



Peoples Resistance

Contribution 10/-

July-October, 2004

Blazing Manipur Against *Rape, Torture And Murder*



**All India Peoples Resistance Forum
(AIPRF)**

MANIPUR, WHY SHOULD NOT I LOVE
YOUR
HILLS MARSHES RIVERS FLIES OPEN
SPACES

*Manipur, I love your hills marshes rivers
Greenfields meadows blue sky.
Why should not I love them?
I ever had a quarrel with them.
Whe I scold I've never seen the hills
indignant
the rivers never retorted;
When do you hear the sky speak with
hurt?
Who else is there if you don't blame them?
You cannot speak against men.
But your hill-grown, valley nurtured
sweet fruit flowers corn grains I love;
not because I get to eat them for free
even if I do not get to eat them
they never say they will eat me up.
Fruits never bite men
flowers never suck blood.
Manipur, your hills marshes rivers fields
meadows blue sky I love.
Who can I love
if I do not love them?
They are not mosquitoes flies or leeches.
Fields never become citizens of this
country
we never hear rivers parading as leaders;
those who done heads
and remove them again,
Those whose hands remain still
when they open their mouths,
Those whose mouths remain silent
when their hands pilfer.
Trifling with us through the years
repeatedly
they turn us upside down at will!
But your hills rivers marshes trees
bamboos
emerald fields open spaces I truly love.*

Thanjam Ibopishak

BEFORE SUICIDE

*Let this dark day go from my mind
And let the day I was born
Be blotted out from memory
To save me from left forlorn.*

*My soul, my body lies in shreds.
My faith in mankind all betrayed.
And my honour now lie in waste
Like leaves in winter all decayed.*

*I cry to heaven for justice
For nowhere else it can be done.
And I denounce those lustful brutes
Before the great celestial throne.*

*Dear one grieve not for what I've done
For it is to Jehova's breast
That I now go to wait for you;
Where all the weary are at rest.*

(Background: A young Naga girl Miss Rose committed suicide after she was raped by two Indian Army officers on March 4, 1974. She was engaged to a young Naga boy. She could not reconcile with the situation, resulting in suicide. The poem is composed by one of her friends on her behalf with whom she talked about the suicide.)





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July-October 2004

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Editor
Gurmeet Singh

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67A, Rameshwar Nagar (Near Gurudwara)
Azadpur, Delhi. Phone: +91 11 27675001
Email: aiprf@rediffmail.com
aiprf@hotmail.com
Website: www.aiprf.net

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Manmohanomics Exposed Again

Manmohan Singh, the blue eye boy of the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) like imperialist institutions, is on move. He has air dashed to New York, London and Geneva with his folded hands as a "simple" and "dutiful" Prime Minister of India. He prayed before the General Assembly of the UNO to allot India a permanent seat in the Security Council. He argued that "Indian Democracy" had grown up and now was capable of serving its imperialist masters in a proper way. At the same time, he made an earned appeal to Bush the Junior, and the US multi-national giants to invest more and more finance capital, so that the developmental promises of his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government could be fulfilled. In the meeting organised by the US big business houses, he expressed the desire of Indian ruling classes very nakedly. The essence of his speech was like this: O my benevolent masters! India is on sale. Come to my country, loot and consume cheap labour and huge natural resources. We have opened all the doors and windows, even broken the roofs and walls for your smooth and delightful entry.

But US and other imperialist forces are still feeling unwell and asking to break all the existing structural barriers and to lift all the restrictions on foreign trade. They are not fully satisfied with the pro-imperialist Common Minimum Programme (CMP), "Popular Budget" of P. Chidambaram, Agreement in the Geneva Meeting of WTO and the recent Exim policy of UPA government. So the "honest" and the "loyal" Prime Minister of India had to promise to accelerate the process of imperialist globalisation and make the Indian economy and labour force favourable for the corporate world.

In real sense, it was Manmohan Singh who implemented the imperialist dictated policies of liberalisation privatisation and globalisation (LPG), in the name of New Economic Policy as a Finance Minister in the PV Narasimha Rao government. While addressing the NRIs in New York on 24 September, he himself claimed that the current victory of Congress (I) in the Lok Sabha election is nothing but a result of the NEP of 1991. This clearly exposes the Manmohan phase of globalisation.

Manmohan Singh is cutting his birth day cake in mid air, on his way to Geneva (although he has forgotten his birth day!), and UPA government has just celebrated its hundred days in power. The UPA government under the leadership of Manmohan Singh came in power by charging that the NDA government was selling the country to TNCs and making severe damage to the sovereignty of the nation. But just after

capturing the driving seat, it began to dance on same imperialist tunes. It pledged to implement the CMP formulated under the strict vigilance of "left" partners. In the CMP, it was promised to give importance to agriculture sector, to wipe out the tears of the poor, to revise sick industries and not to privatise profit making public enterprises, to provide employment for hundred days in a year to a member of below poverty line family, to scrap POTA, to provide safeguard to labour power, especially in unorganised sector, to enhance the scope of social welfare, so on and so forth.

But soon after coming to power, the UPA government announced to go ahead with the privatisation of Airports – albeit with little change. While the NDA government was in favour of 74% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in this sector, the present government reduced the limit to 49%. Then it decided to reduce the interest rates on the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) from 9.5% to 8.5%, affecting about 4 crores workers – who support altogether about 12 crores family members. CPI, CPI (M) and other "left" supports of the so-called progressive government made much hue and cry upon this attack on the working masses, but the government turned deaf ears to them.

The Finance Minister P. Chidambaram came with a "Budget With A Difference" (as claimed by The Hindu – a pro-CPI (M) newspaper) like his old "Dream Budget". It was claimed that it had incorporated most of the points of CMP and so a peoples friendly budget. But in essence there is no difference with the budget of the NDA government. It has also given more concessions to big business houses and levied taxes on the poor and vulnerable sections of the masses. It has further opened the economy to foreign capital, by removing many restrictions on the entry of Foreign Institutional Investments (FIIs) and raising its ceiling in debt funds. Now speculative capital can enter without any permission, which will make our economy extremely vulnerable. Not only this, the budget has also increased the FDI cap in Insurance sector from 26% to 49% for handing over the savings of our people to foreign capitalists. In civil aviation and telecommunication sectors to the FDI caps have been increased from 40% to 49% and 49% to 74%, respectively. It is to note that these three sectors have strategic importance in our economy which are being handed over to foreign MNCs.

The theoreticians of CMP dreamt to safeguard the sick and other profit making public industries from private and foreign vultures, but the Manmohan

government continued to sell the shares of these industries without any break. It has planned to disinvest 5.2% shares of NTPC to get around Rs. 4000 crores at one stroke. The Ministry of Disinvestment has recently computed the approximate value of surplus public shareholdings (in excess of 51%) in 19 listed profit making PSUs and 18 unlisted PSUs at Rs. 119263 crores. In these lists PSUs like ONGC, IOC, MTNL, HPCL, GAIL, BPCL, BHEL, NALCO, SCI and MMTC have been included. The UPA government has also made a drastic change in the policy of disinvestment. Now the proposal for disinvestment will be submitted directly to the Group of Secretaries on Disinvestment. There is no role of CCEA, Cabinet Committee on Disinvestment and even the Disinvestment Commission.

Another pro-imperialist move of the UPA government is to appoint the 14 representative of World Bank, Asian Development Bank, McKinsey, Boston Consultant and other foreign consultancy firms, on the consultative committees of the Planning Commission for a mid term appraisal of the 10th Five Year Plan. Many more parties, organisations and economic experts have raised serious questions on this harmful move of the government. Even the "left" economists (who are the part of the consultative committee), supporting the government have decided to boycott the committee meetings till the withdrawal of these foreign experts. But M.S. Ahluwalia, Dy., Chairman of the Planning Commission and one of the most favourites of corporate world is forcefully justifying their inclusion. The Finance Minister P. Chidambaram is arguing that they are not foreigners but NRIs, and their recommendations will not harm but strengthen the Planning Commission.

Likewise the UPA government is claiming its victory in the General Council Meeting of WTO, held in the last week of July in Geneva.

Kamal Nath, the Union Commerce Minister, while returning from the meeting proclaimed that India had succeeded in protecting the interests of developing countries and particularly their agriculture sector. He also said that he had succeeded in sidelining the contentious Singapore issues from the agenda of agreement. But Robert Zoellick, the US Trade Representative explained the thing in quite opposite manner before his countrymen. He claimed that Geneva agreements on non agricultural market access were a major victory for US corporations. Again US and the EU succeeded in pursuing the development countries to begin talks on Trade Facilitation – one of the important Singapore issues, which was rejected in Cancun Ministerial Meeting of WTO. They also succeeded in breaking the unity of G-20 which emerged in Cancun and played one of the main roles in challenging the monopoly of US and EU over trade negotiations. In Geneva, India and Brazil, the leaders of G-20, were co-opted in Five Interested Parties (FIPs) with US, EU and Australia. Thus in Geneva, India betrayed the interests of developing and least developed countries in order to serve its imperialist masters. Although US and EU agreed to do away with their export subsidies in agriculture and reduce domestic supports being provided to their farmers, but no time table had been fixed. We know that in the given frame work of WTO, imperialist countries have enough scope to grant different kinds of subsidies to their farmers and agri-business by manipulating 'Blue Box' and 'Green Box' facilities. Many experts have revealed that under Geneva agreement, developed countries, especially the EU, need not to reduce agricultural subsidies. Furthermore the Geneva agreement has not touched the 'Green Box' facilities, which contained 70% of total subsidies given by US. On the other hand, showing lollipop of subsidy

reduction in agriculture, US and EU had forced the developing countries including India and Brazil to reduce import duties on non-agricultural products and to start negotiations on the contentious issue of trade facilitation. They left the other Singapore issues, such as investment, competition policy and government procurement for future round of trade negotiations. Overall the outcome of the Geneva meeting of WTO will have disastrous effect on the already crisis ridden economies of the third world including India.

To implement the Geneva agreement, the UPA government has recently announced the Exim policy of 2004-05. Under this policy, the restrictions on the import of 35 agricultural commodities (including onions and tomato) and non-agricultural commodities have been lifted. The CMP claims to give importance to agricultural sector but nothing was assured to help the farmers, who produce export quality of agricultural goods. All stress was given to provide facilities and subsidies to exporters community.

Similarly the UPA government has changed the existing price mechanism of petroleum products, almost giving free hands to increase their prices frequently.

Thus within a short span of rule, the real anti-people and pro-imperialist character of Manmohan government is well exposed before the conscious people of India. It is proved that the ruling class government of India is not serving the interests of the India masses, but their imperialist masters.

It is the urgent need of the hour that all the progressive, democratic and revolutionary forces should unite and build a broad based movement against the policies of imperialist globalisation being implemented in our country.

26th September, 2004.



Bring Back All the Indian Workers from Iraq

Stop Helping US Consolidate Occupation of Iraq

Satnam

'The government is anxious and looking into the matter' is the routine reply whenever ordinary people are caught up in some dangerous situation. The three Indian drivers along with four others from Kenya and Egypt taken hostage by an Iraqi armed group wait for death and a second life at the same time.

The people are enraged at the callous behaviour of the government which has no respect for the lives of those taken hostage. It is the second incident where Indian nationals are suffering due to the occupation of Iraq by the US forces.

For the third consecutive day the people of two villages known by the names of *Dehlan* and *Mehatpur* in Una district, Himachal Pradesh, jammed traffic to put pressure on the government to act immediately and effectively to secure the release of the three Indian hostages. On the other hand, the people of *Makrona Kalan* near Morinda, Ropar district Punjab also jammed traffic at two places in Hoshiarpur and Morinda towns. The people were protesting that the district authorities have done nothing even to console the family of the victim, Sukhdev Singh. The people surrounded Una district headquarters to force district authorities to come to the rescue of hostages. The people and families of the Indian workers are very much worried as already two Pakistani workers have been killed there.

The Indian state in its blind subservience to the US interests in the gulf has allowed Indian nationals to be used as guinea pigs. It is the lust for foreign exchange and a few crumbs from the leftovers of the billions of dollars of contract money which the US companies are extracting from Iraq in the name of reconstruction after the country was devastated in the name of threat to America from the non-

existent Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the lie which has exposed the monstrous nature of the US and British imperialists.

A few months ago it was the case of private mercenaries which the Indian government allowed to defend the US imperialism's dirty war interests. Forced by wide spread exposure and protest voices the government of India had promised the country that private recruiters would be stopped from sending troops to Iraq.

Now it is the ordinary workers who are under attack. They were sent to Iraq from adjoining gulf countries by gulf labour agencies who help US consolidate its occupation of Iraq by doing construction and transportation work. These labour agencies even use force to send workers inside Iraq. There are reports that about five thousand Indian workers are kept as virtual prisoners in the US military bases in Iraq. About the same number is hired / forced by private companies like Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company (KGL). A few days back two young Punjabi brothers, Harnek Singh and Lakhwinder Singh, escaped from Iraq via Kuwait told the press that they were forcibly taken to Iraq by the company they were working for. They talked of inhuman working conditions of the Indian workers working in the US military bases. In an interview given before the journalists both accused the US army of forcibly taking away Indians and forcing them to work day and night. They were forcibly sent to Iraq to work for the US army. They, along with numerous others, were kept like slaves. According to them the Indians working in the gulf countries are picked up and forced to go to Iraq. The workers have become the victims of such agencies which serve the US interests in the Middle East.

The approach of the Indian rulers, both past and present ruling alliances,

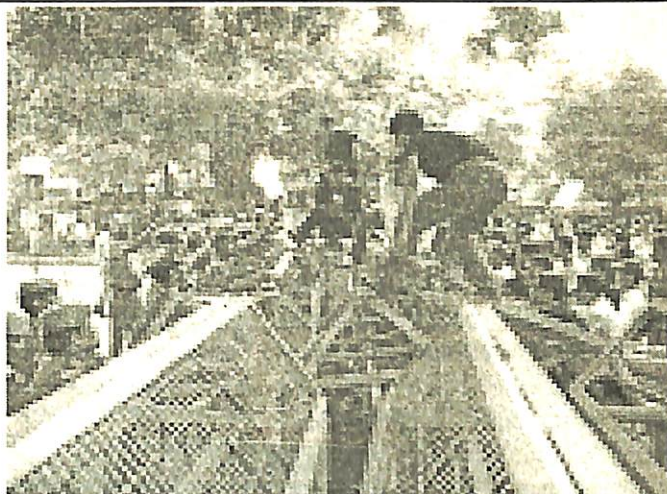
towards the whole question of Iraq has been condemnable from the outset. From its subservient character has emerged its role vis-à-vis the mercenary forces, the workers and the sending of army to Iraq. It did not stop the private recruiting agencies until the incidents of casualties from the battlefield came. It did not ban the companies from sending labour force to Iraq as it wants to serve the US and its own interests at the cost of the lives of the people. And lastly, on the question of sending the Indian army it has not refused on the grounds that US act of aggression in Iraq was against the Iraqi people and international law and was meant to control the Middle East oil and energy sources for the purpose of exclusive US hegemony in the world. It only said that if the UN asks and the situation permits it would happily send its forces. Even the UN has not right to impart legality to US aggression on Iraq, much less the so-called civilian administration in Baghdad, which is only a defaced puppet of the US military establishment in Iraq sanctifies sending of troops or workers in Iraq.

The whole world knows that the Iraqi people are fighting for their liberation from the US army control. The people of the whole world, including the Indian people have hailed the Iraqi resistance movement and they support it. If any damage is done to the hostages the blame squarely will lie on the Indian State which first and foremost jeopardised the life of the Indian workers by allowing their forced or otherwise transportation to Iraq. We demand that all the Indian workers working in Iraq should be brought back immediately and the US should be condemned for its occupation of Iraq. The attitude of the Indian government is highly condemnable as one of serving the US

Continued in page 17.....

MANIPUR BURSTS OUT IN PROTESTS

***Against:
Rape
Torture
and Murder***



Gurmeet

July 2004 has seen a wave of militant protests in the North Eastern State of Manipur. The people came out on streets against the Indian army whose 17 Assam Rifles men picked up a woman of 32 and tortured her to death after raping her. Thangjam Ningol Manorama, from Bamon Kampu, a town near the capital city of Imphal, was arrested from her residence by the security forces on July 11. Four hours later, her mutilated body was found dumped four kilometres away from her house. This triggered the ire of the people which had been building up for a long time due the continuous brutalities of the Indian army in Manipur, like rest of the North East. According to press reports there have been more than twenty killings since February this year by the forces in false encounters whereas many have been grievously injured.

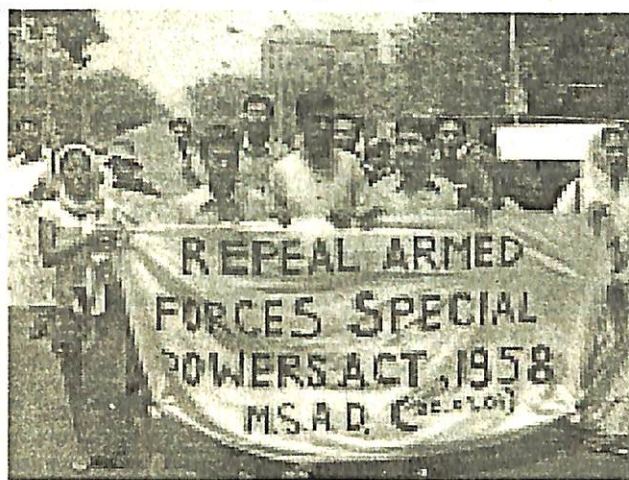
The security forces accused Manorama of being a cadre of Peoples Liberation Army of Manipur. They maintain that Manorama was killed when she tried to flee while being taken to a guerrilla hide out. But her mutilated body bore the marks of brutal torture and rape. The people took to streets and refused to take her body for cremation on these grounds and insisted on a post mortem. The body of the victim remained in the mortuary for nearly ten days and ultimately. It

was cremated by the State itself but the government of Manipur did not dare to announce the post mortem report. Meanwhile the public out cry and protests flared up throughout the Imphal valley engulfing big and small towns.

About twenty six organisations formed a joint action committee to launch a struggle against the brutality of the Indian army. A two day bandh call was given by it during which the

orders. During the bandh hours about twenty women bared themselves before the army and dared them to touch or rape. Such was the outpour of fury that the security forces remained subdued while group of hundreds and thousands of people roamed the streets demanding the withdrawal of the army from the State chanting, "Indian Army Go Back."

The movement against torture, rape and murder soon developed into a powerful political movement demanding repealing of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958, under which any army officer can kill and maim with impunity without inviting any inquiry or action. This 1958 Act, imposed on Manipur in 1980 has been the cause of untold State brutalities on the people. Previously, it was imposed in Assam State to contain powerful national liberation movement of the Naga people. Any part of India that the government declares as "disturb area" automatically falls under this act. The voice against this act is gaining momentum throughout the North East as whole of it is under Indian military boots. The Assam Rifles have acquired notoriety in the North Eastern states as have the Rashtriya Rifles in Kashmir. In both of these places the Indian army acts freely and cruelly against the people. But for the first time a powerful demand for the repeal of this vicious black act has gained ground. The Naga people too are



people occupied the streets and surrounded many government buildings and offices. They burned down more than seven government buildings, jammed the streets. All business and official activities came to a naught while people ruled the streets. Later on, the government clamped down the curfew but in those hours too the people continued to picket government buildings. The government, instead of arresting the culprits, clamped down restrictions on assembly and gave shoot at sight

raising this demand as atrocities have not stopped in spite of the "peace process".

Cornered by the pressure of the people's movement the army has been put on the defensive. Chief of Eastern Command, Lt. Gen. J R Mukerjee said on 11 July that, "99 percent of the allegations are exaggerations". The army officials in Imphal say that Indian army is a disciplined and well behaved armed force. They claim that in the last few years 66 of army men have been put under enquiry and disciplinary action, that the army cares that no atrocities are committed. A very ambiguous argument indeed is that 66 men have been found guilty till date! Most of the enquiries demanded are never initiated and usually most of the atrocities go without provoking huge protests and such kinds of demands as in the present case. Moreover, the 'well behaved' aspect of the armed forces is too glaringly dark to be believed. The case of Manorama itself is a witness who, even when picked up with an arrest warrant, no female security personnel were there. Rest of the story tells her mutilated and trampled body. And there are numerous accounts of its 'good behaviour' in the occupied territories which spark off indignation and revolt.

Ask the people of Kashmir and North East and you would get stories in hundreds. Not going into the remote past crime list of the Indian armed forces we give the most recent brief that has appeared in some papers. Manorama's case is no exception.

April 3: three youths had to be hospitalised as AR personnel beat up several villagers of Keirak village under Kakching police station following a militant attack on their camp the previous day.

April 5: a woman escaped with a minor bullet injury as CRPF personnel allegedly fired indiscriminately in the Old Market area in Churachandpur after a burst tyre was mistaken for a militant bomb attack.

April 28: a Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) cadre Lukram Sunil, alias Ibomcha, of Oksu Mamang Leikai was 'arrested'

from his home and his dead body was recovered the same day.

May 4: AR personnel reportedly picked up Meghachandra alias Ramesh, a former People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) cadre, from his residence in Leimapokpam Khunpham Makha Leikai in Bishnupur district, and his dead body was recovered in the evening.

May 6: five villagers were hospitalised after they are said to have been thrashed by AR personnel at Nongdam camp under Lamlai police station.

May 11: a former PLA cadre Hanjabam Bobby Sharma was severely tortured after being picked up from his residence

Armed Forces. Nagaland, Assam and Kashmir have their own blood spattered tales of anguish.

The inspiring thing of the Manipur people's resistance struggle is the forefront participation of women and women organisations. They are literally spearheading this movement. When Indian army accuses Thangjam Manorama of being a sergeant in the PLA one wishes that legions of them were there. It will only enhance the fighting capacity of the people and give a boost to the women's fight for half of the sky.

On 22 July, students from Manipur demonstrated in the streets of Delhi to protest against the dirty and brutal behaviour of the security forces demanding repeal of the 1958 Act and punishment for the perpetrators of the crime. A five hundred strong force of people, including some from other student organisations in the capital and also democratic rights and resistance organisations, raised slogans against the Indian army. The AIPRF contingent participating in the protest demanded an end to the occupation of North East and asked the Indian government to withdraw armed forces from the North East and Kashmir.

The mood of the demonstrators was defying and challenging. The onlookers were bewildered. Due to unrelenting hate campaign against Pakistan the people are used to think that their army is doing a good job in defending the country. Its dark and brutal side is never reported in the so-called unbiased press. Whenever some excess is mentioned it is reported as a part of the campaign 'to safeguard people from terrorism and terrorists.' Anti military demonstration came as a surprise for them. Nonetheless, the demonstration succeeded in sending the message that the army is playing dirty games within the borders of the country in a way way the occupation forces do. ☺

Do you know?

- ☺ That 38 million people of our country residing in the North East are forced to live under a military rule and undeclared Emergency.
- ☺ That this military rule has been carried on without a break for 46 years.
- ☺ That even a non commissioned army officer of the lowest rank has the power to shoot to kill anybody, to forcibly enter into any house, to destroy any building and to arrest anyone without a warrant.
- ☺ That to take such action the officer needs no permission from a superior and is not answerable to anyone.
- ☺ That the people have no right to approach the court and launch prosecution for atrocities committed by any such officer.
- ☺ That all this is sanctioned by a law called the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act which came into being in 1958.
- ☺ That despite an eight year ceasefire and efforts towards a peace process between the Government of India and NSCN, the army is still deployed.

at Khoyathong Pollem Leikai by AR personnel. He was later found abandoned near the Kangla Moat in Imphal city.

May 20: two youths went missing after being picked up from their residences at Mayang Langjing under Lamsang police station in Imphal West district.

May 25: Dead bodies of two youth were recovered after AR personnel picked them up from their homes at Kangpokpi area in Senapati district.

May 31: a relative of Manipur food and civil supplies minister Pheiroijam Parijat Singh died in Army custody after being picked up by Army personnel from his residence at Nongada Awang Leikai in Imphal East district.

June 9: Thokchom Doren was arrested by AR personnel from Lamjao and was found killed the next morning.

This much for the lie of the "well disciplined and well behaved" Indian

Withdraw Security Forces From Manipur Condemn the Rape of Thangjam Support the Manipuri Peoples Resistance

The rape and murder of Thangjam Ningol Manorma (32) by the Indian security forces is one of the most heinous crimes against the North Eastern Peoples. It has once again shown that the Indian forces are acting as occupation forces suppressing the national rights of the north eastern states and peoples. They are also violating the international norms of human rights. The occupation forces are using rape as a war tactics to humiliate the people. It is but natural that

people would fight back against such kind of heinous atrocities. We see that the people of Manipur, especially the women, under the leadership of militant women organisation Meira Paibi are putting up a heroic fight back against the Indian State. The so-called Indian democracy relies on the force of guns and widespread torture in the whole of north.

Thangjam Ningol was abducted by the security forces belonging to Assam Rifles from her house on July 11, 2004, and was tortured and shot dead after being raped. The whole of Manipur erupted in mass scale protests and declared a two day

general strike. They demanded punishment to the rapists and killers, burned effigies of the Indian prime minister, home minister and Manipur chief minister. The people demanded an end to the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958



under whose authority the security forces are acting in a criminal way and without impunity. The massive outrage of public that Manipur witnessed indicates that the people of this annexed state are against the presence of the Indian security forces on their land. They demand the withdrawal of security forces, and in this way, seek liberation from the clutches of the Indian State.

The rampant oppression in North Eastern States, like Kashmir, is continuing unabated and only invites widespread condemnation and opposition from the people of these areas. The Executive Committee of All

India Peoples Resistance Forum stands by the rights of these people and supports their resistance against the Indian armed forces. Death of Thangjam will only prove another nail in the coffin of the occupation forces in Manipur. The AIPRF calls on

the people of India to stand in solidarity with the fighting people of Manipur in this hour of glorious resistance. The Indian security forces should be withdrawn from the whole of North East thereby putting an end to occupation. AIPRF supports the right to self determination, including secession, of

the North Eastern peoples. The AIPRF stresses the point that the struggle of the Manipur people will also lend strength to the resistance of the oppressed Indian people. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act is not only against the people of North East and Kashmir but also against the people of entire India. It is time we stand up and say no to repression and demand the repeal of this act and withdrawal of the security forces. We stand in solidarity with the people of Manipur in this hour of distress and fight back.

22 July, 2004

All India Peoples Resistance
Forum (AIPRF)☉

Manipur Bhawan in Kolkata Ransacked

In solidarity with heroic Manipur struggle, Revolutionary Students Front (RSF) organized a militant action in Kolkata city. On 9th August at 4.30 pm, about 2 dozen members of the RSF, carrying flags and placards attacked the guest house of the Manipur government. They ransacked the office room, broke window panes and tube lights, threw away flower pots and uprooted plants. They preferred not to meet any official of the anti-people Manipur government and instead concentrated on their protest action leaving behind leaflets condemning the rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama by Indian security forces of the Assam Rifles demanding the withdrawal of all Indian armed forces from Manipur and repeal of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

Reverberations Of Resistance Across the Country

Withdraw Indian Army from the North East Repeal Draconian Military Law of 1958

Sunil

New Delhi reverberated with a second demonstration against the Indian army, exactly one week after the first one. The people say they have no memory if they had ever heard slogans of this kind in their life. They were listening to these slogans for the first time. "Rapist Indian army go back", "Indian army— shame shame", "Indian army get lost", a few to cite from the many. More than five hundred people from the North East and Delhi demonstrated against the Indian Government to demand repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 that has been used to unleash unbridled terror over the people in the North East and create fear in their hearts. 46 years of brutal repression, mass scale torture, rapes and killings have not been able to cow down the

spirits of the people and the result is: the voices of protest against repression over the nationalities of Far East have travelled to the heart of the capital city of Delhi. The law has only enhanced indignation and hatred towards those who tried to instil fear.

The demonstration was organised by Committee for the Repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Delhi, on 30th July. It came after a day long convention on 29th where various speakers deliberated over the undemocratic and brutal nature of this law. In the end the convention adopted a resolution demanding its abrogation, demilitarisation of all civilian space by restricting the army to the barracks, and punishment to the guilty army officers who have perpetrated crimes on the people.

The committee has decided to expand itself to the all India level and

include civil, human rights, and struggling people's organisations from all over the country which can come forward for mobilisation of the masses against this draconian Act. Though it is decided that the units would be organised in all the states but special attention would be given to the areas where the Indian security forces have been especially engaging themselves in crimes against the people, like in

continuous peril. Their peaceful way of life has been converted into hellish conditions where mothers don't know whether their sons would come back in the evening after they leave for the day's usual chores. The disappearances, fake encounters, and continued insecurity due the presence of security forces have played havoc with these peace loving peoples of the hills and valleys.



A Protest March in Delhi

North East, Kashmir, Punjab, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra, Chhattisgarh and Telangana. The hands of the Indian army and paramilitary forces of the Indian State are drenched in the blood of thousands upon thousands of people. The women everywhere have been a special target, rape being used as a tactics of war. The Indian army has behaved like an occupying army. This has been especially true in the case of Kashmir and the North Eastern States. These states have been struggling for independence from India which annexed them after the British colonialists had left. For them, the people of north east and Kashmir say, the "independence of India" has come as a perpetual subjugation of their nations, unbridled terror and trampling of all kinds of national and human rights. Their dignity has been trampled, their national cultures spoiled, and their lives put into

The recent case of Thangjam Manorama has set off a widespread protest movement in Manipur against the presence of Indian armed forces and the people of almost all the north eastern states have rigorously condemned the cruel behaviour of the forces against the common people. They are bringing out numerous stories of army atrocities, especially of the Assam Rifles, throughout the North East.

Even Arunachal Pradesh, hitherto considered as the peaceful area of the North East, has its own tales of suffering to tell. The army, armed with this act, acts with impunity, without fear of any accountability and reprimand or punishment. The victim can neither plead nor appeal. Any officer becomes a law into himself. Here, resistance and fight back becomes the only option.

The echoes of the resistance in North East have trekked into Delhi now. "Indian Army—Down Down!" "End the Occupation of North East and Kashmir," ranted the air on July 30, 2004. Demands for justice and freedom highlighted the mood of the demonstrators. The right to self determination of nations, including secession was upheld and demanded for the nationalities. Withdrawal of Indian armed forces from North East

was one of the main slogans raised by the demonstrators. This wish of the North Eastern peoples was quite noticeable.

The spectators were wonder struck when they saw Naga men and women dressed in their national attire leading the demonstration. They were equally held in awe when they heard slogans against the Indian army. Nationalism of the North Eastern peoples put to shame the so-called national pride of India when the Indian army was termed as rapist and atrocious. The students from Nagaland and Manipur were joined by their student comrades from Delhi along with human and civil rights organisations and activists of DSU, AISA, MAS, AIPRF, Vikalp and others.

In the evening, a two hour cultural programme was organised where more than half a dozen cultural performances from Nagaland and Manipur were staged. A documentary highlighting the aspirations for national freedom of the Naga people set the chord of the cultural program. The silent stage show about life in a Naga village told the story of the peaceful and industrious nature of the hill peoples and also their tale of woes for which the Indian army is responsible. The presentation sent the message of live and let live, a fundamental premise of any peace loving people. ☺

Solidarity Protest in Bangalore

As we all know that Manipur is inflamed by protests these days, people are protesting against Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). There has been a situation quite like emergency since 1958. In concern to rise against the brutalities and atrocities being organised by Indian army-government there, a protest was carried out at Town Hall, Bangalore on 23rd of August 2004. This protest was chiefly organized by Mahila Jagruti Sangathna, Karnataka.

The murder of Thangjam Manorma, whose body was found tortured, raped and riddled with bullets has awakened women and human-rights organizations all over India and especially in Manipur. AFSPA has provided army with vast rights. So-many people/women are fired, thrashed, abused, raped and killed daily by armed forces. Manorma's case is not the exceptional one. So, to raise voice against this inhuman act, many organizations including, People Democratic Forum (PDF), Center of Social Concern, Saint Joseph College, Bangalore, Human Rights Association, Bangalore, Karnataka Vimochana Ranga (KVR), Shakti Mahila Sangathana, Bangalore-Manipur Association, took part in the protest.

The protest started at 4:30 in front of town hall and ended at 7 pm. With their experience in North East, Sushma, the president of Mahila Jagruti and well-known social activist Shivsunder, while addressing the protesters, explained the plight of North-East people who are being crushed by the boots of Indian army daily. Prof. Bhanu Partap Singh of PDF and Vasu of KVR explained the wretched condition of Manipuri people and called upon the people to fight back the atrocities of Indian government

in North East. Sheela of Human Rights Association and Mallige of Mahila Jagruti said that AFSPA is totally inhuman and extremely cruel, so soon be repealed.

At the end Anupama, president of Bangalore - Manipur Association, who is basically from Manipur addressed the protestors. She recalled the worse situation people are experiencing due to atrocious and terrorist activities of Indian army under the name of 'repressing terrorism'. She paid thanks to all activists who exhibited the fraternity of oppressed masses by extending their militant support to Manipuri peoples resistance. ☺

Protest March in Bihar

On 21st may Jan Abhiyan, Bihar organised a protest march against Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act and the rape and killing of T. Manorama by Assam Rifles. It started from Patna Radio Station and went up to Railway station. They raised slogans against the state repression going on in Manipur and demanded the repeal of AFSPA. They also demanded severe punishment to the Jawans and officials of Assam Rifles, responsible for the rape and killing of Manorama. Expressing solidarity with the ongoing struggle in Manipur, they pledged all support to the people of Manipur. ☺

Solidarity Actions in West Bengal

In support of Manipur struggle against on going state repression, several programmes were taken in WB, especially in Kolkata city.

In the last week of August 2004, Revolutionary Students Federation (RSF), Manipur Students Association (MSA) and All India Students Association organised a demonstration in College Street area. It was attended by around two hundred activists and supporters of the participating organisations. They raised slogans against the rape and killing of T. Manorama and demanded repeal of Arms Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).

In the first week of September 2004, RSF and MSA jointly organised a convention in Tripura Hitai Sadhani Hall. It was also attended by more than two hundred people. Intellectuals like Jyoti Prakash Chattarjee and others addressed the Convention. They condemned the state repression on the people of Manipur and demanded severe punishment to killers of Manorama and the repeal of AFSPA.

Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR), West Bengal activists organised a demonstration at Jangi Pada (Hoogli Dt.), against AFSPA, which was attacked by the goons of CPI (M). In this planned attack, fifteen activists including Sujato Bhadra (General Secretary) and Amit Kumar (Vice President) of APDR were injured.

Protesting this attack, AIPRF and SFPR jointly organised a meeting in front of the Bank of India near the Sialdah Railway Station. It continued for three hours and addressed by many speakers. They all demanded to arrest and punish the attackers. ☺

Human Indignity to Human Insecurity in Manipur

Chayan Sen

Over the years incidents and cases of blatant violations of human rights by the police and armed forces have become a routine in the land locked region of North-east. The repression targets not just the actors in the struggle for socio-economic justice that are challenging and questioning the State but also seeks to criminalise, and delegitimise their ideology, politics and organisations. The state and the Government deliberately derecognising the fact that the different nationalities and their movements have political and socio-economic bases. Instead of attempting any political process to, the issue the state is increasingly resorting to repressive measures whereby it brands any such peoples movements as anti national and threat to national security and integrity. This way it is ensuing different legislations like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, National Security Act etc. along with the military and para-military forces to curb any dissent of the people.

In this increasingly belligerent mood of the State, an assessment of its impact on the human security and dignified existence of the people in the North-east, particularly the latest trends in Manipur, would clearly illustrate the serious erosion of the democratic space in the region.

General Intimidation and Oppression

The Indian State's promise of autonomy and the preservation of cultural identity of different nationalities have lost its substance, long time ago. It has become mere blatant in this era of Globalisation, where sociological distinctions and issues of identity are being undermined by the so called leaders of the 'free' world who seek to establish their economic and political systems in every nook and corner of the Globe. The Indian state acting as lackeys to these powerful monopolies has made its intention clear that it intends to swallow the different nationalities whether the North-eastern or the

Kashmiris into the expanding stomach of the 'Great Motherland'. Systematic loot, discrimination, injustices and inequalities by the Indian state on the people over the years, has made the people to resist and fight for asserting its own rights, that is, right to life, dignity and resources.

The latest macabre incident of rape, torture and killing Thangjam Manorama Devi in Manipur by the Armed Forces has once again highlighted the human security situation in the region where people are being held hostage by different security legislations and the subsequent cordoning by the Armed Forces. The killing of Manorma is not just an isolated incidence but is a testimony to the increasing military offensive by the Indian Govt. on the Manipuris in recent times, in the garb of containing militancy. This military offensive has started much before the general elections in the country. Prior to the election the Indian military was engaged in fierce operation in almost all parts of Manipur, creating fear and tension among the people. Many people were picked-up, arrested and assaulted on suspicion. In this situation people were compelled to cast their votes to the greatest festival of Indian Democracy. But this offensive by the Armed forces did not stop and has been continuing unabated even after elections and change of regime at the centre.

The violent protest, which engulfed the entire state after the gruesome killing of Manorama, however brings forth the brewing discontent and anger of the people of the state against the high handed policies and measures of the Indian union and the Armed Forces. The people of the state became restive of the growing intolerance and repression of the Armed Forces. This has crossed all threshold limits. It also demonstrates very clearly the fighting spirit, dedication and ideological commitment of the people for the cause of their identity. The remarkable fact is that, it has happened

within a period of two years, since 2001, when people of Manipur rose up in protest against what was perceived as a move to Balkanise Manipur; when the Govt. of India signed an agreement with the NSCN (IM) to extend their ceasefire "without territorial limits". In that movement 18 people were killed and thousands were injured, during violent clashes with the police and Para-military forces.

Indian state has failed miserably over the years, even in ensuring basic provisions like food, healthcare, housing, sanitation, employment, communication etc. Over and above the Indian Govt. has superimposed some draconian Acts in the region, thereby giving sweeping powers to the armed forces without any accountability as such. This has transposed a situation whereby the people are finding extremely difficult to even assert their minimum democratic rights.

Some of the Acts which are in operation in the region and particularly in Manipur are enumerated below:

1) *Armed Forces Special Power Act, 1958*

Ever since its inception in 1980, the whole of Manipur is declared disturbed area under this act.

The status has not changed ever since. As a matter of fact, the impunity enjoyed by the armed forces under this Act requires no additional laws as they can get away with almost anything and everything they do. Once an area is declared disturbed under section 3 of this Act, even a non-commissioned officer of the armed forces of the Union can enter and search places, arrest persons, interrogate them and even fire upon or otherwise use force, even causing of death against on suspicion of disturbing "public order". No prosecution, suit and legal action shall be; instituted against the armed forces for the acts committed under this act.

This special power is routinely used

by a large number of armed forces personnel stationed in Manipur and other States in N.E. where by hundreds of suspected militants dwell as ordinary civilians have been reported to be arbitrarily arrested, tortured, extra-judicially executed, involuntarily disappeared, while women are raped and sexually harassed, etc.

2) The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1911.

Under this Act the District administration is authorized to stop public meetings "which are likely to promote sedition or to cause a disturbance of public tranquillity in the proclaimed areas". The entire State of Manipur is declared and "Proclaimed area under this colonial Act.

3) The Punjab Security of State Act, 1953:

Certain parts of Manipur Valley are declared as "dangerously disturbed" under this Act. Once declared as such, section 10 of the Act enables the Govt. to impose collective fines on the civilian populations.

4) Foreigner's Protected Areas Order, 1958

Foreign nationals with a valid visa to India are prevented from entering Manipur, unless a special permission is obtained from the union Home Ministry of the Govt. of India. The order is in operation for all times.

5) The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967

Under this Act 18 organisations in Manipur are declared as "unlawful" organizations. Individuals alleged to be members or associates of the organizations could be arrested and detained without any evidence. This is used daily by the police for counter insurgency.

6) The National Security Act, 1980

Under this law, a person can be detained without charges. The government routinely booking people under this Act, by alleging them 'anti-nationals' and 'insurgents'.

7) The code of criminal Procedure (Manipur Amendment), 1983

The usual criminal procedure code of India has modified in Manipur by:

- a) extending the period of investigation, thereby extending the time of administrative detention.
- b) Providing more impunity to law enforcement official.
- c) Making the provisions for bail more stringent.

Moreover, prohibitory orders under section 144 of Cr.P.c. are perpetually placed thereby banning the gathering of five or more persons. Even taking out processions for marriages or funerals are required to obtain prior permission from the D.C.

8) Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1985

The act is allowed to be lapsed by the Parliament in 1995 but cases are still pending in Manipur under this Act. Many accused of TADA are getting severe punishments even today.

Human Security in Conclusion

The various draconian legislations enacted in this region have translated themselves into internal military rule, whereby the armed forces are being given absolute power. Immunity to the police and armed forces is provided by specific provisions in all the above mentioned legislations. Even the state government constituted authority is bypassed by the Centre, which is evident from the fact that, even though the Ibobi Government is 'considering' for a partial lifting of the AFPSA from certain parts of Manipur, it has failed to convince the central leadership for the same. The centre has categorically declared that it will not repeal the Act under any circumstances. Ibobi Singh knows very well that the centre would reimpose the Act even if his cabinet decides to lift it, as happened in Nagaland twice in lifting the disturbed area tag. Notwithstanding the general mood of the people in the State, the centre has even decried the recommendations, appeal and authority of the Manipur Assembly.

Thus in spite of this comprehensive legal, institutional and administrative arrangement to safeguard and protect "National Security" interest in Manipur in particular over the years, the situation is getting from bad to worse. These hyped security arrangements and policies have led to greater alienation and loss of faith in the constitutional system among the people in this region.

The policy makers fail to realize that in an atmosphere of constant fear, insecurity and anxiety created by the state, security and law enforcement agencies, where "human dignity" is trampled with for some other consideration, there can be no "national security".

The rape and killing of Manorama exemplifies better the state of human security and dignity of the people in the entire North East. Though the "national media" tried to ignore and play down the incident as a mere exaggeration or as an isolated incident, but it cannot just ignore the pitfalls of the situation. This is not just a spontaneous upsurge of the people but on the contrary, it is an expression of resentment for the long process of subjugation, exploitation and repression of the people of the region by the Indian government. The Indian government cannot expect to take the people for a ride by creating sensationalizing "national security" hype thereby crushing ruthlessly the genuine aspirations and movements of the people for a democratic change.

The political tone and tenor of the uprising will be written in the golden pages of history as the spirit of dedication, iron discipline, untold sacrifices and unbelievable courage and bravery of the toiling masses of Manipur. The people have resolved to fight, and fight to the end, until they achieve their unfinished task of asserting their rightful place and dignity from the authoritarian Indian State. This inspires and will continue to do so for the struggling people in other parts of the country.



The Killing of a Criminal by his Victims in Kasturba Nagar, Nagpur: *A Women's Activist's Viewpoint.*

Shoma Sen

The killing of Akku Yadav, a notorious criminal by the women of Kasturba nagar was a tremendous eye-opener for us, women activists and "socially conscious intellectuals" of Nagpur. It came as a shock and surprise to those of us who have been trying to organize women, to see this spontaneous militancy and solid show of unity by women from a basti, where no political party/group or women's organization had been organizing. As you are undoubtedly aware, Akku Yadav, an anti-social element, who had been extorting money, molesting and raping women and had committed a number of murders, had been killed by a mob of women in the premises of the Nagpur District court, where he was being produced before the magistrate, in police custody, on 13th August, 2004.

Since a number of activists from outside Nagpur have been asking me about the incident, I thought that I could share some my views.

This episode made me feel that the women's movement had never taken this category of violence against women very seriously. Women's studies and activism had articulated the concepts of "domestic" and "family violence", "communal and caste violence", "sexual violence", "state violence". There was even an all-encompassing term like "social violence" to include witch-hunting, acid throwing, violence inflicted by community *panch* verdicts etc. However, it now appears that terrorizing women by criminals is a widespread phenomenon, invisible even to the women's movement. A women's movement activist recalls her childhood in a Nagpur basti, when a local goon tried to terrorize her simply because her mother was a leader of the

Bharitya Mahila Federation, by stubbing a burning cigarette on her hand. The Akku Yadav incident brought to light, through a TV channel that recently, a 14 year old girl in another Nagpur basti had been raped by an anti-social, had become pregnant and delivered a stillborn baby. And yet, women intellectuals say, with pride, "Thank God our country is not like the west, where there are so many teenage pregnancies."

The sexual violence of criminals or anti-socials against innocent women, is just another example of the innumerable ways in which rape is used as a political weapon. Whether it be to teach a religious community or a caste a lesson, or used by the state as in Manipur and the North East, to silence a struggling community, women as a weaker sex have to suffer the horror, the violence, the pain and the trauma, for no fault of their own. The stigma of honour attached to rape is the crux of the matter. Here too, women and their families, underwent their private traumas without bringing their humiliations into public focus. It is said that a woman raped is 'raped' a second time, in the process of the legal battle for justice, which few have the courage to withstand. In Kasturba nagar, for the past few years, Akku Yadav and his father, brother, nephew, all involved in his criminal activities, used rape as a weapon for exhibiting and maintaining his power over the weak and poor inhabitants of this dalit basti. Women have spoken out now about how many, from a 10 year old girl, to a pregnant woman, were sexually assaulted by him. It was his practice to storm into a person's house, demand food and drink and then insist on having sex with a female member of the household. Any refusal led to the woman being dragged

out to the fields and raped. A woman who had tried to resist Akku had also been murdered by him.

Numerous FIRs had been lodged in the Jaripatka police station (whose Station Inspector is now suspended) regarding various criminal acts of Akku and his family, but each time Akku was let out on bail, his goonda-tactics increased. It was due to this that the women who had gathered in the court were forced to take that desperate step. For them it was a matter of life and death, a question of their survival. Imagining, with horror what the rage of this psychopath would lead to after his release, they lashed out at him with stones and chilli powder and finished him off. It was later alleged by the police that a few men, dubbed as anti-socials, were allegedly also in the mob and the police claim to have found knives on the spot. While there is no conclusive evidence to this effect, it is clear, that even if it was true, they are poor victims, basti residents, who were terrorized by the goon.

Since this is not a place where any women's organization has been active, it must be remarked that the women showed tremendous unity and willpower, which must have arisen from their common suffering. North Nagpur, a predominantly dalit residential area, a sort of ghetto in this "modern, secular, independent" India, has been the stronghold of the Republican Party of India. Though today, the RPI is faction ridden and till late no prominent RPI leader visited the basti, or extended support to these women. In the past years dalit women have shown tremendous fighting capacity, as in another major atrocity against a dalit woman, Manorama Kamble, a maid-servant had been raped and killed on Holi by the drunk male members of a

businessman and lawyer's family, the Devanis, in the same area. Then women had gheraoed the Devanis bungalow in shifts: one lot at night, the other at daytime. Their agitation got the body exhumed and a DNA test done. Women courted arrest and we wondered why, when the police (state) and women activists were both fighting for justice for Manorama, the police were arresting the dalit women!

So now in the Akku killing case, women, old and young fought together once again, with militancy. When five women were arrested, 400 women came forward to court arrest, to admit to the crime. They were not from Kasturba Nagar alone, but from various dalit bastis of North Nagpur. Ironically, those arrested had not even actively participated in the incident and here again, those who were not even in the court that day were volunteering themselves up as the guilty. One of the arrested women was young and pregnant. Her mother-in-law offered that she be kept in custody instead of her. Another was a young unmarried girl. Apprehensive about her future, the basti women volunteered another elderly lady in her place. Whatever, be the legal implications, accused were exchanged for accused, displaying a wonderful answer to the usual saas-bahu enmity rap flung at women activists. And as the struggle went on, morchas and dharnas for granting of immediate bail to the women and the arrest of Akku Yadav's criminal nephew, Dangrya, tremendous public support built up. Local dailies had male journalists writing that women cannot expect protection from the police, the law courts or even men in society and so need to seek measures for their own protection. Social organizations hailed the women as "Veerangana" or female fighters and clamored to felicitate them. Even the RSS women's wing spoke out in support. The women's commission Chairperson, Poornima Advani visited the basti and spoke of understanding the crime as an act of desperate women

who have lost all faith in the state machinery. Retired judges and human rights activists conducted a fact-finding. Senior lawyers, in large numbers, did a signature campaign and offered free legal aid. A group of young male lawyers who were to appear for the accused, made way for a group of young lady lawyers to appear on behalf of the women! With all this pressure, the judge quickly granted bail, the day they were produced, without adjourning the matter for the next day. In the evening, the released women were welcomed with gugal and garlands by their sisters in struggle and the next day, Akku's nephew, Dangrya was arrested in Amravati. The police made it a point, not to produce him in court but took him straight to the magistrate's house!

Today, as the pitch of the agitation scales down, women find that they may have no jobs to go back to. Most are either daily-wage workers, construction workers or domestic servants. Even the daily wage male workers remark that people are not giving them work because they are from the infamous Kasturba nagar. One domestic worker said that her employer remarked, that if they could kill Akku Yadav, then these women might kill them too! Leelabai expressed her views that "Our basic problems are economic. The problems of poverty and joblessness. My house, for instance, is made of planks of wood. One kick and any criminal can break into it." Questions of security widened to those of economic security. Would the newfound media attention bring some cottage industry or development work to the area? Other women started whispering about secret routes that they could use to return to work, for after having proclaimed on TV that they had no remorse, had they abetted more danger to themselves? Due to the Ambedkarite movement's insistence on education, a number of domestic worker or labourer women's daughters were in college. Could they now safely start attending their classes?

Meanwhile, women intellectuals, activists and TV channels have been discussing the pros and cons of women taking the law into their own hands. The women's movement (and women's studies) a melting pot of various ideologies, has had an ambivalent attitude about women committing acts of violence. One stream believes that women are inherently peaceful, nurturing, non-violent, while men are inherently aggressive and violent. Some others believe that women, due to force of circumstances may have to resort to acts of violence in self-defense, while women in Maoist movements believe that women, along with the exploited classes should support the path of armed struggle. One section of the human rights and women's movement believe that the rights movements should condemn state violence but be silent about violence by struggling sections, while another section of the same movements believe that it should condemn both violence by the state and by the people. Without any awareness of these debates and theories, the women of Kasturba nagar have done something, a murder, a killing, an act of violence. Like hundreds of women, languishing in jails, women who killed their husbands because they saw them raping their daughters, the unmarried mother who killed her infant, the woman tortured for years by her alcoholic husband who wanted to kill him and escape with her lover, and so on...so many crimes against women and so many women against crime. In a society where violence against women is the mainstay of patriarchy, peace can only come after enormous years of struggle. ☺

**Read
Jan Pratirodh
Hindi Bimonthly
Organ of AIPRF**

REVOKE THE PRIVATIZATION OF CENTAUR HOTEL

At midnight on June 1st, 2003, the then BJP-led Government at the Centre and the then Minister for Disinvestment, Arun Shourie, pulled off a fraudulent coup in the name of disinvestment : the Centaur Hotel at Juhu Beach, Mumbai was handed on a silver platter to Ajit Kerkar, the Chairman of the Tulip Star Hotels Limited. This hotel was owned by the Central Public Sector Undertaking called Hotel Corporation of India, which was a wholly owned subsidiary of Air India. This hot property situated in a prime locality was doing roaring business, including accommodating the lay-over passengers of Air India. Then, as a start of the disinvestment conspiracy, the government brought in a corporate rogue called R C Aggarwal, who deftly turned the profit making hotel into a loss making unit, thereby qualifying it for disinvestment.

No Transparency in the Sale Deal

The deal for the sale of this hotel was concluded in a most dubious and underhand way to hoodwink the employees and the rest of the Indian people. Ajit Kerkar, the former head of the Tata-owned Indian Hotels Limited, who had been shown the door by the Tatas for foreign exchange irregularities, was a member of the Air India Board and was on the Subcommittee for Disinvestment in HCI Ltd. He was the only party at the time of the financial bidding and dictated his own terms to the Government. Though the Juhu Centaur Hotel was reportedly valued by the firm of Jordan and Fleming to be worth Rupees 315 crore, it was sold to a company having an equity stake of Rs. 5 lakhs only. Moreover, Kerkar's low bid of Rs. 153 crore was accepted by the government and he managed to raise

funds from public sector banks to the tune of Rs. 129 crore by mortgaging the hotel itself - thus utilizing public money for a privatization deal ! As if this were not enough, the encashment of the Bank Guarantee was held back at Kerkar's request by the Ministry for Disinvestment, which worthy body did not charge him interest on delayed payments either.

Today this shining five star deluxe hotel lies in a shambles. It has been degraded from its deluxe category to a three star hotel. Once filled to capacity with guests and foreign tourists, it has now become a den for call girls and dubious elements.

Employees are Crying Foul

When the hotel was on the verge of disinvestment, the then Prime Minister and Arun Shourie made a pact with the union leaders that the interests of the 773 employees would be protected for the period of one year only : their terms and conditions of service existing prior to the disinvestment would be maintained and within that period all of them would be offered a Voluntary Retirement Scheme. This deal was made behind the backs of the majority of the employees who were in no mood to give up their jobs at that time. But the new management did not keep their part of this deal : the family medical benefit and leave travel concession was immediately stopped and the officers ceased to get their annual increments. The monthly salary, which earlier used to be paid by the end of the month, now came to be paid by the 26th of the next month in two installments. The Charter of Demands of the employees which was pending settlement since the last over two years was conveniently buried. Provident Fund contribution, housing

loan installments, income tax and professional tax deducted from the monthly salary of the employees was not deposited with the concerned authorities, but was used as working capital by the Kerkar management. The recognised union of the hotel's employees - the Shiv Sena affiliated Bhartiya Kamgar Sena - proved to be more true to the management's interests, rather than those of the employees actively stalled all attempts made to agitate by the employees. But the impact of the new management's actions was so great that the employees on their own initiative protested by wearing black badges on 23rd April, 2004. Three employees, including two women, were suspended soon thereafter for leading this protest.

The management created an atmosphere of insecurity, and uncertainty to such an extent that all employees wanted to take VRS and leave. But contrary to the pact made at the time of disinvestment, no VRS was offered till 31st May, 2003. Conditions deteriorated to such an extent that employees had to obtain an order from Mumbai High Court to get the management to implement its promises regarding VRS. About 510 employees eventually opted for VRS, but to date the meager VRS amounts have not been given to them. Instead, the management put up a notice asking the VRS optees to proceed on leave from June 28th, 2004. This created a fear among the employees that they would be thrown out of their jobs without being given their legal dues. It was only when they strongly protested against this that the said notice was withdrawn.

It is reported in the newspapers that Kerkar plans to sell the Hotel to another party (a French corporate group by the name of Accor, is reportedly one of the bidders) for a sum of Rs. 350 crore, thus making a

Continued in the next page.....

Resist Privatisation of Mumbai and Delhi Airports

It is shameless, there is no other word for what the Central Government is preparing to do by privatization of the Mumbai & Delhi Airports. The entire land, buildings, machinery and employees have been enumerated and evaluated by a foreign company AB Ambro Consultants. Totally 1875 acres of prime land is to be handed over. Of this 202 acres is occupied by slum dwellers who are to be evicted - about 5,00,000 working people. According to the report at Mumbai Airport there are 2687 employees (including the officer category). The report has analyzed the employees according to their skill, their age and the numbers of years of service put in. All this is in preparation for how to retrench us. As the newspapers have already informed us, in the first phase, only 40% of the employees are to be retained.

Mumbai Airport is the busiest airport in India. It is the major gateway to international tourist & business traffic in India. The land, the property, and the labour that has gone into developing this airport cannot be measured through mere mathematical calculations. It is a monopoly activity of gigantic proportions. 38.08% of the AAI profits comes from Mumbai Airports. Together with Delhi airport it amounts to 76% of the total AAI profits. If these two airports are privatized the rest of the 118 airports in the country will be declared unviable and also sold off. It is a well known fact that AAI has 2000 Crores in its Reserve Fund, and now it is being emptied in the name of face lifting and modernizing these airports. That is to say that even the funds of AAI are to be stolen by these capitalist thieves (both foreign & indian) and all this is being organized by the Central Government - the elected representatives of the people! The actual recommendations of the survey have been kept completely secret and they are before the Group of Ministers for a decision.

AAI Employees, learn from the experience of the Centaur Hotel workers. After the completely fraudulent privatization, employees were forced to take miserable amounts as VRS and a survey among them, reveals that almost all the workers are either unemployed, reduced to daily wage contract workers or hawkers. They have been forced to shift their residence to further suburbs, take their children out of school, change their eating habits, have become chronically depressed, leading to heart attacks, strokes & other ailments and some cases to death. Some have developed suicidal tendencies and all complained that they have lost their respect in the family, in the neighborhood and in society because most of them have many years of working life still left, while they have no work. So AAI employees, resist privatization and VRS with all your might!

AAI Employees, your mental and physical labour has run these airports all these years. In times gone by, land from thousands of peasants was taken away from them to develop these airports. It was the money of Indian people (public money, not that of any capitalists) that was used to construct them. These airports belong to the Indian people, the Central Government has no right to hand it over to multinational corporations and Indian capitalists.

Everything depends on you and your preparedness to fight. It is better to die fighting than to die of starvation.

STOP PRIVATISATION!

STAND UP AAI WORKERS & OFFICERS!

STAND UP AND FIGHT THIS ATTACK ON OUR LIVES!

STAND UP FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY AND OUR CHILDREN!

(A Leaflet Published AAI Employees)

From the previous page

killing of almost Rs.200 crore!

The example of the Juhu Centaur Hotel has amply illustrated what 'disinvestment' really means: turn profit making public sector units into loss-making ones, thus qualifying them for 'disinvestment', then sell them off in underhand deals for a song to private parties, who, in turn, will sell them off to foreign firms and make a veritable killing. It is apparent that all the players in this 'disinvestment' hoax -- the government, the ministers, the bureaucrats and the treacherous employer-friendly unions - have got a slice of the cake. This game needs to be exposed for what it really is - a shameless fraud on the Indian people by their rulers, where public money is gifted to unscrupulous corporates.

We, the employees of Juhu Centaur, who have built up the reputation of the hotel through our sweat and blood over the years, refuse to give up our jobs and take the crumbs offered to us as VRS. We pledge to fight till this fraudulent disinvestment is cancelled. We appeal to all patriotic, democratic people to support our just struggle.

CANCEL THE FRAUD DISINVESTMENT OF CENTAUR HOTEL!

WITHDRAW THE SUSPENSIONS OF THE FIGHTING EMPLOYEES!

FIGHT TO PRESERVE OUR JOBS!

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DISINVESTMENT FRAUD IS A PATRIOTIC BATTLE-JOIN IT!

WORKERS UNITY ZINDABAD!

UNION OF CENTAUR - TULIP STAR EMPLOYEES

PUPPET RULE IN IRAQ

Kumar

On June 28, 2004 Paul Bremer, the US administrator left behind 1, 60, 000 US and allied army troops in Iraq to take care of the caretaker government of Iyad Allawi. He handed over a piece of paper to the authority to Allawi & company two days ahead of the schedule and made good his departure. The US administration under Bremer had expected big guerrilla attacks on 30th June so it advanced the last rite on Bremer by two days. Bush and Blair were there in adjoining Turkey but they preferred not to attend the 'handover' lest there is a leak of the secretive affair and anything untoward happens. Only six persons were present at the time of handing back "sovereignty" to the Iraqi people. They came to know of it after half an hour when swearing in ceremony of the new ministry was being conducted. In the present world where sovereignty is not an irony in the present day world that an authority is handing over a thing which it does not have and those who are being handed over the thing have no information about it. The people 'got' it even when they were oblivious to it. As if sovereignty were a thing created out of nothing by a magic wand in the hands of America. The question has been well asked by some people: how the US could impart what it is was not invested with. An occupying force cannot have sovereignty of the occupied country and thus, cannot relinquish it. Sovereignty of a people can only belong to the people and not some alien power. Bremer did not have it and what Allawi got was an order to crush the resistance movement in Iraq with an iron hand.

The slave will do the job of his master. The indiscriminate air bombardments in the town of Falujah and other places and daily killing of dozens of people after Bremer left is an indication that the puppet prime minister Allawi is determined to carry the job forward. The June 28 handover, stipulated that elections in Iraq would be held in January 2005. Allawi feared

the outcome as the movement headed by Moqdata Sadr may participate in the elections and get a majority. Though Moqdata Sadr's militias have fought bravely against the occupation forces after he fell out with the Americans, after one year of the occupation, on a deal for getting representation in the post Saddam disposition. Sadr said that he may get majority to establish an Iran style Islamic rule in Iraq through elections. Allawi does not want to create additional headache for the Americans, neither the Americans want Sadr unless he is fully tamed. So the first act he has done after getting 'sovereignty' authority from the US he has postponed the elections at least for six months (though he himself was to head the government for six months!). He gave himself six more months to consolidate the Iraqi civil rule for Americans.

With Bremer out the US has sent John Negroponte, as its ambassador to Iraq. Negroponte would be the de facto ruler of Iraq and Allawi regime would be only accountable to him. When Bremer left, he stated that the most important task of the new regime was to contain the growing resistance movement so the elections are held in a peaceful atmosphere. Peace in Iraq today means unopposed US control. And for this to happen, crushing of the resistance is a primary concern. Allawi is a CIA man. Lakhdar Brahimi, the US representative first for Afghanistan after invasion and then for Iraq before invasion, while defending Allawi told ex-Under Secretary of the UN, CR Gharekhan, "it would be impossible to find even one anti-Saddam person without some link with a foreign agency." For Brahimi, Allawi is the best bet in the present time. Iyad Allawi is doing the dirty job for American imperialism like Marcos, Suharto and numerous others like Mobutu, who hailed from the country they ruled but bowed their head before the US.

Though Allawi has the paper right to ask the US and British armies to leave Iraq yet it is clear that he is there only

to carry orders. The US defence ministry has made it known that it would take many years to return peace to Iraq and the US forces will stay there for as many years. The US launched war saying its mission was to bring freedom to the Iraqi people. Now Iraq is up in arms against occupation to win freedom. This armed resistance is termed terrorism and the movement itself is branded as one against freedom. The colonisers have their own logic for everything which is quite the opposite of what truth is.

The Iraqi freedom fighters are termed as terrorists. But the support the fighters enjoy in Iraq make the US and its British and other allies shudder. Fallujah town, though reduced to rubble, is in the hands of the rebels. The US fighter planes daily pound the city, but the so-called international community is silent about US atrocities, which are on a far greater scale than what Israel is doing in Palestine.

The UN and other major imperialist powers have given international legitimacy to Allawi and company by terming the Iraqi set up as a transition effected towards Iraqi sovereignty under the aegis of the UN.

The US which trampled under foot all international norms and ditched the UN, when it went to launch aggression on Iraq has secured the UN legitimacy for occupation. It routinely demands foreign forces for Iraq under the UN banner but many countries are reluctant to send their troops as the resistance movement is only growing by the day and more intense war is expected in future. The US has lost more than one thousand army men after when it claimed that war was over in Iraq. A growing number of US army men are refusing to join war in Iraq. With growing opposition to war back home, it is desperately trying to rope in armies from poor nations as Spain has already committed to withdraw forces and many governments are under pressure by the people not send troops as cheap blood for the American administration. In the absence of official armies coming for its rescue it is hiring private mercenaries around the world. Let others die if ire of

the American public is to be put under control, especially in this election year. The spectre of death that haunts the American consciousness after the nemesis in Vietnam, is mounting up.

Though the resistance war in Iraq is not the type of war the Vietnamese fought in the sixties and seventies, yet it has popular support among the Iraqi people. Vietnam syndrome has staged a come back in the US. The Bush administration is on an all time low in popularity among the American citizens for whom this war has been carried on a mountain of lies. Never was the opposition so strong even before launching a war, as has been the case with war on Iraq. Millions in the US marched together against this war along with tens of millions around the world.

The readers must be remembering that France, right from the beginning of occupation, has been calling for an Iraqi disposition in the seat of power in

Baghdad. For imperialist powers any government with native faces is sovereign when it serves the imperialist interests. For the people of Iraq Allawi is an agent of imperialism and there is nothing to say of sovereignty as long as US and allied forces are there and elements like him are in the seat of power.

When BBC said on 28 June that "Americans are no longer in power," it was a mockery of the concept of independence and at the same time a travesty of truth. The people of Iraq are fighting for a sovereign Iraq minus imperialist agents and occupation forces. The real sovereignty of a people resides in their will and here the will is to drive out the imperialist forces and imperialist agents. The sovereignty of the people in Iraq today exists in the people's will and this will is being reflected in the war of resistance.

Even in the days of Saddam Hussain the sovereignty of Iraq was trampled under foot for twelve long years where US played the main culprit and UN acted as its surrogate.

Sanctions regime played havoc with the life of the people there. Iraq did not have the rights to sell oil in the international market. All imports were banned. It did not have the right to use its own air space. In the name of curbing defiance to the UN it was reduced to a pariah state. And above all it was accused of having 'weapons of mass destruction' which it did not possess and for which lie it was invaded on March 20, 2003. It was then its sovereignty was crushed. It was completely destroyed when US forces captured Baghdad. Now the liberation struggle is trying to rebuild it and this will be restored only when the US and UN forces in Iraq are either completely destroyed or forced to quit.



From page 4

imperialist interests. Indian Government is behaving like the military government of General Musharraf who bowed his head to the US dictates shamelessly and is even looking for an opportunity to send troops to assist US masters in Iraq. He only wants the pretext that other Islamic countries should take lead in this matter. The blame of the death of two Pakistani workers lies with Pakistani government only.

The Indian people have resolutely condemned the US aggression and occupation of Iraq and demanded from the Indian government not to ally with the US in any way. But the Indian regime is only waiting for the right opportunity to send its forces openly though allowing underhand trafficking of mercenaries. It put forward the opinion that if UN asks for it or some Iraqi disposition (read puppets) requests the Indian government would look into the matter. The intellectuals and economists serving the ruling class interests have long been

propagating participation in the so-called construction work in Iraq for the smallest of crumbs, saying, those who participated in the war against Iraq got bigger contracts and India should ready itself to make up for the loss by other means. They have been preparing ground for the government to act openly. Every such scheme of the Indian ruling classes should be opposed resolutely. We must stand more resolutely for the end of US and British occupation of Iraq; and while supporting the liberation struggle of the Iraqi people pressure must be built on the government to secure the release of Indian workers by committing that India would withdraw all its private mercenary forces and workers from Iraq.

Even the workers who want to go to Iraq for making some quick money should understand that the Iraq people are fighting against one of the deadliest power of the world. There fight is for the liberation of their country. Dozens of Iraqis are sacrificing their lives daily for their beloved country. It is a life and death

question for them. There is fight for a just cause must be supported with ever increasing determination and vigour. We should resolutely stand in solidarity with the Iraqi people, support them and hail them. Any allurements to earn a few rupees should be ditched aside and it should not be allowed to come in the way of supporting a just cause. The Indian government stands condemned in its callous and criminal attitude towards our overseas worker brethren.

We stand by the struggling people and families of the hostage workers who are demanding the safe return of their dear ones.

Bring Back All Indian Workers From Iraq.

Condemn The Us For Its Occupation Of Iraq.

Hail The Struggle Of The Iraqi People For Liberation.

Condemn The US Subservient Indian Government For Its Anti Working Class Attitude.

1st August, 04



P . O . T . A

Production Of Terrorist Act In Gujarat.

Dr. Mukul Sinha

How does one declare a war on terrorism if there are no terrorists around? In Gujarat, this logical hurdle is easily surmounted. Create them first and then declare war on them so that the "hapless citizens" can vote you to power as their sole savior! Till October, 2002, Gujarat had no "terrorist" of any kind but by the third week of January, 2004, Gujarat now has around 180 "hardcore/ anti-national/ Jihadi" terrorist in its Jails; i.e. in a period of 15 months, Gujarat has produced and arrested nearly 180 hardened Islamic terrorists, an average of 12 terrorist per month. A good rate of production by any Indian standards thanks to the potent productivity under P.O.T.A. The table - 1 will indicate the growth rate of terrorism in more details.

The experiment with POTA had however started long before the first arrests were made on 6.10.2002 under POTA in the conspiracy case to kill Asoke Bhatt and Bharat Barot. In fact it started with the burning of the S6 coach of Sabarmati Express.

On 27th February, 2002, the S6 Coach of Sabarmati Express was gutted in fire near the Godhra Railway station and 59 Karsevaks had died in the inferno. The FIR was lodged on 27th itself by the Driver of the Sabarmati Express. After registering the criminal case under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Government invoked the provisions of section 3(1)(a) & (b) and 3(2) of POTA in the said case on 3.3.2002. However on 25.3.2003, Shri K. C Bawa, Dy. Supdt. of Police, filed an application before the Railway Court, Godhra to keep in abeyance the offences under POTA for the time being on the ground that he has received legal opinion of the Gujarat Government according to which it was not appropriate to take action under POTA under the existing circumstances. Thus, on and from 25th March, 2002, POTA was revoked in the

Godhra case. On 22nd May, 2002, the first charge sheet was filed by the Police in the Sessions Court Godhra. The last paragraph of the said charge sheet was significant:

.....*Without thinking of the consequences of communal hatred and violence by instigating and exciting hatred, they attacked the passengers and the coaches of Sabarmati Express with stones and set on fire the coach No. S - 6 by putting inflammable liquid like petrol and as a result, 59 passengers which include men, women and children were burnt alive and killed. Around 48 men, women and children were grievously injured due to fire and stone throwing and thus an attempt was made to kill them.*

Thus, the accused have completely burnt down the coach No.6 of Sabarmati Express and caused damage to coach No.5 and coach No.7 and thereby caused loss of property of railway to the tune of Rs. 17,31,250/- and also caused loss of property of the passengers.

The aforesaid act on the part of accused is intended to cause communal disharmony between Hindu and Muslim community and to disrupt public peace and is aimed at provoking Hindu outburst without thinking of its consequences on the people all over the state of Gujarat and districts and villages and the said action amounts to breach of notification No. U/MKP/MJS/V/S/433 dated 14-2-2002.

The conclusion arrived at by the Police have all the ingredients to frame charges under POTA but POTA was not invoked even while filing the charge sheet! Why did the Government of Gujarat become suddenly magnanimous towards the "killers of the Hindu Karsevaks"? The reason is not far to see. Till that month, i.e. May, 2002, thousands of Muslim men, women and children had been brutally

massacred all over Gujarat and crores worth their property had been destroyed. The entire Muslim community in Gujarat was terrified and terrorized by the organised pogrom. Thousands of FIR (though not properly recorded) had been registered against several hundred accused who were from the majority community. If POTA were to be invoked for the Godhra accused at that point of time, it would become most difficult to avoid invoking the same against the accused of the Post Godhra riots. So quietly, the Government withdrew the POTA charges from the Godhra accused to let some time pass... At this stage it would be interesting to compare the allegations made by the Police against the Godhra accused with the allegations made against the accused in the Naroda Patia case. (See the Box for the complaint)

It may be noticed that the 1st Paragraph of the FIR in the Naroda Patia case is almost the same as that of the last paragraph in the Godhra charge sheet. An FIR filed by a Police Officer on 28th Feb. 2002 virtually recreates the reaction theory of the Chief Minister! Here however, the reaction takes place on 28th Feb. 2002 whereas the "action" took place on 22nd May, 2002! Be that as it may, POTA was never invoked in Naroda Patia case or hundreds of similar cases where the accused were hindus.

But that was not the end of the story. On 18.3.2003, the Investigating officer filed another application to invoke and apply POTA against the accused in the Godhra case and from the said date, charges under POTA were framed against them. During the period of one year, needless to point out that most of accused in the post riots cases were released on bail whereas except one, none of the 75 accused in the Godhra case were released on bail. After POTA was

Table 1.

Sr. No	FIR No. Date and Police station (1)	Number of accused (2)	Date of Official Arrest (3)	Days of illegal detention prior to arrest (4)	Offense (5)
1.	DCB I FIR No.23/2002; 30 th Sept 2002 at Gaikwad Haveli Police Station. Note: In this case, Sameer Khan & 12 others were arrested on 1 st October, 2002, on the alleged ground that they had plotted to assassinate Narendra Modi. Sameer Khan was killed in an "encounter" with the Police on 22.10.2002. All accused discharged by Sessions Court Ahmedabad on 2.1.2004 holding that no prima facie case was made out	24 Yakin Ahmed M Salamasudin Guru Ramanlal Vyas Majboor Rahaman Abdul M Pathan Abubakar Haji Ahay Ram Sharma Ajij Abbasi Baheralam Pathan Sahistakhan Gulam Khan Sinkalbai andhar	1.10.02	13 arrested. 6 of them detained for 4 to 6 days	120B/121/12 1A/ 122 ..IPC + ... (NO POTA)
2.	DCB FIR dated 5.10.2002. (Allegations of conspiring to kill Asoke Bhatt and Bharat Barot during Rathayatra in July, 2002) Charge Sheet filed on 2.1.2004 in the Court of G R Udwani	12 Vikram alias M Ali Fatima bibi Alam Khan Amir Khan Mamu Sayed Laxmi Changil Omprakash Parmar Manoj Parmar Rajesh Chota Shakeel Dawood Ibrahim	6.10.02		120B/121/12 1A/ 122..IPC + POTA
3.	DCB I FIR No. 6/2003; 4 th April, 2003 at Gaikwad Haveli Police Station (ISI Conspiracy case for Waging war against India etc.)	82	4.3.03 onwards	44 arrested. Detained between 15 to 30 days	120B/121/12 1A/ 122..IPC + POTA
4.	DCB I FIR No. 11/2003; 5 th Nov. 2003 at Gaikwad Haveli Police Station (Fidayeen case; AK 47 recovered from Juhapura flat..)	8	4.11.03	4 arrested. Two Detained for 3 months	120B/121/12 1A/ 122..IPC + POTA
5.	DCB I FIR No. 16/2003; 11 Dec. 2003 at Gaikwad Haveli Police Station (Plotting to murder Jaideep Patel; case...)	5	11.12.03	5 detained between 2 to 5 days.	120B/121/12 1A/ 122..IPC + POTA
6.	Godhra case: CR No. 9 of 2002 at Godhra Railway Police Station	123	27.2.02 onwards	75 arrested from 27.2.2002 onwards	302IPC+ POTA
7.	Haren Pandya murder case + Jagdish Tiwari attempted murder case.	19	2. 4.2003 onwards	15 arrested	...307 +..302IPC + POTA
8.	Akshardham case	34		6 arrested	302IPC + POTA
9.	Tiffin Bomb case	21		17 arrested	...IPC + POTA

invoked against them, the chance of getting any bail vanished. This perhaps is a glaring example of equal protection of law guaranteed by our constitution!

But the above is not the only glaring example. Reverting back to the recent cases of POTA as enumerated in the Table-1, on reading the FIRs or Charge sheets filed in those cases, the opening allegations/imputations invariably reads as under:

"The investigations revealed that

of May, 2002, numerous lives were lost and many mosques were destroyed. The Muslim community felt that they had been very adversely affected in these riots. This in turn inculcated in them a strong feeling of injustice, discontentment and yearning for revenge.

In this environment, Mufti Sufiyan Ahmed Patangia (A-13) (absconding), a Muslim cleric used his powerful oratory skills and the ability to inspire confidence in the

Naroda Patia, burnt houses, burnt pages of Quran and plundered Mosques. The CDs also depicted the inhuman and disrespectful burial of dead bodies of those killed in riots. Further, Mufti Sufiyan (A-13) during his religious discourses urged the Muslims to involve themselves in Jehadi activities like planting of bombs and targeting VHP and BJP leaders with a view to strike terror in the minds of a section of people viz. Hindus so that such riots against

Place: Naroda - Patia

Date of offence : 28th February, 2002

Offence under : Sections 143, 147, 148, 149, 436, 395, 302 & BP Act 135(1)

THE COMPLAINT :

I, B. K. Solanki, Police Sub-Inspector, service Naroda Police Station, Ahmedabad City. On behalf of the State, the facts of my complaint is that recently the Karsevaks, who had gone to Ayodhya in connection with construction of Ram Mandir, were returning back by the Railway and the running train, which had started from the Godhra Railway Station, was stopped by a mob belonging to the Muslim community and after detaining the Driver, had launched a murderous attack on the Karsevaks and other passengers who were sitting in the Railway compartment with the dangerous weapons and had destroyed the coaches and set it on fire because of which several women, men and children had died and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had today given a call for Gujarat Bandh in connection with the above incident today....

Thus , today, on 28.2.2002, during the Gujarat Bandh call, between 12/0 hours and 19/30 hours a mob of 15 to 17 thousand people led by active workers of V.H.P. and B.J.P. in which Kisan Kirani, P.J.Rajput, Harish Roder, Babu Bajrangji and Raju Chobel were shouting Maro-Kapo (Kill-Kill) and by instigating the mob, the persons from the violent mob had, destroyed, looted and set on fire the ST Patia Nurani Masjid, the nearby Muslim residential area, the shops of the Muslim Community in front of the Nurani Masjid and in the so called Hussein ni Chali next to the ST Workshop and the Bhagyodaya Hotel near the Thakkarnagar Char Rasta and other shops in the neighborhood and had killed a total of 58 women, males and young children by frontal assault against each other, in the area under the Naroda Police Station, in connection with the recent incident of the Hindu killings at the Godhra Railway Station, is my complaint for investigation. My witnesses are my police personnel, the policemen at the points and the victims of the incident and the shopkeepers.

This is my complaint, which is true.

Sign of the Complainant in English.

In my presence

Sign in English

Police Inspector

Naroda Police Station

Ahmedabad

on 27.2.2002 some Hindu Kar Sewaks while travelling in a train were set ablaze near Godhra Railway Station. Thereafter, riots took place in various parts of Gujarat particularly in Ahmedabad city. In these riots which continued unabated till the last week

minds of the Muslims to inflame hatred against Hindu community. He exploited the sentiments of the Muslim by showing to them video CDs and literature published by Jamat Ulema-I-Hind and other radical Muslim organizations. These CDs depicted burnt dead bodies of the victims of

Muslims may not be repeated in future. By all these action he succeeded in instigating a strong feeling of ill-will against the members of Hindu community especially leaders of BJP, VHP and Bajrang Dal. Mufti Sufiyan (A-13) also strengthened his relations with Rasool Khan Parti (A-18)

(absconding), one of the wanted criminals of Ahmedabad presently residing in Karachi, Pakistan..."

The above lines were extracted from the Charge sheet filed by CBI in the Haren Pandya murder and Jagdish Tewari attempted murder case where 15 persons have been arrested under POTA. The aforesaid two paragraphs constitute the first two paragraphs of the Charge Sheet No. 3 filed by CBI on 8.9.2003 before the Special POTA Court at Ahmedabad. Shri Haren Pandya, ex home minister, was killed on 26th March, 2003 at Law Gardens, Ahmedabad whereas Shri Jagdish Tewari, a leader of VHP was fired upon on 11.3.2003 in his medical shop at Rakhial, Ahmedabad.

Thus in the above case and several other cases filed under the provisions of POTA, the "motive" alleged against the muslims for committing terrorist acts is their urge to take revenge for the brutal killings of muslims in the post Godhra riots with a view that no such riots take place in future!

This allegation sounds strangely familiar since the Chief Minister of Gujarat State and other leaders of BJP and VHP had almost said the same thing to account for the innumerable deaths of the Muslim men, women and children in the Post Godhra riots. And at that time also the deaths of the Hindu Karsevaks in the S6 coach at Godhra was cited as the reason for provoking the Hindu masses to commit the most gruesome killings from 28 February 2002 till the end of May 2002. The action and reaction theory was touted at that point of time and in fact as we have extracted the FIR in the Naroda Patiya case, the FIR itself recites the Godhra deaths as the reason for the mob going on rampage in Naroda Patiya. If that could be the logic at that point of time, how does the urge to take revenge for the killings of the Muslims become an act of terrorism? Why doesn't the theory of action and reaction fail when the accused are the Muslims? Another example of the equal protection of law in Gujarat!

In all the cases listed in Table-1, there is one exception. In the case at

Sr. No. 1 (FIR No. 23/2003), 14 persons were arrested on the allegation that they had plotted to kill Narendra Modi. Strangely, the provisions of POTA were not invoked. The said case was discharged even at the stage of framing the charges as the Sessions court did not find any prima facie case. Infact some of the observations of the sessions court are eye opening:

⊗ After going through case papers submitted by DCB, the court says "all these things appear to be fancy"

⊗ Regarding the manner in which the DCB had registered the FIR, the first police document which puts the law in motion, the court observed that the first two pages giving details of Pakistan's proxy war against India, are an "essay rather than a complaint of serious case."

⊗ Commenting on the application of section 121 (conspiracy to wage war against nation) against the accused, the court, after examining the evidence and arguments of the prosecution, observed that "it is a most serious offence, having effect on the security of our nation but merely because the section is applied, the court cannot frame the charge."

⊗ About applying section 122 (collecting arms for waging war against the country), the court observed that there is no collection of arms or an attempt to do so and "no allegation against any of the accused that he is involved in this type of activity, so no offence can be made applicable against of the accused."

⊗ The FIR alleged that the accused had helped Samirkhan in procuring a fake passport from Bhopal in the name of Nawabkhan which was used by him to travel to Pakistan on January 13, 1998 for getting terrorist training. However, the court noted that the Regional Passport Officer, Bhopal, T.D.Sharma had in his statement to DCB stated that the passport was issued to Nawabkhan in March 1998. Hence, it held that the fake passport was not a subject matter of the conspiracy. It also observed that Sharma had stated that issuing of the passport was a result of

a clerical mistake, "but nothing is brought out that any mistake has been committed by the accused."

⊗ The DCB has in the charge-sheet, attached print-outs of e-mails allegedly received Pathan. The court on examining the evidence found that though they were an admissible piece of evidence, "still there is nothing to involve the other accused after departure of Samirkhan in so called police encounter. The court further observed "I may state that to bring out printouts does not require any skill and any person of a normal common sense, after training of a few hours, can manage (to do it)"

The above observation of the Session Court in a case where no less a person but Shri Narendra Modi himself was alleged to have been the target of a conspiracy to be eliminated, speaks volumes of the cases of terrorist conspiracy that are being filed in the State of Gujarat against the members of the Muslim community. It may be recalled that the main accused in the case Shri Sameer Khan Pathan was killed in an encounter during his detention.

What then is the modus opernedi to make out a case against the accused under POTA? A consistent pattern emerges while analyzing the facts of detention of the accused in all the cases listed at Table-1. The accused and several more persons are detained for days or even weeks prior to their actual arrest being shown on record. The entries in the column (4) of Table-1 would indicate the approximate period of such illegal detention. During this period of illegal detention, the persons are coerced, threatened and ultimately promised of liberty if they "confess" or atleast point a finger at some other persons. Failure to do so results in longer detention. Ultimately, several individuals to save themselves become "witness" and sign on the dotted line against some other persons destined to become a "terrorist". After obtaining such "evidences", the persons are formally arrested under

Continued in page 25.....

Elections 2004- *An Analysis*

Gurmeet

Election extravaganza 2004 is over. Old rulers have given way to older ones. The Congress party is back at the helms with support from the pink left. The new conglomerate calls itself United Progressive Alliance (UPA) asking the people to forget the odd 40 years for which they pushed the country into the hands of foreign capital and initiated imperialist reforms as dictated by World Bank, IMF and imperialist powers like the US, Britain and others. Those who went out were named national democratic alliance (NDA) despite the fact that these forces had enacted a horrible dance of death in Gujarat, trampling under foot every shred of human and religious minority rights. The NDA was responsible for wholesale manipulation in history, sciences and all kinds of social sciences making way for the domination of Hindu fascism. And nothing to say of the worsening situation in employment and jobs where every other government concern was put under the hammer for sale. Twelve years back, these forces were responsible for the destruction of the Babri Mosque.

The change of government gives the impression that Indian democracy is at work, kicking and dancing, as bourgeois columnists have drummed aloud. It is being termed as the defeat of fascist forces, hence the name of the new company as, 'United Progressive Alliance'. Far from it. The defeat of BJP led government is only the electoral defeat and not the destruction of the fascist forces. It is not fascism vs. democracy at all. These Hindu fascist forces had also acquired the throne through this so-called democracy. Democracy did not stop them from coming to power. The parliamentary victory of the Congress-pink-sundry-scimitars is far from the victory of "progressive" forces. The pink left has only

imparted it some notorious credibility, the type CPI provided the congress party, especially in the period of emergency. Now again, when parties of the crisis ridden ruling classes have been unable to muster the required numbers of their own, the so-called left has stepped in to save them and prolong their rule.

Only the set of the rulers has changed. It is a victory by proxy. Ask the people whether they would like to replace one anti-people government with another, their answer would be a definite NO. The poison that plunged the country into an incurable state of syndrome is as intact as before. Whatever change is there in the scene the intervention of the people is only thus far important that they reject the forces that strengthened rabid Hindu fascism. The people also reject the policies that have pushed the country into the hands of imperialist capital through economic liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. But both the set of rulers carry on these policies. The head of the new government is Manmohan Singh who is considered to be the main tool in bringing the economic policies of the imperialists when he was Finance minister. Years back when Narsimha government, was defeated in the parliamentary elections, it was said that he was punished by the people for his economic policies. The change only brought in bigoted communalists at the helm. They continued with the same economic policies for which Narsimha government was brought down. Now the communalists are punished and the previous criminals are again on the throne. The vicious cycle continues unhindered. The Congress too has 1984 anti-Sikh carnage in its black history sheet. Not less communal in any way. Neither 1984 perpetrators were punished nor would the conspirators

of Gujarat killing be brought to book.

The intervention of the people to bring the culprits down can be called a conscious act only, as far as the rejection is concerned, a negative vote. It is not a matter of choice. For a choice they would have rejected both the set of rulers. But bourgeois democracy does not allow that far. It restricts the right of choice. You can only reject one set and make way for the other. This does not leave scope for effecting radical change in the socio-economic conditions that have made life miserable for the multitudes of masses. For effecting such changes the working people of the country have only one alternative: to struggle against the system, to resist and fight against onslaughts on all kinds of their rights. In election politics there is no alternative. The elections these times are not run on any political issue; rather, the agenda is how to control the rising discontent of the people in various fields, that is, "good governance". This 'good governance' is the demand of imperialist powers like the US, Britain and France and also the United Nations who know that the new world system of unbridled market forces would only trigger wide spread resentment and fight back of the people against the system of exploitation. Hence the growing need to control these rebellions and revolts.

The elections, in essence have become an exercise to let the resentment of the people out and nothing else. It is time to know the conspiracy of the ruling classes and adopt ways to forge people's unity and build their strength to enhance their fighting capacity. Electoral politics is no alternative.

It is only struggle, resistance and the fight back that is the need of the hour.

❖

Weep Not, My Love

Peter Kimani

Most victims of sexual violence are silenced by the fear of stigmatisation, but Njeeri Ngugi chose to speak out. Peter Kimani spoke to this courageous woman who has given voice to the silent cry of thousands of rape victims. Weep not, love, he whispers to her, the fingers that penned those popular books touching her shoulder tenderly. She wipes away the tears and her faltering voice steadies somewhat, coming stronger and even sadder. Tears well once more and his fingers make another trip to her shoulder, comforting. Njeeri wa Ngugi has been in the public domain for a decade - immortalised in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's poetry and the occasional press photos. Lately, she has come to be known as the beautiful wife who accompanies Ngugi wherever he is - seen but rarely heard.

This week, she spoke publicly for the first time - faintly, yet powerfully.

Anguished, yet strong, recounting an ancient story with startling resonance. Evil committed in impenetrable darkness had been brought to light before the bright television cameras.

"I was raped," she said to a hushed battery of journalists. Finally, she had spoken the taboo word. The brief, ugly word that conveys the violence and degradation that many women and girls know all too well. Occasionally, boys suffer too at the hands of fellow men. The veil had been lifted - no muffled voice-over, shaken and terrified, recounting a sad tale in the safety of anonymity, but from a clear-voiced woman looking you in the eye.

"I didn't have to humiliate myself by going public with my ordeal. I could have packed my belongings and gone to the US to heal myself. I can get great help overseas. But it is wrong to leave the perpetrators free. Even if I can't see them, I have cursed them wherever they are. And they know it." I first met Njeeri last December in California, USA. She

wore her hair in weaves and drove a silver Toyota Sequela. A buoyant woman, she talked fast in her heavy African-American accent, walked even faster, and showed off her garden where she grows sukuma wiki and tubers - to connect her with her Kenyan roots. Then she ran to the kitchen to make some tea before she remembered she had to pick up their children from school. Her energy was simply amazing! Today, she lifts the tea-pot with effort to pour me a cup in the white-washed hospital ward, her energies sapped by raw memories of terror. "I have brushed my teeth a hundred times, went to the dentist for a mouth clean, used lots of mouthwash and even drank some of it. But I can still smell him." This harrowing experience was the last thing she expected in Kenya. "We came here with pride. I brought home my husband, who had sworn never to return while Moi ruled. Then you almost killed him, and humiliated me thus." Hours before that trip, I had spoken to the couple as they passed through Cape Town on their way here, and an elated Njeeri had said, "I am bringing back your child. The lost son is coming home."

Her home is in Miteero, Mang'u, a sleepy village where she and her three sisters were brought up on a hawker's wage. Her father, Douglas Ndung'u, died during the Emergency and her mother, Mary Magdalene Wambui, never knew rest. Njeeri moved to the US in 1972, graduating from New Jersey City State University with a degree in counselling. She has devoted over two decades to fighting for abused and neglected children in the US.

In an ironic twist, it was a little girl who comforted her this week. "I heal people who are victimised. I never knew that, at 50, I would be sitting on the other side. What really touched me was the little girl who came over with a bouquet of flowers and said, 'Pole'. I couldn't help but break down. For 18

years, I was employed in New Jersey to protect children, and here was one comforting me."

Why did she speak out? "I can't live a lie. It wasn't my fault. I can't justify a wrong. I did absolutely nothing to attract his (the rapist's) wrath. I will repeat it a thousand times to heal myself. I cannot live with the guilt. I am angry and bitter with those thugs. I know I am not the first woman to go through that painful and degrading experience. But it was not my fault. And now that I survived, I hope something will come out of it. "It would have been very, very easy for me to take your word as attempted rape, get on the plane and go to America and heal myself. But every time I saw it over and over on TV that Ngugi wa Thiong'o's wife... attempted rape, and it was like putting a knife in my chest over and over again. It's like having a dog bite you, then people say, 'oh, the dog nearly bit her'. Yet you can feel the pain because the bite resulted in a wound."

Njeeri is grateful to the many people who have offered support in this trying time. "Beth Mugo touched me deeply," she says of the education assistant minister. "She came as a woman just to sit and cry with me."

But, above all, there is her husband. He could not stand her cries and rushed to the door, daring the thugs to shoot him, as if reaffirming his promise to her during their wedding on July 11, 1992: Mother once told me

*When a man loves a woman
It's like one and his shadow...*

Let me and you

Embrace

Let our hearts merge

To form a shadow

*To shield us from rain and
sun.*

*(From: The Nation (Nairobi)
August 20, 2004)*

Hold People Assemblies!

Raise The Voice Of The People!!

Punna Rao

In the context of the talks between the Government of Andhra Pradesh and the Naxalite parties, a serious debate is going on among various mass organisations, intellectuals, democrats and the common people about the issues that would come up during the talks. From the last two months temporarily a silence atmosphere is prevailing in the state with lot of hopes on getting a "democratic space".

Former Chief Minister Chandra Babu Naidu of AP claimed the early polls of Assembly during April 2004 as a referendum to his government on – the World Bank development model, repressive measures that his Government has taken on the Naxalite parties and united Andhra Pradesh rather than separate Telangana. The verdict of the people is against the wishes of Babu and voted him out of the power. At the same time BJP led NDA government have lost their power at the Centre. People have clearly rejected the Hindutva campaign of Sangh Pariwar.

The Congress Party in A.P went to polls with TRS, CPI and CPI (M) alliance by openly declaring the Naxalite issue as socio-economic instead of looking it as a law and order problem. Congress Party promised that it would hold talks with Naxalites if it comes to power. CPI, CPM in principle agreed the Talks with Naxalite parties.

People have voted for Congress on these planks. Government initiated the dialogue process with the pressures from all quarters. Mean while Peoples' War declared ceasefire unconditionally and expressed their interest on the talks with Government. Peoples War and Janashakthi parties announced their representatives. In this pretext, prominent personalities ABK Prasad (Eminent Editor of News Papers), V. Hanumantha Rao (Senior Journalist), Prof. K.R. Chowdary, M.T. Khan (Senior Civil rights activist) and Dr. Bhaskar Rao

(PEEM) have called various mass organisations, intellectuals and democrats of all walks of life to chalk out a common programme to make part the peoples issues and their solutions in dialogue process in addition to lift the ban on Naxalite parties and removal of "prize money" on the heads of Naxalite leaders. The people attended this meeting unanimously agreed upon the formation of "Peoples Assembly Organising Committee" and chalked out various programmes throughout the state. Mr. M.T. Khan, Akurathi Murali Krishna (A.P.B.C. Front), K. Vittal Raj (AIFTU), K. Parvathalu (DBRCS) and D. Punna Rao (AIPRF) were the convenors of the committee.

The People Assembly Organising Committee has decided to organise peoples assemblies on- Crisis in Agriculture Sector, Farmers Suicides, Peoples movements and State Repression, Imperialist Globalisation-World Bank Agreements- Peoples Lives, Land Reforms, Dalit issues, Women issues, Imperialist culture, Closure of Industries and labour Acts- Retrenchments, Commercialisation of Educations, Distribution of Water resources, Separate Telangana etc.

The aspirations of the people on various issues expressed in the Peoples Assemblies will be brought to the notice of both the Naxalite parties and the Government during the dialogue process and remind them to resolve these issues according to the wishes of people.

On 14 July 2004 a press conference was held and the programme of the Committee was announced.

The First Peoples Assembly

A day long "First Peoples Assembly" was organised on "the crisis in Agriculture and Suicides of Farmers" in Hyderabad on 24th July 2004 at Gandhi Bhavan. More than 500 people attended the Assembly including

farmers from various parts of the state.

A keynote paper on Agriculture Crisis and Peoples alternatives to resolve the issues was present by Prof. K.R. Chowdhary and discussed thoroughly. The aggregation of various problems like shortage of irrigation facilities, water resources, cut in subsidies by the government, steep increase in the agricultural inputs, fall of prices, high interest private loans, non-availability of continuous supply of electricity for agriculture, support to corporate agriculture and poor water management led to the crisis and as a result farmers has left with no way another than suicides.

Prof. Chakradhara Rao, Retd. Professor of economics, Osmania University explained in detail how lives of farmers were ruined due to the World Bank policies adopted by the previous Government led by Chandra Babu.

Many farmers spoke in the assembly and expressed their views to resolve their problems. They felt that - Government should come forward to rescue the farmers from the burden of private and government loans. As there were no agriculture yields for several years, the bank loan should scrape up immediately instead of imposing moratorium on loans. Seeds should be supplied at subsidised rate to cop up from the scarcity of input resources. As drought situation is prevailing in most parts of the state Government must supply "food for work" with out any irregularities. State should immediately take up the construction of various projects pending from last 30 years and should construct new projects on Krishna and Godavari rivers.

Praja Kala Mandali, Arunodaya and other cultural organisations have performed several cultural programmes on farmer's issues. Wide coverage of the programme by the medium has

drawn the attention of many people. At the end of the Assembly the farmers made a resolution.

Resolution

We, the farmers of Andhra Pradesh attending the first peoples assembly on "crisis in Agriculture and Suicides of Farmers" have made the following resolution:

We were deeply distressed at the suicides of our fellow farmers and express our sympathy to their kin and kith.

These suicides are not the deaths of our brothers due to personal problems, over ambition, mindless deaths or deaths just for compensation of the government as portrayed by the previous government led by Chandra Babu and some of the BJP leaders. We believe that these suicides are due to the imperialist policies adopted in the agriculture sector with the orders from World Bank by the Babu's Government. Hence the suicides are definitely the murders of Imperialist Globalisation.

The crisis in the Agriculture is aggregated because of implementation of WTO agreements and World Bank policies in addition to throwing the Fertilizers, Pesticides, insecticides, seeds and etc to the hands of Multi National Companies.

The Crisis is not due to failure of rains as said by the Governments. It is due to poor management of water resources and lack of irrigation projects.

Government have never tried to extend his full support to the farmers. There is cut in the agricultural subsidies and bank loans. Invariably the only alternate for the farmers is to go for high interest private loans, which burdened them and led to suicides.

We condemn the Government attitude of encouraging MNCs monopoly on seeds, pesticides and insecticides which in turn increased the fake pesticides and insecticides. Due to this malfunctioning farmers put to irrecoverable loss.

Electricity, main resource to agriculture was privatised and this led to hike in electricity charges, cut in power

supply, low voltage problems that made the crisis more intense.

Lift of restrictions to EXIOM policy, especially on agricultural products by the previous NDA govt. on the lines of WTO regime further ruined the lives of farmers.

We demand that at least looking at these drastic results India should quit WTO. We demand the govts. to follow self-sustained economy instead of World Bank dictated economy.

We demand the govt. to supply agricultural inputs at free of cost to the farmers. All the pending projects should be completed as early as possible.

Farmers of Andhra Pradesh are on the road of struggle for the last 10 years. Even we have lost lives to the bullets of police at "Kaldari" during the tenure of Chandra Babu. I stand on this path until we find genuine solutions to our long pending problems.

We call our brothers not to commit suicides, but to move in the direction to solve our problems collectively.

We hope that the on going "Talks" between Government (whose aim is people welfare) and the Naxalites parties (who waging struggle to resolve people's problems) would discuss our problems and find solution.



From page 27

in virtually every case of heinous crime, the responsibility for the crime also rests upon society. The penalty of death tries to shift the entire blame on to the criminal and society in turn forgets the lessons that need to be learnt. The myth that purging society of some aberrant individuals is the solution to crime needs to be shattered. Abolition of the death penalty is a first step in that direction.

We appeal to everybody to oppose this death sentence in every sphere of life to prevent the gross miscarriage of justice. Join rallies and write letters to the President of India and to the Governor of Bihar to commute the death penalty against the five landless peasants." (10th May, 2004) ❖

From page 21

POTA and Police remand follows. During this legal period of remand, the accused are subjected to third degree treatment and "confessions" extracted under the threat of fake "encounters". The fate of Sameer Khan Pathan is always a sufficient reminder for the hapless "terrorist" to resist giving a "confession". Thereafter the media does the rest of job. Hundreds of terrorists are thus created under POTA.

In the case at Sr. No. 5 listed in the Table-1, five muslim youth were shown to be arrested on 11th December, 2003 though they were detained for periods between 2 to 5 days prior to 11th December. This fact was brought to the notice of the POTA court who refused to grant police custody on 12th December, 2003 but sent the accused in Judicial custody. The State filed an Appeal before the High Court which passed an exparte order on 23rd December, 2003 granting police remand for ten days. The Police took the accused in custody on 24th December, 2003 and subjected them to third degree methods. The accused had thereafter moved the High Court again complaining about the third degree method and the Court on 30th December, 2003 after recording the statement of the public prosecutor permitted an advocate to meet the accused during the period of Police remand. The accused informed the their Advocate about the torture they were facing and later on complaints were made to the POTA Court which has recorded the same and sent the accused for medical examination after noting the injuries. This is one case, which was legally followed up exposing the modus operandii. The State of Gujarat therefore does not "misuse" POTA but actually uses POTA to create "Terrorist". Whether the stories spread around by the media about the "terrorist plan of the Jihadi terrorists" have terrorized the majority community, or not, the Muslim Community is totally terrorized by Police action. Strange are the ways of rule of law!

(Prepared by Dr. Mukul Sinha, 104 Maharana Pratap Complex, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-6.) ❖

Oppose Death Penalty To Landless & Poor Peasants of Bihar

All India Committee Against Death Penalty

The Supreme Court on 15 April 2002 confirmed death penalty to Krishna Mochi, Veer kuwar Paswan, Dharmendra Singh and Nanhe Lal Mochi, all poor peasants from Gaya district of Bihar. The four were convicted for the killings at Bara village in Gaya district in 1992 in which 35 men belonging to upper caste families were killed. In another case, the Supreme Court has confirmed death penalty on Shobhit Chamar, a dalit landless labourer from Bhabua district. He is also accused in the killing of upper caste landowner.

Who Are These People Condemned To Death?

Nanhe Lal Mochi and Krishna Mochi were semi-bonded dalit agricultural labourers who cultivated the fields of the Bara landowners. They were well known to the Bara landowners as those active in the peasant organisation and therefore their adversaries. They have spent 7 and 13 years respectively in jail till date, of which the last two years were spent in condemned cells in Bhagalpur jail. Veer Kuwar Paswan was a dalit resident of nearby Khutbar village who herded goats but due to serious indebtedness was forced to work as an attached labourer. He too was known as a participant in struggles for wages and land led by the local poor peasant organisation. Dharmendra Singh is Rajput by caste, educated till matric who tried to leave cultivation, but unable to obtain remunerative employment, came back to the village. The larger landowners of the village had meanwhile captured his land. He approached the court to regain control over his land, meeting expenses by taking loans. The court decided in his favour, but by then his financial state was miserable and Bara massacre had occurred. His opponent in the court case implicated him in the Bara case.

How Were The Charges Framed Against Them?

Immediately after the Bara incident, police started rounding up people from dalit hamlets who were known to have participated in land and wage struggles. The terror created by the landowners and police forced dalits from neighbouring villages to flee. Bhatbigha dalit tola of Bara village was completely deserted. The FIR was filed on the basis of an eyewitness account naming 35 people and 400-500 others. 115 people were arrested of whom 13 were later charged. This eyewitness was however not part of the witnesses produced in court. No Test Identification Parade was conducted to identify the accused.

The charges were filed under TADA, a law that the Parliament allowed to lapse in 1995, in the face of its rampant misuse, due to the arbitrary powers it gives to police officers, and since it violates all norms acceptable evidence and of a fair trial and. The numerous instances of killings of dalits by upper caste landlords never invited the provisions of TADA. No authorisation was taken for the application of TADA. Still the trial for the Bara killing was conducted under TADA after the lapsing of the law.

Two weeks after the Bara killings, police arrested Bihari Manjhi and two others from Bodh Gaya under another case. The Superintendent of Police was said to have recorded his confession that named many others as involved in the Bara killings. Such confessions are valid evidence under TADA. But in this case the SP did not record it but stated in court that he had assigned this job to an Inspector in his presence. The SP was unable to identify Bihari Manjhi in court. The Inspector turned out to be an accused in the murder of the nephew of Wakil Yadav, another accused in the Bara killings whose inclusion was based on the confession

of Bihari Manjhi!

Still this confession became the clinching evidence and the basis for conviction of 9 people by the TADA court – four to death, four to life imprisonment and one to 10 year imprisonment.

How this happened is again related to the way TADA operates wherein the accused were denied their right to bail and to a fair trial, but all the procedures in TADA meant as a check on the prosecution were conveniently flouted. An inspector was made the investigation officer (I.O.) when TADA requires that investigation be conducted by an officer of rank not lower than a DSP. The I.O. was changed midway. The second IO stated in court that most of the investigation was conducted by the first I.O., yet neither the first I.O. nor his case diary was presented before the court. TADA however ensured that the accused remained continuously in jail and were even denied appeal to the High Court, which is normally the court that can confirm a death sentence. In this way the accused were denied one level of appeal.

The case was heard by the Supreme Court against eight of the accused. One had already completed his 10 years and did not appeal. Four facing life imprisonment were acquitted. The court was divided in its opinion on the other four. Two judges awarded death penalty to the four while the third judge acquitted one and converted the sentence to life imprisonment for the other three. Bihari Manjhi, whose confession to the police became the basis for the conviction in the TADA court, was acquitted.

This time the reason for the conviction was identification of the accused by witnesses. But the witness accounts show serious discrepancies. Each witness was either unable to

identify the accused s/he had named, or denied they had ever named them, or named them for the first time in court, or wrongly identified the accused. In this game of matching names and faces, the faces that were randomly matched correctly got sentenced to death. So serious were the errors that one of the judges stated in the judgment that: "It is apparent that the investigation in the case is totally defective"; and again "it can be said without any doubt that almost all witnesses have exaggerated to a large extent".

But the conviction and sentencing failed to address the crucial facts that (i) the witnesses never said that these accused were involved in any specific violent act; (ii) that they held any weapon; and (iii) the police never recovered any weapon from them.

Why Did The Bara Killings Occur?

The structure of landholdings in rural Bihar that emerged after the land reforms, initiated by the government since the 1950s, left the lives of the poorest sections comprising dalits, landless and small peasants largely unaffected. They remained at the mercy of landlords for access to land, work, food and credit. Raising of any demands by this section led to swift and brutal attacks. Things began to change from the mid and late 1970s when organisations of this poorest section of the people started forming in the plains of central Bihar. By the mid eighties, different parties of the CPI (ML), MCC, CYSV and others emerged as the major organisers of the poor in rural Bihar. Successful struggles were waged for distribution of ceiling surplus lands, access to common lands and other resources, better wages; against feudal practices of forced labour, indebtedness and to stop sexual exploitation of women workers. The state at best remained a mute spectator, and in perceiving these struggles of the rural poor as a law and order problem, failed to even address the issues raised by the struggles.

By mid 1980s landowners started forming caste-based armies to reverse the gains achieved by the struggles of poor peasants. Bhoomi Sena, Kisan Sangh, Sunlight Sena, Sawaran

Liberation Front, Ranbir Sena are some of the more notorious ones. Their modus operandi was to create terror through organised massacres. They attacked dalit hamlets, setting them on fire, killing men, women and children, and destroying houses and goods. Police was either found conniving with these armies or at best was a spectator. Even the IG of Bihar police admitted in a policy document that the police was responsible for promoting the formation of these armies. But police repression on even peaceful rallies by the poor was growing. In 1986 at a mass rally at Arwal (Jehanabad) demanding distribution of a fourth of an acre of land for nine landless families police opened fire killing 23 people.

The Sawaran Liberation Front was the most brutal one till that time operating in Gaya, Jehanabad, Patna and Aurangabad. Its leaders, Ramadhar Singh 'Diamond', and Haridwar Singh became a target of the peasant movement. Bara village was a known hideout of these leaders. News of their presence in Bara village led to the Maoist Communist Centre organising an attack with hundreds of people on the upper caste village.

Why Should The Death Penalty Be Opposed?

The details of the present case make it amply clear that awarding of death penalty is unfair. When one judge acquits an accused and two judges award death penalty, the only conclusion one can draw is that the judgment of the court shows a high degree of subjectivity. In addition the flouting of procedures by the investigation, exaggerated and faulty witness accounts makes the conviction itself seriously suspect. One judge of the Supreme Court has even hinted at 'free fabrication of evidence'. Death sentence cannot be permitted in such a situation and the imposing of the irrevocable penalty can lead to serious miscarriage of justice.

The killings such as at Bara form the few exceptions in a long string of killings by upper caste landlord armies. But the killings by landlords have neither invited harsh punishments, let alone the death penalty. Most have not

even resulted in conviction. The state has never found them to be a fit case for the imposition of TADA. All this simply shows that "terrorism" is defined merely as a violent activity which challenges the existing power structure. And death penalty cannot be awarded when dalits are killed by landlords simply because such instances are the norm. Death penalty, like TADA and POTA, leads to arbitrariness in law and punishment and should be opposed.

Death penalty in our country is awarded only in the rarest of rare cases. This statement is as subjective as it can get. The fact is that only the poor and dalits or else those whose crimes are seen as threats to the state get this punishment. This is natural because such accused are normally unable to get access to competent lawyers. The subjective factors such as judicial authorities' lack of empathy with the lives of such accused makes the awarding of the extreme penalty more likely. Death penalty is therefore both subjective and biased.

The only argument presented in favour of death penalty, is that it deters people from crime. But evidence of this is singularly lacking. In the present case, no such claim can be made. Since the Bara massacre landlord armies have killed several hundred more persons and peasant organisations have retaliated in some cases. Crimes, both by the landlord armies and by the organisations of the poor are a reflection of the conditions of existence of the people and the role played by the state. Doing five people to death makes no difference to this living reality.

Crimes have a social, economic and in such cases, a political basis, which means that crime can only be reduced by addressing its root causes. Officially murdering five people disregarding this larger responsibility of society and state is brutal, and amounts simply to an act of vengeance by the state. Vengeance cannot be the basis of modern law, or a legitimate motivation of the state.

More apparently in this case, but *Continued in page 25.....*

All India Committee Against Death Penalty

Contacts: Tripta Wahi : 011 - 27667209; Ali Javed : 011 - 27662108; Surender Mohan : 011 - 22542801; Gautam Navlakha:9811153254; Gopal N. Guru : 011-27662410; Sunil : 9810117171; Arjun Prasad Singh : 011 - 27675001,aiprf@rediffmail.com

Chairperson:
Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer

Committee Members:

Justice (Rtd) Ajit Singh Bains,
Punjab & Haryana High Court
Justice (Rtd.) D K Basu,
Kolkata High Court
Justice (Rtd) Rajendar Sachchar,
Delhi High Court.
Justice (Rtd.) S. M. Daud,
Mumbai High Court
Justice (Rtd.) Suresh,
Mumbai High Court
Rabi Ray
Ex. Speaker, Lok Sabha
Jaipal Reddy
Member Parliament
Dr. Ashok Mitra
Ex. Finance Minister, W.B.
Gurusharan Singh,
Dramatist, Punjab
Prakash Ambedkar,
Pol. Activist, Maharashtra
Girish Patel,
Advocate, Gujarat
Surender Mohan
Ex. M.P.
Indira Jai Sing,
Advocate, Supreme Court
Arundhati Roy,
Writer, New Delhi
Asghar Ali Engineer,
Mumbai
Nandita Haksar,
Advocate, Supreme Court
Dr. K Balagopal,
Human Rights Forum, Hyd.
K G Kannabiran,
All India President, PUCL
Prashat Bhushan
Advocate, Supreme Court.
Varvara Rao,
Revolutionary Poet., AP
Nedumaran,
Peoples Rights Federation, T.N.
Vrinda Grover,
Advocate, Supreme Court
Dr. Tripta Wahi,
Hindu College, Delhi University
D. R. Chaudhary,
Ex. Chairman, HPSC, Haryana
Gaddar,
Revolutionary Balladeer, A.P
Gautam Navlakha,
Editorial Consultant, EPW
Arjun Prasad Singh,
Joint Secretary, AIPRF
Raj Kishor,
General Secretary SFPR
Prof. Gopal N. Guru
Professor, Delhi University
Prof. Ali Javed
HoD, Urdu Deptt. Delhi University
Prabhakar Sinha
Human Rights Activist, Bihar
Dr. Razi Ahmed,
Director, Gandhi Sangrahalay, Patna
...and Others

Mercy Appeal

To,
His Excellency,
President of India,
New Delhi

On 8/6/2001 the Session Judge cum Designated TADA Court of Gaya (Bihar) awarded death punishments to Veer Kuwar Paswan, Krishna Mochi, Dharu Singh @ Dharmendra Singh and Nanhe Lal Mochi, in the case related with Bara occurrence. In this incident members and supporters of a notorious private army Swarn Liberation Front (SLF) were killed by a crowd of hundreds of people. The feudal army had organised heinous massacres in Sawan Bigha (Jehanabad), Rampurchai (Jehanabad), Mein Barsimha (Gaya) and other places, killing several dozens of dalits and oppressed people. Since the Bihar Police directly or indirectly supported the landlord army, the affected people took their own course of action, and the result was the Bara incident, in which more than two dozen supporters of SLF were killed.

In another case of Durgawati (Bhabhua district, Bihar) Shobhit Chamar was awarded death sentence by the District and Session Judge of Rohtas on 23/2/1996.

The Supreme Court has confirmed the death sentences of Shobhit Chamar and the four convicts of Bara Case. The process of issuing Black Warrants to hang those five landless, poor and dalit people till death is on. So, they are terribly waiting for the gallows for months on end. Altogether, about 50 convicts awarded with the death penalty are languishing in Bhagalpur Central Jail of Bihar. Almost all of them belong to socially oppressed community. They may get the same confirmations from the Supreme Court of India. Similar reports are available from many States, like A P, Tamilnadu, Punjab, Delhi, Gujarat, M. P. and J.&K.

The awarding of death sentences by Trial Courts and the confirmation of this severe and 'rarest of the rare' punishment by the Supreme Court clearly appear to be a serious miscarriage of justice to the downtrodden people of India, specially in Bihar-Jharkhand, where around 200 gruesome massacres, killing more than 1000 oppressed and struggling people, were organised by private armies like Swarn Liberation Front, Sunlight Sena and Ranvir Sena. Ironically, none of the killers of these private armies, which are run by upper caste landlords, got death punishment from any court in Bihar and Jharkhand. Several cases of massacres were not being tried even. The notorious Brahmeshwer Singh, head of the Ranvir Sena, which organised about 4 dozen massacres of oppressed people, including 58 people in Lakshmanpur Bathe, was a candidate for Ara Loksabha constituency. Ramadhar Singh @ Diamond, the head of Swarn Liberation Front, and other leaders of private armies are also enjoying political patronage from different parties. In most of the cases of massacres they got acquittal from courts. In some cases, these bloody assassins were given ordinary punishments, like jail custody for some years. Many of them came out on bail and again took very active part in organising massacres of dalits and poor people.

But it is a matter of deep concern that the Indian judiciary is awarding death punishments to dalits, backwards, oppressed and minorities even without fulfilling the legal and judicial process of judgement. In the case of Bara such lacunae are very much apparent. Let us see some of the glaring facts of this case and about its trial process.

1. Bara incident (occurred on 12th Feb, 1992) was a retaliatory mass action, in which more than 1000 people took part. In this situation, it was impossible to locate the actual killers.

2. According to the Police Diary of this case, Tekari Police Station incharge got the news of Bara incident by 9 pm but the police reached the spot of occurrence at 1.00 am (after 4 hours). They first met Shrawan Kumar, whose hands were tied. They also noted down his statement as FIR. But later on, this FIR was burnt and another version was made in the name of Satyendra Kumar Sharma to implicate many people, not involved in the incident. But this new informant never turned up in the court to verify his report.

3. The police started to write down the diary of this case since 13/2/1992 and they completed 222 paragraphs up till 23/2/1992. But they did not mention the name of any independent witness. In search of some witness, they raided the house of Ravindra Singh, village Gafa in the night of 17/2/1992. That night Bihari Manjhi was also sleeping there. Both were arrested and made non-FIR accused of Bara Case. The 'Confessional Statement' of Bihari Manjhi was recorded and placed as the main evidence of this case before the Trial Court.

4. During the trial, the prosecution examined 34 witnesses but none of them stated that accused were armed with any deadly weapons. No witness stated that any of the accused took part in the murder of any of the deceased. There were no recovery of arms or any incriminating article from any of the accused. Again none of the witnesses stated that accused were the members of any extremist organisation.

5. The Bara case was tried under TADA Act. According to the provision of TADA the authorised District Magistrate or First Class Magistrate of same stature should take up the whole process of the trial of the case and write down the Judgement. But case was tried by Smt. Shakuntla Sinha (1st Class Magistrate) and the Judgement was given by Jawahar Lal Chaudhry (1st Class Magistrate). He had been brought from Bhagalpur Court for this purpose only.

6. Under the provision of TADA, only the SP is authorised to register the Confessional Statement of the accused in his own hand writing. But the Confessional Statement of Bihari Manjhi was recorded by a Sub-inspector. According to the provision this statement was to be sent as soon as possible to the Chief Judicial Magistrate. But it was not done so for 5 years. After 5 years it was directly sent to the Special TADA Court with a certifying note of the SP of Gaya.

7. The Confessional Statement, which was made the main basis of the Judgement, has been recorded in 10 pages altogether. Only 5 pages have the signatures of Bihari Manjhi, even which were denied by him in the Trial Court. The Trial Court did not order to verify the signatures by experts. The S.P. of Gaya District sat for hours before Bihari Manjhi for taking his Confessional Statement but he failed to recognise him in the trial Court.

8. The Supreme Court has given an instruction in the case-Kartar Singh vs. the State of Punjab that investigation charge of a TADA case should be handed over to a DSP rank officer. But in the case of Bara incident, this charge was orally handed over to an officer of Inspector rank, namely Ram Japit Kumar. He conducted the entire investigation of this case, but his case diary was not brought before the court. He was not even examined by the prosecution.

9. The Supreme Court has confirmed the punishment of death sentences in Bara Case by a majority of 2:1. Justice M.B. Shah differing from the majority view has taken into account many of the above mentioned facts. He questioned the awarding of death sentences on the basis of the "quality of evidence" of a single public witness No.21. He noted down that the investigation of this case was totally defective. So, he did not find this case fit for death punishment.

With the above facts, no one having impartial thinking and wisdom would agree with the order of the confirmation of death punishments to five oppressed people of Bihar by the highest court of Indian Judiciary. If they are hanged, it will add a new dimension in the functioning of Indian judiciary.

Therefore, we request you to commute the death sentences of five landless, poor and dalit peasants of Bihar to life imprisonment. We also request you to stay the execution of Black Warrants of the above five prisoners condemned to death till the disposal of their Mercy Petition.

Signed by: 1. Surendra Mohan, 2. Gautam Navlakha, 3. Dr. Tripta Wahi, 4. Prof. Ali Javed, 5. Sunil, 6. Arjun Prasad Singh.

New Delhi,
28.5.2004

Enclosed:

1. Life sketches of five persons facing death sentence.
2. List of massacres of oppressed people in Bihar.
3. Photocopy of Mercy Petition sent by the victims from Bhagalpur Jail.

Convention Against Death Penalty to five Peasants of Bihar

A.P.Singh

In Delhi some democratic organisations and intellectuals took up the initiative to build an all India forum against death penalty, especially in defence of the five peasants of Bihar. Democratic organisations and individuals were contacted all over India. Finally, in the month of April, about 170 noted personalities, including Justice (Retd.) V R Krishna Iyer, Justice (Retd.) Ajit Singh Bains, Justice (Retd. DK Basu, Justice (Retd.) Rajinder Sachar, Justice (Retd.) SM Daud, Justice (Retd.) Suresh, Rabi Ray, Jaipal Reddy, Dr. Ashok Mitra, Gurusharan Singh, Prakash Ambedkar, Girish Patel, Surendra Mohan, Arundhati Roy, Nandita Haksar, Dr. K Balagopal, KG Kannabiran, Harish Dhawan, Prashant Bhushan, Gautam Navlakha, Indira Jai Singh, Varvara Rao, Nedumaran, Asghar Ali Engineer, Prof. Ali Javed, Dr. Tripta Wahi, Prabhakar Sinha and Dr. Razi Ahmad agreed to join the forum. All India Committee against Death Penalty was formed with the Chairmanship of Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer. A working Committee with 7 members was constituted to execute the task of organizing an all India Convention in Delhi and making the death penalty of five peasants of Bihar into an all India issue.

The working Committee fixed up the date of 21st May 2004, to organise the convention in the Constitution Club, Delhi. It issued leaflets and posters in English and Hindi along with invitations throughout India. There was a good response from several states. So, on 21st May about 250 legal experts, human rights activists, intellectuals and social activists from Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, UP, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and other states assembled in the Constitution Club at Delhi.

The convention was divided into two sessions. The first session started with the enthusiastic song sung by

Amitabh (Abhivyakti, Bihar)—“Ye Ganga Behti Hai Qyoon”. Then on behalf of the working committee Dr. Tripta Wahi welcomed the participants. This session was chaired by Surendra Mohan and convened by Ali Javed. This session discussed social conflicts in Bihar and the biased attitude of the judiciary in awarding death penalties. Bara case was the central focus around which discussion was held. At first, Adv. S.N. Bhattacharya from Jharkhand, who had fought the case battle in defense of the peasants, presented in length the socio economic condition of Bihar and Jharkhand. While elaborating on the Bara Case, he projected it as another sort of class struggle, waged by the ruling classes against the oppressed people of Bihar.

Afterwards, Adv. Nandita Haksar of the Supreme Court, stressed that the death penalty to four Bara accused had been confirmed by the Supreme Court with a majority of 2:1. The minority judgment has pointed out that the evidence was “fabricated”. So the case of these peasants should be championed in a resolute and determined way. But, she questioned the arguments in favour of the abolition of death penalty. She categorically said that we should not oppose death penalty to George Bush, Narendra Modi and Dara Singh.

Deepika Tandon of PUDR, assertively placed the opposite view. She said that death penalty cannot be used as a deterrent to crimes. Socio-economic and political system is responsible for criminal activities. So, without changing the system, we cannot check crimes in society. She demanded the commutation of death penalty although she was critical of the retaliatory action in Bara.

Rajkishor, the General Secretary of SFPR explained the socio-economic conditions of Bihar. He said that landless-poor peasants were fighting for land, wage, dignity and against

social oppression by landlord armies and state police. They had no choice but to organise retaliatory action like Bara incident. The judiciary is not punishing the private armies, but is awarding death punishments to the fighting poor peasants of Bihar.

D. Prempati, one of the known social activists of Delhi stressed the need of strong people’s movements against the death punishments to Bihar peasants. Animesh Das of IFTU expressed the solidarity of his organisation to the ongoing movement against death penalty of Bihar peasants. O. K. Yadav of Samajik Nayaya Morcha said that we should not call the Bihar peasants facing death penalty as dalits. Chhote Lal of Fansi Virodhi Morcha, Delhi said that resolute and continuous fight was needed to force the government to commute the death sentences of these poor peasants. Anand Swaroop Verma, a veteran journalist also spoke against the biased role of Indian judiciary and demanded the commutation of death penalty of five peasants. Surender Mohan very briefly concluded this session

The second session was introduced by Subhash Gatade, the editor of Sandhan. It was chaired by Justice Ajit Singh Bains and convened by Dr. Tripta Wahi. In this session, sharp discussion took place on the provision of death penalty. Most of the speakers spoke against the capital punishment stressing that it can never be a deterrent and the socio-economic conditions must be changed to stop crimes and violence.

Dr. Ashok Mitra, the ex-finance minister of West Bengal, stressed that states which allows violence against the downtrodden should it self be hanged. As long as the unjust system continues, it will continue to hang the innocent and the poor. The only recourse left for the people is to struggle against such punishment every time.

Nitya Ramakrishnan, an advocate in the Supreme Court, pointed out some of the serious loopholes of Bara case and strongly advocated that this was not a fit case for capital punishment.

Justice Rajinder Sachar declared that he had always been against death penalty, which he called inhuman and brutal.

Arjun Prasad Singh of AIRPF explained the specific situation of Bihar, where about 200 massacres have been organised by private armies. About 1000 downtrodden people killed in these massacres, but none of the killers has been given capital punishment. But the Indian judiciary is awarding death penalties to the landless and poor peasants which must be opposed tooth and nail.

Triveni Singh, the convener of Fansi Virodhi Manch, Bihar-Jharkhand, totally opposed the provisions of death penalty and demanded to scrap them as soon as possible. Some other speakers such as Anandi Das, (ex-MP from Orissa), Hari Singh Tarq (AFDR, Punjab), Ashok Mathur (Rajasthan), Shiv Mangal Sidhantkar (Peoples Front), Dr. Manoranjan Mohanty and Thomas Mathew (Samajik Nayaya Morcha), also put their views in the convention. They all demanded the commutation of the death penalty of the peasants of Bihar.

In his presidential speech, Justice Ajit Singh Bains said that there is a provision to award death penalty in the rarest of the rare cases and Bara is not a fit case for that. The Trial Court and also the Supreme Court have failed to provide justice to the poor people implicated in the case. He called up all the democratic minded people to organise struggle against these punishments.

During the convention, two resolutions were also passed—one against the death punishments to the five Bihar peasants of Bihar and the other against the punishment of death penalty itself.

The convention also resolved to struggle for the commutation of the death punishments to the five Bihar peasants and for the abolition of death penalty, the last vestige of bodily torture, from the system of justice.

The convention was to be chaired by Justice V R Krishna Iyer, but he could not come due to his ill health. He sent a written message opposing death penalty. His message was read out at the beginning of the convention. Prof. Rajni Kothari and Gautam Navlakha were also to chair and convene but they also could not attend due to some health reasons.

Overall, the convention was a grand success and it gave a clarion call against the death penalty as a whole. After the convention it was planned to meet a delegation to the President of India on the next very day. But the President was busy in the making of the new NPA government, so it was not possible to get the appointment. The office of the President gave the appointment for 28th May. A delegation consisting of Surender Mohan, Gautam Navlakha, Dr. Tripta Wahi, Prof. Ali Javed, Arjun Pd. Singh and Sunil went to meet the president and submitted a memorandum, demanding the commutation of the death penalties of the five peasants.

Another delegation, including Justice Rajender Sachar, Surender Mohan, Gautam Navlakha, G.N.Saibaba, Dr. Tripta Wahi, Sunil and Arjun Prasad Singh met the Home Minister of India on 9th September, 2004. It has planned to organise meetings in Delhi University and JNU, a Protest March to the Prime Minister of India and to continue the signature campaign all over the country. It has also decided to attend the protest programs being organised in Patna and other places.

Thus, the struggle against death penalty is gaining momentum day by day. The same tempo must continue till the President of India is convinced to commute the death punishment given to five peasants of Bihar.

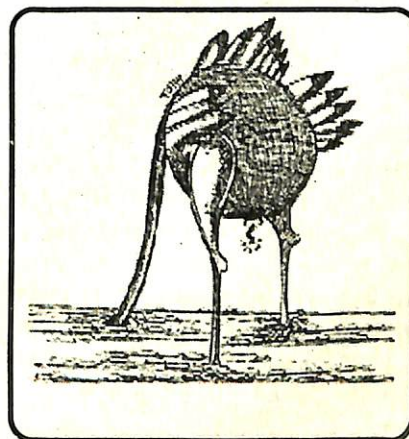
From page 32

The Dhanbad District administration and especially the police officials had tried their best to create fear among the people by propagating that some "terrorist forces" were coming to the town. The Supdt. Of Police tried to terrorise the people and the participants from the local areas declaring that heavy combing operation was underway to nab the "terrorists", who were trying to come to the rally. SP's misleading statement came under severe criticism from the organizers of the programme and about 40 intellectuals of the Dhanbad town.

The Dhanbad town had been well decorated with hundreds of flags and banners. About a dozen big gates had also been built. Several thousand posters were pasted on the walls of the town. About 60 to 80 volunteers worked hard for 15 days to make this program a grand success. Three cultural teams from Punjab, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh organised 100 cultural performances in the town and nearby places. These cultural performances got very enthusiastic response from the masses of Dhanbad and nearby areas.

Thus, the united Jan Garjana Rally & Mass Meeting in Dhanbad was able to give an energetic and united call to fight against the UPA government of the oppressive and exploitative ruling classes and the system as a whole.

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JAN GARJANA PREVAILS OVER GHAN GARJANA

Mukti Prakash

12th July 2004. It was a cloudy sky. About 10 thousand people with colourful banners, flags and placards converged at 2.30 p.m. in the Shahid Bhagat Singh Maidan (Golf Ground) at Dhanbad, the famous Coal Town of Jharkhand. They were thundering more powerfully than the clouds above. The cultural troops from Bihar, Jharkhand, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh, armed with red flags, bows and arrows, dafalees and other musical instruments were singing and dancing - an attractive scene that caught the attention of the eye at the very first glance. Even the policemen, who were specially deputed for tight vigilance got attracted towards these cultural warriors. The rally was organised jointly by three democratic organisations, namely, Struggling Forum for People's Resistance (SFPR), All India Peoples Resistance Forum (AIPRF) and Forum for Peoples Resistance (FPR). The people had reached there through a well organised procession.

After a short while the people began to take their seat on the ground to listen to the speakers from various parts of the country. The cultural troops moved to the green room, built behind the dais. Soon after, the cultural program was started. The thick clouds over the sky began to melt. One of the leading members of the organizing committee Arjun Pd. Singh (AIPRF) gave the welcome speech in brief and called upon the presidium to take their seats. As soon as the presidium took their seats, heavy rain started lashing the ground and it was filled with water in a short time. It seemed that the heavy rains would force the people to leave the venue without completing the mass meeting. Many of them had already begun to take shelter in the Buses and buildings in and around the ground.

But soon the situation began to change, when one of the members of the presidium, Darshan Pal began to

sing his favourite song - 'Mashalein le kar chalna, jab tak raat baaki hai...' At this juncture Amitabh, Executive Committee member of All India League of Revolutionary Culture (AILRC), began to persuade the people to come back and brave the torrents. Soon the speakers began thundering speeches to submerge the thunder of the clouds. They had continued for one hour in this way and finally the 'Jan Garjana' prevailed over the 'Ghan Garjana.'

The Jan Garjana Rally and mass meeting was organised against Common Minimum Program (CMP) of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, Hindutva fascist forces, POTA, ban on the CPI (ML) Peoples War, MCCI and the Death Penalty to 5 Peasants of Bihar. So, the speakers centered the above issues in their speeches.

The chief speaker of the meeting Hai Singh Tarq (president of AFDR, Punjab) said that even after 56 years of independence 70% of the population is facing hunger and scarcity. The CMP is nothing but the continuation of the same policy of liberalization and globalisation. He further said that POTA is not against terrorists but against the fighting people of India. The Indian state is itself terrorist. He also condemned the death penalty given to five peasants of Bihar and demanded its repeal as soon as possible. He called upon the masses to organise and fight for changing the repressive system.

The well known Marxist thinker of West Bengal, Aseem Chatterjee, said that the current UPA government is following the same pro-imperialist policies of the NDA government, of course, with a 'human face'. He criticized the biased judgments of TADA and Supreme Court regarding the death penalties to peasants and demanded immediate repeal of the punishments. He called upon the revolutionary peasants and workers to

revolt against the exploitative system.

Tara Singh (Convener of the South Asia chapter of World Peoples Resistance Movement) said the US is the most terrorist state of the world, which dropped atom bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and which occupied Afghanistan and Iraq in recent days. He regarded BJP and other Hindutva forces, who have organised genocide in Gujarat as the most terrorist outfit of the country. But the Indian State is imposing POTA on CPI ML (PW), MCCI and other revolutionary organisations and awarding death penalties to the struggling peasants of Bihar.

Sukhwinder Kaur (General Secretary of Aurat Mukti Manch, Punjab) said that the Indian State does not have positive outlook towards women. During State repression, the women especially become the main target of physical and mental attacks. She called upon the women community to unite and fight against all types of oppression and suppression.

Rajkishor (Gen. Sec., SFPR), Darshan Pal (President, AIPRF), S.N. Bhattacharya (Adv. Dhanbad Court), Jeetan Marandi (Jan Pratirodh Sangharash Manch), R.C. Prasad (convener, AIPRF, Bihar-Jharkhand), Venkateshwar (FPR, A.P.) also put forth their views in brief before the audience who remained in the stadium despite heavy rain.

Overall, the rally and the mass meeting created a deep impact upon the masses present there. The *julus*, which was made quite impressive by singing and dancing cultural activists, attracted the general public. It was perhaps the first chance that the people of Dhanbad were seeing such a huge, disciplined, colourful and impressive procession of democratic and revolutionary forces.

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AIPRF Activities

**Uttar Pradesh: Aligarh,
20th March: Anti-imperialist
Day**

To implement the call of MR 2004, ILPS and some other international forums, the AIPRF organised a Convention And Protest March in Aligarh. THE convention was held in Malviya Pustakalaya and it was attended by more than sixty progressive and democratic people, including some intellectuals. As a chief speaker Y N Mishra (Advocate of Allahabad High Court and UP Convener of Indian Association of People's Lawyers) said: " Now it is exposed before the world people that the main aim of US attack on Iraq was to have a control over the sources of Petroleum and natural gas." The coordinator of the programme Ashok Prakash (AIPRF) stressed that it was necessary to boycott foreign goods, specially made by US MNCs, to expose the 'imperialist exploitation which is increasing day by day. The convention was also addressed by Rajesh Pratap, Pushpendra, Kuka Sharma, Suresh Chandra, and others. They all condemned the occupation of Iraq by US and other imperialist forces and demanded the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Iraq.

After the convention, a protest march was also organised on the GT Road. It went upto Kathpula Chowk, where the effigy of imperialism and the US flag were burnt. Protesters also distributed a leaflet among the people.

Martyr's Day Celebrated

Martyr's Day of Bhagat Singh-Rajguru-Sukhdev was celebrated in the form of a meeting in front of the DM office, Aligarh. The meeting was presided by BM Naagar and addressed by Ashok Prakash, Adv. Osman Sharles,

Rahman Siddiqi, Adv. FM Khan and others. They remembered the heroic sacrifice of the three martyrs with deep respect and gave a call to complete their unfinished task of Indian revolution. On the occasion, a poster exhibition was organised and a leaflet distributed.

Demonstration Before DM

On 24th July AIPRF organised a protest demonstration before the DM office of Aligarh against sending helpers to US and other occupying forces in Iraq. It started from Ambedkar Park and went up to DM office. A memorandum was submitted to the DM, to be forwarded to the President of India demanding to bring back all the Indians working in Iraq, and to stop helping any kind of war activity of US and other imperialist forces. The demonstrators burned the US flag and made speeches condemning the US occupation of Iraq.

Convention and Protest March Against Globalisation

On 14th and 15th September, 2004, about a dozen progressive and democratic organisations including Inquilabi Chatra Morcha, PSU, AIPRF, Jan Mukti Morcha, Bhagat Singh Vichar Manch, IAPL, Bhoomiheen Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, Bharat Noujavan Sabha, Sanchiya and others, jointly organised a convention and protest March against imperialist globalisation. The venue was Shahid Asfaq Ulla Hall (Students Union Hall), Allahabad. It was attended by more than 300 delegates.

The subject matter of the first session was 'The Impact of Globalisation on Education and Unemployment'. It was introduced by Aseem Satyadev, a lecturer of Devariya College. The chief speaker of the session was Prof., Arun Kumar, Department of Economics, JNU Delhi. He spoke at length about

the privatisation and commercialisation of Indian education and its unfavourable impact on employment. Some other speakers including Dr. Sandhya, from Parivartankami Mahila Manch also spoke on the subject. The session was well attended by general students of Allahabad University. It was presided over by a five-men presidium consisting KK Tripathi (AIPRF), Vishwa Vijay (ICM) and others.

In the second session, the subject was 'The Impact of Globalisation on Agriculture and Industry'. The subject was introduced by Adv., Kamal Singh of Kisan Mazdoor Sangatan. The chief speaker of this session was Kripa Shankar Chaube, the renowned economist of Allahabad. He spoke in detail about the imperialist plunder of Indian agriculture. Arjun Prasad Singh of AIPRF spoke on the impact of globalisation on Indian industry. The representatives of BKSS, Bhartiya Kol Adivasi Uthan Samiti and other organisations also put their views in this session.

The next day an impressive Protest March was organised from the venue of the convention. It went up to Subhash Chowk and turned into a street corner meeting. It was presided over by Babu Ram Vishwakarma, the convener of Bhagat Singh Vichar Manch and addressed by Prashant (PSU) and others.

At the end of the programme, the effigy of Bush was to be burnt at the Subhash Chowk. But the police snatched the effigy, so the task was not fulfilled. This pro imperialist action of the Allahabad police was severely criticised by the organisers.

During the two days programme, cultural organisation like Darpan (Azamgarh), Sanchia (Allahabad) and others perform drama, songs and other activities creating good impacts upon the participants. The convention hall was well decorated with colourful posters.

Convention on Dalit and Minority Question

About a dozen progressive and democratic organisations including AIPRF, Sampradaikta Virodhi Manch, Bahujan Vam Shakti, Hindustani Akliyat Council, Lord Budha Club and others organised a convention on 19th September at Aligarh. The subject of the convention was Conditions of Dalits and Minorities after 1947. It was attended by more than 300 people from different walks of life. Many eminent speakers such as Dr. Darshan Pal of AIPRF, Tej Singh, the editor of Apeksha, Prof., Javed from Bareilly. Dr. Rajaram of Bahujan Vam Shakti Kamal Singh from Kisan Mazdoor Sanghatan and others put their views on the repression of the Dalits and minorities, especially after the new phase of imperialist globalisation. Ashok Prakash, the convener of Aligarh unit of AIPRF conducted the convention.

West Bengal: Kolkata

Campaign Against Death Penalty Surging Ahead

In Kolkata a 'Committee Against Death Penalty' was formed with several known intellectuals and social workers on the joint initiative of AIPRF and SFPR. The committee organised a big and impressive convention on 29 March, 2004 in the College Squire Hall, which was attended by more than one thousand people. After a long gap, different types of political people, including Dr. Ashok Mitra and some of the leaders and workers of the 'left front' took part in the program.

Dharna for Prisoners Release

On 31 August 2004, Bandi Mukti Committee of West Bengal organised a Dharna against on going state repression on political prisoners. It was attended by more than one hundred people. A small meeting was also organised at the Dharna place, which was addressed by Ashim Chatterjee, Niranjana Basu, Shewal Mitra, Kartik Pal and others. They

demanded immediate halt on state repression and the release of all political prisoners.

Bihar:

Marx Birth Day Celebrated

Marx birthday was celebrated by organizing a convention on 5th May 2004 in Arvind Mahilla College, Patna, under a joint banner of Marks Jayanti Samroh Samiti. Delegates of AIPRF, MCPI, SFPR, Communist Center for Scientific Socialism, CPI (M-L) and some other organizations took part in the convention. In this programme a paper, elaborating the economic, political and philosophical ideas of Marx was presented. Speakers of different organizations stressed the importance of Marxism in the contemporary world. They strongly felt the need of running a regular study centre so that to have a better understanding of Marxism.

Fake Power Transfer in Iraq Exposed

Jan Abhiyan, Bihar- a joint forum of democratic and revolutionary forces organized a convention at Gandhi Sangrahalaya, Patna on 19th July, 2004 against the fake power transfer in Iraq by the US imperialists. It was attended by the delegates of the participating organizations, including AIPRF and others. It was addressed by more than a dozen speakers. The so-called transfer of power in Iraq was termed as an eyewash. The convention demanded the immediate withdrawal of US and other foreign occupying forces from Iraq.

After the convention a Protest March against the occupation was held from Gandhi Sangrahalaya to Patna junction.

Protest March against CMP and State Repression

The Beguserai Town unit of AIPRF organized a protest march on 9th August 2004 (Kranti Divas) against Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and the growing state repression on revolutionary

and democratic movements. It was attended by more than 600 agricultural labourers and peasants of several villages along with the several activists of Beguserai town. The protest march started from Railway Mal Godown and covered a distance of 5 km, passing through Power House Road, Main Market, Stadium Road, Kachehri Road and Railway station Road. It again returned the starting place and converted into a mass meeting. It was addressed by RC Prasad (Convener of AIPRF Bihar-Jharkhand), Manoj Kumar (State Committee of AIPRF), Prem Kumar Azad (Beguserai Town Committee member) and Ganga Ram (MKSP leader). It was presided over by Mohindra Prabhat, the Convener of the Beguserai unit of AIPRF. During the mass meeting cultural programmes were also presented.

The speakers said that CMP was nothing but the continuation of the same pro-imperialist policy of the central Govt. They condemned state repression going on the democratic and revolutionary movements. They demanded to repeal the death penalty given to 5 landless-poor peasants Bihar.

Convention against Death Penalty

Fansi Virodhi Manch, Bihar-Jharkhand organized a convention against the confirmation of the death penalty of 5 landless-poor-peasants of Bihar by the Supreme Court, on 16th May 2004 at Patna. It was attended by many known intellectuals and social workers such as Razi Ahmed, Viswajeet Sen, Rajkishor Tirveni Singh, Bhupindra Kumar, Nand Kishore, Manoj Kumar, Amitab, and others. They all demanded the repeal of the death penalty, awarded to 5 Peasants of Bihar.

Protest Dharna Against Police Atrocities

Bihar police have once again increased upon the poor and struggling people of the state. It

opened fire upon the demonstrators at Pathepur bloc (Vaisali district), demanding flood relief on 4th August 2004. In this unwarranted police action one boy Mantu Kumar (14 years) was killed and some others were injured. On 16th August, the police opened fire at Ujan village (Darvenga district), on the people taking part in a road block programme. They were also demanding proper relief for flood affected people of the area. In this firing Shyamsundar Kamat (30 years) and Babloo Kamat (10 years) were killed. On 18th August, the in charge of Varisnagar police station injured Subelal Mahatu and Ram Pravesh Rai firing with his police revolver. They had gone to the police station to register a case of kidnapping and murder.

Similarly the Mongyr police arrested one Prasadji Sharma without any proper reason from his village. The villagers got very angry and rescued him forcefully from the police. Then police registered a case including several dozen villagers. Protesting this false case, Bhagat Singh Memorial Students Club and Sangrami Mahila Samiti organised a road block programme near Nauwagardi village. Police came in huge numbers and attacked the struggling people with lathi and tear gas shells. It also resorted to firing in the air. But the people gave stiff resistance and police had to return without getting success in lifting the road block.

The police then planned to 'teach a lesson' to the struggling masses. In the night they attacked four villages including Nauwagardi like a private feudal army. They broke into the houses and looted the properties of the households. Several dozen villagers including children, women and old persons were severely beaten. About a dozen of them were arrested and sent to jail. The police organised many raids in villages to arrest the activists of student and women organisations. They harassed their family members too.

Protesting against all these police atrocities, Dhaman Virodhi Morch, Bihar organised a Dharna at Patna Junction roundabout. It was attended by the activist and leaders of several democratic and revolutionary organisations. At the Dharna place, a small meeting was organised which was presided over by Bhuvaneshwar Prasad Singh, the convenor of the Morcha. It was addressed by R.C. Prasad (Convenor of Bihar-Jharkhand AIPRF state committee), Nand Kishor Singh (CPI -ML), Satish (CCI), Ravi (Convenor of Patna unit of AIPRF), Santyindra Singh (Convenor of Apradh Virodhi Manch) and others. They all demanded immediate half of police repression and release of all arrested people of Nauwagardi and other villages. They also demanded severe punishment to the police forces, responsible for firing and atrocities.

Convention and Protest March against Capital Punishment

Fansi Virodhi Manch, Bihar-Jharkhand a convention and protest march on 28th August against the Capital Punishment given to five landless dalit peasants of Bihar, namely, Krishna Mochi, Nanhe Lal Mochi, Veer Kuwar Paswan and Dharu Singh (all in Bara case) and Sobit Chamar (in Durgavati case). The convention was organised in IMA hall, Patna, which was attended by more than 300 delegates of different organisations and some of the known intellectuals of the city. It was presided over by Dr. Razi Ahmed (Director, Gandhi Sangrahalay), Raj Kishor (Gen., Secy., of SFPR), A.P. Singh (Joint Secretary of AIPRF), Lakhan Prasad (Gen., Secretary, Gramin Mazdoor Union), R.C. Prasad (Convenor, Bihar-Jharkhand Committee, AIPRF), Vasanti (Nari Mukti Sangh) and Triveni Singh (Convenor of Fansi Virodhi Manch, Bihar-Jharkhand).

Triveni Singh placed a written paper before the delegates exposing the legal lacunas in the order of

awarding death penalty to the four accused of Bara case by the TADA court and also in the confirmation order of the Supreme Court. It gave strong argument against the capital punishment as a whole. After that, Dr. Razi Ahmed also argued against the provisions of death penalty in different Acts of the country. He furthered said that a peaceful and equitable society can not be built by using violent means.

Speaking on behalf of the Working Committee of the All India Committee against Death Penalty, Arjun Prasad Singh gave information about the protest programmes being organised in different parts of the country including the capital, Delhi. He appealed the delegates and the people of Bihar to organise stiff resistance against the death punishment awarded to agricultural labourers and poor peasants of Bihar.

The leader of All India Progressive Women Association, Prof., Bharati. S. Kumar supported the call of united struggle against the death punishments to five peasants. But she did not like to compare the case of Dhananjay with the five peasants of Bihar. She also suggested to take up the other cases of TADA in which several mass leaders of CPI -ML (Liberation) have been given life imprisonment.

A freelance journalist and human rights activist, Prabhat Kumar Shandilya said that there was hundred percent reservation for Dalit, minorities and OBCs in getting capital punishment - while the murderers of feudal armies are either being acquitted or getting nominal punishments. So he strongly argued to abolish the provisions of capital punishment.

CPI -ML leader, Nanda Kishor Singh opposed the death penalty given to poor peasants of Bihar. But he questioned the demand for the abolition of death penalty from Indian Acts. Lakhan Prasad criticised the biased role of Indian judiciary in granting death penalty

and gave a call to overthrow the exploitative and repressive system.

NAPM leader, Vijay Kumar also spoke against repressive role of Indian state and demanded the repeal of the order of death punishment given to Bihar peasants.

The General Secretary of Bihar PUCL, Kishori Das said that PUCL is not only against the death penalty of the five peasants of Bihar but also against the provisions of death penalty as a whole. The leader of CPI-ML (New Democracy), Prakash Das severely criticised the order of granting death penalty to the poor peasants, but said that he was not against awarding death penalties to Narendra Modi and Bush-Blair like butchers.

Raj Kishor of SFPR gave the details of Bara case and its unfair trail and demanded the immediate release of the four accused of this case who are waiting for the gallows in Bhagalpur Centrail Jail. R.C. Prasad of AIPRF said that unless the repressive state machinery is smashed, the struggling and downtrodden people will continue to get such severe punishment. So there is an urgent need to accelerate the process of overthrowing the repressive system.

Ramadhar Singh (KBS, Bihar), Satish (CCI), Narendra (CCSS), R.K. Verma (Lok Chetna Manch), Ashwini (AISYU), Indradev (AIDSU), Akhtar Hussain (Social

Activist) and others also address the convention.

The Bal cultural team of Krantikari Sanskritik Sangh performed dance with revolutionary songs before and during the convention which was well appreciated by the delegates.

At the end of the convention, a resolution was passed demanding the repeal of death penalty to the five peasants of Bihar and also all the actions taken in Bihar-Jharkhand under TADA and POTA.

After the convention an attractive protest march was also organised from the campus of IMA hall. It went up to Patna Junction passing through main roads. All the protesters raised loudly slogans against the death penalty and state repression.

Convention Against Globalisation

Jan Abhiyan, Bihar organised a convention against globalisation on 6th September, 2004 at Gandhi Sangrahalay, Patna. It was attended by more than 200 delegates belonging to the constituent organisations including CPI -ML (SR Bhai), MCPI, CCI, CPI -ML, Jasava, AIPRF and others.

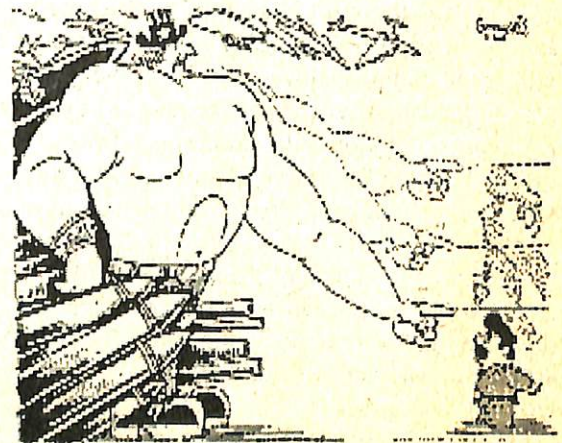
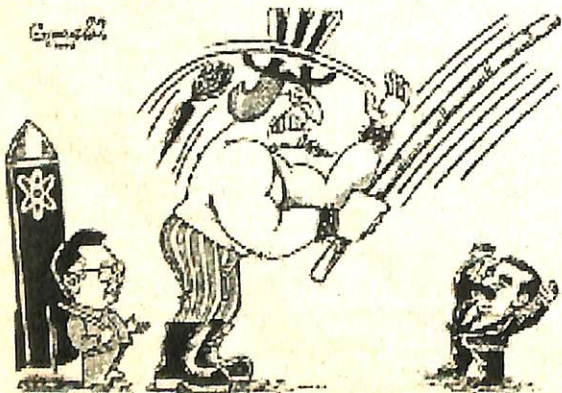
First of all, a paper with title 'Imperialist Globalisation and India' was presented on behalf of Jan Abhiyan Bihar, depicting the impact of globalisation on agriculture, industry, service sector, working

class and infrastructure of India. Another paper was distributed by Communist Centre for Scientific Socialism titled 'Challenges of the Alternative of Socialism in Anti-globalisation Struggles'. In this paper it was stressed that socialism is the only alternative to the imperialism and imperialist globalisation.

Representatives of other participating organisations put their views orally and felt the need of united struggle against imperialist exploitation going on in the country in the name of globalisation with human face.

Haryana:

In the third week of May, a convention was organised in Kurukshetra University of Haryana. Balbir Singh of Kaumi Ekta Manch presided and it was addressed by Harish Dhawan (PUDR, Delhi), Arjun Prasad Singh (AIPRF) and Mangat Ram Sahotra (Editor, Junjhalahat), Balbir Saini (Lok Sangharash Manch), Veer Mitha (Dalit MuktiSanghatan) and others. Most of them demanded to scrap the provisions of death penalty from different Acts of India. After the convention a 9 member Committee against Death Penalty, Haryana was formed. The committee members elected Mangat Ram as Convener and decided to take up campaign against the death penalty. ☺



From Back Cover Page

With the turn under Deng Xiaoping to the rapid expansion of capitalist social relations, Hinton increasingly came into disagreement with the direction taken by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The essays from *Monthly Review* collected in *China: An Unfinished Battle* (Cornerstone Publications: Kharagpur, India; 2002) set out that critique and struggle, with which his sunset years have been occupied. Bill Hinton again and again challenged the one-sided negative account of the Cultural Revolution that is now official dogma in China, no less than in the global imperium of the United States. His belief in the revolutionary transformative power of the peasantry, of ordinary people, cannot be shaken because it has been based on what he had himself experienced.

In the last years, more than ever, Bill Hinton has been close to *Monthly Review*. As late as 1996 Bill intervened at a critical moment to help set things right at *Monthly*

Review when it looked for a moment as if the enterprise was in danger. After a visit to India in the late 1990s, Bill stopped by in New York City to chat with us at *Monthly Review* about his trip. He talked with pleasure of the young Indian Maoist students who strained his waning resources of energy, and would have kept him up all night every night to talk of what had happened in China and what might yet happen in India and elsewhere. Bill mentioned with pleasure seeing tattered copies of the Indian edition of *Monthly Review* that showed clear evidence of having passed from hand to hand. Tired and ill, he seemed young and vigorous at the thought of poor revolutionary youth fighting to master theory and brave practice.

Straightforward and passionate, farmer and revolutionary, Bill Hinton's life demonstrates the universal core of Marxist revolutionary practice. Neither cultural nor generational differences proved barriers to his learning and teaching. Live like him. ☛



Postbus 1452, NL-3500 BL, Utrecht, Netherlands
Tel: +31-30-2400551 Fax: +31-30-2322989
E-mails: ilp515@runbox.com
Web URL: <http://www.ilps2001.com>

27 February 2004

Dear Friends,

Three years after the successful founding of the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) in May 2001, the ILPS is set to convene its Second International Assembly (SIA) under the theme "Advance the people's solidarity and struggle for liberation and democracy against imperialist plunder and war".

At the Second International Assembly, the over 200 participating organizations of the ILPS will assess the League's work over the past three years. At the Founding Assembly in 2001, the then newly elected Chairperson of the ILPS, Crispin Beltran, called on the ILPS members to meet the challenge of expanding and consolidating the League. The aim is to strengthen the ILPS as a global formation of anti-imperialist political unity amidst the intensifying crisis and onslaught of imperialism and the growing people's resistance worldwide.

Since the First International Assembly of the ILPS, we have witnessed great changes in the world situation. The global economic crisis under imperialism continues to devastate countries. September 11, 2001, set the stage for US imperialism's wars of plunder and aggression. Its invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq; its proclamation of Southeast Asia as the second front in its "war against terrorism"; its continuing intervention in the internal affairs of other countries – these are all concrete manifestations of the brutality and viciousness of imperialism against nations and peoples of the world.

In response, the people's resistance movement has also intensified globally at all levels.

The Second International Assembly will allow ILPS participating organizations to take stock of the present international situation and how ILPS can more effectively advance its work to benefit the growing international anti-imperialist movement.

In order to meet the challenge to ILPS as a global formation for anti-imperialist struggles, the Second International Assembly will focus on strengthening the ILPS. It will concentrate on forming, expanding, and consolidating the study commissions and working committees on the 18 concerns during the Second International Assembly.

The Second International Assembly will be held from 10-14 November 2004 in The Netherlands.

For more information on the SIA please write to:

Email: sia2004@ilps2001.com and
ilp515@runbox.com

Fax: 0044-870-105-66265

In Solidarity,

Crispin Beltran
Chairman

Arman Riaz
General Secretary

William H. Hinton (1919 - 2004)

by John Mage

William H. Hinton died in the early morning of Saturday, 15th of May, 2004. He was born in Chicago in 1919. At the age of 17 he worked his way to the Far East. Without money, he supported himself by washing dishes, and then got a job for six months as a reporter on an English language newspaper in Japan. He continued his travels by way of Japanese occupied Korea and Northeast China, then through the USSR to Poland and Germany, and finally returned to the United States by working as a deckhand on an American freighter.

Bill Hinton read Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* in 1942, and it changed his life. According to Bill, the book changed his world outlook from that of a pacifist to that of a Marxist. In 1945 he returned to China as a staff member of the U.S. Office of War Information. Present at the Chongqing peace talks between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party, he got acquainted with Zhou Enlai and met Mao Tse Tung on three occasions. From these meetings Bill came to see and feel the possibilities for China's future.

In 1947 the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) donated some tractors to China, and among the instructors sent to teach their use was Bill Hinton. Assigned to a district under the control of the Guomindang, Hinton was outraged at the prevailing corruption and volunteered to cross over to a liberated zone in the south of Hebei Province. Conditions in the liberated zone were harsh, but the honesty and enthusiasm were what Bill had dreamed of. He made a major contribution to the introduction of mechanized farming in the liberated areas.

When the UNRRA was terminated and U.S. technicians were told to return to the USA, Bill Hinton asked to stay on in China. He accepted a post as an English teacher at the Northern University in Southeast Shanxi province, near Changzhi City, in a liberated district. In 1948 he asked to join the university staffed land reform work team in the village of Long Bow in the outskirts of Changzhi. Hinton spent eight months working in the fields in the day and attending land reform meetings both day and night. He took careful notes on the land reform process, and forged close bonds with the people of Long Bow village.

After the conclusion of the Korean War in 1953 Hinton returned to the United States. His notes were seized by the U.S. Customs and turned over to the notorious Senate Committee on Internal Security (the "Eastland Committee"). Hinton was placed under continuous

harassment by the FBI. His passport was confiscated, and he was barred from all teaching jobs. At first permitted to work as a truck mechanic, he was later blacklisted and denied all employment. He then took up farming on some land inherited from his mother, and farmed for a living for some fifteen years. During this whole period Hinton kept up a continuous fight to speak out about the successes of the Chinese Revolution, and waged a long (and eventually successful) legal battle to recover his notes and papers from the Eastland Committee.

Once his notes and papers had been returned, Hinton set to writing a documentary account of the land reform in Long Bow village in which he had been both observer and participant. The book, *Fanshen*, was finished in 1966.

After many big U.S. publishers had turned it down, it was published by Monthly Review Press. *Fanshen* was a stunning success. Hundreds of thousands of copies were sold, and translations appeared in ten languages. Playwright David Hare adapted *Fanshen* as a play staged first in London, and then all over the world. On Zhou Enlai's initiative *Fanshen* was translated into Chinese, and in 1971 Zhou invited Hinton to again visit China.

Bill Hinton followed *Fanshen* with books documenting the achievements of Revolutionary

China, such as *Iron Oxen* and *Shenfan*. On repeated visits he resumed the work of agricultural instruction that had first brought him to China at the end of the Second World War. In particular he returned again and again to Long Bow, introducing new agricultural techniques and investing his own savings in new Long Bow industries. He has called Long Bow his "second hometown." Bill's affection has been returned by the people of Long Bow. In the spring of 2002 Long Bow sent their mayor on a long and special journey to the nursing home near Boston where Bill Hinton, aged and ill with a serious heart disease, was confined. He brought with him from Long Bow copies of the handsome photo book *William Hinton: An Old Friend of Chinese People*, published in Long Bow in honor of Bill Hinton. These biographical notes are based on that book.

