

New Wave No:1

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INTRODUCING *THE NEW WAVE*

Capitalist restoration in China was a major setback of the second half of the 20th century for the International Communist Movement. Later on, the collapse of the Soviet Social Imperialist bloc also had a big impact on various Maoist parties all over the world resulting in serious wrangling within them. As a result, a number of Parties abandoned revolutionary Marxism and climbed on the bandwagon of social Democracy. Some others even went to the extreme of refuting Communism itself, and plunged in to the quagmire of bourgeois democracy. Being unable to grasp the ideological under currents of these events, many became ideologically bankrupt. Even then a few Communist Parties could come out with more ideological clarity; boldly defending and upholding revolutionary Marxism. In this process, they not only advanced in the evaluation of historical experiences but could make ideological advancements also. This has paved way to a deeper recognition and grasp of universality of Mao's contributions resulting in establishing Maoism as the third and higher stage in the development of Marxism. Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) which is the embryonic centre of the world's Maoist forces, played a vital, role in establishing Marxism-Leninism-Maoism the world over as the advanced ideological weapon in the hands of the proletariat to defeat all the enemies of mankind.

Maoism has brought a new vigour to the oppressed masses the world over, as directly seen in the People's Wars in Nepal, Peru, India, Turkey and the Philippines. A new wave of revolution is emerging in the world spearheaded by Maoist forces.

South Asia is turning in to a major storm centre of revolution. Revolutionary upheaval in Nepal under the leadership of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has already rendered sleepless nights to the imperialists and their comprador agents in South Asia.

In our country too a new stirring up is visible. ‘The New Wave’ will strive to embrace and convey the power of this new revolutionary motion in its diverse aspects and to help in sharpen its ideological weapon.

Globalisation and Unemployment

LOOKING FOR JOBS BEYOND THE HORIZON

George Joseph

One of the greatest myths created by the advocates of globalisations is being demolished by the latest report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) regarding the employment situation at the world level. According to the report, ‘Global Employment Trend, Brief-Jan 06’ of ILO, global employment generation is highly inadequate resulting in massive unemployment. It warns that this job crisis is one of the biggest “security risks” of our time. The report says “The world’s unemployment rate stood at 6.3 percent, unchanged from the previous year and 0.3 percent points higher than a decade earlier. In total, nearly 191.8 million people were unemployed around the world in 2005, an increase of 2.2 million since 2004, and 34.4 million since 1995. All most half of the unemployed people in the world are young people, a troublesome figure given that youths makeup only 25 percent of the working age population. Young people are more than three times as adults to be unemployed”.

This dismal picture of global unemployment is coming out amidst euphoria on economic growth everywhere. For many years, the ruling classes and their economists have been emphasising the need of improving economic growth rate to contain unemployment and generate more jobs. This idea was widely propagated from the beginning of imperialist globalisation all over the world. In many of the developing countries including India, liberalisation of the economy and structural adjustment programmes were implemented in this line. One of the earliest documents on liberalisation initiated in 1991, published by the finance ministry in 1993, says that the aim of the economic reforms was “to put the economy on a sustainable path of 6 to 7 percent growth and it is essential if we are to break the age-old bonds of poverty, which continue to afflict so many millions of our people”.^[1] If we look back we can easily see that this one-sided concern over economic growth was the product of 1990s. But, in actual life there exists no one to one correlation between economic growth (measured in GDP) and employment generation. Though, the global economic growth rate was 5.1 percent in 2005, employment growth rate was 1.7 percent. This trend is the same with every country.

“At the end of 2005, 2.85 billion people aged 15 and older were *in work*, up 1.5 percent over the previous year, and up 16.5 percent since 1995. How many of the new jobs created in 2005 were decent jobs is difficult to estimate at this point but given the experience of the last years it is not likely that it is the majority”, says the ILO report. Here, the term *in work* needs some clarification. According to the ILO definition, this means those who are self-employed, employed, employers as well as unpaid family members. In this, self-employed must include the ‘discouraged labour force’, those who turn to some other means of survival being unable to find

any job. For example consider the case of a rag picker on the street. According to ILO's definition, the rag picker is a self-employed person and hence *in work!* And, the unpaid family members of the very same rag picker, who is 'self-employed', are also *in work!* If such people were removed from those *in work*, the total number of unemployed would double. Instead of doing that, it introduces another category, *working poor people*, those unable to earn 2 \$ (nearly 90 Rupees) per day. According to imperialist standards, these are people below poverty line. As per ILO's data itself, *working poor people* constitute around 6.7 percent of the total employment. That is, out of 2.85 billion workers 1.9 billion cannot be really considered to be employed or in work. Global employment to population ratio also has declined as per the ILO report. This is a measure of the share of world's working age population (between 15 years and 59 years) that is *in work*. It has declined from 62.8 percent in 1995 to 61.4 percent in 2005. For young people aged between 15 and 24 years it has declined from 51.7 percent in 1995 to 46.7 percent in 2005. In comparison to the general adult working age population, the rate of decline of employment opportunity for the young people is very high. Global youth unemployment is 3.5 times that of the adults. This shows the increasing job crunch at the world level.

Table 1: Unemployment in the world-1995, 2000, 2002-2005(million)

Year	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total	157.3	177.2	191.4	189.6	189.6	191.8
Male	92.7	104.7	112.8	111.7	111.7	112.9
Female	64.7	72.5	78.3	77.9	77.9	78.9

Source: ILO, Global Employment Trend Model-2006

ILO Director General, Juan Somavia writes, "...what we are increasingly concerned about at the International Labour Organisation is that the world is sliding into an unprecedented global job crisis". According to him during the past 10 years official unemployment has grown by more than 25 percent. Of these unemployed, 86 million, that is nearly half of the global total, are young people aged between 15 and 24 years. As of 2005 more than 15 percent of the youth in the world are unemployed. Though the youth's population have grown by 10.5 percent over the last 10 years youth employment grew by just 0.2 percent.

Within this global scenario, let us see what is there in stock for us here in our country? The recent survey report of National Sample survey Organisation (NSSO) related to 2004 shows a substantial increase of unemployment. In comparison to the unemployment in urban areas, rural unemployment is very high. According to the report, rural unemployment has almost doubled from that of 1993-1994 for both men and women. On the basis of government's own definition of 'labour force' and 'work force' rural unemployment, which was 5.6 percent for both men and women in 1993-94, has increased to 9 percent and 9.3 percent respectively in 2004. In the urban area, unemployment has increased from 6.7 and 10.7 percent to 8.1 and 11.7 percent respectively for men and women in 2004.

Table 2: Unemployment rate among men and women(as % of labour force)

Year	Rural men	Rural women	Urban men	Urban women
1993-94	5.6	5.6	6.7	10.5
1999-2000	7.2	7	7.3	9.4
2004	9	9.3	8.1	11.7

Source: National Sample Survey Organisation

Table 3: Level of unemployment (million persons)

Year	1983	1993-94	1999-2000	2005
Population	718.2	894.0	1004	1008
Labour force	261.3	336	363.3	403.3
Work force	239.6	315.8	336.8	356.8
Unemployed	21.8	20.1	26.6	46.2
Unemployment rate (%)	8.3	5.99	7.32	11.5

Source: Calculated from National Sample Survey (Current Daily Status Basis)

According to the official calculations, the total number of unemployed people has increased from 20.13 million in 1993-94 to about 46 million in 2005. That is, the total number of unemployed has doubled during the past 10 years. Data available from 947 Employment Exchanges, as on September 2004, show that 40.8 million job seekers were registered with the employment exchanges. Out of that, about 70 percent were educated (ie. 10th standard and above) 26 percent were women. Those placed through the employment exchanges at the all India level during the period of January–September 2004 was near about 0.103 million – a placement of 0.25 percent of the jobseekers. Functionally, employment exchanges are not serving the purpose for which they were meant. It was based on this justification that the NDA government once planned to get rid of it; they had a similar logic for the attempt to discard the public distribution system, saying that people don't purchase from ration shops! How will people purchase such rotten grains distributed through ration shops and how can employment exchanges provide non-existent jobs? Instead of addressing the real issues, the rulers are resorting to circular logic to further their class interests.

Though, employment and poverty alleviation were the main promises of every government that came and went and elections are still fought on the very same issues, the number of unemployed and poor are increasing day by day. Every five year plan, every budget speech and every election manifesto keeps on speaking about these issues, while the numbers of poor keep on increasing. It was in such a situation, let us remember, that liberalisation policies and structural adjustment programmes were implemented as a part of imperialist globalisation in the name of increasing GDP growth rate for reducing poverty and providing employment. But what is the result of the 15 years of liberalisation?

Except for a brief period of all round recovery of the economy during 1993-95 as a result of the hectic activities in the economy after the opening up, indicators of real development, that is the development of the people, are steeply falling at a rapid pace. When, in every year, 18 million

people are added to the working age population (15 years to 59 years) and 8 million are added to the labour force, average job creation was only around 3 million during 1999-2000 and 2 million during 2000-2003, leaving more than 5 million jobless. Annual growth of employment in the agricultural sector, which is the largest employer in the country accounting for 56.7 percent of the employment, was a mere 0.2 percent during 1993-2000 resulting in zero employment elasticity (growth of employment per growth of GDP). Large scale land concentration and widespread mechanisation resulted in the increase of landless households from 35 percent to 41 percent between 1988 and 2000. While landlessness and unemployment ravaged the rural poor, peasants were forced to commit suicide being unable to bear the burden of the so called 'economic growth'. And this is still that is continuing.

The industrial sector, which provides 17.6 percent of total employment, was facing lack of capital investment, resulting in rapid fall of employment, though there was a huge inflow of foreign capital into the speculative market during the past 15 years of liberalisation. During the period 1991-2001, India received \$17.8 billion Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). But employment in manufacturing sector rose only 1.7 percent during the same period, compared to 28.3 percent in the 1970s and 16.9 percent in the '80s. During the same period, annual addition of employment in the organised sector which employs around 8 million people has gone down from 0.39 million in 1990 to - 0.17 in 2001. This means retrenchment or loss of job. It is estimated that around 1.3 million (13 percent of the work force) employees lost their jobs between 1995 and 2002.

After the opening up of the economy, FDI and Foreign Institutional Investments (FII) flowed in on a large scale resulting in the boom of stock market indexes, a fictitious growth of economy and increased total foreign exchange reserve. Everything was the result of the pumping in of speculative capital. We remember the euphoria created during the time of NDA government when the stock market index crossed 6000 points. Today the stock market is above 12000 points. Foreign exchange reserves crossed \$140 billion. GDP growth rate is somewhere around 8.5 percent. In comparison to the NDA government the UPA government is in a better position to campaign about a 'super shining India' outsmarting the NDA campaign on 'shining India'. What is exactly shining is nothing but the speculative capital of multinational corporations and their Indian counterparts.

Table 4: Annual Addition to Organised Sector Employment (million jobs)

1990-1991	1991-1992	1992-1993	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
0.39	0.32	0.12	0.20	0.15	0.41	0.31	-0.08	-0.06	-0.15	-0.17

One segment of the service sector that was much glorified during the past years of liberalisation was Information Technology (IT). Though it was providing a mere 0.2 percent of the total employment, it was projected as the hope of hopeless jobseekers. Apart from attracting a section of the upward mobile middle class jobseekers, it cannot be considered as a viable solution for the ever swelling unemployment. But the campaigners of liberalisation still project the IT sector as a major source of employment.

It is not that the rulers are not aware of the grave situation. To hoodwink the people, they resort to jugglery and arithmetical manipulations, in order to present a lighter picture of unemployment, in the same way as they brought down the number of Below Poverty Line population. Discouraged labourers, those who withdraw themselves from jobseeking being unable to get a job, are not at all considered by the government data. Their number is not reflected in the calculations of the government. At the same time, those who eke out some means for minimum survival are considered to be employed! In government data, disguised unemployment is not reflected at all. If all these sections of unemployed people are properly accounted for, the real picture of unemployment that emerges would be more frightening. Yet, the UPA government is now preparing to change labour regulations, thus making it easier for employers to throw out workers!

Saroj Dutta –Not Merely A Person of Literature, But An Architect of Socio-Cultural Consciousness

Asit Sengupta

On 4th August, 1971 night Saroj Kumar Dutta, popularly known as S.D. or *Shashanka* got arrested from a Kolkata shelter. Next day at dawn after a couple of hours of brutal torture, police-force secretly took him to Maidan of Kolkata, beheaded him and took away his head and left the rest of his body for few hours. And later, they took the possession of that part of the body also. But till today, in official police record, he remains an absconder.

Since then thirty five years have elapsed. Yet he is haunting the whole of West Bengal society. Maoist revolutionaries are still considering him as a pioneer and ideal figure of the revolutionary cultural movement and, a theoretician and an activist. This is quite understandable. But surprisingly, still he is an extremely haunting literary personality for the revisionists, careerists, bootlickers and or aspirant-bootlickers of the ruling classes. The situation is such that ignoring S.D., nobody can claim to be even a progressive intellectual. Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] and the Communist Party of India [CPI], which are continuously playing the anchor-roles in hiding the state-killers of S.D., are still compelled to publish and sell his earlier writings merely giving his full name, i.e., *Saroj Kumar Dutta*, but not his actual identity. The trick is a simple effort to maneuver the new generation readers so that they will not know about his real ideological and political stands, which they know can tear apart their counter-revolutionary characters.

Is it because of his unusually brutal killing by the police-force, Saroj Dutta became such a sensitive figure? Can we simplify his social contribution by attributing to such benevolent colours and contours of Bengali *babudom*? If so, why not a single commission to probe his killing constituted by the government could complete its term and *babudom* is, in fact, passive in this regard? And more so, why at the time of his killing, only a handful of intellectuals came out to lodge their worries about the possibility of such an inhuman treatment with him? At that time seeing the bland and spineless responses of this class, on the killing of Saroj Dutta, poet Birendra Chattopadhyay had to scream in despair:

“In this country is there any human being –

Is myself a human being?”

No, it's not because of their benevolence and liberalism that the revisionists and comprador *babudom* are not forgetting Saroj Dutta. They indeed want to do this – with their whole bodies and souls, but the social reality is not permitting them to do so. It is the ideology and practice of Saroj Dutta that has made permanent imprints on

Bengal's socio-cultural fabric. And, that, they are finding fatal for their very existence. Then, how can they ignore or forget him?

From his college life onwards, S.D. was attached with the Communist Movement. He had joined *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a Kolkata based English daily news paper, after doing his post-graduation as a Sub-Editor. There he had organised and led trade union strikes for several times. Due to a political strike, he and others lost their job. During the time of that agitation he got married with Comrade Bela Dutta.[\[2\]](#)

Since undivided CPI-days until Naxalbari struggle, S.D. was more confined to the Party-propaganda and literary work. He was in the Editorial Board of CPI's Bengali daily news paper *Swadhinata* (Freedom) since early 1940. He was also in the cultural paper of the party, *Parichay* (Introduction) and later became its Editor. He had initiated another famous literary magazine *Agrani*. While doing all this work for the Party, he had started to oppose the revisionist line of the Party-leadership which was toeing with Khrushchev's theory of peaceful transition to Socialism. This had brought him in the fold of CPI(M), thinking that the formation of this new Party would be a real rupture from revisionism. During his CPI(M)-days, he was a member of the Editorial Board of its Bengali weekly *Desh Hitaishi* (Well wisher of the country) right from its inception. However, almost instantly his hope was shattered. When Naxalbari struggle started, he became an all out supporter of this uprising. Immediately after the Naxalbari peasant uprising along with Sushital Roychowdhury, the Editor-in-Chief, and others, he paid special attention to propagate this struggle as a model for the Indian Communist Revolutionaries through the pages of *Desh Hitaishi*. Revisionist bosses of CPI(M) were vehemently opposing Naxalbari uprising and they organised some goons to beat and drive out Saroj Dutta and other supporters of Naxalbari from *Desh Hitaishi*-office. Right from inception of the Bengali evening *Deshabrati* and English periodical *Liberation*, he was a member of the editorial boards of both of them. Later he became the Editor of *Deshabrati*. Both were the organs of CPI(ML). The name *Liberation* was actually proposed by Saroj Dutta.

Saroj Dutta was a prolific, sharp, witty, Marxist writer. Through his poems, he repeatedly tried to demystify the legends in which exploitation and suppression of the poor were tried to be covered up. Even Sukanto Bhattacharya, a great path-breaking poet in Bengali literature, who died in his early twenties, used to acknowledge Saroj Dutta as a poet of stature. However, a few eternally enlightened 'friends of Revolution'(!) are making vain attempts to propagate that he was not that much an efficient translator, nor a good poet. Clearly, this effort is meant to keep away the younger generation who can be otherwise attracted towards his ideology through his literary works.

It's true that Saroj Dutta himself was not a path-breaker of Bengali literature like more younger Sukanto Bhattacharya. But his poems and articles, as well as translations, were more concerned to develop consciousness against feudal and imperialistic cultural propaganda. Through his poems he repeatedly tried to destroy the myths created by the nobles through centuries. (viz. *Shakuntala*, *Uttar Ramayana* etc.). Varvara Rao (VV) a tall poet in recent Telugu revolutionary literature, once commented that, during his student days first time he read the poem *Shakuntala* in Telugu translation along with other friends and found it as astonishingly iconoclastic giving a new dimension to analyse a myth under which century-old exploitation of women by the nobles were hidden with the ruling classes' effort to justify their satanic acts as mere coincidence for which disobedience of the nobles by the exploited masses has played the anchor role (*consider revising this*). Comrade V.V. and others were further astonished to know that such a poem was written in the decade of 1940. As a result, an effort was taken to translate the poems of Saroj Dutta from Bengali to Telugu and now almost all of his poems are translated into Telugu. Indeed, it had upset those who were in clownish acrobatics to prove that Saroj Dutta was not a poet of stature. Moreover, it happened, before these bootlickers could start their business- Saroj Dutta, as a revolutionary poet, had become an all India figure!

Saroj Dutta's translations from Romain Rolland, Maxim Gorky, N. Krupskaya, Leo Tolstoy, Patrice Lumumba, Langston Huges, Ernest Jones and others made popular among the youth of Bengal. He had taken particular interest to popularise the anti-imperialist and communist scientists through his columns in newspapers.

From the whole literary creations of Saroj Dutta, one can easily find a common theme that he tried to infuse the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and communist world outlook among the youth of Bengal. When the idol-breaking movement against the comprador ideologues started by the pro-CPI(M-L) revolutionary students and youth, on behalf of the Party he took up the responsibility to give its ideological basis. Precisely this particular quality of Saroj Dutta was the most unsolicited one to the reactionaries of all hues, including the revisionists of all shades, because it sowed the seeds of Revolution.

Ideological Struggles in the Cultural Front

Saroj Dutta had launched three major ideological struggles in the cultural field – one, against the line of thinking of Buddhadeb Basu; two, against that of Samar Sen and third and the most important one during the compradors' Idol-Breaking Movement in 1970's. During this time he was the Secretary of West Bengal State Committee of CPI(M-L).

Responding to the speech of Buddhadeb Basu – a well known Bengali poet and scholarly person – given at the conference of Progressive Writers' Association (PWA), Saroj Dutta raised sharp criticism and exposed its hollowness. Buddhadeb Basu had argued that prior to revolution, in the society there would be suffering, boredom and horror, so to depict them would be the task of the artists and writers. Saroj Dutta's reply was that the very thinking that art and literature would mechanically depict the facts is an unscientific and self-deceptive thinking. On the contrary, to apply wholeheartedly the individual talent for the destruction of the society that destroys the individual talent is the task of the progressive artists and writers. And he cautioned that introduction of such confused fellows into the Progressive Cultural Movement would weaken the Movement seriously.

Saroj Dutta was more aggressive while replying to the article "*In defense of Decadent Culture*" by Samar Sen (also a well-known Bengali poet, who later initiated and edited the weekly *Frontier*). The reason was very obvious. Samar Sen had proposed that writers and artists who are exposing the decadent nature of the prevailing society, are progressives and dictation by the Communist Party to write only the propaganda material cannot be tolerated. Realising the revisionist characteristic of this proposition, Saroj Dutta vehemently attacked this position. He opined that the task of the Communists is to uproot the existing decadence, that's why Communists cannot afford to bear even a tinge of decadence within them as well as in their movements. In the period of decadence, the art and literature which portray the decadence are not sincere, rather hollow in their approach, it preaches inertness and that way it is counter-revolutionary. Every attempt to rationalise and constructing logic to justify the inertness must be vehemently repudiated, particularly in the period of making revolution. Saroj Dutta also warned that the Communists should be cautious from these "tricky demagogueries". He had also denied the allegation of Samar Sen that Communist Party had ordered the writers to write propaganda material as factually incorrect.

Now-a-days, a few *babus* are trying their hard to show that by taking such a stubborn and belligerent step against such revisionist outlooks, Saroj Dutta, in fact, denied the Maoist concept of United Front. In other words, what these United Front-expert-*Babus* are really pleading for is to give space to petty-bourgeois anarchists, revisionists and compradors in the people's culture, in the name of their self-styled concept of United Front.

In this respect, it would be pertinent to recall a contemporary debate between Bishnu Dey, another renowned Bengali poet and scholarly person, and Manik Bandopadhyaya, one of the greatest novelist and short story writer that Bengali literature has ever produced, the then president of PWA, Bengal, on the issue that whether writers and artists should be in the Communist Party or not. Bishnu Dey wanted to be a fellow-traveler of the

progressives without becoming a member of the Communist Party with the plea that the Communist Party's discipline restricts and blocks the creativity of the artists and writers. Manik Bandopadhyaya strongly refuted this assertion, and upheld that democracy as the fundamental characteristic of a true Communist Party without giving room to anarchism and concluded that, because of this, dynamism comes only through the Communist Party and sans dynamism one cannot be a progressive and not even a fellow-traveler of them.

Today, one can easily see that this kind of *vrindabani lotas* [3], who after doing a few initial supportive feats for the exploited classes, finally used to toadying the exploiters. In any language and culture, one will get a number of such examples. But the question remains – how to identify these elements from the beginning? Both S.D. and Manik Bandopadhyaya had shown that through the ideological debate, it is possible to identify the alien trends within the intellectuals and it cannot be the question of mechanically discarding them. Unfortunately, such a trend was never developed in our Communist Movement

S.D.'s Last and the Greatest Battle in the Cultural Field

Among the ordinary masses of Bengal, till the time of *The Spring Thunder over India*, Saroj Dutta was only known as a Communist in the field of literature and journalism. Of course, within the Communist Party, he had a high revolutionary prestige. When Comrade Charu Majumder was trying to organise the Maoist Communist Revolutionaries, he had sent Sauren Bose from Siliguri to Kolkata to make contact particularly with Saroj Dutta and Comrade Sushital Roychowdhury. In later period, S.D. was an active member of the *All India Co-ordination Committee of the Communist Revolutionaries* (AICCCR) and right from the formation of CPI(M-L), he was in the West Bengal State Committee. On the other hand, since the beginning of the publications of CPI(M-L)'s Party organs *Liberation* (in English) and *Deshabrati* (in Bengali – a daily evening paper), Saroj Dutta was in their Editorial Boards. Afterwards he became the editor of *Deshabrati*. In the pages of *Deshabrati*, he had started a regular column: *Patrikaar Duniya-ae* (In The World of Newspapers) with his pen-name of *Shashanka*. Instantly, articles in this column became the most sought-after and it became the point of discussion and the source of inspiration for the broad masses of the whole of West Bengal. Through these columns, upholding Maoism and the Comrade Charu Majumder's line, he openly and unhesitatingly advocated, supported, promoted and encouraged to wage the total war – waging a war against the ruling classes at all the fronts together, i.e., waging war not only at the military front, but also in the fronts of ideology, culture, history, economy et al – against the prevailing semi-colonial and semi-feudal system of our country. Through these columns, he had also exposed the ruling classes' and their agents' crookedness and their panic from the revolutionary ideology and armed masses. From the writings of *Shashanka*, it was very much evident that, he never understood and propagated Revolution as a simplistic question of mere seizure of political power where as he upheld the Maoist concept that in making a Revolution, use of organised armed might of the masses is an essential and basic thing Taking lessons from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China (GPCR), which was going on at that time under the leadership Comrade Mao Tsetung, Saroj Dutta was trying to apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the context of India, particularly West Bengal, under the leadership of Comrade Charu Majumder.

At that time, CPI (M-L) was waging armed struggles to build up base areas and People's Army and the columns of *Shashanka* was giving unequivocal active support and creating people's opinion for it. When students and youth, influenced by CPI(M-L) and GPCR, started the Idol-Breaking Movement with their own initiative, Saroj Dutta being a leader of the Party owned it and took up the responsibility to provide the theoretical and ideological basis for this Movement. As *Shashanka*, first he wrote an article: *Murti Bhangaar Samarthane* (In Support of the Idol Breaking). In this article, on the basis of Mao Tsetung's understanding of comprador class, he exploded the comprador-parameter of being a "patriot" and set up people's parameters to decide a patriot. Simultaneously, he set the guide-line that the object of the Idol-Breaking Movement is on one hand to demolish the social image of the fake patriots built by the compradors and on the other hand to establish the prestige of the pro-people real patriots, who were either relegated to the secondary position, or made ignominious by the compradors. It was indeed a fatal blow to the existing line of thinking to analyse the history of our society and

culture. Many ruling classes' icons got naked as the *chamchas*[4] of British imperialism and its subservient feudals. The real class character of many so-called social reformations and as well as British introduced education system to develop the compradors – which is still in vogue in our country – got thoroughly exposed. The whole neatly fabricated concept of “*Bengal Renaissance*” was exposed as an effort by the British imperialists to create a comprador class for them. Due to this Movement, the very concept of ‘*Bengal Renaissance*’ got such a jolt that even after so many patch up work by the ruling class for so many years, it couldn't really get back its previous acceptance. Saroj Dutta himself wrote a few studies of some of this type of ‘great persons’ to provide an idea how to analyse them. Comrade Charu Majumder had an agreement with this position where as Comrade Sushital Roychowdhury, though did not object this, had raised some criticism on certain analysis of a few characters. Similarly, few others also later raised some criticism on S.D.'s analysis of Prafulla Chandra Roy.

This Movement along with these articles of *Shashanka* could create a charged atmosphere in favour of the revolutionary culture all over the West Bengal, particularly among the students and youth. Defying the death and the terror of severe police-torture, broad masses came forward *en masse*, on one hand to physically smash the idols of the “great persons” established by the ruling classes, and on the other hand, to seriously investigate the compradors-defined “great persons” regarding their true class-characters and collaborationist acts with British imperialism and its subservient feudals. In fact, a number of revolutionaries lost their lives, became maimed by the police-torture for their participation in the Idol-Breaking Movement. As a result, the level of consciousness of broad masses had reached to a new height and in West Bengal a new wave in all the disciplines of revolutionary art and literature emerged. What Saroj Kumar Dutta and like poets could not do by writing poems, this Idol-Breaking Movement and a few articles of *Shashanka* in relation to this Movement could do, not only that did that in a massive way!

Idol-Breaking Movement had considerably diminished the barrier between the direct and indirect cultural activists. In any society, everybody – whether one can write, draw, sing or play, or not – comes under the ambit of culture. Yet, a general notion came from repeated reactionary propaganda that those who can write, draw, sing or play are THE cultural activists, and others are not. In the particular case of our country, *Babudom* has almost monopolises these activities. As a result, particularly urban middle-strata *Babus*, who are having definite access for reading, writing, and other training facilities, became the sole contractors of cultural activities. If anyone from the downtrodden classes is coming up as an artist or writer, either s/he is gobbled up or put down by this class, or goes down anonymously being ignored. Imperialism is extremely keen to keep up and expand this mechanism. S.D. had an earlier understanding that ruling classes had widened the natural gap between the direct and indirect cultural activists. In the debate with Samar Sen, he had particularly raised this point. During the Idol-Breaking Movement, first time in the history of Indian Communist Movement, the direct and indirect cultural activists came together to shatter the alien culture and thus tried to minimise this gap in a conscious manner. Those Comrades who had gone to break the compradors' idols were not necessarily writers, artists or intellectuals, rather most of them were only indirect cultural activists, or one can say broad-masses. Later Maoist Movements in India have not taken up such a conscious effort, though, of course, they have given special attention to expand the number of direct cultural activists. But the question to bring the indirect cultural activists into a cultural movement, i.e., in other words, the task to arouse the broad-masses actively on basic socio-cultural issues is yet to be taken up consciously. One of the lessons of Idol-Breaking Movement is that such a movement cannot be driven by a Party without having and actually implementing the total war-concept and completely dissociating itself from the monolithic Party-structure.

To begin the Idol-Breaking Movement, the example of May 4th Movement of China before the formation of CPC was there before the Party. A number of revolutionaries had to lay their lives, but the Movement could give fatal blows to feudalism and raised the level of consciousness of the whole society and created the background for forming the Communist Party. The Party and Saroj Dutta had tried to organise this Idol-Breaking Movement in the way mass line was applied by Mao Tse tung during GPCR to smash the bourgeois head-quarters in the Party and government. The power of the reactionary fellows, who were sitting in

the government, was challenged through this method. This method is quite unthinkable, as it is against the so-called Party-discipline in a Communist Party that follows regimented monolithic Party-concept of Comrade Stalin. Applying the lessons of GPCR in our country, breaking away from this metaphysical concept regarding Party's method of functioning, was a must. When Comrade Charu Majumder told about the necessity of applying the lessons of GPCR, he never talked about it in abstraction. He and like Comrades tried to apply it in a concrete manner. The method applied in Idol-Breaking Movement was one of such example. It was intended to unleash the initiative of the broad-masses in a massive way. And it got remarkable success in it. In spite of the fact that this Movement was initiated by the pro-Party students and youth, Party's intervention in giving it ideological and theoretical basis and organisational forms, could make it a more broad-based and more effective in developing further understanding about the method of functioning of imperialism in our country by utilising compradors and their culture.

Naively putting up a *Laxman-Rekha* [\[5\]](#) between the feudal culture and comprador culture, a few gentle persons later have raised criticism that in his earlier life Saroj Dutta was a serious opponent of feudal culture, but during the Idol-Breaking Movement he didn't pointed his gun towards it, rather he had devoted his full might against comprador culture. In this case, these well-read gentle persons, got a parallel like 'Young Marx' and 'Older Marx' in Saroj Dutta. These well intentioned gentle persons failed to understand the inter-relationship between feudal culture and comprador culture, as well as they couldn't really appreciate the development took place in the understanding of the existing state character and the society of our country in wake of Naxalbari Struggle and realisation of Maoism. One of the most important development made by Mao Tsetung in the science of Marxism and Leninism is the concept of compradors being used by imperialism in alliance with the subjugated feudalism to obstruct the growth of national capitalism. Naturally, it is having its own socio-cultural manifestations too and imperialism is eager to promote and consolidate this culture, which is having number of umbilical linkage with both feudalism and imperialism. Hence, in particular socio-cultural condition of India, the steps taken by S.D. and the Party to uproot the comprador culture during the Idol-Breaking Movement, in effect, had hit the very base of existing feudal socio-culture of our country. One can confidently assure these gentle persons that with the acceptance of Maoism and along with the development of Naxalbari Struggle, Saroj Dutta could really go into the depth of the problem and successfully could hit to the base of existing feudal socio-culture of our country. 'Two Saroj Duttas' thus never existed, as was confused by these gentle persons. Contrary to it, it was one and the same Saroj Dutta – of course, more matured and ideologically sharper than earlier – whom we can see during the Idol-Breaking Movement.

Some Comrades, in spite of their revolutionary consistency, zeal and determination, in spite of their serious acceptance of Maoism, are still suffering from the hang-over of Stalinist metaphysical concept of monolithic Party-structure and functioning. Obviously, they are not in a position to appreciate the mass line method of Mao Tsetung that was adopted during the Idol-Breaking Movement. As a result, they are failing to recognise the importance of this Movement and also the basic need of continuing this kind of movement. Simultaneously, they are failing to understand that rupturing from Comrade Stalin's monolithic Party-structure and to follow Maoist concept of Party-organisation is a must to uphold Maoism truly. Hence, their criticism of Idol-Breaking Movement and the method applied to conduct this by CPI(M-L) and Saroj Dutta, comes from the same point of departure that is being used by the utterly rotten ruling class revisionists, like CPI and CPI(M), who out rightly reject the very concept of Maoism and vehemently oppose GPCR and Naxalbari.

Saroj Dutta

Saroj Dutta or Saroj Kumar Dutta was born at Norail of Jessore District of undivided Bengal (now in Bangla Desh) in 1914. His liberal, atheist and principled parents indeed had nurtured the future revolutionary life of Saroj Dutta. After completion of his M.A. in English with first class he joined *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* – a English-daily newspaper that was published from Kolkata –

as sub-editor. But due to organising a political strike, very shortly he was thrown out of this paper.

Right from his student life he had accepted Marxism ardently. In 1954 Saroj Dutta became the editor of *Swadhinata* (daily news paper of CPI) as well as *Parichay* (Bengali Literary organ of CPI). He also had close contact with Bengali daily newspaper *Satyayuga*.

Saroj Dutta was a prolific, sharp, witty, Marxist writer. Through his poems, he repeatedly tried to demystify the legends where exploitations and suppressions of the poor were tried to be covered up. In reply to Bengali poet Buddhadev Basu's article "Bengali Literature Today: Position of modern writers" (read at All India Progressive Writers' Forum) Saroj Dutta wrote *Chhinno Jaar Chhadmabesh* (Whose veil is already torn) published in *Agrani* (a Bengali literary periodical) in 1939. That was the first attempt to establish Marxism in Bengali Literature. He had entered into another polemics in the field of literary ideas with his cotemporary Bengali poet Samar Sen. There he had blasted the pseudo-revolutionary approach of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. He had written number of biographical articles for the younger generations to arm them with Communist values and internationalism.

He was equally at ease in translating the literary creations from other languages into Bengali. In 1946, he translated "I will not rest" – the autobiography of Romaine Rolland – into Bengali as *Shilpeer Nabajanma* (New Birth of an Artist). At that time it could create a great sensation particularly among the literary circle and it had created a protracted impact on the younger generations. In 1943, he became a member of 'Anti-fascist Writers' and Artists' forum' and he was also involved with "Friends of Soviet Union". After the death of Stalin in 1953, Soviet Union had adopted deStalinisation policy and it had a big impact on the whole of C.P.I. But Saroj Dutta had an opposite view which were expressed through his literary activities. In 1953 and 1954 he translated "America in Gorky's Eyes", "Tale of Sebastopol" by Tolstoy. In 1957, he translated Turgenev's "Spring Torrent", Tolstoy's "Resurrections". He had also translated Krupskaya's "Memoirs of Lenin" into Bengali.

During the time of split of CPI into CPI and CPI(M), he refused to accept the post-Stalin Khrushchevian theory of peaceful transition to Socialism of Soviet Union and adopted Mao Tsetung Thought. At that time he started to work as a member of the Editorial Board of *Desh Hitoishi*, the party organ of CPI(M).

Immediately after the Naxalbari peasant uprising along with Sushital Roychowdhury, the Editor-in-Chief, and others, he paid special attention to propagate this struggle as a model for the Indian Communist Revolutionaries in the pages of *Desh Hitoishi*. Revisionist bosses of CPI(M) were vehemently opposing Naxalbari uprising and they organised some goons to beat and drive out Saroj Dutta and other supporters of Naxalbari from *Desh Hitoishi*-office. Soon Saroj Dutta came in close contact with Comrade Charu Majumdar and became a part of the process to build the new party of the genuine Communist Revolutionaries – CPI(ML). Right from the inception of the Bengali evening *Deshabrati* and the English periodical *Liberation*, he was a member of the editorial board of both of them. Later he became the Editor of *Deshabrati*. Both were the organs of CPI(ML). He had explained the ideological basis of Idol-Breaking Movement against the comprador theoreticians through the writings in the name of *Shashaanka* in the pages of

Deshabrati. In fact, at that time *Shashaanka*'s articles in *Deshabrati* were the most popular writings in Bengali. In these writings Soroj Dutta tried to assimilate the rich and earthy oral tradition of the downtrodden class of Bengal – which was looked down by the feudal and comprador *babus* of Bengal as *chhotoloker bhasha* (language of the wretched) and kept that kind of expressions away from the arena of Bengali literature.

In the last part of his life, he became the Secretary of West Bengal State Committee of CPI(ML). On 4th August 1971 night he was arrested and brutally murdered. To hide his identity he was beheaded and his body was thrown in *Maidan* of Kolkata by the police. But even today, police's official version is that he is still an absconder. To dilute the people's anger, CPI(M)-led West Bengal State government had constituted more than one commission to probe into this incident, but none was allowed to complete their terms even by the same government.

Comrade Charu Majumder on Comrade Saroj Dutta

“At midnight of 4th and 5th August the police captured Comrade Saroj Dutta and on that very night shot him secretly.

Chairman has said: “It is not hard for one to do a bit of good. What is hard is to do good all one's life and never do anything bad, to act consistently in the interest of the broad masses, the young people and the revolution, and to engage in arduous struggle for decades on end. That is the hardest thing of all!” Comrade Saroj Dutta was such a comrade and his entire life was spent in working for the revolution. There is no reactionary force which did not fear his pen which was as sharp as a razor. That is why the police force did not even enact the farce of a trial, they murdered him on that night itself. ...

Comrade Saroj Dutta was leader of the Party and he died a hero's death befitting a leader. His revolutionary steadfastness should serve as a model for youths. Overcoming all weaknesses, the youths will have to take to the path of revolution more resolutely and avenge these killings by integrating themselves with the workers and poor and landless peasants.”

August 16, 1971

CPM on Caste Question

A Reformist Agenda to Save Brahmanism

ajith

The resolution adopted by the CPM convention on ‘The Problems of Dalits’ starts out with a section titled ‘A Marxist Perspective on Caste Oppression’ – a section notable for its superficial, idealist and ahistorical treatment of the issue. We are thus informed that *“India is the only country in the world where such a system came into being and still exists.”* Evidently, the CPM leadership would benefit a lot from some reading, or at least some briefing from their acquaintances in the surrounding South Asian countries. More than ignorance, this reflects a deeper problem of outlook and stand. The very next sentences declare that *“The varna and caste*

system was sanctified by Hindu religion and by Vedic scriptures. This was the main reason for its consolidation.” Then how do we explain the continuing existence of caste in Buddhist Sri Lanka and large parts of Islamic Pakistan?

Obviously, there is something more involved here, in both the realms of material social relations and ideological superstructure. At the level of social relations we must investigate the unique features of caste that made it so useful for the exploiters of the South Asian subcontinent throughout centuries and its implications for democratic revolution. Without this material reason there can be no explanation for the continued existence of caste in countries where the Hindu religion had lost state patronage centuries ago.^[6] The initial four fold Varna division (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras) was a form of division of labour. While its later evolution into caste continued to fulfil this role under feudalism, it was also the form of integrating tribes into it. This had the distinct feature of modifying and absorbing crucial elements of tribal endogamy, social organisation and taboos, instead of wiping them out. But this by itself cannot explain the persistence of caste. Neither can it be sought in religion. The ‘estate’ form of social division in medieval Western Europe was also based on birthright. And it had legitimacy supplied by the all powerful Catholic Church. But all of this could not block the later sprouting of capitalism. Nor could Catholicism prevent the rise of Protestantism or even its own transformation to adapt to the capitalist system.

While we must look to the external intervention of colonialism to get a satisfactory answer, it is equally important to examine a unique internal feature of the caste social order. ***Caste was not only a division of labour. It was also a hierarchical division of labourers. A division closed by birth and legitimised through religious belief.*** This was that particular feature that endeared it to the exploiters over the ages. This was the material substance that promoted an incorporation of caste division in one or another form, into their rule despite having diverse religious beliefs, be it Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity or Sikhism. Though the CPM pays formal tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in its resolution, it has hardly bothered to grasp his pioneering recognition of the role of caste as a division of labourers. Marxist theoretical work on caste must necessarily synthesise this contribution. It is of great importance even in such a basic task like forging working class consciousness.

The recognition of caste as a form of social organisation cutting across religious faith also demands that we go beyond Hindu religion, or even religion itself. We must address the central issue of Brahmanism. This ultra reactionary ideology has repeatedly succeeded in persisting under adverse conditions and adapting to new socio-economic relations. A further reading of the CPM resolution will show that its shallow treatment is meant precisely to draw attention away from this crucial task.

The only reference it makes to Brahmanism in its document is this: *“Apart from its rabid communal ideology, the RSS adopted a Brahmanical stance right from the beginning.”* Well, this is broadly acceptable, if one overlooks its separation of the RSS’s ‘rabid communal ideology’ from its ‘Brahmanical stance’. What about other political representatives of the ruling classes? Were they ‘non-Brahmanical’? This is what it says about the Indian National Congress: *“The Congress-led national movement on its part, failed to take up radical social reform measures as part of the freedom movement.”*

To put the record straight, it was never a matter of 'failure'. Throughout its existence the Congress persistently did all it could to block radical, democratic, social reforms. This was true of its initial phase where Gokhale and others tried to reform some of the more obnoxious practices of Brahmanism. It was blatant under Tilak and his group who refused to accept any reform whatsoever and didn't hesitate to drive out the 'social reformers'. And it continued under Gandhi, though in a very new guise. In fact, the rise of Gandhi from being just one in the pack of leaders to the canonised status of Mahatma was directly related to his ideological, political, organisational, and struggle package. This was a package to restructure the Congress in order to establish its hegemony in the anti-British struggle. It was done by blocking the growth of movements (working class, peasant, anti-caste, national) coming up from below, through a partial takeover of their agendas and incorporation of their social bases under the overarching domination of the Congress. ***A notable thing about the Gandhian package was its adaptation of Brahmanism to new needs and challenges.*** The grounds had been prepared by Dayanand Saraswati, Vivekananda and others who had tried to save the caste order with new interpretations. Gandhi was the new synthesis of Brahmanism. It was a synthesis suited to the interests of the rising comprador-bureaucratic bourgeoisie and those sections of feudal lords keen on seizing emerging opportunities in close company with them. This synthesis was absorbed by Nehru and later leaders as a cornerstone of the Congress. Starting from Indira Gandhi's return to power in the early 1980s, the Congress has refashioned this to present a more explicit and rigid Brahmanic stance. This was necessitated by the legitimacy crisis of the Indian ruling classes and competition from the Sangh Parivar for the post of main political representative.

One cannot expect the CPM leadership to accept this. But why is it so carefully silent about Gandhi's notorious support to varnashrama dharma? It is silent because its class collaboration demands accommodation with Brahmanism. This is not a new development. Let alone Gandhi, even a reactionary bigot like Sankara who led the assault to restore Brahmanism in the philosophical realm was extolled by CPM theoreticians. The present CPM resolution's favourable quoting of E.M.S. Namboodiripad who tried his best to make Sankara acceptable is not at all surprising. **The CPM's opposition to the RSS or other representatives of the ruling classes is not over Brahmanism but about the preferable flavour. This is why it repeatedly appeals to Gandhi and his version of 'accommodative' Brahmanism.** This also explains its eagerness to claim the post of true standard bearers of the Gandhi-Nehru Congress tradition, as opposed to its present leaders, who are accused of compromising with the aggressive, rigid, Brahmanism of the Sangh Parivar.

The CPM's Brahmanic tradition has its roots in the revisionism of the erstwhile united CPI. This party did have a number of theoreticians and activists who were firm in their opposition to Brahmanism and keen on identifying with progressive thinking and struggles against it. But the leading core was forever anchored in the Gandhian tradition. This was complemented by a stubborn insistence on mechanical thinking and powerful economism. Hence its activities on the caste question never went beyond the parameters set by the Gandhian reform ideal. Instead of synthesising and building on the achievements of radical social reform movements and their critiques of Brahmanism it turned its back on this democratic stream. In the name of unity (of the working class movement, of the freedom struggle and so on) it opposed all efforts to consciously raise caste, gender and similar issues and struggle against backward thinking among the masses.

The present resolution seemingly indicates a change of course. Yet the tail is all too evident. In the sole paragraph where the anti-caste movements of the past find a place, there is nothing about their critiques of Brahmanism. The old CPI criticism on these movements not addressing the “... *crucial issue of radical land reforms.*” is repeated. Was the old CPI or the present CPM any better in addressing the issue of “radical” land reforms? What exactly are the specific tasks of radical land reform in caste-feudalism?

The CPM resolution accepts that the Dalits were deprived of ownership rights to land and property. In many nationalities and regions this meant that they were deprived of the right to tenancy also. Yet, castewise, they were (and remain) the largest labour force in agriculture. But the old, undivided, CPI and the CPM (or CPI) never addressed this particular feature of caste-feudalism. It never found a place in their theoretical work or agrarian programmes. The slogan of ‘Land to the Tiller’ was grasped and applied in a mechanical, economist manner. Ignoring the issue of identifying the real tillers, this position was reserved for the tenants. Thereby Dalit landless peasants’ right to land they tilled was denied. They were excluded from the peasant movement by channelling them into agricultural labourers’ organisations. These were focussed on wages and working conditions and homestead or surplus land. Even where they gained land through homestead rights or distribution of surplus land, under CPI or CPM led governments, this blocked them from any further right to land. In effect, this was a modified continuation of the Brahmanic exclusion of Dalits from the right to land and an inevitable consequence of the programmatic positions of these parties.

The only exception to this was Telengana. But there too it didn’t come from a conscious rectification. It was a spontaneous outcome of the high tide of class struggle generated by the politics of armed struggle to seize political power. And it was inevitably pushed back once the CPI leadership surrendered to Nehru and went back to its parliamentary ways. This was the record of the old CPI on the land question. It is continued by the CPM. This ugly tradition also shows us how economism and revisionism directly serve Brahmanism.

The CPM resolution laments that “...*imperialists, the landlords and bourgeois leadership were acting as the defenders of the caste system, by protecting the landlord and pre-capitalist land system.*” Why is the bourgeoisie defending the caste system and protecting the pre-capitalist land system? All the resolution offers is non-answers: “*bourgeoisie compromised with landlordism*”, “*society under capitalist development has compromised with the existing caste system*” and “*Indian bourgeoisie itself fosters caste prejudices*”. It cannot go beyond this drivel because the CPM’s class analysis of the Indian ruling classes is equally trivial. All its Party Programme does is to repeat the words ‘big bourgeoisie’ para after para and leave it at that. There is no class characterisation of this bourgeoisie, apart from a string of qualifications similar to those quoted above. As for why the Indian big bourgeoisie exhibits them, the only explanation is a mechanical parroting of Marxist analysis on the German or Russian bourgeoisie’s compromise with feudalism – they compromised because they feared the masses. This vulgar treatment of class analysis has its implications in dealing with the caste question.

Is Brahmanism intrinsic only to the feudal class? Is the Indian big bourgeoisie’s defence of the caste system a matter of compromise or is it an inevitable aspect of its class character? The Maoist concept of the particular type of capitalism, bureaucrat capitalism, engendered by

imperialism in the oppressed countries can answer this. Bureaucrat capitalism and the comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie that grows up as the big bourgeoisie in these countries exists forever intertwined with feudalism. This is not a compromise but an inseparable urge of its class character. To return to the subject at hand, ***Brahmanism is very much a part of the Indian comprador-bureaucrat bourgeoisie's world outlook. Not just in the caste question, its stamp can be seen in all of its ideology, politics, culture and practice. Brahmanism is contained in the very core of the Indian ruling classes; in their state, exploitation and oppression.*** This provides a powerful basis to bring out the struggle against caste and Brahmanism from the comparatively narrower frame of the Dalit issue without reducing the role of specific struggle on the caste question. It also implies that the caste issue, or any of the other issues, cannot be dealt with in a piecemeal, reformist manner, separated from the central task of seizing political power by destroying the Indian state.

The CPM resolution says that the fight against caste oppression and communalism are interlinked and it must be linked with the struggle against class exploitation. Why only these? Can we advance the struggle for women's emancipation without taking on caste and Brahmanism? Can conscious working class unity develop without addressing all these issues? The CPM's outlook makes all of them mere supplements, since it evades identification of both the social relations and superstructure that actually intertwine all these tasks as integral parts of new democratic revolution, with agrarian revolution as its main axis. This is inevitable given its collaboration with the present social system.

Implications of the Indo-US Nuclear Agreement

A number of agreements were made during Bush's trip to India. They tie this country more tightly into the web of US imperialism's strategic aims, open up India to US biotech and armament monopolies and increase technological dependence. The most important agreement is the nuclear deal. Though different political factions of the ruling classes, such as the BJP and the CPM led Left Front, have expressed concerns over details, the consensus among them is overriding. The Indian ruling classes are in raptures over what they believe is their entry into world power status.

Just before his visit, Bush had announced his Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). Under GNEP, a consortium of nations with advanced nuclear technologies would ensure that countries who agree to forgo their own investments in enrichment and reprocessing technologies will have reliable access to nuclear fuel. India was put in this category in a marked change from the qualification of being one among "leading countries with advanced nuclear technology", stated in the 2005 statement. This had raised a lot of criticism in Indian ruling class circles. The 2006 statement conveniently sidesteps the issue but pointedly drops the formulation of 2005. Instead, a bland sentence sums up the whole thing, (both countries) "Welcomed the successful completion of discussions on India's separation plan and looked forward to the full implementation of the commitments in the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement on nuclear cooperation." The two further steps called for before the US honours its commitments, getting US Congress approval and finalising an additional protocol by India with the International

Atomic Energy Agency, will be occasions for extracting more commitments from India. Condoleezza Rice has already set this up with her statement that the Indian government will have to agree to amendments in the present deal in order to get it through the US Congress. While US senators sit in judgement, the Indian parliament has had no role in this whole affair except listening to a report by the Prime Minister. So much for India's so called sovereignty and democracy!

While moving towards the deal, and in the debate following it, much has been made of the division in the establishment between those willing to accept all the demands of the US and those who 'fought' to protect India's nuclear weapons capacities as well as Fast Breeder^[7] capabilities. But the Bush regime was all along willing to let the Indian state retain its weapons capacities. Analysts point out that with even the agreed 65 per cent of nuclear capacity under full safeguards, the remaining would be enough to produce 200 atomic bombs every year! It will also allow the Indian state to continue with its ambitions to have nuclear powered and armed submarines. The deal has in fact sanctioned the Indian state's nuclear weapons status, though not in formal terms. This is well within US ideas on India's role in its strategic plans. A US strategic think tank paper notes that, "In late 1997, the White House had decided to make India the lynchpin of its South Asia policy and to replace its nonproliferation focus which the Indians hated, with a multifaceted approach in which they were sure the Indians would welcome under any government."^[8]

This means firm support to the Indian state's expansionist interests. The present nuclear deal formalises this at the cost of greater Indian collaboration. All factions of the ruling classes welcomed it, principally because their expansionist drive is satisfied. It will be wrong to ignore this and argue that the Indian rulers agreed so that they can boast of being a world power in order to cover up their weaknesses and divert the masses. No doubt, they are far from being a world power. But that does not contradict their expansionism. Their expansionist acts have always been realised with the backing of one or the other imperialist power.

For the people of India this holds out big dangers. India is already involved in the US led occupation of Afghanistan. This includes deployment of its para-military in the guise of protecting Indians working there. Its navy serves to assist the US in the Indian Ocean and surrounding seas. It is also a part of the US-Japan-Australia strategic naval tie up. As collaboration increases, Indian forces will be drawn into being cannon fodder for US aggression and the people will be more exposed to retaliatory attacks by its victims. The arms race in South Asia will accelerate and relations with neighbouring countries will worsen.

The interests of the US in making India the lynchpin of its aggressive moves in this part of the world is certainly related to its designs to retain global superiority vis-à-vis other imperialist powers. But it cannot be reduced to this alone. South Asia has already emerged as a strong centre of the world revolution, where Maoist forces have a solid and growing footing. At present the US and its close allies are focussed in West Asia and consider it as the frontline in their worldwide 'war on the people'. But a potential Maoist revolutionary upsurge in South Asia holds out a major threat to their plans. Not only does a huge part of the world's oppressed live here, their revolutionary advance will make a powerful impact all over the world and accelerate the

emerging new wave of revolution. This is the unstated but crucial concern shaping US strategic plans for the Indian state, which is the bulwark of reaction in this region.

Much is being written about the US considering China as the biggest danger it will have to face in Asia in the future. China certainly has formidable strength. But, like India, it too is really not an independent world power. It is not going to be one in the near future. China's economy is thoroughly tied up to and dependent on imperialist capital. Though the previous socialist system had given it a broader economic base, compared to India, most of it has been destroyed. At the most China may become an interim threat to US designs, just as Iraq under Saddam became one. To that extent, the US is keen on building up Indian expansionism as a tool to keep China in check and also to stir up trouble when it suits it.

Kill, But be Discrete

It is reported that Manmohan Singh has advised a Central conference on strategising against the Maoist movement to be firm in suppressing it but avoid brutalising the state. This is similar to his deceptive slogan of "Globalisation with a humane face." They just don't go together. Globalisation means havoc and misery for the millions, to push up the profits of imperialist and bureaucrat capital. It cannot have a humane face. Neither can the Indian state avoid revealing its brutality as it tries to suppress the growing spread of the Maoist movement that represents the interests of the people; which is why he has also called for discretion. To put that in plain speak he wants his forces to kill; but with less, or even better, no exposure. Exposure dents the blown up image of being the 'largest democracy'. It could also hurt prospects of wooing in more imperialist capital, who are already concerned.

This conference has repeated most of the decisions of earlier conferences. The new element is the Centre's instruction to set up a joint command with several joint task forces combining the police from neighbouring States. Though the Centre and the States still claim that there is no need to bring in the army, the proposal on joint command indicates that they are preparing for this. In fact the army is already involved in orchestrating the deployment of retired officers. RAW's (Indian counter-intelligence) helicopters are doing active surveillance and 25 Central para-military battalions are already deployed. These para-military formations are near equivalent to army infantry. The Indian state has perfected the public relations act of deploying the army under a different name. The Rashtriya Rifles in Kashmir is an example; all its forces have been drawn from the regular infantry. Something similar can be expected.

It remains to be seen how the proposal to set up a single command and joint task forces will work out. This had been floated out earlier also. Apart from State and departmental rivalries there is a political complexity. Unlike the early 1970's when the Congress was in sole power in New Delhi and most of the States, the present situation is quite fragmented. All the main players in Delhi – the Congress and allies, BJP and allies, the fake Left – are in government in the concerned States. All are united in the aim of destroying the revolutionary movement, which is the single biggest obstacle to their globalisation sell out. But they have serious political contradictions amongst themselves. Besides, the political compulsion each party faces in the different States is also quite varied. Neither of these aspects can be ignored by them. The UPA government's capacity to enforce a common policy is also limited.

This and the inevitable resistance generated among the masses to the anti–people economic policies and suppression of the rulers make the going all the more difficult. The so called Salwa Judum (Peace Movement) in Dantewada district of Chattisgarh is a good example. Last year the media was full of accounts on how the people are getting organised in this movement to resist the Maoists and ensure that they don't lose their share of development. Now we hear something very different. We read of masses being uprooted from their villages and pushed into camps guarded by Salwa Judum vigilantes; of their being forced to participate at gun point in the so called peace rallies; of people killed, women raped, houses burned down. This was of course exposed by the CPI (Maoist) and human rights organisations earlier itself. But now it is reported in the mainstream media itself. Salwa Judum is led by a Congress leader. He is backed by the BJP Chief Minister and the Central government, which has sent in a battalion of the Naga armed police. Yet another section of Congress and BJP leaders have criticised the whole strategy as counter–productive. Meanwhile, mass resistance is growing. The state forces and counter–revolutionary vigilantes suffered a number of blows from the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army and people's militia led by the CPI (Maoist).

The Central conference was quite concerned about the spread of the Maoist movement into more States and new regions. It accepts that the 'naxal menace' is now present in 40 per cent of the country's area, affecting 35 percent of its population. Yes, it is spreading and growing, though not yet fully unified and at different levels of activity. Contradictions, further sharpened by globalisation, provide the fuel.

Who Will Gain from Capital Account Convertibility?

The UPA government is now set on moving to capital account convertibility as soon as possible. Once this is allowed there won't be any bar on converting rupees into any foreign currency and vice versa. Anyone can buy and sell any amount of foreign currencies whenever they feel like it. Financial speculation will shoot up.

Allowing capital convertibility has all along been part of the liberalisation package, initiated by the Narasimha Rao government with the present Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as his Finance Minister. But the South East Asian financial crisis of the 1990s forced them to back off. These countries had opened up their economies and had allowed capital account convertibility. Naturally, there was a big inflow of foreign capital. They were being held up as models for others. But just as capital flowed in it rushed out also and triggered off a crisis. Many big companies went bankrupt and thousands were throw into the streets. The UPA government wants us to forget this shocking lesson. Now that foreign exchange reserves have swollen up, they are eager to carry out their original plan. These reserves and growth figures are held up as proof of the country's economic strength, allowing capital account convertibility.

This is actually a circular logic. The sharp rise in foreign exchange reserves is itself a direct outcome of Foreign Institutional Investors (FII) role, mainly in stock markets. The UPA government changed tax laws and further relaxed limits on foreign capital investments in various sectors. Estimates say that the government gave away nearly Rs 8000 crore in 2005 alone to FIIs and others by abolishing the tax on long-term gains from transactions of shares and other securities altogether. This has given greater incentive to FIIs. While net FII flows (this is the total

inflow minus outflow of FII) into India from the early 1990s till end-March 2003 amounted to roughly Rs 68 thousand crore, in two and a half years, between then and the end of December 2005, the total inflow was nearly Rs 11 lakh crore. This capital is also counted in calculating Gross Domestic Product figures. Hence more FII capital means more GDP. This is cited to show a higher economic growth rate. And that is then used as a justification for further liberalisation.

FII capital is speculative capital. It is imperialist capital roving around for quick and high profits in financial deals. Since the government has permitted FIIs to bring in money from undisclosed sources a lot of Indian black money is also flowing in through this channel. Though the inflow of such capital boosts up foreign exchange reserves it is a liability. Since the driving force of such capital is quick profit it is always searching for the best option. The moment it sees a better place for getting higher profit it will rush away. And this can be done very quickly in the present global financial set up. In fact this was exactly what triggered of the South East Asian financial crisis in the 1990s. Since successive Central governments have eased restrictions on foreign capital investment, majority ownership of a number of key Indian financial institutions is now in the hands of FIIs. If they decide to pull out, the whole financial system will be thrown into crisis.

FII speculative capital is already a liability in a more immediate sense. The huge foreign exchange reserve it has helped built up causes the value of the rupee to go up. This makes Indian exports less competitive. Since globalisation has made export oriented growth supreme and the USA is a key market, the government can't allow this. So it buys up dollars through the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to keep the rupee value low. This in turn becomes another burden and a source of bleeding out resources. Speculative dealers stand to gain. They convert their dollars into rupees via stock market deals or otherwise. When this pushes up the value of the rupee they can sell out to get more dollars. Otherwise also, a good portion of foreign exchange reserves flow back to USA via the RBI's buying up of the US government securities. Imperialist financial advisers have started arguing for new international institutions which can take over the task of investing surplus foreign exchange reserves held by countries like India in a more 'profitable' manner.

All of this brings up an obvious question – exactly who is benefited by the huge build up in foreign exchange reserves? If one leaves out the narrow super rich and neo-rich segments of the population who can now freely import all sorts of luxurious goods or travel abroad for vacations, it is clear that the principle beneficiaries are the imperialists themselves. At the cost of pushing the whole country into a dangerous situation, which will bring utter ruin to lakhs, the ruling classes are hungering for that extra leftover from their imperialist masters' kill. That is exactly what the haste for allowing capital account convertibility is all about.

NARMADA STRUGGLE: JUSTICE DENIED

Nirmala

By dismissing the plea of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) to stop the ongoing construction to increase the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam from 110.64 m to 121.92 m until the rehabilitation of the Project Affected People (PAF) at the height of 110.64m is completed,

the Supreme Court has once again proved how it is doling out injustice. It has not only declined to stop the ongoing construction, but has once again assigned the Prime Minister to take decision on the basis of the report on rehabilitation. The question at this point is why do we need a supreme court to take such decisions, as the work to increase the dam height was already sanctioned by the Narmada control Authority (NCA) and the Prime Minister was already empowered by the Supreme Court as the final arbitrator through its verdict of 2000 October? Actually, the dispute was on the question of rehabilitation and resettlement of the PAF of the Sardar Sarovar dam. Interestingly SC has not taken a decision on this issue. On the contrary, it has (il) legally sanctioned construction work to increase the height of the dam! This is in gross violation of the Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal Award (NWDTA) of 1979 and its own verdicts of 2000 October and 2005 march.

‘Land-for-land should be the basis of rehabilitation, as against cash compensation under the Land Acquisition Act’; ‘Villages must be relocated as a community and newly created villages must have all basic amenities’; ‘Rehabilitation should be on irrigable land, irrigable lands must be made available for rehabilitation one year in advance of any construction starting on the dam’—these were the conditions put forth in the Narmada Tribunal Award. All these were violated one way or other by the concerned States, and more than 13200 families are still left behind for rehabilitation even at the existing height of 110.64 m. NBA activists went on indefinite hunger strike demanding stoppage of height-increasing work until the completion of rehabilitation as prescribed by the Tribunal Award and earlier SC verdicts.

Under the pressure of NBA’s hunger strike, a group of ministers led by Central Water Resources Minister Saifuddin Soz visited the project affected areas and reported about the dismal state of rehabilitation work in Madhya Pradesh, which has already declared that it has no irrigable land for compensation. These ministers also said that reports of Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) sub group of NCA and Grievance Redressal Authority (GRA)— a body set up to ensure the completion of rehabilitation and resettlement, were “largely paper work”. Later, the Sardar Sarovar Project Status Report submitted by the Water Resource Ministry to the Prime Minister’s Office also disproved the claims of the concerned States on rehabilitation of the ousted Project Affected Families. It identified that 36,921 families from 226 villages in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh will be affected if the height of the dam is increased to 121.92 m. This has substantiated the argument of NBA regarding rehabilitation. However, the Centre claimed that all the affected families were resettled in the three states in its application filed in the Supreme Court on April 17! Actually, on the basis of the bare facts before the court, it should have questioned the contradiction in the claims of the Centre and suspended the ongoing work until the completion of rehabilitation. Instead, it has denied justice to the poor of the Narmada valley mostly tribals and dalits by declining to stop the work. This was in violation of its own observation made on April 17. The same SC bench has then said: “It is made clear to the State Governments that if the relief and rehabilitation to the unfortunate oustees is not granted in true letter and spirit, this court will have no option but to stop the work of the dam”.

Actually, Supreme Court has already watered the original Narmada Tribunal Award through its verdicts of 2000 and 2005. As said earlier, the original amend speaks of ‘land-for-land’ as the basis of rehabilitation and it should be made available before one year of any construction on the dam. Supreme Court verdicts changed the condition of rehabilitation as ‘parri passu (side by

side) Rehabilitation and Resettlement'. In doing so the SC has given ample provision to the concerned States to delay rehabilitation. If this was 'back stabbing' by the SC on the original Tribunal Award, now in the latest verdict, it is attempting 'front stabbing' when it says that the issues before it are whether rehabilitation of the oustees could be completed simultaneously with raising of the dam height and the validity and implementation of the Special Relief Package. This special package is something new brought in by the SC with the connivance of the Centre. This Special Relief Package is nothing but cash compensation in lieu of the land-for land compensation as specified in the original Tribunal Award. The Shunglu committee appointed by PM to look in to the matter of cash compensation also is getting the sanctity of the SC with its above observation. Eventually, we may expect a verdict of SC permitting cash-compensation also for rehabilitation when it takes up the matter again for hearing in July 2006. Then it will be another loss to the struggling masses-the victims of the destructive development agenda of the state. And, it will prompt NBA for a new compromise.

NBA has been compromising in its struggle against the Sardar Sarovar dam ever since it came into existence. From 'no dam' to 'at least rehabilitation'—it was compromising all along in its Gandhian struggle. The latest hunger strike by Medha Patkar, Jamsing Navgave and Bhagwatibehn Patidar proved to be futile in its immediate aim, though it could bring out the plight of the project affected people on a wider canvass and further the debate on the destructive development agenda of the ruling class parties.

It is clear that the Prime Minister's evasive approach to deal with the situation was deliberate. He was allowing injustice to happen like Narasimha Rao during the demolition of Babri Masjid. As he was empowered by the Supreme Court to take final decision, he has the legal authority for a timely intervention in the dispute. He must be aware that there was no urgency to increase the height of the dam. It is an old story that the water in the dam has not been properly utilised at all. Gujarat could manage to irrigate only less than 10 percent of the land it could have irrigated as it has not constructed many canals and other water delivery systems. It could not provide enough water to Kutch and Saurashtra regions which are reeling under severe drought. In such a situation height increase is totally unjustifiable and inhumane as it ousts large number of families in addition to the thousands already waiting for rehabilitation. Not only that, when his own ministers have reported about the pathetic state of rehabilitation, he could have trusted their report and taken a humanitarian stand to suspend construction. Instead, he referred the matter to Supreme Court. And the SC, reaffirmed PM's final authority and posted the matter for further hearing on July 7. The PM's evasiveness at this juncture was criminal as it amounts to snatching away the livelihood of thousands of ousted families.

The Sardar Sarovar dam is constructed and is still being constructed on a series of lies. Lies on the kind of development we need, lies on the benefits of big dams, lies on the prosperity dams will bring, and finally lies on rehabilitation. Though all these were exposed time and again the State has been aggressively imposing its destructive development agenda over the poor people of the country side who are at the receiving end and the direct victims of this agenda. Whether it is the valley in the Narmada basin or in the habitats of Kalinganagar, the state has a single paradigm of development. Its development agenda is violent and aggressive-it is development at gunpoint. They have converted the country into a big corporation working with an aim of profit only. Here judiciary acts hand in glove with the executive. Struggles against it should not be and

cannot be peaceful. Particularly when this development agenda is forcing the people to take life and death decisions. And, this is the obstacle before NBA as ever.

The pathetic failure of its Gandhian compromises stand in sharp contrast to the militancy of the masses in Kalinganagar. There, they have succeeded in blocking the agenda of the state and comprador monopolies like Tata, for nearly 5 months now. This may be broken by brutal force. But that will only pave the way for a higher level of consciousness and struggle- not the despair reaped by the NBA.

Undermining Reservation

A section of students who demonstrated against the proposal to reserve seats for Backward Class students in leading all-India educational institutions, naming their movement 'Youth for Equality' was not at all surprising. They were continuing a long standing tradition of the Indian ruling classes – enjoy the benefits of caste and accuse anyone who demands redress of creating privileged groups and divisions in society. For them, equality means the perpetual monopoly of the upper class, upper castes.

With globalisation taking its toll of government jobs, reservation in the private sector and top notch educational institutions that are considered as stepping stones has become a live issue. Though the UPA government's Common Minimum Programme had declared in favour of these steps it has been dragging its feet. The 93rd Constitutional Amendment, that gives legal protection to reservations in education, was something forced on it to handle potential political volatility caused by the blatantly anti-reservation judgement of the Supreme Court.

The retrogressive anti-reservation agitations of the late 1980s and early '90s were engineered to question and recast the legitimacy of caste reservation. Merit was posed as the victim of reservation policy, which was accused of imposing mediocrity at a time when India was getting ready to leap into the 21st century. It was argued that over the past decades 'development' had made reservation unnecessary. Through this discourse, the Gandhian acceptance of reservation as a 'penance' by upper castes was undermined. Instead it was sought to be repositioned as a temporary concession, to be ended as soon as possible. But the sharp polarisation, shift in oppressed caste vote banks leading to new political parties such as the BSP, RJD and Samajwadi Party emerging as contenders and redrawing of political equations prevented this. Reservation retained its place as a constitutional right. But its status of a democratic right solely addressing caste discrimination was diluted with the introduction of economic criteria.

Since then, ruling class ideologues have been working at a totally different policy which would retain reformist sheen and also allow further dilution of caste reservation. The Bhopal Declaration of the Congress is one among them. In place of reservation as a democratic right, it seeks to bring in affirmative action. This calls for allotting a certain quota in government orders for products and services in favour of enterprises of Dalits, Adivasis and Backward castes. The response of the educational and corporate elite to the recent proposal on implementing reservation in their sectors is also shaping up along these lines. Scholarships and a quota system

in procurement are being held out as alternatives to reservation. This apparently offers equal opportunity to members of the oppressed castes; provided they have sufficient merit or entrepreneurial skill. There lies the catch.

Centuries old shackles of caste effectively prevent the large majority of the oppressed castes from acquiring knowledge and skills that are easier for others. Even in the most liberal circumstances they must confront biases and discrimination, which continuously wear them down. Those who manage to surmount this will inevitably be a tiny minority. If this capacity to overcome is to be made the criteria, in place of the right of all members of the oppressed castes to reservation in education and jobs, with concessions in qualifications, ultimately their vast majority is going to be cut off from any means to improve their situation. This is of course already happening. Only a very narrow section has succeeded in getting ahead through reservations. Hence the change may not be so visible in terms of numbers. But once this policy gets enshrined the present situation will be officially formalised. Reservation as a democratic right of all members of the oppressed castes will be forever eliminated.

Another World Is Possible – A Communist World!

There are billions of us who cannot stand the world as we know it. On this planet many struggle to lead lives they don't find worth living, while most fight just to survive.

The wealth working people have created, instead of being a means for a better life, has become an obstacle to human progress and even survival, because it is controlled by imperialism, a world-eating system whose first, last and only goal is profit. From tsunami and earthquakes to global warming, the rulers are unwilling and unable to put human lives first. Ceaseless waves of global capital smash through country after country, robbing people of their land or leaving them without a job, driving them to roam the world seeking work. New investment and new advances in technology bring misery, hardship and even danger to the masses, instead of a way out. In one country after another, including the Asian giants of India and China, the sordid truth about the "success stories" of the "free market" is that the paradise they provide for a handful is built on a living hell for the great majority.

In opposition to world opinion, the US and Britain invaded Iraq, seized its wealth, set up a puppet regime and revived medieval demagogues who are fighting for a share of the pie, under the occupiers' bayonets – and they proclaim this a victory for democracy! Nothing good can happen in Iraq until the people unite to kick the US out and overthrow the local reactionaries – and for this they need the support of the world's people.

Now the US is threatening a nuclear war against Iran – in the name of opposing nuclear weapons! This shows yet again that what the US seeks is not peace but global hegemony. Now is the time for the cry "No war on Iran!" to become a force in the world.

The anger of the people of Nepal is boiling over. For years the US, UK and other imperialists and India armed and financed the hated monarchy against the revolutionary people's war. Now that the king is tottering, they want to intervene to save a system based on feudalism and foreign domination. The solution for Nepal's people is not a new face on the old system but a new

democratic revolution as part of the world revolution. We say, Imperialists and India – Hands off Nepal!

Resistance is rising in many countries, but too often the people do not understand the real nature of the system or who their friends and enemies are, on a national and international level.

We want a world where one nation does not oppress another – where the diversity of humanity can flourish unfettered by borders. Where women, “who hold up half the sky”, are not treated as objects or pushed down and held back. Where society is not divided into the humiliated majority who work with their hands and the privileged few who get to think and make the real decisions. Where people have broken free from the ideas that have arisen from and legitimated thousands of years of exploitation and oppression. Where all human beings, collectively and individually, can at last achieve conscious power over their own destiny and that of their planet.

That world has a name: communism. And there is an outlook and method that can guide us to fight for it: Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The first attempts to build socialism and advance to communism in the Soviet Union and China were subject to relentless attack by the imperialists and reactionaries, who today scorn and ridicule their histories and their leaders, in an effort to bury forever the hope of revolution. But these revolutions made real, dramatic changes in the lives of hundreds of millions and left a rich legacy to critically examine and go forward on that basis. The world urgently needs more and stronger communist parties united in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, which is fighting to build its understanding, unity and power so that it can lead humanity toward that goal.

1 May 2006 - The Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

Hail the 10th Anniversary of The Heroic People’s War in Nepal

The People’s War, driving forward the New Democratic revolution of Nepal, will complete 10 years on February 13th. These 10 years have written a new saga of heroism and self-sacrifice in the annals of the international communist movement. With the leaders and ranks of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Peoples Liberation Army it leads in the forefront, the Nepalese masses have come forward in huge numbers, willingly paying the price in blood, to rid their country of the semi-colonial, semi-feudal social system and the reactionary state that protects it.

From its initiation in 1996, the People’s War in Nepal has gone through many twists and turns. These included three spells of ceasefires. On each occasion the Nepali ruling classes, Indian expansionists and their imperialist masters, drummed up big propaganda that the Maoist revolutionaries were going to lay down arms. This was again repeated in the context of the 12 point agreement with the main parliamentary parties. But, on each occasion, the CPN (M), has destroyed the wild hopes of the enemies, proved the ability of the communists to worst the enemy in peace talks as well as war, and made significant contributions to enrich the strategic and tactical understanding of the international communist movement on People’s War. It has also deepened the understanding on the women’s question and given rich experiences in handling

issues like the caste question, particular to many countries in South Asia. A good number of political lessons have been given by the People's War in Nepal in "being firm in principles and flexible in tactics", "uniting the many to defeat the few", the brilliant manner by which the contradictions among the enemies have been made to serve the cause of revolution, as well as application of proletarian military science to advance the war in leaps always centred on the key issue of seizing political power. This was ensured by a deep grasp and creative application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, by the CPN (M) under the able leadership of its Chairman comrade: Prachanda, and a firm commitment to its pledge made before the initiation in 1996, "This plan would be based on the aim of completing the new democratic revolution after the destruction of feudalism and imperialism, then immediately moving towards socialism, and, by way of cultural revolutions based on the theory of continuous revolutions under the dictatorship of the proletariat, marching to communism and the golden future of the whole humanity."

The People's War led by the CPN (M) and the base areas built up throughout Nepal's rural areas, stands out as a beacon of inspiration to the masses all over the world. It points out the real way to face up to the ravages of imperialist globalisation and build a new world free of exploitation and oppression. The CPN (M) has always insisted on holding high the internationalist character of the People's War it is leading and uniting even more firmly with the proletarian forces all over the world through the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. It has also made ceaseless efforts to link this war with the revolutionary aspirations of the masses in the South Asian countries and used its prestige to make a co-ordination of the Maoists in South Asia possible through the CCOMPOSA.

From the very beginning, Indian expansionism has been trying to destroy the People's War. Though it has stopped open supply of weapons to the autocratic Gyanendra monarchy, it continues its intrigues and interference Nepal's affairs, in close co-operation with imperialist powers. It refuses to free leaders of the CPN (M) locked up in Indian prisons on false charges. US imperialism continues to threaten the revolution and conspires to break the new unity of struggling forces in Nepal. But the People's War, which has already achieved so much in a short span of 10 years will surely stand up to these threats. It will continue to be the spearhead of the Nepal's revolutionary advance and the backbone of the broad resistance against its present rulers. It will continue to inspire the masses throughout the world and strengthen their will to destroy the world imperialist system for ever.

RED SALUTES TO THE HEROIC MARTYRS OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR!

RED SALUTES TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF NEPAL (MAOIST), THE PEOPLES LIBERATION ARMY AND THE NEPALESE PEOPLE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR!

LONG LIVE MARXISM-LENINISM-MAOISM!

LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!

MAKE THE 21ST CENTURY A CENTURY OF PEOPLE'S WARS, FOR THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM!

CENTRAL ORGANISATION COMMITTEE,

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST-LENINIST) NAXALBARI February 1, 2006.

The New Turn in Nepal

The people's struggle in Nepal has led to a new turn in the country's political scene. This upsurge in the cities, mainly in Kathmandu, was initiated by the call given by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [CPN (M)] and the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) comprising the major parliamentary parties in continuation of the 12 point agreement between them. Though US imperialism, other imperialist powers and India tried to force an agreement that would give room for the Gyanendra monarchy, and some among the SPA were willing, the rebellious mood of the masses backed by the firm stand of the CPN (M) defeated their conspiracies. They had to concede the restoration of the old parliament, which was dissolved by Gyanendra. But, unlike then, the strength of this parliament lies in the streets. The mood there, including among the support bases of the SPA, is clearly in favour of ending the monarchy and establishing a secular, democratic republic. So the future clearly depends on how soon and fully the SPA will honour its agreement with the CPN (M) and prove able to control the army. What now exists is a ceasefire between the CPN (M) and the SPA, with the masses hungering for quick progress.

Imperialism and Indian expansionism have been forced to back off from their insistence on preserving the monarchy, even if ceremonially. They are now trying to intervene through the approaching process of adopting a new constitution. Thus they raise the issue of the CPN (M)'s disarmament as a pre-condition, debate about the composition of an armed monitoring force and prepare to resume arms supply to the Royal Nepal Army. Meanwhile their ideologues and media work overtime to establish that the changeover in Nepal was entirely a result of peaceful agitations. This is not ignorance. It is conscious propaganda to deny the decisive role of the 10 year old People's War that brought about a shift in the balance of forces in Nepal and made the present political development possible. Indian revisionists, particularly the CPM, are also a part of this propaganda effort. They are strutting around with the claim that their mediation made the 12 point agreement and the ending of the people's upsurge possible. To swallow this one must forget that they as well as their counterpart in Nepal, the UML, were for constitutional monarchy and against a Constitutional Assembly till recent. If they now are staunch republicans the reason once again lies in the shift in political alignments brought about by the People's War. Another reason is a policy view emerging from their mentors (imperialist and Indian expansionist strategists) that a Constitutional Assembly may be a better option to intervene in Nepal.

To understand the developments in Nepal one must also answer this question – why didn't US imperialism or Indian expansionism opt for a military intervention? The presence of a powerful People's War with wide support is a deterring factor. But this has never been sufficient to force the reactionaries to back off. One must look for the reasons in the present world situation as well as history. One important factor is the US being tied down in Iraq in an occupation war that is getting more and more unpopular. Venturing into Nepal to suppress a Maoist revolution can well spark off a radical polarisation within the growing anti-war movement all over the world, particularly in the US itself. For the US and other reactionaries, while carrying out their 'war on the people', it is more convenient politically to deal with Islamic fundamentalists and

terrorism as the main enemies rather than Maoists and People's Wars led by them. An armed intervention in Nepal would bring up the basic battle line between the imperialist system and the people of the world, between capitalism and communism. Indian expansionism too has its reasons. Venturing into Nepal with its armed forces will be far more exhausting and costly than anything it has done in the past. It will immediately unite the overwhelming majority of the Nepalese people into a National Resistance War with the Maoists firmly in leadership. Within India it will give a new impetus to the ongoing People's War, which is already a major concern for the rulers. Apart from such immediate reasons, reactionaries are probably drawing inspiration from historical examples, like Vietnam in the 1950's, where an acceptance of Constitutional Assembly elections gave them time to prepare both the political and military grounds for armed intervention. They may be more confident now since, unlike then, no socialist camp or country exists today. Evidently, such calculations have also played a role in encouraging the parties in the SPA, most of who are guided by one or the other reactionary power, to go along with the CPN (M). This is not to ignore the internal compulsions they faced but to remind ourselves of the logic of reaction.

Democracy is a powerful rallying call – for the people, and unfortunately, for their enemies also. Protection or restoration of democracy has often been used as a slogan by the reactionaries for their wars and armed interventions. In the coming days, the setting up of an interim government, elections to the Constituent Assembly and the details of a new constitution will be the main arena of struggle in Nepal. Imperialism, Indian expansionism and diehard reactionaries in Nepal will do all they can to impose a solution which will leave the exploitative system and state essentially untouched, whatever may be the form of governance. They will also be preparing grounds for armed intervention as a last resort.

The CPN (M) is also preparing. In keeping with its stated positions and the 12 point agreement, it has expressed its belief that an interim constitution and interim government will be built up by dissolving the existing parliament, constitution and the government after the initial phase of the dialogue and that it will lead to a whole process of unconditional constitutional assembly election. These steps, enjoying wide support from the masses, will be useful to fight reactionary manoeuvres. The 4th May statement of comrade Prachanda, its Chairman, has proposed a broad republican front of pro-people forces in the form of a movement to guarantee the resolution of the people's basic problems and warned against US imperialist conspiracies. It also soberly states, "...with deep sense of responsibility towards people's aspiration of democracy and peace and remaining firm in 12-point understanding, we are going to sit in the talk. If someone understands our sense of responsibility as a weakness, "tired of war" or "haste to come over ground", it will only imply that he has not understood our idea and feeling at all. We are prepared to fight from any front of struggle for Nepal and the Nepalese people till the end."

Iran Maoists on Islamic regime's "nuclear posturing"

With the false swagger of champion puppets, the heads of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) have announced that they have joined the nuclear powers club. . . At the Friday prayers, with lots of noise but without any shame, the ayatollahs proclaimed that Iran's new status as a "nuclear power" should be celebrated as a patriotic holiday and demanded that the people's hearts be

filled with “national pride”. However, the majority of the people who have suffered under a medieval religious regime for 27 years are not inspired to feel any national pride by this...

Two days after this announcement, *The New York Times* wrote that Western nuclear analysts believe that Iran lacks the necessary skills, materials and tools to come close to achieving their nuclear desires. “Nothing has changed to alter current estimate of when Iran might be able to make a single nuclear weapon, assuming that is its ultimate goal. The United States government has put that at 5 to 10 years and some analysts have said it could come as late as 2020.” (13 April 2006) This newspaper quoting David Albright, the head of the Institute of Science and International security in Washington who is following Iran’s nuclear programme: “They have a long way to go.” However, the Bush government seized the opportunity and demanded that the world’s powers punish Iran. The options put on the table by the US range from economic sanctions to bombardment.

The real reason for the Islamic Republic’s rush to proclaim itself a “nuclear power” is that the regime is worried about its own survival. They have adopted a policy of seeking to accelerate a confrontation with the US based on relying on Russia and China. Western journalist Michael Slackman reported in mid- March from Tehran: “When [Iranian Prime Minister] Ahmadinejad took office, he embraced a decision already made by the top leadership to move toward confrontation with the West about the nuclear programme... But one political scientist who speaks regularly with members of the Foreign Ministry said that Iran had hinged much of its strategy on winning Russia’s support... The political scientist said some negotiators believed that by being hostile to the West they would be able to entice Moscow into making Tehran its stronghold in the Middle East. ‘They thought the turn east was the way forward,’ the person said. ‘That was a belief and a vision.’”(NYT, 15 March 2006) The heads of the IRI think that their nuclear policy can serve several goals: to silence the people, cool down the differences within the regime and find new international friends.

Regarding the people, this policy is an absurd effort to boost “Iranian national pride” in the hope that they would temporarily stop thinking about the regime’s crimes and plunder. Regarding the ranks of the regime, the point is to unite the different factions around a plan for survival. And regarding the US and European imperialists, their aim is to provoke the US to accelerate an attack on Iran. These reactionaries are counting on the religious sentiments of the Moslems of the Middle East and inside Iran... Regarding the regime’s policy towards the powers competing with the US, the regime’s aim is to separate Russia and China from the US and Europe, following their “East versus West” strategy. So far they have been the lackeys of the Western imperialist capitalists. Now that the West does not want them anymore, they have to sell themselves on the world market to another master, and they are hoping for Russian and Chinese buyers.

from the April issue (no. 27) of Hagighat, publication of the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, AWTW News Service..

Mass violent protests rock Turkish Kurdistan

Starting at the end of March the Kurdish area of Turkey witnessed a week of mass upheaval and fighting with police and gendarme troops on a scale unprecedented in recent years and maybe longer. Clashes between some 10,000 protestors and police broke out on 27 March in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey after the funeral of 14 Kurdish nationalist guerrillas killed by government forces. Thousands of stone-throwing youth, with the support of a great deal of the local population according to reports, attacked police stations and other government targets over a three-day period, until the government sent in gendarme troops to occupy the city. Some clashes continued after that. There was also serious fighting in the Kurdish cities of Batman, 80 kilometres to the east, and Kiziktepe, near the border with Syria, and in Istanbul itself, following a protest by Kurds.

The Turkish government has been carrying out armed operations against the Kurdish nation and in particular Kurdish guerrilla forces associated with the PKK nationalist organisation for many years. (Although the Kurdish Workers Party changed its name to Kongra-Gel a few years ago when it left its claims to Marxism behind, it is still widely known by its old initials). The government never ceased military operations in the area even though following the US-assisted capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK withdrew their forces to the Kurdish area in Northern Iraq and repeatedly called for peace negotiations. PKK ceased all armed operations for five years, until 2004. The Turkish state, more or less openly dominated by the National Security Council made up of the top military chiefs, responded to these calls for peace by labelling the PKK “terrorist”. The U.S. government and the European Union backed Turkey in this regard.

Feelings in the Kurdish areas of Turkey were already simmering after a series of bombings in the Semdinli area, where several people were killed. The last of these was an attack on a bookstore during which some vigilant ordinary Kurdish people were able to capture the perpetrators red-handed in the act, only for it to turn out that they were members of the Turkish army intelligence section, called Jitem (Jendarmerie Intelligence Service). One of them was a former PKK guerrilla who had turned traitor and was used by Turkish intelligence. It then became apparent that a number of bombings that had been blamed on the PKK were in fact the work of Turkish intelligence – outraging not only millions of Kurds but also many Turkish people too. General Yasar Buyukkanit, the no 2 man in the Turkish army, made a media statement that he personally knew the men who had been caught carrying out the bombings and that “they are good boys”. Everyone understood this to be a way of putting a cloak of protection over these murderers.

People felt that they had right on their side, that they had caught the perpetrators red-handed, and that there was no reason to expect justice from the very state that was in fact behind the crimes in the first place. Heated street battles against the police erupted throughout the area. This also led to infighting among the ruling class forces, particularly between the military and the Justice and Development party, the Islamic party heading the government. A local prosecutor in Van even prepared an indictment against General Buyukkanit for going outside established channels to organise his own vigilante gang. This led to an uproar of protest from military men and hard-liners, broadcast widely in the media, basically saying how dare this prosecutor make

such scandalous claims against the men who are responsible for defending our country. These military figures alleged that the prosecutor was providing indirect support to the “terrorists”.

This was the setting for the vicious attack on 26 March by the Turkish army, which massacred a group of 14 PKK guerrillas using chemical bombs in the North Kurdistan mountains near the border with Iraq. The Turkish army denied the use of the chemical weapons, which violates international law. However, family members of the dead guerrillas saw the bodies, and exposed what actually took place. Their accounts were convincing enough to be widely reported in the Kurdish media. When the bodies of the guerrillas arrived back in Diyarbakir, many thousands of people attended the funerals. This has been seen as a time to strike back at a harsh clampdown meant to crush the Kurdish movement in general. Repressive measures have hit all the Kurdish organisations in Turkey, including the DTP (the Democratic Society Party), the legal Kurdish nationalist party, and the mayor of Diyarbakir.

The police tried to prevent people from attending the funeral, which caused even more anger, and led to widespread fighting between youth and police. The police killed four children and nine adults in the course of the street clashes.

Hundreds were arrested, including some supporters of the Maoist Communist Party of Turkey/North Kurdistan (MKP). Ilyas Aktas, a young journalist in Diyarbakir for the Maoist newspaper *Devrimci Demokrasi*, was shot in the head by the police and fell into a coma. On 11 April, his doctors announced that he was on life support and brain dead, with no hope for recovery.

On 9 April, 2,000 people marched through East London to protest the government’s attacks and express solidarity with the Kurdish people’s struggle. Many thousands more took to the streets in Germany, Switzerland and throughout northern Europe.

The MKP issued a statement that declared “its unconditional support for the legitimate, democratic demands of the Kurdish nationalist struggle and their right to resist the Turkish fascist regime to secure those rights – and that ultimately it is only through new democratic revolution that the Kurdish nation can achieve genuine liberation”.

France: Youth revolt

[The student’s upsurge in France succeeded in forcing the Villepin government to back off. An article posted on the A World To Win News Service pointed out, “... the movement’s greatest strength is its broadness in two senses. First, its ability to combine widespread support among much of French society with increasingly confrontational (and controversial) actions... Second, its ability to draw in youth of all sections of the working class as well as the middle classes.” The controversial law (CPE – First Job Contract) which permitted employers to dismiss with little notice and without cause people under 26 during their first two years at any job has been rolled back.. Other measures in the so-called “Equal Opportunity” employment package adopted in the wake of last November’s revolt would allow children to leave school at 14 to become apprentices and work at night starting at 15. For children not in work, their families would be cut from

welfare if they fail to attend class. The following excerpt from a leaflet of the World People's Resistance Movement-France explains the issues behind the CPE –ed.]

The CPE is the tip of the iceberg of major changes looming over French society. For several generations a kind of agreement has existed in France whereby the working class and the masses of people would accept the capitalist system in return for a certain degree of job security, educational opportunities and social benefits. But this model always excluded an important section on the bottom of the society, and in recent years this section has been growing larger and more desperate, as we saw last November when the working class suburbs erupted. Those who previously benefited from this social pact see the gains of the past being whittled away. For the educated youth the promise that a diploma would mean of social advancement and a secure future has been evaporating. The entire ruling class of France, the Socialist Party included, believes that the only answer to ensuring France's competitiveness internationally and thus its future is to accelerate these tendencies; this means greater freedom for employers to fire at will, sharpening competition among the people for increasingly few crumbs, increasing inequality and intensifying exploitation. The only difference among the main ruling class parties and spokesmen is how to introduce a more savage and naked capitalism and who will preside over this process. And make no mistake: the rulers are united that this restructuring will require an even heavier boot of the police on the neck of today's and tomorrow's victims of the process.

While the current movement has begun as a battle to protect current labour laws, it cannot remain for long on that level. Besides, a return to the days of a more benevolent capitalism is not really possible: capitalism in today's world means inequality, exploitation, wasted lives and broken dreams. It means immense riches for a handful and hardship or worse for most people. Capitalism is a system that has spread throughout the whole world, intensifying the gap between rich and poor in each country and between a handful of imperialist countries including France and the great majority of humanity. Clawing to the top of this basket of crabs is impossible for most and not the future we want to fight for.

The revolt of the youth began last November in the suburbs. Since February the bulk of secondary school and university students have powerfully rejected the future that they see diminishing before them. People are furious to discover that the government won't listen to the cries of hundreds of thousands of youth in the streets and the millions more who support them. The real nature of French democracy – a dictatorship of the capitalist ruling class – is coming into sharper focus, with the help of the club-wielding cops and the scent of tear gas.

In times like these people's thinking can somersault. All that was declared permanent and unchangeable yesterday must submit to a fresh examination by the new generation. It is no longer possible to "outlaw" the questioning of society's rules and the way it is organised, along with capitalist cultural mottos blaring out to youth to "succeed or die trying". Older people see their own spirits, buried under decades of "realism", rekindled by the youth's declaration of a "rêve général" (general strike). Still, the fight around the CPE poses choices for the road ahead: Will the youth return to their daily routines and uncertain futures, slapped down for having dared defy the ruling class? Or will the current upsurge prove to be just the prologue of new rounds of battle that will further shake the whole country and contribute to the fight to remake the world?

On the Italian Elections

[The Italian election has captured attention with the spectacle of a defeated party breaking all 'parliamentary norms' in order to hang on to power. As the following excerpts from the Maoist Communist Party's (Italy) Election Boycott call helps us understand, there is more to this than the desperation of Berlusconi (now voted out) trying to block possible legal action by a new government. It is very much part of the elections itself, which was "the most antidemocratic ever held in Italy after the World War II." – ed.]

The general political elections in Italy put one before two bourgeois coalitions competing for the power, inside the same process of building a modern fascist and police state regime in order to improve the role of the Italian imperialism in the world imperialist competition, in the phase of the infinite war led by the first head of the imperialism, the US.

In the Italian elections, on one hand, we have the coalition of the current government Berlusconi-Bossi-Fini. A three-headed monster: Berlusconi, representing the parasitic financial capitalism; Fini representing the political inheritors of the conservative and farmer Christian Democratic right, strongly linked to the Vatican; Bossi, representing the owners of small and medium industrial firms, the wild capitalism of the richest areas in the north of the country. Inside this block takes part the majority of the Vatican, under the guidance of the new clerical-Nazi pope Ratzinger, also by means of the UDC party of Casini, the new fascist and new Nazi forces; the big crime organizations – mafia, 'ndrangheta' and 'camorra'.

This faction of the bourgeoisie combines the defence of the interests of part of the big financial capital and the reactionary mass populism. It projects a form of open personal dictatorship holding a monopolistic control of the media, the centres of the power and, particularly, the suppressive state apparatuses: police, armed forces, magistracy, intelligence.

The other coalition represents the majority of the industrial capitalism and of the Italian trans-national corporations, linked to the EU and the world market, that fear the reactionary march of Berlusconi can punish their interests and the general interest of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the world market and competition. Also this block, in which take part the trade unions, the financial and productive system of the cooperatives, the disadvantaged part of the state apparatus and the sectors of the southern economic system integrated in the world market, projects an authoritarian form of regime, based on the repressive strengthening of the state apparatus, on the growth of the role of the Italian imperialism in the world chessboard, first in the areas where it has direct interests, the Middle East, the Northern Africa and the Balkans.

On all the decisive aspects, the elements that unite the two coalitions of the imperialist bourgeoisie are more numerous than those that divide them and they both aim to be its "business committee" to impose its particular interests as the general interest of the country.

The coalition led by Berlusconi move from a servant alliance with Bush and the US imperialism seeking a particular place under the shadow of the US giant. That is why it participates in the frontline of the war and the occupation of Iraq, upholds the US stand on almost all the world-influencing topics and opposes the solid building of a European

imperialistic pole under a French-German leadership. The coalition led by Prodi does not aim to obstruct the strategic plans and interests of the US imperialism but to moderate their impact, in order to allow Italy to play both the games, combining the liaison with the EU and its own interests in the Mediterranean area. In this sense, neither one coalition or the other actually proposes the withdrawal of the troops from Iraq but rather they compete on how to maintain and strengthen the Italian presence and the relationship with the other countries in Middle East: Israel, Iran, Egypt.

Internally, both the coalitions aim to support the police state and to review the antifascist Constitution. The Berlusconi's coalition openly evaluates the fascism and cancels the Resistance. The Prodi's coalition upholds a modernization that puts amongst the relics of the past the antifascist struggle and the form of bourgeois democracy born from the Resistance. Therefore, both the coalitions agree on the strengthening of the police forces, the militarization of the country, the laws against the "terrorism" and the migrants. Also on the ideological and cultural field, both the coalitions make the "family" and the "security" the main levers to preserve and improve the stability of the existing state and system.

As regards the attack against the conditions of life and work of the people's masses, actually the coalitions do not differ: they aim to expand the precariousness, the exploitation, the privatization and reduction of social services, in the context of an ongoing impoverishment of the people's masses, particularly the southern people, the youth and the women. To do this, the Berlusconi coalition aims to build regime-servant trade unions, while the Prodi coalition aims to use the lever of a "concerting consensus", realizing the corporative integration of the unions in the handling of the economics and the State.

As regards the big crime organizations in Southern Italy, Berlusconi aims to make an alliance with them; Prodi aims to a "restricting coexistence" in order to strengthen the role of the Italian capitalism in the world and to defend the interest of the firm-owner from the mafia blackmails.

The assault launched by Berlusconi against the magistracy and the mass media makes these centres of the bourgeois rule a field of a factions' struggle that goes however against the freedom of press and the appearing equality before the law that the bourgeois democracy claims to apply. While Berlusconi openly holds the democratic judges and commentators as enemies Prodi looks at them as elements to keep under control.

The bourgeois electoral competition is the triumph of the parliamentary democracy as form of dictatorship. This time, the system of election is shaped on the rule of the money, of the richness, of the elites of the bourgeois parties and even any appearance of choice for the voters has been cancelled. The incoming elections will be the most antidemocratic ever held in Italy after the World War II.

This system and the general interests of the bourgeoisie make the political ranks competing for the vote more homogeneous and widen the separation between the parties and the masses, between the State and the masses and between the interests of the bourgeois industrial and financial oligarchy and the working class and people's masses.

The parties, inheritors of the revisionist CPI, the Rifondazione Comunista Party of Bertinottie, other lesser forces, play the role of the pages in the coalition of Prodi, they seek seats and remainders with few chances to influence the programs. But their role is important and goes over their electoral strength. That is to serve the general interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the stability of the bourgeois state and system as a whole, through their active mobilizing to include the masses in the support of the centre-left coalition, to reduce their separation from the bourgeois state, to corrupt the ideology, the culture, the character and the organization of the proletarian and people's movements of opposition, to actively oppose in the mass movements every tendency to go beyond the framework of the bourgeois interests and establishment and every form of antagonist, revolutionary and genuinely communist organization.

This way today the reformism serves the march toward the modern fascism.

US: Immigrants step out

A great upsurge is taking place across the United States! Hundreds of thousands of immigrants are stepping out of the shadows, into the sun. In Chicago, up to a half million filled Daley Plaza, shutting down the city, chanting “¡Se sienta, se sienta, el inmigrante está presente!” (The immigrants are here, you can feel it!) In Milwaukee, home of Congressman Sensenbrenner, author of the cruel bill that set off the protests, 25,000 marched. Tens of thousands went into the streets in Washington, DC. In Phoenix, over 20,000 demonstrators marched to the office of Republican Senator Jon Kyl, co-sponsor of a bill that would give illegal immigrants up to five years to leave the country. In Georgia, tens of thousands of immigrants stayed away from work in protest against a new state law there that would deny state services to adults living in the U.S. illegally and impose a 5 percent surcharge on wire transfers from illegal immigrants. As we go to press, students have walked out of schools throughout Southern California, and hundreds of thousands are filling the streets of Los Angeles. [Half a million people ended up filling the streets of central Los Angeles that day. The following week saw similar protests in many regions of the country, including conservative “American heartland” places like Oklahoma City. More than 10,000 people, mainly immigrants, marched across the Brooklyn Bridge into Manhattan behind a banner reading, “We are not illegal!”]

People widely know about – and hate – the Sensenbrenner bill passed by the House of Representatives in December. Pushed by fascist anti-immigrant Tom Tancredo and others, it would, among other things, immediately criminalize millions of people by declaring it a felony just to be in this country without “proper papers” – and to provide any help to these people. The House bill also calls for further leaps in border militarization, including a 1,200-kilometre-long wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, and it refuses to consider any possibility for undocumented immigrants to get legal status.

– excerpted from various articles in the 2 and 9 April issues of Revolution, the voice of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (www.recom.us) by AWTW News Service.

BUDDHIST DIALECTICS

Rahul Sankrityayan

In Buddhism there is no place either for god (creator of the universe) or for revealed book. Morality is based on the act of being good or bad. Those who believe in god subject morality also to the will of god – whatever is prescribed by god is good and whatever is prohibited by him is evil. Here Buddhism differs, it considers the “good of many, happiness of many” (*bahujana hitaya bahujana sukhaya*) to be the criterion of good and evil.

Socio-economic Views

In the economic and political fields also the views of Buddha are different. He had prescribed the ideal of service for the monks and nuns. He had called those who did not conform to this ideal as “useless consumers of the nation’s wealth” (*mogham sa ratthapindam bhunjati*). He enjoined upon them to adopt communal living. He had introduced the system of economic communism in the community of monks and nuns. Apart from the eight items (of personal use), such as clothing, the begging bowl, etc. all other things were considered to be the property of the commune (*samgha*). The houses, gardens, small agricultural and other implements, bedsteads, beddings, etc. were considered to be communal property.

In the days of Buddha whatever land was donated was given to the “present and future commune of the four directions” (*agata anagata chatudisassa*) alone. This system continued for four or five centuries. The inscriptions in Ceylon [presently Sri Lanka –ed.] indicate that in the two centuries preceding Christ, fields were donated as charity only to the “present and future communes of the four directions”. Of course, in the Buddhist commune economic communism could not continue for long and in the 2nd century BC, according to the testimony of the inscriptions at Sanchi and Bharhut, the monks and nuns were already constructing pillars and railings with their private income which meant that now they had other personal property apart from the eight items of personal use.

Buddha preferred the political system of the republics (*ganas*). In that age slavery was prevalent, and hence in the Lichhavi (Vaishali) republic, the most prosperous and powerful at the time, democracy existed only for those who belonged to the Lichhavi clan. The slaves were movable property and they were numerous. The non-Lichhhavi Brahmin or grahapati (trader) caste though free had no right of vote for the senate (*samsad*). They were at the mercy of the Lichhavis. All the same these republics were evidently better than monarchy.

For Buddha the origin of monarchy did not lie in any divine source but kingship was the product of the growth of private property. Private property led to inequality or class division among the people, who started quarrelling among themselves and (overtly or covertly) started trying to snatch each other’s property, and therefore they selected one from among them as their judge, who by accumulating power for selfish ends developed into a king.

Buddha lived in the 6th-5th century BC (death 543 BC). At that time too economic and social discrimination was very sharp. For the eradication of economic inequality he attempted the eradication of economic inequality. Buddha confined his efforts to the monastic communes alone, but the abolition of social inequality he attempted on a universal scale. His voice raised against casteism had its effect but the basic foundation of casteism lay in the high-caste “haves” and the low-caste “have-nots”. Without removing the one the other could not be done away with. All the same Buddha’s communes granted equal rights in the monastic order to the lowest of the castes, the chandalas who were accepted as human beings by courtesy only. Buddhism fervently advocated the brotherhood of man without any distinction of race, country or caste. The principle of coexistence embodied in the *panch shila* was put into practice by Buddhism. And its missionaries in foreign lands never even dreamt of destroying the culture of any nation.

Buddhist philosophy

Buddhism has made original contributions in several fields but those in the field of philosophy are unique. Of course, it will be erroneous to say that it helped Marx’s philosophy or it ever came anywhere near the fundamentals of Marxism. But an understanding of Marxist philosophy is easier for students of Buddhist philosophy.

We know that Hegel’s philosophy played an important part in the development of Marxist philosophy and Marxist philosophy on its part removed the inconsistencies of Hegelian philosophy. It is said that the reality put up-side-down in the form of Hegelianism was put on its feet by Marx in the form of dialectical materialism. Hegel held that mind or idea was primary and real and matter a product thereof. Marx held matter to be primary and mind to be its highest development. Buddhism in its highest and final form is in a large measure similar to the idealism of Hegel. The idea (*vijnana*) of Yogachara philosophy is dynamic and nonmaterial. Like Hegel, the Yogachara school of Buddhism too considers idea or mind as the ultimate reality.

The basic tenet of Buddhism is: all is non-eternal. Later on the word “momentary” came to be used for “non-eternal” and it was said that whatever is “real” is “momentary” or “dynamic” and whatever is not “momentary” is not “real”. Thus Buddhist philosophy denied the existence of anything “eternal” and “static” in the world. For Buddhism this is the fundamental concept which has no exception. The denial of god or soul was a corollary of this principle. Buddhist philosophy takes pride in its denial of the soul (*anatmavada*).

Buddha’s birth synchronized with the end of the age of the Upanishads. The sages (*rishis*) laid the greatest emphasis on the soul (individual or cosmic) – soul is something nonmaterial, eternal and unchangeable. Buddhism aimed primarily at shattering this eternalist philosophy of the Upanishads, and that is why it was called *anatmavada* as against the *atmavada* of the Upanishads.

The dynamism of Buddhist philosophy, i.e., everything is in flux, inspired an entirely different outlook about the world. Even the believers in souls or eternalists were willing to accept the external world as changeable but they believed in an eternal existence within it. This they called *atman* or *Brahman*. Buddhists say: if we look inside the trunk of a banana tree we would get only layers within layers, one covering peeling off after the other but no substance inside it,

similarly all the things in the universe do not contain any eternal substance – atman or Brahman; the world is void of any eternal element.

Hence the concept of Buddhist voidism (*shunyata*). To explain their concept of dynamism the example of clouds or the flame of the lamp is cited. Just as the clouds go on changing each moment, so does this world. Even the most solid diamond or iron goes on changing every moment. Then why the similarity and sameness in their previous and subsequent forms? To this the Buddhist reply is: similarity in organization. The effect is always similar to the cause, hence the illusion of oneness. The flame of the lamp is changing every moment but the new flame born out of the old flame is similar to it, therefore we rush to the conclusion that “it is the same flame”.

Theory of causality

Having accepted the entire inner and outer world, without any exception, as non eternal it was necessary to have a different theory of causality too. Those who held the atoms or matter to be like immutable bricks could assert that by the assemblage of them the new object arises. Their integration and disintegration correspond to the origination and destruction of things. But Buddhist philosophy did not believe in the existence of such immutable eternal bricks. Everything is void of eternal essence, i.e., there are not things (*vastu*) but events (*dharma*). They could not be compared to gold which is a primary element and can be molded into different shapes, such as bracelets or pendants. Buddha used a different terminology to explain the law of causality: dependent origination (*pratitya samutpada*).

Elucidating this terminology Buddha says “When this was, then this comes and it was then this becomes” (*asmin sati idam bhavati*). At the completion of this, this is born. What has just ended is the cause and what has emerged after the cause is the effect. The effect was wholly nonexistent when the cause was there, and when the effect came into existence the cause completely vanished. There was no eternal substance inside the cause which is transferred to the effect. Actually they have no other relation to each other except that the one preceded or followed the other.

Collectivity of causes

Having accepted the entire inner and outer world in flux, as a conglomeration not of things but of events, the concept of dependent origination becomes inevitable. Dynamism and the theory that there is no eternal substratum forced them to look upon the world as made up of events. Rejection of the old ideas of the law of cause and effect inevitably led to the concept of dependent origination. In other words, dependent origination replaced the old theory of cause and effect.

Here Buddhist philosophy shattered another old concept, according to which one cause was supposed to beget one or several effects. The sages of the Upanishads believed in several strange things originating from the same soul (*atman*). Even in the material world one element was called the cause and the other element originating from it the effect. Buddhist philosophy contended that no object – or to use their nomenclature *dharma* – is born of one thing. No effect

has only one cause, but several causes together give birth to one effect (object). This theory is called collectivity of causes (*hetusamagrivada*).

The great philosopher Dharmakirti says: “One (thing) is not born out of one but all is born of collective causes” (*na chaikam ekam ekasmat, samagrya sarva sambhavah*). When several causes assemble then one effect is created. Though the doctrine of the unity of the opposites is not mentioned as in Marxist philosophy yet it is clearly stated that one effect is the result of the coming together of several causes and if the smallest of them is missing then that effect would not result. According to Buddhist philosophy cause is entirely different from effect, in other words, the emergence of the effect is a qualitative change. And this qualitative change (emergence of an entirely different effect) cannot take place unless all the causes are pooled in the required measure – quantity. This concept of cause and effect includes qualitative change (the effect) and quantity which brings this about (collectivity of causes).

Definition of Reality

In the light of this conception of the world the Buddhist thinkers had to define anew what is “real” and what is “unreal”. For the ancient thinkers this definition was simple enough: that which is eternal, immutable or unchangeable is real and that which is non-eternal, mutable or changeable is unreal. In Buddhism there was no place for such “real” things. They defined a real thing as: that which is capable of objective action (*artha-kriya-samartham*).

Sweets and bread are real because they are capable of objective action, i.e., they are able of the objective action of nourishment or satisfying our hunger; but the sweets and bread seen in a dream are not real because they cannot satisfy our hunger, they are in-capable of objective action. That which is capable of objective action has been called not only real but absolutely real (*paramartha sat*). What was real according to the ancient thinkers was not capable of objective action because it was immutable, eternal and perfect. What is the proof of the existence of an inactive thing which is beyond the reach of the senses, since it is not an object of direct perception or of inference based on it?

The criterion of being objectively active is an infallible test of reality, and there is no doubt that in it one gets an inkling of modern ideas. The real should prove itself by objective experiment, nothing can be called real just on the basis of reason. To the rationalist objection that his stand was not rational, Dharmakirti replied: “If the objects themselves are like that, who are we?” (*yadidam svayamarthanam rocate tatra ke vayam*). Reason is not absolute, only the objective action or experiment is the touchstone of reality. This was a big weapon but it was not used, and there was reason for it. The entire progress of science is based on this principle – that we accept objects as our guide.

Matter and Mind

In Buddhist philosophy there are differences regarding the ideas about body and mind, matter and mind. Monist idealists among Buddhists consider only the mind to be real. Of course, even this “real” (mind) of theirs is dynamic. The others, the dualists, accept the separate existence of matter and mind. But this much both accept that the mind depends on the body (*kaya sthitam*

manah). Mind or consciousness or idea cannot exist apart from the body or matter. This sentence reveals to some extent the mutual relationship between mind and matter, i.e., mind is dependent on matter (body).

Even the dualists did not accept that mind is absolutely different from matter. They said that like water and the waves, the world of matter is a transmutation (*parinama*) of mind. This is akin to Hegelian philosophy. If instead of “matter is a transmutation of mind” (*vijnana parinamosan*) it is said that mind is evolution of matter (*rupa parinamashchit*), then Buddhist idealism will be spared the trouble of standing on its head.

And in their philosophy there was enough ground for thinking in this manner. When every effect is entirely different and qualitatively entirely new as compared to the causes then what difficulty was there in accepting that mind evolves from matter – mind while being entirely different from matter could still be its effect. Dialectical materialism even while asserting that mind has evolved out of matter does not contend that mind is matter on the contrary it considers mind to be different from it and its highest evolution.

In Buddha’s time, on the one hand, there were the *atmavadi* thinkers who considered the soul to be eternal and immutable. On the other hand, there were materialist thinkers too who denied the existence of the soul, although their materialism had not risen above the level of mechanical materialism. Buddha and his followers propounded a philosophy which includes several features of advanced materialism but they were not prepared to call themselves materialists.

The Buddhist thinkers had from the very beginning been insistent on adopting the middle path in all matters; and here too they wanted to keep themselves between theism and materialism, although with regard to non-eternalism they did not advocate the middle path. For this consideration alone Buddhism is accepted as a religion. In spite of such radicalism in their philosophy, their belief in rebirth, yogic mysticism and some other views are the same as in other religions. That Buddhist thought made violent attacks against many an established tenet is proved by this saying of India’s unparalleled philosopher Dharmakirti: “*Vedapramanyam kasyacit kartrivadah snane dharmehcha jativada valepah. Santaparamth papahanaya ceti dhvastaprajnanam panca lingani jadye.*”

“Accepting the authority of the Veda and someone as the creator, the desire of getting merit through the holy dip, the vanity of casteism and torturing the body to redeem the sins – these are the five characteristics of stupidity”.

THEATRE

MUMBAI: OF THE MILL WORKER AND BY THE MILL WORKER

“COTTON 56 POLYESTER 84: THE CITY THAT WAS MUMBAI”

Gargi

Written by Ramu Ramanathan, translated by Chetan Datar and directed by Sunil Shanbagh, the play “Cotton 56 Polyester 84: The city that was Mumbai” was really a rare theatre experience. As the name itself suggests, it is the story of the mill workers of Mumbai – or erstwhile Bombay – who actually laid the foundations of this working class city. If we go by history, the blood and sweat of the Girni Kamgars – the mill workers – wove the fabric of this once-industrial city.

Today, gigantic shopping malls and plush residential high rise buildings, constructed on the ruins of these mills and it’s connected working-class neighbourhoods, rear up triumphantly and threaten the very same mill workers who now eke out with other means of livelihood.

“Welcome to Girangaon, the village of Girnis, the township of cotton textile mills. Parel, Byculla, Lalbaugh – once the centre of Mumbai, one of the greatest cities in the world, the foundation of its prosperity and growth, its cosmopolitan character and its rich culture. The story of Girangaon is the story of Mumbai” – says the brochure on the play. Exactly. The story of Mumbai is principally the story of mills and mill workers.

Cotton mills were built up in Mumbai from 1850 onwards to meet the needs of Britain and supply coarse cloth to the local market. Britain faced severe shortage after the outbreak of the Civil War in America. It was in this situation that the first cotton mill was setup in Mumbai. Soon many mills came up and brought lakhs of workers from different regions, languages, castes and religions to Mumbai. Though they were working long hours for exploitative wages and living in shanties and chawls their working class liveliness brought new spirit to the city. Their mutual interaction laid the basis for a cosmopolitan culture, further enriched through their songs and theatre. Their working class spirit created a vibrant culture cutting across caste, language and religious barriers. Peoples’ poets and singers emerged. Mumbai’s working class movement grew up in this fertile soil and became the foundation of the communist movement there. It is estimated that, by 1960s, there were more than 2.5 lakh workers altogether in all the mills. Their liveliness and mobility during days and night’s brought a 24 hours life to Mumbai. The downfall of this culture coincides with the emergence of Shiv Sena in the 60s and its gaining a foothold among the mill workers, acting as the champion of the cause of mill workers. The revisionist degeneration of the CPI by this time gave it the necessary opening. Shiv Sena’s manoeuvring further worsened the plight of mill workers. Lay-offs and lock-outs became a routine affair. After the historic strike of mill workers in early 80s, most of the mills remained closed, throwing out the workers. It is not surprising to see the offspring of Shiv Sena leaders like Thackeray and Manohar Joshi, who were once talking about the mills and mill workers, purchasing Kohinoor mills for rupees 421 crores and planning to construct commercial complexes there. Already, National Textile Corporation has sold out its Mumbai Textile mills for about 702 crores rupees!

Around 600 acres of prime land held by near about 60 mills will be sold out and converted into Singapore style shopping malls or plush residential buildings after pulling down the chimneys of the mills brick by brick. Then on, no trace of any mill will be found. No trace of the vibrant culture generated by the mill workers will be left. After all, there won't be any mill workers either.

This is the background in which the play is set. Various episodes in the life and struggles of the Mumbai mill workers have been braided into a fine and simple, but provoking, play in the skilful hands of Ramu Ramanathan and its realisation on stage by Sunil Shanbagh. Unlike conventional forms, this play uses the style of story telling. The story unfolds through the conversation between two mill worker friends—Bhai (Hindu brother) and Miya (Muslim brother). They are jobless mill workers whose mills are closed. The characters in the play are nameless. Quite correctly, since they are not particular individuals; neither in the play nor among the mill workers. The story itself is not of any individual—it is of the many Bhai's and many Miya's who had to tie up their whole lives in yards of cotton and polyester yarn. Bhai and Miya through their narration and interaction, and sometimes their reminiscences, take the audience on a journey crisscrossing past and present.

Bhai is running a Sarvajanic Vachanalaya—a public reading room. Miya is still fighting the court cases of the mill workers as a union activist. Bhai has got his wife and son Chottu. Though living in despair and uncertainty, both Bhai and Miya are not totally lost. Their lives are enlivened by cherished memories of the past. They still retain the working class spirit to fight with odds. At times they evaluate their past deeds in a critical and self-critical manner. On one such occasion, Bhai criticises Miya for his aligning with the Shiv Sena when it came to work among the mill workers; a criticism he accepts but tries to explain that the situation had forced him to do so. To this Bhai makes a striking statement, “A person becomes communist only for once in the whole life”! That is it.

Apart from Miya, his wife and son, there are a few other characters also in the play who we find around us in Mumbai. One of them is a local money lender and businessman who consistently tries to convince Bhai and his wife about the futility of working class ideals and encourages them to do some business, making use of his loans. Though Bhai's wife gets attracted despite his efforts to convince her, he never weakens. It is not that she is ambitious of doing business but this was the only practical way out – a sight commonly seen in society. Another character is the underworld don with whom Bhai's son Chottu works. Chottu gets involved with the underworld out of frustration and despair. At one point, Bhai and Miya reminisce about Chottu—how he used to accompany Bhai to the mill and help him in his work and how Chottu was working as a temporary worker in the mill. The don is being portrayed as an example of how criminals are being created by the system. Don knows how the cause of mill workers got defeated and the treacherous political games played by various politicians. His vengeance to the system has turned him to criminal activities as he realises that politicians are more criminal.

Chottu and his lover-the don's daughter- are representatives of the new generation. Chottu's bitter experiences force him to crime, to thinking that money is power and eventually bring him to the dangers of the underworld. Chottu does not heed his father's advice against his don

connection. On the contrary he asks Bhai what was the outcome of his principled life as a mill worker? Chottu is full of vengeance against the system but directionless. The play ends with his encounter death.

The simplicity of the play is highly applaudable; as simple as the life of a mill worker. With just a few small benches constituting the Sarvajanic Vachanalaya the stage is set for the entire play. Miya, Bhai and his wife have well depicted the concerns of mill workers. Their fine acting takes the audience to the past for a few moments and then brings them back to the present, something otherwise very difficult for such a so-simple play.

The portrayal of the relation between Bhai and his wife is balanced with a marked absence of any trace of male domination, though not in an idealist sense.

Various songs describing the lives and concerns of the mill workers, sung quite lively by Bhai, remind us of the cultural space created by the mill workers during their time. The vibrance of that culture is effectively recreated through these songs which are integral to the play.

Nagesh Bhonsle and Kumud Mishra respectively as Bhai and Miya have performed aptly on stage. Similar was Charusheela Sable-Vachhani as the wife of Bhai. Devdatta Sable's music has brought out the beauty of the lyrics with all of its vitality.

This timely and thought provoking play convincingly tells the tale of the mills and mill workers and their role in the making of Mumbai; how their little hopes and simple dreams are being shattered in the name of development; how a secular and vibrant culture is being swept out by the onslaught of the development models of globalisation. At the same time one can't but question its faith in the courts (Miya still fights mill workers' cases in court) when the judiciary itself has sided with the private mill owners and mill managements through its judgements against workers and permitting mill owners to sell off mill land.

In A Night of Full Moon

Saroj Kumar Dutt

Those who try to obligate me

With their flutes, herbs and rituals,

Breaking the poison fangs

Who hold me inside a smothering basket,

Who keep us around their necks

And usually kill us at the end –

Warn them

A night of full moon has come!
Often I wobbled my entranced hood
To the tune of their flutes,
Frequently I sought for a pit to hide my exhausted self,
Repeatedly I screamed with dumb rage
And lashed out then with my useless fangs tried to assail them,
And pounded my head against the hard earth!
But watching my vain efforts
They got jubilated and laughed at me.
Today all over my body
There is a severe pain,
My sensitive skin is finally growing,
The body is shaking with the fever of pain,
And like two drops of extracts of hatred
My eyes are unperplexed;
Now I would come out of the old skin –
A fresh, smooth and ferocious!
But in the revelry of their games
They have forgotten –
Tonight my venom gland is full to its brim.

[1] Economic Reports: Two years after and the task ahead, Government of India, Finance Ministry, 1993.

[2] Comrade Bela Dutta had got her Communist Party membership even earlier than S.D. She had worked as an organiser in *Tebhaga* Movement and was a woman combatant of the initial period of Communist Movement in India. She had participated in attacking an armed police camp during *Tebhaga* Movement.

[3] *Vrindabani Lota* : is a Hindi idiom, came from a particular type of round-shaped vessel, which rolls to any side at any time, indicates dwindling character.

[4] *Chamchas*: mainly a Hindi slang, which means boot-lickers.

[5] *Laxman-Rekha* – a Hindi-idiom, which means a line of demarcation which must not be crossed.

[6] More accurately Brahmanic religious faiths, since it is now established that there was no Hindu religion as such till the colonial period.

[7] Fast Breeder reactors can convert thorium, which India has abundantly, into uranium; thus allowing weapon and reactor grade fuel self-reliance.

[8] ‘Natural Allies? Regional Security in Asia and Prospects for Indo-American Strategic Cooperation, Stephen J. Blank, Strategic Studies Institute’, U.S. Army War College, September 2005.