

PEOPLE'S MARCH

Voice of the Indian Revolution



**Bans, Fake Encounters &
State Terror
Cannot Stop Onward March
of Revolution**

19**Microfinance:
The New Money-
lender****14****Interview with
Comrade
Prachanda,
Chairman,
CPN (Maoist)****22****Bolivia in the
Throes of
Turmoil****Cover Story**Agony of Deprivation: Politics
of Ban**3*****The Great Indian Sell Out :
Traitorous Policies of
Indian Rulers***FIIs & FDIs Capture Indian
Industry at Breakneck
Speed**26****Political**Casteist Venom & Dalit Agony
Reports of Nanavati Commissions
and the Attitude of the Manmohan
Singh Government.
Oppose Draconian Forest Bill
Punjab Elections**6****9****11****16****International**Katrina Shows Black Side of
US 'Democracy'
Chinese Coal Mines - A Virtual
Death Pit**12****13****Now available****People's March in Book Stalls in major bus stations in all districts of
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Agony of Deprivation; Politics of Ban

For the tribals of Araku valley of Vishakapatnam district life is a hell; death comes as freedom from suffering. Excruciating poverty coupled with rampant malaria (and other diseases) is decimating the entire populace. No health care, no chloroquine tablets; each attack of malaria of a semi-starved human, is a step towards death. Hunger compels them to carry on working no matter how ill. Added to this are the witchdoctors, private doctors, traders and officials who fleece them even of the little they earn. Superstition and backwardness adds to their woes. Girls marry on reaching puberty and give children at their homes without any help at the tender age of 15 and 16. Together with malaria, that too of the falciparum type, amebiasis, scabies, jaundice, gastroenteritis and fractures are rampant. Of the average annual income of a tribal family of Rs.360 per month 20% goes on health care. Haunted by poverty and illness that follow each other in quick succession the tribal people are pushed to a slow agonizing death. As a tribal said "*it is a wretched life. There is no quality in it. Illness has become our second nature. Death at least is freedom from repeated ailments*".

And it is amongst such people that the Maoists work and live. Some of the Agency areas of Vishakapatnam are strongholds of the Naxalites. The pain of the tribals and their death is not felt by the moneybags and their agents in Hyderabad. The death of a single Congress or TDP hoodlum is of importance, not the lives of thousands of tribals. According to the very TDP itself 2,000 tribals died in these belts in just two months. On an average 312 tribals (official figure) die in these Agency areas of the State every month. No tears are shed for them. On the contrary those who seek their upliftment are banned, hounded and killed in fake encounters after brutal tortures. AP under UPA rule has had the largest number of suicides in the country in its one year rule — the official figure is over 700. AP has the largest number of rural families in debt — about 82% compared to the national average of 49%. But AP is the poster boy of the World Bank implementing its reforms packages with a fervour that astonishes its very sponsors. Be it Naidu of the TDP or

YSR of the Congress, these are nothing but mafia bandits acting at the instructions of the imperialist agencies.

On the very next day after the ban the World Bank President descended on AP and gifted millions of dollars for the so-called Self Help Groups in the Naxaliteaffected areas. As a statement by the CPI(Maoist) general secretary, issued on Aug.22 says: "*It is no coincidence that the arrival of the World Bank's chief Paul Wolfowitz to Andhra Pradesh State and the promulgation of ban on CPI (Maoist) and seven revolutionary mass organisations happened at the same time. By proclaiming the ban on our party and on seven mass organisations, YSR wants to show that he is no less loyal than Chandra Babu Naidu in following the dictates of the World Bank.*"

It was first the Jayalalitha of Tamilnadu that imposed a ban on the Maoists; this was followed by a strong threat by the Karnataka government to do the same; then the AP government banned the party and now finally the Chhathisgarh government has banned the CPI(Maoist). In fact the CPI(Maoists) have de facto been banned in most State, particularly in AP. The CPI(Maoist) statement adds: *From January the government started genocide. In the last seven months it has killed 110 comrades belonging to various revolutionary Parties and mass organisations. Most of them are unarmed. And almost all the 'encounters' are fake.* Also in Jharkhand leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front and other revolutionary mass organisation, were picked up from the Dhanbad trade union office in July itself, for no reason whatsoever.

The ban on the Maoists and mass organisations is to stifle the attempts of the masses, like the above mentioned tribals, to come out of this humiliating and agonizing existence. For, it is the Maoists who alone share their woes and show them a path to their liberation. It is they who live amongst them, educate them, give them some self-respect and teach them how to fight for a better existence. The arrest of Vara Vara Rao, a poet, and Kalyan Rao, a novelist, immediately after the ban, is

nothing but an attempt to stifle the voice of even legal dissent. If even poetry is treason and stories are terrorism then people have no other alternative than to raise the gun in the fight not merely for justice but even to gain the smallest democratic space.

Maoists demand self-respect not the servile existence of the "mainstream". Maoists demand justice and not the loot of the moneybags that finance the "mainstream". Maoists demand humanity for the poverty stricken masses, not the dirty politicking of the "mainstream". And Maoists demand a decent life for all not just for the elite and their hangers on that thrive on the "mainstream". **These cultures of the system demand that the Maoists give up, not merely their guns, but primarily their self-respect, their humanity, their sense of justice, and their struggles for a decent existence and come and join their gutter "mainstream".**

This is what the Prime Minister also meant when he repeated this at Hyderabad soon after the imposition of the ban. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh urged Naxalite "brethren" to use democratic means and the electoral path to achieve their goals and in the same breath warned that no civilised society would tolerate violence and extremism. He used his typical carrot and stick method.

But to join the 'mainstream', would mean selling ones soul to the devil. Of course then, they will not be banned, they will not be killed in fake encounters, they will not be brutally tortured, they will not be hounded day and night by their dogs, the Greyhounds. It is an easy path taken by so many — Liberation, Red Flag, etc — but it is a dishonest path, a path of betrayal of the masses and servility before the establishment. They want the Maoist to give up their principles, their dreams of a just order and join the devils of the 'mainstream' that reeks of corruption, opportunist power politics, scheming Chanakyas, gangsters, mafia, et al.

The Ban in AP & the Reaction

The ban was imposed in the wake of the killing of the Congress MLA by the

Naxalites. But if that was reason for the ban, the Congress itself should be banned as they were involved in the killing of the powerful TDP MLA from Rayalseema. In fact these two main parties have killed numerous of their men in the Rayalseema faction fights and the chiefs of both parties are in fact faction leaders deeply involved in these murders. That killing was a mere pretext to impose the ban.

For the first time ever the literary organisation Revolutionary Writer's Association (RWA or Virasam in Telugu) was banned. This did not take place even during the Emergency. While Varavara Rao was arrested from his residence in a pre-dawn raid, Kalyan Rao and four other members of Virasam were arrested in the afternoon from the Hyderabad Press Club. State Gen. Secy Krishna Bai, vice president Chenchaiiah and executive members Ratnamala and Chalasani Prasad were picked up by the police along with Kalyan Rao.

The police found that Kalyan Rao had disappeared when they went to arrest him. The arrest of Kalyan Rao, who had reportedly gone underground after imposition of the ban, turned out to be a media event. He had convened a press meet at short notice at the old Press Club in Basheerbagh to condemn his colleague's arrest. On getting wind of his presence, the police descended on the premises in large numbers and waited till he came out. They had a tough time in arresting him as slogan-shouting 'Virasam' members put up stiff resistance and squatted in front of the waiting jeep. In between, there was a minor scuffle between the policemen and photographers. The police physically lifted him into the vehicle and drove him to Saifabad police station.

Both the Chief Minister and the police Chief were paranoid that the journalists were addressed even without their knowledge and began issuing threats even to them. Even before the imposition of ban on the CPI(Maoist) in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Reddy had said that it was a major crime and culpable offence if the journalists interview the Maoist. "*Journalists are not above the law,*" he had threateningly said. After the imposition of ban, Swaranjit Sen, the DGP, said that action will be taken against journalists who meet Maoists.

The statements were followed by the

first incident of cops summoning a rural journalist to demand explanation from where he had got the statement of an underground leader of the CPI (Maoists). MD Ahmad, a reporter for a Telugu newspaper was summoned by the Deputy Superintendent of Police at Nagarkurnool in Mahbubnagar district and was asked about his reports. The cops also wanted to know why he had faxed the statement to a national TV channel. The reporter reportedly told him that the statement was dropped in the box of his newspaper at the bus stand and he did not know who brought it. The incident evoked strong reactions from the journalist community. The AP Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ), condemning the threat of the DGP to the media, said that it will fight against this harassment. "*APUWJ wants to make it clear that we are not prepared to take lessons from the State Police chief on what to report. We are not his informers and we will perform our duty on informing people through media without fear*" Union president Amarnath and the General Secy. G. Anjaneyulu said.

At the courts the police acted in a totally arbitrary fashion. Mediapersons were kept at bay by the police at the police station and on the court premises. Lensmen and videographers were not even allowed to take the photographs of the Virasam leaders. The lensmen were allowed to take snaps after they staged a brief protest against the police action. The area was sanitised with a dog squad and explosive detection gadgets. Even the persons entering the court complex were checked before allowing them in. The two were produced in the court after being brought here in a case pertaining to the September 2004 attack on a police constable. The incident occurred at a Maoist commemorative meeting held at Madigubba village in Atmakur mandal on September 22.

In addition to the ban the government has planned to raise a special tribal battalion with 1,200 members from the Naxalite affected areas. They have also increased the protection to all politicians. The police have been busy, after the ban, preparing a list of politicians and traders who have connections with the Maoists. "*We will not hesitate to arrest people who continue to help the Maoists*" said a top police officer.

The government has also reactivated

the killer vigilante squads of the Naidu regime. The brutal killing of a civil rights activist, Kanakachari, in Mahbubnagar district by the self-styled "Narsa Cobras" is the latest in a series of revenge killings, allegedly with tacit support from the police. Kanakachari, a teacher at a local school, was axed to death after being kidnapped by unidentified persons. "*These outfits are the creation of the police. Why is the govt. silent on the role of the police in this brutal murder*" Human Rights Forum convener K. Balagopal questioned. The group has put out a list of prominent Maoists and their supporters it pledges to kill.

Even the centre is panicky. They have advised the YSR govt to beef up the security of Congress leaders. On August 24 at a meeting of the STF on 'left-wing extremism' at the MHA's (Ministry of Home Affairs) headquarters, counter-strategies were devised for AP. The main decision was "**to tighten the security of vulnerable Congress leaders while also taking up intelligence-driven surgical strikes to net big CPI(Maoist) leaders**". Of the two recently-constituted joint task forces to undertake cross-border special operations, the one comprising AP has been asked that the CPI(Maoist) leaders — belonging to the central committee, state committee and even the district level — being trailed, are not allowed to get away by merely crossing state borders. Some CRPF reinforcements were sent to AP after the ban.

Widespread Opposition to the Ban

Both the poet and novelist made speeches from the court and Varavara Rao said the ban was a gift to the World Bank, whose president reached AP just the day after the ban. There has been widespread opposition to the ban and particularly of the arrest of the poet and writer. So strong has the opposition been that the Home Minister said that they are thinking to review the ban on the RWA. The ban on the Virasam, the intellectual wing of the Maoists, triggered a wave of protests from rights activists, poets, writers and the media. "*It is a ban on freedom of speech*" said Olga (P. Lalitha Kumari), a prominent poet and writer. The State Human Rights Commission has also issued notices to the DGP Swaranjit Sen, and the Hyderabad City Police Commissioner Dinesh Reddy in the

case of arrests of revolutionary poets VV and Kalyan Rao. The Commission, taking a suo motu notice of the media reports about the manner in which the two former emissaries of the Maoists were arrested in Hyderabad, has asked the officials to submit a report whether guidelines of the Supreme Court in the D K Basu case were complied with. The police have come under attack for raiding VV's residence at 3.30 am and creating panic among residents of the building.

The CPI (Maoist) statement, condemning the arrest said: *Not only the mass organisations were banned but the government has arrested leaders of the Revolutionary Writers Association, Varara Rao and Kalyan Rao. The DGP is giving daily threatening statements that they would arrest Gaddar also, leader of the JNM. The governments' onslaught on the revolutionary writers is nothing new. From the days of Vengal Rao to the period of Chandra Babu Naidu, the Revolutionary Writers Association has been facing uninterrupted repression. Despite this, they are raising their voice against state terrorism, against the exploitation by feudal, imperialists and comprador capitalists. It is the climax to the YSR's fascism to proscribe the organisation which has a three and half decades history and which has set new trends in the literature – not only in AP but at the all India level too. The repression on the writers will give way to the creation of new art forms. The revolutionary literature will take new leaps like the literature in Latin America during the military fascist regimes. Neither the proscriptions, nor the persecutions would deter the detained people's writers.*

Most political parties, like the TRS, CPI and CPM, have opposed the ban. Even sections from within the Congress have opposed the ban. Many tribal leaders opined that it would be good on the part of the State government to issue pattas to lakhs of acres of forest land cultivated by tribals over decades instead of setting up a tribal police battalion. They questioned the government why it did not fill the 40,000 backlog posts lying vacant for years together in the various departments in the State if it was really sympathetic towards tribals. They strongly opposed the State government's move.

Ofcourse, all the ruling parties, though they may oppose the ban, are for ending the naxalite movement, only they feel that the ban may not help the process and could infact be counter-productive. Many are panic stricken with the fear of reprisals from the Maoists, who have openly declared that now after the ban they can and will strike in any part of the State. Senior politicians have been told not to move out of their cities. Meanwhile, the home minister is the most fearful and has expressed reservations over clamping the ban on Virasam. According to sources, Jana Reddy is under pressure from his family to relinquish the home portfolio in the backdrop of the re-imposition of the ban on the Maoists. Also the Union Minister of State for rural development, Mr. A. Narendra, said that the Telangana Rashtra Samiti condemned the State government's decision to re-impose a ban on Maoists and their frontal organisations.

No ban can stop Revolution

In Chhathisgarh massive police forces have been brought in to the affected areas including the elite Naga battalions. It was quite natural that the people would hit back and the landmine explosion wiped out 24 CRPF personnel including some officers. These puppet forces of the moneybags were confident as they were equipped with anti-landmine vehicles. With deadly accuracy even this could not protect them.

Besides, the Congress leader of the opposition, Mahendra Karma, has been on a rampage in the area. In this two-pronged attack Karma has sought to also mobilise the people for launching physical attacks on naxalite stronghold areas. This campaign has been going on from June. This too has faced a setback with the masses counter-attacking and wiping out over 35 of the lumpen leaders who were in the forefront of the attack. Not only that the Maoists also attacked Karma's own village.

As press reports have said: *The Maoists raided Pharaspal village and killed Suku Karma and Sukhdev on Tuesday, Home Minister Ram Vichar Netam said, adding both died on the spot. The Maoists asked Suku if he was participating in the anti-naxalite movement and subsequently killed him. Karma is actively involved in the ongoing Jan Jagran*

movement against the Maoist by tribals in the backwaters of the State. However, "This will not stop the jan jagran movement," the Home Minister asserted. The Maoist raid on Karma's village came as a surprise because his house is heavily guarded by Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel deployed for the security of the family of the opposition leader.

With neither the para-military offensive nor the Karma offensive striking any success the paralysed Raman Singh government also clamped a ban on the Maoists.

But, bans cannot and will not stop the onward march of the people's democratic revolution in the country. The acute poverty of the masses is getting further accentuated every day. The government polices, at both Centre and State level, only furthers their deprivation and adds lakhs more each day to the numbers of poverty stricken. Large sections of even the middle classes are being pushed down into the depths of poverty. There is no other party, except the Maoists, who genuinely stands by the people in all their woes.

So, neither guns nor butter can kill this movement. No ban can stifle their voice. Neither duplicity nor enticements can divert them from the path of revolution. No false propaganda against them can hide the reality. The New Democratic Revolution marches forward no matter what steps are taken by the Centre and the States. As the statement issued by the general secretary of the CPI(Maoist), com. Ganapathy, says *The ban, contrary to the dreams of YSR will help extend our guerrilla war and take it to a higher stage. How much cruel repression the government might resort to, our Party and revolutionary masses would resist the onslaught and advance our movement..... It is certain that those who do not learn lessons from the past will be swept into the dustbins of history. That will happen to YSR, Janareddy, Swaranjithsen and his government too. People will overthrow these fascists with their organised power sooner or later. The one and half year rule of YSR government clearly proves it is just following the footsteps of the Chandra Babu Naidu government.*



Casteist Venom & Dalit Agony

- Arvind

The incidents of Gohana, Haryana, on August 30th is like a story repeated thousands of times each year in the rural areas of the country — a case of the upper caste elite giving vent to their casteist venom against dalits with total collaboration of the administration, police, political parties, etc. After the event much crocodile tears are shed by the politicians, and the parliamentary vultures of dalit/left parties try and make political (vote) capital and the government tries to barter dalit self-respect for monetary compensation. In this case the price kept rising gauged on the extent of dalit resentment/retaliation — first when all seemed quiet the going rate was Rs.5,000 per family; after the all-Haryana bandh call which turned militant it went up to Rs.50,000; and finally after the massive clashes of dalits and police on Sept 5th in Amritsar the price tag went up to a lakh per family. But, no action is taken against the powerful jat panchayat — the khap — which unleashed the terror. So, today it is Gohana, earlier Jhajjar, Badhran, Jhind, and numerous other unreported instances of dalit atrocities in Haryana. But, this time the dalits of the state were not silent they hit back!!!

The Gohana Tale

In this village the dalits had refused to do “begar” or forced labour on the lands of the jats. Many dalits in this village had also improved their economic status with good houses, jobs and education. All this had become a point of hatred for the jat elite.

On August 27th some dalits of Gohana killed a notorious moneylender, Baljeet. There is no report whatsoever as to the reason for the clash, but the police promptly arrested Shiv Kumar and his three associates and launched a man-hunt for ten more dalits. Then the entire one thousand dalits of the village fled the area fearing jat reprisal. On the morning of the incident the jat panchayat (khap) met and openly demanded the presence of the CM or else threatened to act on their own.

By noon, with the CM not arriving, the 1,500 jats gathered there, began to vent their fury on the dalit basti in broad day-light. In spite of all the open threats and the fleeing of the entire dalit basti the police were conspicuous by their absence. Equipped

with petrol and local weapons they began looting and ransacking houses and then setting them on fire. Had the dalits not fled the village many would have been killed, such was the intensity of the fury unleashed on the basti. Upper caste venom cannot tolerate even the slightest assertion of dalits; even a small rise in their economic status is sufficient to trigger their casteist fury. Here not only had they come up the economic ladder, they refused to do “begar” and even had the ‘audacity’ to challenge a money-lending shark. All the 54 houses of the dalits were ransacked and looted and then burnt down. Property worth crores was destroyed.

After all had been destroyed the police turn up and declare section 144 for fear there may be retaliation against the jats and to protect them from dalit anger. For days not a single person was arrested. The police and administration, including the IG of police, again and again repeated that this was not a casteist attack but merely public anger to the killing of Baljit. They went out of their way to give the jats a clean chit.

On the next day the so-called ‘sarvajatiya panchayat’ attended by the sarpanches from 96 villages, with 5,000 people in attendance, also termed the burning of houses as not a casteist attack but as a retaliation against the killing of Baljeet. They demanded the immediate arrest of the accused in the ‘murder’. They gave the police a deadline of two days to do so. They claimed that the 23 charged with the burning and loot were not true, it was done by others. The aggressive tone of the panchayats comes from their confidence of the full backing of the state machinery. In fact the IG of police ‘confirmed’ that the 14 dalits charged with the ‘murder’ had criminal backgrounds and were hunting for the ten not yet arrested. Their arrogance went so far that at a so-called ‘sarvajatiya panchayat’ on Sept 8th they called for the release of even the few who had been arrested in the carnage and against giving even the Rs. 1 lakh monetary compensation to the dalits. No one is even mentioning a word to recover the properties looted and now in the houses of the upper caste hoodlums.

Today the dalits of Gohana have lost everything. There is absolutely no talk of

retrieving the property looted by the upper-caste mobs. Even after a week of the incident though 23 have been mentioned in the charge-sheet only 4 have been arrested. The dalits of Gohana reported to a fact-finding team that visited the area that they feared the police as much as the upper-caste mob. Ever since they arrested even the elderly mother of 70 and wife Babli (42) of Shiv Kumar Kaka, the main accused in the killing of the moneylender, they have feared the police will arrest many. But now a police camp has been set up, ostensibly for their protection. The police have been ‘cleaning’ up the houses even before the residents return in a bid to cover up the damage. Most have lost all their property and life savings and there is not water or even electricity in most of the burnt-down houses.

The police attack is not surprising as the upper-caste moneylender wielded enormous power in the area. So, much so that at his 13th day function (tehravin) there was in attendance several MLAs and even the Chief Minister’s son!!!

The Political Vultures

It is clear from all reports that the BJP MP of the region was directly involved in the attack on dalits. His son and brother were said to be present during the action instigating the crowd. But no action has been taken against them. On the contrary the BJP has been organising the Valmiki Mahapancha-yatas and backing the Valmiki Samaj to form a new party to break the Cong-ress influence on the community. The INLD has backed these steps, exonerated the BJP and called for the dismissal of the Congress. In typical duplicity it is they who primarily instigated the mob and now it is they who are mobilising Valmikis for so-called justice!!!

The Congress government of Haryana gave full support to their administration and police; yet not to get an anti-dalit image, made a show of mock sympathy. They sought to barter dalit self-respect for monetary compensation, taking little or no efforts to catch the culprits. When crores of property have been destroyed and looted this method of offering compensation, as to a beggar, was itself humiliating. Hooda also repeated that

because of "police restrain" not a single life was lost — in other words allow the burning and looting or else lives may have been lost. The Congress Social Welfare Minister went even one step further, praising the jat panchayats for being peaceful, and on the contrary issuing veiled threats to the dalits. She appealed to dalits to "*exercise restraint and not be led by anti-social elements*"

Then came the dalit party vultures to utilize caste affinities to gain votes. Mayavati of the BSP, who had spent the bulk of her last four months organising 50 Brahman sammelans in 26 districts of UP and a maha sammellan in Lucknow, found time to visit the basti to make a few demagogic state-ments in order to help her maintain the dalit vote bank. She was followed by Ram Vilas Paswan who also sought to make political capital. Both also sought to pacify the dalits, keep them peaceful and merely demanded compensation.

Also those to turn up were the CPM who have now become the professional fire-fighters of the Congress to dampen peoples anger and diffuse protest. They too did not mention a word against the jat panchayats but merely called for the suspension of officials.

But the dalits had little faith in these political vultures and instead came out militantly on to the streets.

Dalit Retaliation

The all Haryana bandh on Sept 2nd turned militant in many places. There were serious clashes in the Panchakula near Chandigarh where buses were burnt and a police motorcycle destroyed. Police resorted to a lathi charge. Road blocks appeared in many places of Haryana and reports of vehicles being damaged came in from Ambala, Pehowa and Hansi. Markets were closed in Karnal, Bhiwani and Panipat. In Narwana a bus was burnt.

On Sept 5th the agitations continued and spread to Punjab, particularly in Amritsar. An all Punjab bandh was called on that date. It took a militant turn in many towns of Punjab. In Amritsar youth roamed the streets with swords and other weapons in their hands. They smashed property and vehicles. The demonstrators fought pitched battles with the police and set fire to 17 vehicles. 40 police officials were said

to have been injured in the clashes. It became so violent that a curfew like situation prevailed, "reminiscent of the days of militancy". The SP of Police had a narrow escape when the furious crowd pelted stones on his gypsy. The police retaliated with brutal violence arresting 70 and injuring many. In Kapurthala about 1,000 dalit youth roamed the streets brandishing swords and other sharp-edged weapons. They attacked government offices, business establishments and religious centres creating panic in the city. Bajrang dal and Akali Dal activists provoked businessmen to open their shops. In Jalandhar tension prevailed in the Nakodar area and nearby villages. Here the police and shop-keepers took an aggressive posture against the dalits. In Ropar a complete bandh was observed. Also there was a total bandh in Rahon town of Nawashahr district. In Phagwara dalit activists were picked up by the police before any agitation could start. Yet many educational institutions remained closed on Sept 5th. In Barnala dalit activists blocked traffic at Court's Chowk. A similar demonstration was also held at Tapa at the sub-tehsil office. They also blocked traffic at Taajo Ke Kanchain. In Hoshiarpur a bandh was observed in various parts of the district.

In all this retaliation not one of the parties and dalit leaders were to be seen. They were confined to the peacefulness of their offices and headquarters to issue statements, peaceful demonstrations, and pathetic demands for action against the authorities. So, the CPI(ML) Liberation and the New Democracy also issued statements from Delhi. But what the dalits really need to stop the atrocities is not vote-bank politics that only further consolidates caste identities, but the mobilization of all democrats in the battle against the feudal caste elites in the rural areas of Haryana to break the back of Khas authority.

Attacks on dalits and caste discrimination and atrocities is not a dalit question it is a democratic question.

The Dalit Mahpanchayat organised in Delhi by the Valmiki Samaj with caste representatives from all over India attending also did not serve much purpose than politicking calling for the dismissal of the Hooda government with not a work mentioned against the BJP MP, and demanding Rs.20 lakh compensation. Caste

politics kills the growth of a real democratic movement against the inhumanities of caste oppression and untouchability.

Growing attacks on dalits Countrywide

The Haryana incidents are the mere tip of the iceberg. In the same week 25 more dalit houses were torched in Akola, Maharashtra.

Tamilnadu has seen massive clashes of dalits and upper castes, a recent incident being the Kandadvi temple issue. Here Dalits have sought to partake in the Car festival held every year. Dalits from the neighbouring villages have been banned from doing so for years. This year the High Court specifically ordered the administration to see that dalits should participate. But, around June 17th, the day of the festival, plainclothes police swarmed into the villages persuading dalits not to go. Dalit local leaders were arrested while others went underground. The women who started walking towards the temple were stopped and detained for the whole day at a wedding hall readied by the police. 800 were thus detained and dalits who lived in the village around the temple were prevented from entry by building of barricades. Such is the extent to which the establishment and upper caste elite go to maintain the 'sanctity' of their places of worship — in spite of the court order. In fact in Tamilnadu Frontline Magazine has brought out a full anthology of such attacks over the years where even dalit sarpanches are killed to prevent them getting elected or after they are elected. The book shows the extent to which attacks have grown in Tamilnadu. This, in the land of the Dravid movement!!!

In Punjab, according to a report of the National Commission of SC/ST in the last one year eight dalits have been killed in police custody. Also the last year has witnessed a number of instances of violence on dalits such as the recent cases in Kurd village (Bhatinda district) and Hasnapur village of Sangrur district.

Legislations and UN Resolutions Meaningless

In 2001 the then government tried its utmost to prevent the question of caste-based discrimination being raised at the UN sponsored World Council Against racism. They claimed that they had abolished the caste system and had provided enough

mechanism to do away with castes. Well, it was raised in spite of the objections and this has helped to bring to the notice of people around the world of the horrors of the caste system. But the elite dalit bodies that dabble in such international events play little role in fighting it at the ground level, where it is really needed. Being UN-sponsored they seek merely to fit it into the entire globalization framework, with some human face. So, the Katmandu Dalit Declaration in 2004 sought to provide "concrete measures" by the very pillars of the oppressive system — NGOs, the government, FIIs, the Private sector, and the establishment trade unions. And now in April 2005 the UN Commission on Human Rights has adopted a resolution to appoint two Special Rapporteurs to do a three-year study on caste-based discrimination.

These bodies are nothing but a process for the co-option of a section of the elite dalit crowd and to take them away further from the reality and brutality in the villages. Other methods of co-option are also there like the granting this year of the Golden Jubilee Life Time Achievement Award to the dalit poet, Namdeo Dhasal —

a one time leader of the Dalits Panther movement who later co-habitated with the Hindu fundamentalist Shiv Sena. Also the caste-based panchayats, as those of the Valmiki Samaj, that have got hyperactive after Gohana, are nothing but outfits by leaders of the community to bargain their caste votes to the highest bidder in the electoral fray. Most act as tools of one party or the other and in no way help fight caste oppression and the increasing atrocities.

The time has come for all genuine democrats of all castes and communities to join with the dalits in the concrete battles against caste discrimination, caste atrocities, caste humiliation and all the other forms of subtle and not so subtle caste biases. Let no longer caste oppression be a dalit question, but a democratic question of all the progressive forces in the country.

Also the dalits would soon realize that they can never get justice within this system: Their humiliation and derogatory existence will continue as long as the feudal basis of this system remains. They should not fall prey to the duplicity of their caste 'leaders' who seek only to bargain their votes to the ruling parties for monetary fa-

vours. It is only by joining the revolutionary mainstream that they can get justice.

In Gohana the first task would be to smash these Khap panchayats (and the state machinery that backs them) that wield feudal authority in the villages by mobilising the masses and fighting back unitedly not only against dalit oppression but all oppression and replacing this feudal authority with the authority of the oppressed masses. For this the poor and the middle amongst upper castes must be made to realize that their future does not lie in their egotistic maintenance of upper-caste superiority but in allying with the other oppressed classes and castes to also overthrow the feudal authority of the Jat elite which also keeps them in a state of poverty though giving the appearance of a make-believe world of superiority. But such a unity of the oppressed is only possible by first-and-foremost educating the upper-castes to give up their casteist prejudices, not by ignoring these, and by jointly taking up issues of exploitation and oppression. Firm dalit assertion of their self-respect also helps this process if it is directed in a correct direction. ■ ■

Letters from subscriber

hi my comrade,

I must apologize about my silence for so long months but I was working with palestinian comrades in Lebanon for 6 months.

Thank you for sending me **People's March** which is very useful to make known activities of the indian Party here. I also tried during my presence in Lebanon to circulate **People's March** also. I will send you in a further message an adress to send it to palestinian refugees camp in this country.

The comrades in France don't have published yet my long translation of the Congress texts of the Party but made a one-page article about the progress of Party activities in India. I'll send you the paper.

take care of you

friendly with communist regards

Erawn

Letters from Browser

Dear Comrades of Indian

I have been read some of the *Remembering The Chinese Revolution*. I have deep feelings about the contents in the book.

Though China has been a capitalist country now, the Maoists of China will never give up struggle. The **People's March** give me strength and the courage. So thank you very much! I'll fight side with you till the victory of the World Revolution.

(Could you give me some suggestion of the Chinese revolution in the future?)

Best wishes for you!

Wangke

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The Report of Nanavati Commission and the Attitude of the Manmohan Singh Govt. Added Insult to Injury of the Sikh Religious Minority

-Amrit

With the tabling of Justice G.T. Nanavati Commission in parliament, the issue of punishing the Congress leaders involved in the planned massacre of the Sikh religious minority in Delhi and other parts of the country in Nov. 1984 has once again come up on the Indian political scene. In the current Monsoon session of the parliament, heated debates between the Congress and NDA allies, particularly Akalies went on. The so-called left allies of the central govt. blew the trumpet of the opposition to the Congress for some time. When the time came for voting on the resolution of suspending work by the opposition, they played the cunning card of being absent from the House. After the PM Man Mohan Singh made a hypocritical speech and ploy of giving an apology, they even outdid the Congress in blowing the trumpet of the rulers. The affected families took out angry demonstrations outside parliament. The govt. had to face the fury of widows and orphaned children. Instead of providing justice to these affected families they were greeted with lathis and canons of water. The affected families expressed grievances even by revolting against the Akali leadership.

No commission as yet has made a genuine attempt to describe as to who are the real culprits of the greatest tragedy that has so far happened to the Sikh religious minority after so called independence. Officially ten Commissions and Committees have been constituted so far on this issue. The names of these committees constituted during the last twenty one years are — the Marwaha Investigating Committee, Ranganath Mishra Commission, Jain Bannerjee Commission, Kapoor-Mittal Commission, Ahuja Commission, Roza Committee, Jain-Aggarwal Committee, Narula Committee and justice G.T. Nanavati Commission. The nine Committees and Commissions constituted between Nov. 1984 and 1999 provided nothing tangible to the people about the mass massacre committed under the very nose of Indian rulers. The NDA (the then central rulers), in order to make some anti-Congress capital out of the issue, constituted yet another one member justice G.T. Nanavati Commission to investigate this issue. After

completing the investigations during these five years, in 2005 this Commission submitted its report to the home minister Shiv Raj Patil on 9th Feb. 2005. The Commission of Inquiry Act provides that the govt. should take some action within six months of the submission of the report.

The Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the Commission by the Govt. on the report of the Nanavati Commission tabled during the current Monsoon Session has proved the adage of complicity of the thief and dog (the govt. and commission) true. The report of the Nanavati Commission has camouflaged this self evident truth that the massacre of the Sikh religious minority people in Nov. 1984 was part of a pre-planned policy of the Congress govt. and party. In this massacre Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar, H.K.L. Bhagat, Dharmdas Shastri etc., the prominent Congress leaders, directly or indirectly led the communal and goonda gangs in attacking the Sikh religious minority people. The police and civil administration not only remained silent but became accomplices in this carnage and even instigated such elements.

Consequently, 4,000 people were burnt with burning tyres around their necks in three days in Delhi the capital of country and the other chief cities of the country like Kanpur and Bokaro etc. Their houses, properties and businesses were burnt to ashes within no time. Thousands of women were rendered widows and children were orphaned. The contemporary Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, justifying this massacre said, "*When a huge tree falls, the earth shakes*". In order to expose these self-evident facts PUCL and PUDR released the investigative report, "Who are the Guilty?" in the form of a booklet, which was banned by the Congress govt. On the contrary, the constituting of Commissions was a well-planned scheme to sidetrack this issue. As a result this issue has been hanging fire for the last 21 years. No Commission or Committee did anything for the people.

Even the report submitted by the Nanavati Commission has not visualized the massacre of Sikhs in Nov. 1984 as a part of the policy and scheme of the Congress rulers. The Nanavati Commission did not investigate the massacre in any city except

Delhi. Nor has any verdict been given in the report to the effect that it has the main responsibility of the govt. to safeguard the life and property of every citizen of the country, but why did the Congress govt. not safeguard the life and property of the Sikh religious minority people? The report has concluded that there is, "*the possibility to a considerable extent of the involvement of the Congress leaders Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar*". The commission has submitted its different recommendations about the different leaders on the basis of these *possibilities*. Necessary action against Jagdish Tytler has been recommended. No action against Sajjan Kumar is recommended due to his acquittal by the court, and no action is recommended against H.K.L. Bhagat with a view to his health and mental tension. The contemporary PM Rajiv Gandhi has been squarely let off from these events. The then home minister P.V. Narsimha Rao was awarded praise for playing a fully responsible role. An attempt has been made to thrust the whole responsibility on a few administrative personnel, a large part of which have retired from service. So, incapability to take any action against them was expressed. The remaining job was executed by the central govt. in its Action Taken Report on the Nanavati Commission report by saying that no action can be taken against anyone on the basis of "*possibilities*".

But, out of fear of isolation from the Sikh religious minority and their furious demonstrations, the central govt. has made a tactical reversal on some issues, due to which Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar have resigned their offices. Two committees have been constituted to provide financial relief to the affected families. The prime minister has apologised and has assured to take legal action on the recommendations of the Commission. But if we scrutinise the whole speech of the prime minister in the parliament, he has cunningly defended the policy and scheme of the central Rajiv govt. by calling it a "tragedy". On the one hand, action has been talked of, but on the other hand it has been said, "*It has been sufficiently proved that there is no proof against the senior leaders of the Congress. In the end the falsehood.*"

Continued at page 10

Deployment of Naga Battalion to fight Maoists Condemned by CPI (Maoist) and NSCN (IM)

The Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee of the CPI (Maoist) issued a press statement on 10th July on the decision of the Central government to deploy the Nagaland Special Armed Forces in Baster on the demand of BJP government Chhattisgarh.

In the statement they quoted that on an earlier occasion when the CRPF battalions and Gujarat battalion were deployed the CPI(Maoist) appealed to the jawans not to join hands with the oppressors because they all belong to the same class for which it has been fighting. They too come from poor peasant families whose living conditions are unbelievably miserable, and those families are always

subject to oppression and atrocities. They appealed to fight together against the existing system. Further, the Maoist Party referred to the fact that the Gujarat police rejected to enter the forests and stayed in the state capital for other duties. Whereas the CRPF entered the battle front and got killed to safeguard the rulers.

They appealed to the Naga jawans that *"better to return to your native state. If you stay do not open fire on us, better surrender our PLGA forces and pass on information to our party on the movement of the top brass. Our Party has always supported the Naga people's just demands and we are comrades-in-arms"*.

On 7th July the NSCN(I-M) issued a

press release and condemned the Centre and Nagaland governments' decision to send Naga forces to fight the CPI(Maoist). From a base camp near Dimapur NSCN(I-M)'s Home Minister informed the media that "The Peoples War party is fighting for the genuine demands of the oppressed people of Chattisgarh. The PW party is not a terrorist organisation. By sending the armed forces from here the state government has been committing a serious mistake".

A number of intellectuals, mass organisations in Kohima, condemned the decision of the government to send the Indian Reserve Battalion to Baster on November 9, 2004.



Continued from page 9

with which the minds of the Sikh youth have been poisoned for the last 21 years, has proved baseless". It has been further said that, *"several commissions have investigated the tragedy of 1984. We all know that we are still far from that reality and efforts should continue to reach this truth"*. The prime minister who does not know the *"reality"* of the historical tragedy of Nov. 1984, whose cohorts are accused of *"false and baseless accusations"*, who knows that, *"no officials and govt. employees can be persecuted four years after retirement"* is talking of taking action or apologising not out of innocence but is doing so out of cunning so that the fury of the people could be diffused and the ruling power could be safeguarded — so that the facade of apology could be presented as an achievement of the Congress during the elections in Punjab, so that this issue could be snatched from its Akali rivals; so that this issue could be further postponed by constituting some other commission or committee in the name of "continuing the efforts to reach the truth". The Congressmen and so-called left immediately

picked up this cunning card and started singing in chorus about the wisdom of the prime minister. The bourgeois press also awarded the certificate *"Manmohan Singh has created a new history by apologising"* where as the reality is that Manmohan Singh has performed the misdeed of forgetting the past history by apologising. The sentiments of the Sikh religious minority are not going to cool down by this apology alone, rather the issue is to punish the culprits of the Nov. 1984 massacre. The issue is also the rehabilitation of widows and orphans.

This job has been performed neither by the Congress govt., nor by the ex-central NDA that constituted the Nanavati Commission, nor by their ally's the ex-Akali govt. The massacre of Sikhs in Nov. 1984 has leapt up in their memory only after the tabling of the Nanavati Report and the coming elections in Punjab. If they had been only a little bit genuine about the massacre of Sikhs in Nov. 1984, they could do have done many things during their rule for 5 years. Their need is nothing but to prolong this issue through Commissions, to cool tempers down, and to exploit the sentiments

of the Sikh religious minorities.

The revolutionary democratic forces need to expose this fresh gimmick of the Manmohan Singh govt. They should expose the real motives of the NDA and their Akali allies. They should demand punishments to police and civil officials including Congress leaders who were the culprits of the Sikh massacre in Nov. 1984. They should come forward for the demand for compensation for the burnt houses and destroyed businesses of the affected families. They should raise a strong demand for the rehabilitation of widows and orphaned children. By doing so they should propagate effectively among the people, particularly among the people of the religious minorities that their religious interests and rights in the present semi-colonial semi-feudal system cannot be safeguarded. Their rights and interest can be safeguarded only in a new democratic federal system, in which the religious minorities, nationalities, tribes will enjoy equal rights, and which will be free from the exploitation and oppression by imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism.



Does the P.M. mean democratic means the way P.V. Narasimha Rao bribed 1 Crore to Shibu Soren to save his Ministry and saved the country to the tune of 900 crores from an impending Election or does it mean fire brand Renuka Choudhry weeping before St. Sonia and requesting her not to decline the post of Prime Minister or does it mean falling at the feet of a Brahmin actress of a Dravidian party for a party ticket to contest the Election or does it mean going with begging bowls to WB, IMF for loans to run the country or does it mean selling our country to MNCs.

Oppose Draconian Forest Bill

- Suman

In the present monsoon session of parliament the government plans to pass the new Forest Bill, entitled *The Scheduled Tribes & Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005*. Ironically this Bill is being eulogised by the environmentalists and the revisionist CPI/CPM. In fact the CPM intellectual Jayati Ghosh went so far as to call it "*one of the most important and progressive laws that the UPA government proposes to enact*" (Frontline July 1 2005). But the reality is something quite different. Let us see the essence of the main proposal in this new Bill.

The Forest Bill

The proposed law gives only the Scheduled Tribes amongst all the forest dwellers the right to 2.5 hectares of forest land per nuclear family for "*self-cultivation for bonafide livelihood and not for exclusive commercial use*" provided the family undertakes "*the responsibility of protection, conservation and regeneration of forests*" and "*ensures no one carries out any activity that adversely affects the wildlife, forests and biodiversity of the area*". Besides, only those lands being cultivated before 1980 will be taken into consideration. And evidence for the validity of a claim to these rights is to be obtained from "*oral testimony, government records, survey maps, satellite imagery, traditional physical structures, gram sabha resolutions and other sources*". Finally, the Bill gives the Adivasi only the right to use the land, not to own it, as he has no right to sell this land according to the Bill.

At all levels the gram sabhas and forest officials are to be involved and they can impose "*penalties for destruction of wildlife, forests, or biodiversity (including felling trees for commercial purposes), and in the case of repeated offences, the forest rights of the offender can be derecognized*".

This Bill is being brought in at a time that the government is planning a massive eviction of tribals in order to clear the way for the multinational mining companies and their comprador agents that are coming into the country in a big way to rob it of its iron ore, coal, bauxite, uranium, and numerous other natural wealth, including its huge biodiversity. Already the Orissa

government has given mining rights for iron ore and steel production to 35 companies, including the giant POSCO and also to large numbers of aluminum, companies.

The draconian nature of the above mentioned Bill is seen in the fact that only land before 1980 is to be considered, for which there is likely to be very little evidence after the passage of two-and-a-half decades. Since then two generations would have come with each new generation seeking some land, all of which will not even be considered. Besides, it is left to the forest officials-sarpanch-bureaucrat nexus to take the decision through the various methods narrated above. It, in fact, is this nexus mafia that have been terrorizing and looting the tribals for decades. Now they are to be entrusted with deciding their fate in the supposed name of the gram sabhas.

Besides this same mafia will have arbitrary powers to deny any tribal family of the right if they are supposedly not taking "*the responsibility of protection, conservation and regeneration of forests*" and "*ensuring that no one carries out any activity that adversely affects the wildlife, forests and biodiversity of the area*". How and why should this be a condition to till the land that they have done for centuries? Also it pits tribals against tribals using them to forcibly police the forest under the fear of losing their land. So, the tribes must slave for the forest mafia in order to live there. And after all this the tribal family live not as a right owning their own property on which they have lived for centuries, but on the sufferance of the State and the political mafia. Nothing could be more humiliating. Yet Jayati Ghosh says it is "*one of the most important and progressive laws that the UPA government proposes to enact*". The Bill is nothing but an attempt of the Tribal Ministry in partnership with the Environment and Forest Ministry to re-introduce 'begar', a system of slavery the British imposed on forest dwellers.

In fact well before the passage of his Bill the forest department has been on a massive offensive evicting tribals from their traditional lands. The process will only speed up, at least in those areas where there is no naxalite presence.

Recent Terror of Forest Officials

Already the BJP government in

Madhya Pradesh has announced a policy of handing over forest land to corporate houses and multinationals. Simultaneously it has gone on a massive and brutal offensive against the tribals (except in those areas under naxalite influence).

Savage methods of eviction were evident of what was reported in three villages Kharkari, Ambakhera and Singhot, of Khandwa district. On April 2, in village of Kharkari armed forest personnel descended on the village in some 10 vehicles, drove the residents away and destroyed homes built over a generation ago. The residents had ration cards, voter identity cards and there were even hand pumps set up by the government. 61 houses were destroyed and everything was looted — millet and coarse grains, forest produce, goats, chickens! Even the local school was raised to the ground. At Ambakhera, a few days later, the forest officials came armed, and raised the village to the ground. They also destroyed any evidence the people may have had of their residence there. Women and children were not spared. 49 houses were gutted; 41 were destroyed in nearby Singhot. The local police refuse to register any FIR. This is not restricted to Khandwa district, evictions also took place in Indore district. In many other villages villagers are being threatened by eviction.

If one looks back a few years we see that the Supreme Court has played a particularly nefarious role in the whole process. In 1992 the Supreme Court stayed a circular of the Ministry that sought to legalise all possessions up to Dec 1993 in MP. In May 2002 the Supreme Court issued a directive to all State governments to evict "encroachers" from all forests immediately.

A massive eviction drive ensued which targeted forest communities. Lakhs of families were rendered homeless — as many as 40,000 families in Assam alone — and there are recorded cases of excessive violence. There has been mass burnings of forest dwellers' homes in MP, Chhatisgarh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. Elephants have been used to demolish entire villages in Maharashtra and Assam. Attacks have also gone against the dalit forest dwellers in the Nilgiris of Tamilnadu.

So now armed with this new Bill, which

Continued at page 12

Katrina shows Up the Black Side of American 'Democracy'

The difference in attitude of the US administration to the victims of the Katrina typhoon and of 9/11 show the extreme class bias of this current rulers. The bulk of those affected by the Katrina were the poorest of the poor Americans, and that too mostly Black, while that of 9/11 at the World Trade Centre Pentagon, comprised much of the US elite. Just in New Orleans, in the State of Louisiana, alone it is expected that about 10,000 have died. This city, famous for its jazz singers has virtually been washed away. It is a tragedy of unimaginable proportions and the US government with its sophisticated state machinery did little and allowed the thousands to perish.

Why? Because this is what is called the underclass of America. Minimal aid in the form of food and clothing began only reaching the affected days after the event. Till today it is simply not known how many are still stranded in the upper floor of apartments, nor how many have perished. Thousands of bodies are rotting spreading disease throughout the State. What is most tragic is that this has occurred in the richest country of the world. It has thoroughly exposed this so-called superior civilization. It is exposing squalor that would shame a third-world country, as well as racial divisions reminiscent of apartheid South Africa. **It's a tale of systematic neglect, administrative incompetence, market-driven environmental destruction and desperate poverty.**

To start with the hurricane warnings predicted an even stronger storm than Katrina turned out to be. Although the effects of such a storm and a breach of the levees (an artificial embankment alongside a river, built to prevent flooding of the surrounding land) were recognised by

officials a year or two ago, the federal government said that there was no money for the repairs. Further in 2004 the federal government stopped funding for maintenance and fortification work on the levees, which were therefore neglected for the first time in nearly 40 years. In addition wetlands around New Orleans — which provide vital protection against flooding and tidal surges — have been drained and built upon, and the federal government has tied all environmental funding to the promotion of inter-state commerce.

Secondly, officials at all levels were very slow to react to the disaster and recognise the scale of devastation. It took the President two days to curtail his holiday and make a flight over New Orleans. Vice-President Dick Cheney continued his holiday in Wyoming and did not bother. People, from all walks of life, are suffering because preventive measures that could have lessened the effects of the hurricane are not profitable. People were forced into an "every-man-for-himself" situation, so millions were left to try and survive on their own. Over 100,000 people were left in New Orleans — often because they didn't have a car, gas or cash. This disaster revealed the unequal and oppressive relations of this system. People live in conditions where when a disaster hits, they are left in severe and needless danger of death. On TV, we've seen the many thousands of Black people trapped in New Orleans.

Meanwhile TV was showing dead bodies of victims in wheelchairs abandoned in sports stadia and convention centres. People were herded into these stadia with no proper infrastructure to cope. The dead and living lay around these enclosures with bodies rotting next to wailing children. The

neighbouring State of Texas to which about one lakh refugees have fled, says it can't spare a dollar for the affected. Texas, which is one of the extreme republican States, is soaking rich in oil wealth and has a population of 22 million. On the other hand aid has been offered from Cuba and Venezuela.

When the people have nothing quite naturally they grab from the stores. For this the administration has ordered to shoot-at-sight. Private property is after all sacrosanct. Not even in death must you touch businessmen's profits.

Finally, it is a recognised fact that a major reason for the increase in the number of storms has been due to global warming. One of the worst effects of this have been on the US coast. While the US is one of the worst culprits for the release of green-house gasses the Bush administration has been adamant in not agreeing to sign the Kyoto protocol to reduce the emission as this would affect the profits of some large MNCs. Now this has come to stike them with increased ferocity. Besides Bush is not willing to spend a few millions on the maintenance of levees and on relief for the Blacks but it has spent \$ 170 billion on the Iraq war and gives subsidies to agribusiness to the tune of \$180 billion a year. Ironically, 10,000 National Guardsmen of Louisiana who could have helped with relief are in Iraq butchering Iraqis.

What the Blacks of Louisiana face with Katrina is only the tip of the iceberg. Life there is a hell for them. The so-called democracy of this 'great' civilization is not meant for them. For them poverty, jails, police terror, drugs, and most importantly daily humiliation is part of their lives. They may no longer be slaves, but they are made to live as the dregs of humanity. ■ ■

Continued from page 11

will soon be turned into an Act the ferociousness of the State against the forest dwellers is bound to increase.

Forest belongs to the Tribals

It was the British, through the mere passing of an Act, seized the forests and its entire wealth and overnight turned the millions of tribals into trespassers in their own land. The Indian government has continued with these British policies

hounding the tribals day-and-night. It was only when the Naxalites entered their lives did the rapacious loot stop. Till today we find that in all areas where the Naxalites still do not have influence the lives of the Adivasis is a nightmare. Thousand and thousands die of starvation in the tribal belts of Melghat, Orissa, and many other places. In the areas of naxalite influence the tribals are, for the first time ever, better off than ever. In these areas the forest truly belongs to them. They not only cultivate

forest land, but also preserve the forests.

But in other places as well tribals are beginning to assert themselves. In the Nilgiris the Adivasis have taken to a civil disobedience movement. In April in a small town in Khandwa district, 10,000 Adivasis gathered against the eviction policies of the government. The tribals of the entire country need to rise in revolt, not just to throw out this Bill, but to assert their legitimate rights over the forests they have inhabited for generations. ■ ■

Chinese Coal Mines — A Virtual Death Pit

- Sharda

Chinese workers who were once masters of their own destiny are now getting killed in thousands in individual accidents as the new capitalist rulers have done away with all safety measures at the work place in order to maximize profits. This is particularly so in the Chinese coal mining sector.

The Chinese government itself admitted that 6,027 workers were killed in coal mine accidents last year. But according to reliable sources the death toll stands at around 20,000. This year, by August itself about 7,000 workers were killed in various accidents in coal mines all through China. 254 workers were killed in a ghastly gas explosion in February. 16 workers were killed due to poisonous gas in a mine in North China. 60 workers were killed due to a gas explosion on the 19th of August in a coal mine in Northern China. Around 6,000 were killed when water seeped into a mine in August. There seems to be no end to these ghastly deaths.

The Chinese coal industry is the largest in the world. It accounts for around 35% of the annual total world coal output. More interestingly, it accounts for 80% of the annual fatal accidents all around the world. The death rate due to accidents in coal mines in China is hundred times more than any other country.

With the restoration of capitalism in China and its subsequent integration into the imperialist world market, the Chinese industry has been facing more direct competition with the corporations around the world. Its inhuman labour policies make it the ideal place for all capitalists of the world to invest and make super-profits. The gigantic flow of foreign capital into the country each year is for this reason. The slave-like labour conditions is something that the imperialist developed economies cannot even dream of — except of course in US prisons. With this huge industrial growth the demand of fuel is increasing fast.

Coal accounts for about 70% of Chinese fuel resources and 80% of the total electricity generated in China is coal-based. With the demand of fuel going up the price of coal also went up by 40% last year. The demand for coal is expected to reach 21 billion tones by this winter.

With the restoration of capitalism, as in other fields, there was a change of ownership in the coal mines too. Thousands of coal mines which were under the public sector earlier went into private hands. There are 23,600 officially recognized coal mines in China. Another 40,000 coal mines are being operated illegally by private operators — of course with the collusion of the state and the party machinery. The amount this private pillage of Chinese people's natural resources can be gauged by the fact that, the largest chunk of the total of 1.9 billion tones extracted in China last year came from these privately operated illegal mines.

In China the workings of the free market are in full bloom with the restoration of capitalism in China — with all its brutalities and inhumanities. Today millions of people in China lie unemployed due to downsizing of industry and displacement of the peasantry. The huge army of unemployed is estimated at some 300 million people who are serving as the main source of cheap labour for the capitalists.

As the demand for coal increased and subsequently its price skyrocketed the predatory drive for profits of the capitalist in both the private and public sectors led to the complete neglect of any safety measures for the workers whatsoever. Abandoned coal mines are being re-opened forcing workers to go deeper and deeper below the surface to extremely dangerous levels. These mines were closed during the socialist period keeping the health and safety of the workers in mind. It is these conditions that are leading to the death of thousands of workers each year.

It is not that laws are non-existent. But, in typical fake 'socialist' style these are there merely to fool the people and the world, the laws made during the socialist

The unrest that is spreading all over China is not just confined to the workers and peasants. It has encompassed all sections of the society so much so that the rumblings are being felt even in the PLA. In August of this year, the Liberation Army Daily quoted a notice by the armed forces warning soldiers that they would be "severely penalized" for taking part in any petitions or demonstrations.

period are only on paper and never implemented due to the large capital expenditure it will entail. More important if the laws were to be implemented they would have to close down thousands of illegally functioning mines.

But all this is not going unchallenged. Each week is bringing news of at least one or two incidents with thousands of workers and/or uprooted peasants joining in pitched battles with the police. The Chinese government itself admitted that there were 74,000 mass demonstrations and riots during 2004. This has forced the government to take note of the horrifying situation and in order to pacify the anger of the workers they announced last March that \$6 million will be allocated to improve safety measures in the mines and that two lakh Yuan will be given to the kin of the workers killed in accidents.

The coal miners of China have a great history of being the first to carry the communist ideology to various parts of the country. There is no doubt that they will in future restore the great legacy of a class conscious working class and as a vanguard force to overthrow the present capitalist usurpers from their throne.

It brings to mind the phenomena of the famous (earlier infamous) Kailan coal mines. Earlier, when controlled by the imperialists, it was like a hell hole swallowing up worker's lives by the hundreds. Few miners survived into the new society in 1949. The imperialists had robbed 200 million tones of coal from this mine alone. After the revolution the communist government invested large sums in safety measures. Coal dust is a major killer even if accidents are not there. Huge amounts were invested in ventilation, dust-control pipelines, good labour protection conditions, proper clothing etc. Apart from safety personnel, there were those who were responsible for fire prevention, checking water, ventilation, tunnel maintenance, and examining dust and gas. And even when the horrifying earthquake struck this area in 1976, with the imperialist shouting that all the 10,000 workers would have been killed, not a single life was lost due to swift rescue operations.

Today the Kailan Coal mines are once again a hell hole under the new capitalist rulers.

Interview with Comrade Prachanda Published in Janadesh dated September 6, 2005

Janadesh : Comrade Chairman, why did you declare unilateral cease-fire all of a sudden?

Comrade Prachanda : To create an environment at both the national and international level for a forward-looking political way out, to inspire the seven political parties to come in cooperation by clarifying their immediate slogan, to reinforce the movement of civil society, to increase political intervention upon the old state and to consolidate party's relation with the broad masses by honouring their sentiment and aspiration etc. are the main motivating reasons behind the declaration of cease-fire.

JD : The royal state has its own military. How will the ceasefire declared without their agreement succeed?

PR : In our opinion, the development of the events of 3/4 days has justified the correctness of political intervention against the old state, the purpose with which the ceasefire was declared. It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the important aspect of the psychological war against the royal army underlies this ceasefire. To prove that the royal army is not in support of peace and a way out (from a new height) is not less significant.

JD : Royal state is speaking the language of repression. Does not this ceasefire become counter-productive in the situation when the parliamentarian seven political parties have not been able to come unitedly with a concrete program?

PR : In my opinion, no question of it being counter-productive arises, for its correctness lies in exposing worldwide the fascist character of the royal state and inspiring to change the vacillating and unclear character of the seven parliamentarian political parties. Concretely speaking, the ceasefire has already played that role within these 3/4 days.

JD : Now, some rumour is spreading that the ceasefire can result in a respite for the royal state in a situation when the party has been acquiring military successes!

PR : The political intervention that has now been taken in the wake of military successes can never give respite to the old state. None, who has seriously observed and understood the historical reality that the key to the development of the Nepalese people's war lies in the appropriate coordination of political and military intervention, can make such kind of talk. It is also necessary here to pay attention to the strategy of active defence (offence when attacked) of People's Liberation Army.

JD : There was outside propaganda that a special agenda on Nepal would be tabled in the General Assembly of the United Nations and that Gyanendra would participate in that. Is not the declaration of ceasefire aimed at influencing the forthcoming convention of the United Nations?

PR : Definitely, there lies an objective of clarifying doubts remaining within different sections in the world on our party's politics and exposing the old feudal power. But, it was not declared with the prime objective of influencing the forthcoming Convention of the United Nations.

JD : You have said in your statement that all in the UNO, including our main neighbour, and the entire international community are showing concern on the present situation in Nepal from their own angle and are presenting their own kind of solution to the problem. Would you please clarify this further?

PR : I think, the international concern, move and anxiety that is being shown on the present Nepal civil war is known to and endured by all. Also it is not hidden to anyone that some of the power-centres are working with the strategy of isolating our movement by creating an alliance between the king and the parliamentarian parties; some of them are working with the strategy of making the king agree to a constitutional monarchy by exerting pressure for cooperation, to a certain extent, between our party and the parliamentarian parties; where as some of them are in favour of real democracy and peace in Nepal. In this very context, it has been clarified in our statement that none can deny that some of these elements are not trying to gain by declaring Nepal a failed State. The essence of the aforesaid mentioned in the statement is to make the Nepalese people further clear, by clarifying the reality that all in the international communities have no unified standpoint.

JD : A short time ago, India was very much offensive towards you, and the previous CC meeting had raised the danger of Indian expansionism. Now, what has been the role of India?

PR : Following the step taken on February 1, 2005, it is an open reality that the discord and contradiction between the king of Nepal and the Indian ruling class has increased to a certain extent. In spite of class unity, today's necessity is to try to use the contradiction that has emerged between them in favour of the democratic aspirations of the Nepalese people.

JD : What is the Party's opinion on the new decisions of the N.C. and UML?

PR : Objectively our party has taken the NC's decision to remove constitutional monarchy from their party constitution and go ahead for a constituent assembly, and the UML's decision that they could go up to a democratic republic through a constituent assembly, as positive and advanced steps, whatever be the subjective reasons for taking it.

JD : Will this ceasefire lead to concrete results in the situation when, though objectively necessary, the dialogue and cooperation between the Maoists and the seven political parties has not yet taken a concrete shape?

PR : The decision the seven political parties took on the very next day after our declaration clarifies the fact that our declaration of ceasefire has motivated them to go forward in the direction of taking concrete decisions. But, because of vacillations, and an unclear and collaborationist stance of some of the leaders of the seven political parties, the resoluteness they should have shown in taking initiative and decisions was not observed. Nevertheless, with the passing of time, we are optimistic that they will come forward.

JD : Comrade Chairman, has this ceasefire been declared by having discussions with the seven parliamentarian parties? Was this ceasefire declared to resolve the complexity that has arisen between the forces waging armed struggle and the peaceful movement?

PR : The present decision of ceasefire has been taken based on our party's political analysis not by having discussions with anyone else. It is not also true that this declaration has been done to resolve the complexity between peaceful and armed struggle. What is true has been said before.

JD : Can the political movement against the feudal autocracy reach its climax now? How optimistic are you towards the possibility of a forward-looking political way out in the near future?

PR : Nepal, in her political history, is at a serious turning point. In the immediate sense, the country can make a forward move only through people's victory against the feudal power. We, on our behalf, are making efforts to make the people's movement victorious by utilizing both the tactics of firmness and flexibility maximally, as necessitates. The feudal autocratic monarchy has been in political isolation and confined by people's encirclement from all sides. In this turning point of history, it is necessary for all of us to push on. What is necessary here is to make ineffective the strategy of some of the international power centres and mainly the United States of America, which does not want this political way out to take place under the leadership of a revolutionary party. This another point to pay attention to.

JD : All have raised the question of democracy. In fact, what kind of democratic republic do you mean?

PR : The democratic republic, which we are saying, is the transitional republic that can address the problems related to class, nationality, region and sex in today's Nepal. Transitional means, it is a republic in between a new democratic republic and a parliamentary republic with Nepalese specificity.

JD : How are you looking at the role civil society is playing now?

PR : In the political movement in Nepal, civil society has been playing a very important role since the period of the anti Panchayat movement. The political clarity and mass mobilisation that is taking place under the initiative of intellectual personalities, including Devendra Raj Pandey, civil society has become an imitable inspiration for the political parties. In this sense, we have high regard to the role of civil society.

JD : For a party in war, the military success becomes a pressure against the enemy. Now, is not there any possibility of the Party being cornered because of the ceasefire? How much is there the possibility of conspiracy from different internal and external powers?

PR : We must never understand political and military intervention in absolute terms. If military support for every political intervention and political correctness of every military success could not be justified the movement can fall prey to conspiracies of national and foreign reactionary powers. We must never forget this salient particularity of the Nepalese people's war of ten years. The enemy's business is always to conspire. The coordination of military and political intervention is unavoidable to make such kinds of conspiracies ineffective. In this sense, the present declaration of ceasefire is pushing the reactionaries into a corner, not us.

JD : What is the situation of inner-struggle within the party? Has it gone in the direction of resolution?

PR : The problem of unhealthy inner-struggle has already been resolved. Healthy inner-struggle is the party's life so it continues uninterruptedly.

JD : What possibility do you see of the king fulfilling their demand of parliament, to make the parliamentarian parties confront you?

PR : Although the palace can move that pawn of conspiracy but right now it is not imminent. Therefore, we have been appealing to the parliamentarian parties to come forward directly for an interim government and constituent assembly. Their slogan for reinstatement of parliament has already become outdated and turned into a weapon for the palace to play.

JD : A joint statement of Ganapathy, the general secretary of the CPI (Maoist), and yourself has come out. It indicates a process towards the polarisation of the revolutionary communist movement in the region. Now, how will the communist movement in the region and the world go ahead?

PR : Ideologically, we are confident of the fact that a new wave of revolution in South Asia and the world is coming up. Our joint statement with comrade Ganapathy is the expression of that identical ideological conviction.

JD : What would you do if the royal government also declares a ceasefire and calls you for a dialogue? Is it that you won't have a dialogue in any case with the government?

PR : Right now, we are not seeing any possibility and justification of dialogue with the royal government. If it makes such a declaration and puts forward clearly that it is ready to provide an opportunity for the people to decide their fate, then there can be dialogue in agreement with the political parties and civil society. We can never expect talks to be absolute, with the aim of providing total rights to the people.

JD : Comrade Chairman, the propaganda being made that you declared a ceasefire after meeting the foreign minister of India and according to India's suggestion, is coming from the media of the royal government. What is the truth, would you clarify?

PR : Nothing can be achieved by such propaganda excepting that our declaration of ceasefire has caused such warped reaction in the brain of royal ringleaders. The misinformation of the national betrayers, that are killing the best sons and daughters, who love the national integrity and sovereignty of the country more than they do their lives, is nothing other than an excuse to hide their defeat. The fact is that, who is sensitive and responsible and who is criminal towards the interests of Nepal and the Nepalese people is clear as daylight. The feudal palace's move that the patriotic Nepalese people can be confused by planned misinformation is now old. The Nepalese people have been able to identify their real friends and foes. I challenge the lackeys of the feudal palace to prove that I met with any of the authorities of the Indian governments, and the ceasefire was declared according to their plan. This kind of misinformation can never save the feudal elements standing in the palisade, from getting thrown into the garbage can.



Legislative Assembly Election Exercise Starts in the Volatile Punjab Situation

-Amrit

The present Congress govt. in Punjab came into existence in Feb. 2002 by a simple majority. It was not formed because of the popularity of the Congress party, rather it succeeded in gaining power due to the notoriety of the Akali, BJP alliance and the internal rift among different Akali factions. Still the Akali Dal (Badal) could retain the status of opposition party by winning more than 40 seats out of 117. Before becoming Chief Minister, a long article in favour of the policies of imperialist globalization, privatization and liberalization by the present chief minister of Punjab, Capt. Amarinder Singh, was published in the Punjab newspapers, in which he expressed his commitment to implement these anti-people policies rapidly in Punjab. Since the inception of the Captain's govt. whatever anti-people policies he has implemented, whatever ruling tactics he has employed and whatever gimmicks he has used to topple the opposition, all of them have not only sharpened the contradictions between the Punjabi people and the rulers, but also the contradictions among the Congress of the captain, his Akali rivals, and the different factions inside the Congress party. Now, when the situation has entered the phase of the legislative assembly elections in Punjab, let us take a glimpse of the different aspects of these contradictions reaching the existing state of affairs.

There have been enormous cracks in the ruling classes of Punjab. The ruling Congress party is deeply divided in factional feuds which have come to the surface particularly after their defeat in Punjab during the parliamentary elections in May 2004. There are also deep contradictions within the other parties — not only the Akali Dal but even the CPM. The CPM it has been divided into three parts — one, the state committee of the CPM associated with the central leadership; two, CPM (Pasla) group, after rebellion from the central committee and working separately; three, MCPI under the leadership of Jagjit Lyallpurj. The last two along with the Liberation, are called the 'left front', and are not election allies of the Congress party. Also there are acute hostilities between the Congress and the Akali Dal, in fact the Congress spent much

of its energies to hound the leaders of the Akali Dal and discredit them and many were even arrested.

The Captain's govt. of Punjab with the Akali Dal (Badal) as its target, has been following the policies of Giani Zail Singh's govt. to boost other Akali Dals including the Khalistanis. For this purpose he has taken up the issues concerning the Sikh religious minority in its own ruling class interests. For the same purpose he has passed the Punjab Termination of Water Agreement Act.-2004 on the issue of waters concerning the Punjabi Nationality. It can not be ruled out that in future he may play the card of 'Award Chandigarh to Punjab' and 'Annexe Punjabi speaking areas with Punjab' in order to out-manoeuvre his Akali rivals.

But the real conflict is between all these ruling class parties and the people which has got very acute in Punjab. Every section of the people have been on agitation within the state.

Crisis and the rise of Industrial workers:

Due to improper and fragmented development under the domination of imperialism, industry has not been able to absorb the rural population. Industry of Punjab is dependent on raw material from outside Punjab. It is fully applicable to the hosiery and cycle industry of Ludhiana and also to the Steel Industry of Gobindgarh and the oil refinery which is going to be set up in Bathinda.

Small industry of Punjab is also on its death bed. This can be estimated from the figures of the industrial units closed down during the last three years. During this period out of the 30% industrial units being closed, 90% are small-scale units. According to the all India census of small-scale industry, only 71,091 units are working out of a total of 1,54,686 units. The rest of them had to be closed down. As a result, unemployment is increasing. Industrial workers are coming on the roads with banners in their hands. Ludhiana, which is famous throughout the world as an industrial centre, is passing through a big upheaval. The prominent Hero cycle industry has been struck with prolonged strikes. The workers

have faced sharp clashes with the management, their goonda gangs and police. In spite of the efforts of a revisionist, reformist leadership to cool it down, it refuses to do so. Due to the devastation of small-scale industry the conditions to mobilize and organize the workers in small cities and towns of Punjab have become more favourable than before. During the tenure of the Captain govt. the contradiction between the owners and the working class has relatively sharpened.

Recently, there has been a glorious struggle of the employees against the privatization of the Sugar federation and the electricity board. In spite of the subjugationist compromise by the leaders of the electricity workers, this struggle has not cooled down. Although the govt. has postponed the corporatisation and privatization of the electricity board for six months due to their political calculations, yet, after the full implementation of this decision according to the Electricity Act-2003 the unrest among the electricity workers, peasants and workers can become explosive. Although the health department was corporatised during the Akali -BJP rule, after handing over the govt. hospitals to big companies like Reliance acute unrest may erupt against it among the health department and the people who will have to pay huge charges.

Agricultural crisis and peasants struggle:

Along with the industrial sector, the agricultural sector of Punjab is also under a severe crisis. The prices of agricultural inputs are continuously rising. There has been an increase in the prices of fertilizers, oil, pesticides, seeds, electricity, several times during the tenure of the Captain's govt. The prices of agricultural produce have been continuously falling. Though there has been a minor increase after a long time in the prices of the crops in Punjab this year, such as sugarcane, wheat, paddy, cotton, this is nowhere near the increase in prices of inputs.

When the Captain's govt. rose to power, it, along with the peasant organizations of Punjab went to Delhi to protest against the then NDA govt. on the issue of rates of

paddy. The Punjab govt. also announced a bonus of Rs. 30 on paddy. This bonus was to be paid in three installments but after releasing the bonus of Rs. 10, the rest of the bonus of Rs.20 has not been paid so far. Instead of fulfilling its promises made during the elections, the Captain's govt., just after coming to power snatched away the facility of free electricity and water. Orders were issued again to collect the waived revenue. Even strictness was imposed for the payment of electricity bills for the period when they were waived — electric motors were disconnected of those peasants who did not pay the electricity bills during the campaign of the boycott of bills. New electricity connections were banned. Only under special schemes, highly expensive electricity connections were revived on the basis of personal expenditure and for the equipment.

Due to the crisis of electricity the peasant's could not avail of proper electricity to grow their crops. During the tenure of the Captain the peasant organization of Punjab along with the organizations of employees launched a struggle for the solution of the above said problems of electricity and to prevent the privatization of the electricity board. The peasant organizations gheraoed the electricity officials and got their connections restored.

In spite of these struggles the increasing agricultural expenses and shrinking income has been resulting in the unbridled increase of debt of the peasantry of Punjab, which is already under heavy debt from the usurers and banks. According to the official figure this loan has risen upto Rs.12,500 crore rupees, where as it is in reality far above that figure. This problem manifests in increasing suicides by the peasantry in Punjab. Its second manifestation is the forcible occupation of the lands of poor and middle peasants by the usurers, banks, pro-capitalist big land lords, because of their inability to repay the loans. In the present situation of Punjab this contradiction has assumed quite sharp proportions. The peasant's struggles of Chathewala, Tapa, Guru Harsahai, Karkandi, Maddoke, Lakha Hazi, Karam Garh Satran, Gidderbaha etc. are manifestations of the above problems. In these usurer Arhtiyas, their goonda gangs in connivance with the police and civil administration have at-

tacked the peasants. They have attempted to forcibly occupy the lands of the peasants. At several places, particularly in Guru Harsahai, Gidderbaha, Karamgarh Satran, there have been direct clashes with the peasants.

The issue is not limited to usurer, arhtiyas alone. How are banks going to deal with this loan crisis? A report in the Hindustan Times dated 23 June, 2005 leaves no doubt about this: "*The Punjab state Co-operative Agriculture Development Bank (Nabard) does not want to take any chances. It has got arrest warrants issued against hundreds of farmers in Bathinda, Muktsar, Mansa, Moga, Faridkot and Ferozepur districts for defaulting on payments. Some farmers have been sent to jail. In Bathinda district alone, warrants have been issued against 100 farmers and about 15 of them have already been arrested. The bank has also procured land auction orders of some farmers. Fearing police raids, a number of farmers have fled homes.*"

While farmer bodies term it as tyranny, the bank officials say they have been left with no alternative but to pressure farmers into re-paying the loans. Official sources told H.T. that the recovery was unsatisfactory as 50-80% of the people had defaulted. The branches, where recovery percentage is low, are likely to be closed by the Nabard. Debt recovery is below 40% for most of the branches and could lead to their closure, said the sources. The co-operative banks have to recover Rs. 317.39 crore from 1,07,069 farmers in the state, of these 59,995 are defaulters and owe Rs. 196.51 crore to the banks.

In Bathinda alone, these banks have to recover Rs. 55.42 crore from 23,841 farmers. A sum of Rs. 36.22 crore is in the form of old loans. However, recovery of the bank's Bathinda branch till June 18 was only 37% as against 52.2% for the last year. Similarly the Nathana branch recovered only 26.8% of the money it had lent to farmers, while Rampura Phul branch got back 34.3% of its loans. The recovery rate of the Talwandi Sabo and Rama mandi branches is 29.1% and 40.4% Sardulgarh, Mansa, Budhlada, Gidderbaha, Malout, Muktsar, Abohar, Jalalabad, Fazilka, Guruhar Sahai and Lambi branches too have not fared any better.

According to bank officials, teams have been constituted to recover the money from

defaulters. The officials fear that if they failed to recover half of the amount loaned to the farmers by June end, Nabard might declare these branches as defaulters.

On the other hand, farmer unions have been protesting the move and hold rallies and sit in dharnas whenever bank officials come with warrants or land auction orders. They are of the view that the Govt. should adopt a lenient approach as farmers are yet to recover from the losses they incurred due to successive crop failure in the last few years and low prices this season.

It is evident from the whole process that the agricultural crisis of Punjab has reached an explosive situation. Even on the eruption of a single struggle on the issue of debt, sequestration and occupation of land, thousands of peasants are arrested in Punjab. On the other hand, the peasants also come out on the roads to resist with sticks.

The impact of Agricultural crisis on the rural labourer

The impact of the agricultural crisis on the rural labourers is manifesting itself in even more horrible forms. The chronic agricultural crisis has already divested them from the land. Very few amongst them have been able to retain the little quantity of land. The daily wage work available in the agricultural sector has now shrunk to only seasonal work due to mechanization. Although agricultural sector absorbs a considerable part of the labourers on contract basis, yet the major part of rural labourers are unemployed, because of the non-availability of wage labour throughout the year.

In addition, the above mentioned industrial crisis is further aggravating the situation for those rural labourers who go to the cities in search of a living. As a result, the rural poor women are being pushed into prostitution on a large scale. Even the women of landless and poor peasants are being pushed into this profession. The debt crisis among the agricultural labourers is also very acute. There have been many instances of suicides among them also.

Being under the subjugation of pro-capitalist big land-lords they have also had to face extreme caste oppression. Recently, there have been instances of social boycott due to the demand for better wages. For example, in village Jangi-Rana of Distt. Bathinda, because of the controversy on

the issue of wages the rural big-wigs through an announcement from the gurudwara speaker banned their entry into the fields. Men and women labourers were banned even from answering the call of nature in the fields. Their social functions were boycotted. Not only on the wage labourers, restrictions were also imposed on the contract workers. There are eight instances of Dalit youth being tortured to death in the police custody in seven districts of Punjab during the tenure of the Captain's regime. The officials of the central Jail Jalandhar tortured a Dalit prisoner Sohan Lal with red hot iron rods. The words, "Scheduled Caste" written with these rods on his back make a mockery of the so-called development of Punjab.

Not to speak of any relief to this most oppressed section of villages by the Captain's govt., even facilities like free electricity, the Shagun scheme started by the Punjab govt. for the rural labouring girls, the old age pension scheme, the public distribution system being run on subsidy, etc were suspended. Not only is the oppression and repression continuing as during the former regimes. but it is crossing all limits. On account of being victims of the severest crisis and caste discrimination there is a great potential to mobilise and organise these most oppressed sections. This potential has widened during the rule of the Captain's govt. There is a crying need to canalize this potential.

The Impact of Privatisation on Students and Employees

There is acute unrest against the govt. policies of the commercialization of education among the students of schools and colleges from the peasant-worker-middle class families of the rural and urban areas. After closing govt. institutions the big business houses have opened private medical colleges, and technical training institutions on a large scale in cities and towns. These institutions being run in grand buildings have become the centres of exploitation of the students coming from the working section through fees and corruption. Recently there has been unbearable increase in fees of schools, colleges and universities. The students launched a sharp struggle against it. The Punjabi University, Patiala, has con-

tinuously been the centre of this struggle. The struggle against the contract system in I.T.I.'s and for revoking increased charges is still going on. The students have fought a glorious struggle against sharp increase in bus fares. It is still going on. The goonda gangs of private transporters openly attack the students. This phenomenon is coming up on a large scale in entire Punjab. These goonda gangs of the bus transporters owned by pro-capitalists big landlords connive with police and civil administration.

Recently, the student struggle against the handing over of govt. colleges to big business houses by the Punjab govt. has been extended to the govt. teachers also. Acute unrest among the teachers against this decision of the govt. has manifested in militant struggles. Lady teachers have also fought in the forefront. The C.P.I., C.P.M., Akali Dal have tried to exploit the resentment of the people through this struggle. The recent agitation of the E.T.T. teachers got on the nerves of the govt. The privatization of govt. schools will affect not only teachers; it will be more acute on the industrial workers, rural workers, peasants and middle class. They will be unable to get education for their children because of declining incomes, because of expensive education due to the privatization of the education. The literacy graph of Punjab will be lowered. Because of this privatisation there will be an increase in the educated unemployed, who are thirty five lakhs in Punjab at present.

The preparation for elections and fresh Tactics

The Captain's govt. of Punjab was rapidly privatizing the electricity board, health, education, sugar mills etc — a total thirty corporations and boards. But after the Punjab visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in May 2005 it has for the time being postponed for some time the implementation of these decisions. On the contrary, it has started taking decisions keeping in view the coming elections scheduled for early 2007. The Captain has announced a deceptive plan named electricity bonus in order to fool the peasants. He has announced to lift the ban on recruitment imposed during his entire tenure. He has en-

acted the drama of supplying free hundred units of electricity to village workers. To mobilize the Congress party for the coming elections, the newly appointed president, Dullu, is appointing new office bearers. The Captain's govt. is rapidly trying to snatch the political issues one by one to compete with the Akalis.

The contradictions between the rulers and the people are attaining explosive proportions. In view of this the chief ruling class parties of Punjab, the Congress and Akali Dal (B) along with their Allies have started election exercises. Both the parties have become more discredited than ever before among the people. The contradictions among the inner factions of both the parties are also sharpening. Both the parties during the last mid term elections to legislative assembly went to the extent of firing on each other in order to capture the booths through their goonda gangs in Garhshanker, Kapurthala and Ajnala.

Yet both the parties are vigorously implementing the imperialist policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. These policies will further tighten the imperialist grip on India including Punjab. This will only intensify the contradictions between the rulers and people to extreme levels. As a result, the ground for tumultuous struggles in Punjab is going to be more favorable. The conflict between the rulers and the people, which has reached the level of using sticks and swords, is going to enter into do-or-die struggles like those of Andhra, Bihar, Jhar-khand. Whichever party gains power in the elections, there will be basically no difference — all are going to implement the policies of privatisation more vigorously. The phenomenon of instability of the govt. on an all-India scale will manifest in Punjab also.

So the situation is ripe for huge advances by the communist revolutionary forces by leading these struggles forward and in a revolutionary direction. In this context we cannot but remember comrade Mao's, dictum "without people's power, people have nothing" and "without a people's army people have nothing". By advancing the peoples upsurge in this direction can they utilize the explosive situation of Punjab in favour of revolution. ■ ■

MICROFINANCE : THE NEW MONEYLENDER

{Given the vast and growing network of SHGs in the countryside, particularly in the areas of revolutionary struggles, and the importance being given to microfinance by the establishment, this article is an eye-opener on the real role of microfinance and its actual impact — or lack of it — on people's lives. Interestingly one of the first visits of the new World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz (an extreme right-wing neo-conservative from the USA), was to AP, where after a discussion with rural women from some SHGs he granted assistance of a massive \$260 million for these SHG movement up to 2008 — coincidentally this took place a day after a ban was imposed on the Maoists in AP..... Editor}

- Rashmi

The Year 2005 has been declared as the international year of microfinance by the United Nations. In India too, it was stated clearly in the budget of 2005-06 that the government intends to promote micro-finance institutions in a big way. This is nothing but one more mechanism to entrap the rural poor in the vicious cycle of debt and keep them from challenging the system responsible for their woes.

Bhagvathy, treasurer of a few Malar Self Help Groups in Kanyakumari district and her co-members were ecstatic when they received the keys to the harvester, sanctioned under the Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojna (SGSY) loan scheme, from the chief minister, no less, at a public function, only to be disillusioned when they saw that it came without the engine! In the event, the additional Rs 18,000 for the engine had to be mobilised from the private credit market at a usurious interest rate.

The women of a neighbouring Self Help Group (SHG) were not much happier either. Their SGSY enterprise loan that was sanctioned by the bank at a public function, with disbursement promised within two weeks, did not materialize at all as the concerned field officer was transferred. The women who had paid an advance for the purchase of cows, anticipating a quick loan disbursement; started paying 60% p.a. interest on the private loan they were forced to take, to retain the cows.

These are not isolated incidents. The much propagated new panacea for eradicating poverty, generating employment and empowering women, the 'magic wand' of microfinance or microcredit is a well thought out conspiracy by imperialists to leave people with a fewer crumbs of bread than they deserve.

The network of SHGs spans virtually all the states of the country. The debate on the issue has become even more pertinent in the light of the fact that the present year, 2005, has been declared as the international year of microfinance by the United Nations. Stanly Fischer, vice-chair of Citigroup and

chair of the advisors' group for the International year of micro-credit says, "Today the world's stock markets are focusing on the people to whom this year is dedicated: microfinance clients". A consensus was reached at the micro-credit summit at Washington DC in 1997, to reach credit assistance to the 100 million of the world's poorest families by the year 2005. Even in India, the Union Budget of 2005-06 gave special focus to microfinance and the corpus fund for microfinance was raised to Rs. 200 crores by the Reserve Bank of India. The 'Microfinance Development Fund' was re-designated as the "Microfinance Development & Equity Fund".

Micro-credit is being proposed as the magic wand that can wish away poverty without having to address the uncomfortable issue of inequitable ownership of wealth and resources.

What is Microfinance

According to the Asian Development Bank, one of the biggest donors for micro-finance, the provision of financial services, such as deposits, loans, payment services, money transfers & insurance to the poor and low-income households and their micro-enterprises are broadly called 'micro-financing'. The term micro-finance came into greater currency since the early 1990s and has largely supplanted the term 'micro-credit'.

A microfinance institution (MFI) is a financial intermediary, which provides credit to the rural populace. This most often are NGOs, but can also be some other bodies like the panchayats, anganwadi teachers, etc. This MFI then sets up Self-help Groups (SHGs) which comprise about 20 people (mostly women) who deposit (save) a certain amount each week/month. Then the MFI puts in an equal amount (or upto four times the amount) and the loan is given to individual members of the SHGs. The loans are given individually but the liability is the collective responsibility of the SHG. In turn, the MFIs are re-financed by commercial banks.

Today, there are 800 plus MFIs who lend

to the poor in India. The SHG or the self-help groups are formed extensively with the help of NGOs. SHG-bank linkage model is the indigenous model of micro-credit that has evolved in India. At the present, there are 3000-plus NGOs with the SHG-bank linkage programme and other models of bank - MFI linkages by the NABARD. The SHG-bank linkage programme covers over 14 lakh groups, involving a cumulative credit flow of Rs. 6,300 crores at the end of March, 2005 from the banking system. Each SHG is supposed to have around 20 members with relatively similar incomes. Their primary principle is the lending of member's savings but SHGs also seek external funding. World Bank and ADB are the biggest donors to MFIs. Typically, SHGs are promoted and supported by NGOs, with some acting as financial intermediaries for SHGs, while others acting as 'social' intermediaries, seeking to facilitate linkages of SHGs with various funding agencies. International institutions like OXFAM and Action Aid organise SHGs either directly or with help from local NGOs. Later, these SHGs are linked to various foreign banks. This is known as 'bank-linkage'. Being a savings-first model, banks have a corporate policy to expand micro-credit operations under the SHG-bank linkage mode.

The origin of SHGs can be traced to 1976, when Professor Mohammad Yunus of Bangladesh started women's group in Bangladesh. This group later developed into the Bangladesh Grameen Bank. In India, the pioneer in this field was Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). Although it started as a trade union for women in the unorganised sector almost 40 years ago, today it boasts of running the first women's bank in the country. In southern India, organisations like Pradan, Myrada, Asseefa, Malar etc. have entered this rural credit system. All these are high-profile NGOs getting vast funds from the imperialist countries.

In fact, there is a diversity of approaches to microfinance involving banks,

NGOs and co-operatives. In each of these models, the group usually assumes joint liability for loans taken by its members. SHGs of 15-20 members, for instance, may rotate their savings as internal loans within the group as well as access loans from the MFI or from a bank. The group usually has weekly, fortnightly or monthly meetings, in which the members deposit a regular savings amount and make any loan repayments. In these meetings, a definite sum of Rs. 10, Rs. 20 etc is deposited by each member and these deposits are used for internal loans. After being satisfied about savings and repayments, banks give loans to the groups.

NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) which came into existence in 1981, refinances the banks, which in turn lend to the SHGs.

Microfinance has come a long way from linking a few SHGs in the early 90s and launching of the NABARD's SHG-bank linkage programme. Microfinance services now cover approximately 28 lakh poor households with the SHG model accounting for 64% of MFI clients. There is a pronounced regional tilt with 90% of the clients in the South and Western parts of India. Also, nearly 93% of SHG clients are women, and therefore, the talk of empowerment of women. One major aim of these schemes is to seek to draw away the oppressed masses from the new power being established in the villages by the Maoists and replace it by the so-called empowerment of the SHGs. For this vast sums are being spent by the imperialists and their institutions like the World Bank, ADB, etc.

Repayment rates range, on an average, from 87% to 97% of all loans! NABARD had already given loans of Rs. 1,192 crore to 11 lakh SHGs till March 2004. The finance minister, in his budget speech this year has asked NABARD and SIDBI to increase the number of SHGs in India significantly.

SHGs have also been institutionalised within the state's anti-poverty programmes through the Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojna (SGSY), a self-employment promotion scheme, which claims to provide loan cum subsidy to the rural poor, officially certified as below the poverty line (BPL). The SGSY was launched after the scrapping of the IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) in 1999-2000.

NGOs are the backbone of this system

of rural credit. In many places, they are being encouraged to form SHGs, and remunerated by the donor banks. Today, NABARD gives Rs 2000 to an NGO for bank-linkage with a SHG, since NGOs can assure the payback and recovery of loans. Womens' SHGs and micro-credit organisations are being seen as roads to poverty alleviation and emancipation of women. Govts have also jumped on to bandwagon by forming lakhs of such groups.

World Outreach of Micro-credit		
Date	Programmes (No.)	Clients (No.)
End 1997	618	13.5 million
End 2000	1567	30.7 million

The new money-lender: Abdication of state responsibility

The SHG member may be charged between 24% and 36% or even 48% on the loan that they receive from the MFI! The norm is about 3% per month which is itself usurious compared to what banks charge. In some cases, the NGOs involved charge an additional sum for its services which is added to the interest rates. **The RBI, in a draft report has stated that MFIs could determine their own rates of interest.** These loans are meant for the BPL households, who are also charged interest rate for other agricultural loans (against land or crop or Kisan Credit Card) — between 8 to 12% p.a. So, even here the BPL households are being charged a higher rate of interest than other sections (car or housing loans are now available for 7%). Earlier, there were cooperative credit institutions, followed by nationalisation of major domestic banks in 1969, and later, the creation of rural banks.

However, the scheduled commercial banks have covered only 18.4% of the rural population. But since the early 1990s, with liberalisation swallowing the banking sector as well, increasing attention is being given to recovery and profitability of banks. The bank sector, in turn, has started showing lack of interest in small accounts. The number of loan accounts of small borrowers with a credit limit range of less than Rs 25,000 has decreased from 5.88 crore in 1991 to 3.69 crore in 2003. There was a drop of 41% in the number of small loan accounts in merely 10 years. While the government is withdrawing from its

responsibility of providing loans to the poor, the alternative being presented is microfinance services.

If microfinance could meet the credit requirements of the poor, then why is the entire country rocked by debt-related suicides? What credibility does Andhra Pradesh's micro-credit 'success story' have if it is the state with the highest number of debt-related suicides? A report compiled at the request of Bombay High Court about farmer's suicides in Maharashtra, states that corporate globalisation and ruling indebtedness are the reasons, for suicides care not restricted to one income level or land-holding category. Accordingly, private lending accounts for 50% of the total lending.

It is quite obvious that micro-finance has not reduced the business or the terms of the moneylenders. Also, microfinance does not factor in the fact that even today, a large part of the rural loans are required for consumption purposes and not income-generating activities. In fact, there is evidence to show that microfinance clients often need to borrow from other sources to meet their repayment schedules, especially of the SHGs. Field reports of SHGs describe the strategies women deploy to keep up with the repayment schedules. These range from pledging jewellery, reducing food intake, selling personal assets and borrowing from informal moneylenders. No surprises here. **Because in microfinance, the 'ability to repay' is more important than the credit requirement of the needy. In fact, the simultaneous withdrawal of the state from rural credit and the entry of microfinance is pushing the poor into the clutches of the moneylenders!**

Actually, the lucrative 'commercial' business of microfinance is shifting from the local money-lenders' hands to men who are suave and come with a tag of a social missionary! Said a micro-credit activist of Karnataka, *"If the women had lent their savings to the market, they would have earned more than what they are earning through SHGs. Both MFIs and NGOs, who receive money from NABARD and banks at low interest rates have become commercial organisations, profiting at the cost of poor women, who continue to pay high interest rates of about 24% on the loans they receive from the MFIs"*.

The microfinance system is actually becoming a way of mobilizing rural savings

as well, e.g., the credit/deposit ratio in Uttar Pradesh is 33% implying that only Rs. 33 out of Rs. 100 of deposits is going back to the people in the form of loans. In the backward districts, this ratio is even lower ranging from 16 to 21% implying that although savings are mobilized from these predominantly agricultural areas, only 16 to 21% of peoples' own savings go back to them in the form of credit. The SHG model of microfinance, in real sense, sucks the poor people of their meagre savings, rather than providing them credit!

The Corporate Interest

Of late, the big corporate sector and the multinationals firms are exhibiting an increasing interest in microfinance. The impressive roll-call of corporates in funding SHGs, directly or by partnerships, and supporting NGOs, includes, ICICI, Citibank ABN Amro, Hindustan Lever Ltd. (Shree-Shakti project), ITC (e-chaupal), Mahindra & Mahindra (Subha Labh), Tata Group (Kisan Sansar), HDFC, Max New Life Insurance, etc. In fact, ICICI is aggressively moving both by setting up a network of SHGs like in Tamilnadu or in partnership with local NGOs to form the SHGs. While it lent out at least Rs 240 crores to the SHGs in the first case, in the second, at least 40 NGOs are in partnership with it in Kerala, AP, Karnataka, Orissa, WB, Jharkhand, UP & Rajasthan.

Cashphor India is into microfinance in Gazipur, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Mau, Balia (all in UP). Registered in 1996, Cashphor Financial & Technical Services (CFTS), ended up near areas bordering the eastern UP and western Bihar, for these regions had the highest number of poor households. This MFI is based on the model of Grameen Bank, where a group of 5-6 members is made and loans are given to individual members but the liability to repay is still collective. CFTS has taken financial help from NABARD, ICICI, UCO bank, UTI Bank, Deutsche Bank, Mumbai, Grameen Foundation USA etc. at 6 to 12% interest rate and disbursed loans to villagers at 20% interest rate. It disbursed its first loan in Mirzapur in September 1997. What started as a company with small funds of approximately 4 lakhs in 1997, grew to a big enterprise with funds of 16 crore Rs by November 2003. On 1 December 2003, micro-credit business of CFTS Ltd. was sold to CMC. Indeed, microfinance has become a

profitable business!

MNCs are getting interested in SHGs as consumers of their products. They are doing marketing surveys through SHGs. In 2001, FMCG major, Hindustan Lever Ltd. (HLL) launched 'Project Shakti', a rural direct to home distributor model, which utilizes networks of women from SHGs as rural direct-to-home distributors. It claims to provide economic opportunities to the poor women but the fact is that its real interest lies in creating a distribution and communication channels for HLL's brands to access the untapped rural markets with a consumer base of 100 million rural Indians.

In September 2004, Grameen Bank in Bangladesh went a step further in its endeavour to 'reduce poverty' through micro-credit, by equipping beggars on the city streets with mobile phones! The plan was that the beggars would offer the phone to the passers-by to make calls for a fee. Each mobile phone would cost the beggars 8,500 taka repayable over two years in interest free instalments. The corporate interest clearly lies in penetrating the vast and hitherto inaccessible rural market.

Myth of employment generation

The SGSY, modeled on the lines of the SHG, claims to provide self-employment opportunities to those below the poverty line, especially women. This is again a hoax. In the first place, the eligibility criteria for accessing the SGSY scheme is the repayment of earlier loans taken (primarily the IRDP) by the male relatives of women SHG members.

Secondly, several SHGs complain of imposing on them some enterprise activity by block and bank officials, such as toy-making, embroidery, candle-making etc. but without any guarantee of market support. SHGs that bought milk cattle in several parts of Tamil Nadu under the SGSY scheme said the milk co-operative societies usually transfer their working capital liability onto the shoulders of the poor by delaying payments for the milk by over a month!

A SHG named Jai Bajrang operating in Jasra block near Allahabad in UP, was formed 4 years back with 12 members. The members began by depositing Rs. 60 per month. After 1½ years, they received a loan of Rs. 1½ lakh. 12 buffalos were bought with this. Over time, the cattle started giving reduced milk but the loan installment had to go on. In a period of three years Rs.

80,000 could be paid back. The cattle has grown thin, milk has reduced but the debt is still there.

More or less, this is the tale of Majority of SHGs. The reality is that in a globalised world, it is near impossible for small-scale enterprises to sustain themselves faced with competition from global corps. What with the small-scale industry being in a dismal shape, can such enterprises generate employment in a world where the market has been monopolised by MNCs & TNCs. All claims of employment generation through rearing cattle, making *papad*, candles, pickles etc. are nothing but sick jokes in a situation where people are getting displaced continuously. We all know stories of farmers' suicides are no longer confined to being mere statistics.

Micro-credit schemes cannot alleviate poverty because they are intended to bypass the actual reason of poverty – the inequitable social relations.

The real interest

The actual reason underlying the microfinance programmes is the reform programme being pushed by imperialists, and their local cronies, to divert the people from class struggle. **It is not unintended that the largest recipient of such finance in India, is Andhra Pradesh and the largest in Maharashtra is Gadchiroli district. In UP, most of the microfinance is going to Mirzapur district. All these are regions of intense revolutionary struggles led by the Maoists.** Again, it is not unintended that NGOs are being involved in this programme in such big way.

The state well understands that the situation is becoming explosive, with massive unemployment as a result of the policies of LPG. In such a situation, if people have to be prevented from entering revolutionary class struggles, they need to be given some sops in the form of employment generating activities. Besides, all talk of empowerment is a political ruse to divert the masses from the people's power evolving in embryonic form in the guerrilla zones and areas of intense peasant struggles.

As early as 1948, America helped launch a project for 64 villages in Itawah district of UP. Described by Nehru as an 'ideal weapon' to deal with revolutionary threats to basic land-reforms, it soon became an all India programme. The US provided

Continued at page 25

Bolivia in the Throes of Turmoil

- Akhil

Bolivian president Carlos Mesa went tumbling down the throne on June 6, 2005. About 4 lakh were marching on the streets in La Paz demanding his ouster.

Latin America seems to have gone into social tremors. Literally every country of the continent is seeing huge movements generated by the inhuman globalization that has pushed millions into poverty and the sprawling slums of the cities. The uprooted miners, labourers, peasants and indigenous people are uniting to wrest back what liberalisation and privatization has snatched from them. It took almost fifteen to twenty years for the people to realise about the devastating consequences of the neo-liberal policies when the real effects of the forces of globalisation shattered and uprooted their lives. They rose up to challenge the imperialist and capitalist forces of globalisation and their local henchmen. This, further precipitated the ruling class contradictions forcing one after the other presidents to resign. Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, all have seen a change of presidents. There are strong anti-regime movements in Peru and Chile. The mass protest movement in Bolivia has resulted in the change of four consecutive presidents since the year 2000.

Ecuador president, Lucio Gutierrez, was forced out of power on April 20, 2005. Two of his predecessors had met the same fate. In 1997, President Abdala Bucaram was ousted after only six months in office. Before him Jamil Mahuad was brought down after two years of his rule. Presidents of Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Haiti had to quit in the face of rising revolts and mass protests due to their economic policies which had pushed the countries into severe economic crises. In 2003, President Sanchez Lozada of Bolivia was forced out of office after he ordered army to quell the protesters. The army killed more than sixty persons in three weeks. And the latest victim of the people's wrath again became Bolivian President Carlos Mesa who had succeeded Lozada. He was driven out of office on June 6, 2005. Two of his associates who were second and third in the line of succession were forced by the people's movement not to assume presidency. The movement was withdrawn only after the Supreme Court justice Eduardo Rodriguez Veltze accepted

the post of president as a stop gap official, promising fresh elections in December 2005.

The oppressed and poor Latin American people are in action bringing down their presidents one after the other. A wide array of political forces is active among the masses where every one of them wants to push the events in accordance with its own interest. The case of Bolivia is another example where vast multitudes of people are grappling with the problem of how to put an end to their miserable conditions of life, most of them agreeing that it is the imperialist plunder of their land that has led to the pathetic situation they are in.

The day Carlos Mesa was to step down a sea of nearly 4,00,000 people were demonstrating in the capital city, La Paz. Bolivia, a land of only 85 lakh people, is a land locked country in the Southern American Continent. Its countryside is nearly obliterated of human population as the imperialist imposed policies of liberalization have driven millions of rural people, peasants and mine workers to the cities to seek work there. The devastation caused by the pro-imperialist economic policies of the government can be gauged from the fact that the displacement of people from their traditional jobs forced them to come to the capital city in such huge numbers that El Alto, a city, sprang up on the hills near La Paz and swelled to one million in population in just 30 years! Here it is imperative to note that while the rest of the world was thrown open to unbridled imperialist plunder through the US-led new world economic set up in the nineties this process has been going on in Latin America since the early eighties as it has remained in US imperialist control ever since the Spanish colonialists hold was loosened here in the early nineteenth century. If US considers Central America as its backyard Latin America is considered by it as its exclusive sphere of influence.

El Alto has remained in the forefront of the mass struggle in Bolivia and brought down two presidents, Lozada and Mesa, just in a span of two years. El Alto consists of uprooted indigenous peasants (called Indians) who flocked to the city as new policies of the government did not allow them to cultivate their traditional crops, as a consequence their agriculture was destroyed; miners from the vast mines

which were closed down due to the fact that the imperialists were no longer interested in tin from Bolivia. Many thousands of families went to other places in the lower regions to produce coca as their lands now have been taken up by the US, British and Spanish oil companies because the land they tilled had gas under it. Since privatization, new estimates of the country's gas and petroleum reserves have increased dramatically to 53 trillion cubic feet, second only to Venezuela on the South American continent. So, the US has reasons to frown on the people's movement in Bolivia as most of the Bolivian gas and oil leads to its destinations in the US (California). Bolivian richness in the natural energy resources has become a cause for its abject poverty, only because the imperialist scramble for this source of energy has led to the dispossession of the masses.

The rulers, one after the other, have only continued the job of working for the imperialist interests. The anger of the people subdues with the downfall of one ruler but rises up again when the ground reality—the relation of the ruling classes with imperialism—does not change. The local rulers remain compradors; the imperialists remain the masters of the resources and the de facto rulers working from Washington. Before we come to deal with the new truce that has come with the fall of Mesa and coming to power of Rodriguez Veltze let us go through the events that led to Mesa's presidency and his subsequent fall where the mass protest movement has played a leading role all through and forced many of the political leaders and the church to come up in their true colours. It is a vast canvas of social turmoil where every force has come up in a truly naked form and the advance of social consciousness (not yet class consciousness) through action has made its imprint.

The Fight For Control Of The Natural Resources

The current struggle of the dispossessed in Bolivia is centred on the nationalisation issue of gas resources and to get rid of the politicians who are in cahoots with the transnational corporations. In 2003, when Gonzalo

Sánchez de Lozada was forced to quit and flee to the US it was water that called the multitudes of the population to come to the streets and stop the privatization of water and its exploitation by the multinational companies. The Water Coalition of Cochabamba, a city in Bolivia, rose up to fight against the government's decision to privatise the water system of the city to US-based corporation, Bechtel, in 2000. The huge mass struggle that went on for a full one month in April of that year forced the government to ditch the plan for privatising water. Bechtel was kicked in the belly and the government had to put its foot in its own mouth. The administration of the water system was taken over by the citizens' and workers' elected representatives' self management team. This led to the realisation throughout Bolivia that people can force the government to retract the anti-people measures, firing into them a confidence that the have-nots and illiterate have immense power hidden in them only if they come up united on some issue. The mass movement for the control of the water system encompassed the workers, the petty-bourgeois, the commoners, and the poor of the city. Next came the struggle for oil and natural gas which had been denationalised in Bolivia in the mid-1990s.

The Bolivian oil and gas deposits have been a national property since 1937. With the coming of the multinational companies during many decades that followed, the need arose for the rulers to again nationalise these resources in 1970. But when privatisation occurred in the 80s, and new reserves were found, Bolivia became a hotbed of exploitation for British Gas, Spain's Repsol and US's Enron, and some from Chile and Argentina. A total of \$ 3.50 billion was invested in poor Bolivia, where about 75 percent population is poor, a great majority among them being the indigenous Indian tribals. The already pauperised people of Bolivia, due to the pro-imperialist policies of their government, started discussing and taking up the issue of nationalisation of gas resources. Cochabamba echoed in their thoughts and many social movements, trade unions and indigenous groups started rallying around a single point—nationalisation of the gas and oil resources. So, the Water Coalition from a city level transformed into a Gas Coalition at the national level.

It was the fight for control of gas by the nation — i.e., nationalization — which led to a great mass upheaval in 2003. Here, we want to point out that when the majority of people considered the issue of nationalization they did not think about who controlled the State. As was reported in Guardian, London, (11 June, 2005) about a labour leader from El Alto, Roberto de la Cruz of the El Alto Regional Labor Confederation (COR), who said: "*When we started this fight we were not interested in changing persons in the governmental palace. The objective was, and is, to recover gas in favour of the Bolivian State.*"

The Bolivians were poor before the denationalisation of gas and oil. They became poorer with denationalisation while multinationals earned crores in profits. Even the Bolivians had to purchase oil and gas at the international prices after coming out from the refineries in adjoining countries, though their state had sold it cheap to the multinationals. A double exploitation!

The demand for nationalisation of resources gathered fast support and the movement gained fast momentum. In September 2003, the Coalition for the Defence and Recovery of Gas held large-scale demonstrations demanding nationalisation of gas. The whole country witnessed a massive upsurge against the government which was more interested in serving imperialist interests than Bolivian. The struggle for gas was joined by the indigenous people of Altiplano, the area surrounding La Paz, who were struggling for their own rights and were being brutally suppressed by the government. The struggle for gas nationalisation, though it went on in all the major cities of Bolivia, yet the poor of El Alto were in the fore front, leading the political onslaughts on the government.

The Bolivian Workers Federation or COB, the El Alto Regional Labor Confederation (COR), and the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), were an important part of the 2003 movement.

With the killing of sixty people at the hands of the Bolivian army in the streets of La Paz, the El Alto raised the demand for Lozada's resignation and prosecution. The government forces could not match the surging crowds of the militant people who indulged in street battles with the police and army. More deaths ensued and Lozada

came to face opposition in his own government. Mesa, his vice president, denounced the use of force. Lozada fled the country, and assuming charge, Mesa promised to hold a referendum on natural gas in 2004.

Evo Morales, the leader of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), whose party is the second largest block in the Bolivian Congress, played a central role in politically disarming the mass movement that erupted in 2003 and allowing Mesa's installation as the new president.

But Mesa, who was another representative of the ruling classes serving imperialism, backed out from his commitment, and the referendum he carried on the issue of gas had no word of "nationalization" in it. The people rejected the referendum by writing "nationalization" across the ballots as asked by COB and most of the other organizations fighting for nationalization.

But Mesa "*used the referendum results to justify his own neoliberal policies on the gas issue. He vowed that he would neither break nor renegotiate existing contracts with the transnationals. Mesa did agree to have Congress draft a new Hydrocarbon Law, but he expected it would not be much of a blow to the transnationals' mega-profits,*" thus wrote a commentator.

Morales campaigned in favor of the July 2004 gas referendum, telling people that voting "yes" would mean imposing 50 percent royalties on transnational oil companies.

"*Last March, however, Congress passed a Hydrocarbon Law that took Mesa by surprise. The new law not only kept an already existing requirement that levied 18 percent royalties on the profits of transnational gas corporations, but it also tacked on another 32 percent in taxes.*" The additional taxes contained in the measure antagonized foreign companies that have been reaping massive profits from the exploitation of Bolivia's natural gas reserves. Mesa was furious that the law was too anti-transnational. It also fueled the wealthy elite's, especially that of the eastern districts', passion for autonomy.

Many participating in the movement for nationalisation objected to the 18 percent-plus-32 percent formula, preferring a straight 50 percent royalty. This was another twist

in the nationalization movement — settling for increased royalties rather than nationalization.

As a study prepared by the Center of Information and Documentation of Bolivia points out, these “sales” are in any case fabricated, with the gas passing from a Bolivian subsidiary of the Spanish energy giant Repsol, for example, to an Argentine or Chilean subsidiary of the same corporation.

“Under these conditions, once Bolivian gas crosses the border, it is converted into thermo-electricity, liquefied natural gas, methanol (bound for the US and Europe) and other petrochemical products, which allows the transnationals to reap enormous profits at Bolivia’s expense,” the study declares.

The New Wave of Struggle for Nationalisation

Things came to a head in May 2005, that had been brewing since April 2004 when the so-called referendum on gas was carried out. The people were living with a sense of betrayal shown by the new president. In May, Mesa ordered a decree calling for an assembly and a referendum. Just a week before the mid-May protests the Bolivian Congress rejected the nationalisation demand and decided to take a decision, instead, on holding a referendum for regional autonomy and not on the nationalisation of natural gas. The regional autonomy in today’s concrete context of Bolivia is: giving autonomy to the oil rich regions where the white settler minority owns vast lands and gas deposits. The “*autonomy referendum*” is obviously meant to placate the transnationals through the wealthy political elite of these oil-rich eastern states of Bolivia, especially Santa Cruz. These capitalists forces “*with ties to*” imperialist capital dominated transnationals “*have threatened secession since October 2003 as a way of avoiding the nationalization of oil and gas.*” This dangerous decree from the president and the decision of the assembly further enraged the workers, peasants and poor and middle class masses of Bolivia and ignited their frenzy. The indigenous people of Bolivia constitute more than sixty percent of the population and are predominantly engaged in agriculture and work as miners. Their radicalization, due to the economic crises and dislocation, has brought them in conflict with the state along with other

poor and middle class people.

The unity of these two vast sections of society became the danger signal for the exploiting comprador elite classes which want to break up the country in as many segments possible as their masters would require, in case the situation goes out of their control.

The US state department spokesman, Richard Boucher, said in early June that Washington was “*in contact with the [Bolivian] government, we are also in contact with other nations that are very concerned and worried by the situation there.*” These other nations are apparently the presidents Nestor Kirchner of Argentina and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil. The so-called “left” governments of these two countries pose their governments as alternatives to Washington’s policies in Latin America while vigorously following the line of the US imperialists and preside over the heads of the people with “left” phrase mongering while carrying on the same exploitative relations. They have only taken up some pro-people measures to hoodwink the masses. Likewise, they both fear the potential domestic impact of a continuing revolutionary crisis in Bolivia.

Boucher added that US discussions with the besieged government of Carlos Mesa were on the “*security situation, about the situation as regards democracy and maintaining the democracy in Bolivia.*” Another US imperialist master told the Congressional sub committee on May 25, that “*We are very concerned about serious challenges to Bolivia’s stability from radical opposition groups that threaten the country’s hard-won gains in democracy, economic development, and the fight against drug trafficking.*”

The whole thrust pointed that the US was considering intervening into Bolivia under the name of “democracy” and the “fight against drug trafficking.” The unchallenged leader of the imperialist world was very much afraid of the democracy the people were enjoying through their fight against the imperialist exploiters and their local henchmen. The people had come on the streets and were ready to **engage in serious battles as many of the miners were carrying dynamite sticks in their hands** and waving and throwing these at the armed forces men. The awakened people were becoming a headache for the thug US.

The mood of the militant masses could be guessed from their determination to take on the military forces as one of them said that “*We will even take up arms if the need arise to force nationalization of the gas resources.*”

The mobilization of the people was continuous and the city of La Paz was surrounded by tens of thousands of people of the El Alto Federation of Neighbourhood Associations (FEJUVE) from May 16. On this day itself, the people of Cochabamba symbolically took over a refinery. All roads leading to the city of La Paz were blocked. More than 55 road blockades disrupted the main highways and commerce in seven of Bolivia’s nine departments or states. The El Alto Refional Labour Confederation called for a general strike to begin on May 23. The Gas Coalition, Workers Federation (COB) and Bolivian Peasant Worker Union (CSUTCB) and teachers and miners organizations supported the call and the whole of La Paz was blocked and paralyzed. Indigenous people from Aymara tried to occupy the presidential palace, Plaza de Murillo, and enter the Congress building on May 24. The street battles between the protesters and police continued for the whole day, with police using batons and tear gas and with ready to shoot snipers from the roof tops waiting for orders to shoot on the people. The people were able to push the police back and reach up to 60 feet of the Congress building. May 26 was declared a truce day by the people due to a religious holiday. Not only La Paz but also Sucre, situated at a distance of 200 miles in the South, Santa Cruz in the East and all other major cities were rocked by the surging crowds of the people. It looked as if the people had taken over the country everywhere and there was no government. The streets were in the hands of the people. The general strike really looked like a festival of the masses.

Meanwhile, on June 8, after receiving the green light from Pope Benedict XVI, the Catholic Church in Bolivia called for a national dialogue to unify the interests of the Bolivian land oligarchy and pro-transnational gas elite of the eastern states, on the one hand, with those of the moderate reform sectors of the popular movements, on the other. The moderate reform sectors include Evo Morales’s Movement Toward Socialism party (MAS), which,

with Mesa, has repeatedly called for Church involvement. Later priests called from the pulpit for social peace, the abandonment of "extremism" and the reconciliation of the rich and the poor. But unions, social movement organizations and the radicalized base of peasant and indigenous movements clearly rejected this initiative.

The people again marched on La Paz on May 30 and refused to follow the demand of the MAS that the truce be extended to May 31 to give time to the assembly to consider the referendum on the question of autonomy and of convening a Constituent Assembly. Obviously, Evo Morales did not want the people to press for nationalization. But the upsurge continued to swell more and more, till on June 6th Mesa was forced to kiss the dust.

The Various Forces

Meanwhile, the various political forces engaged in the whole turmoil were having their own agendas to pursue. Demands for Mesa's ouster not only came from the residents of the El Alto poor but also the Eastern Agricultural Chamber, representing the country's wealthy farmers. They wanted Mesa to crush the people's revolt. Mr Vaca Diez, whose ouster was demanded by the agitating masses, wanted to take up the presidency after Mesa's exit. He, an agribusinessman from the gas rich eastern state of Santa Cruz, belongs to the Leftist Movement Revolution, and had the support of the National Revolution Movement party of the former president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada. He and the second next in line to him, the chairman and the leader of the lower house, Mario Cossio, had to bow out in the face of the growing demand of the people for their heads. See the names of their parties: "Leftist", "Revolutionary", and yet are mere imperialist boot-lickers.

Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) leader Evo Morales, who is a parliamentar-

ian and fears the extra-parliamentary militant mass action on the streets did not associate himself with even the demand of "nationalization" for the bourgeois state let alone for a transition to Socialism. He tried to prolong Mesa's regime by calling on the people first to vote in the April 2004 referendum, and later when Mesa was facing the deluge of the Bolivian masses in May and June this year he called on the people to accept regime's proposal for referendum on autonomy and constituent assembly to divert the target fire. He tried to substitute autonomy for nationalization. It is another sure way of securing Bolivia for the imperialists. He wants his way to presidency through the so-called "democratic elections" as he could see that most of his followers in the workers and poor sections had switched over to the position of demanding the resignation of Mesa. He got afraid of the radicalizing effect of the movement.

Later, Evo appealed

Even most 'leftists' did not tell the people that the answer to globalization and liberalization was not the nationalisation of resources staying in the hands of the reactionary state but to smash the state itself, for a real break with imperialisms. The crucial question of the state was left untouched and fire was only directed at one or two persons rather than on the system as a whole. Unfortunately the Maoists in the sub-continent are still weak and only they that could provide the real answer.

The leaders of the current social upheaval in Latin America that set in motion the likes of Lula, Chavez and others, do not believe in dismantling the old reactionary and anti-people state structure to replace it with a new state of the workers and peasants and the nationalist sections in the bourgeois forces. In reality they want to go along with the existing semi-colonial state structure and system with some modi-

fications, while blaring rhetoric, sometimes socialist, sometimes Bolivarian. This is no alternative to imperialism, imperialist globalization, liberalisation, et al within the existing system. This becomes obvious from the fact that one after the other such states go tumbling at the feet of one or the other imperialists. Even if they adopt some radical measures for too long they run the risk of going Allende's way, making way for the worst kind of dictatorial rule over the people in the absence of a real preparation to confront the evil forces of imperialism. The people, on their part are continuing their glorious tradition of fighting against the forces of exploitation and oppression while leaderships are afraid to lead them to real victories over the local reactionary classes and their imperialist masters. Even in the current phase of the Bolivian struggle the army threatened to intervene, in case the movement gets more radicalized for a real revolution of the people. The US was ready to move its pawns in the game. It still has, though in a covert way.

MAS has become instrumental again in suspending the current struggle for nationalization under the pretext of giving time to the new president. The new president may not be an affiliate to a particular ruling class party like Mesa but he represents the same class interests of exploiters that have ruled this country for long. He has promised an "electoral process" for solving the problems facing the country. The trap has worked because the leaders spearheading the movement have not prepared the masses to grapple with the question of a real alternative to imperialism. The 'left' presidents in the South American Continent are not rare to find these days. But a real left alternative is still a cry. The people are ready for change, the leaders are not. So we can expect that the people would be in the streets again when December comes.

Continued from page 21

financial and technical assistance. It was claimed that such community development programmes would lead to all-round development of the Indian countryside through mutual cooperation & self help of the villagers. Just before the inauguration of these programmes by Nehru in October 1952, an 'operational agreement' was signed by the US & Indian governments on 31 May 1952 which gave the organisational details of community development.

The same story and same interests prevail today – forms may vary and one of the forms is microfinances. With continuous shrinking of employment opportunities and abdication of the state's responsibility in the social sector in accordance with the policies of LPG, a safety valve is required to prevent the people from rising up against these policies. Microfinance, with the help of NGOs, is one such programme. On top of it, it provides inroads for the corporate sector into the hitherto vast unexplored

rural market. It also helps tap some of the rural savings. The government is happy that the responsibility of providing credit to the needy is no longer there. Banks are happy that SHGs, are able to ensure repayments. And, imperialists are happy that the magic bullet of microfinance is weaning away people and funds from revolutionary struggles.

The only victims are the people, prey to a new, suave and dangerous moneylender.

FII & FDIs Capture Indian Industry at Breakneck Speed

- Arvind

In the industrial and financial sectors hardly a day passes when there is not a report of a takeover of some company or the other by foreign capital. This takeover is taking place in two ways: First through FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investments), where these FIIs are systematically buying up the companies by purchasing their share capital. This is being facilitated by the government relaxing the laws to allow the open entry of FIIs in all sectors. The second is by the direct MNC penetration through the FDI (Fixed Direct Investment) route. These giants themselves buy up companies, either by purchasing existing ones, or by ousting their partner in joint ventures. In addition new MNC investments come in on a large scale like Enron, the giant steel plant Posco, etc.

FIIs New Grab

To try and understand the process let us take a recent example. Most of such takeovers go unnoticed as the example reported in the Sept.2, 05 issue of the Economic Times — in this case a giant US financial institution like the JP Morgan Chase bought a 25% stake in small company Binani Cement for Rs.150 crores. What this means is that the management of the company de facto passes into the hands of the FII. Such takeovers are being not only encouraged by the government; in some instances it is being forced. For example the govt has told the Dhanalakshmi Bank to reduce the promoter's stake in it from 37% to 10% — in other words sell-off 27% to a foreign bank!!! Dhanalakshmi Bank is already in talks with the ADB and IFC Washington. Such takeovers are taking place on a daily basis and result in a greater and greater stranglehold by foreign capital over the Indian economy.

Besides the FIIs are now dictating terms and demanding their people on the board of directors. An example of this is the Hyderabad-based IVRCL Infrastructure & Projects Ltd. Two FIIs bought a majority share in the company, which was then forced to take certain steps to comply with the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Last year \$ 9 billion of FII poured into the country and in the current year, in the first eight months alone, \$7 bn has come in, and it is expected to reach \$10 billion by

the end of the year. So during the UPA rule a good \$20 billion of FII (i.e. one-fifth of the entire one year's government budget) would have entered the country by the end of this year. **In fact, today the FIIs have displaced the FIs (Indian Financial Institutions like UTI, LIC, IDBI, etc) in the quantum of capital they control in industry. While FIIs hold 18% of the share capital the FIs hold a mere 7% today** {Economic Times May 11, 05}. And the FII rate of increase is rapid, particularly in some sectors like the banks. Normally a 26% stake is sufficient to be in control of the company. All government and RBI rules are being changed to facilitate this takeover.

Today FIIs are the largest shareholders in 77 'Indian' companies at the end of Dec.2004 {Economic Times Jan 25 05} These 77 companies account for 44% of the total traded market capitalization on the Bombay stock Exchange (BSE). In the above two financial years the FIIs have invested a huge \$ 15 billion in the stock exchange (equity market). In just the two years of 2003-4 FIIs have doubled their stake in ONGC, Tata Steel, Larsen and Toubro, Tata Power, Bharati Teli Ventures, Cipla, Grasim Industries and Reliance Energy Limited. Now FIIs plan a massive Rs.600 crore investment in Anil Ambani's Reliance Capital. At the end of Dec.2004 in 23 companies FIIs stakes were higher than combined holdings of banks, mutual funds, public and private companies and others. The following is a list of some companies where the FIIs are the largest shareholders:

Company Name	FII holdings in %
HDFC	63.2
Satyam Computers	56.6
ICICI Bank	49
Infosys Technologies	41.8
Zee Telefilms	40.2
Geodesic Information Systems	36.2
Ind Swift Lab	33.1
NIIT	33
Pantaloons Retail	30.6
HDFC Bank	29
Gujarat Ambuja Cement	28.7
United Breweries	27.3
Container Corp.	27
Aurobindo Pharma	26.5
Amtek Auto	26.4
Hero Honda	25.7
LIC Housing Finance	25.4
Alok Inds	25.1

UB Holdings	24.9
Mahindra and Mahindra	24.9
Arvind Mills	24.8
Apollo Hospitals	24.8

Source: Economic Times January 25 2005

Interestingly in most of the above companies the share of the Indian Financial Institutes (FIs like LIC, IDBI, UTI) for most varied between 3% and 6%. Until the 1990s it was these Indian Financial Institutes that had major shareholding in most of Indian big business. But with the globalization offensive this has gradually been changing. Not only that, with high levels of foreign capital into banking, insurance and other financial sectors the FIs begin to lose their hold, resulting in the domination of foreign capital in these companies together with the promoter's capital. This ties the compradors even more firmly to the apron strings of the imperialists.

But, this is not all; the FIIs have also begun to target medium sized industries. In fact the majority of the \$ 2 billion invested in the quarter April-June this year has gone to this sector {Economic Times July 19 2005} so, for example in just this quarter FII investment in the two companies Bajaj Hindustan and LIC Housing Finance rose 14% and 10% respectively. Other examples of high growth in FII investment are Indian Hotels, Tips Industries, Micro Inks, Ruchi Soya and Karnataka bank.

But FIIs is only one aspect of the growing imperialist takeover of Indian (and comprador) industry; the other is the direct MNC onslaught.

MNC's Deep Penetration:

Here too not a day passes without some MNC or the other either ousting their Indian partner or increasing their stake in the joint venture. In this way the entire cement industry has been virtually taken over in just the last couple of months (see earlier articles in this column). A similar situation is to be seen in mining, electricity, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure and nearly all sectors of the economy — not just consumer products which is already fully in MNC hands. Now the UPA government has been pushing for the takeover of Indian banks, telecom, real estate, airports, retail business at a fast pace. Already 74% foreign capital has been allowed into banks,

Continued at page 27

Red homage to Com. Sridhar who led the Revolutionary movement in Central and Eastern India!

-Arjun

Com. Sridhar, Vinod, Karuna and Somany were martyred in a raid on Dhou dai police station in Narayanpur police district of Chhattisgarh on 30 April, 2005 when the assault party failed to break the 3rd round obstacle and was jammed in a place. The enemy forces concentrated their fire power on the assault batch and lobbed grenades. Four comrades were seriously injured, among them Com. Karuna and Somari were martyred on the spot and Vinod was martyred in PLGA's crossfire. Com. Sridhar was seriously injured in the raid and lived for two days more and was later martyred. He never showed any nervousness and encouraged all the fighters to take revenge on the enemy. Com. Sridhar was an SZCM, SCM and North-Command-in-Chief, Com. Vinod and Com. Karuna were section commanders and Com. Samari was a party and PLGA member. They lived till their last breath for the cause of the people to seize political power and change the system itself.

Com. Sridhar joined the revolutionary movement in 1983. He came from Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh at the age of 19 after completing the Inter (10+2 system) course and discontinued the technical course to join in the movement as a professional revolutionary. He built the revolutionary movement in central and eastern India in the past 22 years with the vigour of a dedicated leader of the people.

He had joined in the party's technical department at first and after serving 5 years for it he was shifted to organizational activity. He was given the responsibility of the town organization and later shifted to Balaghat of Madhya Pradesh. Whenever his responsibilities were changed he proved to be an able organizer and

commander to suit the new situation and task and lead different types of work with exemplary responsibility in different fields. Whenever a complicated and complex situation arose Com. Sunil's name came up with all priority. At the same time when and where the new responsibility was given Com. Sunil always accepted it boldly and tried his level best to undertake the given responsibility as the communist.

Com. Sridhar joined as an armed squad member with the assumed name Sunil and continued there almost a decade in various responsibilities. He moved extensively in Rajanandgaon and Balaghat districts of Madhya Pradesh, Gondia and Bhandara districts of Maharashtra. When the Divisional Committee was formed at a district level conference in 1994 Com. Sunil was elected DVCM. He played an inspiring role in this region to build the mass movement. He fell in love with a squad member and married her in 1993.

Later Com. Sunil along with another comrade was deputed in East-Singhbhum of Jharkhand to lead and train a squad. Com. Sunil changed his name as Sridhar for the new task. The area and language were absolutely new to him. But having more than a decade of experience in building Adivasi and non-advasi peasant movement he was at ease with the situation to merge with the Santhali people of Singhbhum. Along with the two comrades deputed from Dandakaranya for 7 months a four-member team from Bengal was trained to move among the people.

This new armed guerrilla squad had to undergo all the hardships and yet sustained. About 10 special police party vehicles always moved in the Dumuria, Gurabandha area to attack the squad.

Having experience in the resistance against the Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh special police including para military forces, Com. Sunil steered the squad members in the furnace of class struggle. He sowed the seeds of revolutionary politics among the people and consolidated the revolutionary forces.

In the end of 2001 Com. Sridhar left to DK from Singhbhum and took upon himself the responsibility to develop an area set by the party towards building the base. When he rejoined the DK movement his name was Com. Mangtu. To establish and develop *Janatana Sarkar* (Revolutionary People's Committees) – an embryonic form of people's political power, he extensively toured and concentrated in the specific area. In 2003 he was elected both SZCM and SMCM. In 2004 he was given the responsibility of the North-Command-in-Chief. In 2005 March again his responsibilities were changed.

All can learn from his great abilities, methods, comradely sense of self and collective discipline, simplicity, and continuously improving his knowledge and ability of fitness and method of command. All those qualities could be taken as a model for a revolutionary communist. Com. Sunil linked the central and eastern Indian revolutionary movement, and his work and contribution will be remembered for ever by the people from Balaghat, Dandkarnaya to Singhbhum for ever. Com. Sunil, Sridhar and Mangtu, whatever the name identified him in the struggling areas he was the son of the oppressed masses who fought till his last breath for the cause of revolution. We pay our glowing tribute to this great Marxist martyr of India. ■ ■

Continued from page 26

telecom, construction and it is a matter of time before they allow it in the other sectors.

The PM said recently there is need to take bold steps. And CPM chief of West Bengal said that we can't stay in the old time-warped. Both sing the same tune. No wonder there has been a spate of what are called Mergers and Acquisitions in the period of UPA rule — in India these are mostly acquisitions by foreign companies of local ones. The value of these acquisitions in the year 2004 nearly doubled over

the previous year to \$ 7.5 billion and in just the first five months of the current year it was already \$5.4 billion. In other words by the end of this year during UPA rule the total takeovers would be a gigantic \$ 18 billion. Even if 20% involve local comprador companies this entails a huge seizure of assets worth about \$14 billion (or Rs.60,000 crores) in just the period of UPA rule. This includes the disinvestments of the PSUs.

Such then is the massive capture of Indian and comprador companies taking place by the imperialists and their MNCs.

In the lead in this robbery are the US imperialists functioning directly or through fake companies set up in the tax haven of Mauritius. The US has \$ 16 billion in direct FDIs in India. Another unknown amount has come through the Mauritius route. The speed of takeovers is increasing by the day. Instead of the East India Company we shall soon have a handful of financial conglomerates and MNC giants strangulating every sphere Indian industry, mining, service, finance and commerce. ■ ■

Press statement:**Condemn the fascist attack of feudal tyrant Gyanendra upon the Revolutionary People of Nepal !****Condemn the fascist attack of Indian ruling classes on the revolutionary leaders & masses of India!!**

A semi-colonial and semi-feudal Nepal, which was hardly known 10 years before by its name and geographical location in the globe, has now become a focal point of keen attention the world over. On the one hand, the establishment of people's power all across the vast countryside of Nepal by way of the people's war, waged under the leadership of CPN (Maoist) for the last ten years, and one year of strategic offensive in particular, has become a source of inspiration for the oppressed all over the world and, on the other, it has become a deadly ideological and political threat for imperialism, particularly the US imperialism and its puppet regimes, including India.

Gyanendra Shahi, a hated smuggler and the ringleader of the palace massacre, by usurping absolute power through a coup on February 1, 2005, is not only massacring the revolutionary masses across the country but also repressing brutally the parliamentary political parties, journalists, civil societies, students, human rights activists and intelligentsia who raise their voice against the royal military fascism. US imperialism, the main enemy of the oppressed people all over the world, and Indian expansionism are trying to prop up their puppet Gyanendra and his royal mercenary gangsters by providing arms, ammunition, logistics and money in different pretexts.

In India, the reactionary expansionist ruling classes have stepped up their countrywide coordinated campaign of brutal suppression of the people's war led by the CPI(Maoist) ever since the merger of the MCCI and CPI(ML)[PW] in September last. They are propagating continuously about the "grave danger" posed by the long Red Corridor of armed struggle stretching from the Base Areas in Nepal up to the guerrilla zones of Andhra Pradesh or the so-called Compact Revolutionary Zone. They have initiated a phenomenal increase in the central repressive forces to tackle the Naxalites, undertook massive modernization and special training of the forces, and are using helicopters where necessary, along with a package of so-called reforms to wean away the masses from the fold of the Maoists. The democratic voice of the people is suppressed and the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution are trampled underfoot in the vast areas of armed struggle and nationality movements. The ruling classes have also stepped up the attacks against every form of democratic struggle and anti-imperialist movements.

In this situation, we the undersigned two Maoist parties solemnly appeal to the entire oppressed masses, the world over, and Nepal and India in particular, to raise voice against every evil design of imperialism and expansionism to repress the revolutionary cause of the oppressed people in Nepal & India. And we pledge to fight unitedly till the entire conspiracies hatched by the imperialists and reactionaries are crushed and the people's cause of Socialism and Communism are established in Nepal, India and all over the world.

Condemn the massacre of the Maoist revolutionaries by the fascist Turkish state! Support the ongoing people's war in Turkey!!

We are very much distressed by the news that the fascist Turkish regime, the lackey of the US imperialism, massacred 17 Maoist revolutionaries, including the general secretary, comrade Cafer Cangöz, of the Maoist Communist Party [Turkey-North Kurdistan] (MKP), in Mercan in the Dersim region of Turkey, on the 16/17 of June 2005. We condemn this contemptible act of cold-blooded murder in which the people's great leaders and fighters sacrificed their lives for the cause of new democratic revolution, socialism and communism, in Turkey, as part of the world proletarian revolution.

However challenging the task may be the firm grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and its creative application can defeat the class enemies and the system that nurtures them, imperialism. At this painful moment, we appeal to the revolutionary masses of the people in Turkey and the relatives of those martyrs to transform this distress and grief into revolutionary wrath against the class enemies and their master, imperialism led by the US imperialism, and to unite under the banner of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, firmly held by the Maoist Communist Party [Turkey-North Kurdistan] (MKP). In this period of grief and distress, we firmly pledge to extend our support in all ways to the MKP and the revolutionary people it is leading in order to accomplish the unfinished task, the martyred heroes have left upon the shoulder of our class, internationally.

Prachanda
Chairman
Central Committee
Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

Ganapathy
General Secretary
Central Committee
Communist party of India (Maoist)

Date: September 1, 2005