

PEOPLE'S MARCH

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5 Farmers in great distress**8 US Elections, Iraq War & Economic crisis****22 Back to Square One: Reenactment of Fascist Raj in AP****Editorial**While Ruling Classes squabble;
Maoists seek to Unify all
Oppresses Masses**3****Political**POTA in a New Form **4**
The New Year Holds Promises
of Still Greater Victories **11**
Condemn Dastardly Attack on
Ngugi wa Thiong'o and wife
Njeeri in Kenya **12**
Advance of People's War in Nepal! **13**
Corporate Terrorism & Genocidal
Imperialism **15**
Fight Back the Proposed New
Patent Act **16**
Masses Bare Burden of Oil Price **17**
Veerappan – A Bandit who turned
as a Rebel against state **18****Reports**A Fitting Reply to the Bhavanipur
Massacre **12**
The Struggle by Revolutionaries in
Chennai and Vellore Prisons in
Tamilnadu **25**
Rallies to Celebrate the Formation
of CPI (Maoist) Brutally Attacked
by the Police **28**

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While Ruling Classes squabble; Maoists seek to Unify all Oppresses Masses

The policies of 'economic reforms' continues unchanged, notwithstanding the change of power at the centre. If anything the speed of foreign penetration has been stepped up with the World Bank stooges (once employees) Manmohan Singh as PM and Montek Singh Ahluwalia as chief of the Planning Commission; and a proven stooge, Chidambaram, as Finance Minister. The fact that the present government depends on the CPI/CPM for its survival has made no difference to the imperialist policies of economic reforms being pushed through. With this, the money-bags are minting fortunes while the poor are being pushed to the level of destitution rarely witnessed before in post-1947 India. Rural devastation has been particularly acute. Not only has rural debt become a major killer amongst the middle and poor peasants, but the *"complete collapse of rural incomes or job opportunities has created an almost unprecedented situation of desperation among the landless"* (Frontline, Dec 3). This is not surprising as agricultural investment in the country has dropped from 1.6% of GDP in 1993/94 to a mere 1.3% of GDP in 2001/02 (Economic Times, Nov.15 2004).

It is in this scenario of growing income gaps between the rich and the poor and the continuous sell-out of the country's wealth to the imperialists that politicians play their power games and the revolutionary forces of the country unite to fight for the change of the existing highly exploitative order.

While the ruling classes and all their political parties have no difference whatsoever on selling the country and its wealth to the imperialists, they fight like dogs for the crumbs. Today their battles are getting more and more acute. Not only are the political dog-fights being openly aired to the public, but also the major comprador bourgeois houses are fighting to death. The latest battle between the Ambani brothers, by far the biggest and most powerful comprador house in the country, is an indication of the rot below. The squabble can have deep political and other ramifications.

But the worst case scenario is in the house of the BJP and the RSS fascists. Here, everyone seems to be at loggerheads with the other. The contradictions are so acute that they are openly being fought in the media. Not only are the politicians at loggerheads but also their religious gurus as indicated by the strong action against

the Kanchi Shankaracharya. An active VHP 'guru' such action would have been inconceivable if not for serious differences within its outfit. Murder, debauchery, fraud are commonplace in gurudom; but arrests, police custody and intense interrogation are not!!

When out of power the BJP is turning out worse than the Congress in its internal spats, with each throwing muck on the other. First, Naidu was kicked out as the president of the BJP in the wake of its defeats, and a fight began for its successor with the RSS lobbying for the defeated Murali Manohar Joshi. The 'strongman' Advani took over the reins to balance the various forces, only to face rebuff after rebuff. The first salvo was fired by the very VHP which trained its guns on the two top leaders in the hope of explaining away the defeat of the major Hindutva elements as being caused by not taking the Ayodhya issue more aggressively. Then came the mahabharat between Uma Bharati and the other second line leaders. She was first unceremoniously deprived of the Chief Ministership of MP and publicly criticised by the likes of Mahajan, Naidu and other top leaders. She hit back, not only at them but also Advani himself, in full view of the television cameras. Hardly had this humiliation of the boss died down that Vajpayee trained his guns at Modi through Smriti Irani, who said she would go for a fast unto death if Modi did not resign in order *"to remove the black spot on Vajpayee's great rule"*. Within hours she retracted her statement openly saying that she was reading out a written script. The actress performed well on the TV with a BJP big boss standing by her side breathing down her neck as she read the written statement. And as the days pass the infighting is getting murkier and murkier.

Quite naturally too the NDA is also in shambles. Out of power and openly fighting in the public the BJP has not much appeal for the others who seek only to ride piggy back on the BJP to get to power. From 23 allies while in power it is now down to 12 and decreasing by the day. And while one of its allies, AIADMK, has been after the Kanchi Mutt, the BJP tried to make it as its main issue to whip up a Hindutva resurgence. Though this attempt failed miserably as the Shankaracharya was shown to be a total degenerate, it is questionable as to how long the alliance lasts. Even the Shiv Sena is in a pathetic state of atrophy after losing the last elections with a succession battle between

the son and nephew waiting to take place with the death of the ailing Bal Thackeray.

As the Congress is in power it is for the time being more united around the autocrat Sonia Gandhi, though cracks have continued to appear in the NCP - Congress rule in Maharashtra. Servility to Sonia is the basis of the unity which came to the fore during her 58th birthday with all top leaders paying obeisance to her majesty, including the very prime minister himself. The glowing attributes made on the occasion reminded one of the Emergency and the flattery poured on Indira Gandhi. The extent of the servility displayed was pathetic with even the Prime Minister lacking minimum self-respect. It is a reflection of the deep-seated colonial mentality, where the more you are kicked the more you will bow before the power. With no real agenda of its own, except a fake secularism and an anti-incumbency atmosphere, the Congress popularity cannot last long — particularly when its policies look much the same as the BJP, and its iron fist pierces through the velvet glove.

While the political dog-fights continue, the imperialist sponsored policies continue unabated creating havoc with the lives of the people. Even according to the UNICER, *47% Indian children are moderately or severely underweight, even higher than the 29% in Sub-Saharan Africa*. And according to a DFID Report (1999) the poverty incidence in India was 59% compared to 39% for Sub-Saharan, 24% for Latin America and 22% for China. But the masses are no longer going to take things silently. There are limits to their patience. The massive revolt of the peasants of Rajasthan, rarely known earlier for such militancy, is an indication of things to come. It was a veritable uprising which has continued for nearly three months, bringing a number of towns under curfew. And with the growing unity of the Maoist forces in the country and the birth of the united CPI (Maoist), the oppressed masses have at last a force that can lead their struggles in a revolutionary direction. This, the ruling classes fear more than any other danger, and are making all preparations to combat this eventuality.

While making a show of softness — withdrawing POTA and offering talks with militants and revolutionaries — they are making massive preparations for major offensives against the people. While repealing POTA they have brought in POTA in a new form — the Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act.

Worse still, the Congress is going ahead with the earlier NDA plan to create a massive terror force from the very areas of insurgency. With the lure of jobs they are going on a massive recruitment drive to employ over 2 lakh personnel to build 209 India Reserve Battalions. A gigantic sum of Rs.1,700 crores have been allocated for the purpose. In contrast a pitiable Rs.45 crores have been allocated "over the next three years in terror-hit districts to ensure social and economic justice". From this allocation, the orientation of the present Central government is clear — to treat the people's issues as a law and order problem, paying scant attention to socio-economic needs. They have also planned a full

reorientation of the Armed Forces in the country with the focus on developing "Special Forces" to enable quick movements. In addition, the Home Minister has said (*Economic Times*, Dec.15 2004) that "the Planning Commission has been asked to lay special focus on Naxalite-affected and remote areas ...".

They have been setting up additional intelligence units with sophisticated training and equipment, whose specific job is to collect information on dissidents and particularly revolutionaries. And they are introducing newer and newer techniques of monitoring and checking movements of all individuals in the country. All these will be used to crush the people's movements not only in India but also in other countries

of South Asia as can be seen by the continuous arrest of Nepalese Maoist and their attempts to foist false cases on their senior leaders in jail in India.

But, with the acute impoverisation of the masses and the intensification of the contradictions amongst the ruling classes there is enormous potential to rally all the struggling forces in the country under revolutionary leadership. And the ongoing armed struggle in parts of the country, led by a more united Maoist force, is a beacon of hope for all who desire real change. And as more and more forces in the country rally round the united Maoist Party with the ruling classes forces further entangled in a web of internecine disputes, the hope of a better future can turn into a reality. ■■

POTA in a New Form

Not only was POTA not repealed with retrospective effect a new law was simultaneously introduced with much the same draconian clauses. On Sept.21 2004 the President promulgated an ordinance to repeal POTA and simultaneously promulgated another Ordinance to amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). But, all existing cases under POTA will be tried under the old law!!! The Ordinance only allows the Review Committee constituted by the Centre under section 60 of the repealed Act to review all cases under it in order to ascertain whether a *prima facie* case existed. The review process has to be completed within a year.

The Common Minimum Programme of the UPA government called for the repeal of POTA and utilising only the existing laws for fighting so-called terrorism. But, the amended UAPA expands the sections on definitions to include terrorist offences, and adds three new chapters dealing with punishment for terrorist activities, forfeiture of proceeds of terrorism and terrorist organisations. In other words the UPA government has basically brought in the same definition of terrorist as the NDA government. **Besides, most importantly, all the 32 organisations banned under POTA have also been banned under the amended UAPA.**

Also the amended UAPA has included the POTA relating to the admissibility of evidence collected through the interception of communications. It also includes, with a minor qualification, Section 21 of POTA, which deals with "offence relating to support given to a terrorist organisation". Under the amended UAPA, the accused should have the intention to further the activities of a terrorist organisation in order to be held guilty. So, as earlier, any sympathizer of a banned organisation can be targeted just as under POTA.

In addition the Act repealing POTA does not have any provision to prevent the use of confessions taken under POTA for any trial that is to be continued under other laws. So, if a confession by the police was earlier extracted under torture this would still be valid even though the new act does not recognize it.

The only difference between this law and POTA is that confessions extracted by police officers will no longer be admissible and there are no provisions regarding bail.

While the BJP vehemently opposed the repeal of POTA accusing the Congress on being soft on terrorism; the other parties like the CPI, CPM, SP, BSP etc wanted the new Bill to be referred to a Standing Committees of parliament. The CPM speaker supported the passing of the Bill saying that if this was not done in the winter session the Ordinance would lapse. He therefore pushed it through to a vote to get it passed. This was easily done as the SP and BSP walked out while the 'Left' parties abstained. These stunts were nothing but subterfuge to make a show of opposition. In fact if all had come together to oppose the Bill it would not have got passed. And thanks to the CPM speaker, Somnath Chatterjee, who could have referred it to a Standing Committee, but did not, the Bill is now an Act.

All parliamentary parties are nothing but collaborators in the so called "war against terrorism" which is used to attack the struggling masses. It is only the vehement opposition of the masses that can act to repeal such draconian laws and release the thousands of revolutionaries, sympathisers and also Muslims still held under POTA. There is need for all genuine democrats to continue the struggle against POTA and the new Act, so that all political prisoners may be freed.

Farmers in great distress

M. Sunil

Farmers are in great distress. In Rajasthan they are struggling against the BJP govt. and state forces which took six lives. Only one third of agricultural land have the facilities of irrigation and even those are not assured. Irregular supply and ever-increasing charges of electricity, cost of other agri-inputs and depressed prices of the crops have become a common phenomena. Farmers are raising their voice against govt. policies and demanding remunerative prices of their products. Suicide deaths by farmers which has been very much conspicuous since the last five years, have been continuing. Despite sweet promises of several govts, landless and poor peasants, particularly tribal people of rural India, have been continuing to die due to starvation evoking everlasting debates on the number and causes of death. Alongwith the vagaries of nature, the vagaries of the world market prices cause havoc to the farmers. Believing all tall talks about the land reform programme, the old class structure despite some changes, basically remains intact adopting newer forms of exploitation—exploitation through feudal land rent in various forms, usurious rate of interest by money-lenders, forward purchasing, hoarding—have been continuing.

The persistent crisis of the agrarian economy has further intensified after the implementation of the economic reform programme rendering more and more scope to brutal imperialist exploitation. The UPA govt. have recognised that the farmers of the country have been in great distress and promised to give a 'human face' to the economic reform programme. So the economic reform programme has been continuing and to give a 'human face' it distributes some reliefs to distressed farmers. It is nothing but a cunning plot to hoodwink the farmers and to bring down their resentment to manageable limits. Even then some unruly(!) farmers have been taking the path of agitation and demonstration to oppose govt. policies.

Farmers' Agitation

Rajasthan

Since June '04 the farmers of Sriganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts of Rajasthan have been agitating on the demand for the supply of water to the command areas of the Indira Gandhi Nahar Project (IGNP). Initially the command area was 16 lakh acres. Subsequently, the BJP and the Congress

govts indiscriminately permitted construction of many canals for the purpose of serving their political constituencies. As a result of this the command area expanded to 36 lakh acres rendering a paucity of water in the first phase. The farmers of this first phase area also demanded assurance from the govt. on continued supply of 5.23 cusecs of water per 1000 acres instead of 3.5 cusecs per 1000 acres which was approved by the state cabinet during the previous congress regime in 1998; though that was not implemented so far.

The previous two crops were destroyed due to paucity of water. The farmers of this region were facing a devastating economic condition. According to Gadsana market committee in 1999 the region produced 4.08 lakh quintal of wheat. In 2003-04 it was just 0.27 lakh quintals. Production of cotton decreased from 4.63 lakh quintals in 1999-00 to 1.23 lakh quintals in 2003-04. The situation is similar in Rawala. From 4.26 lakh quintals of cotton in 1999-2000, it declined to just over 60,000 quintals in 03-04. This time they were much concerned as the sowing season of the rabi crops was going to be over but they could not begin their cultivation for want of water. The aggrieved peasants, including landless peasants and agri-labourers, led by the Kisan Mazdoor Vyapari Sanghrash Samiti began a stay-in demonstration in front of the SDM's office in Ghadsana tehsil. It continued for a month. They demanded that the govt. should release their share of water from the IGNP for the cultivation of the rabi crop. It was a peaceful demonstration. Most of the agitators would return to their homes at night and return in the morning.

On 25th Oct., following the failure of talks hundreds of farmers began a "mahapadav" (mega-gathering) in front of the SDM's office and locked the office. But the demonstrators allowed food for those who were inside the office. On the plea of releasing the gheraoed employees in the next day evening, when most of the demonstrators went back to their homes, the gurdians of 'democracy' began their action. The police and Rajasthan Armed Constabulary came down on the remaining unarmed agitators and resorted to lathicharge and lobbed teargas shells. Then the police and armed constabulary went to the adjacent townships, beat the farmers brutally and looted their belongings. The news of this police brutality spread in time and on 17th Oct the enraged farmers, in support of the Ghadsana agitation, came to the streets in many places in protest

against the police atrocities. In Rawala when farmers marched to the local police station, police opened fire; 4 landless peasants were shot dead and many agitators were seriously injured. The agitators became violent, set fire to the offices and residences of the SDM and Tehsildar, attacked the office of the sub-registrar besides setting ablaze few police vehicles and two police stations. Curfew was imposed in Rawala and Ghadsana at 2.30 pm but due to the farmers' resistance, police could not have entry into the area till evening. The army was deployed the very next day. On 30th Oct a joint press conference was held by the Samagra Seva Sangh. The representatives of all the organizations condemned the police firing and stated that the "trigger-happy police did not issue any warning to the agitating farmers and the police opened fire on unarmed farmers to kill them." On 8th Nov. curfew was withdrawn. The farmers again organized themselves within a short time and stopped all govt buses. On 9th Nov., in various parts of the state, farmers joined the protest marches in solidarity to the farmers' agitation. In Sriganganagar a large number of peasants gathered to picket the collectorate office. The police arrested many farmers from Sriganganagar and Hanumangarh to suppress the protest marches. The farmers continued defying all threats of the administration and oppressive measures of the police. When one of the seriously injured farmers died on 18th Nov. '04 the administration quickly moved to his village and the body was buried under heavy police security. Even villagers were not allowed to be present there. On 3rd Dec. '04 the police resorted to a lathicharge on a gathering of farmers and arrested more than 700 agitators including five leaders of the Sangarsh Samiti. At the same time the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary and the Special Task Force began combing operations in search of other leaders. These measures only aggravated the farmers wrath and that was expressed in the next day. The violent farmers faced the police forces in Suratgarh, broke the police obstruction and courted arrest. Many of the agitators were injured when police applied force. Gradually the protest agitation began to spread throughout Bikaner division. The university students picketed the jail in Suratgarh demanding the release of arrested agitators. In the evening curfew was imposed in Annupgarh and subsequently extended to Ghadsana and Rawala towns following clashes between

the police and the farmers. In spite of all these repressive measures the govt failed to quell the farmers' agitation. On 6th Dec. '04 when more than a thousand farmers were moving towards Kajuwala town to participate in a "mahapadav" the police lathicharged and opened fire. Hazoor Singh, one of the agitators was killed and many people were injured. At mid-day curfew was imposed in Kajuwala town for an indefinite period. The enraged farmers did not allow the cremation of the body of Hazoor Singh and more than 1500 farmers stayed at the spot refusing to dispose of the body till the govt assured a relief package to the family of Hazoor Singh. After three days, after getting an assurance they cremated Hazoor Singh in the presence of a huge gathering of farmers. The farmers were seething with anger. The protest movement continued till 10th Dec. compelling the state govt. to accept their demands.

Though the leadership of this powerful spontaneous outburst was usurped by the ruling class parties like CPI(M), Congress and others to serve their political interest, it exposed the brutal character of the state forces once again. It also helps the farmers realize the true character of so-called democracy.

Gujrat

The farmers of Gujrat have also been facing a deep crisis due to a hike in the power tariffs and irregular supply of electricity. The agitation of the farmers continued for about one year from Nov '03 to July '04. This was led by the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), the farmers' wing of the BJP. As usual, there was compromise between the state govt. and the leaders of the BKS disregarding dissatisfaction of the farmers. Thus the peasants' resentment continues though it is not in an organized form.

The farmers began to oppose the increase in power tariff which was raised from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,260 a horse power since June 2003. As the farmers' agitation was supported by the vast majority of the people, the state govt reduced the tariff to Rs. 900 an hp in Oct '03. But, the dissatisfied farmers continued their agitations. Two weeks after the then union law minister Arun Jaitley intervened to arrive at a compromise between the State Govt. and the BKS leadership. The agitation was withdrawn with a mere reduction of only Rs. 50 an hp on Feb. '04. In spite of this hush-hush truce with the BKS leadership for their own political interest, the farmers' resentment continued.

The power problem is linked to acute shortage of water. As there are no other

sources of water the vast majority of the farmers have to pump ground-water for continuing their cultivation. Around 85 per cent of Gujarat's irrigated land depends on pumped under-ground water whereas this figure is 60 per cent across the country. For this purpose the farmers have to use more electricity. According to Jay Narayan Vyas, the former Narmada Minister "*wheat cultivation in north Gujarat is 10 times more expensive than in central Gujarat because in the north they consume a lot more electricity to pump water.*" The increased power tariff along with ever-increasing prices of other inputs result in the higher cost of production but the market prices of agri-products remain depressed. And it even dwindles well below the cost of production rendering the vast majority of the farmers indebted. Even the farmers' wing's leader of the BJP, Maganbhai Patel, had to admit that "*farming is no longer profitable.*" The small farmers are becoming more and more impoverished. Ismail Bandi, director of the Modasa Agricultural Committee reported, "*peasants are deeply in debt, paying interest of 60 percent to 120 percent to money-lenders. ...small cultivators are selling off their land and becoming casual workers.*" Ignoring the sufferings of the peasants the Hindu chauvinist Modi govt. has increased the power tariff. Though the govt. has promised to supply power uninterruptedly for 14 hours a day the farmers have supply of power only 6 hours a day and that too not regularly. Agitated farmers also draw attention to the anti-peasant policies of the govt. which can construct 80 highways neglecting the urgent need of constructing canals for providing irrigation facilities.

Madhya Pradesh

The farmers of Madhya Pradesh have also been facing similar problems. During the period from 1991 to 2002 the power tariff was increased thrice by the then Congress state govt. First in 1991 just after the assembly election the govt. took the decision to disconnect all single point connections and the Electricity Board increased the tariff with effect from March 1, 1999. In 2001 the average increase in tariff was 18 percent. That too in a period when peasants were in great trouble due to subsequent four years of drought. A large number of peasants could not pay their bills. Consequently, their electricity connections were cut off as they became defaulters without considering the plight of the drought-affected peasants. The power tariff was again increased on 30th Nov. 2002 by as much as 800 percent and the number of hours of power supply was

also decreased from 24 hours to 6 hours a day. However, the state govt exempted small farmers. During the last two years 6 lakh power connections out of a total of 12 lakh connections had been cut off as they failed to pay the dues. Thus a large number of farmers lost the facilities of energised irrigation.

The increase of power prices further pushed the farmers to deeper crisis enhancing the cost of production of agriculture while they have been confronting the vagaries of nature and those of world market prices. According to one study a large number of farmers are in debt, particularly those of the small and medium categories. The study also reveals that the expenditure for power is the single largest expense for farmers other than labour cost. The use of power-based irrigation becomes more and more out of the reach of the small and marginal farmers. They are generally dependent upon shallow tube wells for energised extraction of underground water which dried up during the drought years. They used to buy surplus water from rich and middle farmers who have better irrigation facilities. But this source they cannot utilize due to its ever increasing price and irregular supply. The most important factor that deprives them of utilizing energised irrigation is the increased power tariff.

Before the last Assembly election the BJP's farmers' wing, BKS, protested against these anti-farmer policies and the BJP promised to solve this problem. But now the BJP govt. has been following the same anti-farmer policies. The aggrieved farmers organized, under the banners of Nimes Malwa Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan, (a newly formed organization) and the Jan Sangharsh Morcha, have been protesting against these policies. They have long been expressing their resentment against govt. policies which have caused disaster to them.

Abject dependence on nature

Even after more than 50 years of transfer of power the agriculture of the country predominantly depends on nature. About 70 percent of farming is rainfed. Though agriculture contributes 24% of the country's GDP, it provides directly or indirectly employment for two-thirds of the workforce and supports more than 70 percent of the population. Even then it has always been a neglected sector. While paucity of water and lack of irrigation facilities cause destruction of crops rendering immense suffering to the vast majority of the rural people, the investment in irrigation has been reducing. It has

dipped from 22.6 percent in the 1950s to 5.6 percent. Moreover 400 projects worth Rs. 79,000 crore, are pending since 1960. These projects, could have provided irrigation facilities to 21 million hectares out of 100 million hectares of agriland which are still vulnerable to the vagaries of nature. Since transfer of power though the govt has spent as much as \$22.5 billion for irrigation projects, even a good percentage of the targeted land is still without water. Thus bad monsoons and heavy monsoons cause disaster to peasants, providing a golden opportunity to the big landowners, a section of rich peasants, money-lenders and hoarders for intensifying their exploitation. This year also it is conspicuous. In Rajasthan out of 32 districts 25 districts have been affected by drought.

In Chhattisgarh out of a total 98 tehsils the govt. has declared 85 tehsils as drought-affected.

In the last Kharif season the farmers of Punjab had to reduce the land under paddy cultivation due to inadequate rain.

Glut Haunts Cotton Growers

After three years of drought the cotton-growers have had a good crop in this season. It was expected by them that the bad patch was going to be over. And they will have scope to either come out of their debt obligation or reduce the same. But now they are facing the threat of a glut in the cotton market.

It is estimated that in this year cotton production of the country is around 200 lakh bales (of 170 kg each). This is 20 percent above normal production level. The International Cotton Advisory in the United States has estimated a record production of cotton globally at 107.25 million bales (480 lbs) equivalent to 137.28 million bales (of 170 kg Indian bales) compared to 122 million bales production last years.

The production of the USA is nearly six million bales in excess of its normal global sales. The US govt. is planning to reduce cotton prices and dump cotton in the international market.

To protect its domestic market the US govt. admits imports only of specified quantities for a definite period of time. Its domestic production is highly subsidised and farmers can sell cotton in international markets at prices below its cost of production. The cost of production of US cotton is \$ 1.70 per kg and it is sold at \$ 1.18 per kg. Export subsidies amounted to \$ 300 mn for 2002-03. Moreover it provides \$ 3 billion per year as per its cotton farm subsidy programme. Greece, Spain and

Turkey helped their farmers providing subsidies of \$ 718 mn, \$ 239 mn and \$ 57 mn respectively in 2002-03.

But cotton farmers of the country do not have any subsidy since 2003. Cotton imports are also free—there is no restriction as regards to time and quantity. Import duty is a nominal 10 per cent. There is no subsidy to encourage export. Even then the govt. and the protagonists of free (!) market ask the cotton-growers to develop their efficiency to compete in the international market which is controlled and greatly distorted by the imperialist forces i.e. MNCs. Moreover, the govt. allows the textile industry lobby to manipulate and distort the domestic market. There is a cotton Advisory Board (CAB), which just after every planting season publish an exaggerated figure of cotton supply with the objective of keeping market price at a low level. Then just before harvesting the CAB and textile mill-owners pressurize the govt for import of cotton projecting their new estimated figure of cotton production which is far lower than the previous one. **The market is flooded with cheap, subsidised imported cotton which pushes domestic price further down.** Through this practice the cotton traders and textile mill-owners ensure huge profit and farmers have to suffer.

As the govt serves the interest of the textile industries, traders and that of the imperialist forces, it does not take any step to address the problems of cotton-growers and to ensure their livelihood. It will not impose any restriction on cotton imports and increase import the duty on cotton.

The cotton farmers are heading towards another crisis. Many farmers of major cotton growing states like Punjab, Maharashtra, Andhra, have committed suicide suffering from the unbearable burden of debt. This time too they are facing the same crisis.

Conclusion

The resentment of the farmers have been increasing. It is gradually taking the form of protest marches, agitations and even violent struggles and spreading throughout rural India. We have stated here some of these movements. The peasants have been raising their voice against the economic reform programme of the govt. which have opened the domestic economy to the MNCs for their plunder. The agrarian economy of the country is now at the mercy of the imperialist forces who control the international agri-commodity market rendering great sufferings to the farmers of underdeveloped countries like India.

Agriculture of our country is still predominantly dependent on nature which

causes havoc to farmers' livelihood. The basic inputs like water and electricity are still scarce. For want of these the farmers have to face bad harvesting or even discontinue cultivation again and again.

As the age old class structure exists the big land-owners, money-lenders, traders and hoarders continue their inhuman exploitation taking advantage of the distressed condition of the peasants.

The ruling class parties and their farmers' wing have been utilizing the dissatisfied farmers to increase their votebank or to have a better edge in the power structure. To keep the farmers resentment within manageable limits they give some reliefs. These parties and their peasant wings favour the economic reform programme which impoverish the peasants and other sections of the people. Thus these parties and farmers' organisations, led by them, betray the farmers. Now farmers are getting more and more frustrated with these leaderships. This has become a great concern for the ruling classes and their masters. These anti-farmer forces have taken initiative to form a national apex body of farmers to take up issues of the farmers. This organization will work in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industries. The undeclared aim of this organization is to hoodwink the farmers and distract them from the path of greater agitation.

Moreover this apex body will serve the MNCs and important agro-based industries to tap the produce of farmers.

The seething farmers are getting more and more frustrated being betrayed by their leaderships. They need an organization guided by the revolutionary forces who organise them and lead them to develop a mighty struggle against the anti-farmer policies of the govt throughout the countryside. The revolutionary forces need to shoulder this task, and lead them against the imperialist forces and their domestic cronies. In the course of development of these struggle the revolutionary forces can help farmers develop their political consciousness which lead them to realize the necessity of a people's democratic state which follow an economic policy of self-reliance. ■■

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US Elections, Iraq War & Economic crisis

Arvind

The three are closely knit Politics is the concentrated expression of economics; and war is the continuation of politics by other means. The deepening economic crisis, particularly in the US, entails a fierce contention for markets and sources of raw materials resulting in the war in Iraq to grab the oil; and such politics of war and aggression, calls for increasingly fascist type rule of the Bush variety. Not that Kerry differed significantly, but Bush's open and blatant policies was the preferred option for the financiers and the oil/military oligarchs of the United States of America. Yet, though Bush may have manipulated a win, all does not auger well on both the economic and war front. Economic crises and stiff resistance to its wars of aggression will, in turn, demand of the US state more fascist policies in the future, both at home and abroad — this would most effectively be implemented by the Bush regime with his Evangelical Christian fundamentalist backing, rather than the wishy-washy Democrat Kerry.

What must be seen is that the US elections were taking place in such a scenario where the US was facing stiff resistance in Iraq and the economy facing serious problems. The victory of Bush was immediately followed by the horrendous and murderous attack on Falluja and its 'pacification' through unbelievable levels of terror. Regarding the economic crisis Bush has promised more of the same bitter medicine — make the masses of the US pay by cutting welfare expenditure and social security even further!

Now let us look at all these three factors of the present US system that has serious implications for the people and countries of the world. First the US elections:

Farce in the Heartland of 'Democracy'

Disenfranchisement of Afro-American voters, manipulated electronic voting machines, a huge Latin American migrant population demarcated as 'illegal', together with massive TV promotion of the candidates and contenders that really did not differ much on basic policy, etc — were the essence of the US election. Yet, for the masses it was one of the most bitterly fought US elections. On the one hand there was a vast mass who, because of their hatred towards the Bush regime, and the lack of any real alternative called for "anyone but Bush"; and on the other hand there were the Christian fundamentalist born-again Christians (that comprise 20% of the population) who aggressively campaigned

for Bush on the "family values" platform whipping up a hysterical campaign against a secondary issue of the opposition to gay marriages. The highest ever turn-out in the current elections was due to the strong feelings that were there on both sides — one manufactured by the Christian fundamentalists from the pulpit of the Church; the other, a genuine strong anti-Bush, anti-war and anti-fascist sentiment which had no other outlet at that time except to vote Bush out (not that Kerry was much better). Surprisingly in India, while throughout the world the people have been vehemently opposing Bush's policies, the Indian government (not just the BJP-types but even the Congress) came out fully in favour of Bush.

First, let us look at the differences between the two main contenders, who together paid a massive \$4 billion (Rs. 18,000 crores; the highest ever expenditure on an election in the US) in their election campaign. This does not include the government's expenses of holding the election but only the campaign expenses raised from private donors. On the questions of Iraq, Palestine, Iran, North Korea it was difficult to tell which of the two candidates was more bellicose. Kerry, in fact, promised to send 40,000 more troops to Iraq, expand the US standing army substantially, spend \$6 billion more on armament for ground combat, and take tougher positions on North Korea, Syria and Iran. Kerry not even once raised the Abu Ghraib/Guantanamo Bay prison horrors nor the murder of one lakh Iraqis since the beginning of the war. Time and again Kerry has said that he would have supported the invasion of Iraq even if he knew that Saddam did not have WMDs. He voted for the fascist Patriot Act and co-sponsored the Syria Accountability Act, which gave Bush the authority to impose sanctions on Syria. And, no one could outdo Kerry in his limitless support to the Prime Minister of Israel, the fascist Ariel Sharon, on the question of Palestine. On this issue there was no difference between Kerry and Bush. Even on local issues there were only shades of difference — this is not surprising as their entire campaign expenditure had been funded by the biggest money-bags of the country. So, quite naturally issues such as abortion and same-sex marriages were ones that showed the differences between the two at the ground level, while on the main substantial issues the differences were minor. And, most surprising of all, when the results were running neck-to-neck, depending on the Ohio count (where the polls had showed that 51% of the men and 53%

of the women had voted for Kerry), Kerry conceded defeat even before the count ended. Finally, Bush did win Ohio by just over 1,36,500 votes — but, it was later shown that 2.5 lakh votes had gone uncounted!! When Kerry conceded this election to George Bush, his capitulation shut down investigations into the massive voter fraud and intimidation.

Many people hoped that Kerry would demand investigations into voter fraud and the disappearance of the 2.5 lakh votes. There were literally thousands of lawyers mobilized around the country to investigate and formally protest voter fraud and intimidations. But after promising to fight, Kerry (like Gore before him) chose to embrace George W. Bush and accept Bush's claims of victory. As his supporters listened, often in shock and frustration, Kerry announced, "In the days ahead, we must find common cause, we must join in common effort, without remorse or recrimination, without anger or rancor."

Now let us turn to the defacto disenfranchisement of votes. It is a known fact that the bulk of Blacks and Latinos vote Democrats. Large sections of these are not allowed to partake. First there is a huge prison population of 2 million, a large section of whom are coloured. Next, it is estimated that over one-half of the ballots that are labeled "spoiled" are cast by African Americans. In other words, over one million Black votes are never counted in national elections. This means that roughly one in seven Black voter or 14% of the Black electorate, is effectively knocked out of the count.

Thirdly, it was well known that the major orders for the electronic voting machine were given to staunch Republican businessmen. Electronic voting machines do not have any problems with spoiled votes. However not a single Black-majority precinct in Ohio used those voting machines. Meanwhile, in those precincts that got the new machines, there were repeatedly high counts for Bush — but because there is no paper trail, it is difficult to investigate or recount. Of the five private companies that manufacture these machines, at least two have strong ties to the Republican Party. Election Systems and Software (ES&S), whose machines will count more than half of all of the votes, is owned by an investment firm whose CFO is a large contributor to the Republican Party. Another 8 or 9 million votes will be tallied by computers supplied by Diebold, whose CEO, Walden O'Dell, caused a scandal by declaring that he would help deliver his home state of Ohio to George W. Bush. "The system is in cri-

sis." Professor David Dill of Stanford University told a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. *"The American public is voting on machines where there's very little protection of their votes. I don't think there's any reason to trust these machines."* Over 1600 computer experts have signed a petition demanding that electronic voting machines not be used unless they offer a paper trail.

So, it can be seen, as with the 2000 elections (which were usurped by the Bush gang through a constitutional coup), this time too the elections were to a large extent manipulated. Even if one discounts the physical manipulation, the manipulation of the mind comes with the massive media barrage worth \$4 billion, a large percentage spent by the Bush regime. Through this, Bush was able to create the necessary fear psychosis in order to whip up chauvinism and the tough so-called anti-terrorist stand. Of the 60 million who voted Bush, 86% considered 'terrorism' to be the major motivation, whereas only 18% focused on the economy and the living conditions. Also the droves of born-again Christian who came to vote for Bush were made to think that this butcher was the protector of "moral values". The Church whipped up hysteria against gay marriages and abortion, which have also been the two main agendas of the fascist outfits like the Ku Klux Klan. Though 55.4 million voted for Kerry, his lack of any clear demarcation from Bush on questions of the war and the economy, made the electoral race a losing battle (as far as the oppressed people of America goes) from the very start. The issue at stake was basically which of the two would run the Empire more effectively in the interests of the US corporates. The latter of course preferred Bush — particularly the powerful OIL and Defence lobbies which have close ties with the Bush gentry.

Economy on the Brink

Though the propagandists are boasting of a recovery — a growth of over 3% this year and rising stock market prices — it is well known that the economy is at the brink. Not only is the falling value of the \$ and gigantic trade and budget deficits the cause of worry, but the massive growth in unemployment and increasing poverty' is the source of nascent rebellion. Never before in the history of the US have the extremes of rich and poor been so blatantly and crudely promoted as during the earlier regime.

On the one hand, corporate profits at 8% of GDP, is currently at its highest level in more than 70 Years. While on the other, for the first time in 75 years there was no overall job growth during a presidential

term. 15% of all manufacturing jobs disappeared in the years when Bush was in office. Today there are one million fewer jobs than four years back 5 million people could not afford health insurance; and 2% more Americans have slipped below the poverty line in these past four years. Such were the glaring differences between the two sections of the population — effectively promoted by Bush's economic policies. He now promises more of the same. The US corporate sector has kept employment and wage growth on a tight leash and pursued the outsourcing model more actively. It has also aggressively used all other kinds of cheap labour, as prison labour, the labour of illegal immigrants, etc. **As a result the share of revenue going towards labour is at the lowest level ever.**

Now, if one turns to the economy we find that a surplus in the budget of \$100 billion in 2001 has been turned into a huge \$514 billion deficit for the current year. This is partly because of the huge expenses on war and hikes in the military budget, and partly because of the big tax cuts, the benefit of which has gone mainly to the rich. Already \$200 billion has been spent on the Iraq war and much more is at stake with the resistance growing and the allies fleeing the battlefield. Bush's tax policies have meant that in 2004 the 1% Americans who earn more than \$1.2 million a year will gain a massive \$78,460, while the 20% of Americans earning merely \$16,620 a year, will gain a measly \$250 from the tax cuts. Bush has vowed to continue with his policy of tax cuts.

Then the current account deficit (excess of imports over exports) has spiralled to a gigantic figure of \$600 billion in the current year or a record 6% of the GDP. Such a massive trade deficit is unsustainable in the long run. This was balanced as long as there was a flow of dollars into the country, that came as investments from other countries. But with the falling value of the \$ this investment is moving elsewhere, particularly to the euro currency areas.

On Nov.26 the Financial Times reported that the dollar had been through the 7th straight week of losses. The US already requires a daily infusion of \$1.2 billion in foreign investment just to keep the dollar decline under control. But if this investment inflow drops the continuous fall in the value of the dollar can result in a crash. Already the Russian Central Bank has announced that they are likely to shift their huge reserves (\$105 billion) away from the dollar. Even a small country like Indonesia, with \$35 billion in reserves, has threatened to cut dollar holdings. But the biggest threat will come from China which has gigantic reserves of \$515 billion. Already, in the latter half of this year there were indica-

tions that foreign governments and individuals, who hold \$3.7 trillion in outstanding US Treasury bonds, were buying fewer and fewer of those and were selling substantial amounts. The combined purchase of stocks, corporate bonds and government debt — overall capital flows into the US — fell in August for the sixth straight month.

While the US publicity machine is trying to make a virtue out of a grave threat by saying that the fall in the value of the \$ will help exports (when the same happened to the euro it ridiculed the weakness of that currency) it is panic stricken that it may lose its hegemonic status as the prime currency for international transactions, with the euro overtaking it. With confidence in the dollar declining countries and investors are turning to the euro which is seen to be more stable. If this continues not only will this symbol of US imperialism take a battering, it can precipitate a balance of payment crisis because of its huge deficits. And notwithstanding the fall in the value of the dollar, America's trade deficit swelled to an all-time high in Oct.04 of \$55.5 billion!!

So, the US economy is on the brink and any small push can result in a fall. And it is this crisis-ridden situation and growing contention with the other imperialist powers that has made it flex its military muscle, and launch unilateral actions, as in Iraq.

Heroic Resistance & the US Nightmare

Fascism at home and wars of aggression abroad are the twin sides of an imperialist economy in deep crisis. In the US itself numerous measures have been taken to increase fascist repression, particularly after the 9/11 attack. The latest drastic overhaul of the intelligence services, the first time in the post-war period, is an example in that direction. So also is the increasing Christian fundamentalism of the Bush regime. But, both at home and abroad it is facing stiff resistance from the people. In the US the huge movements against war, globalization, unemployment etc have been going on, and abroad the heroic Iraqi resistance is creating nightmares for the American rulers.

The heroic battle of Falluja is just one example of the nature of the resistance and US terror. Falluja, a town of just 5 lakh people has become the symbol of the Iraqi resistance. On Nov. 6 Martial Law was declared all over Iraq after massive guerrilla attacks on the Iraqi army and police station left over 50 dead. On Nov.8, soon after Bush was re-elected, a huge 20,000 US soldiers along with a token number of Iraqi soldiers launched "Operation Phantom Fury". For over a month before the attack the cow-

ardly Americans subjected Falluja to most intensive bombing. In spite of that it took two weeks of intensive fighting to subdue the city. The horrors that were perpetrated on the Iraqis during the attack has shocked the world. The cruel methods adopted matched that of Hitler. Officially, in this battle 1,400 Iraqis and 100 US soldiers were killed; (in the first battle of Falluja, in April 2003, officially 1,300 were killed). More than 1000 Iraqis have been grievously injured. Civilians, including women and children, were not allowed to leave the city once the offensive began. Those attempting to flee by swimming the Euphrates, were shot and killed. Falluja, the city of Mosques, has been reduced to rubble by massive air power and heavy artillery. Very few buildings are left standing. Barely one lakh people remain in the city.

Military analysts say that the scale of the attack on Falluja is unprecedented in contemporary history. The Americans admit that the city witnessed the most intense urban guerrilla war in the history of modern warfare. Yet, it is said that only 400 fighters remained in the city to "fight until death". Others linked up with fighters in Mosul, Ramadi, Baquba and other neighbouring towns. As fighting raged in Falluja the Iraqis stepped up their attacks in other parts of the country.

Though Falluja may be 'pacified', the type of US rule in the city would make George Orwell's 1984 look like that of a liberal. All residents (those who remain) have been sent to "citizen processing centres" so that a database of their identity can be compiled based on DNA tests and retina scans. People of Falluja are forced to wear badges all the time with their home address on it. Car use is banned, people are ferried in military buses. All male citizens are defacto made into slaves herded into "military-style battalions" to do various jobs for the Americans.

The genocidal methods adopted by the US has created a furore throughout the world. In the war over one lakh Iraqis have been killed, most of whom are women and children. In this war officially the US has admitted to 1000 of their military killed and 10,000 injured. The honors of Falluja resulted in the Iraqi Islamic Party withdrawing from the 'Iraqi government'. Most allies have been withdrawing from the Iraqi war. Even the servile UN secretary General took the step to warn the US and British not to undertake any major military initiative. But it is only the lackey Indian government which has not only gone out of its way to praise Bush but also offer to train Iraqis for the planned fraudulent elections due in January.

Soon after the electoral victory the Prime Minister of India sent a letter praising Bush stressing the "overriding priority" of both countries to make the future more secure. He went on to assure Bush that India was a partner "against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and will stand by the US in strengthening international peace". The letter also expressed hope that the two countries would "embark on a larger and more ambitious

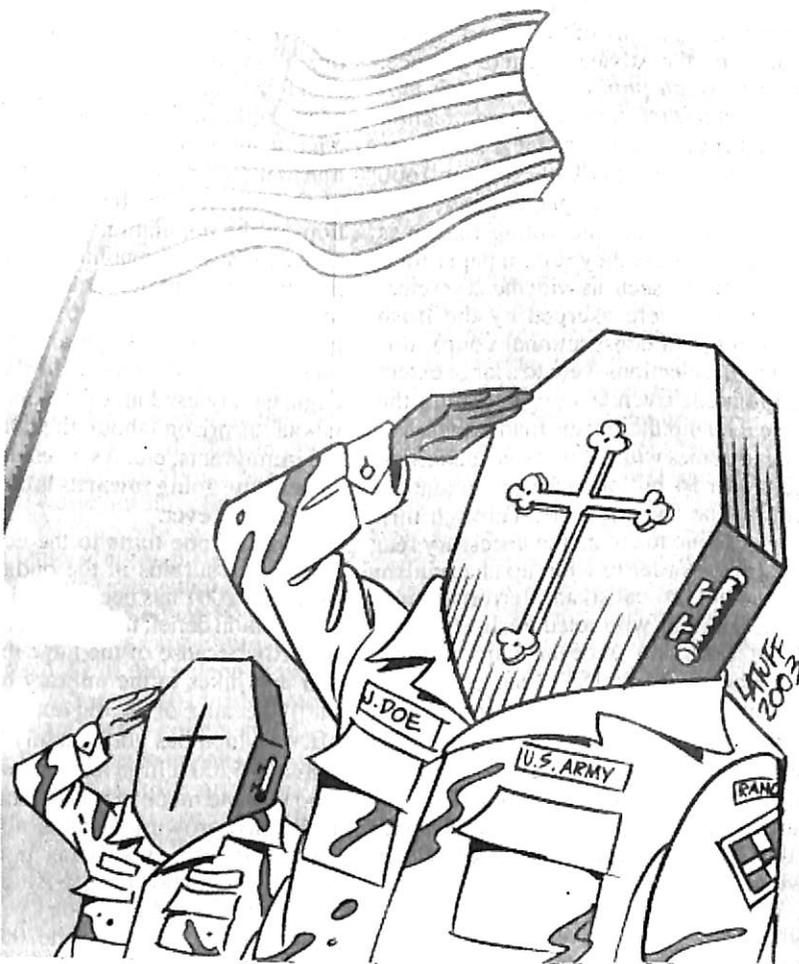
agenda for broader strategic cooperation". This letter was sent on the eve of the attack of Falluja!! Also while Arafat's body was not even buried the Congress-govt announced its plans for a new round of negotiations with the butcher Sharon gov't of Israel and the proposal to sign a new arms deal. Through all this the pathetic CPI/CPM allies and props of the government merely looked on as pliant collaborators, of course after making the necessary noises of 'opposition'. And all this after the new Bush administration has been arming Pakistan to the teeth with high-grade sophisticated weaponry!

But one month after the 'fall' of Falluja reports came in once again of pockets of resistance continuing in Falluja with the US again resorting to aerial bombing. Besides, throughout December, attacks continued all over Iraq, particularly what has come to be known as the Sunni triangle. Mosul witnessed several attacks. In the restive city of Samara guerrillas launched a series of coordinated attacks against the US and Iraqi troops killing over 50. Samara's police chief resigned. The resistance has fought back with a tenacity and ingenuity beyond anyone's expectations. There is now a daily average of more than 100 at-

tacks in various parts of the country. Significantly, even the neutralization of Al Sadr's armies (due to pressure from Iran) has made little difference to the level of attacks, making it doubtful whether his fighters are obeying the orders to desist from fighting the occupiers.

Today, the need of the hour is for all democrats throughout the world to rally in support of the great and heroic resistance of the Iraqi people who are in the forefront in the battle against the demonic US imperialism. The more the US forces are tied down in Iraq and Afghanistan, the more difficult will it be for it to resort to new adventures throughout the world. In that way the resistance in Iraq is in the interests of the entire people of the world fighting and resisting the onslaught of imperialism, particularly US imperialism.

Late News: Dec 21, 2004.: As we go to the press, the Iraqi resistance launched its most devastating attack on the occupation forces since the beginning of the war. In one of the most top security US military camps, a rocket struck at its very heart. Over 19 Americans and five others were killed on the spot and over 60 have been seriously injured.



The New Year Holds Promises Of Still Greater Victories

Samya

The people of West Bengal are witness to an amusing drama that is being staged on the political scenario of West Bengal since the PLGA formed by the CPI(Maoist) triggered landmine blasts at Kokrajhorein Belpahari of the Midnapore West on December 5, blowing up three guest houses in the process. In one sense it is unique as it contains elements of both a tragedy and a comedy. It is a sad tragedy for the oppressive Indian state and its political representatives of West Bengal. It is a comedy for the long-suffering people of Bengal.

The blast was so sudden and unexpected that the whole state machinery was at a loss what to do. A fear-psychosis has gripped them—a terrible fear—the fear of losing their lives, losing their control over vast areas, the fear that this man-eating system they had set up over the ages and which they regard to be eternal and invincible, was now faced with the prospect of doom. This sudden realisation has made them mad and hysteric and the situation in which they have been driven to is manifested in their statements. The top police officials are trying hard to count the total number of armed guerrillas engaged in the operation. It could be anything between 60 and 200, consisting of both men and women and armed with sophisticated weapons. The *Dainik Statesman* reports (6-12-2004) that the police forces have been terribly frightened since the incident. In reply to the question why the police reached the place 18 hours after the incident, Amit Kiran Deb, Home Secretary, Govt. of WB, replied rather amusingly that the blast had caused no deaths, and the delay was tactical as the police would have to be sure that they would not be blown up again by landmines on the way. So it is the blast of landmines that has made the state machinery tremble in fear. The DG of Police, Shyamal Datta was supposed to visit the site, but refrained from doing so for reasons best known to him. Instead, he held a meeting at Midnapore police headquarters and during the press conference, expressed their inability to deal with the guerrillas who attacked them from the rear, not from the front (*Dainik Statesman*, 8-12-2004).

Such a poor fellow, this DG of police !! He seems to be totally unaware of the Maoist guerrilla strategy and tactics that the revolutionary forces should always attack the enemy in places and at times where and when the enemy least expect to be attacked. We would advise the police forces to have serious lessons in the Maoist strategy and tactics before making such

foolish comments in future. If one can read the situation right, many more such surprises are lying in store for the demoralised police and para-military forces.

One or two years back, if we can remember right, the WB Govt. seemed to convince themselves that the erstwhile PW and MCCI activists who had been indulging in anti-State activities, were coming from Andhra Pradesh. Now they have discovered that the Maoists from Nepal were also probably involved in such attacks. This is evident from the statement made by Jogesh Chatterjee, the IG of Police, Western range : "We suspect that some of the Nepal Maoists were also present that night." (*Hindustan Times*, 7-12-2004). The WB Govt. and its state machinery still seemed unprepared to accept the reality that guerrilla fighters could emerge from the sons of the soil, from the vast multitude of the oppressed and starving masses of Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia and other areas. If they are not prepared to admit this, then we will not quarrel at this stage. Meanwhile, we will have more additions to the amusing drama that is being played on the political stage of WB. Let us get prepared to hear from the government some day that since the Maoist guerrillas are active also in Peru, so the Peruvian Maoists are also involved in the landmine attacks in WB.

Most interesting is the response of the Chief minister of WB. Actually, he did not respond, or failed to respond, apart from organising hasty meetings with his top police officials in his otherwise busy schedule with his imperialist masters. The usually talkative Buddhadev, who some time ago threatened the erstwhile PW and MCCI guerrillas with State repression, is now mum and speechless. Perhaps the PLGA have brought sleepless nights for him. Let him remain speechless for as many days as he chooses.

No less amusing is the reaction of the CPI(Marxist)—the ruling party and the most trusted stooge of the ruling classes in WB. In an editorial (*Ganashakti*, 7-12-2004) — the mouthpiece of the party—the CPM, in a conspicuously feeble voice, seemed to convince the people that 'People's War Liberation Army' is trying to create an 'atmosphere of terror to make their existence felt', that it is anti-development and anti-people. It stated that with the improvement of communication network, tourism in that area would receive an automatic boost, thereby strengthening the local economy. However, the Maoists are opposed to it. The same view is expressed also by the IGP, Western Range (*The Statesman*, 7-12-2004). The CPM and the police on the same

platform are adding more interesting scenes to the ongoing drama !!

Why did the PLGA blast down the guest houses ? The leaflets they left behind justified the blasts saying that "the guest houses had become centres of flesh-trade" (*The Statesman*, 6-12-2004). Why is the WB Govt. in such a hurry to build a road from Odolchua to Kokrajhore when these regions remained neglected for decades under CPM rule ? They are doing it not to bring about any improvement in the living conditions of the people, but for the steady movement of the police and para-military forces to suppress the ongoing revolutionary struggles. What about the so-called atmosphere of terror ? Who have created terror ? Who have been oppressing and persecuting people and destroying people's property ? Who have been trying to crush any form of criticism and opposition to the government and the State with their police force and armed party hoodlums and lumpens ? The so-called 'terror', which *Ganashakti* deplores, is in response to the white terror the State machinery and the CPM party that have spread in the countryside. It is the revolutionary Red Terror to counter the counter-revolutionary white terror—the Red Terror hailed by Mao in 1927 in his Hunan Report and throughout the period of revolutionary struggles.

In reality, a spectre is haunting the Indian ruling classes — the spectre of a People's War. This war is to be led by the revolutionary party of the people — the Communist Party of India (Maoist) by unleashing the creativity of the masses and forging unity among the peasants, workers, petty bourgeoisie, national capitalists and other toiling people oppressed for ages. It is the politically-conscious People's Liberation Guerrilla Army or the 'People Armed' — led by the CPI(Maoist) that would make India free from feudal oppression and imperialist domination. The great and valiant people of India and the revolutionary party and army without which the people have nothing, would have to counter and defeat not only the Indian State machinery, but also their imperialist masters. A glorious, new dawn will certainly break out over our beloved motherland — the dawn which the people of India have been dreaming for a long, long time. It will entail tremendous human sufferings and sacrifices. The dream which inspired our revolutionary forefathers to initiate the Naxalbari struggle in 1967 under the leadership of Charu Majumdar will truly become a reality in the days to come. The New Year truly holds the promise of still greater victories. ■■

A Fitting Reply to the Bhavanipur Massacre

With the Nov.24, 2004 ambush in UP, killing 17 police personnel on the spot, the ruling classes have gone into a panic. Barely 70kms from Varanasi, the newspapers began clamouring that the Maoists are now nearing the Capital. In this ambush, under Naugadh police station in Chandauli district, 13 PAC jawans and four police were killed, including the incharge of the Chandraprabha police station. This action occurred at 7.30 in the morning, 5 kms away from the Chandraprabha dam. The police van was totally destroyed and the guerrilla forces retreated with 5 SLRs, 2 LMGs, an AK-47, grenades and bullets.

This ambush was a retaliation against the massive combing and police terror in the region. In fact two days earlier Maoist guerrillas of the CPI(Maoist) had killed two policemen and a forest officer during an armed encounter. They also blew up the Dak Bungalow of the forest officials. As a result of this new offensive, the I.G. of police of that zone together with the police commissioner themselves began leading the new combing operations; both of whom escaped by a hair's breadth during the ambush on Nov.20. In fact the police van that was hit was not moving alone; it was part of a convoy with three other vans with

police from the police stations of Mugalsarai, Chaandauli and Saithdaraja. None of these vans dared to take on the Maoists and immediately fled the scene. To rebuild the morale of the mercenary forces the UP police Chief, B.K.Nayyar, promised Rs.5 lakhs each to the families of the deceased plus a job for one member of the family.

The bourgeois media complained that the Maoist guerrillas carried out this action with clockwork precision. They said that the administration of the region was already alerted due to the spread of the Maoist influence in the area. Besides the PAC, six companies of the CRPF were also stationed in the area. The media claimed that the Maoists were running a parallel government in 250 villages in the districts of Chandraul, Sonbhadra and Mirzapur, and that their influence was spreading to Gajipur, Banda, Chitrakoot, Devariya and Ballia. This whole region borders Bihar, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. It was to put an end to the terror unleashed on the people by the police and para-military forces that the Maoist guerrillas hit back.

Also, it must not be forgotten that over three years back, in this very region, the

police brutally massacred sixteen peasants belonging to the Krantikari Kisan Committee of the then MCC. On March 9, 2001 in Bhavanipur village of Mirzapur district they dragged out members of the KKS who had gathered as part of a wedding celebration in the village, and brutally murdered them. One Mahilla comrade, Kanchan, who had come from the neighbouring village to campaign for the International Women's Day programme was dragged away by the police never to be seen again. Besides the one agent's house in the village the police terrorized the entire village beating them like animals. Not even the old, women and children were spared. Expensive items from their houses were looted. Even the dead bodies were not given to the families but whisked away by the police without identification.

In that incident, what was surprising was the fact that the CPI(ML)Liberation, which has a presence in that area, said not a word in condemnation. Ever since then, for over three years the police and landed interests have been running amuck against the oppressed masses and the revolutionary activists. It is not surprising the retaliation took place to curb the atrocities. ■■

Condemn Dastardly Attack on Ngugi wa Thiong'o and wife Njeeri in Kenya

On 11 August, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and his wife Njeeri were attacked by some anti-social elements when the couple went back to Kenya after a gap of 22 years for the release of Ngugi's latest book. They were brutally beaten up, their apartment ransacked, and the most condemnable of all: 58 years old Njeeri was gang raped by the goons to humiliate and degrade the rebel voice. He was burnt by cigarette butts on his face. This whole incident is highly condemnable and arouses disgust, rage among the lovers of national cultures and national languages around the world.

Famous novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o spoke out for the first time on the shocking attack in which thugs tortured him and sexually assaulted his wife. The US-based literary scholar revealed to a hushed press conference that his wife Njeeri was raped when gunmen subjected them to an hour-long ordeal in their executive city apartment.

But the 65-year-old former detainee, who was visiting Kenya for the first time in 22 years, bravely declared that the attack would neither kill his spirit nor make him hate his motherland.

"There is a saying that we should not let people who do not like what we are doing kill our spirit. We are continuing with our programmes as soon as doctors give us a

clean bill of health. I cannot let the Kenyan people down," he said. A four-man gang forced their way into the Ngugis' flat at Norfolk Towers in the city centre on Thursday and beat up Prof Ngugi, torturing him with burning cigarettes and whipping him with the butt of a pistol. It happened barely a fortnight after they had jetted into the country to a red-carpet reception.

Yesterday he revealed that the gang also raped Njeeri as he and a colleague, who was also in the flat, struggled with the thugs.

"In her case it was not attempted rape. It was rape, period," he sadly told a press conference at Nairobi Hospital attended by local and international journalists. The confession was unsolicited, with Prof Ngugi offering the clarification as an afterthought. A statement on the attack issued last week by his publisher referred to "attempted rape". Asked whether he regretted coming back to Kenya, Prof Ngugi declared: "I am a Kenyan. This is my country for better and for worse." The couple first held lengthy consultations with the don's physician, Dr Dan Gikonyo, and psychiatrist Dr Frank Njenga before the press conference. It had been scheduled for 1pm but did not take place until almost 3.45pm. Looking pale but composed, Prof Ngugi

walked into the hospital's lecturer room flanked by the two doctors and East African Education Publishers managing director, Mr Barrak Muluka, who is in charge of his itinerary. He wore a white hospital robe and sandals. A healing wound on the left side of his forehead - reportedly inflicted with a burning cigarette - stood out on his face.

They burst in through the door and made them lie down in different parts of the room before beginning their sustained attack.

The gang, armed with two pistols, a machete and a pair of wire cutters, burst into the bedroom where his wife had been sleeping and, when Prof Ngugi heard her scream, he ran to her rescue but was beaten off and burned on the face with cigarettes.

Prof Ngugi said he called the press conference — his first since being admitted to hospital — to let Kenyans know that he and his wife had fully recovered.

Five security guards have been arrested by police investigating the attack. Detectives are trying to discover how the four-man gang was able to lie in wait near his heavily guarded apartment for four hours before carrying out the vicious assault. ■■

Advance of People's War in Nepal! Oppose Indian Ruler's Dangerous Designs in Nepal!!

The media is giving out daily accounts of clashes between the Maoist forces of Nepal and the reactionary State of King Gyanendra. The Maoists have been attacking the RNA in all parts of the country in systematic and coordinated plans. As an example, a press release of the PLA Nepal Western Division (dated Nov.11, 04) indicated the nature of some attacks in just the two day — in one of which the platoon commander, Com. Adarsha, was martyred.

These systematic countrywide attacks was a result of decisions taken at an important plenum of the CC of the CPN(Maoist) held in end August. In a brief press release issued on August 31st by the CC it brought out some of the main points incorporated in the document passed at the Plenum, which said:

The document has accepted the challenges to develop on all the component parts of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the Marxist Philosophy, the Political economy and the Scientific Socialism by applying dialectical materialism for the success of revolution as well as in the service of the world proletarian revolution and in resistance against imperialist erected ideological and cultural confusions including so called postmodernism in the 21st century, the economic colonialism and process of looting in the name of so called globalisation and privatisation, and against the modern military fascism waged in the name of war against terrorism. In this reference, welcoming the ideological debate led by the International Communist Movement, mainly by the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement RIM, (of which our glorious party also constitutes a membership), the document has accentuated on the unified initiative of the whole Party for a developed and new ideological synthesis of Prachanda Path in Nepal.

The document has made a lengthy historical explanation over the process of expansionist intervention of the reactionary Indian ruling class over Nepalese nationality, geological

integrity, economic self-dependency as well as over political and cultural freedom; over the national capitulationist character of the old feudal state, and the struggle of the Nepalese people against the expansionist intervention and national capitulationism. Along with the analysis, the document has clarified the fact that having backed by the US imperialism, the Indian expansionism is coming on the direct intervention against the great People's War. This has been further justified by the intervention and arrest of several responsible comrades including comrade Kiran, the veteran member of the standing Committee of our Party, in different cities of India recently targeting our Party Headquarter. Having following the expansionist doctrine of Nehru, that regards the Himalayan ranges as its border, the Indian ruling class is advancing with vicious intrigue and conspiracy with the strategy of either Bhutanise (Treating with Bhutan- Tr.) or Sikkimise (Treat as to Sikkim- Tr.) Nepal. The Indian monopoly capitalist rulers, who have always backed destabilisation and anarchy in Nepal, have now been openly threatening Nepal with their ill intention bringing Nepal under their control through military intervention and conduct massacre against the patriotic and self-respected Nepalese people in the name of so-called supporting to the war against terrorism. Indian expansionism has now stood as externally a main barricade for the creation of credible environment to find a forward-going political solution through peaceful negotiation. The chieftains of the old state of Nepal, in a daydream of lengthening the period of reactionary state, have been committing a heinous crime of mocking over the independent existence and self-respect of the Nepalese people by kneeling down in front of the Indian expansionism. Having made an afore said analysis, the document has called for all the self-respected and patriotic Nepalese people stand unified against the national capitulationism of the old state, Indian expansionist

interventions and the danger of nearing military attacks. The document, in the new planning of the party, has emphasised to concentrate against the national capitulation and Indian interventions in all out ideological, political and military fields. The document has also emphasised that the independence of Nepal and Nepalese people can be preserved by turning the whole country to a war front, by militarising all people, and by raising the war strategy to a new height against military interventions of any imperialism and expansionism. Similarly, in the document it is believed that in the war against national capitulation and expansionist interventions, there will be support and sympathy not only of the broad patriotic Nepalese people (which also includes the patriotic personals within the so-called Royal Army of the old state) but also there will be a support and sympathy of just loving Indian masses as well as the masses of the world over.

In another very important section, the document has discussed achievements and weakness of the Party work in the past one year, and has drawn conclusion that the foundation in order to advance in the strategic offensives against the enemy has been built up. On the basis of the specific context of Nepal and in the present international situation, the document has presented an explanation of the strategic offensive and with a certain political and military target, it has also lay out a first plan of strategic offensive. In order to achieve a targeted aims, the document has stressed on developing resistance on the leadership of the Unified and Centralised Leadership to the level of Party, People's Liberation Army, United People's Revolutionary Council, various National and Regional Autonomous Governments, different fronts, departments, and broad masses of people. Similarly, in the new plan, keeping attention on the skill of the People's Liberation Army, the state of means, resources and qualitative growth on number and the necessity of strategic offensives, the formation of the

PLA has been developed three Divisions with the formation of Central Division in addition to Eastern and Western Divisions. Hence, the regular force of the PLA has been organised on three Divisions, 9 Brigades and 29 Battalions. Similarly, it is also decided that altogether one hundred thousand (100,000) people's militias will also be organised under the formation of Company under the Districts and Regional Headquarters. Finally, the new plan has also clarified an aim to provide a military training on defensive and offensives to the broad masses of the people to fight a Tunnel War against foreign interventions.

In another important section of the document, a broad proposal on the organisational rectification is presented. Divided into two sections including ideological rectification and organisational and working style rectification, a concrete plan and programme has also been pointed out in the document. According to that, on ideological rectification, a concrete orientation has been laid out in the document on the problem of study and practice of the dialectical materialism about the correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist conception on preservation, practice and development of Prachanda Path, importance of ideological struggle against individualist anarchism and the bureaucratic working style. About organisational and working style rectification, having learned from the past weaknesses, certain methodology has been pointed out mainly to make the relation with the friendly forces a respectful, lively and intense. The essence of the document is to aim to take the responsibility of the whole country. A certain methodology has also been laid out to initiate the rectification as a campaign from the centre to the bottom.

In the light of the growing civil war in the country, the new UPA government in India has been exhibiting its expansionist fangs against the people of Nepal right from the day it came to power. Treading the earlier NDA path, it had forged close links with the genocidal King Gyanendra, seeking to prop it up in every way possible. As we go the press this despot has arrived on a high

profile state visit to India to conspire for greater Indian assistance to crush the ongoing people's war in Nepal. Of all the political formations in the country it is the CPI(Maoist), as vanguard of the Indian oppressed masses, that has strongly condemned these interventionist policies of the Indian rulers. In a statement issued by its General Secretary, Com. Ganapathy, on Dec.17, 04, it said:

Nepali's King Gyanendra's eleven-day official visit will start from Dec. 23. Earlier prime minister of Nepal and chief of the RNA visited India in September and November respectively. Now the main purpose of the king's visit is to ensure support from the four bordering states of Bengal, Bihar, UP, UK and its 1800 Km. stretch to deploy the Indian armed forces and to beef up hundreds of outposts, which have emerged in the recent past to monitor the CPN(Maoist) activity. To push its armed forces directly the Indian government as a first step beefed up its border vigil to ensure safe passage for its armed forces when it will enter to fight along with the RNA against the Maoists. In the first week of December Defence Minister Mr. Pranab Mukherjee strategically declared that India will render all assistance to the Royal Nepal Army like supplying all types of military equipment, training RNA personnel and sealing the border. It is not difficult to understand the essence of this statement. The Indian ruling classes are going to wage an undeclared and deceitful war against the Nepali people and the People's Liberation Army under the leadership of the CPN(Maoist).

Since the last few years the Nepali people have been waging war against the monarchy under the leadership of the Maoists with the aim of establishing a new democratic society. Imperialists and the entire reactionaries are fiercely opposing this revolutionary war of Nepal. The CPM, one of the main props of the UPA gov't. at the Centre kept mum on the decision of the government and visit of the king. In West Bengal, where it is in power, it is not sparing any chance to play its role in crushing the revolution in Nepal in the name of opposing 'terrorism'. The CPI(Marxist) led police forces have arrested many leaders and

activists of the CPN (Maoist) including Com. Mohan Baidya, one of the topmost leaders, in Bengal. Bengals' Buddha, Bihars' Lulu, UP's Mulayam and Uttarakhand's Tiwary are preparing for a red carpet welcome to the king during his official visit from December 23.

On the one hand the King is pursuing the UPA government to get full assistance and blessing to his operations against Nepal's Maoist revolutionaries, on the other hand he is closely moving with the Sangh Parivar, particularly the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. On this or that pretext the Raja is keeping close links with the communal fascists who are ideologically staunch opponents of communism to get their involvement against the Maoists in Nepal and India.

Our CC(P) will mobilize the Indian people in solidarity with the great revolutionary struggle of the Nepal people against the unjust deeds of the Indian Government and the king of Nepal. We are confident that if the Indian Gov't. dares to send its mercenary army for suppressing the revolution in Nepal it will have to incur the same shameful defeat as it had received in Sri Lanka in the 1980s. The CC(P) calls upon all the revolutionary and democratic people of the Indian subcontinent to rise in united struggle against the expansionist Indian ruling classes and their mercenary army.

The CC(P) calls upon all the revolutionary, democratic, justice and peace-loving people of India to forcefully oppose the Indian Government's interference in the internal affairs of Nepal.

The CC(P) calls upon the jawans of the Indian army who hail from the toiling classes, not to involve themselves in killing their class brethren by participating in the unjust military campaign of the Indian Government.

We are calling on the people of Bengal, Bihar, UP and Uttarakhand to oppose the Rajas' visit to these states.

We call upon the people of South Asia, as well as the entire world people to rise against and resist the India Gov't.'s interference in the internal affairs of Nepal for protecting the medieval rule of king Gyanendra whose hands are soaked with the blood of thousands of Nepali people.

Corporate Terrorism & Genocidal Imperialism

Suman

Around midnight a full two decades back, on Dec 3, 1984, 27 tonnes of the highly poisonous gas, methyl isocyanate (MIC), leaked from the Union Carbide (UCC) pesticide plant at Bhopal. Located near the railway station in the heart of the city, within minutes the entire people at the station and in the neighbouring slums lay dead. A holocaust of unbelievable proportions was about to unfold. Within 48 hours 20,000 were dead. According to the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) another 2,50,000 people (over 30% of the population of Bhopal — the capital of MP) continue to suffer from permanent disabilities and chronic ailments as a result of the exposure to the gas. In addition due to chromosomal and genetic damage among the victims the next three to four generations of children in Bhopal will suffer from birth defects and spontaneous abortions. With such a massacre the attack on WTC and Pentagon pales into insignificance. Yet, till date no action has been taken on the culprits and even a pittance has been paid in compensation. The Indian and US governments have been collaborating over the years to absolve the guilty. Worse still, till today the plant has not yet been cleaned up and continues to pollute the environment as the cost of such a clean-up would be around \$500 million. Till today the land, ground water and even the milk is polluted. A 1999 Greenpeace report found severe contamination of the factory site, surrounding land and groundwater. Drinking water wells near the factory were heavily polluted with chemicals known to produce cancers and genetic defects. In a study lead, mercury and organo-chlorines were found in the breast milk of nursing mothers in the affected areas.

The tragedy lives on. The people suffer while UCC continues to thrive under its new owner Dow Chemicals. UCC's Eveready Batteries are still the craze throughout the world reaping massive profits for the owner. They refuse to even pay compensation except for the pitiable amount ordered by the Supreme Court. And even this is sought to be snatched away by the Indian vultures who rule at both Delhi and Bhopal. In 1991, a full seven years after the tragedy, the Supreme Court ordered the payment of a pitiable \$470 million to discharge all claims of compensation against the UCC — a small fraction of the \$3 billion claimed. Most claimants got barely \$400 each — just over Rs.7,000 at the exchange rates then existing.

But, the Supreme Court also ordered that criminal proceedings be taken against those responsible. Yet, the UCC and its chief, the demon, Warren Anderson, flatly and publicly refused to appear before an Indian court. And successive governments and the CBI did nothing to get the criminals to India. Also the criminal cases against Indian officials have dragged on for years and judges presiding over the case have been repeatedly transferred.

The facts behind the case are now publicly known where the UCC utilized an untested procedure to produce the pesticide Sevin in order to cut costs and reap huge profits. The UCC has been operating in the country from 1966, but the unit manufacturing MIC began to function only in Feb. 1980. The 1970 project proposal reveals that UCC had realized that the technology to be adopted at the Bhopal plant was not a proven one, and yet it opted to take the risk in view of the large profit margins. Utilization of proven technology would have been far more costly. The MIC-to-sevin process, as developed by the UCC, had only a limited trial run. In addition to this when it was known that MIC was a highly volatile substance and had to be stored at zero degrees centigrade, the refrigeration system had been shut off from June 1984 to save costs of the Freon gas. Sevin production at the plant had stopped in Oct. 1984 following huge accumulation of stocks. According to their own finding, on the day the gas leaked the temperature of the tank from which gas leaked was at 15-20 degrees centigrade instead of the requirement of 0 degrees. The lower temperature would have retarded the reaction considerably and given time for corrective action.

All this goes to show the criminal intent of the UCC to dump dangerous pesticides in our country, ignoring all safety concerns in order to maximize profits. The Indian rulers were total collaborators in this nefarious project turning a blind eye to all the omissions. Not only that, after the holocaust they have exerted maximum effort to protect the guilty. In fact last year when activists from abroad tried to clean up the contaminated site they faced eviction and arrest by the police of the Digvijay Singh Congress government. But this is not all:

The CBI failed to submit the huge amounts of available evidence proving UCC's guilt. It even opposed the survivors' plea to visit the UCC's head-quarters; a visit which would have exposed the UCC's

double standards in safety measures practiced in the USA and in India. One excuse for being unable to enforce criminal procedures was that the UCC no longer had any concerns or assets in India.

The present BJP-led NDA government's strategy has shifted, shockingly; from mere disinterest and apathy to deliberate, aggressive defence of the guilty! In 2001, UCC merged with Dow Chemicals, which, therefore, now bore all the responsibilities of the UCC. Dow has four subsidiaries and many assets in India. Did the NDA government seize them? Did it tell Dow to produce Anderson and the other killers, or else quit India? Far from it, it readily succumbed to pressure from Dow, and the CBI has moved to dilute charges against Anderson et al from culpable 'homicide' to mere 'negligence'!

Even more shocking has been the NDA government's move to snatch away and misutilise the victims' compensation. The compensation given by UCC was a mere 1/7 of that demanded by the government. Even the whole of that meagre amount has not reached the victims. The amounts of compensation given have been even lower than the standards set by the Indian railways! In addition the Bhopal Hospital Trust at Bhanpura, supposedly built for the gas victims, was steeped in corruption and irregularities.

After the paltry payments, Rs. 1360 crore of compensation fund remains on balance. A Group of Ministers appointed by the NDA government has decided to distribute this amount among 20 non-gas affected wards!

The children born in 1984 will now be 20 years, many of whom will be living lives with defects, deformities and other health problems. A whole city has been incapacitated for decades just due to the avarice of greedy imperialist demons and their Indian collaborators. How can the affected achieve justice? How can the guilty be really punished? All the lobbying and social activism of the host of NGOs operating there has given little relief to the affected. What is required is a mass upsurge against all the Dow factories in the country whose wealth is confiscated by the masses and handed over to the affected. The call must be to kick all Dow units out of the country and hang the internationalism will call for the American people to punish Warren Anderson and other criminals of the UCC in the US itself.

Fight Back the Proposed New Patent Act

On Jan.1 2005 the Indian government is all set to introduce the disastrous new patent act. This Act will not only facilitate the further skyrocketing of drug prices, it will act to wipe out thousands of small scale pharmaceutical industries.

It was in 1994 when the WTO came into being that the then Indian government agreed to drastically amend the 1970 Patent Act within a 10-year period as per the agreement set forth in the TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) deadline. It is said that this TRIPS agreement was basically drawn up by the US pharmaceutical companies, in which just one company, Pfizer, played a major role.

The process of capitulation to imperialist interests took place between 1987 and 1994 through which the WTO agreement was negotiated. In 1993 a Rajya Sabha Committee viewed with concern the "grave impact of the proposed patent act On drug prices in the country". Also the report of the Arjun Singh Committee in the early 1990s remained confidential and never came out in the open. The First

Patents Amendment Act was passed in 1999, followed by the Second Amendment Act in 2002. It is these changes that facilitated the massive increase in the price of drugs over these years. The recent disclosure in the Economic Times (Dec. 9 2004) indicates the extent to which this facilitated the loot of the masses and profiteering of the pharmaceutical companies. The ET reported that on three commonly used drugs the NNPA (National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority) showed that the companies paid retail margins of about 1000%. The three drugs were Nimesulide (anti-inflammatory pain-killer), Cetrizine (anti-allergy) and Omeprazol (for ulcers). This shows to what extent the public is being fleeced. 20 companies have been named for this massive overpricing including the well-known ones like Wockhardt, Cipla, Ranbaxy, Lupin and Zydus Cadilla.

Now, the Third Amendment Bill of 2003 is being rushed through without discussion or changes. If not passed by Jan1, 2005 India can face WTO retaliation. From 1994 to 2005 a large

number of foreign companies filed anticipatory claims under the "mail box" procedure, which will flower into full-fledged patents on Jan.1 2005. In other words, these TNCs took aou patents which was not effective in India; but which will now come into force once the new patent act comes in. So companies manufacturing such drugs will have to cease manufacture on Jan 1 2005. It is only the big companies, like Ranbaxy, that have filed for hundreds of patents that will be able to make use of the new legislations and partake in the TNC onslaught. It is estimated that because of this new Act roughly 25,000 small scale pharmaceutical companies will face closure, thereby throwing thousands out of jobs.

So the new patent act will have disastrous impact on the country. It will result in thousands of closures and job-losses. And it will push drug prices even higher making it absolutely unavailable to the common masses. Ofcourse, the TNC giants and their compradors 'Indian' counterparts will enhance their profits ten-fold. ■■

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Masses Bare Burden of Oil Price Hike to give Windfall Profits to Oil Cos. & Govt.

Bowing to the dictates of the imperialists the earlier government removed the Administered Price Mechanism throwing oil prices to the vagaries of the market. This has affected the prices of petrol, diesel, LPG and kerosene. Besides, each successive government has sought to reduce the subsidies pushing this basic fuel out of the reach of the poor. The worst affected will be the workers, peasants and the middle-classes. Particularly the rise in the price of diesel will affect all, as transport charges of essential commodities will skyrocket. The rise in prices of petrol and LPG will badly hit the middle classes, and organized working-class.

This price hike is nothing but the result of the policies of opening out the country to the imperialists and bowing to their dictates. Firstly, while India has huge untapped resources of oil and natural gas, it is now dependent for 70% of its needs on imports. Secondly, the earlier BJP-led government totally bowed to imperialist dictates by removing controls on the pricing of oil and its products thus making it dependent on the vagaries of the international market. The Congress-led government, backed by the CPM has continued with these same policies. Worse still, it has increased the burden enormously, where oil prices in India are nearly double that of the international prices. Thirdly, the hike in LPG is not linked to the rise in international prices but is due to the government aim to remove the subsidy. Finally, in the entire pricing mechanism, the excise duty on oil if cut or removed will entirely meet the additional costs in the international prices. This the government does not do, as the imperialist dictated policies of 'economic reforms' is intended to push the burden further onto the backs of the masses and not cut government revenue.

Most important of all with the rise in prices of oil it is only the masses who have suffered; the oil companies have seen a massive growth in their profits and the Central government has seen a windfall increase in customs duties from imported oil. The major beneficiaries have been the public sector oil companies and Reliance that control the bulk of the refining. To take just one example — IOC's profits grew by a gigantic Rs.4000 crores (i.e. nearly \$ 1 billion) in the last two year period, from Rs.2884 crores in 2001/02 to Rs.7004 crores in 2003/04. In the same period the price of petrol (Delhi) rose from Rs.26.5 per litre to Rs.39 now. Reliance witnessed an even bigger jumps in profits. In addition, though the government marginally reduced excise duties on imported oil, the net duty on oil products is still around 30%, giving it a massive net revenue of \$10 billion (Rs.45,000 crores) this year, or \$1.1 billion more than expected. **In other words the hike in prices has only gone to fill the coffers of Reliance and the government, at the cost of the living conditions of the people.** It is an out-right loot of the people by the government and big business. The government and big companies are hand-in-glove to rob the masses.

The increase in the present prices is the product of the imperialist dictated economic policies of the present and past governments and NOT merely due to the hike in the international prices — that too, through close collaboration with the revisionist CPI/CPM that is backing the government in power. All the noise made by many an opposition party against it is also a hoax, geared to make political capital out of the issue, as it is only their earlier policies that are being continued by the present government. Also, much of the opposition by various political 'left' formations is merely a part of their vote-

bank politics, as each is demonstrating separately and not building a united movement against the price hike. Their prime aim is the narrow interest of focusing their party banner and not unitedly fighting back the hike. The need of the hour is for all progressive forces in the country to unite to firmly oppose and militantly fight back this price hike.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST) condemned the increase in petrol prices and called for a massive united movement to vehemently oppose this hike. Silence will only lead to a further burden on the masses, as all parties servilely bow to imperialist dictates, whose sole aim is to rob the country's wealth, by increasing the burden on the masses. There is need to expose the hoax of so-called opposition by the CPI/CPM. To cover up their collaboration with the UPA's pro-imperialist policies they resort to the fraud of role-back. In this the government first raises the prices by 20 to 30% more than what is planned and then under so-called 'left' pressure reduces the hike by the 20-30%. So in this case the govt put forward the ridiculous proposal to increase LPG rates by Rs.5 per month. This was then removed and the CPI/CPM was made to look as though it had 'pressurised' the government. Such methods are nothing but tricks to hide the 'left's' total collaboration in pushing through the imperialist-dictated policies of the new government. They do not expose the ugly face of the government who has shifted the entire burden onto the backs of the people, thereby serving the interests of these companies. It is the people that have to put pressure on the rulers by fighting back these anti-people policies in a consistent and thorough-going manner. Token resistance only acts to diffuse the discontent. ■■

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— Editor

Veerappan – A Bandit who turned as a Rebel against state

[Translated from the Tamil original]

Ravindran

On 18th of August, 2004 Veerappan and his three associates Sethkkuli Govindan, Chandra Gowdar, and Sethumani were brutally killed by the Special Task Force of the Tamilnadu police. The Chief of the STF Vijayakumar ADGP, its chief of intelligence wing Senthamarai Kanna SP, and the latest recruit into the STF, SI Velladurai, and the governments of Tamilnadu and Karnataka fabricated a story that Veerappan and his associates were brought for treatment in an ambulance, which was arranged by the STF. When the van reached Papparappatti near Dharmapuri, it was intercepted by STF and the inmates were asked to surrender. When Veerappan started to fire on the police they opened fire in self defense in which all four, including Veerappan died on the spot. But the people of Tamilnadu are not ready to believe this story. As days passed the hollowness of this story begun to get exposed and the real information about this incident started to leak out. This information exposed the sadist tortures and the fascist nature of Jayalalitha and her faithful dogs, the STF.

After this incident the STF started to roll out different stories contradicting each other. Even the bourgeois media raised many questions about the genuineness of the police version by pointing out these contradictions. The STF, till now, has not given any reply to these questions. Firstly, those who have intimate knowledge about Veerappan refute it as “*an unbelievable lie*” that Veerappan was brought out by deception. On the 19th morning, the very next day after the killing, the STF chief Vijayakumar, told reporters that the driver of the ambulance and one more person escaped. Later he retracted by saying that those two men were part of “operation cocoon” who were responsible to bring out Veerappan in the ambulance. SI Velladurai boasted that he went to the forest many times to meet Veerappan posing as a Eelam militant. But the STF chief said that his role was limited to bringing Veerappan out of the forest. One official said that Velladurai threw a hand grenade inside the ambulance, contradicting this, another official said that he threw a teargas shell. Vijayakumar said that three informers including Palani, who were present with Veerappan, refused to

enter the ambulance and escaped. First he claimed that a video camera had been fitted in the ambulance recording all activities of Veerappan and his associates, but later he did not open his mouth on that even after repeated queries from press reporters. To list out all the stories reeled out by the STF, the limited pages in this article are not sufficient. These stories themselves clearly show that the police, in order to cover up its gruesome murder, hastily wrote a new script of the ambulance drama. By doing so they themselves got exposed even more.

On the other hand, evidence related to the incident expose this shoot out story. Firstly, the people in the surrounding area refute the police version that the shoot out continued for about 30 minutes in which hundreds of rounds were fired. They said that they heard firing sound only for a few minutes. Also, large quantity of blood was not found neither in the ambulance nor at the place of the incident. This completely exposes the story of encounter killings. Not only that, the police tried hurriedly to burn the bodies of all four on the same night by threatening the relatives. And they succeeded in burning the bodies of Sethukkuli Govindan, Chandre Gowdar, and Sethumani. Only with the resistance of Veerappan's wife, Muthulakshmi, brother Madaiyan and few activists of democratic and human rights organisations, the body of Veerappan was prevented from cremation. Later, in the early hours, it was buried as per their custom. More importantly, the bodies of the deceased were covered completely except the faces. The relatives, even Veerappan's wife and children were not allowed to open the cloth covering the body. The fascist Jayalalitha govt denied even the fundamental right to perform the last rites according to their customs. Anybody can easily understand the reason behind this. Its aim is to destroy all injury marks on the body suffered due to torture.

Even then, they could not conceal the cruel torture carried out by these blood thirsty beasts as the injury marks on the forehead of Veerappan, and jammed face of Govindan revealed. Information given by the relatives of the deceased and doctors expose the inhuman torture carried out by these human beasts. Limbs of Govindan were crushed and his penis was cut off;

the palms of Veerappan were burnt; there were needle marks on the neck; the hip bone was found crushed. Those who gave these information are not ready to declare openly, because of fear that the fascist Jaya govt and its henchmen, the STF will not hesitate to kill them in an ‘encounter’ and brand them as accomplices of Veerappan. It is interesting to note that the DMK chief Karunanidhi gave a mild threatening statement to the STF and Jaya govt saying that “*he will expose what had happened in the forest*”.

The above said information and the evidences establish that Veerappan and his associates were killed by gruesome torture. More facts provided by the relatives and the people in that area are coming out on this ghastly murder. By examining the information available so far on this incident, it can be concluded that, Veerappan and others were arrested by the STF using sedative drugs fed by those who were very close and trusted by Veerappan, tortured them cruelly and finally killed them. To cover up this cowardly act and show their ‘heroics’ they enacted the unbelievable drama of shoot out in the ambulance. Subsequently, they indulged in the heinous act of burning the bodies and threatening the relatives.

Fact finding team and coercive tactics adopted by the fascist Jaya govt.

In the hope that the ruling classes and the bourgeois media would not expose her govt and no body else would dig this issue more deeply, the Jayalalitha govt made arrangements to celebrate the ‘victory’. But the formation of a Fact Finding Team comprised of Human Rights activists and democrats had created panic that the heinous crime committed by her govt would get exposed before the masses. It is adopting various coercive tactics to pressurize the human rights activists and create hurdles in their effort to bring out the facts. When the Team visited the area, the STF organized the family members of police informers, who were killed by Veerappan, to disturb the team's effort to bring out the facts. In a press meet held at Bangalore, the STF chief Vijayakumar gave an open threat by saying “*we know how to*

deal with the Fact Finding Team". They also started a slanderous attack on this team through their stooges. They issued open threats under some fictitious name in the Brahminical newspaper "Dinamalar" that they will be arrested if they do not stop the fact finding. They intimidated the relatives of the deceased and the people in that area not to divulge any information. None of the STF officials were ready to meet the team and fled away from the area. They did not allow any one to see the ambulance van or any other evidence. Even they refused to give the postmortem report to the wife of Veerappan, as if it is a classified defense secret. The relatives had to move the High Court even to get the postmortem report.

The STF, with the help of some bourgeois intellectuals, put forward the argument of "*can any one demand human rights for a criminal like Veerappan*"? Raising the same argument, news magazines like "Tughlaq", "Dinamalar" and "India Today" which supports almost all fascist measures of the govt, have written editorials condemning the Fact Finding Team. The so-called neutral journals "Hindu" and "Ananda Vikatan", raised question like "*what is the necessity of human rights to Veerappan*"? They adduce prejudices by addressing the Fact Finding Team as "*supporters of Veerappan*".

The main content of this 'civilized' argument is "*civil rights are not applicable to dangerous criminals like Veerappan*". The unstated argument is to deny all fundamental rights guaranteed under Constitution to these "*dangerous criminals*", and it is a justified act to subject them to any kind of inhuman, third degree torture. This argument is very dangerous. This argument is not only against the Constitution, but also supports and justifies state terrorism and fascism. The human rights organizations demanded that the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India are common to all, including to those who are charged with serious criminal charges, that the state cannot violate these rights and the accused must be tried and punished only by a court of law. Even the formal Rights, guaranteed by the Constitution is an illusion for the broad masses. Today, when the state machinery, particularly the police and the army are trampling the rights of the people under their foot, and committing countless atrocities on them, the demands of the human rights organizations are justifiable.

Those props of fascism who criticize

the human rights activists got exposed completely in the case of the arrest of Kanchi swami Jayendra. They make a big hue and cry against the arrest of the 'holy' man Kanchi Shankaracharya, who hired notorious gangsters to kill a poor brahmin in a temple for his personal benefit. They shout from the rooftop that human rights are violated and it is wrong to arrest such a 'holy' man. The RSS, BJP and other saffron gangsters, who scorn off the very concept of human rights, are fuming over the arrest of the 'holy' pontiff of the Sankara mutt. On the contrary, the human rights organizations are demanding that the fundamental rights guaranteed under constitution should be applicable to all; proper legal procedures must be complied with in punishing an accused and prevention of physical and mental torture.

There is another danger in the argument of "*are human rights applicable to criminals*"? Today, when the govt is ruling the country through black laws like the Goonda Act, NSA, POTA the police can frame charges against any one according to its wish, brand them as a dacoit or, rowdy, or terrorist or extremist. Thousands were arrested all over the country and charged as terrorists and extremists under NSA, POTA, etc. Lakhs of people who are detained under the goonda (prevention) Act have been acquitted as innocents. Under such circumstances raising questions like "*are criminals entitled for human rights*" is nothing but giving license to the police/govt to arrest, torture and kill by branding any one a criminal.

This argument is not confined to this. The Hindu fascist gangsters and the Congress are demanding that human rights are not applicable to cross border 'terrorists'. The same argument is extended to the Naxalites and other militants belonging to national liberation movements, who are waging armed struggle for the liberation of the oppressed masses and nationalities. Tomorrow this can be extended to a trade unionist or a Dalit activist or a feminist or any one who is fighting genuinely against exploitation and oppression. As the growth of fascist forces increases this argument will be extended to newer and newer sections of the population and finally reach a situation where there will be no democracy or human rights to any one other than the fascists. It is an immediate task of all the democratic forces to expose and defeat such fascist arguments. As part of this, it is not only inevitable but also essential to expose the

human rights violation, and to demand punishment of the guilty police personnel who were involved in this gruesome murder of Veerappan and three others.

The govt and the mass media have created an image for many years that "*Veerappan is a notorious criminal and a gruesome murderer*". In this background the fascist Jayalalitha gang and the mercenary chieftains like Vijayakumar and Walter Devaram have expected that the people of Tamilnadu will celebrate the killing of Veerappan, who was a nightmare to the police over many years. Except these gangsters, people of the state did not celebrate this cowardly act. Ruling class parties and the mass media expressed their support for the killing. But the attitude of the people of Tamilnadu, particularly the people in Veerappan's area has shocked the ruling classes. Bourgeois intellectuals were shocked by the spontaneous sympathy wave generated in support of Veerappan. They accuse the mass media, which projected Veerappan as a hero as responsible for such sentiment among the people. What is the reason behind the hero's image and the sympathy wave after his killing among the masses? To find out the answer to this question, we have to examine the clashes and encounters (real encounters) between the STF and Veerappan in the last fifteen years and the monstrous atrocities committed by the STF on the people of that area, particularly on the adivasis. Let us briefly look into this.

How Veerappan, a criminal turned into an anti-state rebel

The story of Veerappan has been focused many times by the bourgeois media in Tamilnadu. It is not our aim to narrate this again. All of them focussed mainly on poaching, smuggling, kidnapping and the killing activities of Veerappan. But they did not narrate the history of his daring fight against a specially trained joint force of Tamilnadu, Karnataka equipped with modern weapons, by adopting guerrilla tactics. He continued his fight for the last two decades against the state forces, including the para-military forces, like the BSF and CRPF on some occasions, numbering about two thousand under 'normal' operations, and up to four thousand during the peak period. The media does not bother to go deeply into these reasons and the impact it had created. In fact, the hero image of Veerappan is the outcome of that fight. If Veerappan continued his smuggling and poaching

activities instead of fighting against the state, he could have become an MLA or even an 'honorable' minister. Smugglers and poachers are not considered as despicable criminals in this social system. The police and forest departments are not their enemies. They are also the partners in this lucrative business. In fact, the underworld dons and criminals are created and protected by these anti-people officials. With Veerappan dead all these mafia stand to make fortunes from the forest wealth — just the exquisite granite stones from this forest is expected to earn about Rs. 500 crores a year only in exports.

Veerappan differs from other criminals specifically due to his decision to confront the state directly and dare to direct his guns against the police. This was the turning point in his life. He refused to surrender to police and lived in the forest as a fugitive. This has completely changed the life of Veerappan. He continued to pursue the same until his death. The reason could be either to avenge the rape and killing of his sister and brother, or to take revenge for atrocities committed on his close associates or even it could be out of business rivalry or a composite of all. But ultimately he became a rebel against the state. His rebellion was not a conscious decision based on some political outlook, but circumstantial. Veerappan who was a sharp shooter, having excellent knowledge of the terrain where he operated, organised his own group and remained inside the forest for his own survival after killing many police and forest officials belonging to Tamilnadu and Karnataka. After these two governments launching a manhunt, it has become inevitable for him to continue this armed resistance, which was sustained for two decades. This long blood stained struggle has created the present image of Veerappan.

In the last fifteen years there were many encounters between the STF and Veerappan's group. At one stage the strength of his group increased up to hundred men. But later only a handful of men remained with him. Despite this, it is an irrefutable fact that the joint forces of the STF could not defeat him in any of the direct encounters. By utilizing the advantage of vast expanse and difficult terrain, by adopting simple guerrilla tactics, the courage and determination to confront big forces had made Veerappan's group almost invincible. Although, Veerappan's tactics like ambush, usage of landmines, raids on police station, were aimed at self-

defense, he carried out some stunning attacks on the STF. Even when the STF surrounded his group he launched counter offensives and inflicted serious losses to the STF. In the real encounters the STF suffered more loss of life. From ordinary policemen to SPs, were the victims of Veerappan. In short, Veerappan, with his knowledge of the forest, and by adopting simple guerrilla tactics not only protected himself from the joint onslaught of the TN and Karnataka police but also inflicted serious losses to them. Due to this heroic fight against the state armed forces he became a "legendary fighter" amongst the people in the forest, who despise the police due to the indescribable atrocities suffered at the hands of these hooligans in uniform.

Moreover, the people in the forest are not against Veerappan because he did not kill or harass any body other than police informers and gave lots of money to the ordinary people, above all these, the nightmarish attacks on the STF has enhanced his stature. Since, he did not have any outlook on the liberation of the people, he did not have close relations with them. He built a network to fulfill his needs based on money and close association.

During mid 90s, different groups having allegiance to Tamil national liberation have joined Veerappan, some for their own protection and some others for the sake of money. The TNLA, under Maran's leadership, stayed with him in the forest and became popular during the Kannada actor Rajkumar kidnap episode. Veerappan was very serious in helping those who suffered at the hands of the STF. He wanted to provide some solace to the victims of the STF and the release of TADA prisoners. This wish of Veerappan and the adventurist aspirations of the Tamil nationalist groups coincided in the Rajkumar kidnapping. Later, the kidnap of Nagappa, an ex-minister of Karnataka, and his killing by the STF of TN followed.

During this period, Veerappan was introduced to various political ideas. The movement led by the LTTE and the armed struggle by the Naxalite organizations had an impact on him. Veerappan, who inevitably took up arms against the state, thought it would be respectable to become a fighter for the cause of the masses. But it cannot be said conclusively that his idea to become a militant was politically profound or there was clarity regarding his old methods as a brigand. To sum up, he had mixed ideas, such as the influence of his old criminal methods, helping the victims of STF terror, and to transform

himself into a militant. But he was firm in his fight against the state.

The armed confrontation between Veerappan and the STF continued for the last fifteen years and the fall of the Veerappan group illustrates two important lessons for any one who wants to build armed struggle for the liberation of the masses. Firstly, regarding utilization of terrain. He could survive and sustain the attacks of the STF for fifteen years with the help of the terrain, even without a deep mass base. This illustrates that in the war against the state, a weak revolutionary force can sustain for a long period and develop the movement and its forces with the better understanding and utilization of the terrain. Secondly, in the war against the state it is impossible to grow or sustain without a deep mass base, which is the real bastion. As it is already mentioned, the anti-state struggle of Veerappan did not have a correct political orientation or mass base. Although the people had sympathy, they did not rally behind him. Hence, he had to depend on his network, ultimately which led to his fall. His fifteen years of anti-state fight was wiped out completely by the STF. This clearly shows that, even if the terrain played an advantageous role, without the mass base and their conscious participation it is certain to collapse. This is the basic concept of Mao's people's war.

STF — pervert, hideous armed gangsters

When you look at Veerappan, it is inevitable to look at its other side—the STF. The STF formed by the TN and Karnataka governments in the 90s to nab Veerappan, have committed innumerable crimes against the people. The horrifying terror created by these forces in the name of capturing Veerappan and utilizing the isolated environment of the forest makes one's blood boil. The lives of the adivasis and other oppressed people in that area had become a hell.

The STF had snatched away the basic livelihood of the people by seizing all activities such as grazing of cattle, collections of fire-wood, ferrying in the river, etc on which the people depend. The STF, like a feudal lord, looted the people's meagre assets like cattle, fowls, money and also forced them to do free labour in their camps by threatening that they would be included in "Veerappan's case". The STF was nick named as "bandits of sheep" by the local people. Not only that, more than hundred person were booked under TADA (more

than 50% of them were widows, whose spouses were killed by the STF) and jailed for many years. It is significant to note that most of them were released by the govt only after Veerappan put forward it as a condition for the release of Rajkumar.

In addition, the inhuman gang rapes committed by the STF of both states, which put mankind to shame, is part of the dark history of the STF. The testimony made by the people before the Sadashivam Commission, which was set up to probe the atrocities committed by the STF, explains the gory chapter of the STF. Recently, Mr. Balamurugan, an advocate and human rights activist, published a book "Solagar doddi" (hamlet of Soligas) which picturises some of the loathsome atrocities.

The torture camps, particularly the MM Hills camp, put the Abu Gharib prison to shame. Not only the STF camps, the whole forest was turned into a massive torture camp. In the name of hunting for Veerappan, it had become a regular feature of the STF to arrest any one on flimsy grounds, subject them to severe torture for many days and finally declare that he was killed in an 'encounter'. The male chauvinist sexual assault on women would put any one to tears. Rape was a common practice of the STF. They considered that it was their birth right to enter into adivasi hamlets and rape any one they wished. Gang rapes in front of their husband/son/father; subjecting female children and even old age women to sexual torture; parading women in the naked in front of the family members and forcing them to watch; passing electricity in the genital organs and many more such sadist tortures were committed on these poor masses. All these were committed under the direct supervision of high-level officers, particularly STF chiefs Walter Dewaram and Shankar Bidri. They directly indulged in various types of torture, including rape. Many women were kept as sexual slaves for many years in these camps. Another important aspect to be noted is that the STF formed to nab Veerappan was regularly deployed to suppress the movement led by the erstwhile CPI (ML) People's War party in Dharmapuri. Also, Com. Ravindran was killed by the STF in a fake encounter. It is just an example how the STF will be deployed to suppress the revolutionary movement.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the STF of both states were running a blood-thirsty rule. Their gruesome regime was no less than the rule of Hitler's Nazi forces, Sinhalese chauvinist forces, US forces in

Iraq, Indian mercenary forces in Kashmir and the North-Eastern states. The atrocities of the STF were not just human rights violation. It was a crime committed against humanity.

The fascist Jaya govt and the Karnataka govt presented awards and rewards worth crores of rupees to these cruel chieftains and other gangsters. The blood of innocent people and the tears of rape victims are going as rewards to these rogues. Any one with the minimum of human values cannot tolerate this ghastly carnival. It is not surprising that a fascist like Jayalalitha, praises such heinous crimes against innocent people.

Although the fascists are praising the mercenaries and celebrate their victory the people are not participating in that. The consistent anti state struggle by Veerappan has made him a legend in the eyes of the people of TN, particularly among the oppressed masses in that area. On the other hand, it is not surprising that the STF, which had committed monstrous crimes and cowardly killed Veerappan and his associates, gained their hatred.

Let us organize against the atrocities of the STF and the growing fascist repression

On the one hand, the fascist Jaya govt is glad over the fall of Veerappan. Other ruling class parties are praising her, as "*the crimes of Veerappan have come to an end*". On the other hand, the Jaya govt is trying to bury the horrendous crimes committed by the joint forces of the STF. The rewards for the murderous force, is nothing but the recognition of its illegal terror campaign against the innocent oppressed masses for the last fifteen years. The TN govt since many years has opposed the probe of the STF for its excesses and punishment for its crimes. The Sadashivam Commission of inquiry was put to rest by the governments of TN and Karnataka. No case was registered against the murderers, including the murder of Veerappan, committed by the STF. The sexual violence was not even under the purview of the law. On the whole, these two state governments conspired to bury these crimes once and for all.

In TN, the Jaya govt, has built a special police wing specializing in fake encounters. It is adopting fake encounter as a weapon. Vijayakumar, Sailendra babu, Velladurai, Ashok Kumar Das and such other merciless killers are focused as heroes of the police force. It announced rewards for the killing of Naxalbari revolutionaries, Muslim and

nationalist forces and even a few rowdies. Further, they are encouraged to undertake such 'special assignments'. As part of increasing fascisation, 'encounter' killings, custodial deaths, sexual violence in police station are also increasing. These unlawful crimes are being institutionalized and are duly rewarded by the govt. Even after 'accomplishing' the task of hunting down Veerappan, the STF is not disbanded. Instead, the govt has announced that STF operations in the forest area would continue. It only means that the atrocities and oppression on the oppressed masses in that area will continue.

In this situation, punishment for the illegal offences committed by the STF and disbanding of this force is a justified democratic demand. To build a movement based on these demands is a democratic task. This should be part of a broader struggle against the increasing fascisation and violence by the police. It is an immediate task to build a democratic movement based on these issues throughout TN, particularly in the areas affected by this. There is a need for all the revolutionary forces, democratic organizations, human rights organizations and others to organize and unify the affected masses in the path of struggles.

It is inevitable to rally all democratic forces, but it is, only the revolutionary movement that can provide the correct, final solution for the fascist dictatorship and offences committed by the STF. The offences against the people committed by the state terrorist forces should be avenged by the people's war. The decadent exploitative social system and this cruel oppression are twins. Most of the people who suffered in the Veerappan episode are the backward adivasis and other oppressed masses. The state, which protects the interests of the big comprador capitalist-big landlord combine, suppresses any resistance or refusal of the oppressed masses to be subjugated. Whether it is AP or Jharkhand, or Kashmir, or the North-Eastern states or any other struggle against the state, the state removes its democratic mask and unleashes a reign of terror. It can be eradicated only by overthrowing this exploitative social system, and in its place establishing a New democratic society through people's war waged by the oppressed masses. The people of TN, in order to put an end to this state terror, must punish the guilty and to liberate themselves from this exploitation and oppression must rally under the Maoist path of protracted people's war. ■■

Back to Square One: Reenactment of Fascist Raj in AP

Nitin

Events in AP had turned out exactly in the manner predicted by us in these pages in the last issue of *People's March*— that the YSR government is reluctant to hold the second round of talks after seeing the massive response of the masses to the Maoists when they came out of their forest base for the first round of talks in October last. The December 6 statement by the Home Minister Jana Reddy at a media conference in Hyderabad, placed the official thinking of the government amply clear with regard to future talks.

It was the first time that the Home Minister had come out with the admission that the atmosphere in the state was not conducive for holding the second round of Talks with the Naxalites and that one has to wait until the situation improved. The Chief Minister had been saying ever since the end of the first round of talks, that is, for over a month-and-a-half, that there was no place for violence in a “democracy”, that the government will not allow the Naxalites to move with arms in the villages, that police will adopt the necessary legal measures if the Naxalites distribute the lands or take law into their own hands to solve people’s problems, and that the second round of talks would take place only if the Naxalites agreed to discuss the laying down of arms as the principal agenda, and so on. He fretted why an elected government should exist if armed Naxalites try to solve the people’s problems on their own.

Addressing the district collectors’ conference on December 3, the Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy, spelt out a new policy with regard to the ongoing talks. He stated that talks or dialogue was a political process while taking effective measures to maintain Law & Order was the duty of the police, that is, the two are unrelated! In his new lexicon, cease-fire has no meaning and talks are supposed to continue even if the police machinery continues its offensive or preemptive operations with the aim of maintaining Law & Order!! Thus he made the government’s official policy clear that the old fascist rule will go on if the Naxalites do not give up arms. The same old policy of the ousted Chandrababu Naidu will now be in place, no matter what the promises made to the

people of the state were during the recent elections, and what the people opine. YSR even hinted that the mediators need not be present in the next round of talks. This was because they had been pressurizing the government to implement the demands placed by the Naxalites during the first round and also to hold further talks without any conditions.

Among the reasons cited by the Home Minister for coming to the conclusion that the next round may not take place until a conducive atmosphere is created were: extortion of huge amounts of money by the Naxalites, roaming freely with arms in the villages and intimidating people by use of force, laying landmines, holding people’s courts, occupying lands, and so on.

Back to Square One:

Thus just three months after the first massive meeting organized by the then CPI(ML)[PW] at Mogilicharla in Warangal on the occasion of the July 28 Martyrs’ Day, which showed that the new Congress government had to bow to people’s wishes and bring some democratic space in the state by lifting the 12-year-old ban on the PW, the YSR government has once again begun to tread along the beaten track: throttle the fundamental rights to freedom of speech and assembly, and resort to police measures to suppress the revolutionary movement. Though the notorious Greyhounds and the SIB goons have not yet begun their professional job of tortures and killings of the revolutionaries in the name of fake encounters, things seem to be gradually moving in that direction.

While the recent firings in Mahboobnagar, Rudrangi in Karimnagar and Machapur in Warangal, creation of the fake organization called Adivasi Liberation Tigers by the Warangal police and enacting the drama of proposing the handing over of covert agent Laxman to the CPI(Maoist) district secretary Yadanna and the agent’s supposed escape subsequently from the ALT to fall into the police hands, and such other incidents show the changes occurring fast at the ground level, the statements of Chief Minister YSR, Home Minister Jana Reddy and the top police brass ever since the conclusion of the first round of Talks, show clear change in the policy of the

Congress government in the state. And the obstruction of the peaceful rally in Delhi and the ban on the Patna rally organized on the occasion of the formation of the new party—CPI(Maoist)—shows the policy changes are taking place with the clear direction of the central government.

Arrests, filing of false cases, deploying covert agents into the revolutionary organizations with the purpose of eliminating the Party leaders, building the informer base in the rural areas, refusing permission to hold meetings and stopping the people from attending the meetings and rallies even when permission was given to hold them, demolishing the martyr columns erected by the masses in memory of their beloved leaders—all these have now become commonplace under the YSR raj. In spite of its claims to be different from the predecessor fascist raj of Chandrababu Naidu and its treatment of the issue of Naxalism as a socio-political-economic one rather than a law & order issue, the YSR government has begun to traverse the same old path and is looking at the issue of Naxalism as a Law & Order issue.

Why has the YSR government begun to clamp down on the democratic rights to hold peaceful rallies and meetings within less than six months after it had come to power and three months after the first public meeting was organized by the PW?

The real reasons for the turn-about in government policy:

The fact is that the very massive turn-outs at the meetings from Mogilicharla on 28th July to Guthikonda Bilam on 11th October, had unnerved the rulers who had always been saying that the Naxalites had no mass base and the police bosses continuously claim that the Naxalites are finished. The Congress government, representing the comprador big bourgeois-big landlord classes and totally subservient to the imperialists, would not have ventured into talks with the Naxalites, even setting aside the strong objections from a powerful section of the police bosses, had it not been for the political compulsions arising out of the promises made by the Congress party ever since 2002, particularly during Election 2004, that raised the expectations of the people for the restoration of the democratic rights that had been completely trampled

upon by the TDP regime of Chandrababu Naidu.

The then CPI(ML)[PW] came to the political assessment in May 2002 that there was no other option before the new government in AP but to declare cessation of hostilities for a few months and to hold talks. Though it knew that nothing tangible would come out of talks, it would certainly provide an opportunity to the Party to take the revolutionary politics to the masses and to strengthen the mass base in the rural as well as urban areas to a considerable extent. Thus the state Party leadership in AP under the guidance of the CC, prepared itself for the political battle that had to be waged through the medium of talks. And indeed the entire talks process did provide a good opportunity to the widespread dissemination of the Party's programme and policies on various issues faced by the country.

But to the ruling classes it became a nightmare. The overwhelming response of the masses all over the state to the calls of the PW, the massive show of strength in at least a score or so meetings held in just three months, the construction of over 250 stupams (martyrs' columns) in the state and the mass involvement for the construction, the extension of the activities of the revolutionaries to newer areas, fear of increasing recruitment, growing political prestige and organizational strength of the CPI(Maoist), the credibility acquired by the CPI(Maoist) as the only real alternative before the masses today—all these had made the ruling classes to sit up and rethink about the whole idea of going to further rounds of talks. In fact, if one sees the fretting and fuming of YSR, one is reminded of the proverbial prince and the dragon story when the talks actually began. His heart failed in the very first round and has been seeking to cancel further rounds by placing impossible conditions on the Naxalites.

If left unchecked, the growing tide of mass mobilizations may well become a mighty tornado endangering the very policies on which the survival of the ruling classes depends. As it is, the media had declared that the only opposition to the ruling party in the state is the PW and that the TDP and BJP have actually become nominal. The only party with a significant mass base, cadre strength and credibility among the people at large, is the CPI(Maoist). Unless it is suppressed, it is

not possible to suppress the militant mass struggles that are beginning to rise.

All ruling parties till date had only thought of bloody suppression of the revolutionary movement and all people's movements. Banning the party and mass organizations, curbs on all open activity, eliminating the revolutionaries in fake encounters, are all resorted to in order to deprive the people of genuine leadership and allow the filthy parliamentary politics to rule the roost. The present government has no alternative than implementing the same old methods. Its refusal for permission to the meetings such as the one on November 16th to declare the formation of the new Party—CPI(Maoist), is a prelude to the impending state terror.

The very next day after the completion of the first round of talks, the Chief Minister of AP advanced his new line of argument intended to scuttle the future talks. The next round of talks would take place only if the issue of laying down arms is discussed as the principal agenda, so ran his argument. The state cabinet, which met on October 30, ratified the proposal of the Chief Minister and several cabinet ministers appealed to the Naxalites to lay down arms and to "join the mainstream". They reiterated Chandrababu Naidu's jargon ad nauseum, fumed that the Naxalites were taking the law into their own hands by occupying the lands and distributing to the rural poor that is, taking over the duties of the government, and a few warned that the law would take its course if the Naxalites tried to seize the land illegally. They appealed to the Naxalites to stop planting the red flags in the lands and that the government would distribute the surplus lands after identifying these through the land commission which would be set up soon. The argument is so worn-out, disgusting, that immediately several organizations and individuals began condemning this attitude. The mediators too declared that it was an unwarranted move and asked the government to retract from the new position. They said that people's issues should be the main agenda in the next round of talks.

The PW-JS replied immediately stating that they were not averse to go for the next round of talks if the people's issues formed the agenda. They warned YSR not to indulge in cheap gimmicks and to implement the demands placed by the Naxalites in the first round of talks. They

also stated that the land rightfully belonged to the people and it was just to seize the land and distribute it to the poor. They gave two months time to the government to distribute the surplus land after which people would themselves resume the confiscation of the land even if it means waging a bitter battle with the police forces. They reaffirmed that "Land to the Tiller" is linked to the question of political power and that it is only through armed struggle that "*Land to the tiller and power to the people*" can be achieved. However, they demanded that the government should at least distribute the surplus land declared by its own tribunals over the decades.

The purpose with which the YSR government had cunningly brought the arms issue into the agenda of the second round of talks is to scuttle the talks without overtly saying so. By asking for the impossible, it was clear that the Naxalites would refuse to sit for the talks and thus the government could absolve itself of any blame for the failure of the talks. Clearly, the YSR government wants to wash off its hands by placing the blame on the Naxalites.

Simultaneously, the government has been trying to restrict the meetings, and where they are allowed, the police are ensuring that the trucks and other vehicles are kept out of the reach of the Naxalites. For the November 16th meeting in Hyderabad, for instance, in almost all the districts the lorry owners were threatened that they would face dire consequences if they hired out their vehicles to the Naxalites for transporting people to the meetings. The police asked the owners to deposit their lorries at the police stations one day before the meeting. And, in spite of all these steps, if there were any vehicles going to Hyderabad on that day, they were stopped on the way, all the passengers were asked to get down and the vehicles were seized. Hundreds of such vehicles were seized on the 15th and 16th of November throughout the state by the police.

The fear of the government is that if the situation is allowed to develop unchecked, the masses would openly rally under the banner of the Maoists for every problem of theirs and the government and all the parliamentary parties would become irrelevant. Already, people are coming forward to openly associate with the Maoists having lost all the fear that the rulers through the police thugs had induced

since so long. The crisis in the state and the Congress government is also growing rapidly. It is impossible for the government to fulfill the demands placed by the Naxalites during the first round of talks even though these are within the limits of the Constitution. After a month of dithering, the YSR govt announced amidst much fanfare that it would distribute one lakh acres of land to the poor, 50 per cent of this to the dalits on January 26th. While the demand of the Naxalites was to distribute from the minimum estimate of 84 lakh acres to one crore and twenty lakh acres. Thus what the govt wants to give is only less than one per cent of that demanded by the Naxalites. That too the bulk of this land has already been shown to be uncultivable and large investments are put in. Moreover, the urban lands encroached by the bigwigs will not be touched by this govt. It is this reluctance of the big comprador bourgeois-big landlord government under the dictates

of the imperialists, that is behind the reluctance to go for future talks and to come down with a heavy hand.

Other problems too are plaguing the Congress government such as the separate Telangana issue, controversy over almost all the irrigation projects that are announced with fanfare and some are rejected by the Courts, the difficulty in getting the 46,000 crores of rupees for the projects and the consequent mass protests that are likely to develop very soon, the people's aspirations for land which the govt cannot fulfil, and so on.

The popularity of the Naxalites is growing with the several issues they had been talking up and distribution of vast amounts of land (details of these struggles will be given in the next issue).

"Make Trouble, Fail, Make Trouble again, Fail again,.....until their ultimate doom"—such is the course taken by the reactionaries the world over, as correctly

pointed out by comrade Mao.

YSR is pursuing the same course. After making promises during the elections to restore democratic rights and hold unconditional talks with the Naxalites, the Congress government led by YSR began to dilly-dally by pushing Clause 7 as a condition for holding talks. But when it faced a tide of opposition to this unreasonable, illogical and absurd condition, it had to turn tail. It was compelled by public pressure to conduct the first round of talks without conditions. Now the YSR government is making trouble once again for holding the second round of talks. And this time around, it has placed even more ridiculous conditions, that 'laying down arms' (and not just the 7th Clause!) should be the principal agenda during the talks. By insisting upon such an impossible and virtually non-negotiable point for the talks, the YSR government had gone deeper into the morass.

The Failed Police Plots

The Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) and the police bosses of certain districts in AP, who had become notoriously lawless under Chandrababu Naidu's fascist regime, have been feeling restless ever since the government had declared a three-month cease-fire on June 16 and extended it by another three months from September 16th. In fact, even before the declaration of the first cease-fire, the Warangal police chief, Srinivasa Reddy, who not infrequently appears on the press fretting and fuming against the Naxalites and openly threatening that the law would take its own course (read the lawlessness of fake encounters for which the Warangal police are especially notorious as seen in the Padmakshamma Hills encounter under the murderer former SP, Nalini Prabhath) to deal with the misdeeds of the Naxalites, staged the Voddugudem incident. Laxman, a squad member, was converted into a covert agent and was instructed to kill Yadanna, the secretary of the district committee of the then CPI(ML)[People's War], by one Tirupathi, the Circle Inspector of police of Govindarao Pet, on June 11, 2004.

The scab, Laxman, shot at Yadanna and other squad members at the dead of the night, and escaped with cash and arms to the protective arms of the police who were waiting nearby. Two squad members died while comrade Yadanna was injured. The police had tried in vain to vitiate the atmosphere by staging the Voddugudem incident, but it had failed to bring back the brutal days of the TDP regime. The democratic organizations and individuals condemned the police misdeed and an enquiry was conducted.

The police, however, continued their intrigues and schemes. They attacked a meeting of the Pratighatana group of Naxalites who were settling a dispute with another group of naxalites of the CP(USI). In the exchange of fire one armed reserve constable, the gunman of the CI Tirupathi, died. It was alleged by the relatives of the constable that he died due to the CI's carelessness. The Warangal police staged a big demonstration demanding the dismissal of the CI and action against him. It was said that the CI had gone for the operation against the Naxalites in the Kamalapur Rayon factory in the expectation of getting a huge amount of money. Unable to calm down the protesting policemen and their families, the government announced the transfer of the corrupt CI, compensation of ten lakhs of rupees to the dead constable, and a job for the son of the constable. Then the police chief became even more mad and in the last week of November, he floated a new organization and named it the Adivasi Liberation Tigers which was supposed to fight for the rights of the adivasis. This fake organization issued a statement in November stating that the covert agent Laxman was in its custody and it was ready to hand him over to the district secretary of the PW, Yadanna. It shed crocodile tears for the unfortunate incident that took place in Voddugudem and said that it wanted to help the PW to take revenge for the incident by handing over Laxman so that Yadanna could kill him. Knowing clearly that this was a police plot, Yadanna issued a statement exposing the drama and asserted that the ALT was a police offspring and asked the fake organization to kill Laxman if it really had concern for justice. And in less than 24 hours, as expected, the ALT declared that the covert had escaped from their hands and was arrested by the police. The police too produced Laxman before the media with the shameless liar, Srinivasa Reddy, explaining that the police found the covert agent lying with injuries in Mulugu forests.

The Struggle by Revolutionaries in Chennai and Vellore Prisons in Tamilnadu

Swarna

In November, 2002 at Oothangarai of Dharmapuri district in Tamilnadu, Com. Siva was killed in a fake encounter and more than 20 comrades including two juvenile and 6 women were arrested and treated in an inhuman manner. The fascist Jaya foisted POTA against them. The juveniles were released after much legal battle. In Tamilnadu except the revolutionaries all who were arrested under POTA were released on bail. But the bail petition of revolutionaries is pending before the High Court for the past seven months without any progress. The prosecution is not ready for the argument and the Judges are not ready to even take up the case. The Fascist Jayalalitha government uses all dirty tricks to delay the bail.

In the last parliamentary general election the UPA alliance under the DMK used the POTA issue to effectively drub Jayalalitha in the elections. Both in the All India context and also in Tamilnadu context POTA issue was used as a vote catcher by the UPA alliance. After winning the election the UPA government was singing different tunes at different times on the POTA issue. In this situation the UPA government at the Center, after much pressure from democratic forces and civil right organisations and the general masses, has withdrawn POTA. But, it has announced that it will not withdraw the cases of thousands who have been imprisoned under POTA.

Under these circumstances the revolutionaries in prison decided to undergo an indefinite fast to **withdraw all POTA cases and scrapping the Act with retrospective effect.** As part of the struggle they underwent a one day token hunger fast on 24.8.2004 and they continued their **indefinite fasting from 26.08.2004, which continued for twenty days.** Comrades. Thanga Pandian, Muthu, Suresh, Sathishkumar, Sakthivel, Manivasagam, Vinayagam, Reeta Mary, Reena Mary and Anandhi started their fast on Aug. 26. On Sept. 2, Comrades. Duraisingavel, Palanisamy, Madhian and Ravi joined with them.

After two days, the 'Q' branch officers came for negotiations. Comrades refused to talk with these mercenaries. After which the DIG of prison tried his best to break the struggle by pleading with them. But his attempts failed. The state administration tried to confuse the comrades talking about the contradiction between the state and centre and threatened that forged case of attempt to suicide will be foisted against them. But these threats were thrown into the dustbin. All the efforts of state mercenaries were futile. The comrades continued their fast steadfastly, with determination inspite of their bad health

The health condition of comrades worsened day by day. On the third day, the health condition of women comrades deteriorated much. On the seventh day two male comrades got bleeding in their motions. On the nineteenth day one male comrade got high fever and could not speak. And many comrades could not even walk. Nearly each lost six to twelve kg.. Comrades who were under fast were kept in solitary confinement in cramped cells without ventilation. Even after seeing all these, the Jaya government refused to admit male comrades to the General hospital. The Human Right Organisation filed a Writ before the High Court, in Chennai to save the life of prisoners, but the fascist Jaya government refused to give them proper medical treatment.

There was solidarity from all walks of the people throughout the country for this just struggle. The prisoners in Bihar underwent a hunger fast in support of the demands raised by the revolutionaries in Chennai and Vellore prison. In Salem and Ponammallee prisons of Tamilnadu, there was a hunger fast for the same. In Tamilnadu, Civil Rights organisations and democrats held demonstrations at Salem, Thirupoor, Madhurai in support of this demand. Throughout Tamilnadu many revolutionary and democratic organisations took up propoganda in support of this struggle. Except the ruling class parties and other parliamentary parties, all other organisations openly supported the struggle. After the initial blocking out of this struggle news, the bourgeois media had to cover this news daily. Even the electronic media had to give coverage to the struggle. Throughout Tamilnadu the general masses were eagerly following the struggle and had shown immense sympathy for the revolutionaries who were waging a brave struggle in confinement. Especially the bold denial of forced drips by women comrades was appreciated by the masses. The human right activists here received solidarity messages from all over India almost daily. The civil rights organisations in Chattisgarh, Bombay, calcutta, Delhi, AP issued press statements in their respective states in support of the struggle. In Delhi, AIFTU, AIPRF, DSU, FDI, FDS, ICTU, IFTU, LOKRAJ SANGATHAN, NEOHR, PSU, PUDR, SAMAJI AYAYA MORCHA, AFPR, VIKALAP, YUVA BHARAT organised a dharna in front of Tamilnadu Bhawan on September, 8 between 2pm and 4pm. The struggle voices of comrades echoed even in BBC. There was solidarity messages from USA, Turkey, Anti Imperialist camp, Austria. The eminent democrats, Justice Rajinder Sachar, Ex-member of Parliament, Surender Mohan, Democratic right Activist Goutam Navlakha, Dr. Tripta Wahi met the Home

Minister of India on 10th Sept., 2004 submitted a memorandum demanding immediate intervention in this struggle by the centre. Since there was no positive response from him, the team met Chair-person of the POTA Review Committee. He also told the same old story. The hunger fast ended after the civil rights team led by Justice Rajinder Sachar assured them to continue the struggle outside the prison walls.

This struggle has exposed the hypocrisy of the UPA government and it became clear to the masses that the promise of withdrawing POTA by the UPA before its expiry is nothing but the fraud. The struggle by revolutionaries has exposed the democratic mask of the UPA government.

At the same time the struggle has exposed the fascist regime of Jaya. The struggle had much political impact among the people of Tamilnadu

Though the struggle started initially within the walls of prison, it ignited the furies of democrats and civil rights organisations and common people. It proved that though the revolutionaries are behind bars, their revolutionary spirit will make many to march along with them. **The struggle of revolutionaries in Tamilnadu prison rent the air. It has become a public issue and it became a part of agenda in almost all civil rights organisation in India.**

All UPA partners in Tamilnadu who kept quiet cunningly during the struggle were forced to talk about this later. The cunning old fox Karunanidhi was compelled to issue statements to withdraw all POTA cases including the cases on revolutionaries. Even the so-called martyr of POTA Vaiko had to ask for the repeal of POTA with retrospective effect. The revisionist crocodiles are also now shedding tears for those languishing in prison. It is a political victory of determined revolutionaries who were ready to take the bull by the horns.

The Fascist Jayalalitha government tried to break the struggle and also the support of democrats and human right organisations by threats and force. But the steadfastness and determination of the revolutionaries and the commitment of those supporting the struggle prevailed. Jayalalitha faced yet another defeat and isolation at the hands of the revolutionaries. She had banned the erstwhile CPI (ML) (PW) and revolutionary mass organisations fearing the lapse of POTA would give it a chance to reach out to the masses. She is continuing the crude repression to wipe out the CPI (ML) (PW) [now CPI(Maoist)] since the last two years. But she failed in all her attempts. History has showed that the revolution and revolutionaries cannot be wiped out by repression. **It is sure that the dreams of Jaya will be smashed by the people of Tamilnadu.** ■■

Continued from page 28

own eyes peaceful people being arrested and forced into vehicles for taking them to various police stations of the state. What was not allowed in the public view was carried out within the walls of the police stations where revolutionary speeches, dramas and songs were staged.

The vast yard of the police lines of Maurice Nagar swarmed with a sea of red flags, banners and mottos. Sky renting slogans hailing the formation of Communist Party of India (Maoist) reverberated in the whole air inside the police compounds. The prisoners hailed the ongoing revolution in Nepal and condemned the widespread police repression on the revolutionary and nationality and national liberation movements going on in India. A message by the revolutionary poet Varvara Rao was read out hailing the unity of the revolutionary movements and coming into being of the communist party of India (Maoist). In a way, the police act of highhandedness was turned into its opposite by the enthusiastic revolutionary masses. The whole episode became an inspiring experience for them.

The people who had been detained also included 250 Nepali comrades who had come from various parts of North India. The arrested included Varvara Rao, Raj Kishor, Hari Singh "Tarq", Sukhwinder Kaur, and Tara Singh. Here too the camp where the volunteers had been camping for the last eight days was surrounded by the police and they were banned from going outside for the whole day on November 25.

The Solidarity Committee decided to take the ban orders on the processions and public meetings to the court of the people to expose the denial of democratic right of freedom of expression to the forces who are committed to the cause of people.

On the one hand the government of India says that Naxalism is a socio-economic problem which has to be tackled socially, economically and politically, while on the other hand, it attacks the people who support the revolutionary struggles, branding it as a law and order problem. Though it says that they should come into the mainstream and overground yet its actual attitude is to disallow any kind of legal and open opportunity to the supporters of the revolutionary movements to air their views in public. It is a gross travesty of promises, proving their falsity, and deliberate attack on the fundamental right of freedom of expression.

This exposes the undemocratic nature of the rulers which do not allow the

representatives of the people's forces to openly express their opinions in the public. But the rulers are free to carry on anti-people acts at the behests of imperialists. They freely use the state machinery against the people. So, the people are justified in questioning the 'integrity-honesty' of the rulers.

The people throughout Bihar and Jharkhand protested against the brutal handling of the Patna Rally by observing a black day on the international day of Democratic and Human Rights on December 10. Many public programmes and meetings were organized throughout the two states as a token of protest condemning the undemocratic and highhanded attitude of the State's forces.

In spite of the State's threats, aired on the radio, T V and the print media, to discourage the people from coming to the Patna Rally the people showed great enthusiasm to attend the programme and had to be stopped by the police with indiscriminate and uncalled for use of force at various places. In fact this oppression was unleashed to contain and suppress the growing influence of the revolutionary forces but the masses refuse to be cowed down by such kinds of attacks by the police and other state agencies. The people organized programmes at all the places wherever the police had stopped them and celebrated the birth of the CPI (Maoist).

Also a joint Press Statement was issued by the CPI(Maoist) and the CPI(ML) (Janashakti) hailing the formation of the new party and strongly condemning the attacks on the rallies. The statement issued on 17-12-04 said:

The Historic merger of two main revolutionary parties on September 21, by forming the CPI (Maoist) was welcomed by the Indian oppressed masses and the revolutionary masses of the world. Whereas from the Pentagon in America to South Block in India and other reactionaries, communal fascists (Sangh Parivar), social fascists (CPM), etc. started to reorganize themselves against the unity of the Maoists in India. From the Internal security adviser J.N. Dixit to the special officer of the Special cell in the PMO and the JOC, to all states police officials — issued statements condemning the Maoists particularly projecting the unity move as a great threat to Indian internal security and sub continental peace. The fascist dictators in the Indian political scenario and the Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha members are engaged day in and day out against the CPI(Maoist) and they stalled Rajya Sabha proceedings too

on 16 Dec. Why are they so afraid? The political, economic and social crisis has worsened in India and the people are rebelling against the rulers, earlier against NDA now against the UPA. The pillars of the oppressor state have started shaking — so the fear and nervousness of the ruling classes.

From November 16 to December 15 supporters, activists and friends of Indian revolution, progressive minded petty bourgeoisie who lend their voice for democracy organized open public meetings at Hyderabad, Delhi, Patna and Kolkata. These states are ruled by parties like the Congress, RJD and CPM, which have amalgamated as the UPA at the Centre, showed the same attitude to disrupt the mass meetings. All the roads were barricaded, every village was cordoned and permission was cancelled at the eleventh hour at Delhi and Patna, hundreds of people were arrested and still the combing, raids are going on to capture the supporters and friends of the Indian democratic revolution. In West Bengal hundreds of people were arrested at various stations on the pretext that they had no tickets. It is ridiculous and funny logic. Never before the Congress, CPI(M), TMC, BJP followers and even ML parties were arrested during their meetings on such a charge in Bengal. Once again it was proved that all the ruling class parties, whatever their slogans may be, in essence all are same to curb, smash the voice of protest and democracy.

We two parties are appealing to the masses of India particularly the 13 states, oppressed masses to get organized against the onslaught of the Centre and State governments. Only through struggle we will get our rights. This is the time to mobilise lakhs and lakhs of people who will allow us to express our opinion openly. This is the time to unite and rebel.

CPI(Maoist) holds its first public meeting in Hyderabad braving state repression

The first public meeting declaring the formation of the new consolidated vanguard party of the Indian proletariat — the CPI(Maoist) — was successfully held in Hyderabad on 16 November, 2004 defeating all the conspiracies of the Congress government at the Centre and the state to disrupt it. The success of the meeting which drew thousands of people all across the state of AP with speakers and cultural troupes from all over the country, showed the immense support the Party enjoys



big bureaucrats and police officials, political leaders and other mafia gangsters, who had amassed thousands of crores through landgrabbing. (see the last issue of People's March for details). The formation of the CPI(Maoist) and the merger of the two guerrilla armies into the PLGA had caused panic in the minds of the rulers. Thus even peaceful rallies and meetings by the Maoists are sought to be banned or obstructed lest the new Party be seen as the revolutionary alternative by the masses of the country who are vexed by the stinking parliamentary

among the oppressed masses of the state notwithstanding the uninterrupted brutal offensive by successive comprador big bourgeois-big landlord regimes for the past three decades.

The ruling party in AP led by YS Rajasekhara Reddy, had left no stone unturned to foil the meeting. First, it tried to prevent the organizers of the meeting from getting the grounds in Hyderabad city by threatening the owners or dissuading them. When the Nizam College grounds was finally booked by the organizers the city police commissioner refused to grant permission on the pretext that it would create a law & order problem. Earlier, it had refused permission for a rally in the streets of the city on the plea that it would disrupt the traffic. Simultaneously, the organizers had also booked the Pirzadaguda engineering college grounds in the outskirts of the city. The Cyberabad Commissioner, under whose jurisdiction the venue falls, tried to cite one pretext or the other to deny permission for the meeting until the eleventh hour. And it was only less than a day before the actual schedule, and that too after a meeting of the state cabinet, that permission was given with several restrictions. Thus, by giving permission at the eleventh hour, the rulers wanted to prevent people from other districts from reaching Hyderabad.

It was stipulated that the meeting could be held between 5-8 PM and that no pro-

vocative speeches should be made against the government and the police!! And this was not enough. The police bosses in every district ensured that people did not reach Hyderabad for the meeting. The lorry owners were warned that they would be held responsible if their vehicles were leased out for transporting people to the meeting of the Maoists. They were even asked to deposit their vehicles at the police station one day before the meeting. And, despite all these measures, when people got hold of some vehicles and were proceeding to the city, they were stopped on the way and their vehicles were seized. The entire police force in the state was instructed to treat this (preventing people from reaching Hyderabad for the meeting) as the top priority task on those two days. The success of the series of meetings of the erstwhile CPI(ML)[People's War], which had merged with the MCCI to form the new CPI(Maoist), had shaken the comprador ruling classes and their imperialist mentors so much that they were unable to bear the spectre of a sea of red flags in their high-tech city that is being sold out for a song to the business vultures.

The demand of the Maoists in the first round of talks with the state government to confiscate the illegally acquired lands in Hyderabad and give it to the urban poor and to hold an enquiry into all the land deals made under the TDP regime, had unnerved the big business houses, imperialist MNCs,

system and the parties that represent it.

The dreams of the rulers were shattered as people thronged to the meeting venue using creative methods to circumvent the police obstruction. Several state road transport buses were used which came to the venue under the unsuspecting eyes of the police. People came to the venue without displaying banners and flags lest they be stopped by the police who were posted at all important points leading to the city. The meeting lasted till 10 PM defying the condition that it should be stopped at 8 PM. The police dared not attack the meeting for violating the condition fearing a backlash from the thousands present who were already infuriated by the police high-handedness.

The cultural programmes went on from 4 to 6 in the evening after which speakers from different states addressed the gathering, besides Comrades Varavara Rao, Gaddar and Kalyan Rao, the official representatives of the Party at the Talks with the state government. Comrades Raj Kishore, the secretary of the AILRC and Tara Singh of the SFPR from Punjab, spoke about the significance of the merger of CPI(ML)[PW] and MCCI for the Indian revolution and called upon the people to reject the parliamentary system and to come forward to build a mighty revolutionary movement in the country.

Rallies to Celebrate the Formation of CPI (Maoist) Brutally Attacked by the Police

Sandeep

The rally and public meeting at Patna to be organized by the Solidarity Committee for the Unity of Peoples Struggles on 5th December was brutally attacked by the police. The rally was intended to celebrate the unity of the CPI (ML) Peoples War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India. Even though the police had given permission for the rally and public meeting yet it was disrupted by the police on the penultimate day. Perhaps, it is for the first time since the Arwal carnage of 1986 that all the districts of the whole of Bihar and Jharkhand region were sealed and the people assaulted in every city and town to stop them from attending the programme.

The people were so much inspired by the call to celebrate the unity of the revolutionary forces that hundreds of thousands were coming forward to participate in it. The state of Bihar was so scared by this mobilization taking place that it decided to swoop down on the rallyists a day before. About ten thousand people, including women and children, who had assembled at the Gandhi Maidan on the evening of 4th December were surrounded by the police forces during the night and were brutally cane charged.

Dozens of activists and participants were injured in the sudden attack by the police. One person named Jeetan Marandi, an activist of the Jharkhand Cultural team, got severe head injuries and was hospitalized along with many others. The police also uprooted the dais, public address system, and tents showing its condemnable anti-people behaviour and violating its own commitment to allow the programme which was to be held in a peaceful manner.

It was already in the knowledge of the media and the police and civil administration that the campaign to organize this programme was going on for the last fifteen days from a place called Eastern Bhikha Chakk. Nothing was illegal or secret about the programme.

This place and another camp where the revolutionary activists were staying were

also attacked and the activists were arrested and beaten up. The police swoop down not only happened in the capital city of Patna but also throughout the states of Bihar and Jharkhand simultaneously. This also happened in Bihar's Aurangabad, Jehanabad, Sasaram, Gaya, Arwal, Kizar, Bihta, Maner, Dulhan Bazaar, Masaudi, Beguserai, Khagria, Motihari, Champaran, Dharbhanga, Hajipur, and in Jharkhand, Garhwa, Daltonganj, Barwadih, Girdih, Gumla, Lohardaga, Bokaro, Ranchi, Latehar, Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Chatra etc. dragging the people out of hundreds of trains, buses and trucks, and beating them mercilessly.



Not that the governments of the two states collaborated in this evil design, the orders were in fact given by the centre after a meeting of ministers and top police officials from thirteen states of the country in Delhi.

The upsurge and enthusiasm among the people was so great that the authorities in both the states had to resort to evil methods to terrorize the people. Wherever the people were stopped they organized pickets and sit-ins on the roads, started cultural programmes, made speeches and raised slogans celebrating the coming into being of CPI (Maoist). Even the compound of the Bankepur Camp jail was turned into a place for celebration and the prisoners held a vast meeting there.

The arrested include the revolutionary activists and leaders like Raj Kishor, Tara

Singh, Ramadhar Singh, Aarti Prasad and others. On the whole, 180 people were arrested and 23 of them were slapped with the 17th, Criminal Law Amendment. This act came into existence in 1908 to be used against the Congress to declare its meetings as unlawful. This law could also charge the arrested with sedition. The British period act still continues and is used now to contain the revolutionary activism of the masses. It is a strange twist of justice that the rally for which permission was granted earlier was to be declared unlawful by the state itself trampling upon the fundamental right to protest.

Here it is important to note that large scale arrests were also carried out by the Delhi police on November 25. More than fifteen hundred people were arrested or detained to prevent the people from carrying out a demonstration and a public meeting in support of the revolutionary struggles going on in the country. Though the arrested people were released in the evening yet it showed that the act to disallow the

people freedom of expression was an infringement on their fundamental right of expression. The whole area around the Red Fort and Firoze Shah Kotla Grounds was turned into a huge police garrison. It looked as if the police feared an onslaught on the capital.

The stopping of revolutionaries from holding a peaceful meeting was a political decision taken by the police top brass to prevent the spread of revolutionary and democratic ideas among the people. Yet the efforts of the police proved unsuccessful as it failed to dampen the spirit of the rallyists who remained steadfast even in the police stations.

Thousands of people saw with their

Continued to page 26