

# N<sup>2</sup>AZARIYA

ISSUE 4



**STOP WAR ON THE PEOPLE OF BASTAR !!!**





# NAZARIYA MAGAZINE

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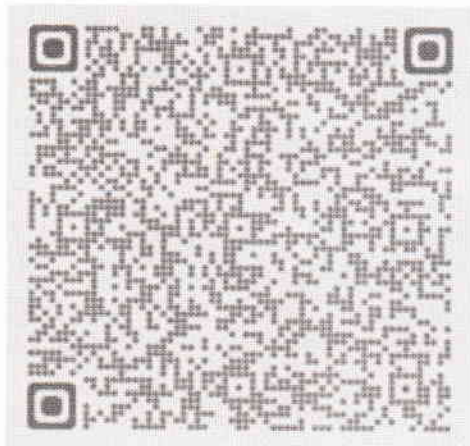
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# NAZARIYA'S PERSPECTIVE

## Marxism-Leninism-Maoism

*In a meeting of Nazariya's Editorial Team, Nazariya made a decision to write from the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective. The following was then adopted as our perspective, as available on our website:*

*The deepening crisis of imperialist capital in the underdeveloped countries of the world has seen an astonishing spread of anti-intellectualism alongside post-modern identitarian trends in the intellectual sphere. In addition, the current climate of the onslaught of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism has brought with it religious and regional chauvinism, caste supremacy and deepened petit-bourgeois cynicism. This fascistic force of national oppression is the prison cell for the resistances of the many peoples in India. Most glaringly, a gaping vacuum within the ideological sphere has served the ruling class in spreading cynicism, confusion and encouraged the creation of silos of interests within revolutionary circles. Concomitantly, the nexus between imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic comprador capitalism in a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country like ours is growing stronger and establishing deeper roots. Today, it's ideological moorings dominate institutions across the country. This anti-people, status-quoist behemoth is entering the cultural, social, economic and political arena as the only force, that is, one without any challenge. This is manifesting every day in the cultural and the ideological sphere. It is this that we intend to challenge through rigorous polemical engagement.*

*At the same time, in these dire times, newer and newer forms of resistance are continuing to establish deeper and deeper roots in society. In order to understand this and to forge a revolutionary alternative, concrete analysis of concrete conditions is necessary. In Lenin's words, "The light of theory must be cast upon every separate fact."*

*Recognising the importance of revolutionary theory and practice, the importance of organised resistance and with an unswerving commitment towards the working-class movement, the Nazariya team strives to participate in the struggle to realise a new world. A world without unbridled inequality and oppression,*

a world where one class of people do not subjugate and live off another and the aspirations of the broad masses of people find it's truest expression, this is the world for which we strive. This journal endeavors to be a space for discussion on a broad range of questions that concern the working class, peasantry, intellectual and professional classes. This includes questions of production relations, social hierarchies including caste, urbanisation, development measures, environmental degradation and resource exploitation, marginalised communities and oppressed nationalities.

The aim of the journal is to analyse the immediate, local, country-wide and international issues through the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the theory of Marxism in the era of a weakening imperialism and modern revisionism, the era in which we are currently located. MLM is the ideology through which revolutionaries whittle class enemies swiftly and thoroughly to bring about complete social transformation of society via the path of militant people's resistance in order to inevitably move towards the era of communism. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the path of liberation in the 21st century. Therefore, Nazariya calls upon all democratic, progressive and revolutionary forces to support this effort through their participation, both in its realisation and its circulation. We lay open the space in our columns for spirited discussions with preference for the approach of engagement and persuasion. The Nazariya team will credit every participant, writer and contributor and take editorial responsibility.



Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism! Inquilab Zindabad!

**Can you hear the screaming wind?-**

**There is a deep pain flowing through the forests, the wind carries the screams of its people.**

**How long till it reaches your ears?**

**Will the scent of their blood, sweat and tears stir you from your slumber?**

**Will it be their dying sighs?**

**Or will it be when the wind stops that you will realize?**

**The scorching of your silent sins, the sweltering heat in your stagnant, stale comfort**

**Maybe when you see the jungles made of**

**hotels and choke in the empty habitats with air that has oxygen only for the firing of guns**

**Will it be when you taste the difference in your bidis? When the hands that harvested them change from the strain of hathgadis and lathis**

**Will your senses continue to fail you like you fail your conscience?**

**Will you hide under the covers until the screaming wind blows away?**

**There is a deep pain flowing through the forests, the wind carries the struggle of its people**

**When you breathe in will it change you or choke you?**

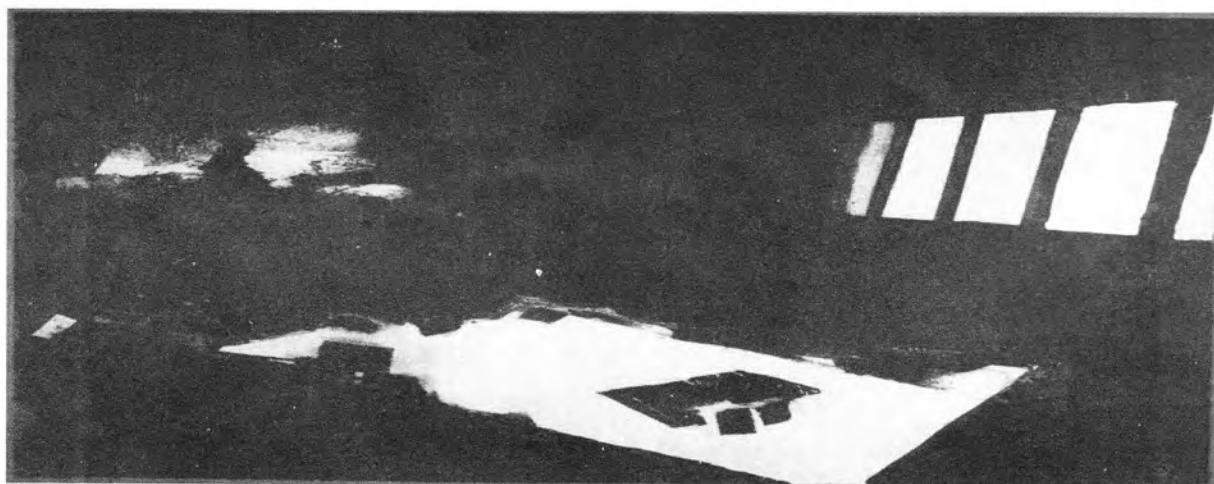
**Tell me if you can feel anything**

Poem by Aditi Kumar



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# INTRODUCTION

by Nazariya Editorial Team

The year of 2024 started with a series of uncertainties and brutal atrocities against the broad Indian masses. Manipur continues to burn, even after the year-mark crosses May 3rd, the day when violence erupted following the introduction of laws and classifications that would potentially take away the protection of traditional lands of the oppressed Kuki tribes. The people of Manipur continue to die in the massacre, Hindutva fascism and its imperialist masters dominate- creating space for further penetration of non-Manipuri companies, creation of new SEZs and a legalised and systematic takeover of forest land- by opening it up for sale to traditional landlord communities. All this is done under the lit fire of religious and inter-community violence, that is fanned and fuelled by the agents of capital. As we enter the month of September, the farmers of North India, particularly Punjab and Haryana, continue a legal battle to be allowed to enter the National Capital to protest for a fair Minimum Support Price on their crops, an end to privatisation of farming, and justice for those murdered by the state forces in the famous 2021 protests. Protests in January and February 2024 were met with an attack through water cannons, rubber bullets and possibly, actual firing, as the death of young farmer and student Shubkaran Singh at the hands of police firing, indicates. Drones were also deployed to drop tear gas on the kisans once venerated in our country as the givers of food and sustenance.

The Indian state's expansionist occupation in Kashmir wreaks unending havoc in the region, with the 5th year of a heavy media blackout still failing to invisibilise the obvious suffering of Kashmiris at the hands of the Hindutva project. Simultaneously, the advance of the 2024 parliamentary elections saw an attack on all, even the parliamentary opposition, by the fascist BJP, with its agents, ED, NIA etc. who deployed cases and ploys to arrest opposition leaders- such as Delhi CM Kejriwal, who still remains imprisoned.

The year 2024 also saw the rolling out of Operation Kagaar- a military step by the Indian State to completely decimate, not only the Maoist resistance to privatisation and exploitation of Adivasis, but also eliminate the very Adivasi populations themselves. The rolling out of Kagaar saw intensification of militarisation in Bastar. A paramilitary camp can be found every 2-3 km in Bastar. 36,000 security forces are deployed in Bastar alone with one soldier for 55 people. This intensified militarisation places its fealty to corporate parasites such as Adani, Jindal, Tata Steel etc. Paramilitary forces also wage a brutal attack on the Adivasis with not only arbitrary militarisation but also heinous rapes of Adivasi women and children. Under the guise of 'anti-Maoist' operations the state massacres the Adivasi population with fake encounters, drone strikes and active assault. This very new year, paramilitary forces open-fired on Adivasis murdering a breastfeeding baby just 6 months old. At least 7 minors have been killed by paramilitary forces in Chhattisgarh this year alone, with Kamli Kunjam a deaf, unwell 16 year old child being brutally raped and killed by the forces. How many of these children from disabled 16-year-olds to breastfeeding 6-month-olds are Maoists? The Surajkund Scheme, rolled out by Amit Shah in a Chintan Shivar in 2022, is aimed at accomplishing this decimation of dissent- not just in Bastar, but across India. An attack on civil society of unforeseen capacity is formulated through this scheme- by declaration of the aim to eliminate "Naxalism of both the pen and the gun". The use of investigative agencies and acts such as ED, PMLA, NIA is planned out in this scheme to eliminate all dissenters. Dissenters to the State's model of privatisation and free flow of imperial capital, dissenters to the State's Brahminical project of advancing comprador classes at the cost of the exploitation of the masses, of Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims and other oppressed minorities in the country.

The dropping of aerial bombs by drones, to harm its own citizens in Bastar, which permeated to fight the mighty resistance of the farmers at the Delhi borders, was formulated in the Surajkund Scheme. Maharashtra State's new Public Security Act, potentially meant to declare all dissenters "Urban Naxals"- formalisation of an informal, extra-legal project as seen in the case of G.N. Saibaba and Hem Mishra, now exonerated by the courts- but who spent ten years of their life imprisoned and tortured under the Urban Naxal myth- is a reflection of this Scheme's aim.

Simultaneous to this momentous attack on the masses and dissenting civil society that dares to raise the voice and demands of the oppressed and exploited- our media, both the “Godi” and the liberal variety, are most concerned about the various extravagancies of the Ambani wedding. In a picture of dystopia, where the comprador Ambanis celebrate with the world billionaires, a psychological war is being led by the media as a prong of the State superstructure- to distract and deviate the masses by focussing attention on the unattainable world of the Ambani's built on exploitation compounded over generations. When the media does bother to report on atrocities in Kashmir, Manipur or Bastar (it doesn't), it engages in jingoistic Hindutva war-mongering against the struggles of the people or it dehumanises the people as militants or “anti-nationals”. Indian Express, Times of India- many mainstream “liberal” outlets have reported death of civilians in Bastar as counterinsurgency killings- claims that could have been corrected by a simple fact check. Adivasis, be they Maoists or ordinary villagers, are all being painted as threats and data to be “eliminated” (in the actual words of these media outlets) by our brave and numerous paramilitary deployed in thousands on tribal, traditional forest lands. This agenda of the media is supported by movies such as “Bastar: The Naxal Story” that calls for murder of intellectuals advocating Adivasi rights, and “Jahangir National University” that launches an attack on the intellectuals and students who have long been at the forefront of democratic struggles of the Indian State.

Where does the role of you, the reader, play into this massive and unprecedented attack on dissent across India? In fighting the genocidal war cry of the State against the Adivasis in Bastar? Or the militarisation of your own universities, that goes hand-in hand with the State's war on dissent? Civil society pressure forced the banning of the genocidal Salwa Judum, and helped end Operation Green Hunt. Students, intellectuals, the middle class, alongside the oppressed and exploited Adivasis, workers, Dalits, minorities have historically been at the frontline of the defence of the rights of those oppressed. As an attack on all dissent is waged, as the Indian State wages a war on its own people- from Bastar, to Manipur to Kashmir, to Delhi, the time to speak up, organise and resist also intensifies. Hence, as Nazariya releases this issue on the War of the State Against the People, it also gives a call to the reader to enter the struggle against the suppression and resist the death of dissent intended by the Indian State. The time is now.





# US IMPERIALISM AND THE DEFENCE/WAR INDUSTRY IN INDIA

by Vallika Varshri

A people living under the perpetual menace of war and invasion is very easy to govern. It demands no social reform. It does not haggle over expenditures for armaments and military equipment. It pays without discussion, it ruins itself, and that is an excellent thing for the syndicates of financiers and manufacturers for whom patriotic terrors are an abundant source of gain. - French litterateur Anatole France



The crisis of imperial capital has rendered the world at the edge of World War III. In the efforts of monopoly capitalists to rake in more profits, capitalists decrease wages and increasingly attempt to mechanize labour in a market bereft of skilled labourers. Due to the worsening exploitation of labourers, the people barely manage to earn wages capable of affording goods, leading to overproduction (the supply of goods is larger than their consumption). It is labour which creates surplus value, and as labour decreases, so do profits. For capitalists to maintain their current levels of production, it is competition that determines profit when the labour employed and wages are the lowest level necessary to sustain production. This gives way to monopoly capitalism, with big capitalist firms swallowing en masse the smaller firms that go bankrupt, eventually leading to monopolies in a country's home market. To overcome this crisis, capitalist countries need to expand their market into newer spaces i.e. other countries. This state is known as the era of imperialism. The USA has dominated the world imperialist order and is doing its best to restrict other competing imperialist countries like China and Russia. The motivation behind doing so is clear -

the Chinese social imperialists and Russian imperialists, as part of the imperialist alliances like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS are attempting to compete with the US-imperialist dominated NATO and G-20 groups, in a bid to capture markets in the various colonial and semi-colonial countries.

In this stage of inter-imperialist conflict wherein US hegemony is threatened, Filipino revolutionary Jose Maria Sison's words about the glut of capital have to be recalled "in the relations of capitalist countries, economic war precedes the shooting war". It is in this context that corporatisation and militarisation are knotting together in an unholy alliance, with corporates and banking/financial institutes investing in the "defence" industries which perpetuate exploitation and oppression on the masses. This has contributed to the creation and continuation of war. This war is an anti-people war which exists in order to save the "old world (imperialist) order" of the American monopoly capitalists; it is an attempt of the emerging imperialists to rebuild a "new" system of exploitation and oppression (a new system in which the exploitation and oppression remains the same with the difference being in who is conducting and dominating the system), with the newly-crowned capitalists at its head. This war is one which is a result of the contradictions between the international ruling classes for the re-division of the world among themselves while preserving imperialism as the dominant mode of production. In colonial and semi-colonial countries, the oppressed nations of the world, imperialists have propped puppet governments and a dependent native big bourgeoisie which does its bidding, often in alliance with pre-capitalist feudal big landlords, governed via neocolonial tactics for the super profit interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

US's neocolonialism not only faced opposition by the

masses but also by communist revolutionaries, national liberation forces and other justice-seeking, peace-loving and democratic forces. Combined with people's struggles in other oppressed countries under its control, the various communist and national liberation struggles of the world led to cementing the crisis for US power in the 1970s. After all, imperialism is that stage of capitalism which is characterised by war; and contradictions within the system have arisen in a bid to reorder the imperialist system. US hegemony is not without its challengers. To retain itself, US aggression has historically suppressed people and countries in the name of "globalisation" by utilising the neoliberal slogans of "strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade". US foreign capital penetrated oppressed countries in Africa, South America and Asia in a bid to expand its own market, perpetuating severe exploitation and oppression of the masses and heralding the destruction of their economies. The US continues this tactic in order to expand its market in order to keep churning out superprofits. In this process, the US is the enemy of the people of the world. The US continues to face challenges to its power, as do other advanced capitalist countries (growing unrest in Europe, for example) face crisis - ultimately a situation which is leading to war as the imperialists have started to reorder their alliances. Confrontation is no longer direct as it was under colonialism. The development of the neocolonial method has led to the illusion of consent, of seemingly equal relations between the exploiter and exploited, between the oppressor and the oppressed. Financial aid and investment is a manner of doing so, and investment and technology transfer in defence industries has become a preferred method of doing so.

By financing the war-machine, the US ruling classes were able to suppress the effects of the threat to their hegemony. This they did by strengthening the military through investment in procuring and improving their arms arsenal; this military then acted in the defence of their economic and political interests. For example, US's invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq to puppeteer a regime friendly to US interests at the cost of the people benefited its agenda of extracting from the country's oil reserves. Secondly, by developing a high-tech and flexible military which relied on private firms to increase its numbers, they decreased reliance on mass mobilisation (voluntary conscription) and removed the social and political forces constraining war by reducing "citizen-soldier" casualties. Lastly, these transformations resulted in huge profits for the

firms and financial investors providing the commodities and capital respectively for underwriting these activities (Payne, 2022). The vulture capitalists are circling overhead, the war-mongers thundering for more profit and war, and it is in this context that the development of the defence sector needs to be located.

## **The "Indian" Defence Industry**

SIPRI reported that India has remained the largest arms importer of the world for many years, but with the Indian government tooting the horn of positioning India as "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India), the need to wear a brighter saffron cloak of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism has emerged. To gain respect in the eyes of its imperial masters and to appease its frothing comprador capitalists (those capitalists relying on imperial capital to support themselves, ultimately serving the needs of imperial capital over the development of their own independent capital), there is a greater need for India to strengthen its position in order to retain the favour of the ruling classes. The deepening imperial crisis means that India needs to be a better "yes-man" in order to serve the imperial capital, which means that the Indian state is turning more and more towards the fascist form of class rule to sustain its presence amidst the deepening crisis of imperialism. Fascism is the openly terrorist, reactionary and chauvinist violence of foreign finance capital, and there is no greater example of the same than the relationship between corporatisation and militarisation in India. As avenues to extract surplus value shrinks for imperial capital, it seeks to aggressively open more markets to reinvest itself to churn out more profits. India is providing the imperialists with this space through the farce of "atma nirbhar" development in the defence industry. This project of the imperialists creates a favourable space for them to create profits, at the expense of the people who suffer greater exploitation and oppression to sustain the war-machinery.

The development of military capabilities of India has been historically tied to the development of the state, located in the material conditions of the society. For example, the introduction of the setting up of the structure of the army rose with the needs of the mahajanapadas, which made use of iron and copper weapons in the wars to defend and establish civilisations. As society progressed and contradictions led to the adoption of superior technology, weaponry and the structure of the military also underwent

changes. It was during the subjugation of India during the years of the colonial British Raj that guns, artillery, and superior tanks were introduced in India (the British needed the Indians to fight its wars abroad in terms of both men and material). The British Empire exploited Indians to set up its manufacturing to fight its war, leading to the establishment of India's first ordnance factory (a term used to refer to a government-owned facility in India that is responsible for the production of a range of defence-related products, such as weapons, ammunition, and other military equipment) in 1801 while the first shipyard (a facility that is used for the construction, repair, and maintenance of ships) was established in 1827 (Yadav, 2024).

Since then, India's so-called "self-sufficient" model continues to be reliant on foreign assistance, primarily in the form of Foreign Direct Investment and technology transfers. In 1962, USSR offered India a favourable arms deal, and by 1980, 70% of India's military hardware came from the country- this included 100% of ground and air defence, most fighter and attack aircraft, all tracked vehicles and tanks, and nearly all naval vessels. India's "non-alignment" policy allowed it to serve multiple imperialist entities at once which meant that India was free to pursue a policy of "co-development and co-production with foreign companies" (Yadav, 2024). It collaborated with Russia in the 1998 BrahMos missile venture and with Israel, with the USA, in other joint ventures and continues to be reliant on the imperial capital to develop and sustain its defence industry. This policy of reliance took an unprecedented turn in 2001 (the same year that the USA launched its "War on Terror" and consolidated its superior position as the dominating imperialist country). A couple years ago, India allowed 100% private sector participation and 26% foreign investment in defence. Since 2014, India has seen further reform by relaxing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) capping and simplifying the defence industrial licence procedure. The Modi government has been trying hard to get FDI in the defence sector by first raising the cap from 26% to 74% through automatic route (a method of regulating FDI by the state in cases of FDI being received from non-residents wherein restrictions are looser in comparison to the "approval method" in terms of scrutiny of levels of investment, especially in certain sectors) and 100% through MoD's approval, whereby the investing foreign entity can have ownership up to 100% in the defence manufacturing.

### **The Indian Ruling Classes Serve Imperialism through Privatisation**

The increasing need for militarisation of society cannot be separated from the political economic context of the society at large. Payne (2022) describes the links between "financialisation and militarisation" as intricately bound together, describing how banking and finance institutions as well as corporates have increasingly "permeated war-making as capitalists attempted to increase their profits and as military officials sought to expand their freedom of movement. In the process, many of the social and political constraints on war were removed and the interests of capitalists, financiers, and war-makers became increasingly interlocked. This set the stage for a vicious circle of financialization and militarism in the twenty-first century—with destructive consequences".

In India, it was the occurrence of the 26/11 attack coupled with increased incidences of "global terrorism" (as defined by the USA) that has given impetus and an excuse for organisations and states to largely think and invest in the security issue manifesting in the exponential growth of the security industry within the country and worldwide. The rhetoric used by the reactionary Indian state is that it is affected by "cross border terrorism" in the west, growing threat of Maoist armed resistance in several states coupled with significant threats to major cities and economic hubs. Since the start of the Modi regime, this has been packaged a little differently. In the 1990s, the trend of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation was pushed into India by the Bretton Wood institutions, representing US imperialism, primarily to better subjugate and integrate the semi-colonial India into the world imperialist system. The rationale of the comprador Congress government was that these reforms were necessary for the Indian economy's growth and recovery from the economic crisis (rampant unemployment and devaluation of the rupee) preceding it. The Modi government has been pushing on the economy the "need of privatisation" since 2015, in essence the same neoliberal policy repackaged to suit India's chauvinistic ideals of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism under BJP-privatisation is necessary to bolster "national pride and strength". The increasing trend of privatisation is associated with modernisation (which means getting the latest weapons) to serve military aims. Secondly, it's argued that privatisation of the defence industry was necessary since India's PSUs have failed on their promise of quality production of military hardware and have become a drain on resources and hence there is a need to look to imports and/or foreign direct investment (FDI) and the private sector for military modernisation.

FDIs are bound to fail as this step is unlikely to attract significant foreign direct investment. Foreign arms



manufacturers closely guard their technology for commercial and strategic reasons, with strict government restrictions on technology transfer. As a strategic industry, armaments prioritise national interests over commercial ones. India's ambition to surpass Pakistan and rival China in armaments necessitates acquiring the most advanced weapons. Without foreign investors manufacturing in India, the country will likely continue importing weapons or only assembling them domestically, perpetuating dependence and reinforcing imperial interests (RUPE, June 2015). In order to preserve their position in the social order created by exploitation and oppression, the ruling classes have moved towards privatisation and militarisation in order to protect and further their own interests.

The defence industry in India is currently “booming”, and according to IBEF (July 2024), the “Indian Defence ecosystem is a confluence between the Government and the defence manufacturing industry”, with the government having established 2 Defence Corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu under which it will launch its first multinational air exercise, Tarang Shakti, on August 6, 2024. This will take place in two phases at the Sullur Airbase in Tamil Nadu in August and in Jodhpur in September. About 10 countries including the US, France, the UK, Australia, and Germany will participate, while 18 nations will act as observers. The exercise aims to simulate war scenarios and test interoperability and joint manoeuvres among the participating air forces. This exercise can be viewed as an attempt to integrate semi-colonial India into the military strategies of imperialist countries, enabling them to safeguard their own interests while conserving their resources. The imperialists stand to benefit economically and strategically from this arrangement, potentially leaving India more dependent on their aid and deepening the grip of imperialism. This dependence could perpetuate India's economic challenges and ensure that it remains under the influence of more powerful nations. Meanwhile, the target of achieving a turnover of US \$25 million in aerospace and defence manufacturing by 2025 has been set by the Ministry of Defence, with the 25% of the defence R&D budget in the Union Budget 2023-2024 being earmarked for private industry and start-ups. To achieve its goal, the reactionary Indian ruling classes are partnering up with American imperialism under the India-United States Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X).

### **Indian state in the Service of Imperialism**

US imperialism is a monster driven entirely by profit maximisation, with a boundless appetite for political and economic domination. The history of the US is replete with examples of a complete disregard for human life, waging wars in countries, exploiting and oppressing countries for cheap labour and resource extraction, and displacing indigenous people for land world over. It competes with other countries, leading to even more misery and war. The USA's “war on terror” created ISIS, its support of Israel is the endorsement of a multiple-decades long genocide of Palestine, and for each war it creates, the USA also invests in it. It supplies weapons directly, it invests in manufacturing of arms, it utilises the resources obtained through stealing to further militarisation in a bid to further corporatisation. This is the business of war, a system which the USA perpetuates not only within itself but also encourages other countries to do. It is also important to note that this business is not restricted to capital, but the USA is also engaging directly on ground to ensure the continuation of war so as to continue reaping its profits. In 2020, the United States had troops in 150 countries, including 70,000 in the Middle East and Afghanistan, so weapons sales are not replacing boots on the ground. An example of how the USA benefits from war is clear in how the CIA-backed assassination of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani led to the stock holdings of just five individual weapons industry executives increasing by \$7 million within a 24-hour period.

Marshall (2020) describes the USA War-Machine as such: “Defence industry profits do not simply disappear into the pockets of executives and shareholders. They are deployed strategically to build support for a highly militarised form of US foreign policy. Their methods are diverse, and formal lobbying through registered agents is just the tip of the iceberg.” Marshall explains how the interests of the USA capitalists affects the world imperialist system as it is a customer of the US defence industry which finance think tanks to help promote other export regimes. In 2016, the UAE paid \$250,000 for a policy paper at the Center for a New American Security (a major liberal think tank) that argued for loosening the Missile Technology Control Regime that prohibited the export of sophisticated drones to the UAE. Two months after the paper was released, a bipartisan group of House members wrote to President Trump pressing him to approve the UAE drone sale, using the same arguments cited in the paper. There are multiple firms like Veritas Capital, Civitas Group, Arlington Capital Partners, Behrman Capital and Paladin Capital which specialise in investing in defence startups (or steering civilian tech startups to apply themselves to more

Another example of how imperialists benefit from the defence industry in India is the development of the expansion of a 500-acre facility in Kanpur in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Adani's (a conglomerate known to rely on foreign capital and debt to finance its functioning) Adani Defence & Aerospace has affiliated with Thales Belgium to manufacture components and assemble unguided and guided NATO-standard 70mm (2.75 inch) calibre ammunition currently being used in Ukraine. The Ukraine-Russia conflict is important for the USA to fuel not only because USA firms are going to profit off the rebuilding process but also as a counterbalance to Russia's advancement. Moreover, Shepherd reported that Adani Defence has set an implicit mandate to export 50% of the defence products it manufactures, with its partnerships to be based on the model it has with Elbit Systems. The partnership between Israel's Elbit Systems and India's Adani Group in 2018 to produce Hermes 900 drones, which have been dropped onto civilians in Gaza, further underscores the military collaboration between the two countries. Good relations between India-Israel also benefit USA, which is known to have propped the settler-colonial "Israel" to act as its proxy in the Middle East. While the Indian state continues to peddle the lies of developing indigenous technology which contributes to GDP growth, or that the defence industry is necessary, the fact remains that India remains a semi-colony. Due to its nature, India is reliant on foreign aid and technology to sustain its industries which are not independent. If foreign capital were to extract itself from our country, our whole economic system would collapse. The defence industry, as part of the same political economic relations of production, displays the same trends. In 2024, India was ranked the world's largest arms importer with Russia as its top supplier. India is dependent on joint-ventures with foreign capital to "locally manufacture" goods, which are exported to imperial countries at dirt-cheap rates. ET (2024) describes India's status as such: "Between 2019 and 2023, the country accounted for a significant 9.8% of the total global arms imports, reflecting a strategic vulnerability in its defence procurement." Not only have FDIs failed to materialise results in their projects in its agenda of "Atma Nirbhar Bharat", but India continues to seek even more imperialist aid to sustain its industries. Between 2014-2023, India's arm imports have increased by 4.7%. Wherein India was first reliant only on Russia, it is now reliant on France and USA which are emerging as key suppliers to India (collectively importing 46% of its arms imports).

This trend is expected to continue "significant contracts" in the pipeline- the INDUS X deal with the US, procurement of 31 armed MQ-9B Sky Guardian drones from the US and 26 Rafale-M fighters from France are only some recent examples.

On the other hand, the US alone exports 42% of the global arms supply, followed by Russia (11%) and France (11%). Other countries' market share in arms export include China (5.8%), Germany (5.6%), Italy (4.3%), UK (3.7%), Spain (2.7%), Israel (2.4%) and South Korea (2%) while India's exports in the global arms market is not even big enough to be mentioned (in the source). This raises a question of what is the essence of this so-called "self-reliance" of Modi's India- is relying on multiple imperialists instead of one real independence, or freedom, when your existence is nonetheless subservient to the economic, social and political control asserted over the country's so-called sovereignty? Rajnath Singh said it himself, "Without self-reliance, India cannot take independent decisions on global issues in line with its national interests."



## WHO PAYS THE COST OF WAR?

### The Defence Industry: A Burden on the People

In a contradictory statement, the president of the Society for Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) argues for financial backing to enhance self-reliance in defence, strengthen economic ties, and invest in technological and military capabilities. This raises a question about India's simultaneous push for financial dependence and local manufacturing. Imperialism, characterised by banking and finance institutions, requires understanding the sources of funding and where profits go. In India, the defense industry is funded by public money

and foreign investment, with the costs ultimately borne by the people. The state provides concessions under policies like "ease of doing business" and "special economic zones," which are funded through taxation of the middle class and the Defence Budget. For 2023-2024, the defence budget was allocated INR 5.94 lakh crore (a 13% increase from the previous year), but actual spending exceeded this by INR 60,000 crore. India ranks second globally in military expenditure but performs poorly in human development indices. The military budget increased by 13% while rural development funding fell by 19% and MGNREGA funding dropped by 33%, despite high unemployment (Ramakrishnan, 2023). The fact that India still retains top positions in terms of military expenditure (ranked 2 in 2021) but occupies abysmally low positions in terms of Human Development Index indices, showcases how the military is advanced by compromising on the people's basic social necessities.

The Home Ministry's budget shows that INR 1,27,756.74 crore (65.2%) was spent on Central Armed Police Forces. Additional expenditures for border infrastructure and security-related projects further inflate the defence budget. Including all related expenses, SIPRI estimates the actual defence budget at around INR 7.6 lakh crore, instead of the alleged INR 5.94 lakh. Last year, the expenditure exceeded this budget by around INR 60,000 core. The privatisation of defence also introduces middlemen and agents who take commissions of up to 12%, further diverting public funds for private interests (Ramakrishnan, 2023). Taxation is a major burden on India's 2% middle class, which pays both income tax and GST. In 2023, only 1.6% of the population paid taxes, with personal income tax rising as corporate tax contributions declined. Despite a booming stock market (BSE Sensex rising from around 19,000 in 2012 to 80,000 in 2024), corporate tax rates have been cut from 40% to 35% to attract foreign investment. India loses about \$10 billion annually due to tax evasion by multinational corporations (MNCs), which exploit tax havens (Gupta, 2023). While corporate profits have quadrupled from FY20 to FY23, corporate tax revenue has fallen, highlighting how the state prioritises corporate interests over public welfare (Das, 2023).

This shows how the state bureaucracy acts as a comprador for corporates, both domestic and foreign. The tax burden on them is reduced to a

minimal, and instead shifted onto the masses to pay the burden. At the same time, this tax is not utilised for their needs but instead to further privatisation. From the students' grievances against NEP 2020, to infrastructural projects causing displacement, destruction and death, to lack of employment in industries, to the pathetic public health system - the government serves the ruling classes, at the cost of meeting the basic needs of the masses.

## **Privatisation- Attack on the People and Revolutionary Movement**

2014 set the stage for privatisation, with Varman (2015) describing this as "the background of the failure to stem the tide of imports and to develop indigenous technology, the Government, experts, and think tanks are increasingly turning to their final solution for all problems - the private corporate sector!" A legion of foreign or domestic think tanks, business associations, and corporate consultants have come up with reports on the armament industry. Thus, since 2012, ASSOCHAM, Boston Consulting Group, CII, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Frost & Sullivan, ICRIER, KPMG, McKinsey, Observer Research Foundation, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Vivekananda International Foundation, etc. have all produced at least one report each on the armament industry. McKinsey begins a report on Indian military industry with a caption that "the stars are aligning for India's defence sector" and exhorts the interested parties to "seize the moment!" Corporates have seized the moment, and the Indian masses are suffering for it. A report actually details how India has shared the citizens' private information with not only foreign firms but also indirectly through "Israeli", American and French intelligence agencies - MongoDB, co-funded by the CIA, and Safran's Sagem Morpho, partially owned by the French government, have both signed contracts with India's UIDAI for the Aadhar card. Additionally, former CIA chief George Tenet was on the board of L-1 Identity Solutions, which UIDAI also contracted with before it was acquired by Safran (RUPE 2015).

Privatisation means that foreign interests are deeply tied with the economic and social conditions of the oppressed countries. Once invested through infrastructural projects and mining operations, imperial capital utilises the land, resources and labour of the country it dominates for its own benefit. Therefore, when corporates set up their industries, especially in resource rich-regions like in Odisha,



Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, imperialism has a vested interest in protecting these corporates i.e. their own profits. To protect its own interest, imperialism (with the help of its compradors in the ruling classes from the capitalists, landlords and Indian bureaucracy) finds it necessary to intervene in the oppressed country's affairs. It does so by two methods - firstly, it strengthens the militarisation of the area to serve as its personal guard. Secondly, it allies with the reactionary Indian state to cuttle down on revolutionary movements. The brunt of it is faced by communists, as stated in the Surajkund Scheme which is an "attack on Naxalism of both the pen and the gun".

In India, we can clearly see how it manifests through brutal operations like Operation Green Hunt, SAMADHAN-Prahar, now the Surajkund Scheme, and in Bastar, Operation Kagaar. Military procurement has been created in the name of security and nationhood but that has little to do with the larger population of the country and their needs. For instance, the bauxite or iron mines are opened up in Jharkhand, Odisha or Chhattisgarh by grabbing people's lands and homes against their will, in spite of their great resistance, and UAVs and increasingly sophisticated weapons are used to quell their resistance. The corporate sector is the beneficiary both of mining the ore, and of the demand for weapons, demand which is independent of the vagaries of the market system and is instead used to further perpetuate imperialism in the name of development. Militarisation in service of imperial capital is devastating the jal-jangal-jameen of the Adivasis, who continue to struggle fiercely against its imposition. In cities, there is an increasing deployment of paramilitary forces in universities and public spaces, thereby cutting down on the space for dissent and democracy.

## CONCLUSION

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels write about how the bourgeois class is its own gravedigger. For the bourgeois to exist, the proletariat (i.e. the most revolutionary class capable of overthrowing capitalism), has to exist. For exploitation to exist, someone has to be exploited. For each oppressor, there are a thousand oppressed. For imperialism to exist, its destruction exists simultaneously. This is the essence of Mao's "On Contradictions", his philosophical understanding of dialectical materialism - the unity of opposites.

The country is suffering at the hands of militarisation and corporatisation under its openly violent assault on the people. The "defence industry", India's "national" pride of India and its holy cow that is necessary in promoting self-reliance and development, is nothing but a man-eater serving the interests of the merchants of death and destruction. There is no winning for the people underneath this war. It is sure the people of both sides are the losers. Imperialists are pumping money and America leads the pack of wolves. They love war that boosts the economy, an economy that creates more and more billionaires even while it leads to more poverty, joblessness, even among sections that were hitherto comfortable like those in IT sectors. War begets war, and the war fought under the drum march of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism is the people's staunchest enemy. It is this force which has murdered 6-month-old Mangli in Chhattisgarh. It supplies the private armies of feudal goons and paramilitary forces who displace Adivasis and rape women. It suppresses the just struggle for national liberation in Kashmir and in the North East. It is the force which encourages the war on the people of Manipur. It is the force deployed to suppress democratic voices across the country- students, intellectuals and democratic organisations brutally repressed by force like in Jamia during the anti-CAA protests. Imperialism's war is a war against the exploited and oppressed people of the world, an assault against the proletariat, peasant, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie.

Imperialism is stuttering with its last breaths, the crisis creating the revolutionary conditions needed for its overthrow. The inter-imperialist conflict between the ruling classes is high; Yankee imperialism is on its toes to stave off the attacks from China, Russia and other capitalists. Meanwhile, the oppressed countries' masses are fed up and are therefore intensifying people's war in their respective regions. Myanmar's revolutionary forces are fighting, India's Maoists continue to face a new operation to "wipe them out" after each failure of the state, Bangladesh's militant consciousness is ascending with the protests of the garment workers and the student movement. At the same time, the combined strength of Hamas, PFLP etc and the Axis of Revolution have forced the settler-colonial project of "Israel" to near defeat, with Lebanon and Iraq providing it support. The revolutionary tide is at a high, and people must utilise this moment to defeat the reactionary paper-tiger

that is imperialism, especially Yankee imperialism, which is the people's biggest enemy.

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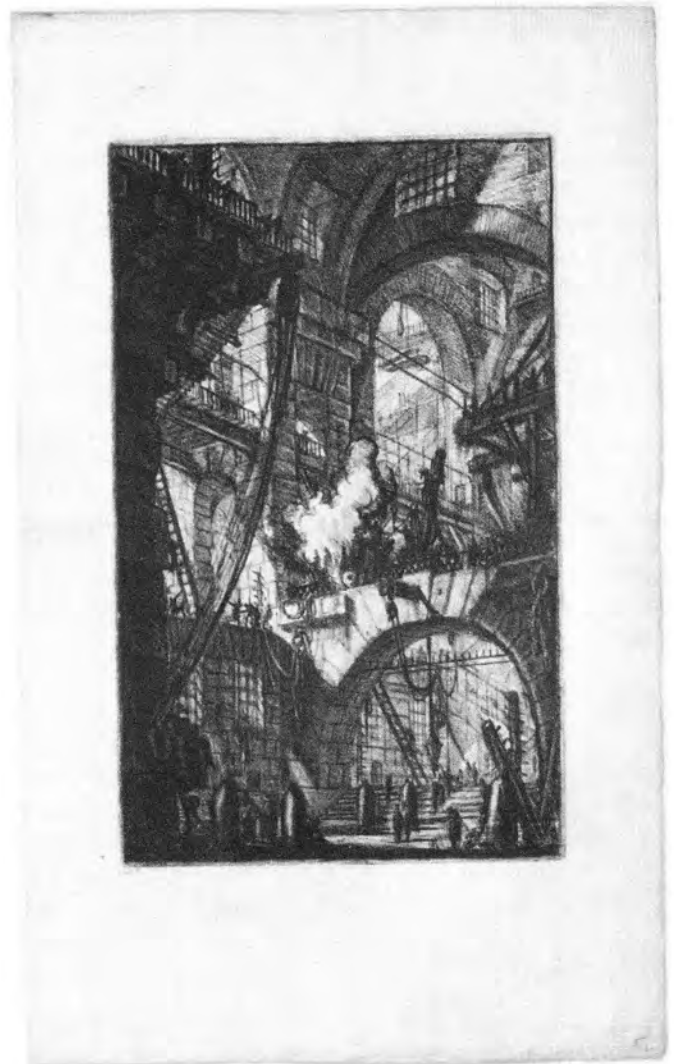
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# **SURAJKUND SCHEME:**

## **The Clarion Call of Fascist War on the People**

by Ramnit Kaur and Vallika Varshri



On October 27th and 28th, 2022, Union Home Minister Amit Shah led a "Chintan Shivir" (brainstorming session) in Surajkund, Haryana, with participation from Home Ministers, bureaucrats, and defense experts across the country. This session aimed to devise strategies for achieving the vision of "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) by 2047 and to lay the groundwork for consolidation of the Brahmanical Hindutva fascist regime across the country. The Surajkund Scheme emerged from this meeting, reflecting a profound shift in Indian governance and security policies designed to implement a vision of Hindu Rashtra under the guise of national development.

### **BACKGROUND AND STATIEGIC INITIATIVES**

Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar:  
The SAMADHAN operation, initiated in 2017,

sought to transform both the ideological and operational aspects of counterinsurgency. Its focus was on reshaping hearts and minds and military formations. Following this, the Prahar operation was introduced to enhance the offensive capabilities of the Indian state through the establishment of forward operational bases (a secured military position, commonly a military base, that is used to support strategic goals and tactical objectives of the main operating base; for example- hospitals, airfield, machine shops etc), higher technological advancements, and dedicated operations. The joint Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar served as the successor to the defeated Operation Green Hunt.

Establishment of Forward Operational Bases (FOBs):

From 2020 to 2022, the Indian state set up 20 FOBs in Chhattisgarh, 18 in Jharkhand, 11 in Odisha, 6 in Madhya Pradesh, 1 in Maharashtra, 1 in Telangana, and 1 in Bihar. By 2022, it was announced that an additional 10 FOBs would be established in Chhattisgarh, 6 in Jharkhand, 7 in Maharashtra, 1 in Odisha, 1 in Andhra Pradesh, and 1 in Telangana. By the end of 2022, 18 new FOBs were operational, with 11 of these set up in Bastar alone in 2023.

### **Key Facets of the Surajkund Scheme**

Countering "Naxalism of the Pen and the Gun": This approach aims to curtail democratic rights and suppress dissent across India. It includes the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) expanded role in conducting raids and seizing property linked to democratic rights activists, anti-fascists and anti-imperialists under the pretext of attacking so-called "urban Naxals". As Amit Shah stated during the Surajkund Chintan Shivir's concluding address, the NIA now has extra-territorial jurisdiction and the authority to confiscate property "related to terrorism." This facet also encompasses the suppression of various democratic movements, including farmers' protests. This has culminated with



the inclusion of even sympathizers of proscribed organizations being deemed criminals under laws like the proposed Maharashtra Public Safety Act, 2024. This is aimed at creating a chilling effect among the democratic-minded civil society, professionals and intellectuals of the country.

**Encirclement Campaign through FOBs and Enhanced Security:** The establishment of FOBs and a carpet security strategy aim to encircle and control insurgent-affected areas more effectively.

**Improvement in Intelligence Network:** The scheme includes significant upgrades to the intelligence network. This involves deploying surveillance tools like Pegasus and utilizing informers from among unemployed youth. The NIA's "one data-one entry" policy is intended to create a comprehensive "terrorist database" targeting individuals raising dissent, particularly from oppressed nationalities and minorities. The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre and National Intelligence Grid will support these efforts, and the National Forensic Science University will be set up to aid in identification.

**Specialized Commandos and Joint Task Forces:** The scheme plans to deploy 300 National Security Guard (NSG) personnel in Telangana with helicopter support for airstrikes and to integrate 2,100 Adivasi youth into the Bastar Fighter Battalion, formed in 2022. Already, various specialized units like the Greyhounds, CoBRA, the C-60, DRG, Bastar Fighter and Thunderbolts are being expanded.

**Financial Restrictions on Alternative Political Activity:** The scheme includes measures to cut down funding for alternative political activities through Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids and Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) reforms. Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), even other sections of ruling class political parties have been targeted, with the likes of Jharkhand Chief Minister Heman Soren, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal among others jailed as part of this law. This same law is applied to most arrested under charges of association with banned Maoist organizations, as a means of slandering them and reducing them into financial criminals in the eyes of the general populace, instead of political prisoners.

**Legal and Corporate Reforms:** The state is also focusing on legal changes to support corporatization and militarization. Prime Minister Modi noted that

many trade and business-related legal provisions have been decriminalized to prevent unnecessary police investigations, while laws like the UAPA are reinforced to combat terrorism. This reflects a dual approach of bolstering law enforcement upon the masses while reducing legal burdens on businesses, particularly the big bourgeoisie.

**Psychological Warfare:** The state's strategy involves labelling all dissenters as terrorists, Khalistanis, separatists, Maoists, or violent mobs. This includes targeting dissenters under the guise of a "war on drugs" through enhanced narcotics divisions. Oppressed nationalities, particularly in the North-East of India, are being branded as hotbeds of the drug trade, which the reactionary Indian state has utilized in isolating the national liberation movements in India from garnering general support from the masses. At the same time, the state continues to tout the supposedly approaching defeat of all such movements. For example, prior to the Surajkund Chintan Shivir, Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the Maoist armed resistance would end in 2022. He later revised his statement to 2023. During the course of the 2023 Chhattisgarh legislative assembly elections, Amit Shah declared that if BJP is voted to power, 2024 will be the final year of Naxalism in India. BJP came to power in Chhattisgarh legislative assembly and immediately began Operation Kagaar in Bastar, aiming to eradicate Maoist armed resistance within 6 months. It has since been three months since that time period elapsed and true to form, Amit Shah has re-adjusted the countdown to 2026! These are measures to demoralize sympathizers and activists of all kinds, to achieve psychological victory in what are usually ideological wars of attrition. Take for example the practice of releasing pictures of slain Maoists and national liberation forces, or even the leaked videos of torture like the recent incident in Poonch. Previously, this practice was utilized upon the murders of famous leaders like Mallojula Koteswara Rao "Kishenji" and Cherukuri Rajkumar "Azad" to counter the mythology that developed around the persons of these leaders during the course of struggle. But now, even civilian torture and killings are publicized, in an attempt to hammer in the idea of impending defeat and danger upon others. What the communists did to Benito Mussolini in the centre of Piazzale Loreto city square, the fascists are trying to do the communists now.

## **Primitive Accumulation and Fascism**

The Surajkund Scheme is deeply intertwined with the Indian state's need to attempt primitive accumulation at the service of imperialism, which involves the expropriation of resources and land from marginalized communities, ravaging the peasants from their pre-capitalist, semi-feudal lives and trying to force them into capitalist production. This strategy has long been part of the state's efforts to consolidate economic and political control. Historically, this has led to severe social and environmental consequences, including disease, displacement, and widespread suffering among Adivasi peasants and other marginalized communities. Yet, primitive accumulation will never lead to the results it did during the development of capitalism in Europe. When the big landlords in England, for example, attempted to enclose land and began to strike against the commons, the peasantry rebelled in armed uprisings such as the Kett's rebellion of 1549. A hundred years later in 1640, more than half of England's counties were facing armed uprisings and guerrilla warfare from the peasants upon attempts at primitive accumulation via enclosure of the commons. In India, the current attempt primitive accumulation is marked by a more aggressive and militarized approach, aimed at further dispossessing communities of their land and resources. This is primitive accumulation attempted at the barrel of a gun. This includes the implementation of new laws and policies that facilitate the takeover of Adivasi lands for corporate interests, often under the guise of development and security. The militarization of these regions through FOBs and specialized commandos is intended to protect and perpetuate these economic interests while suppressing resistance.

Primitive accumulation is always a violent and brutal affair which will eventually lead to the ravaging of the peasantry, its mass displacement and movement to the urban areas as it begins to transform into the proletariat in factories. Yet, in India, where we continuously see the state ravaging the peasantry and waging wars against them, whether they lead to the big farmers' protests in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh in 2020 and 2024 or the resistance of the Adivasi peasantry in central India, the peasantry has no industrial sector to absorb them. This has led to the creation of what the bourgeois economists call

"internally displaced persons" and "migrant labourers" who are often stuck in semi-proletarian or lumpen-proletarian conditions, with no boisterous and developing national bourgeoisie to absorb them and provide them a recourse. This cycle, of which the only conclusion is mass rebellion, is a symptom of India's nature as a semi-colonial semi-feudal country.

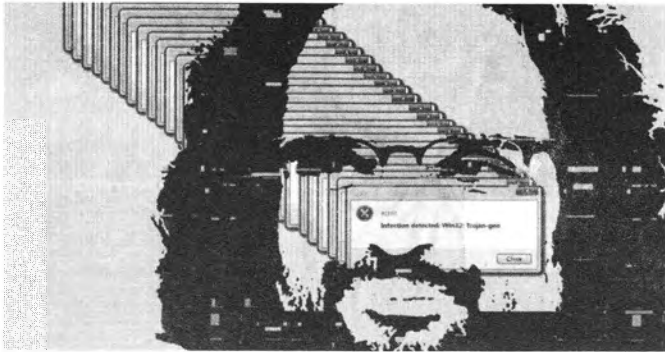
## **The Past and the Present**

The Surajkund Scheme represents a continuation of the Indian state's historical pattern of repression and militarization. Historically, the Indian state has employed similar tactics during periods of unrest and resistance. For instance, the aggressive expropriation of land and resources from Adivasi communities in regions like Saranda in Jharkhand has led to severe social and environmental consequences, including disease, starvation, and displacement. The current approach, characterized by advanced technology and increased militarization, marks a new phase in the state's strategy. The intensified focus on surveillance and legal reforms reflects an escalation of past practices, now framed within the broader agenda of "Viksit Bharat." The Surajkund Scheme represents a declaration of war against the people of India, marked by heightened surveillance, suppression of dissent, and militarization. These actions are a continuation of historical patterns of violence and repression, now amplified through modern technologies and legal reforms. As the state pursues its agenda of primitive accumulation and ideological consolidation, resistance from various sectors of society, including Adivasi communities and religious minorities, will be inevitable. The struggle for justice and democratic rights remains a critical challenge as India navigates this aggressive and repressive phase of its development. Unlike its predecessors in Operation Steeple Chase, Operation Green Hunt and Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar, the Surajkund Scheme is a qualitative shift which turns Bastar and the rest of India's resource rich regions in Central India as the epicentre of fascist onslaught, the tremors of which are now being felt all across India as part of the Surajkund Scheme. What is first tested in Bastar, against the Adivasi peasants and the Maoists, will then be normalized across the entire country, be it against the oppressed nationalities, Muslims, Dalits, working class, religious minorities, petite bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie, as part of the Brahmanical Hindutva fascist onslaught.

# **RONA WILSON<sup>\*</sup>**

## **Voice of Resistance is Echoing in the Heart of the Masses**

by Vallika Varshri



This article is republished from the Nazariya Website, with some political edits and additions

**Release Rona Wilson!**

**Free the BK-16 Targets of the Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism's Assault on Dissent and Democratisation!**

“People like Rona represent the last frontier, the last line of defence that dissidents have.”

Rona Wilson is one of the activists behind bars due to the BK16 case, targeted for his activism and anti-fascist intervention. He grew up in Kollam in Kerala before moving to New Delhi in the early 1990s, wherein he spent his life till his arrest. Rona was arrested in a joint operation between the Pune and Delhi police from a rented one-room in South Delhi's Munirka village. After acquiring a graduation in Zoology, Rona realised that his calling was elsewhere, thereby landing up in JNU to complete his master's in philosophy at the Centre for Political Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, wherein he was a member of Democratic Students Union (DSU).

### **Academic Work and Activism**

Rona made significant contributions in the academic field, writing on several topics addressing India's political economy, the oppression and subjugation of Muslims as well as the use of anti-terror laws to target political prisoners. The significance of his work lies in the people-centric approach he took, centring the struggle of oppressed groups while advocating for their rights in his works.

One of his most seminal works is “Manufacturing Imperialism: The Political Economy of SEZ” in which he questions the basis of the idea of development through industrialisation, propped up by foreign direct investment. He provides a seething critique of the shift in policy since the invasion of imperial capital, through the diktats of the IMF and World Bank as welcomed into India through the Liberalisation-Privatisation-Globalisation (LPG) model. This model obfuscates the very question of development itself by posing itself in a way through which pertinent aspects of the anti-people ramifications of the model are ignored. The premise of the model is that displacement is inevitable in development, an argument used to justify the brutal displacement, destruction, destitution, death, and rape of the Adivasis, peasants and labour in its effort to build consensus for a degenerate model of “development”. This development is one premised on brutal state repression, land grabbing and environmental destruction in a bid to extract resources for the foreign powers while providing cheap labour in the form of the impoverished masses. His thesis is centred around a simple question- “is there a possibility of a development which is free of any form of displacement; any form of violence on the people?” (Wilson, 2013).

The basic argument behind Rona's statement was that under India's semi-colonial, semi-feudal conditions, independent capitalist development did not take place. Due to lack of capitalist development, the industries in India which came up were unable to absorb the emergent labour displaced from agriculture. The expansionist nature of capital meant that more advanced capitalist nations (like the US during the Green Revolution for example) exported their capital into oppressed countries like India through the big bourgeoisie-landlord-bureaucracy nexus which serves as agents for imperial capital, thereby ensuring that feudal relations of production continued to dominate the now “independent India”. The domination of feudal relations curbs independent capitalist development, which ensures



that India remains reliant on the import of foreign technology and foreign direct investment. This means that Indian interests remain subservient to imperialism, which launches its assault through the Indian comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie to unleash anti-people development models to extract surplus from India (Wilson, 2013).

Rona (Wilson, 2013) does not stop at merely critiquing this model, but instead offers a solution to the same. He writes of an alternative to this parasitic system which is “a replication of the status-quo where the money lender-trader-landlord nexus holds the political power, while sharing the benefits of surplus generated in the economy with imperialism”. His proposed model of development is one which “would move towards a structural change in the economy with redistribution of land and a thoroughgoing shift in political power in favour of the toiling masses. This model envisages mass participation, with the needs of the masses forming the propellant factor giving a sense of direction to the industries resulting in the production of items that are useful for the everyday life of the people, for leading a dignified meaningful existence. This would necessitate the orientation or the choice of capital that is sensitive to the resource base of the economy and indigenous technology.

Where imperialism penetrates, fascism rises to protect the interests of foreign finance capital. This is why imperialist loot in India is supported by the ruling class ideology of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism in order to better enable resource loot. In writing about the nature of fascism in India, Rona simultaneously works for the rights of political prisoners as well as writes against the attack on oppressed groups. Through his careful study of the movement and the work he did as an activist, Rona (Punyark, 2019) provides a radical critique of the “Muslim other”. Through his Ph.D. proposal, he writes about the intensification in the violent measures against Muslims, who are posited as the enemies of the “nation” (Hindu Rashtra). He highlights how Islamophobia has been used as an ideology to consolidate the politics of Hindutva by the ruling class in India- highlighting the nature of the attack on Muslims through genocide, illegal detention, banning of Muslim organizations, ghettoization etc. In this same thesis, accepted by many renowned foreign

universities, Rona argues that the state apparatus makes Muslim men an “object of socio-cultural national gaze wherein the subject always expect a terrorist in his body”, supported by the legal fiction of a militant Muslim man, a “terrorist Muslim masculinity”. This construction of the Muslim other is disseminated through the media (a means of the ideological state apparatus) to alienate the Muslims as an “other” in the citizens, using this narrative to simultaneously portray Muslim women as “docile bodies” in need of protection (against the “terrorism of Islamic men”).

Even 5 years of wrongful incarceration is unable to quiet the revolutionary spirit with which Rona works, who launched a seething critique of the “New India” from his jail cell. The New India is one which the Prime Minister has labelled as “Amrit Kaal”. In the context of the release of Bilkis Bano's rapists, with BJP legislator C.K. Raulji justified the decision with the words “Brahmins, and Brahmins have good sanskar (culture). Their conduct in jail was good”, Rona questions the farce of democracy by saying that “New India” is a misnomer. He references the curiosity which was generated by the PM's visit to the USA in which he labelled India as a democracy in addressing a joint session of the Congress. Rona questions this by arguing, “Not a misplaced curiosity, as the 'new India' being ushered in, post-2014, has been witnessing growing assaults on the basic freedom of people. Issues that should be of least significance in the everyday life of ordinary citizens – like what you eat, drink, wear; whom you talk to, move around with; where you go, offer your prayers, stay, buy your daily provisions from – have suddenly become of utmost significance.” (Wilson, 2023)

Questioning the nature of Indian democracy is not new to Rona, with his activism around political prisoners being centred around the undemocratic nature of the “anti-terror” law in India. Rona was a founding member of the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners (CRPP) and serves as its Public Relations Secretary. The seeds of this organisation may be associated with SAR Geelani, who has known Rona from the days when both were students in the capital in the early 1990s. “Since then...we worked for human rights together,” Geelani said in an interview. “When I was arrested in 2001, Rona was one of the

persons I would always see in the courtroom. Whenever I entered the court and saw his smiling face, it soothed me,” Geelani said. This experience led to the formation of the CRPP in 2007 (Konikkara, 2019).

CRPP is an organisation fighting for the democratic rights of the oppressed sections of society. CRPP's objectives include implementing the UN Convention on Prisoners and to arrange for legal assistance to prisoners who are disadvantaged or discriminated against in receiving a fair trial. It argues that it seeks freedom for the “Muslims, Dalits, Adivasis, people from the oppressed nationalities of J&K, Manipur etc... and persons who get prosecuted by the state simply because of his or her political ideology”. CRPP is unique in that it defines and gives the scope of a “political prisoner”. Its statement says, “the persons who have been arrested or detained, for partaking in struggles of political, social and economic significance, in favour of exploited classes and oppressed castes/communities, in whatever form, and were guided not by selfish-interest, but by definite political views or ideologies, irrespective of the charges that the state has put on them, should be considered political prisoners. However, members of the state sponsored armed groups would not be considered as political prisoners. Private armies of Bihar, Salwa Judum of Chhattisgarh, SULFA of Assam and a host of groups in J&K and other states or similar groups, operating under patronage of the state/ruling parties, be viewed as state sponsored armed groups. In addition, persons directly involved in genocide, rape and mass murder or so in connivance with the state should also not be considered as political prisoner.”

Through his work in CRPP, Rona Wilson was involved in organising protest programs against the constant targeting of Muslims under various draconian laws like UAPA. He was one of the most active people involved in the campaign for the release of SAR Geelani who was illegally arrested in the case of parliament attack along with Afjal Guru. Likewise, he campaigned for the people who had been illegally detained by the police just because of their political activism or ideology. He has campaigned for the release of Prof GN Saibaba, Hem and others who had been arrested for speaking against Operation Green

Hunt carried out by the Indian state in Central India.

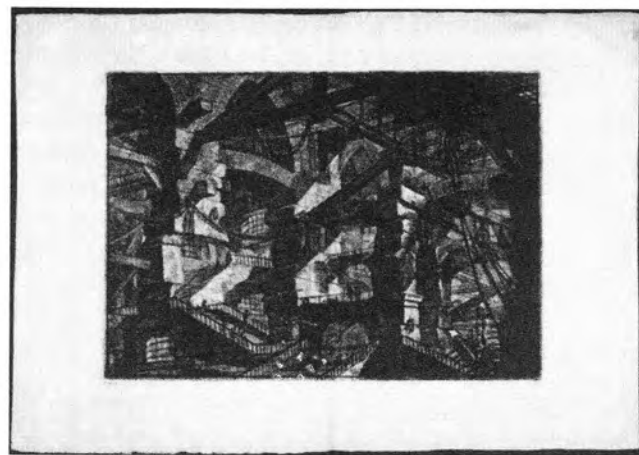
Rona made a powerful speech in which he historicised the criminal laws of India. In this speech uploaded on YouTube (Wilson, 2012), he argued that structures like the National Counter-Terrorism Center and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) should not be constituted as “repression is a necessary condition for the Indian state to perpetuate itself.” This warning has found justification in today's time wherein we see the NIA being a lapdog of the state to silence all those who dare to speak out against its oppression and exploitation of the masses- the repression of Kaimur Mukti Morcha, raids on NewsClick etc are examples of the same. Through these enforcement agencies, certain draconian laws like the UAPA, AFSPA, TODA, POTA are implemented. These laws are then utilised to further the ruling class's agendas. For example, laws like AFSPA have been utilised by the state to undermine the national liberation struggles in the Northeast regions (for example, Nagaland had declared itself an independent country even before 1947) in anticipation to curb movements and the people's demands for autonomy and nationhood. This pattern is also seen in Kashmir. Through these anti-terror laws, militarisation is increased in the regions in the name of “internal security” which is then used as a smokescreen for the indiscriminate killings, rape, and displacement of Adivasis and Dalits by labelling them as “Naxals”.

He further elaborates on how these anti-terror laws give impunity to investigative agencies to not only investigate and arrest but also execute those who do not align with the interests of the state; the very definition of terrorism is kept as vague as possible in laws like UAPA to ensure an all-encompassing scope which the state determines at its convenience. Through the UAPA, Rona said, “sanction is given to the National Counter-Terrorism Centre as well as the Intelligence Bureau to arrest, not only to investigate but also to execute ... anyone who they deem fit as committing offences that are not in the interest of the Indian state.” The recent decision of the honourable Supreme Court regarding the nature of UAPA cases, where the apex court declared that “in UAPA, the jail is the rule and bail is the exception.” The judgement gives more impunity to the government to impose

UAPA on innocents and put people behind the bars under “the illegally justified jurisprudence”.

In these regions, there is a creation of a “security industry” through investment by the government into building structures like prisons, nodal sectors to create a “war-time economy” in regions like Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur etc. The state creates an emergency-situation in the region through capital. This shows how money is being pumped to create a “buffer section” who benefit from the emergency as this war-like situation creates a space, through militarisation, into which private corporates can invest and thereby extract surplus. This leads to an informers' economy through which the state is not only benefiting economically but is also able to surveil its citizens better in these “conflict zones”. Rona ends his speech by arguing that the role of CRPP is therefore important to ensure that democratic rights are ensured for those political prisoners who have already been declared guilty through media trials. He argues that it is necessary to counter the media propaganda and generate a public opinion against the repressive state apparatus.

Along with the famed author-activist Arundhati Roy (who is facing a similar attack under UAPA as Rona along with Kashmiri lawyer Sheikh Showkat for raising the slogan of “Azad Kashmir” in a conference), Rona was also a member of the Committee for the Defense and Release of GN Saibaba and has been working on the issue of political prisoners since the early 2000s. Professor GN Saibaba is a Delhi University professor who was arrested in May 2014 on charges of having links to Maoists. Saibaba is severely disabled and uses a wheelchair. In March 2017, he was sentenced to life, and has currently been acquitted, with the Bombay HC noting that the prosecution failed to prove the charges beyond reasonable doubt.. Arundhati added that Rona's incarceration is a huge setback for the political prisoners whose rights he was fighting for. “Coordinating even one person's legal defence is a monumental task. Rona was constantly doing prison visits, dealing with prisoners' anguished families and ... lawyers who had offered their services for free. I remember him trying his best to handle all of it with his hesitant, somewhat apologetic smile,” she said.



### **The Dubious Agenda of the State to Prosecute Democratic Rights Activists**

Before his unjust and illegal arrest, Rona's work was simple, democratic and within all legal boundaries, exposing the fascistic nature of the state for targeting him for raising dissent. He worked towards arranging legal-aid for political prisoners and raising awareness of work by political prisoners, fact-checking of lies and propaganda as well as constructing a counter narrative to the dominant development ideology. Therefore, it can be unequivocally said that Rona Wilson is an activist who the state is deathly afraid of. Not only has Rona been instrumental in the creation of a united front against Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism, but he is also an activist committed to the struggle, to fighting for a society in which the exploited and oppressed can be free. In the words of his acquaintance from their college days, Professor Haragopal described Rona Wilson in glowing terms. He states that Rona is someone whose commitment towards his values is uncompromising, and that the activist's moral compass is based on the “larger concerns of the poor people, concerns of the prisoners, concerns of the tribals” and that his interaction with Rona has focused on issues like “nature of the state, the regime, the future of India, the future of the struggles”.

Rona was arrested from his Delhi home on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018, along with 4 other activists on the same day- Sudhir Dhawale, Surendra Gadling, Mahesh Raut and Shoma Sen. All five were accused of having links with the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) and charged under various sections of the UAPA. However, the state had particularly targeted Rona Wilson who in some ways knew that he was always

being watched. On his vigilance, Meena Kandasamy says that Rona was the type of person who would avoid conversations via phone or text and would meet people in more clandestine locations. This shows the extent to which the state has been stalking Rona, who was singled out in the Bhima Koregaon case. In fact, the Bhima Koregaon case is nothing but a pretext for the fascist Indian state to suppress dissent of those who represent the voices of the masses and challenge the hegemony of the exploitative Brahmanical Hindutva Fascist state. The BK-16 arrests were nothing but a pretext to arrest those people who through their actions present a revolutionary critique of the nature of the Indian state and present an alternative to the present social, political and economic order.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has accused Rona of trying to create disturbances in India since they have seized some documents from him which talk about how oppressed groups like Dalits and Muslims must join hands in the formation of an anti-fascist united front to strengthen the mass mobilisation of people. For this reason, the police singled out Rona for conspiring to assassinate prime Minister Narendra Modi, based on the claims of the police of having found a letter amongst Rona's possessions- the Pune police claimed that this was discovered on Rona's laptop and addressed to a "Comrade Prakash".

Rohan Nahar is Rona's lawyer, and he said in an interview with a journalist, "They want to try and hook Rona Wilson and Shoma Sen. It contradicts the stand of state. In one breath, they say that it is a covertly operated movement; they do everything clandestinely and do not use their real names. It is funny and ironic that once you say that, you are trying to present evidence where names are being used and emails are being sent and received," he said. Nahar added that "the entire stance of the prosecution is fraught with a lot of issues", especially since the authenticity of this letter cannot be verified. Even more ironically, the Pune police had raided Rona's house a few months before his arrest on 17 April 2018, and seized his laptop, phone and other written material and had possession of all his passwords. Along with the raid, the team of Pune police led by Deputy Commissioner of Police Pravin Munde and investigating officer, Shivaji Pawar searched the residence of Rona Wilson in Delhi by arbitrarily trying to frame him under the Sections 153 a, 117, 505 1 (b), 34 of the IPC. On this alleged letter, filed as evidence for court by the police,

Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam told ANI news agency, "it has been Prime Minister Modi's old tactic, since he was Chief Minister of Gujarat. Whenever his popularity declines, news of an assassination plot is planted. So, it should be probed how much truth is in it" (Konikkara, 2019).

Scott Harrison theorised that Marxist-Leninist-Maoists have a rather different conception of what the word 'fascism' means than the standard conception of the bourgeois ideologists. In asserting that "the real test of a bourgeoisie society (as to whether it is fascist or bourgeois democratic) is in how it acts in relation to those who are actually stirring up the masses... And that means that how the state acts against revolutionaries and revolutionary parties, and the militant mass movements they organise and lead, is a key indicator of whether it is a fascist state or not." Here, it is quite fascinating to note what the then Defence Minister, P Chindabaram, himself said to (ex)-FBI Robert Mueller about NIA- "new weapon in hand to combat terrorism," which was "perilously close to crossing constitutional limits" in empowering the NIA. He expected the act to be challenged in court, as it ascribed "certain investigating powers to the NIA which may be seen to conflict with responsibility that is exclusively with the states" (MS Nileena, 2022).

Firstly, the files found in Gadling's drive appear to be edited- the copy of the letter's text is justified alignment to the media, but left-aligned when the copy was given to the lawyers of the (falsely) accused. Importantly, the police violated the Information Technology Act, 2000, by not securing digital evidence properly, failing to provide hash values (unique ID number given to evidence which aid in verifying that it is not tampered with) during seizures, and delaying their provision by months. Grover argued in court that this is in violation of Section 88A of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 which prohibits presumption of the originator of electronic evidence. Incriminating files were only found on devices seized without following proper procedure. Moreover, the police have denied the accused their legal right to possess and inspect copies of evidence being produced against them. The police have delayed providing the accused with the cloned bitstream images (copy of all data on a device, including hidden



and deleted files, unlike a standard file copy which only includes visible files. This ensures complete data preservation) of the devices seized from them, which ideally should have been provided to them at the time of the raids. Thanawala (2023) reports in *The Leaflet* about other legal violations in the chargesheet against Rona Wilson and Shoma Sen. Grover argued that, according to IT (Security Procedure) Rules, 2004, electronic records must have secure digital signatures to be considered secure. He claimed that sending the device to the FSL without immediate hash value verification allows for potential tampering. Citing the Supreme Court's ruling in *Anvar P.V. versus P.K. Basheer* (2014), Grover emphasised the volatile nature of electronic evidence and the lack of presumption of authenticity for insecure records under the IT Act, 2000 as Section 3 states that “an electronic record shall be deemed to be a secure electronic record for the purpose of the Act if it has been authenticated by means of a secure digital signature”.

National security laws and exceptions to Article 19 have always been justified within the Constitution to be used as a weapon against dissenters, against those who challenge the state authority i.e. bourgeois rule. The Bhima Koregaon case exposed the farce of law as one which propagates for “equality, justice and freedom”, revealing the naked truth universal to all class societies: the law is the weapon for the bourgeoisie to propagate, expand and maintain their class rule. Despite failing to meet the legal standards set by its own Constitution and legal apparatus, when the law stopped serving the ruling class as in the case of the BK-16, it was discarded in favour of an open fascist assault by the state. In various petitions, the victims of the Bhima Koregaon-16 conspiracy case have asserted their arrests as illegal, the legal case against them built on baseless grounds. In a *Caravan Report* (Kaushik and Sivan, 2019), legal analysis shows how the police have tampered with the evidence in the handling of the case.

Years after his unjust arrest, Arsenal Consulting analysed the electronic copies of the computers of co-defendants Rona and Surendra at the request of the defence team. Arsenal Consulting (a Massachusetts-based digital forensics firm) had stated that an attacker used malware to infiltrate Wilson's laptop and

deposited at least ten incriminating letters on it. These included a purported letter to a Maoist militant discussing the need for guns and ammunition, and even urging the banned group to assassinate Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A year later, a report was released by the *Washington Post* revealing that Rona was targeted by two separate groups of hackers before he was arrested. The report reveals that one of the groups that carried out the hacking, referred to as *ModifiedElephant* by SentinelOne, allegedly planted documents on Wilson's device. *ModifiedElephant*, the main hacker, sent emails with documents or attachments – laden with commercially available malware like *NetWire* and *DarkComet* – that were tailored to the victim's interests and were often copied to multiple recipients they knew, SentinelOne said. Wilson received at least 32 emails from *ModifiedElephant*, and Gadling was the recipient of 40 such mails from the group (*WashingtonPost*, 2021).

SentinelOne identified the other hacking group that targeted the activist as *SideWinder*. International cybersecurity experts have tracked *SideWinder* operations against targets in Pakistan and China. Rona Wilson had received dozens of e-mails – some from other activists and some disguised as news articles – that had malware meant to infiltrate his computer. Three independent experts in the United States and Europe reviewed the SentinelOne report at *The Post*'s request and concurred with its conclusions. Concerningly, the researchers said that the earliest attack on Wilson can be traced back to a decade ago, though the email attacks intensified in 2014 and continued until at least 2016. Snorre Fagerland, a Norwegian cybersecurity researcher who co-wrote a 2013 report on *Hangover*, said the newest details about the campaign against Wilson contribute to a better understanding of the ties between attackers who may be operating in India and targeting foreign adversaries and domestic dissidents alike. “It's safe to say that we have learned a lot over the last decade,” Fagerland said, “not only about the methods, but also about targeting and how the Indian advanced persistent threat ecosystem works.” Even before this report came to light, the previous year saw an investigation by a global consortium including *The Post* revealed that hundreds of phone numbers from India appeared on a global list that included some

numbers selected for surveillance by NSO Group's clients using its Pegasus tool, which is licensed only to government agencies. In a detailed report released on 17th December 2021, Arsenal Consulting, and Amnesty Tech Security Lab, have confirmed that the iPhone of one of the key accused, Mr. Rona Wilson, was attacked multiple times by the Pegasus spyware (Washington Post, 2021).

Rona fought staunchly against the state despite knowing that his arrest was inevitable, driven by the fire of passion for revolution, by the recognition of the injustices of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism propped up by imperialism and its lapdogs within India. Haragopal said that Rona knew that he was being watched by the state. "But he was also very careful because he was interested in his career," and wanted to study further, he said. These reports expose the basic fault line in the case against Rona Wilson- there is neither any rational nor any legal basis to the same. This is a bogus case meant to create a chilling atmosphere, a tactic of psychological warfare against progressive and democratic minded people, people who advocate for the rights of the exploited and oppressed sections of society, to silence them. Rona himself sums up his experience, "To have spent more than five years in prison, for alleged offences under the most draconian acts of the Indian Penal Code, fully aware that the only 'crime' you and your co-defendants have committed is speaking truth to power, is an experience that is surreal. To live such a quotidian life in prison is a dystopia that stares at you. Yet you have little choice in prison but to engage with this audacity. It is through words that you confront this dystopia, name it".

### **Release Rona Now!**

CRPP, in its statement against the raid on the home of Rona Wilson has summed up the Bhima Koregaon conspiracy case aptly: "That these raids are happening at a time when voices of Dalit resistance are transforming into an avalanche of resistance against the anti-people policies of the state indicates the deliberate attempt by the powers that be to stifle all voices of protest. Moreover, it exposes the brazen vengeance of the state against Dalit upsurge organising against the unbridled loot and plunder of resources by imperialist capital aided by the forces of Hindutva

Fascism. By targeting activists and peoples' lawyers, the state is blatantly trying to snuff out even voices of defence from political prisoners. It must be understood that violence that ensued in Bhima Koregaon is being used as an alibi by the ruling classes to browbeat activists and lawyers who have been fighting for the people into silence. These pre-meditated raids reflect the desperation of the increasingly police state and its growing tendency within the executive to frame activists and lawyers under false charges and keep them in confinement under prolonged incarceration."

At the time of his arrest, Rona was waiting to go abroad in order to finish studies. This opportunity was taken from him, his potential and individual stifled to serve the insidious agenda of the state. Haragopal believed Rona to be a promising scholar. "I thought he would shape himself into one of the leading intellectuals of this country," he said. Rona would not compromise on his values, Haragopal said. On finding himself in jail, Rona writes to his family, "The life in jail, in confinement, gives you ample opportunity to see things in a different light. And as a human rights activist, defender, it gives me tremendous opportunity to look at what I had written and stood for in the last 15 years or more from the other side of the bar."

Rona Wilson is an ordinary man, fighting an extraordinary fight against a corrupt and degenerate system of imperialistic loot and Brahminical Hindutva Fascism. Rona is a scholar, an activist, a person driven by the need for revolution. He is a Marxist but not a criminal, he is a dissenter but not a terrorist. The state has painted him so, like they have painted those who fight against injustice, for hope, as terrorists, as anti-nationals. The question remains- whose nation? In a country which is itself a prison house of nationalities, are we to accept the state's agenda of establishing a Hindu Rashtra? Are we to accept a "nation" which reduces the workers and peasants to slave-like conditions, a nation built on the blood of Muslims, of Adivasis, of oppressed castes, of women and other exploited and oppressed groups? Are we to accept a nation which throws its most patriotic, country-loving people into jail for having a voice, albeit one which speaks to the people, of their demands, instead of the chauvinistic and reactionary

agenda of the state? No, we cannot accept this as a country. We cannot accept anything but the unconditional release of Comrade Rona, of the release of all political prisoners who fight selflessly for us.

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# **NGOs AND THEIR ROLE IN COUNTER- INSURGENCY OPERATIONS: A Case Study of the Role of NGOs in Hasdeo Aranya People's Movement**

**A Nazariya Editorial**



“Environmentalism without class struggle  
is just gardening.”  
– Chico Mendes

In May 2024, environmentalist Alok Shukla was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize, considered the green Nobel Prize, for his work with the Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan (CBA) and the Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti (HABSS) which have been struggling against coal mining operations in the ecologically sensitive Hasdeo Aranya forest, known popularly as the lungs of Chhattisgarh. The official statement by the organizers of the Goldman Environmental Prize 2024 reads, “Alok Shukla led a successful community campaign that saved 445,000 acres of biodiversity-rich forests from 21 planned coal mines in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. In July 2022, the government cancelled the 21 proposed coal mines in Hasdeo Aranya.... one of the largest intact forest areas in India.” After collecting the prize, Shukla addressed the media and declared to the Frontline magazine, “the Hasdeo movement is a model of resistance.” South of Hasdeo, another decades old struggle has

been ongoing, against similar issues of corporatization through mining and construction projects via rampant militarization, in Bastar division of Chhattisgarh. While in Hasdeo, the leading bodies have organized the local Adivasi peasants in peaceful rallies, gatherings and protests against mining and deforestation, in Bastar, the Adivasi peasants have relied on both organized armed struggle as well as sit-ins and mass rallies as the methods of resistance to defend their lands. The conferring of the Goldman Environmental Prize upon Shukla, the face of the Hasdeo campaign and his emphatic declaration of the success of his campaign as a viable model for the peasantry of India raises various questions for every astute political activist. “No Appa, I didn't get eaten up by a tiger... No, like I already told you, there has been no Maoist activity here in the last 10 years... Yes it's a really beautiful place.... We are next to a cow and poultry farm, like from an illustration in a book... Yes, I'll be careful. No, no Maoists for sure. Or tigers for that matter. Bye...,” (Gade, 2018) reads a conversation by visual journalist Satwik Gade with his father, during his 2018 visit to the Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti office. The narrative is



clear: the leadership of the Hasdeo movement is one representing peace, tranquillity, a fight to restore a world straight out of the fantasies of Rudyard Kipling, while the Maoists posit a threat equivalent to that of the man-eater Sher Khan from the very fables, threatening the safety of this peaceful resistance! Yet, as with all fantasies, the truth is somewhat far off, with about 4 lakh trees facing the axe in Hasdeo Aranya for the second phase of the Parsa East Kete Basan (PEKB) coal mining efforts under the aegis of the newly elected BJP government in Chhattisgarh, all in favour of the big industrialist Adani Group. In sharp contrast, in Bastar, where the Maoists, the Adivasis have managed to stop all such activities. The questions for us then are two: first, why does Bastar elude corporatization, even when parts of it (Abhujmarh) are the most militarized zones in the world and second, does Hasdeo Aranya offer us an alternative to the resistance strategy in Bastar? In light of this discussion, will it become adequately clear that as part of the Indian state's Surajkund Scheme, even the ruling classes will promote a specific type of leadership within people's movements to delegitimize actual resistance of the people.

### **NGOs on Ground: New Contrás Dressed in Local Clothing**

While Alok Shukla and the HABSS serve as the fronts of the operation, the Hasdeo campaign is actually powered by a litany of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which have been given ample space by the governments and the ruling classes of India until very recently. The formation of NGOs comes after the height of the revolutionary upsurge ushered in by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China and the Vietnam national liberation war during the 1960s which saw overwhelming participation of students, youth, workers and people of oppressed nations in Maoist (then, MLM Thought) organizations as the universal lessons of the Chinese revolution started getting adopted by Marxists in all parts of the world. A few decades prior to this process, imperialism had sought to contain the crisis of revolutionary upsurge by ending its policy of direct colonization, shifting towards neo-colonial tactics and converting the former colonies into semi-colonial countries where a new, dependent but local section of the big bourgeoisie was transferred power to. This

dependent class, often in alliance with the big landlords, would maintain the grip of imperialism in the former colonies but this form of class rule often adopted aesthetics of socialism and genuine national liberation, legitimized under the phraseology of "decolonization." These new states and their subservient and dependent ruling classes could only hold the fort for so long as the 1960s saw the emergence of various economic crisis which compelled the oppressed and exploited masses to question the nature of their so-called independence. Imperialism, now led by the hegemonic presence of US imperialism, sought to adopt neoliberalism as its policy to extract further superprofits from semi-colonial and (the remaining) colonial countries. But now with the masses armed with a progressive consciousness, it had to once again prop up an agent to do its bidding in the now lively 'resistance market' for neoliberalism to take off without causing a breakdown of imperialist grip on the oppressed and exploited peoples. "Neoliberal politicians began to finance and promote a parallel strategy 'from below,' the promotion of 'grassroots' organization with an 'anti-statist' ideology to intervene among potentially conflictory classes, to create a 'social cushion.' These organizations were financially dependent on neoliberal sources and were directly involved in competing with socio-political movements for the allegiance of local leaders and activist communities. By the 1990s these organizations, described as 'nongovernmental,' numbered in the thousands and were receiving close to four billion dollars worldwide," writes sociology professor James Petras (1997).

In India, NGOs have swarmed like flies to areas where red resistance flew high, rapidly trying suck life out of people's movements in the name of offering a route of 'peaceful resistance' to them. Jharkhand became the first victim to these practices, with the NGOs opposing the state in lip service and eventually causing a few pockets in the Saranda forest to allow mining operations, an unimaginable scenario during the height of the Maoist resistance in the West Singhbhum-Saikela region in the Jharkhand-West Bengal border area. In 2011, the Indian state initiated the Saranda Action Plan (SAP) wherein the government mapped out various short term and long term 'developmental policies,' ranging from providing electricity, education, employment to houses, food and vehicles. The SAP aimed to sap the life out of the

just resistance of the people via providing them with freebies so as to coerce them away from their lands which contain mineral ores. The SAP states that most of its tasks could only be achieved with the aid of corporates and NGOs, mentioning that “to empower the tribals and to promote sustainable livelihoods, social mobilization into SHGs and their federations is a sine qua non. This can only be done by a sensitive support organization like a NGO.” (GoI, 2011). Under the Surajkund Scheme, the Indian state continues to intensify its Jharkhand-specific Operation Clean (FACAM, 2024) utilizing the model proposed in the SAP. As the plan states, the aim of the NGOs is to coerce the Adivasi peasants into state-backed 'local' forms of organizations like Self-Help Groups. James Petras explains this phenomenon, “typically, NGO ideologues counterpose 'state' power to 'local' power. State power is, they argue, distant from its citizens, autonomous, and arbitrary, and it tends to develop interests different from and opposed to those of its citizens, while local power is necessarily closer and more responsive to the people..... the emphasis on 'local activity' serves the neoliberal regimes since it allows its foreign and domestic backers to dominate macro-socio-economic policy and to channel most of the state's resources toward subsidies for export capitalists and financial institutions.”

On purely military terms, it is an open secret that worldwide, imperialists employ NGOs as a formal part of their counter-insurgency operations. For example, Section 2.8 of the US Army Field Manual No. 3-24 'Counterinsurgency' states that intergovernmental organizations (IOs) and NGOs provide the counterinsurgency operations the required expertise to complement the military in implementing the Hearts and Minds counter-insurgency strategy. The manual clearly states, in Section 2.29 that “NGOs play an important role in resolving insurgencies” and should ideally be present prior to military operations and should remain in the area even after military operations end, in a bid to curb resurgence. Subsequent sections go on to elaborate that the state will often find it practical to avoid direct interactions between the military and the NGOs as the aim is for the NGOs is to win over the local population on behalf of the state. Legal expert Jamie Williamson (2011), an advisor for the International Committee of the Red Cross, notes that,

“although the respective mandates of all actors are to be respected, it is clear that the military remains in the director's seat.” Since the days of Operation Green Hunt, the Indian state has employed the tactics first tested during the British imperialists' suppression of the protracted people's war led by the Malayan National Liberation Army in the 1940s and later developed as the Hearts and Minds strategy during the failed suppression of the Vietnamese national liberation war. After the setbacks suffered in the OGH phase, Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar and now the Surajkund Scheme expand upon the same tenets in new ways and winning hearts and minds remains a key factor, for which NGOs are bound to play a crucial role, in tandem with the overt militarization of resistance areas by the Indian state's paramilitary. Akin to the CIA-backed Contras which aimed to foil the Sandanistas in Nicaragua, NGOs serve as slow poison to destabilize people's movements.

For our particular case study, in the Hasdeo campaign, one finds that Alok Shukla functions as the figurehead of a web of NGOs who serve, for the lack of a more appropriate phrase, frontal organizations of monopoly capitalists like Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Microsoft's Bill and Melinda Gates, Germany-based engineering giants BOSCH Corporation, tech company HP Inc., shell corporations of Bezos' ex-wife MacKenzie Scott, Henry Ford's brainchild in the Ford Foundation, British billionaire Alan Parker, along with state funds like Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Foreign Commonwealth Development Office of the United Kingdom, International Developmental Research Centre of Canada, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), as well as international fronts like European Commission, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank itself. Indian comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie finds its presence in funds by Tata family, Azim Premji Foundation and the Shriram Group. Indian state invests heavily in many of the NGOs involved in Hasdeo, through various channels such as the NITI Aayog, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Water Resources etc. Even right-wing parties like Germany's Christian Social Union of Bavaria are found investing in the Hasdeo campaign via their Hanns Seidel Foundation. All these entities utilize various charitable, philanthropic, supposedly

social justice oriented fronts to funnel foreign finance capital into the Hasdeo campaign. HABSS finds itself backed by NGOs like Centre for Policy Research (CPR), an old think tank established since the 1970s, and a much smaller NGO called Jana Abhivyakti, which is part of the larger NGO Society for Rural Urban & Tribal Initiative (SRUTI). To make matters complicated, SRUTI finds most of its fundings from a Sweden-based indigenous-rights NGO called the Tenure Facility, which is backed by fronts of the above mentioned foundations. CPR itself has recently been found to be funnelling funds towards Jana Abhivyakti!

Essentially, NGOs are functioning like shell companies to funnel foreign finance capital from monopoly capitalists into the Hasdeo campaign in a bid to preserve their façade of neutrality and make the entirety of the campaign seem truly “grassroots” and “local” in nature when in reality, it is backed by imperialists who have their hands bloodied with a history of curtailing people's movements. The Ford Foundation and the Gates Foundation have been particularly notorious for their promotion of the destructive “Green Revolution” in the agrarian sphere and their destruction of public healthcare in favour of private delivery of healthcare which has robbed millions of people from healthcare access. While others like the Tatas have a history of relying on the extremities of privatization, such as Special Economic Zones, which have led to massive people's resistance in places like Singur in West Bengal. In fact, the Tata Group has heavy involvement in various Adivasi areas in Odisha and Jharkhand, threatening to displace hundreds of Adivasi peasants in places like Keonjhar and Noamundi, and are facing resistance themselves! Notably, none of the Tata mines in the Bastar, such as the proposed mine in Bailadila hills of Dantewada district, ever saw the mining operations begin in the region.

It is also pertinent to point out that some of these NGOs are facing troubles with the Indian state, particularly since the arrival of Brahmanical Hindutva fascist BJP in power in 2014. CPR, for example, had its FRA licence revoked and has also lost its decades old tax exemption. The leadership of the CBA, the parent-body of HABSS, was also detained by the Indian state upon its protests against the felling of trees for Adani's PEKB coal mine this year. This

contradiction does not signify the end of the NGO involvement in curtailing people's resistance, nor does it signify any revolutionary character within the Hasdeo campaign. Instead, it represents the developing contradiction between the liberal-oriented imperialist bourgeoisie of the world and the outwardly fascist imperialist bourgeoisie. Fascism is not a circus of monkeys, but a coherent doctrine of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, as many of the arguments given above are often cited by the fascists upon their curtailment of NGOs and such movements. “Fascism recognizes the real needs which gave rise to socialism and trade unionism, giving them due weight in the guild or corporative system in which divergent interests are coordinated and harmonized in the unity of the state,” summed up Benito Mussolini, in his pamphlet the Doctrine of Fascism. Therefore, fascism is the apex of bourgeoisie's class rule, which in India is comprador feudal fascism, and it latches onto the same arguments that communists posit. But while communism aims to change the relations production via seizure of state power into the hands of the proletariat, fascism aims to preserve the existing reality through identification of the symptoms and offers alternatives which strengthen the reactionary states of the ruling classes. Fascists have themselves propped up NGOs which directly serve their strategic interests and curtailed NGOs which do not do the same. Narendra Modi's BJP government's outwardly fascist politics is continuously making sections of the liberal imperialist bourgeoisie uncomfortable, not due to any progressive morality of the imperialists but due to their recognition of the lack of longevity of the brutal Brahmanical Hindutva fascist regime, which is continuously facing prolonged opposition from the masses. This contradiction has materialized in the form of the BBC documentary “India: The Modi Question,” the subsequent protests against its banning, the backing given to the Rahul Gandhi-led Congress party which serves as a more palatable foil to Modi in the eyes of the liberal-minded bourgeoisie and the ultimate reduction of BJP's parliamentary presence. This contradiction is also well reflected in the curtailment of various establishment NGOs which had steadfastly served the Indian state for decades, which includes the likes of CPR. Instead, the BJP has promoted formation of NGOs which openly serve the strategic interests of Brahmanical Hindutva fascism.

The BJP has utilized the phraseology of decolonization, indigeneity and along with ideas from post-colonial, post-modern discourses to give its legitimacy to its crackdown and 'fight against foreign agents' in the NGOs. Prabhu Chawla (2024), former Editor-in-Chief of the right-wing New Indian Express writes, "the latest round of suspension and taming of NGOs is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mission to neutralise all institutions which his party believes undermines the cultural, social, religious and unique identity of India. Purging the NGOs of all illiberal elements and choking their financial pipeline is an unwritten part of BJP's manifesto." This is not anti-imperialism from the fascists, but merely a purging of the other section of the bourgeoisie in favour of their own. During 2020 alone, for example, 736 new NGOs, backed by the BJP's parent organization the RSS, became party to government sponsoring (Sagar, 2020). For those making plays at revolution, the matter should be clear, in that the inter-ruling class contradiction during rule of fascism is bound to intensify, especially when the imperialist bourgeoisie across the world are moving against each other via proxy wars more and more. The nature of the crackdown on the NGO backers of HABSS and CBA should then be identified correctly as part of this trend, and not one of revolution.



### **Role of Revolutionaries Amidst People's Struggles Being Co-opted by NGOist Leadership**

What then, do we find amidst this sea of NGOs? A left-oriented student organization, going by the name of COLLECTIVE has also participated alongside HABSS, released booklets on the matter and has held various events discussing the events in Hasdeo Aranya. The political programme of COLLECTIVE does not mention the names of Marxists but utilises

chunks of Marxist analysis of the conditions of India, hailing the Naxalbari uprising in its programme. The stated goal of this student organization is, "a revolutionary transformation towards ending capitalism, patriarchy, caste and other structures of oppression and discrimination (based on ability, language, religion, race, ethnicity, region, nationality etc.), towards the establishment of a society where all forms of exploitation will be abolished."

"Hasdeo Will Win," COLLECTIVE's pamphlet on the movement declares. Curiously, this organization has little to say about the actual Naxalites in the present. Interestingly, COLLECTIVE's programme has its own critical analysis of NGOs, "the global hegemony of capitalism is ideologically reflected in the rejection of the revolutionary task of complete social transformation. Instead we see efforts through funded NGOs emerging to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the state. They are advocating for the 'empowerment' and 'inclusion' of the underprivileged rather than questioning the structural inequality, exploitation and dispossession." How then, will Hasdeo win, we ask? Where is COLLECTIVE's critique of the NGOized Hasdeo movement and where is its alternative model of leadership to this struggle, which will lead to its stated goal? Since COLLECTIVE has astonishingly cowered from stating that its goal is communism, we will invoke V.I. Lenin to remind our secretively communist friends on what is to be done by revolutionaries when faced with such movements. "to belittle the Marxist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the spontaneous development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, to its development along the lines of the Credo programme; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschafterei*, and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Bolsheviks; is to combat spontaneity, to divert the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Marxism." (Lenin, 1902). The essence of Lenin's point, is that in the realm of ideology, there is only the ideology of the ruling bourgeoisie and the exploited



proletariat. Even in movements, these two will always be in a contest for leadership of said movements. The task of revolutionaries is to combat the bourgeois ideology and establish Marxist leadership to truly take the movements to an end point where they can succeed. Once again, we ask, how will Hasdeo win, when it is led by the ideology of the ruling classes, the agents of the ruling classes in NGOs and the revolutionaries who tail this leadership, instead of exposing it and offering the people a genuine alternative? Tailing of bourgeois leadership is strengthening the bourgeoisie. We laud the efforts of COLLECTIVE in uniting with the peasantry in Hasdeo Aranya and striving to propagate their genuine demands but we implore them to engage in genuine ideological struggle with the NGOist leadership that sits atop the campaign.

Relegating the postponement of ideological struggle against the NGOist leadership and the task of their exposure to a distant future has potentially worse effects for the internal line struggles within organizations too. As previously mentioned, vast sections of people participated in the revolutionary upsurge of the 60s and 70s. Yet, many of the revolutionaries of the time are now found in NGOs and academia, manoeuvring behind the homogenous phraseology of "civil society." All revolutionary movements go through periods of ebbs and flows. In these periods, many are found leaving the organizations they are working in, for greener pastures, often adopting revisionism of Marxism or even outright bourgeois ideological frameworks to justify their abdications. Prime examples of such individuals are the likes of Communist Party of USA activist Angela Davis, now a revisionist academic, former Black Panther Party activist turned lawyer Kathleen Cleaver who was sponsored by the NGO Fletcher Foundation to study at Harvard, former Black Panther Party Chairwoman Elaine Brown who formed her own NGOs while claiming to be working for liberation and now runs an organization that helps former prisoners start their own businesses! Others like the anti-imperialist urban guerrilla organization Weather Underground's Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn, the latter of whom featured on the FBI's top 10 most wanted list for seven years, were rapidly ushered into academia through clinical programs at various universities. James Petras offers the reasoning for this phenomenon, "[this] conversion of many

ex-Marxists to the NGO formula and practice, Anti-Statism was the ideological transit ticket from class politics to 'community development,' from Marxism to the NGOs." Due to this anti-statism, many a revolutionary may be foiled into forming unity with NGOs and tailing NGO leadership of people's movements.

Now often, the first response that may come from well-intentioned cadre of such organizations will be the misinterpretation that we are suggesting non-participation in these struggles. Karl Marx (1843) had clarified this nearly 200 years ago, "we develop new principles for the world out of the world's own principles. We do not say to the world: Cease your struggles, they are foolish; we will give you the true slogan of struggle. We merely show the world what it is really fighting for, and consciousness is something that it has to acquire, even if it does not want to." It is these conscious elements who form the core vanguard of any revolutionary transformation of society. Therefore, it is these conscious elements who will push incessantly against all bourgeois leadership, deviations and co-options of struggle, including the current NGOist iteration that affects the Hasdeo Aranya movement. Lenin writes, "all worship of the spontaneity of the working class movement, all belittling of the role of 'the conscious element', of the role of Marxism, means, quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers. All those who talk about 'overrating the importance of ideology', about exaggerating the role of the conscious element, etc., imagine that the labour movement pure and simple can elaborate, and will elaborate, an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers 'wrest their fate from the hands of the leaders.' But this is a profound mistake."

Tailism of the NGOist leadership of the Hasdeo people's movement, ignoring the presence of Maoism a few hundred kilometres away from Hasdeo Aranya in Bastar, indirect servitude towards foreign finance capital, and uniting with a bourgeois leadership without assertion of the ideology of the working class and running on the path of least resistance, that of false peace and surrendering the lives of the masses to the moral whims of the ruling classes' paramilitary and the police is a grave betrayal. Thus, we urge the genuine and well-intentioned cadre of

COLLECTIVE to struggle against the inadequate leadership that guides their organization and transform it into an organization actually capable of ushering revolutionary transformation of society, worthy of the Naxalite credentials its program tries to uphold.

### **Material Force Must be Overthrown by Material Force: Why the People Will Win**

Finally, the matter comes to understanding what the alternative to all this is. Democratic rights activist and lawyer K.G. Kannabiran would often say, "Naxalism is not the problem but the solution." In vast parts of the country, the Adivasi peasants have adopted Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as their ideological-political-organizational outlook for many reasons, but the primary being that Maoism offers the most advanced ideological development to organize their age-old resistance against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism in India. The historical development of anti-feudal anti-imperialist people's resistance in Bastar is a testament to this. The Adivasi peasants have often shaken themselves off the yoke of ruling classes, such as the Halka rebellion of 1774. During this period, the Adivasi peasants fought back against the invading alliance of the imperialist British East India Company and their feudal allies the Marathas using armed struggle to defend their lands against an invading armed force. This was followed by the Paralkot rebellion of 1825 in Abhujmarh hill area where the Adivasi peasants of Abhujmarh once again organized armed struggle against the British and Marathas who were intending to invade the Abhujmarh hills after crushing the Halka rebellion, the Maria rebellion of 1842 which was a 20 year-long protracted guerrilla war to protect the cultural practices and lands of Adivasi peasants who had been grinding under the joint rule of imperialist British and feudal Marathas. Soon, they rose again during the Koi revolt of 1859 where the Adivasi peasants once again took to armed struggle in opposition to the Zamindars being given contracts to cut Sal trees in the forests where the peasants lived. The nature of the struggle became more and more sharp, especially after the Indian peasantry rose against imperialists during the war of 1857, which led to the Muria revolt of 1867 where the Adivasi peasants not only waged protracted guerrilla war against the state but eventually ended up moving from the countryside to surround the city of

Jagdalpur where the ruling classes lived. This struggle was only quashed after the encirclement was broken by the British army attacking from outside. Finally, we saw the famous Bhumkal movement where the British imperialists started reserving large areas of the forests for corporations to extract natural resources from which led to large scale displacement of Adivasi peasants from their lands culminating in them uniting under the call of Gunda Dhur in waging guerrilla war against the imperialists. The Adivasi peasants of Bastar continue their struggle against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism, in the form of corporate loot of natural resources, displacement of peasants from the forest lands and destruction of the Adivasi culture under the banner of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. At the same time, peasants in the area adopted various other methods such as sit-ins, strikes and mass rallies, beginning from the Silger movement in 2021 which saw thousands of Adivasi peasants mobilize against militarization and corporate loot of natural resources and inspired hundreds of such movements across the country under the united banner of Moolwasi Bachao Manch. Through the course of genuine anti-imperialist, anti-feudal class struggle, the Adivasi peasants have employed Marxism as a living science of change in front of our eyes, in a time when the ruling classes are hell-bent on shunning the idea of inevitability of revolution.

The continuous development of the people's resistance in areas like Bastar, whether armed or unarmed, has led to the remarkable rise of Janathana Sarkars, or people's governments, in these resistance areas wherein the Adivasi peasants practice self-governance, beyond the ambits of the reactionary Indian state. While the Indian state continues to form fake Gram Sabhas to give a pass to its projects of corporate loot, in violation of the PESA Act, the Adivasi peasants have formed their own embryonic form of a new democratic state, putting into practice not just governance for themselves but the idea of what their politics translates to on a day-to-day basis for the rest of the oppressed and exploited masses of India. Instead of recognizing the Janathana Sarkars as legitimate forms of self-governance in Scheduled Areas under the PESA Act, the Indian state has tried to delegitimize the Janathana Sarkars as mere fronts of the Communist Party of India (Maoist). But by all accounts, the Janathana Sarkars serve as united fronts

of all genuine anti-imperialist anti-feudal forces, united in the cause of forming a people's own form of governance and propagating a people's model of development versus an imperialist model of development. This has manifested wherever the masses have been organized by an anti-imperialist anti-feudal leadership.

Take for example the People's Committee Against Police Atrocities (PCPA) in Lalgarh. Per the words of Maoist leader Kishenji, the PCPA and the Maoists are two different forces. The PCPA, while not the same as a Janathana Sarkar, functioned as a united front of various anti-imperialist forces. Yet, under the banner of PCPA, not only did tens of thousands people mobilize for public hearings, establish new irrigation systems in an arid Jungle Mahal area, create parallel healthcare systems for the people as well as collective farming practices in a matter of few years, tasks which the Indian state had failed to accomplish in more than a half century. Under the Janathana Sarkars, not only have the Adivasi peasants developed new types of seed varieties suitable for their agrarian conditions without the intervention of imperialist-backed HYV seeds, constructed check dams, schools where the children are educated in their local languages, even cultural practices like the Gondi languages have advanced under the Janathana Sarkars under which the Gondi language was formulated into a written script for the first time. Anti-imperialist anti-feudal resistance is not just mere resistance, it is an answer to all backwards form of class rule in the form of a people's alternative. As Naxalite leader Charu Majumdar would say, "one who cannot make others dream can never be a revolutionary." The same applies to the leadership of people's movements. It is only genuine anti-imperialist anti-feudal leadership which is capable of envisioning an alternative and putting its ideas to the test during the course of a people's resistance, turning a resistance into a movement for more. This alternative is what NGOized leaderships are created to kill.

We at Nazariya Magazine hail the just resistance of the people all over the country, whether it be in Hasdeo Aranya, Bastar, Jharkhand or Punjab. At the same time, we laud the leadership of people's movements which shun imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism, such as the leadership of Moolwasi Bachao Manch and even the one provided by armed Maoists. We urge all genuine democratic-minded progressive forces in the country to shun the NGOs involved in co-opting leadership

of people's movements, as part of the counter-insurgency operations of the reactionary Indian state, and expose their presence. History provides us with ample reasoning as to why the people of India will continue to fight and develop their forms of struggle, their class consciousness during the course of said struggles, until victory is achieved. We urge all anti-imperialist anti-feudal forces to unite under the banner of their politics, not under the banner of NGOs and rally in support of people's resistance for a people-centric alternative. History has offered us the baton that was held by the Soviet Red Army, the baton with which it smashed fascism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the workers and the colonized people of the world united in a people's war for the defence of the only socialist state in the world, USSR. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as Brahmanical Hindutva fascism launches its most brutal offensive on the people in the form of the Surajkund Scheme, we are burdened by our historic responsibility to unite against this fascist offensive and protect the people's alternative.

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# **OPERATION KAGAAR:**

## **The Idea of Peace in Bastar**

by Ramnit Kaur



While the world celebrated New Year's day, the 1st of January saw a harrowing day for the villagers of Mutvendi, located in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh. When the security forces open-fired indiscriminately upon the villagers, a six-month old infant named Mangli who was feeding on her mother's breast, was killed by a bullet that pierced through her mother's hand. While villagers, including the child's father and family, grieved and struggled for compensation, mainstream media outlets either ignored the event, or others like "Times of India", "Indian Express" etc. leaped onto the red-tagging, Naxal-blaming fake news bandwagon, declaring the death to be a result of cross-firing between the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) and the CRPF, wherein the killing bullet had been fired from the Maoists' weapons. Journalistic standards of integrity and an attempt at basic cross-checking of the Security Force's narrative, are neglected by these media outlets whenever an opportunity presents itself to spread the myth of the "Naxal terror". Villagers of Mutvendi, including the infant's family, have in ground reports and local interviews, clearly declared that the death was not the result of a "cross fire". Drunk security officials came up to the village and started indiscriminately firing.

Cases of such indiscriminate firing, death, rape,

encounter, and subsequent red-tagging of murdered Adivasis is a common tactic of the Indian state in its war on the Indian people. The Adivasi populations of India have been fighting for centuries for rights over their jal-jangal-zameen. Though the constitution of "independent" India itself gives Adivasis in "Scheduled Areas" a right to self-governance of their ancestral jal-jangal-zameen; these rights are eroded both by legal and illegal means by State apparatuses. In a thirst to open up all viable land to mining operations or industrial penetration by big corporations such as Tata, Jindal Steel, POSCO, among others, these lands- those that legally and principally belong to the adivasi communities inhabiting them, are pushed open for these corporate looters of Indian wealth and resources. While these comprador agents and the Indian State accumulate wealth for imperial finance, the adivasi and local communities are forcibly displaced in a genocidal mission. Innocent, common citizens and those adopting constitutional means of protest are put under attack as much as the Naxalite forces that had risen in the area to combat the forcible attack on jal-jangal-zameen-izzat and adhikar (water, forests, land, respect and rights) of the local populations.

These attacks are instituted by the State under the cover of being "peace-keeping" forces that carry out brutal security operations only against armed Maoists, never against villagers. However, reports of the brutal Operation Green Hunt, Operation SAMADHAN PRAHAR, and the most recent Operation Kagar show that common citizens are prime victims of the brutalities, rape, torture and killings of the security forces. Moreover, even when the anti-State force, the alleged Naxalites, are killed, encounters tend to be fake more often than real, rife with evidence of Naxalites (alleged or otherwise) being taken prisoner, tortured, raped, and then shot, by the security forces. This is in blatant violation of International Human Rights Treaties regarding laws of war, and the rights of non-combatants, as well as the law of the land- where the security forces have no right to murder in cold-blood, torture a non-combatant, or alleged Naxal

who is as entitled to the judicial process and rights of prisoners, as any other Indian citizen. The aims of the Indian State's war on its own people is not a war for development but a war for brute, mass displacement and genocide of local Adivasis for the sake of corporate loot.

The beginning of 2024 has seen the introduction of the brutal and savage Operation Kagar, or "Final Mission", that has unleashed hell upon the adivasis of Bastar. The State does this under the constant rhetoric of wanting peace, ironically rolling out statements in favour of peace with "Maoists" just as they roll out this mission aimed at their elimination. Kagar also stands for the elimination of all democratic and constitutional resistance in Bastar, alongside the armed resistance, in fact it is a genocidal war cry of the Indian State against the very existence of the Adivasi populations. This article intends to explore the atrocities and historical continuity of Operation Kagar, the Indian state's janus faced nature in its proclamations of peace versus its genocidal mission, and try to examine what "peace" would actually mean for the oppressed and exploited Adivasi peasants of Bastar, and the irreconcilability of the state's idea of "peace", i.e. passivity and silence in one's own annihilation, in the displacement and destruction model of peace imposed by the Indian State with the actual connotations of peace.

### **Operation Kagar "The Final Mission" - History and Continuity of the Assault**

Operation Kagaar, translating to the "Final Mission" marks the latest stage of the Indian State's genocidal war against its own people. Concentrated in the Abujhmad, this stage of the Indian Government's brutal assault against its adivasi citizens is particularly brutal and gory. Backed by more than a hundred thousand paramilitary forces supported by drones, helicopters, and satellite surveillance; provided by US imperialists and their lackeys, this offensive is a continuation of decades long war in Chhattisgarh, purportedly against Maoist insurgents. To understand this Operation, aimed at eliminating the "Maoist threat" in Chhattisgarh, it is important to understand the history of counter-insurgency in the area.

The Indian State has adopted the tactic of "Low-Intensity Conflict" in dealing with the Maoist armed resistance against its ruthless corporatisation and displacement agenda in the Adivasi lands. This tactic is particularly used in civil wars, and involves asymmetrical power dynamics between the involved parties, where one side may possess superior military capabilities while the other relies on unconventional tactics such as arming local militias. It involves a use of paramilitary and arming locals against the insurgency, as well as a use of heavy intelligence inputs. It is a tactic adopted from the US government. The Indian State adopted this tactic, first by arming and supplying the notorious Salwa Judum, a "people's militia" armed and supplied by the State, that notoriously burned down 640 villages, killing thousands and displacing around 3 and a half lakh villagers. The intentions of the State in forming this militia were evident- a few days ago, MoUs with Tata, Essar and others had been signed- making space for mining in several of these villages. Indeed the State and its corporates reaped the fruits of the genocide and killing of its citizens, as Tata and Essar Steel readily took up the "abandoned" lands to set up mines.

After news of its illegitimate killings, mass human rights violations, torture, mass rape, killings and rape of minors, and massive genocidal destruction, evoked a strong civil society response and condemnation, the Supreme Court declared the militia illegal and ordered its disbanding, in 2011. This disbanding was followed by the rolling out of Operation GreenHunt, backed by the heavy dollars, training and ideology of US imperialism, an official operation of the Indian state to counter the Maoists, branded by them as "the biggest internal security threat". This saw the use of the Special Police (like Greyhounds, Cobras and Scorpions), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Border Security Force (BSF) and even Indo-Tibetan Border Police and tens of thousands of paramilitary troops. This Operation adopted the genocidal "Hearts and Minds" strategy of colonialists and imperialists. As described by Adolfo Naya Fernandez's seminal work on GreenHunt - "This strategy seeks, on the one hand, the total elimination of the insurgency, and, on the other, the legitimacy of government institutions by the population, in order to accomplish this, it is necessary to force the population of the "infected" places to move to fortified camps,

preventing their contact with the insurgency, leaving it isolated from the population. Likewise, the local population is armed to create self-defense groups against the insurgency while emphasizing giving an image of efficient administration with goals as the well-being and "development" of the population, thus legitimizing the Government in its plans to "eliminate" the insurgency and exert social control, agency and, on the other, the legitimacy of government institutions by the population."

This strategy is in contrast to the guerrilla warfare tactic of "becoming the fish among the sea" and instead aims to "drown the fish by removing the water". The aim, hence, is not to win an ideological war by winning the "hearts and minds" of people but to use brute violence to subdue the people into submission, even if it comes at the cost of entire populations.

The effects of Operation GreenHunt were as wrecking as Salwa Judum. The spurious motives of the State in this Operation were evident- Arundhati Roy explored the motives of the State's mission in the thousands of MoUs signed with the Mittals, Jindals, Tata, Essar, Posco, Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, and, of course, Vedanta. She described- "There's a MoU on every mountain, river, and forest glade. We're talking about social and environmental engineering on an unimaginable scale. And most of this is secret."

In 2017, marking the end of Operation GreenHunt, Operation SAMADHAN- Prahar was rolled out. Under this, more than 90 paramilitary camps were built up in Bastar alone. Every 3-4 kilometres in Bastar is inundated with a camp, making it one of the most militarised regions in the world. The aim of these camps was not to "eliminate Maoists", but to kill all sorts of resistance to mining operations about to be set up. Even when no Maoist presence is recorded in the region, these camps were set up to eliminate democratic, constitutional resistance of the people against forced, unconstitutional displacement. For example, in Rowghat, 22 paramilitary camps were set to encircle a proposed mining area that has no armed resistance (or Maoists) presence. A strong anti- camp movement arose in Bastar, with people adopting peaceful means of protest to avoid the building of camps over their villages. The paramilitary in many

instances shot and killed unarmed protesters, such as at Silger on Bijapur-Sukma border where 5 people, including a pregnant woman and her unborn child were killed by the security forces after they opened fire on the protestors on 17th May, 2021. SAMADHAN-Prahar saw an increased defence expenditure on the "Left-Wing Extremist" threat, with a staggering amount of Rs 6456.36 crore spent between 2014-2024. This to counter a threat they constantly claim is ever weakening, and close to elimination!

Use of warfare tactics such as aerial bombings marked a new step in this war- conducted on the unsuspecting villagers of Bhattiguda, Kawargatta, Jabbagatta and Meenagatta on April 7. These claimed the life of one woman villager. These are by the Heron drones supplied by the US-backed Israel. The US-India alliance in ensuring the interests of the compradors are also evident in the National Technical Research Organisation's coordination with NSA on Surveillance drones. Leaked documents by CIA (Baruah, 2018) whistleblower Snowden show India's secret involvement in a counter-terrorism platform called SIGINT Seniors Pacific (SSPAC). The reasons behind heavy backing of the US in India's war in Bastar is evident in the heavy investment of Asset Management corporations like Black Rock in mining corporations gaining from the genocide in Bastar (PTI, 2024), and the profits that comprador and imperialist corporates seek to make off Bastar.

In 2022, Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar was reviewed at a Chintan Shivir in Surajkund, leading to the rolling out of the Surajkund Scheme that intensifies militarisation in Bastar, and also launches an attack on civil society, democratic groups, activists etc. by strengthening intelligence agencies such as NIA and ED, and locating them as central in defeating the ideological war against resistance to corporatisation.

Operation Kagaar is another reinvigorated milestone in this long history of the State's reign of terror in Bastar. This time, it gives a call for a mission of elimination- a mission decried by Amit Shah in subsequent election promises to eliminate Naxalism by the next year. These are nothing but war cries against the Adivasi people of Bastar, and not some

insurgents, it is a cry against a democratic, people centric development model that gives people autonomy in their livelihoods and development, and focuses on health, education and welfare rather than plunder, loot, genocide and destruction. This war cry was heard in the State's killing of the infant girl on January 1- a child that never got to experience the world filled with the beauties of the perennial rivulets and lush greenery, the struggle of her community, but saw the terror of the State in the bullet that took away her innocent, too-short life. The child is one victim that makes the paramilitary's true mission apparent, her tender age makes it impossible for the State and its crony media to label her as a "Maoist", as is done when the victim of excess is past the cusp of adolescence. But her story marked only the beginning of close to 200 killings in Bastar this year, that have been labelled as killings of "Maoists" by some reactionary media (marking some of the only instances that it bothers to report on killings in Bastar). However, most of these are fake encounters, deaths of innocent villagers, children, who were not just killed- but whose dignity, life, freedom, was stripped off them in a mission of their destruction- who were sometimes tortured, raped, forced to dress as combatants, before their deaths.

It is worthwhile to explore some of the innumerable atrocities Kagaar has committed in the short span of its existence. For every 7 Adivasi persons in Abujmarh, there are now 3 paramilitary personnel. Children have died due to Indian state's mortar shells left around in the forests (12/05/24, Gurga, Bijapur), 12 unsuspecting villagers have been dragged from the forests while they were gathering tendu leaves and been shot dead, later dubbed to be Maoists in fake encounters (11/05/24, Pedia, Bijapur). Shocking accounts of young adivasi girls being forced to wear guerrilla uniforms after being raped by security forces have emerged. Even "encounters" by the State forces involve unbridled and disproportionate use of force, and murder of non-combatant members of Maoist forces- in a recent encounter of 29 Maoist fighters, reports of the Maoist forces, corroborated by villagers, indicate that while 12 were killed in exchange of fire, 17 were tied up, tortured, and then killed. On 2<sup>nd</sup> April, in Nendra, Chattisgarh, similarly, evidence of rape and torture were found on a minor, deaf and dumb girl, who was killed among 12 others

in what was dubbed to be an "encounter" of Maoists by the State DRG forces.

## **The Farce of Peace and the Janus-Faced Indian State**

In an ironic gesture, as of 22 January 2024, the Home Minister Amit Shah bid to eliminate Maoists by the coming elections, State Home Minister Vijay Sharma expressed willingness to talk to Maoists. This reveals the Janus- faced nature of the Indian State. Any state must formulate ideological and political consent to its hegemony, which it does through coercive and non-coercive means. The psychological war of deadening the consciousness of the rest of the Indian peoples to the brutal war in Dandakaranya is seen in the fear-mongering of the elusive "Naxal threat" by the media, jingoism on "eliminating" Maoists (often unarmed villagers) by the State, the farce of national security, but also the ever-present rhetoric of the State's vision of development and peace, a peace they claim involves the protection of rights and entitlements of Adivasis. While legal and illegal means - from the watering down of Central Mining and Forest Conservation Acts' securities in 2023 to flagrant disregard of constitutionally guaranteed Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) provisions for self-governance - are used to sell the land of Adivasis to the corporates; the State maintains its farce- the Maoists want violence, the State wants peace. The Maoists oppose "development", the State brings peace and security to Adivasis. Every few years, peace talks with pre-conditionalities such as "abjuring violence" by Maoists, or this time - "no obstruction to the construction of roads and mining in the forest area"; are offered by the State. Just as Vijay Sharma offered "peace talks", the genocidal Operation Kagaar was rolled out. The offer of these talks are nothing but a propaganda ploy for the State- an instrument to manufacture their image as the righteous force against violent insurgents.

But the Maoists do well to oppose peace talks when they come with such nefarious motivations. The struggle in Chhattisgarh- be it the armed one, or the democratic one, against corporatisation, against mines, against encroachment, is what is keeping the people of Bastar alive. If conditionalities such as "abjuring violence" or the laughably partisan one of

allowing smooth mining operations are imposed, are met, then it will leave the people of Bastar helpless. This call is not sincere, as the experience of the revolutionary party has shown. On 2 July 2010, in the remote forests of Adilabad, the Andhra Pradesh state police murdered Cherukuri Rajkumar, known as Comrade Azad, a Politburo member of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist). Hemachandra Pandey, a journalist accompanying him, was also killed in cold blood. The burn marks revealed that both were shot point blank, while unarmed and captured. Azad had been nominated by his party as its chief negotiator for the proposed peace talks with the Government of India. When a State, in the height of peace talk negotiations, kills the proposed negotiator, the message is clear. The State does not want peace.

At various points, the Maoist forces have made their stance on peace talks clear- ceasing of mining operation, release of political prisoners- particularly the innocent, unaffiliated villagers in jail on charge of being Maoists, removal of paramilitary camps from villages, ending of tortuous concentration camps disguised as rehabilitation camps for displaced adivasis, following of constitutional processes before grabbing Adivasi land- these are some pre-conditionalities the Maoists have demanded for the possibility of peace talks. These are not selfish demands, don't serve any aim of private gain, they are demands that are essential for the local populations, demands that guarantee their basic dignity and right to life, demands that will show, truly, the intention of the State to enter a process of peace for the people- not war, loot and plunder. Vijay Sharma's conditionality of clearing way for mining operations and roads however, laughably displays the State's object- make way for corporate plunder, no matter what. In the face of these ill-meant bids for peace, one cannot help but realise that Azad's words ring true- "It is state terror, saffron terror, and state sponsored terror that have become the greatest threat to peace and security in our country."

### **Operation Clean: When the State's War for "Peace" Succeeds**

In Jharkhand, the State's mission of elimination and development has seen reality in the past few decades. Operation Clean in the Saranda forests of Singhbhum

region of Jharkhand, which eliminated all Adivasi resistance to enclosure and take-over of land is one example of the State's nefarious vision. The predecessor of Operation Clean (which is a part of Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar) was Operation Anaconda, a part of Green Hunt. The lush and green Saranda forests were once watered by perennial streams. Now, as a result of militarisation, and takeover of land by corporations for mine, the perennial streams have been completely wiped out, as have natural water aquifers. Resultantly, kidney and liver disease have become endemic to the region. The average lifespan of a villager in Saranda has been reduced to 45 years.

This is a result of the accomplishment of the genocidal vision of these 2 Operations. They succeeded in eliminating resistance, killing and raping innocents until villagers either fled, died or became subdued, and making way for mines via resultant displacement. The State continues apishly chest-thumping over this Saranda model of development, boasting big roads set to accompany construction for mines. While villagers die, "naturally" due to inhumane conditions imposed by their situation, or are killed. Activists like Stan Swamy were arrested and judicially murdered, journalists like Rupesh Kumar Singh arrested to limit his reporting, democratic organisations like Visthapan Virodhi Jan Andolan harassed- to support the Operation and eliminate all resistance and news of the repression. Local militias such as Tiritiya Sammelan Prastuti Committee (TSPC), People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI), Pahadi Cheetah, Shanti Sena - were used by corporates to support the paramilitary in clearing the way for corporate rule.

Operation Clean and its impact exposes what "peace" means for the State- a condition of complete subjugation of Adivasi local communities where they give up any claim to their jal-jangal-zameen, which is the source their lives, by either killing them, or subduing them into tortured submission. These Adivasis do not live in peace, in fact they barely live at all, in these inhumane conditions where they either have to leave their villages and search for livelihoods in a completely new place devoid of the ancestral connection they feel to the land, or risk getting killed, tortured, raped, or beaten by the paramilitary



surrounding their villages. The corporate loot literally chokes the life out of them every single day- taking away the clean air, natural sources of food and water, connection to nature, and related livelihoods that they were once accustomed to. Their life spans reduce drastically over time, showing the genocidal and lasting effect of this violence on a community. This is peace for the corporates, for the State, but it is no peace for the oppressed and exploited Adivasi that sees the true fruit of the Saranda model of development.

### **The Development Dilemma: Development for Who?**

The reality is striking- the State is not an agent for peace, and its "development" plans are not for the people. Rona Wilson had correctly identified that the premise of the existing model is that displacement is inevitable for development. As the Indian Government justifies genocidal Operations like Kagaar through the "development" rhetoric, a few important questions need to be asked about this development by displacement model. Firstly- development for who? The imperialist and their compradors, or the masses? Development by who? Do the people have a stakeholdership and part in this development? Or are they just cogs to be abused, exploited, cast aside, or as we say -in this most violent mission of the State- killed? Another essential question arises who gets to define development? The minority reaping off its benefits? Or the majority of the masses suffering its reality- be it the Adivasis displaced in Bastar, Hasdeo, Jharkhand, Assam, and several other places; the small or middle peasant heavily indebted to feudal landlords, unable to afford health, food or education for his child; the Muslims and Dalits being pushed into ghettos, deprived of their dignity, self-respect and identity, and suffering the hate crimes of jingoistic Hindutva terror, as they become cheap labour to help generate or support institutions of imperial capital; or the ever expanding "middle class" that faces one inflation after another and feels the economic failure of this development model in its dwindling pockets?

In India, mass unemployment prevails- as primitive accumulation as it happens in independent capitalism didn't happen- there were few industries to absorb

excess labour produced by displacement. The failure of the agricultural economy to sustain excess labour, and the subsequent failure of towns to take them in- produces an extremely cheap, extremely exploitable labour force, and a vagrant and destitute "reserve army" of the unemployed. These people- these wretched of the earth, these are the masses of India. The devastation of the State's development model is not unique to Bastar or in Green Hunt, SAMADHAN Prahar, Surajkund, or Kagaar. It is a normality, a reality; a reality that the State wants people to be convinced is the only possible reality. Struggles against this model by the people- be it in Bastar, Dandakaranya, or anywhere else, reveals a hope, a demand, a vision, for a changed reality. Perhaps a changing reality given the persistence of these struggles even in the face of the most brutal repression. It is this possibility to imagine and envision a different future, a more equal, a more just, a more free future that terrorises the State as it threatens its class dictatorship. The kernels of this threat to their class rule, their hegemonic model is what drives the terror unleashed by the State in Bastar.

Abujhmad, like other regions of Dandakaranya, has seen greater equality in distribution of land, provision of local self- initiated schools in face of absence of government schools, health provisions mastered by novice locals- with necessity breeding invention, the decline in influence of the exploitative forest contractors and the sahukar or local moneylender, since the "Maoist threat" came to dominate. The people engaging peacefully in the anti-camp movements too represent a demand for autonomy, ecological sensitivity and self-governance that represents the kernel of a radically new model of development from the existent one. Rona Wilson, an activist currently imprisoned by the Indian State described the necessities of such a pro-people model as being one that "would move towards a structural change in the economy with redistribution of land and a thoroughgoing shift in political power in favour of the toiling masses. This model envisages mass participation, with the needs of the masses forming the propellant factor giving a sense of direction to the industries resulting in the production of items that are useful for the everyday life of the people, for leading a dignified meaningful existence. This would necessitate the orientation or the choice of capital that

that is sensitive to the resource base of the economy and indigenous technology.”

## Conclusion

Through Operation Kagaar, the State has taken a qualitative step meant for total destruction and elimination of not some “Maoist” threat, but of the very Adivasi people of Bastar. As the State embarks on this mission of elimination, it is essential to not be deceived by the State's conflicting rhetoric of peace. The State with its model of militarisation, displacement and private loot- is an instrument of terror for the common masses, and no agent of peace. Peace in the face of the crudest repression, the cruellest atrocities, a threat to one's existence, is not peace but passivity to your own annihilation. Peace is not possible when a state of war has already been declared by the State. The Adivasis of Bastar are taking up the bastion of peace, actual peace and prosperity- for the masses, in their various struggles- in the brave anti- camp movements where protesters brave bullets for the right their jal-jangal-zameen- a constitutionally guaranteed right, and in taking up armed resistance against a repressive State.

It is upto the people to decide and organise unto their resistance, and it will do well for the Indian State to remember that repression breeds resistance. And as the intensity of Operation Kagaar's genocidal cry increases, so will the will, persistence, and collective struggle of the masses. The parasitic developmental model behind Operation Kagaar is not unique to Bastar, Chhattisgarh, or tribal regions- it permeates to all of India. Just as the bid to invite investment prospects backs Operation Kagaar, the State puts investment above people's rights everywhere- even the topmost court revealed that bail must be denied in the Maruti labour case, as allowing accused labourers to go free “would harm investment prospects”. It is the people's resistance to this war cry of the Indian State, their ability to envision and fight for a better future even in the face of starkest terror that shall bring this hypocritical State down to its knees!

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# A LOOK INTO PEOPLE'S ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE IN CENTRAL INDIA

by the Nazariya Team



The establishment of Janathana Sarkars (people's governments) in central India has profoundly transformed the socio-economic and cultural landscape of the region. These local governance structures, initiated in areas with significant Adivasi populations are aimed to address the needs and aspirations of marginalized communities. By implementing land reforms, promoting social equity, and encouraging community participation, the Janathana Sarkars have facilitated substantial improvements in living conditions, economic opportunities, and gender relations. Nazariya Magazine aims to look into the alternative people's model of development ushered under the ambit of these Janathana Sarkars to address what exactly Surajkund Scheme, corporatization and militarization is counterposed against and hell-bent on destroying. For this, we have studied and utilized the work of Varavara Rao on Janathana Sarkar, "Revolutionary Changes in Gadchiroli in Two Decades" by Bhupati, "Various Classes in Bastar-Our Attitude" by Viyukka Books, "Janathana Rajyam" by Paani (2017) and "The World Turned Upside Down: Basic Changes Brought About in Parts

in Parts of Central India by the Maoist Movement" by Amit Bhattacharya (2021).

## **Background: Democracy of A New Type**

India is often hailed as the world's largest democracy, a system "of the people, by the people, and for the people." However, since the transfer of power in 1947, this ideal has often fallen short of its promise. Many citizens, both within India and abroad, have grown disillusioned with the democratic institutions—such as the courts, police, and administrative machinery—due to their perceived ineffectiveness and corruption. Basic services like water and electricity remain a source of daily frustration and protest in many regions. For the Adivasi communities, who form a significant part of India's population, the situation is even more dire. In many Adivasi peasant areas, the state's democratic institutions and even basic medical services are nearly non-existent. For years, these communities remained isolated from the so-called "modern" world, lacking access to essential services and opportunities.

However, recent years have seen a remarkable shift in some Adivasi regions. While several North-Eastern

states and other areas have been fighting for independence from Indian state control, Adivasi peasants in central India and a few eastern states have pursued a different path. They have begun forming their own "people's governments." This "people's democracy" has emerged in what were once dubbed the most "backward" and "uncivilized" parts of the country. Over time, it has evolved in various forms and at different levels, demonstrating a more true democracy in action. Unlike the flawed democratic institutions of the Indian state, which only posits a democratic pretence, this people's democracy operates on the principles of collective governance and democratic centralism, guided by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology.

One notable example of this people's democracy is the Janathana Sarkar. These governments represent an embryonic stage of people's power that could eventually be established across the entire country, as a model of governance truly geared towards the interests of the masses of India. The Janathana Sarkars have made significant strides in various sectors, including agriculture, culture, education, and even military organization, providing a glimpse into a possible future socialist state. Despite severe repression from the Indian state, the Janathana Sarkars have shown resilience and growth, moving towards more advanced forms of self-governance. They represent the true form of self-governance, promulgated by Indian state's own Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996. Instead of recognizing the Janathana Sarkars as legitimate forms of Adivasi self-governance under the PESA Act, the Indian state has attempted to use the Forward Operational Bases (FOBs) and military rule to attack these forms of governments and label its participants and organizers as members of the proscribed Maoist party.

### **Cooperatives and Agrarian Changes**

The concept of cooperatives is often discussed in both administrative and academic circles in India, with occasional articles touting government achievements in this sector. However, it is widely acknowledged that the government's cooperative department is plagued by corruption. The official statistics may look impressive on paper, but the reality is quite different. In contrast, the cooperative experience under the Janathana Sarkar in the Adivasi areas of the Dandakaranya forest offers a genuine

model of collective, corruption-free production.

Per a report compiled by an on-field researcher to Viyukka Books, to provide some context, this region is located along a riverbank and is relatively underdeveloped in terms of production methods. It is home to a mix of rich, middle, and poor peasants. Traditional farming tools, such as bullocks and plows, are commonly used, but not everyone has access to them. The main crops include paddy, lentils, and various types of millets. In this unnamed area, collective agricultural work began with ploughing fields together and gradually expanded to other agricultural activities. Initially, work teams were organized to prepare plots, dig ponds, cultivate fish, plant seeds, till land, and dig small wells. The success of these teams inspired the local population and encouraged broader participation in collective work. The community-built wells and ponds, sold surplus crops and fish, and generated significant revenue.

As people's awareness and enthusiasm grew, the Adivasis began forming Janathana Sarkars, which made the collective agricultural work more systematic and increased production. There was a noticeable improvement in farming methods, and the collective approach allowed for better utilization of cattle and farming tools. Some notable achievements in a particular area (left unnamed by the researcher) in Dandakaranya include the Janathana Sarkar purchasing 260 cattle, which were distributed to poor peasants, and providing 540 quintals of seeds, including paddy, sesame, lentils, maize, and millets. They also built 70 new houses and repaired 350 more. During a famine, the Janathana Sarkar provided relief funds of Rs. 25,000 to the affected population. In total, 1,436 acres of land were seized from local landlords, those who had fled, and enemies of the people. Of this land, 1,057 acres were distributed to 482 families, 310 acres were reserved for the Janathana Sarkar, and 65 acres were allocated to the militia.

Further details reveal that one of the lower-level Sarkars in this particular area successfully cultivated 5 kg of paddy and maize. Although vegetable cultivation was less successful, the cooperative committee managed to distribute 2 quintals and 25 kilos of seeds worth Rs. 1,200 across several villages. They built new homes and repaired existing ones. The rise of cooperative activities and revolutionary consciousness also led to a significant shift in



traditional gender roles. Previously, women were excluded from certain agricultural tasks, such as sowing seeds or handling harvested paddy. The Kranthikari Adivasi Mahila Sanghatan (KAMS) took on the challenge of breaking these taboos. This organization had already been addressing women's issues before the establishment of collective activities and the Janathana Sarkars. Now, with many of these age-old superstitions dispelled, KAMS focuses on involving women in the Janathana Sarkar's initiatives.

The Janathana Sarkar has also intervened to regulate prices for forest products sold in weekly markets and provides support to victims of state violence and the Salva Judum militia through the revenue generated from collective activities. Additionally, it funds residential schools from these revenues. The Chhattisgarh state government's fascistic Salva Judum campaign significantly impacted village life, leading to increased repression. The violence initiated by Salva Judum was so brutal that even the Indian state's Supreme Court recognized the mass rapes, murders and village burnings instituted by this state-backed militia and imposed a ban on this front in *Nandini Sundar & Ors. v. State of Chhattisgarh*. This compelled the Adivasi peasants to form mediums for self-defence via community defence mechanisms. The village militias, already in place, became more active. New militia platoons were formed, and many young men and women became full-time militia members, creating a new sense of unity within the community.

Initially, the Janathana Sarkar provided for the militias, but they quickly became self-sufficient and even began contributing to agricultural production and revenue generation. The militias generated Rs. 10,000 from sesame crops and produced 1,500 quintals of paddy in the particular area visited by the researcher. The cooperative efforts in this region have also led to the formation of a team of carpenters who travel between villages before the agricultural season, ensuring that all farming tools are in good repair. The Janathana Sarkar supports this initiative by purchasing furnaces and necessary metals. In a creative approach to cattle distribution, the Janathana Sarkar allows farmers to keep calves born from distributed cattle while collecting 20 kilos of paddy

per year in return. This reciprocal arrangement ensures a continuous supply of cattle and supports the community's long-term agricultural needs.

In addition to cattle, the Janathana Sarkar has distributed goats and hens, particularly to those who lost livestock during the Salva Judum campaign. It has also distributed fish packets to promote pisciculture and is committed to supporting the families of martyrs and victims of state violence. The development committee of the Janathana Sarkar purchases forest products, such as mahua and brooms, from local people to facilitate trade in the local markets. Meanwhile, the forest protection committee, a sub-committee of the Janathana Sarkar, ensures sustainable forest management. It has campaigned against indiscriminate tree cutting, a practice common when the community was more nomadic. Now, with settled villages, forest protection is a priority. Anyone wishing to cut trees must obtain permission from the committee, which assesses the need for building materials, agricultural purposes, or other needs. Unauthorized tree cutting is penalized, usually through fines.

The experience of the Janathana Sarkar demonstrates that scientifically managed cooperative activities can bring significant benefits to the community. It also exposes the shortcomings of the government's cooperative programs, despite their financial resources and modern facilities. The success of the cooperative movement in these "backward" forest areas of Dandakaranya sets a powerful example for other regions.

### **Improvements in the Living Conditions**

The advent of Janathana Sarkars brought considerable advancements in living conditions. Prior to their establishment, many rural communities faced severe food shortages, with diets limited to basic staples like rice soup and boiled horse gram in the morning and minimal rice in the evening. The introduction of land reforms and improved agricultural practices under people's governments led to a significant enhancement in food security. Households began to enjoy more nutritious and varied diets, including rice twice a day, with more substantial meals in the evenings.

In addition to food, the availability and consumption of consumer goods saw a notable increase. Previously, people used oil sparingly, extracted from local seeds such as vippa and pusu. With the rise in incomes and market integration, refined oils like Parachute coconut oil became widely accessible. Tea, once a luxury of the wealthy, became a staple for many, reflecting improved living standards.

The variety and consumption of vegetables also expanded significantly. Traditional vegetables like brinjals, tomatoes, and beans remained popular, while new varieties such as cauliflower and radish were introduced. Fish breeding in local ponds became a common practice, providing an additional source of protein and contributing to both dietary diversity and local income.

Housing conditions improved markedly under the people's governments. Prior to these changes, many families lived in grass huts that required frequent repairs and were vulnerable to the elements. With increased economic stability and support for construction, many transitioned to more durable brick houses. This shift not only improved living conditions but also provided a safer and more comfortable living environment. The availability of household items like steel utensils and personal eating plates further highlighted these improvements.

### **Economic Advancements**

Economic changes under the Janathana Sarkars were equally transformative. Land redistribution was a cornerstone of the reforms, significantly altering land ownership patterns. This redistribution allowed many landless peasants to gain access to land, while over 50% of the population benefited from additional land. This increased access to land led to enhanced agricultural productivity, with farmers extending their cultivated areas and adopting modern farming techniques.

The reduction of traditional exploitation practices, such as those by local moneylenders and landlords, was another significant change. The implementation of land reforms and support for agriculture reduced the dependence on exploitative financial systems.

Increased use of tractors and other modern farming equipment improved efficiency, allowing farmers to cultivate larger areas and increase yields.

Economic empowerment was also bolstered by enhanced access to financial institutions. Banks and credit facilities became more involved in supporting small peasants, providing necessary loans for seeds, fertilizers, and equipment. This support enabled peasants to invest in their operations and boost productivity. The rise in disposable income was reflected in the increased purchase of consumer goods, including bicycles, radios, TVs, and motorcycles.

### **Cultural and Social Changes**

The establishment of people's governments also catalyzed significant cultural and social changes, particularly in gender relations. Women's organizations, such as the KAMS, played a crucial role in advocating for gender equality. Their efforts led to the implementation of policies ensuring equal wages for equal work, which empowered women economically and challenged traditional gender norms.

The increased participation of women in political and social activities marked a significant shift. Women began to join political organizations and participate in guerrilla activities, leading to greater respect for their opinions and rights. The changes extended to domestic affairs, where women's rights over property and children were increasingly recognized.

Social practices that previously placed women in vulnerable positions were also reformed. For example, the traditional Gotul dance, which had sometimes been a site of harassment, was reformed to create a safer environment for women. These reforms contributed to a greater sense of security and self-confidence among women, enhancing their role in community life.

### **Conclusion**

The establishment of people's governments in central India has brought about profound improvements in living conditions, economic opportunities, and gender relations. Through land reforms, economic empowerment, and social equity initiatives, these local governance structures have transformed the

the lives of marginalized communities. The advancements in food security, housing, and consumer culture reflect the positive impact of these reforms. Additionally, the changes in gender relations and social practices underscore the broader social transformations facilitated by these people's governments. While challenges remain, the experiences of these governance structures offer valuable insights into achieving sustainable development and social justice in similar contexts. The Indian state's Constitution itself provides impetus for Adivasi self-governance in the form of Janathana Sarkars, supposed to be actualized via the PESA Act, 1996, under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. "[These] demands might sound utopian and revolutionary but there is nothing extraordinary in them. Most of these fall within the ambit of the Indian Constitution.... [but] we know that these die-hard agents of the ruling classes whose real social base comprises of hardly five per cent of India's population can never think in terms of the interests of the remaining 95 per cent of the population. They will not accept even these Constitutional demands unless the people rise up and bring enormous pressure or rebellions break out in their own police and other armed forces," said Azad, of this situation.

In a country where even the notions of bourgeois democracy is a façade, Janathana Sarkars offer a legitimate people's democratic alternative. They represent the same aspirations and politics of the people that was first seen in the Soviets of Workers' and Deputies, the Chinese communist government in Yan'an. Lenin openly said of the Soviets, "alongside the government of *bourgeoisie*, another government... consisting of the proletariat and the peasants... has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies." Lenin succinctly concluded, "the basic question of every revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution."

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# THE SURAJKUND SCHEME IS AN ATTACK ON DISSENT, DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY!

## The Story of Kaimur Mukti Morcha, Bihar: The Role of NIA in Suppressing Dissent



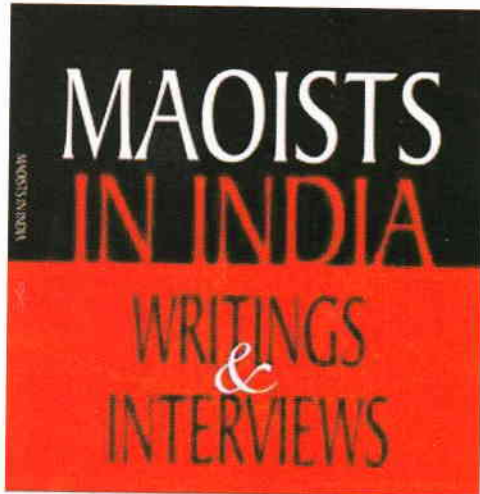
To be clear, this displacement [in reference to the state-sponsored displacement to make space for the governmental tiger conservation project in the Kaimur Plateau] is not silent. It is a state-sanctioned violence by the Indian government against its people. When this is resisted by local movements, the government cracks down heavily on democratic processes like dharnas which try to protect the rights of the people. By labelling all pro-people movements in opposition to corporatisation as one sponsored by Maoists, the state rains down brutal repression through the law of the land. In this process, the state also militarises the space by erecting watch towers and deploying special paramilitary forces to aid corporate plunder of the Adivasis and their forest, like through policies like Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar...

...The strongest voice for “land to the Adivasis” and against the Tiger Project in Kaimur (Bihar) has been Kaimur Mukti Morcha (KMM) which is facing acute state repression. Vinod Shankar, an executive committee member of KMM, spoke out in a Facebook post revealing that the police are targeting him and tried to arrest him in the name of being a “Naxali”. He is an active member in the anti-tiger reserve campaign and anti-tribal dispossession projects in Kaimur. Police have also threatened his family members and conducted an illegal search in his house, without obtaining a search warrant. The police declared his house a mini-gun factory when they found Bharrat (a local adivasi who usually carries a weapon) in his house.

The September 2023 NIA raids on democratically minded farmers, students and anti-displacement activists in East Uttar Pradesh is continuation of the repression on the struggle in Kaimur. The NIA conducted the raids in eight locations in Prayagraj, Deoria, Varanasi, Chandauli and Azamgarh districts in connection with an FIR lodged in June against alleged Naxals. The agency is yet to issue a public statement on the outcome of the raids.

Source: Nazariya Magazine (Website):  
<https://nazariyamagazine.in/2024/01/09/kaimur-mukti-morcha-the-fascistic-attack-on-jal-jangal-jameen/>

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ECONOMY OF SEZ – RONA WILSON

General

## Manufacturing Imperialism: the political economy of SEZ – Rona Wilson

🕒 11 years ago Editor





# ANURADHA GANDHY

ANURADHA GANDHY WAS A FORMIDABLE REVOLUTIONARY, WHOSE LIFE WAS A TESTAMENT TO UNWAVERING POLITICAL DEDICATION AND THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE. ANURADHA STARTED HER JOURNEY AS A STUDENT ACTIVIST IN MUMBAI. SHE THEN BECAME A LECTURER, BUT THEN STARTED WORK ORGANIZING THE EXPLOITED AND OPPRESSED CASTES, CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, AND COAL-MINE WORKERS. SHE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNIST UNDERSTANDING OF THE CASTE AND THE WOMEN'S QUESTION, WITH HER SEMINAL WORKS NOW BEING AVAILABLE IN THE BOOK "SCRIPTING THE CHANGE". HER WORK ON CASTE ESTABLISHED THROUGH A HISTORICAL, DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS THAT CASTE IS AN INHERENT PART OF HOW CLASS SOCIETY EMERGED IN INDIA, ACROSS VARIOUS MODES OF PRODUCTION. ANURADHA MOVED TO BASTAR LATER IN HER LIFE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT THERE. SHE WAS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE KRANTIKARI ADIVASI MAHILA SANGHATHAN (KAMS) THAT HELPED IMPROVE THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE OF WOMEN IN BASTAR BY DRAWING THEM INTO CLASS STRUGGLE. HER ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF VARIOUS FEMINISMS, EXPOSED HOW ONLY CLASS STRUGGLE WILL LEAD TO THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN AND ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLES. DEEMED A "MAOIST TERRORIST" BY THE INDIAN STATE, SHE LOST HER LIFE DUE TO A FATAL FORM OF MALARIA IN THE JUNGLES OF JHARKHAND, UNABLE TO ACCESS BASIC HEALTHCARE OUT OF FEAR OF CAPTURE AND MURDER BY THE REACTIONARY AND COWARDLY STATE. A MARTYR TO THE REVOLUTION, ANURADHA IS AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL. BORN TO A WELL-OFF MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY, SHE GAVE UP HER CLASS COMFORT TO BECOME ONE OF THE PEOPLE, A FISH IN THE SEA OF THE MASSES, AND GAVE HER LIFE TO THE FIGHT FOR NEW DEMOCRACY.



## SCRAP SURAJKUND SCHEME!

### RONA WILSON



RONA WILSON IS ONE OF THE ACTIVISTS BEHIND BARS DUE TO THE BK16 CASE, TARGETED FOR HIS ACTIVISM AND ANTI-FASCIST INTERVENTION.

RONA MADE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE ACADEMIC FIELD, WRITING ON SEVERAL TOPICS ADDRESSING INDIA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY, THE OPPRESSION AND SUBJUGATION OF MUSLIMS AS WELL AS THE USE OF ANTI-TERROR LAWS TO TARGET POLITICAL PRISONERS. HIS WORK IN SEZs PRESENTS AND JUSTIFIES THE THESIS THAT THE INDIAN STATE'S CURRENT DEVELOPMENT MODEL IS BASED IN DISPLACEMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE COMMON MASSES FOR THE INTERESTS OF CAPITAL AND BIG CORPORATES. RONA DOESN'T STOP HERE, HE GOES ON TO IMAGINE AND ENCAPSULATE WHAT A TRULY DEMOCRATIC AND PEOPLE- CENTRED DEVELOPMENT MODEL WOULD LOOK LIKE. IT IS THE STATE'S FEAR OF ACADEMICS, ACTIVISTS, LAWYERS, INTELLECTUALS AND OTHER PEOPLE WORKING TOWARDS A TRULY DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY THAT MAKES IT TARGET PEOPLE LIKE RONA. RONA'S VISION TERRORISES THE STATE BECAUSE IT THREATENS THEIR CLASS INTEREST BASED ON THE EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION OF MILLIONS. THE REACTIONARY SURAJKUND SCHEME IS A MUCH GRAVER MATERIALISATION OF THIS AIM OF THE STATE. RONA ALSO WORKED ZEALOUSLY IN THE COMMITTEE FOR THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS TO ENSURE THE ACQUITTAL OF THOSE FIGHTING FOR TRUE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY WHO WERE ATTACKED BY THE STATE. NAZARIYA MAGAZINE HONOURS RONA AS A TRULY PEOPLE FRIENDLY ACADEMIC AND ACTIVIST, AND DEMANDS HIS IMMEDIATE RELEASE.

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