

# PEOPLE'S MARCH

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## The Millennium Verdict Further Deepens the Instability

The 'tamasha' of the 13th Lok Sabha election is over. But no sooner had the curtain dropped over this farcical drama, when a new and more farcical 'tamasha' began to unfold : unending dog-fights for power. But more of this later.

The hotch-potch coalition of 24 parties calling itself the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has succeeded in manipulating the 'people's mandate' in its favour. It has secured the 'legitimacy' to rule for another five years provided, of course, it could hold itself together. The opposition Congress(I) and its allies led by Sonia Gandhi, failed to stage a come-back, despite its own style of manipulative schemes that has over a century-old tradition. The so-called left, particularly the biggest "left" party, the CPI(M), a master in the dialectics of manipulation, has found its base further eroded after it left its much-publicised Third Front and fastened itself to the apron-strings of the Congress(I) in the name of defeating the communal BJP. All these manipulators — corrupt, unscrupulous, scheming politicians most of whom are tainted with scandals and scams and have a record of criminal and communal acts; traitors who have no principles in selling out the country's interests to the imperialist vultures for a few kickbacks and commissions

have joined together to thrust upon the Indian people the millennium fraud called the 13th General Election.

What relevance do these elections have for the people of India ? What are the issues that had dominated these elections ? Does the verdict reflect people's aspirations ? What are the prospects for the much-sought-after stability of the centre ? Let us analyse these one by one.

### Of no Relevance to People

Elections in general have no relevance to the people's daily lives. They do not solve the problems faced by the people — poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease — and they cannot fulfill people's aspirations on any front. They are only thrust upon the people by the exploiting ruling classes to gain a stamp of legitimacy to rule and continue their exploitation unhindered. But the propaganda is so ingeniously and subtly done that atleast a gullible section of the people is made to think that people can "democratically" elect the government of their choice and throw out the one that does not fulfill the promises made. The experience of the last 12 General Elections and several more to the state legislatures have exposed the true nature — the actual essence behind the democratic appearance of the elections: the people have no choice at all but to vote for one of the representative parties of the exploiting classes; that all the parties and candidates are birds of the same feather and that if one party is thrown out, an equally rapacious oppressor, if not more, takes its place; that even the "election" of these exploiting parties involves money-power, muscle power, rigging, caste, communal and several other factors.

The 13th Lok Sabha election has proved itself to be even more irrelevant to the people with hardly any issues to speak of. While the BJP-led alliance tried to play on

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the "success" of Kargil, the "Charisma" of Vajpayee (whatever that may mean since most people get bored by his speeches), the foreign origin of Sonia Gandhi, the Congress-instigated toppling of the BJP-led government. The only one issue that was common to all parties without exception and that had a top place in their electioneering agenda was a vilification campaign and mud-slinging of each other. The statements made by George Fernandes and Hegde of the JD(U); Pramod Mahajan, Advani, Uma Bharathi and even Vajpayee himself of the BJP; Sonia Gandhi and other lesser leaders of the Congress(I); Rabri Devi and Laloo of the RJD; and Jyothi Basu of the CPI(M), among others are classic examples of this campaign of personal vilification against each other.

The electioneering had thus brought out the stark facts regarding our rulers before the people :facts regarding the power-hunger, the unscrupulousness, the scandals and corruption indulged in by the politicians of every hue; their criminal and communal record, and so on and so forth. It had shown that no political party had any concrete constructive programme to be placed before the people and each was a dirty manipulator out to acquire power at any cost.

### BJP's Kargil Card – A real Fiasco

The BJP expected that the tremendous euphoria that was built by the media over its "success" in the Kargil operation, the anti-Pakistan war hysteria and the national chauvinist frenzy raked up in the wake of Kargil, would fetch it a majority. In fact, with this high expectation of Kargil becoming translated into votes, it sought to play up the national chauvinist frenzy, by organising rallies for the dead soldiers and victory rallies; shot down a Pakistani fighter plane on the pretext that it had violated Indian Air space; unleashed a big propaganda campaign that ISI agents were arrested in the North East, that Pakistan was enflaming the situation in Kashmir and the North East; and so on. The BJP thought that it would be rewarded by getting an absolute majority for the tough approach and measures that it had adopted towards the

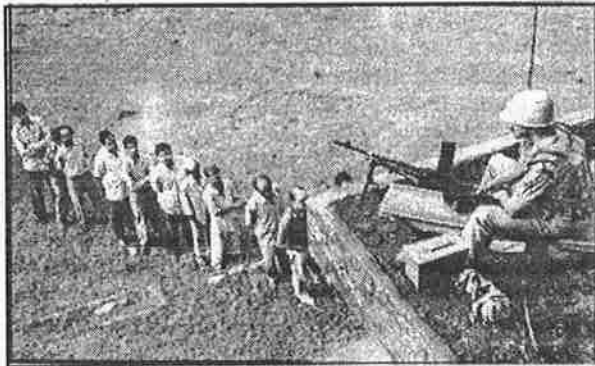
traditional foe. But neither the euphoria over the Pokhran-II nuclear explosion in May last year nor over Kargil this July could be converted into votes in a big way. It was routed on its own home turf of UP where it lost 28 seats out of the 57 that it held in the 12th Lok Sabha. This has great political significance as UP, a state where the Mandir-Masjid issue had played a dominant role in electoral politics giving the much-needed numbers to the BJP had been providing almost a third of the Lok Sabha seats won by BJP in the past decade — 51 out of 120 in 1991, 52 out of 161 in 1996, and 57 out of 182 in 1998; In Punjab too, it suffered serious reverses along with its partner, the Akali Dal, securing one and two seats respectively losing 8 seats that they earlier held combinedly.

The Prime Minister Vajpayee himself won with a depleted margin from Lucknow losing almost one lakh votes compared to the last election. The BJP's vote-share in the country as a whole has actually gone down from 25.59 per cent in 1998 to 23.07 per cent this time. It lost 6 out of 13 seats it held in Karnataka.

It is only due to the gains made by its allies that the BJP was saved from total disgrace. The Alliance of two dozen parties forged long before the election, helped it prevent the division of votes. Thus the BJP's capacity to win seats has actually decreased when compared to the last election: while it secured 182 seats by allying with a dozen others last time, it could not get even an extra seat despite the doubling of its allies to two dozen in the election this year. And even of these 182, the BJP won only 108 in direct contests while the rest came via the allies such as the TDP in AP, where it won 7 seats; DMK in Tamil Nadu, where it won 4 seats; Shiv Sena in Maharashtra where it secured 13 seats; BJD in Orissa, where it got 9 seats; Janata Dal (U) in Bihar where it won 23 seats; INLD in Haryana, where it secured 5 seats; Trinamul Congress in West Bengal, where it won 2 seats; and so on.

Yet another factor that was very favourable to the BJP this time was the serious division among the opposition parties which contested against each other. Particularly in UP, the Congress, the Samajwadi party and the BSP, by contesting against each other, provided a good opportunity for the BJP. Yet, the popularity of the BJP was on such a low ebb that it lost half the seats it won in the last election. Even in Maharashtra, the split in the Congress helped the saffron alliance but they fell 20 short of the 145 needed to form a government in the state. And for the Lok Sabha, the BJP got only 13 and Shiv Sena 15.

But for Kargil, it is doubtful whether the BJP would have maintained even the seats that it had won in the 1998 election; the national chauvinist frenzy paid off in



A scene from Ballot Battle in Kashmir

terms of votes in some states as in Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, MP, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh where the BJP's gains were quite significant; but in the rest of the country Kargil created few ripples and it was the regional issues which became dominant.

The BJP's gains were in fact in these very states that routed it in the Assembly elections earlier : in MP, the BJP and its allies won 29 out of 40 seats just 9 months after being almost wiped out in the Assembly polls; Delhi, which saw the Congress sweeping to power in the Assembly polls, returned BJP candidates in all the 7 constituencies. However, there was little enthusiasm among the voters as the voter turn-out was less than 44 per cent, down by 5 per cent over 1996. In Rajasthan, the BJP gained 16 out of 28. Here too, it was replaced by the Congress(I) government in the last Assembly elections in November 1998. The sea-change which occurred in these states in a matter of a few months can be attributed to the Kargil factor. Securing less than a quarter of the total votes polled in the entire country, the BJP's weak mass base becomes conspicuous contrary to the projections of a massive victory by the media.

### **Sonia – the Congress(I)'s lone candidate**

Wherever the Congress(I) contested, it was made into a Sonia show; the candidates had no importance, in every constituency it was for seeing Sonia as PM that people were asked to exercise their vote. The main theme of the Congress was stability; it tried to drive home the point that it alone had provided stable governments in the past and it alone could provide one at present, while all coalitions would only end up in instability as proved by the recent BJP experiment and that of the UF governments earlier. Sonia relied more on negative propaganda against the BJP and its leader Vajpayee, holding the latter responsible for the Pak 'intruders' in Kargil and depicting his role in the Kargil issue as one of "national betrayal" as it continued to import sugar from Pakistan well until June when the Kargil operation was going on.

Though it gained considerably in Karnataka and UP, it failed to retain its '98 tally of 140 seats. It secured 112 seats while along with the allies this comes to a total of 135 seats. But the total votes for the Congress(I) had increased going up from 25.82 per cent in the last Lok Sabha election to 28.42 per cent this year. This is despite the fact that the party contested only in 453 seats in 1999 against 477 seats in the last election.

In AP, the Congress(I)'s fortunes were even more amusing : in 1998, it bagged 22 seats in AP by polling 38.46 per cent votes, but in 1999, it won only five Lok Sabha seats despite increasing its vote-share to 42.81 per cent.

The Congress(I) too thus had no issues of relevance

to the people in these elections. It banked on the Sonia "charisma" as its counterpart did on Vajpayee's; it tried to play on the stability card — there was nothing concerning the vast masses of people, even the populist schemes and promises of the Congress(I) were exhausted. In the Assembly elections in five states that were held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls, the Congress(I) was swept to power in Karnataka where it won 133 out of 224 seats and Arunachal Pradesh where it secured 53 out of the 60 seats. In Maharashtra, it emerged as the single largest party with 75 seats which, however, constituted just over a quarter of the 288-seat Assembly. It succeeded in cooking up a majority by aligning with its recently split away group and arch-rival, Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and six others thereby replacing the BJP-Shiv Sena rule in Maharashtra. The Congress(I)'s greatest loss in the Assembly elections was in AP where the TDP managed to come back to power. However, it increased its strength in the Assembly from a mere 26 that it had won in the December 1994 elections to 90 this time.

### **The "Left" dumps the Third Front in favour of the Congress(I)**

The so-called left parties like the CPI and the CPI(M), which have been shouting from the roof-tops about the Third Front as an alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP for over a decade, dumped the slogan and campaigned for the Congress(I) on the pretext of defeating the communal BJP.

In fact, between 1989 and 1999, the Left's relation vis-a-vis the Congress(I) turned a full circle. In 1989, its sole agenda was to ensure the defeat of the Congress and it supported the JD's VP Singh government from outside along with the BJP. Thus BJP became an ally of the "Left" in isolating the Congress. In less than a year, however, the BJP pulled down the JD government and took up an aggressive campaign against the Babri Masjid and vowed to construct the Ram temple in its place. In the 1991 elections to the parliament, the "left" took the stand of "equi-distance" from both the BJP and the Congress(I) describing them as two sides of the same coin. The equi-distance theory remained in operation until the 1996 elections when the BJP emerged as the single largest party and even formed a government for 13 days. The United Front government which was formed in '96 with the "Left"'s support and even the participation of some "left" parties in the government, relied heavily on the Congress(I) for its very survival. The "Left" thus took the Congress support to keep the BJP out but did not yet have an understanding with it. After the collapse of the UF government in '98 and the formation of the BJP-led government, it came up with the formulation that the

BJP was the bigger enemy and that to defeat the BJP, it was willing to have a tactical alliance with the Congress(I). At first, it bargained for a Congress without Sonia but later it completely compromised and campaigned for Sonia's Prime Ministership too in the event of a Congress victory. The CPI and CPI(M) declared the Third Front dead after the announcement of the elections to the 13th Lok Sabha and claimed that going with the Congress(I) is the only way to defeat the BJP. Thus the past decade has seen the "Left" completely immersed in the job of making and de-making the governments at the centre playing the role of a broker and a manipulator. The CPI(M) emerged as the chief broker among the "Left" parties. The result of this is a further erosion of its mass base and organisational weakening. There were hardly any mass movements in the past decade even if they be of the reformist kind. The '99 election had brought out the weakness of the "Left" as never before in terms of votes polled. The percentage of votes polled by the CPI came down from 1.75 in 1998 to 1.48 in the current election. It had narrowly escaped the humiliation of being de-recognised as a 'national party' as it had failed to secure the required 6 per cent votes in more than four states/union territories. But it managed to get just enough seats that helped save it from disgrace.

In West Bengal itself, considered to be their traditional fortress, the Left Front lost ground to the Trinamul and the BJP and was completely routed in the urban areas. The CPI(M) tally was down to 21 from the previous 24. In the rural areas too, the "Left" candidates had narrow leads over their rivals that has led to speculation that their present term of office in West Bengal could be the last one. In AP, the CPI and CPI(M) were virtually wiped out losing in even their traditional strongholds like Khammam and Nalgonda. The "Left" parties had a combined strength of 33 seats in the dissolved AP Assembly and were reduced to just two. While the CPI drew a blank, the CPI(M) got the two seats. They lost the three Lok Sabha seats that they held earlier.

The call for an alliance with the Congress, has created a rift within the so-called left with RSP and Forward Bloc refusing to endorse the pro-Congress strategy of the CPI and the CPI(M). It has also created a crisis within the CPI and CPI(M). If the NF became defunct with the results of the 1998 election when several of its leaders and constituents like the TDP began to sail with the BJP, the Third Front became irrelevant even before the '99 election itself. The CPI and the CPI(M), on the one hand, dumped the decade-old slogan and queued up behind Sonia's Congress, most of the veteran leaders of the various Janata Dals — champions of the Third Front till yesterday who posed as staunch anti-BJP spokesmen, the

Sharad Yadavs, Ramvilas Paswans and so on — joined the BJP-led coalition at the centre.

The "Liberation" group, which calls itself CPI(ML) although at present it has nothing in common with the original CPI(ML), was washed out totally in Bihar and elsewhere. Its lone winner is from Karbi Anglong in Assam that has been its traditional stronghold for nearly two decades. It decried its fate by blaming the pro-Congress(I) stand of the CPI and CPI(M) and is now taking up the slogan of the Third Front and calling for the unity of all the "Left" forces in their "heroic" parliamentary struggle against the communal and fascist forces. These followers of the modern revisionism of Deng, have hardly any difference with the CPI and CPI(M) but for the tactical slogan of supporting the Congress(I) to defeat the BJP.

## The rise of the other parties

Taken by themselves, the two largest parties, the BJP and the Congress(I), together secured a mere 51.5 per cent of the total votes polled in the 13th Lok Sabha election. The rest of the votes were shared among scores of smaller parties and independents, though a large number of them are in one alliance or another. It shows that the two major parties in the country have hardly any relevance for a considerable chunk of the country's population. It also shows that these other parties will continue to play a crucial role in the formation or pulling down of governments in the future. The stability of any government at the centre thus depends on the support of these smaller parties some of which have just one or two seats, but wield considerable bargaining power. The significance of this can be realised from the fact that the last BJP-led government fell as it fell short of a single vote to defeat the no-confidence motion in the parliament.

The gains made by the Samajwadi Party and the BSP in UP (26 and 14 respectively), the Nationalist Congress Party in Maharashtra, the Sikkim Democratic Front in Sikkim, apart from the various allies in the two coalitions led by the BJP and the Congress(I), point to the polarisation that is likely to emerge in future more and more along caste, religious and regional lines.

In UP, out of 85 seats, parties other than the Congress, BJP and their respective allies, got over half the seats—forty three. Mulayam Singh's SP gained six more seats than it held in the dissolved Lok Sabha. Besides, it came a close second in 23 other seats. The BSP gained 10 more seats against its earlier four, came second in 14 other seats and lost by a very narrow margin in 3 seats. That these smaller parties could give the BJP a drubbing in its own Janmabhoomi notwithstanding the Kargil factor, the Ayodhya issue, the division among the opposition themselves and the broader alliance of the BJP-led forces,



points to the polarisation that is likely to occur in future even in other states along caste, religious and regional identities. They demonstrate the limits of BJP's expansion in future and how its base can be eaten away by smaller parties based on local issues. The smaller players will continue to hold the key to the "stability" of the government at the centre (stability in the sense of holding on for the five-year-term).

## Is Naidu's TDP an exception ?

From day one when the election results in AP began to pour in, the media began building up the myth that Naidu is an exception among Indian politicians; that he got the mandate from the people for his ground performance through his various schemes that benefited a large section of the people in AP; and that was why the TDP won with a thumping majority (29 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats with an additional seven seats for its ally the BJP and 180 out of 293 Assembly seats) in spite of Naidu lacking the charismatic traits of the founder of TDP, NT Rama Rao. The vote to Naidu's TDP is being interpreted as a positive vote for "good governance and development" while in most states the voting pattern has been negative. As it is the first time since 1978 that an incumbent government in AP has been reelected, Naidu's victory is sought to be made to look like a legend.

What is the ground reality ? The fact is that Naidu is a wily politician, perhaps the shrewdest of the manipulators. Backed firmly by the comprador big bourgeois-imperialist combine, he made AP a hunting ground for every type of foreign investor and the Indian comprador houses. In his four-year-old rule, he had sold off the interests of the state to the multinationals. He became the darling of the World Bank and IMF; was proclaimed the Business Man of the year, received continuous coverage in 'The Economist' and other mouthpieces of international capital, and has intimate links with the sharks from Wall Street to Dalal Street. He had proved himself to be the most reliable dalal among the Indian state governments and was described by the Wall Street Journal as "Prime Minister Material" the very day the results were declared. The fact that he was able to secure a \$550 million Economic Restructuring Loan from the World Bank at a time when US sanctions were in force in the wake of the Pokhran nuclear explosions in May 1998, shows the extent of his comprador servility to foreign capital. He served as a vehicle for the World Bank's experiments of dealing directly with the states bypassing the centre in its new strategy — "sub-national" approach — of lending to the states within a Third World country. He allowed AP to become an experimental station for the imperialists in all spheres — from infrastructure to information technology to terminator

seeds. And for this, vast sums were pumped into the state by the imperialists. No wonder, the media describes him as the CEO of AP Inc. — a CEO in the service of the imperialists and the comprador bureaucrat bourgeoisie. The foreign loans helped increase the support base for the TDP in the initial phase by providing him funds to launch various populist schemes while pushing AP into a debt trap.

There are two important reasons for the imperialists to choose AP as their model state for implementing their liberalisation and other economic 'reforms' : one, it is a state as big as unified Germany possessing vast fertile land with rich water and mineral resources; moreover, it has a relatively better infrastructure of roads, railways, ports and communications as is the case of much of South India. (It is to be noted that among the hundred most backward districts of India at present there is not a single one from AP which shows its relatively better position vis-a-vis other larger states such as UP and Bihar) All these favourable conditions placed it among the foremost states for the imperialists to choose from to implement their neo-liberal policies. Just as they had selected Punjab in the late 1960s for implementing the 'green revolution' strategy. But what finally prompted the imperialists to select AP is the need to tackle the threat posed by the revolutionary movement. The imperialists are scared to the hilt at the prospects of the new spectre haunting AP — the spectre of the ever-growing revolutionary movement that is bound to engulf the entire country. They have aided Naidu in every possible manner to crush the movement : provided funds for the various schemes, and for the construction of roads and other development projects in rural Telangana in a big way. They tried to divert and wean away a section through schemes such as Janmabhoomi, Mahila Janmabhoomi, Adarana, Roshni, CMEY, Deepam, DWCR, Water Users Associations, Rytu Bazaars and so on. A section that benefited directly from the schemes, no doubt, was drawn towards the TDP.

The World Bank and the imperialists thus played a major role in boosting up the image of their trusted agent, Chandrababu Naidu, by pumping in vast sums of money for the latter's schemes in order to create a social base for the ruling TDP and to isolate the revolutionaries. These populist schemes were combined with a massive crackdown on the CPI (ML) [PW] and the revolutionary movement led by it.

In the four years that Naidu was in power, he turned AP into a police state and gave a blank check to the police and administration; hence the officialdom was fully on his side. This single most important factor ensured that his party had a greater edge in rigging the elections. The bomb culture which his goondas unleashed, wiped out a

considerable number of opponents in the past few years. From country-made bombs to remote control-car bombs — all were used freely. The TDP goondas roamed freely after the car-bomb explosion in Hyderabad two years ago. Even land-mines were used in Rayalaseema by the TDP goondas. During the election itself bombs that were stored in a minister's house went off on August 28 in the town of Narasaraopet in the coastal region killing four persons. The Panchayatraj Minister 'Doctor' Kodela Prasad Rao, was not even arrested after such a blast at his residence. Thus while jungle raj prevailed in Rayalaseema and the coastal districts, where, with the backing of the state, the TDP ensured an upperhand in rigging, in the Telangana region, on the other hand, it indulged in massive rigging with the aid of the state machinery.



Voters at a polling booth in Medak in South Telangana  
'Democracy in Telangana under the shadow of the gun'  
reads the Telugu caption.

The fear of rigging by the TDP was so much that the rival Congress(I) filed a writ petition in the AP High Court challenging the posting of two senior police officials during the election. They charged that the officers — Umesh Kumar, IG, Grey Hounds (Special anti-Naxal armed police unit), and SR Tiwari, DIG, anti-Naxal investigating bureau — were being sent to these districts in the name of curbing naxalite activity but actually to facilitate rigging by the TDP. In the North Telangana region neither the TDP nor the Congress nor any other parties for that matter, ventured out into the rural areas for campaigning. However, on the polling day, by deploying a large police force, both the Congress and TDP indulged in massive rigging, but it was the latter that had an edge. The only complaint of the Congress(I) was that the rigging was not "free and fair" !

Thus the swing that was said to have taken place and the failure of the anti-incumbency factor with respect to the TDP is a myth. Even with the rigging, "cycling"

(see box), etc., the fact is that the TDP lost a considerable number of seats that it had won in the December '94 Assembly election. The Congress(I) increased its tally from 26 to 90 though it lost heavily the parliamentary seats that it held earlier. And in 10 assembly seats, the margin was less than 1000 while in 52 others the Congress(I) trailed behind with a margin of less than 6000. Even a one per cent swing of votes against the TDP would have seen its strength in the Assembly drastically depleted.

The ruling classes, through their all-pervasive media, are trying to project the TDP's victory as an example of positive performance, of uplifting the poor by implementing the World Bank-sponsored schemes, as an example to be emulated by other chief ministers, and so on. Thereby they want to pave the way for a greater inflow of foreign capital, justify their policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation, and implement them at an even faster pace. This is a big myth deliberately floated by the reactionary media to sell the neo-liberal policies of the World Bank-IMF-WTO combine.

First of all, one should not read too much into the whole verdicts in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country like India. Otherwise, one would only land up in insolvable riddles and contradictions. For instance, if the victory of Naidu's TDP is to be interpreted as an approval of the World Bank-dictated reforms that it had been implementing most loyally, then would one interpret the defeat of trusted stooges of the World Bank like ex-finance minister Manmohan Singh and Chidambaram as a defeat of the policies of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation which they pursued vigorously during their tenure ? Moreover, how does one explain the serious losses suffered by the same TDP in the 1998 parliamentary election when it got just 12 out of 42 seats ? Why was his performance of the earlier three years not rewarded by the people then ?

It is actually money power, muscle power, caste, regional, religious etc., factors along with populist and attractive promises and schemes just before the elections that actually decide the poll outcome. And in all this, Naidu's TDP scored a point over its chief rival, the Congress(I).

After the 1998 election, the TDP launched a series of populist schemes with an eye on the assembly election. A few weeks prior to the elections, it even promised to provide a million subsidised LPG connections in order to attract the rural women-folk. During the election campaign, the TDP's focus was not on the Vision 2020, information technology and other elitist jargon but was more on the welfare programmes that it had undertaken and is planning to undertake for the supposed benefit of

the poor.

But it is clear that the policies being pursued by Naidu's TDP in AP will land the state's economy into a deeper crisis. As it is, the state's finances are in a bad shape. Naidu's rule had seen a manifold increase in the state's debts. He had come to an understanding with the World Bank on a Rs. 10,000 crore loan for the various projects. This will lead it deeper into debt and increase the burden of debt service obligations. AP is now treading a path traversed long before by several Latin American countries — Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Mexico etc. The IMF and the World Bank, quite naturally, care little for the harmful effects of their prescription that would only aggravate rather than cure the disease. Though the results may look alluring temporarily, the drain of wealth and capital flight from the state that would follow with the implementation of these imperialist-sponsored schemes — unemployment, poverty, disease, drought and famine — will increase further. Already, vast rural tracts in the state, particularly the four districts of Chittoor, Anantapur, Cuddapah and Mahaboobnagar, are reeling under severe famine conditions. 10.26 lakh hectares of land suffered crop failure in 436 famine-afflicted Mandals with the loss to the peasantry estimated to be Rs. 2,560 crores. Naidu's high-tech rule is bound to create a vast ocean of poverty with a few islands of plenty.

### Instability will deepen further

The newly-formed NDA government led by the BJP with its 296 members in the parliament is even more unstable than its predecessor. The BJP with the same number of seats, had to depend on two dozen allies in the new Lok Sabha in place of the dozen allies in the dissolved parliament. With about 40 per cent of the seats in their control, the allies now have a greater bargaining power — a fact that is already being witnessed in the ministry-formation after the announcement of the results.

The wrangling for posts began even as the election results began pouring in. Mamata's Trinamul, with just 8 seats, had its eyes set upon the coveted Railway Ministry which it ultimately got much to the chagrin of other veterans like JD (U)'s Ram Vilas Paswan and Nitish Kumar. The JD(U), a party which secured 20 seats but is filled with power-hungry veterans, had begun to bargain for more posts to accommodate the representatives from all its three constituents — Janata Dal (Sharad Yadav faction), Samata Party of Fernandes and Hegde's Lok Shakti) — which had come together to fight under a common symbol and name.

Vajpayee, who first declared that his cabinet would be of optimum size, had to give in to the pressures of his allies and rest himself content with a 70-member jumbo-sized cabinet. Despite this, he had to face the wrath of

senior leaders like Ramakrishna Hegde who was not accommodated in the new cabinet and the three ministers of the Shiv Sena returned to Mumbai without taking charge as they were dissatisfied with the portfolios entrusted to them. The pressure for more ministerial berths and central funds for their respective states will continue to rock the government in future. While the allies would want to expand their base in their respective states, the BJP, on the other hand, will try to contain the influence of its allies as continual dependence on them is fraught with danger to its own survival in future. It will also strive to buy up the MPs belonging to its allies emulating the successful experiment of PVN Rao's government in 1991 which was transformed from a minority government to a majority one by buying up the MPs belonging to the JMM. This will be a constant source of conflict among the NDA partners apart from conflicts on the socio-political agenda. Though there is a consensus among all the NDA constituents on the economic agenda with each trying to outbeat the other in implementing the World Bank-dictated policies, the BJP's own agenda of construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya (which, the VHP declared, would begin shortly), Article 370, Uniform Civil Code etc., is bound to give rise to severe conflicts in the ruling alliance.

The instability of the government is such that even a cross over of just 8 per cent of the total (26 seats) could lead it to collapse. Withdrawal of support by the TDP alone, or by the combination of any two bigger allies such as the JD(U) and Trinamul, or the JD(U) and the DMK, could prove to be fatal to the government. The TDP has decided to support the BJP-led government from outside so that it can retain more bargaining power and also exonerate itself from the harsh anti-people policies that are on the government's immediate agenda. Such is the "stability" achieved by the grand alliance of twenty four! From the very day the elections are over, another election continues to loom large over the political horizon.

There is now almost a consensus among the political parties that a full five-year term for the Lok Sabha should be made mandatory through an amendment to the constitution. Some are arguing for a German model in which a no-confidence motion against a ruling party could be introduced only when the opposition is in a position to form an alternative government. Needless to say, none of this can solve the inherent instability of the government and save it from collapse.

### Now for the Millennium Sell-out !

The BJP-led caretaker government, certain that it would be swept to power again, prepared a 100-day economic agenda even before the election results had come out. Proclaiming that it is now inaugurating the

## "Free and Fair" Elections !!

"Bellary Floats on Liquor" runs a banner headline in a popular English daily. "Bullets and fraud, not informed choice, determine the (poll) outcome" says a weekly referring to the election in Bihar, but most of which is applicable in large parts of India. "1,232 ballot boxes with false ballot papers seized in Bihar"; "EC bars four magistrates from conducting elections"; "large-scale booth-capturing feared in several constituencies", "Bombs stored in AP Minister's house explode", and so on run newspaper reports. A look at these reports during the period of election reveals the extent to which one can stoop to capture seats.

Nothing is sacrosanct. All is fair in love and ballot war. Unleashing a reign of terror on the rival candidates and their supporters and even forcing them to withdraw from the contest if they are not strong enough; capturing the polling booths and stamping the ballot papers as voters and polling officials look on helplessly; managing the administration and placing pro-ruling party officials in selected booths to facilitate rigging; printing excess ballot papers or false ballot papers and changing the ballot boxes in connivance with the polling officials; impersonation as very few presiding officers dare to ask for voter identity in places where the mafia gangs virtually exercise a parallel rule; "cycling" — an ingenious method in which the first voter who goes into the polling booth, brings back the empty ballot paper without casting his vote. It is then stamped in the name of the candidate and sent with the next voter who drops it in the ballot box and brings back the empty ballot paper that he collects from the polling official. These voters, in turn, are paid from Rs. 50 to 500, depending on the importance of the constituency after handing over the empty ballot paper to the concerned party. This 'cycling' goes on until all

the voters cast their votes in favour of their respective candidate. The greater the money power, the greater is the number of such captive voters.

Each voter is generally paid Rs. 50 on average by a candidates. In VIP and VVIP constituencies, the amount can go upto Rs. 500 or more per vote. In Bellary, it is said that while Sonia's campaigners gave a 500-rupee note to each voter, BJP's Sushma Swaraj presented each woman voter with an expensive silk saree along with the traditional 'Sindoor' etc. With each



Armed goons with sophisticated weapons on their way to capture polling stations in Bihar

parliamentary constituency having around a million voters on an average, one can imagine, or find it mind-boggling to imagine, how much a candidate spends even at the rate of Rs. 50 per vote. And it is ten times more or even higher for prestigious seats like Bellary, Lucknow, Raebareilly etc.

It is money power and muscle power (which again is dependent on the former) that determine the outcome

of the election in India in general.

**Outlook**, dated October 11, 1999 captures the situation in Bihar thus: "Blood stained the ballot papers, voters were banished from booths, political murders became routine, fake ballot papers in fake boxes were imported and the state machinery was unabashedly exploited to benefit the stalwarts" and concludes that "Elections in the state have little to do with fairness or freedom. Bullets and fraud, not informed choice, determine the outcome." This, however, is not the phenomenon of Bihar alone. It is the underlying feature of the election in this largest "democracy" in the world. The only difference being that in Bihar, the means adopted for rigging are too crude, while in other parts of India they are combined with subtler forms like 'cycling' which are acceptable to all the major contestants.

second generation or reforms, the Vajpayee government spelt out the details of its blueprint to sell-out the country to the imperialists thereby securing the patronage of their foreign mentors and the comprador bureaucrat bourgeoisie prior to the elections itself. These include,;

(i) adoption of the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) Bill, Money Laundering Bill, Amendment to the Companies Act, Securities Contracts Regulation Act, the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), and other legislative Bills; (ii) boost to FDI by allowing 74 per cent



foreign equity in automobiles, auto components, petroleum, bulk grain-handling, tourism etc., through the automatic route, and 100 per cent FDI in non-conventional energy and films, besides 51 per cent in the telecom sector and 40 per cent in banking — all through the RBI window; (iii) bulk sale of some profit-making PSUs for resource mobilisation to keep the fiscal deficit under check. The PSUs selected for immediate disinvestment to mobilise Rs. 7000 crore this fiscal year are : Modern Foods, IPCL, GAIL, ITDC and BALCO; (iv) Agreement on matters related to external trade such as Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), service sector and the farm sector at the WTO Talks at Seattle from November 30 to December 3 this year.

The other Bills that are also in the new government's immediate agenda are : the Coal Mines Bill, 1998; the Coal India Bill, the information technology Bill. The first two permit mining of coal and lignite not only for captive purpose but also for sale. The Coal India Bill empowers the central government to direct the transfer of land or mining rights in Coal India Ltd or its subsidiary to any subsidiary company. These two Bills are part of the conditionalities of the World Bank's modernisation loan to Coal India Ltd and would have to be passed in order to avail this loan (The ET October, 1999).

The state governments too will be actively involved in this millennium sell-out by the newly-elected traitors. The role of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) will be drastically reduced giving way to a more aggressive Foreign Investment Implementation Authority (FIIA) where states' representatives will also sit, playing a more crucial role in state government clearances. All these changes are sought to be achieved at a pace unheard of under the earlier governments.

The statements by the Prime Minister Vajpayee, Finance Minister Yaswant Sinha, the Commerce and Industries Minister Murasoli Maran of the DMK, Telecommunication minister Ram Vilas Paswan of the JD(U) and others soon after their assumption of power show their anxiety and haste in pushing through the "reforms."

While Vajpayee, in his very first speech after becoming the Prime Minister, spoke of some "hard decisions" to be taken for reining in the country's economy and the need for "tightening our belts" to ward off the impending crisis, Yaswanth Sinha, in an interview with The Economic Times, which was published on October 15, talked of passing the various Bills in the coming session of the parliament and the urgent need for deepening the financial sector reforms as per the recommendations of Narasimhan Committee II which includes the government giving up its majority stake in banks. His target was to

raise Rs. 10,000 crore in the next 100 days through improvement in tax collection and disinvestment of the PSUs. Instructions were also issued to cut about 10 per cent in non-plan, non-salary expenditure.

DMK's Murasoli Maran, the Commerce and Industry Minister, indicated on the very first day he assumed office that he was an even more loyal imperialist stooge than BJP's finance minister. According to him, all sectors should be opened up to 100 per cent FDI and the handful of exceptions should be put on the negative list. His millennium mission is to remove all stumbling blocs in the way of foreign investors to generate as much as 10 per cent of the GDP i.e., about \$50 billion a year. The foreign investors and Indian Big Business are elated by these pronouncements that make the Manmohan Singhs and Chidambarams hang their heads in shame for their poor show as Finance Ministers. *The Economic Times*, in its editorial on 16 October, hailed Maran for his "absolutely correct priorities". Indeed, to speak of \$50 billion foreign investment a year at a time when the inflows are just around \$3 billion needs lots of guts. Who else but a millennium traitor could do that to one's motherland, inviting foreign capital to come and plunder our people and resources without any fear?

Then Ramvilas Paswan, the Communication Minister announced soon after assuming charge that he would take Internet to rural areas and provide a telephone to every village by 2002. When almost half the villages do not have clean drinking water and lakhs of people die of water-borne diseases every year, talking of Internet and telephone are a cruel joke played on the poverty-stricken rural masses. It is actually a clever ploy to create a demand for the telephone industry of the MNCs and their Indian compradors. While the Textile minister Kashiram Rana declared that the New Textile Policy would be announced soon, Power Minister Kumaramangalam announced reforms in the State Electricity Boards and reduction of subsidies. Thus all the patrons of the BJP-led NDA government are vying with each other in selling out the country to the imperialists and to shift the burden of the crisis on to the backs of the vast masses. The TDP, which has chosen to support the government from outside, is already a hot favourite of the World Bank and the various MNCs.

## Attacks on people will intensify to an unprecedented scale

It is clear that the new government will step up its attacks against the people in all spheres in order to push through the "second generation reforms" that aim at selling out the country's interests lock, stock and barrel to the imperialists and their compradors. The Prime Minister's warning to the people to "tighten their belts"

and that the time has come to take "hard decisions" means that people should be ready to bear additional taxation, bear cuts in subsidies, boldly face the rising prices and the cuts in jobs due to reduction in government expenditure on the one hand and privatisation of the PSUs on the other, prepare themselves to face diseases and natural calamities like floods and famines as the government is giving up its responsibility towards public welfare due to the constraint of resources and so on.

The fresh attack on the people had actually begun even before the new government had assumed office, barely within 48 hours after the counting of votes had started, through the steepest ever hike in diesel prices — 40 per cent at a stroke. There was no hint of it until the completion of the last phase of elections on October 3. Such is the hypocrisy and double standards of the parliamentary parties. If the hike in prices was announced prior to the election, the BJP-led alliance would have faced the wrath of the people. The bitter memory of the Assembly elections in last November when the BJP was routed in its strongholds of Delhi, MP and Rajasthan mainly on account of the steep rise in prices of essential commodities is still fresh in their minds to risk taking such a measure prior to the election. Now that they are safely in power, these hypocrites began riding rough-shod on the people's backs.

But this is precisely the fertile soil for the instability of the government — more than the machinations of any cunning, power-hungry partner to destabilise the government. The source of instability is inherently rooted in the very policies pursued by the government — in the unfulfilled aspirations of the people and the unbearable economic burden and the burning problems that would drive them into the streets demanding a solution.

The deepening economic crisis and the further sell-out of the country's interests is bound to push the vast masses into further misery and destitution. As it is, the country is headed towards an internal debt trap due to the sharp rise in government debt in the last few years. Today India's internal debt to GDP ratio stands at a staggering 55 per cent. According to a statement made by the Finance Minister, the government has to borrow Rs. 90,000 crore to 1,20,000 crore per year just to finance its interest payment obligations. The crisis has further deepened in the current financial year with elections and the Kargil operation eating up almost Rs. 15,000 crores. The central government's fiscal deficit has risen from Rs. 36,325 crore to Rs. 1,03,737 crore over the same period. For the current year, the actual deficit is likely to be higher than 6 per cent of GDP against the budgeted figure of 4 per cent (*The Economic Times*, 16 October, 1999).

Reduction of the fiscal deficit has been the aim of

every government at the centre since 1991. Towards this end, subsidies were slashed, social welfare programmes were curtailed or scrapped altogether, public expenditure was cut down resulting in further unemployment, shares of PSUs were sold off to foreign investors and to the big business houses, FDI was permitted in a big way and yet the fiscal crisis and the underlying economic crisis only deepened further. The very same prescription that had aggravated the disease is now being administered with greater vigour by the new government. This will lead to even deeper crisis in the Indian economy thereby aggravating the social and political crisis.

**Fight the anti-people, pro-imperialist policies of the traitorous BJP-led government at the centre !**

**Intensify the ongoing People's War !!**

As the 'second generation reforms' bring in their wake a new round of militant struggles by the working class, peasantry, students, government employees, women, dalits, adivasis, the religious minorities and the various nationalities, the ruling classes will further step up their fascist repression. They will more and more fascise the state structure, curtail even the existing rights of the various sections of the people; enact draconian, black laws and ordinances to deal with militant dissent; and strive to crush all democratic movements through fascist measures.

In a way, today's situation is similar to that of the early 70s. In the mid-term polls of 1972, Indira Gandhi rode to power in the wake of the Bangla Desh war of 1971. Within one year after she won a two-thirds majority in the parliament (single-handedly without any allies), people began to come out into the streets protesting against the rising prices, unemployment and corruption. The agitation became particularly severe in Bihar and Gujarat by 1974. The railway workers went on a 20-day All India Railway strike; there were agitations even by the Provincial Armed Constabulary in UP. To contain the people's movements, the crisis-ridden Indira government, in spite of its massive majority in the parliament, was driven to the extreme measure of declaring Emergency in June 1975 after it failed to curb the growing tide of people's struggles through its Black Acts.

Today, the situation is even more serious and the economic crisis deeper. Although the ruling alliance has a wafer-thin majority and is highly unstable, it is more likely that the alliance partners will take a consensus approach in coming down heavily on people's movements. To carry out the agenda of further selling

out the country's interests to imperialism, the ruling classes have no other recourse but to crush all opposition to their traitorous policies with an iron hand. And in this, the various state governments are hand in glove with the centre. And in AP, the fascist fangs of Naidu will dig still deeper, 'aided' by a captive government at the centre that is dependent totally on the TDP's support, and by the imperialists who wish to project AP as the model state that has vindicated their neo-liberal policies and contained the revolutionary movement.

Yes, the country is passing through the gravest crisis and the people have to 'tighten their belts' for the impending battle. The revolutionary and democratic forces are in a stronger position and better organised today than during the mid-70s. The nationality movements have emerged as a great challenge to the ruling classes along with the movements led by the revolutionary forces. Various sections of the people are coming into struggles on their sectional demands either spontaneously or under petty-bourgeois leaderships. Directly affected by the policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation, the Indian working class, which has been rendered passive by the pro-establishment Left, is all set to revive its age-old glorious tradition of militant, heroic struggles, and to play its historic role as the leader of the revolution. The near-famine conditions that are becoming a bane of

the Indian countryside that is being transformed into a vast desert due to the neglect of irrigation by successive governments, the incessant crop failures and pauperisation of the peasantry, the sell-out of the interests of the peasantry at the dictates of the WTO — all these are galvanising the hitherto dormant sections of the peasantry into a mighty, elemental force that has the potential to sweep away the monsters from power. Women and dalits, persecuted religious minorities such as the muslims, christians and Sikhs — all of whom have been oppressed and suppressed for long — are bracing themselves to face the "hard decisions" being taken by the government.

It is the urgent need of the hour to unify all these oppressed sections of the population, build powerful class and mass organisations from the grass-roots to the All India level and wage a relentless struggle against the traitors that are selling away the country under the respectable guise of a "democratically-elected" government. This struggle must go on side by side with the intensification of the armed agrarian revolution in the vast countryside, the deepening of people's war and the establishment of alternative organs of people's democratic power in place of the putrified, outdated and irrelevant parliamentary institutions.

— Nishant

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*(Continuation of page 33 ...)*

Pakistan. France, which first said it would not deliver the submarines due to be shipped on October 28th, changed its mind after a 'fact-finding' visit of EU representatives returned from Pakistan.

On the other hand, the Generals themselves are trying to appease the West by putting on a mask of "reasonableness". Technically their rule is not through martial law, but by technocrats. To please the Western bankers and the IMF they promised to extract \$5 billion, looted by the rich and powerful, from the nationalised banks. Musharraf, in his address, spoke not of fundamentalism, but of Kemal Pasha. Towards India, they announced a unilateral withdrawal from the international border. Yet, two of the six appointed to Musharraf's National Security Council, were once close associates of the earlier ruthless dictator, Zia Ul Huq. In fact, Zia's advocate-general during the martial law days, is now senior advisor to the military rulers.

The Pakistani ruling classes are in a severe crisis. Habituated to Western imperialist pampering during the cold war years, when they were useful as a counter-weight to Soviet imperialist domination in India and Afghanistan, now they find themselves orphaned in the new geo-political climate. With no Soviet super power to contend with in the region, the West is now more

favourably inclined towards the servile Indian rulers. Pakistan is now seen as just one other client state in the Third World with no necessity to bestow any special favours on it. Yet, America is moving cautiously. They do not want to push it into the camp of the anti-American Islamic countries, like Iran, Iraq, etc. Besides, it has a nuclear bomb, which, if combined with the Islamic bomb, can become a lethal mix for Israel and the West. On the other hand, the Indian rulers, by attempting to force the 'rogue state' label onto Pakistan, is seeking to push it into the Islamic camp, in order to strengthen the Washington-Delhi axis.

Meanwhile, amidst all these pulls and pressures at the political plane, Pakistan also faces a defacto bankrupt economy, enormous poverty and has hardly any civil liberties worth the name. The various oppressed nationalities are suppressed under the iron boots of the dominant Punjabi nationality. Consistently diverted by an anti-Indian hysteria, they, like the people of India, are yet to shake off the yoke of imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucrat capitalism from their backs. But with the country's deepening crisis and increasing dog-fights amongst the Pakistani rulers, great opportunities open up before the Pakistani people. If not directed towards revolution, there is every danger for people's frustration to find outlet in Islamic fundamentalism. □

# Election Boycott in South Bastar

— by Ashok

It was September 10th as we reached a small village in Kunta tehsil. With elections due on September 25th in this region, it was a period that ought to have witnessed the peak of the election campaign. But as we wound our way from village to village during the one month's stay in the region the entire picture began to unfold : Hectic campaigning (for boycott) was being conducted only by the People's War Party; no candidate of any party even entered the area. And as we traversed the region, radio Bhopal continued to blare out : Red Alert in Bastar; Borders sealed..... surveillance by two helicopters ... vast para-military force, NCC and homeguards being utilised to ensure 'free and fair' polling.

We covered the three squad areas of Kunta, Basaguda and Byramghad each covering about 100 to 150 villages (now, all a part of the new Dantewada district). Throughout the 100 kms covered, the story seemed the same as we spoke to the ordinary villagers.... Elections, they said, had no relevance to their lives, as whoever got elected (Congress, CPI, BJP have all come as 'representatives') there has been no development whatsoever over the past 50 years.... not only that, they had to face the daily terror and loot of forest officials, the village elders (Sarpanch, Patels, etc.), the traders and all officials. Development, they claimed, only began after the arrival of the PW squads — first they suppressed the looters, and now they are helping us in our own development.... from literacy, sports and medicine, to organising the construction of dams, lakes, wells etc.

## Kunta :

It is Dabbakunta village of Kistaram Range. Over 800 people are gathered from 12 villages. The meeting is being run by the local chairman of the DAKMS (peasant organisation) Range Committee. Present at the meeting were not only villagers but also hostel students, teachers, health workers, etc. It began with a procession with banners, placards and slogan-shouting. The speeches were interspersed with songs — one on election boycott. It was a festive occasion. We wondered how such big meetings were taking place in an area earmarked as 'Red Alert'. We were informed that not a word leaves the villages and anyhow the enemy only patrols the main roads. Besides, as added caution, villagers and GRD (village defence units) had been posted at various points as sentries.

We witnessed similar meetings in Polachelma, Guchannpalli, Bellamgonda, Kommampadu and Dokpadda. All were meetings involving 5 to 10 villages.

All had large number of women present and was being conducted by the respective DAKMS range committee member.

As we moved on to Kunta Range similar meetings took place in Gorkha (8 villages), Askeyvayya (10 villages), Elladmadgu (7 villages), Maraigudda (12 villages) run by the local range committee members and in Gompadu the meeting was held by the LGS (Local Guerilla Squad).

DVC (Party Divisional Committee) member in-charge of Kunta Squad Area, Com. Ramanna (Narendra), explained the nature of the boycott campaign. He said that these central meetings, by Range Committee members (DAKMS), were taken at large villages that were polling centres. Prior to this, two day classes were conducted for each of the three Range committees. One full day went in explaining the Party's stand on boycott, the CC circular, and the slogans that should be carried. 400 copies of the DKSZC (Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee) pamphlets were given and explained. After this class the campaign took off. Besides these central meetings by the RCs, village-level meetings were held by the squads themselves, while conducting their usual organisational activity. In addition, the local CNM (Chaitanya Natya Manch) cultural troupe spent a fortnight-long campaign focussing on the boycott. Finally, specific campaign batches were formed to cover 5 to 6 villages under their jurisdiction. In Kunta squad area 17 such batches of men were formed and 3 of women (comprising 5 to 7 members each). In addition, 60 banners and 370 posters were put up at the main centres. The Kunta CGS even entered Kunta town (where there is a police camp) and took meetings. Finally, an intensive campaign was repeated in the 5 days prior to the elections.

## Basaguda :

Here seven central public meetings were held in the three ranges along the same pattern as those held in Kunta. In a village in Jaggargonda range, 15 villages were involved and about 1000 people attended. Also in a village in Pamed range, 1000 people attended from 15 villages. In the other major meetings 6 to 10 villages were involved with 350 to 500 people attending.

In the Basaguda squad area, the Platoon (PL2) actively participated along with the local squad in the boycott campaign. Com. Gopanna, DVC secretary, who accompanied the platoon, reported on the nature of the boycott campaign. He said in the seven central meetings, of the 4000 people who attended, 1000 were women. In



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one such major meeting, DAKMS divisional president, Poona Masa explained the need to boycott; this was followed by speeches by Range committee members, and finally by Com. Gopanna who explained the CC circular and SZC pamphlet.

Here too the campaign was preceded by holding day-long classes not only for the three DAKMS range committees but also for one KAMS (womens organisation) range committee. Then 15 campaign batches were formed involving 100 youth — 70 male and 30 female. These covered in all 100 villages divided according to the specific areas of responsibility of each range committee member. In addition the local CNM cultural troupe campaigned in 60 villages with not only songs but also a play on the election. Then, the CGS (Central Guerilla Squad) campaigned in 30 villages, while the platoon in 12 villages. The Platoon, before holding the meeting, held marches, and saluted the people. Besides, the squad/Platoon held separate meetings with teachers, youth, employees and journalists from the small towns and explained the party's stand on elections. Also meetings of the village elders (most of whom have surrendered before the people's strength) were held, the party view-point explained, and were warned not to vote. Besides, 25 banners and 200 posters were put up in main centres and 500 pamphlets distributed as far as Jagdalpur. In Basaguda town, where a police camp exists a GRD team put up posters and banners, shouted slogans and distributed handbills, before disappearing into the forest.

### Byramgad and others :

Here too after educating the Range Committees of Byramgad squad area in the three ranges, 23 campaign batches were formed. This involved 100 people with KAMS batches of 5 members each and DAKMS of 7 members. Central meetings were also held, as in Pandum, involving seven villages and 350 people. DVC member, Com. Ganesh, said that in addition to this campaign the CNM local cultural troupe did a fortnight-long campaign and the squad did propaganda in 40 villages. In addition meetings were called of the town youth and teachers, and both the sarpanches and block members were warned not to assist the electoral machinery. A decision had been taken for the GRDs to burn down propaganda offices of the political parties set up on the main road.

A similar pattern was reported in the other three squad areas of South Bastar, with some local variations. In Malkangiri Squad Area (Orissa) 6 batches of KAMS were formed and 5 of DAKMS. 'Voice' — a wall paper — was also used to propagate the boycott. In the National Park area an added factor, was the creation of an all-women squad (LGS) which propagated in 17 villages. In

the Madded squad area, which was facing stiff repression, propaganda had to be more discreet.

### Boycott and Rigging :

After the 25th, as we moved from village to village we got continuous reports of zero voting. In most areas even the sarpanches, patels and gurujis (teachers) had refrained from voting. In fact in many places, the polling booths wound up by the afternoon, while the stipulated time should have been 5 p.m. In some places the polling booths did not even reach the village. For example, in Taren village, not a single vote was cast and the officials took away the booth at 3-00 p.m. In Puvarti too, not a vote was cast, and the booth was removed by 1 p.m. In Tomoda the booth did not reach. In Pidia polling centre not a vote was cast, while the officials that took another booth to neighbouring Undri village, returned to Pidia (with the booth) within an hour. In Jod-Jod village the CNM troupe reached the morning before the polling date and put on a performance. The same afternoon the polling officials arrived with a booth. Thinking that a squad was present, they immediately fled the village and reported to the nearest police station. The police arrived in the village, threatened the villagers, who refused to disclose anything. The next day the polling officials did not reach. Generally, the police either accompanied polling officials in large groups of 20 or 30, or did not go at all. In most interior areas, fearing ambush by PW guerillas, the police did not even attempt to accompany the officials. Besides these on-the-spot observations, we were later told by DVC members that in 80% villages in which the PW works, there would be zero voting; while in the rest it would not go beyond 5%.

This was the ground reality. But what was the official news ? The September 30th issue of 'Dandakaranya Samachar' reported a series of interviews where villagers apparently did not vote out of 'fear' of naxalites cutting off their fingers. Worse still, of the numerous polling centre details published, in two villages which we personally visited the results reported were astounding. In both Silgeer and Puvarti not a single vote had been cast, yet the paper reported 156 votes (out of 615) for Silgeer and 150 votes (out of 591) for Puvarti. In another village, Fusbakka, where we were told not a single person voted, 'Dainik Bastar' (October 2, '99) reported that of the 1170 votes 961 had been cast — 82%. Here the BJP candidate publicly complained of rigging by the ruling Congress party. Of course, in Bastar, rigging was not as systematic as in Telangana, where the police force itself rigs in favour of the TDP. Here it depended more on pliant polling officials. In fact, even areas on the fringe of the movement in South Bastar recorded low turnouts — Penta had zero votes recorded and Millianpalli only

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40. In spite of this rigging, the official voter turnout was the lowest in MP, at 32%.

The election boycott campaign was a mass education campaign to reject the existing system and to build the alternative revolutionary organs of power. This had been detailedly elucidated in a pamphlet brought out by the DKSZC (dated August 9, '99) and widely distributed in the area.

The boycott campaign in South Bastar is an example of the CPI(ML)[People's War]'s boycott campaign throughout the country, no doubt with local variations. To counter the PW's effective boycott campaign in the country the government has been on a high profile propaganda campaign to negate the effectivity of the PW's poll boycott call. First, they propagated widely, that in Bihar the PW was supporting the RJD and in AP they were supporting the Congress (I). Then, specifically in

Telangana, it was widely propagated to have reported the highest voting (at 61%). No doubt, this was to prove the 'ineffectivity' of PW's poll boycott call. But in AP, and specifically in Telangana, the entire state machinery is mobilised in high-tech manner, to combine brutal repression with sophisticated rigging in favour of the TDP. This has the twin effect of getting elected imperialism's chief stooge and also discrediting the PW.

In fact, in this 13th Lok Sabha election, not only was there a systematic boycott by the PW, MCC, in Kashmir and the entire North East, but also vast sections of the masses boycotted the elections over their local demands, or out of total frustration of the farce being enacted. Slowly, the masses are beginning to realise that the only real alternative to this existing system and the electoral farce is achieving area-wise seizure of political power through people's war. The armed struggles of Dandakaranya, North Telangana and Bihar are a living alternative before the people.

## Grass-roots Democracy

— by local correspondent

The fake democracy of the recent Lok Sabha elections can be contrasted with the real democracy in the guerilla zones existing under the leadership of the CPI (ML) (PW). A reflection of this, were the DAKMS conferences held in South Bastar from mid-March '99 to mid-June '99.

The Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Sanghathan (Peasants and Worker's Organisation) of South Bastar has a divisional committee for the entire region, under which exist 16 range committees, (each range has about 30 to 40 villages) under which are the hundreds of village committees and mass membership. Though entire villages support the movement, only those active and militant are given membership to the DAKMS. The conferences were held in the backdrop of six months of state terror (operation Vajra) leading to forced surrenders and large number of arrests of leading DAKMS members. At the time of the conferences many were still in jail. These conferences are held every two years. At the village and range level, for some, it was the 7th Conference (Basaguda and Kunta's 6 ranges), for others it varied from the 1st to the 5th, depending when the DAKMS unit was formed. At the Divisional level it was the 5th Conference in S. Bastar. The entire conferences were held under the guidance of the South Bastar Party DVC (SBST DVC).

It began with the village level conferences led by the Party SAC (Squad Area Committee) of the respective areas. In a typical village conference, first the General Body meeting of the DAKMS members was called which reviewed the two years work and the nature of committee

functioning. As per the DVC decision the review included:

(i) extent of participation in agitations and calls given by the Party (ii) land distribution (iii) development activities undertaken (iv) Tendu Patta struggles and drought relief (v) the disputes settlement mechanism (Panch) (vi) forest protection, (vii) campaign against social evils (viii) election boycott campaigns (ix) repression and resistance. Then the regularity of committee functioning (supposed to meet once a fortnight) and the frequency of holding gram sabhas was reviewed. Then, after a criticism and self-criticism of the outgoing committee a new committee was elected. In most cases the new committee was a mix of some old members and some new ones.

After this process was over, the entire village was called for a gram sabha. As leading members face repression, no bad elements of the village or outsiders (relatives etc., from other villages) were allowed to attend the gram sabha. At this meeting the work report, already assessed, was presented as also the self-criticism of the old committee. Finally, the new committee was presented before the villagers present.

In this process, roughly 450 such village conferences were held over the 16 ranges, each electing village committees of 5 to 7 members. After this process was over began the range conferences.

Each range conference had between 25 and 30 delegates, mostly comprising of the Presidents of the

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village committees. These conferences were organised by the respective squads and went on for three days. It was a work-review cum political educational camp. The Agenda, as set by the SBT DVC, comprised :

(i) Welcome of the Delegates (by SAC secretary or squad commander) and explanation of the purpose of the conference

(ii) Explanation of the programme and constitution of DAKMS, which is printed in Gondi.

(iii) Explanation of the DAKMS political resolution on the national and international situation — in this imperialism's role in India, character of the ruling class parties, communalism, reports on people's struggles and revolutionary struggles, etc., were explained.

(iv) Assessment of the work-report on the nine issues taken up at the village conferences.

(v) Criticism and self-criticism of the old range committee and election of a new one.

These conferences were held in secret in the forest, with posters, banners, red crepe paper festoons decorating the conference hall. The conference began with a procession with enthusiastic slogan shouting. After the DAKMS flag was hoisted by the outgoing president, the procession went to the martyrs column to pay homage to the martyrs. Delegates also brought along some food materials, while the preparation of the ground site, kitchen work etc was done by the adjoining village. Sentry duty and patrolling were done by the squad with the assistance of the GRDs.

After the election of the new committees, which also comprised some of the old and some new members, a number of resolutions were passed. The resolutions included : opposition to various social evils, against repression and informers, on various economic demands, on the boycott of elections, against conversions to hinduism and christianity, assistance to families of arrested/martyred comrades — both economically and

also in agricultural work, etc.

Finally, the 5th South Bastar Divisional Conference of the DAKMS was held in a manner similar to the range conferences, with the same topics, but covered in greater depth, over a period of 4 days. The resolutions passed also included more political topics, and a new divisional committee of five was elected from the 25 delegates. The conference was inaugurated by the president of the divisional committee of the DAKMS, Com. Subbanna by the hoisting of the red flag. After a procession and homage to martyrs the proceedings were begun under the guidance of the South Bastar Party DVC (SBST DVC). DVC member, Com. Janaki introduced the conference; DVC member, Com. Sujata presented the work report; DVC secretary, Com. Gopanna, presented the political resolution; and DKSZC secretariat member, Com. Latchanna, concluded the conference with a rousing speech. Finally, an oath was taken by the new committee.

Prior to the conferences, the party SBT DVC had outlined some 14 major weaknesses within the DAKMS, which were presented in all the conferences held. Some of these included : lack of a mass line — reflected in autocratic functioning, not holding gram sabhas, ignoring creation of a second line leadership, etc.; neglect of KAMS (women's organisation); ignoring the Jungle Bachao policy of the party; etc. Through these conferences the white terror of the state was countered, bad tendencies rectified, the mass line more firmly established and the entire level of political consciousness raised. In the entire division over 10,000 members attended the conferences and over 450 village committees were elected. Of the committees roughly 55% were from poor peasant background while the rest were from the middle peasantry.

This then was a true democratic process, compared to the fake voting of the ruling-classes. This was an example of the democratic functioning of a mass organisation of Dandakaranya. The process is as elaborate in the functioning of the embryonic organs of people's political power — the Gram Rajya Committees. □

### **An Important Announcement for the Readers**

We are pleased to inform our readers that **PEOPLE'S MARCH**, which has been coming out as a **Bi-monthly** magazine, will now be published as a monthly starting from **January, 2000**. Hence we request subscribers to note the changes in the subscription rates as mentioned below.

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# Digging Through the Imperialist Connection In East Timor

— G. Fellow

East Timor is on fire. It is burning like a hell-hole. Indonesian-abetted militias are rampaging the cities and towns burning, looting and killing with impunity. Imperialist masters of the world are deep in thought about how to protect their economic, political, geo-political and mercantile interests in the continuing imbroglio, how to defend and continue their exploitation of South-East Asia, how to contain and channelise the emerging anarchic and dangerous situation in East Timor which is likely to engulf the whole of Indonesia and may start a chain of events, even rebellions, in the lucrative market and natural resource-rich land of tens of millions of the poor and the wretched who inhabit the 3,000-island archipelago. Rebellions and revolutions are the most fearful things the reactionaries despise and East Timor is another vivid example where the imperialists and local reactionaries have conspired and collaborated to extinguish the flame of revolt ever since the East Timorese started their struggle for liberation from centuries-old-rule of colonialism.



East Timor is a part of an island situated on the South-Eastern fringe of the Indonesian archipelago, about two hundred miles off Australia. Before the Portuguese came here, in 1511, its inhabitants were a peace-loving mixture of races of Indian, African, Chinese, Malay, Arab and, of course, of the local Atoni people, perhaps the descendants of the 5,00,000-year old Java man. Almost every family you come across, you will find Indian features in one of the members, African in another, and of a local in the third one, depicting centuries of intermixing of various races. Right upto the Indonesian annexation in 1976, 70% of the people believed in animism and the rest were Catholic Christians without any prejudices against each other. A mix of races and religions, ancient and modern. Portuguese colonialists only behaved as traders and merchants, shipping out

sandalwood and other natural resources from East Timor. They least tried to disrupt the East Timorese civilisation and unlike their British counterparts in Australia and New Zealand never thought of permanently settling there. The little land of East Timor was divided into a number of kingdoms comprising a certain number of tribal groups which were divided into clans or village level units which bound them in a thread of kinship. The Portuguese maintained a small army there. When World War II broke out Portugal did not join any of the two warring blocks. Japan invaded the whole of Indonesia in 1942 and occupied it, including East Timor where Portuguese units did not resist the invaders nor were they forced to leave by the Japanese. The Japanese forces started building air fields there as a part of their preparations for further thrusts into neighbouring lands and especially Australia which had been settled by the British imperialists. Australia too landed its paratroops to thwart the Japanese attempts and started a guerrilla warfare against Japanese

armies. In this way East Timor was dragged into the World War inspite of Portugal's neutrality and became a battlefield for the warring imperialist armies. East Timorese, on their part, also fought against the Japanese invaders in order to resist mass scale evacuations forced by Japanese forces and pillaging of their land. Australian guerrilla forces and East Timorese fighters in this way fought a common enemy. Timorese fighters proved fiercer and more daring than the Australians and fought almost with their bare hands against the enemy. At the end of the

war it was estimated that the East Timorese had lost about 60,000 of their men, thousands in massacres, while the Australian loss was not more than about a hundred men. At that time the population of East Timor was just about 6 lakh, i.e. about 10% lost their life in the war. Though the ending of war brought "independence" to Indonesia, the East Timorese did not opt for it and remained under the Portuguese when the Japanese and Australians left. Had they been conscious of it, they could have easily won it from the Portuguese as Portugal was a weak and backward colonial empire unable even to maintain itself, let alone maintain a colonial empire.

Most of the African colonies of Portugal were up in arms and were fighting for political independence in their own way. Armed struggles were going on in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. A number of political



organisations in Sao-Tome, Principe and Cape Verde Islands had been struggling against the Portuguese since the late fifties. Left far behind by its European counterparts and ex-competitors, Portugal was not in a position to defend its empire in the face of surging people's movements and armed struggles in Africa, nor was it economically as advanced as the other imperialist powers. As a result of the battering it was receiving in Africa a crisis started developing in its society and especially, its armed forces. A wave of radicalism started sweeping through its armed forces and young and lower rank army officers revolted against the government in Lisbon, dethroned the military rulers bringing an end to the regime Salazar had established. The left-oriented Armed Forces Movement then declared that it will no longer maintain its colonies and will impart independence to them. All this happened in swift succession in April 1974. It was then that the idea of independence got its way into East Timor. And East Timor got awakened to it.

As in every society different classes express their different interests through their political behaviour and political formations, in East Timor too, different classes formed their own political organisations to assert themselves. Independence from Portugal would lead to a situation where a new found power will open more avenues for certain classes and restrictions for others. This being the case, different class forces started putting their own agenda and manifestoes before the people. It may look strange that the East Timorese society did not have any political party before April 1974 while the whole world was seething with political activism right from the beginning of this century and, especially, after the second world war. Given the history of its people and the way Portuguese treated it one can understand the simplicity and peace loving character of its people, yet it will also explain the perserverence and the stamina such a people exhibit when put to extremes. Portugal, as well as many others, thought that East Timorese do not need any independence and/or it cannot become a viable state of its own. But the people of East Timor once rocked the world in 1976 and now again in 1999, attracting even a commoner's interest, and have forced all the major powers of the world to take not a casual notice of the situation there. The world and the major powers of the world have their own way of seeing things and pursue policies according to their own interests. Before we come to this point let us relieve the events as they unfolded right from the time of the formation of the first political groupings in 1974.

### Formation of Political Parties and Conflicts

After the turmoil in Lisbon in April 1974 three political formations emerged in East Timor within a span

of one month. The first party formed was called the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT). The UDT comprised of the elite class of colonial administrative officials and owners of coffee plantations. This political formation, true to its social base, did not stand for creating an independent country. As it was not evident that Portuguese will not be interested in maintaining any presence in East Timor, the UDT first called for a federation with Portugal. But later on it switched to independence. The second formation was launched by young petty-bourgeois nationalists who wanted some genuine economic reforms for the betterment of the East Timorese people. It was called the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT). **This was later converted into the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN).** The third was, the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (Apodeti). The people who launched this formation had close ties with the people in West Timor. Its political slogan was for the integration with Indonesia.

As is clear from the name, FRETILIN itself did not have even the word liberation in it, as was the case in most of the liberation struggles raging in Africa in those days, and it became a popular catchword of all types of anti-imperialists and pseudo anti-imperialists. Yet FRETILIN was "accused" by the world bourgeois press and the imperialist government leaders as being communists. They were not. They were just genuine nationalists and genuine nationalism was what the imperialists had come to despise throughout their struggle against and in the tackling of the working class and people's movements in the colonies. The nationalism of the FRETILIN was bound to play a decisive role, as we shall see later, in determining the attitude of various imperialist and comprador governments of the world towards the problem of East Timor. However, Fretilin forces started organising the Timorese people at the grass root level awakening them to the idea of independence telling them, in opposition to the other two pro-Indonesian and pro-Portugal political groupings, that "we are not potatoes to be sold to another country." The activists of Fretilin also launched literacy campaigns, built schools and hospitals and initiated different co-operative schemes. In this way it became a powerful mass movement which engulfed the whole of the countryside. In fact, the surging consciousness and the political awareness which had gripped the masses and the thousands of enthusiastic activists of Fretilin had very much to do with the upheavals in Portugal itself. The young officers of the Armed Forces Movement of Portugal were very vocal and unambiguous in condemning colonialism. Many had openly expressed themselves to be Communists and Socialists and wanted the Portuguese

regime to change its ways. Portuguese society openly discussed the merits and demerits of their past fascist rulers and passed judgments. The students from East Timor who had come back after visiting the upheaval and turmoil in Portugal were very much influenced by all sorts of radical ideologies, joined the Fretilin infusing into it a revolutionary fervour and vigor. This was bound to raise eyebrows in the imperialist capitals and the reactionary governments of South-East Asia.

Obviously, as it was a national struggle and the men leading the Fretilin were of petty bourgeoisie origin, and were influenced by all sorts of progressive ideologies from nationalism, revolutionary nationalism, bourgeois democracy, social democracy and of course, "socialism" of the Portugal Socialist Party and a vague brand of "Marxism", they, like many African Movements of the day, went through all kinds of experiments and practices.

America, and especially Indonesia and Australia got alarmed. They were fearful that Fretilin will convert East Timor into another base of communist insurgency. America was already facing the prospects of defeat in Indo-China. The impending victory of powerful revolutionary struggles in Vietnam and Cambodia was already being talked about and these struggles were exerting a 'contagious' influence world wide. At that time the Far-East and South-East Asia seemed to "finally" determine the fate of imperialism in Asia. For the imperialists and the reactionaries of the region a heavy hand was the need of the day to control the rising tide of upsurge in East Timor and drench it in blood, if need be. And here was a tested running dog at hand who could do it, the butcher regime of Suharto.

## U.S. Running Dog Suharto Repeats 1965

As everybody is well aware, Suharto earned notoriety as a ruthless butcher when he arrived on the Indonesian scene in 1966 and an extremely corrupt and despotic ruler when he was forced to abdicate in early 1998. His thirty-two year-long rule was one of the most inglorious periods in the history of the Indonesian people. It was a vivid example of a phenomenon of "newly independent countries" going into the clutches of neo-colonialism and compradorism when these countries are run by a combine of feudal and bureaucrat-capitalist classes (as in Asia), or by petty-bourgeois nationalist and tribal chieftains who stop halfway after getting power and don't go for dismantling the colonial administrative, military and economic structures, thus turning independence into a sham and end up as tyrants for their own people and as servitors of imperialism. Suharto was an inevitable sequel to the "half-hearted nationalist" Sukarno who tried to get on to two boats at a time and paid with his life. When Suharto captured power in a CIA-engineered military

coup d'état in 1965 he ordered the killing of thousands of communist party rank and file, trade unionists, student and youth leaders, women activists and above all lakhs of peasants and agricultural labourers. John Pilger has written in his book "Distant Voices" that the US embassy in Jakarta had spent two years in preparing a hit list of about 5,000 people and it was given to the Indonesian army to execute [p.246]. And this was well before Suharto came on the scene. That was in Sukarno's time. Suharto came to power when President Lyndon B. Johnson had already ordered the strafing of North Vietnam with continuous bombing, in a bid to contain the communist guerrillas' thrust into the South and the coup in Indonesia was a part of an over all strategy to contain communism in Asia and for the encirclement of Maoist China. Suharto acted at the behest of his imperialist masters by killing about a million people within months and got a pat on his back, a certificate from the Australians and Britishers as an "able" statesman, billions of dollars for himself and his cronies from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and various imperialist governments, and armaments from America, Britain, France and Germany. He also opened up Indonesia's rich natural resources for unbridled exploitation by western imperialists and Japan. Richard Nixon, while shamelessly showing his elation over the role Suharto had assumed for America, declared that "Indonesia with its rich and abundant natural resources was the biggest prize in South-East Asia." Of course, it was, and still is. They had found a ruthless running dog in South-East Asia and a great treasure of natural riches. A few billions of dollars of bribe (Suharto and his cronies pocketed more than 40 billion US dollars) was nothing as compared to the "biggest prize". **And he was picked up again, this time for East Timor, to stop the "spread of communism" to secure the sea lanes in the Timor Gap, and to control one of the biggest oil reserves of the globe lying underneath the land and in the sea around East Timor. Perhaps not lesser a "prize" than Indonesia itself!**

Let us get back to 1974. When Fretilin was formed in May 1974, one of the first tasks it took up was to feel the pulse of Indonesian rulers. Jose Ramos Horta, one of the founder members of Fretilin, called on the Indonesian foreign minister in Jakarta in June 1974. Ramos Horta later wrote in his book *The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* that Adam Malik had "whole-heartedly" assured him of his support for the right to self determination of East Timor. On the other hand the Indonesian regime convinced the 'radical' regime in Lisbon not to raise a cry when Indonesia annexes East Timor.

In September 1974, Adam Malik met Portugal's foreign minister Maria Soares (later the 'Socialist' President of Portugal) and the latter gave his consent on

behalf of his regime for the annexation of East Timor. For Indonesia the problem was clear now. Australia had already agreed to this when Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, considering an independent East Timor as a non-viable state, had given a clear signal to Indonesia to go for East Timor. *The Melbourne Age* wrote in its September 13, 1974 issue that "Australia is expected to take a significant step in the next few weeks towards ensuring that the tiny enclave of East Timor becomes part of Indonesia. Australia and Indonesia are likely to make a joint approach to Portugal, urging that this is the only practical solution for its 450-year-old colony . . . Mr. Whitlam and President Suharto agreed last weekend that the best and most realistic future for East Timor was association with Indonesia." Thus the stage was set to invade and take over East Timor so that a "nonviable" country is integrated into a "viable" neighbour.

The imperialist logic of "nonviability" has helped it from the very beginning of colonialism. The 'civilized' societies of Europe 'had to colonize' America, Australia, Africa and Asia because the people there were lesser humans and thus not fit for living the way they lived. That is why the Europeans "had to" exterminate them en-mass, raise settlements, trade them off as slaves, plunder their lands for the "progress" of the 'civilized world' and after centuries of domination and oppression if they were to rise up to take the destiny in their own hands they were to be told that "you are not fit to rule yourself, it is unviable", "your countries are unviable, accept the means we devise for you, or here is hell for you."

Sukarno was not viable because he did not "fully" abide by their dictates. Viable Suharto was brought in a "putsch" to secure the "biggest prize" of thousands of billions of dollars, for an insignificant amount of bribe. This security of economic interests would not have come without the instrument of political domination, hence the coup d'etat of 1965 was carried to establish this domination. The same imperialist threat of non-viability was looming large now over the East Timorese because there was a danger of East Timor going the 'communist way'. And "communism" meant a threat to the very existence of imperialism. Fretilin was accused of being communist throughout the world bourgeois press. Imperialist capitals were waiting for the moment when the ultimate will happen. One of Suharto's cronies General Benny Murdani assured the Australian Ambassador Richard Woolcot that when Indonesia decides to launch the full-scale invasion of East Timor, Australia would get "not less than two hour's notice". This was later disclosed by the *National Times*, Sydney, in May 30 and June 6, 1982 in *The Timor Papers* which were monitoring reports of the Central Intelligence

Agency of the USA that had been leaked. Woolcot sent a cable to his government in Canberra, that when the invasion happens the Australian Government should take an ambiguous stand. He suggested clearly what to say in that situation. "Australia cannot condone the use of force in Timor, nor could we accept the principle that a country can intervene in a neighbouring territory of concern, however, .... at the same time we concede that Indonesia .... could not be expected to take lightly a breakdown in law and order in Portuguese Timor." This recommendation of the Australian Ambassador to his government was one of the classical examples of Imperialist diplomacy, of deception and complicity in the crime which was going to be committed in East Timor. This farce of the Australian Government was also exposed in "*The Timor Papers*".

Indonesia was waiting for an appropriate opportunity to give the word 'Go' to its armed marauders. I quote Pilger, who had quoted *The Timor Paper* in the same book: "On September 17, 1975 the CIA reported, '*Jakarta is now sending guerrilla units into the Portuguese half of the island in order to engage Fretilin forces, encourage pro-Indonesian elements, and provoke incidents that would provide the Indonesians with an excuse to invade...*'" The forces of darkness were working hand in glove with the forces that run the affairs of the world today. These things have been repeated time and again on the world scene by the very same powers. For imperialism there is no dearth of such bullying dogs who are always ready to leap upon the victims their masters point to. These Masters sometimes point out from behind the scenes, and sometime themselves come to the forefront to lead the operation as was witnessed in the gulf in 1991, in Grenada, in Panama, in.... the list is very long.

In the meantime, November comes. The Portuguese have almost deserted the land. They are busy back home tackling their own problems. The administration is virtually in the hands of Fretilin. Only, there is no formal announcement. **Here, in these circumstances, Fretilin opts for the unilateral declaration of independence. It is done on November 28, 1975.** People rejoice and celebrate. Across the border, the Indonesian authorities decide that the time for diplomacy is over. It is time to give the word 'GO'. Indonesian troops start pouring into East Timor. Tension grips the whole country. The newly established East Timorese government organises some evacuations in the capital city Dili. Indonesian authorities decide to launch the full scale invasion on December 5.

But wait! The imperialist chieftain from America, President Gerald Ford is to arrive on the same day for the final inspection of the whole operation. Invasion is postponed. Ford lands in Jakarta along with his notorious aide Henry Kissinger, who has on his hands the blood of

the Vietnamese people. Preparations are okayed. And as his aircraft takes off on December 7, the inevitable happens. Killing, shooting, burning starts.

Till February 1976, 60,000 are killed. Suharto repeats 1966. The land of a peace loving people is drenched in blood. And, this is just the beginning. Many a mini bloodbath are yet to happen before the Major Bloodbath of 1999.

The death toll by 1999 surpassed 2,00,000. In East Timor, Indonesian forces created a chain of Mai Lais as the American mercenaries did in Vietnam. Whole villages were destroyed and their populations exterminated. After the 1975 invasion, an Indonesian military officer said of the killings, "*when you cleanse a field you kill all the snakes within it, young and old, big and small.*" That was as clear an acceptance of the massacres committed. And, as clear an indictment of the Indonesian forces.

The continuing gory of carnage in and around Dili forced UNAMET staff and the Nobel Prize Laureate Bishop Carlos Belo to leave their places, escorted and surrounded by Indonesian Security forces. They left behind thousands of terrified protection seekers in the compounds of both the buildings surrounded by pro-Indonesian militias and the Indonesian Military. The evacuated staff and the Bishop were unable to tell what would become of those whom they left behind. There is a silence on the face of the evacuated. Neither God nor the United Nations have an answer. Neither are they of any help here. You don't have to see to believe. It is quite understandable. East Timor is in flames everywhere. Cities, towns and villages alike. Tens of thousands who have crossed into West Timor are witness to the atrocities and their magnitude. From 1976 to 1999 there was no U.N. or the Bishop in East Timor. Both walked in only a few weeks before for the 'peaceful transition', which infact, is never that peaceful.

One continues to pay the price, when it comes 'peacefully'. The UN knows it and the Vatican knows it, yet when they want red to be known as green, they manage it. After a few months no statesman of the civilized world, or the media, or the UN, or the Vatican will ever talk about Dili as a 'Ghost City'. Nor will anybody from the World Community talk or try to unearth the "mass graves" of Suharto's slaughters. The world will only be reminded of the Gulag or Cambodia of Pol Pot's times, time and again. Ideological preferences forbid them to talk about Lon Nol, Samozza, Pinochet, Marcos, Suhato, Mobutu and above all, about some Trueman, or Bush, or Clinton. . . . the list will never end. All these "honourable and revered" men belong to a specific genre and realpolitic protects them, and the Pope proffesses Baptisma. However, we have to know what these revered men do

when they play their part of the game in a context like East Timor.

## "The International Community's" Role

After the end of the 'cold war', and in this new "era of hot wars against the world people" a new catch-word has entered into the consciousness of the people : "The International Community", pushed down by the Murdochs of the media. But what does this mean ? When you go through the press releases of different organisations, the governments of the world and UN briefings, you come to know that the "International Community" is nothing but the United States of America and the horde of imperialist powers it leads. First, we heard it during the Gulf War, then during the Kosovo-Serbian crisis and a little bit during the Kargil conflict back home. Now East Timor has again brought it on the agenda.

Before coming to the present phase of the conflict we will first go back a little and try to know what this "International Community" did when President Suharto repeated 1965 in East Timor in 1975 after being given the signal to 'Go Ahead'.

When President Ford was asked to comment on the Indonesian invasion and the consequent bloodbath, he evaded an answer. His press secretary's single sentence, "*the President always deplores violence, wherever it occurs,*" speaks volumes about the hypocrisy of an imperialist. Imperialist brigands were all support for Suharto. Now, after destroying the '**communist menace**' in East Timor, American armaments started directly reaching East Timor instead of through Java. This was disclosed by CIA operation officer, C. Philip Lichty, who also disclosed that President Ford was very much aware of everything as reports were regularly sent to him. For Japan now, the oil route from the Mid-East would be free from any headache. The Australian government was the first to hail this annexation. Australian Prime Minister, Malcom Fraser, after addressing the Indonesian Parliament in October 1976 told reporters that the "*Austrlian Government acknowledges the merger of East Timor into Indonesia.*" He considered that it would be better to strike a deal with Indonesia rather than with Portugal or an independent East Timor to exploit oil on and around East Timor. And at last they struck a treaty with Indonesia in 1988. This treaty, **The Timor Gap Treaty**, gave an Australian company right to explore and exploit land and off-shore oil which would ensure Australia about seven billion barrels of oil or billions of dollars. And the Australians once again praised Suharto as an "able Statesman" and a "moderate" politician.

The French Paper *Le Monde* reported in 1978 that France had struck a big deal with Indonesia concerning



arms, armoured cars, tanks and counter-insurgency helicopters which would help Indonesia deal with the guerrilla forces in the mountainous interior of East Timor. At the time the deal was struck France also decided not to take any part in discussions about East Timor in the United Nations so as to avoid placing *"Indonesia in an embarrassing position."*

Similarly, when Britain's Labour government sold Hawker fighter aircraft and rapid-firing guns to Indonesia in the late seventies, it declared that there had not been many deaths in East Timor. One may call it a strange logic, but, it is the usual logic of a very seasoned merchant who trades in death. In fact Britain never thought that East Timor should be an independent entity. In July 1975 its ambassador in Jakarta, Sir John Archibald Ford had reported back to his government about the situation in East Timor expressing the opinion that, *"The people of East Timor are in no condition to exercise the right to self-determination,"* and recommended to his foreign office in London that it was in Britain's interest that Indonesia should *"absorb the territory as soon as and as obtrusively as possible."*

Another imperialist member of the 'International Community', Canada, in its bid to justify trading with Indonesia absolutely condoned it by declaring that, *"groups opposed to Fretilin had asked Indonesia for the integration of East Timor and Timor is now an integral part of Indonesia."*

Other sections of the "International Community" seldom speak, they just tow the line or remain aloof when not directly concerned. Third world governments, whenever in trouble, themselves appeal to the 'International Community' and seek their blessings or bribes through the World Bank or the IMF. Yes, immediate neighbours of Indonesia, comprising the ASEAN, supported Indonesian intervention and occupation of East Timor and never uttered a word about the slaughter. One could not, of course, have expected Pinochet or Indira Gandhi or Tito to speak against the annexation.

While talking about world reaction to Indonesia's expansionist behaviour we should remember here that India too had snatched Goa from the Portuguese, and then dismembered Pakistan (to control its market but the exercise did not achieve the desired results), and again, annexed Sikkim. Bhutan and Nepal always feel threatened, while the people of Kashmir and the North Eastern states have never considered themselves as Indians. We should also remember that infamous statement of Morarji Desai, when he was the Prime Minister of India, concerning the Naga and Mizo insurgency in the North-East, in which he had threatened

to wipe out the whole ethnic populations if they continued to challenge India. So, on the whole the 'International Community' including India, supported Suharto's invasion. When five days after the invasion, the Security Council of the UN met to discuss East Timor, another exercise in futility was witnessed. It reflected the working of the world body as an ineffective instrument when it takes up the cause of a victim who does not have the backing of the powerful, or you may say, the 'International Community.'

## UN and East Timor

In the case of East Timor, and many many more, the UN behaved in tandem with the powers - that - be, in the overall context of an unjust social system, where powerful men set the tone, direct the proceedings, dictate the terms, influence the decisions and let the culprit go scot-free. A place where nobody understands the depth of the trauma of the victim and where his wails and appeals fall on deaf ears. East Timor was passing through a trauma, a victim of carnage, death and destruction. And the judges were stone-faced, however, clever and calculative. Participants of the UN Security Council's meeting spoke according to their class character and voted according to their class interests. A resolution was passed in the Security Council which "deplored" the invasion and the bloodshed and "asked" Indonesia to withdraw its troops "without delay". The resolution was not unanimous. Japan, the biggest investor in Indonesia opposed the resolution. The US, Britain, Australia, Germany and France abstained. The 'International Community' knew before hand what was to happen and set the tone of the resolution. We have already dwelt on the post invasion deals of the 'International Community' with the Suharto regime. Fifteen days after the bloodbath had started and Indonesia was well entrenched and in complete control of East Timor, (and ten days after the first resolution) the Security Council met again and passed another resolution. This time it was unanimous, because the desired goal had been achieved and the regional interests of the 'International Community' had been safeguarded by Indonesian aggression. Hence there was now no hurdle in achieving unanimity, calling on "all states to respect the territorial integrity of East Timor" and ordering Indonesia to withdraw its troops "without delay." This "without delay" was to be delayed indefinitely and ended recently after twenty-three years. During these long years the Indonesian army has nearly decimated the Fretilin guerrillas, the cold war has come to an end, the New World Order has become the order of the day and, above all, Fretilin, is no longer considered as communist. The Security Council sat down last year to sort it out, thought a way out, and set in motion a process of "peaceful

transition" to disentangle the Indonesian knot of autonomy for East Timor within Indonesia. The Security Council never mentioned the words "independence for East Timor." The August 30 ballot was, not to decide about the independence of East Timor. The appeasement towards Indonesia was explicit and un-officially talked about in the diplomatic corridors, that was echoed in the bourgeois press everywhere. From the way the post-August 30 scenario is developing, one is forced to admit that transition was not towards an independence in the real sense of the word. If it was really for independence, it could not have been peaceful. We don't yet know what transpired and is still transpiring, behind the curtains in the "International Community's" capitals and in Jakarta. What all we can do is attempt to understand the currently unfolding public behaviour of this Community of International brigands, while taking into account their past practices vis-a-vis East Timor and other areas of conflict. As far as the UN is concerned it cannot cross the limits set by this Community and has no locus standi of its own. It will just follow the course taken by the powerful as a willing instrument, as it has behaved during the Gulf invasion by American-led forces and in the Kosovo crisis as dictated by America and its allies.

### Current Phase

After the August '30 polling passed off peacefully UN officials and Clinton were all praise for the civil and military authorities in Jakarta. It was even a condonation of the dirty record of crimes committed by these very butchers and gross insult to the victims. The very next day pro-Indonesian militias, most of whom are actually members of the Indonesian armed forces, began their killing spree. The move was well planned and the day the election results were declared large scale killings and suppression was let loose. Why did Fretilin, which had won a massive majority vote, not anticipate the massacre and not make any preparations to face such an eventuality? The question is not out of context and we will return to it soon. However, the UN officials went into hiding in secure places and ultimately left the Timorese helpless and bewildered to face the new onslaught of those who had been praised by the UN for providing a "commendable security environment" a week ago.

As usually happens, after an orgy of death and destruction, an attempt is made to create public opinion before the Big Guns decide to intervene. Or else, everything is played down by the media, accompanied by a hushed silence on the part of the world masters, in a manner that allows the perpetrators to continue the way they like. Only, the overstepping of the boundaries of the political, economic and strategic interests of the masters

is not allowed. When these boundaries are over-stepped then the Empire decides to strike, sometimes in the name of fighting the communist menace, at others, for "defending" democracy or human rights.

In East Timor's case America restrained itself and hinted to Australia to take the initiative, as the latter has more strategic stakes in the region. Australia was ready to intervene with its *"Alliance of the willing"*. The only hitch was that the world powers don't want to antagonise Indonesia and are trying to bring her around in a peaceful manner. Moreover, if Yugoslavia or the Gulf is repeated in Indonesia there is a possibility that the whole of Indonesia may fall apart because there are many national groups which are fighting to establish their own independent states so as not to allow their national wealths to be squandered off by the Javanese whose leaders sell them cheap to the imperialists and, in the process, fill their own pockets with huge commissions. This would be a great loss for the West because of the high economic and strategic stakes. Also, it would throw up a new problem for the West to deal with, that of the emerging nationality problem within almost all the countries of Asia and Africa. Kosovo is already proving a thorny tangle to be resolved. Imperialism won't like to trigger such a chain reaction throughout these countries. The governments of these countries are doing well to suppress the nationality aspirations in their own countries. Lesser the disorder the better for the New World Order. That is why they demand that *"Indonesia should permit the peace keeping forces"* to intervene. It is most likely that Indonesia will comply only after striking a deal with the West that Indonesia should continue to get its share of the exploits from East Timor after it gets its **"independence"**. Xanana Gusmao has kept quiet after his release from prison soon after the poll results were declared. The 'International Community' itself is going to 'sort out' the problem and perhaps, he is waiting for the outcome. Otherwise everybody would have been expecting of him to speak on the recent developments affecting his own land in which he too has lost his near and dear ones including his father, as has been reported in the media. When the trail of death and destruction has engulfed the whole of East Timor, Xanana Gusmao is silent. This silence does not seem to be indicative of a gathering storm. There is a danger, as one can imagine from a sequence of events, that he may accept whatever he is offered. One expects of him to carry on his struggle for national liberation to the point of real liberation from all kinds of foreign exploitation and oppression. That is what *"Nationalism"* stands for. Without this, independence will turn into the type that exists in which the Indonesian masses themselves are being crushed today, and are desperately looking for a way out of their

**'tryst with destiny.'** A "tryst" which from 1949 onwards gave Indonesia its wavering Sukarno, a ruthless imperialist agent, Suharto, and a long line of Habibies and Wirantos who are the recent perpetrators of violence in East Timor and are continuing the sell out of their country's riches for a few crumbs bringing misery, poverty, oppression and degradation for the great majority of its inhabitants. When the abettors, instigators and protectors of rulers like Suharto come to the Timorese as their 'saviours', it is high time the Fretilin and the East Timorese people do not forget their past, their tribulations, their ordeals and traumas which have resulted from the joint crimes of these very 'saviours' and their henchmen in Jakarta.

Nobody knows for how long the travails of the East Timorese will continue as bigger vultures are in the waiting to descend on their country. These vultures have already carved out big chunks of natural resources of the country through their servitors in Indonesia. Old masters are again preparing for a victorious end game. For Fretilin the struggle has to be launched on all fronts — ideological, political, military and economic — to be won. It is not without reason that they have been caught unawares at two crucial junctures of their struggle for independence. Fretilin had pinned too much hope on the United Nations. This dependence increased after Xanana Gusmao was arrested in 1993. In spite of a widespread mass base and great popularity, Fretilin suffered military defeats at the hands of the powerful Indonesian Army fully backed by the imperialists. Correct lessons had to be drawn to convert defeats into victories, but it started sliding downwards on to the path of depending more and more on diplomacy, like the PLO, under the auspices of UN. This is a more dangerous trap than directly tackling the diplomatic and political moves of the enemy forces (imperialists included). This trap paves the way for not one but a series of tragedies in today's New World Order where the 'International Community' is riding roughshod over the people, creates a 'World Opinion' (through the media Moguls and a wide range of NGO's including the UN's Human Rights Watch group) and moves on to centre stage either peacefully or forcefully 'settle' the issue, as the situation demands. The Indian press has contributed its own share in this strategy of the Fourth Estate of imperialism. It has neither exposed the anti-East Timorese stance of its own government nor of that of the imperialist machinations, past and present. The same has been the case with free lance columnists. Their attitude towards Kashmir or the North East or East Timor suffers from the same pro-imperialist or national chauvinistic myopia greatly influencing the ideas of the people, determining their behaviour and preparing them to digest whatever imperialist governments or their own

ruling classes say on these issues.

## Distinguish Friends From Foes

Fretilin must distinguish between enemies and friends and carry forward the cause for which hundreds of thousands of its people and warriors have laid down their lives. Facing Kangaroo Court in 1993 Xanana Gusmao, while acknowledging military defeat at the hands of a superior and powerful enemy, defied death saying : **"As a political prisoner in the hands of the occupiers of my country, it is of no consequence at all to me if they pass a death sentence here today. They are killing my people and I am not worth more than their heroic struggle ....."**

Of course, true sentiments of a brave revolutionary!

Last year, in June 1998, Fretilin's External delegation made a statement before the decolonisation Committee of the UN in which it praised America for **"helping"** East Timor in the UN efforts, equated Gusmao with Nelson Mandela in terms of popularity and talked positively of political changes in South Africa, Palestine and Yugoslavia. All these things raise questions about the approach that Fretilin suffers from. Today, when America or the UN acquire a major role in some conflict it must put the revolutionaries on guard, let alone themselves call for it. The road to America invariably leads to surrender and imperialist domination; the Palestine struggle testifies to it. Nelson Mandela has not fared any better than other 'nationalist' leaders of liberation movements who succumbed to imperialism. Mandela abandoned all the measures he had promised to take up after the end of apartheid. He did nothing to change the economic system Azania inherited from South Africa. Yasser Arafat had turned the palestine guerrilla fighters into cops to serve the interests of his imperialist masters, suppressing the Palestinian revolution and legitimising Israel.

**The way Nelson Mandela and Yasser Arafat went can't be the way for any revolutionary movement which fights against exploitation and national oppression. It leads to nowhere, or, if rightly said, it leads to Mobutus and Suhartos or Aquinos or Habibies. Mandela and Yasser dropped their struggle halfway, compromised on principles and failed to lead their fellow countrymen into a world free from oppression and exploitation, as they had once dreamed of and promised.**

**Without carrying on the struggle against all kinds of enemies and reactionaries through to the end no real independence can be achieved and it will remain a distant dream.**

1-10-'99

# How Engels Criticized

– Notes on studying “Anti-Duhring”

— by Wang Che

**ANTI-DUHRING**, Engels’ great work, was the product of an acute inner-party struggle.

During the 1870s, Eugen Duhring, a lecturer at Berlin University, came out with a series of works which launched an all-round attack on Marxism, from philosophy and political economy to the theory of socialism.

Weaving his web like a spider, Duhring made up this whole series of systems out of his “genius” brain. He imagined that, without any kind of experience and starting from the simplest “basic forms” or “basic elements” of things, he could logically deduce a whole system of philosophy by applying several understood axioms of philosophy and then, by sovereign decree, he imposed this constitution on nature and humanity. Engels pointed out:

**“This is only giving a new twist to the old favourite ideological method, also known as the apriori method, which consists in ascertaining the properties of an object by logical deduction from the concept of the object, instead, of from the object itself. . . . The object is then to conform to the concept, not the concept to the object..... The philosophy of reality . . . proves... to be..... the deduction of reality not from itself but from a concept.”**

Apriorism is an idealist theory of knowledge. The materialist theory of reflection holds that ideas are the reflection of objective reality, that all true knowledge originates from experience. So there is no knowledge prior to experience. Yet apriorism holds that the rational includes some “gifted concept,” “self-understood reason,” “born principles” or logical categories, that it does not arise from experience but is innate in the mind, and that starting from these principles or categories, one can get real knowledge through logical deduction. Apriorists do not admit the dependence of conceptual knowledge upon perceptual knowledge, but think that the former is independent; they oppose proceeding from practical experience, but stand for proceeding from the rational. They do not proceed from facts to concepts but vice versa.

In criticizing apriorism, Engels incisively elaborated the principle of the materialist theory of reflection. He said that principle was not the starting point of research, but was its ultimate result, that it was not for the objective world to adapt to principle but a principle was correct only when it conformed to the objective world. But Duhring turned things upside down. With convincing arguments, Engels explained that all knowledge, including mathematics which seemed very abstract, came from practical experiences.

Duhring’s “socialism” was created by the apriori

method. According to him, socialism was neither a reflection of the objective law of social development at all nor a reflection of the class interests of the proletariat, but was derived from the so-called principle that was universal and just.

## Historical Development Is Not Decided by Men of Genius

Utopian socialists believed that society could be changed by the force of reason alone and that reason was apriorist and eternal. They denied the fact that knowledge depends on social practice and truth is a process of development. Proceeding from this, they inevitably derived the idealist conception of history which considers history as being created by genius.

Using the materialist conception of history, Engels thoroughly refuted this idealist conception of history. He pointed out that the final causes of all social and political changes should be sought, not in man’s brain or better insight into “eternal truth” or “universal justice,” but in the economic base of society and class struggle. The birth of capitalism was not because of mistakes in man’s knowledge; it was historically inevitable because the capitalist system corresponded to the development of the social productive forces under the then historical conditions. Similarly, that the capitalist system must give way to the socialist system is not because people come to know that it is contradictory to the principles of justice and equality or merely because they want to abolish classes, but because the capitalist relations of production retard the development of the social productive forces and only the socialist relations of production can liberate those forces. Therefore, the question is not one of first imagining a perfect social system in the mind and then imposing it on society. Only by objectively observing and knowing the laws governing the development of society and relying on the struggle of the masses to transform theory into a material force can society be changed.

Marxism has always recognized the reaction of mental on material things and the role of heroes, leaders and geniuses in history. But no matter how great the geniuses are, they cannot change the laws of history and decide its course. History is not created by a few men of genius but by the masses of the people. Only when the ideas of heroes, leaders and men of genius represent the interests of the advanced class, correspond to the needs of the objective reality and are grasped by the masses can they become a great material force to transform the world.

A genius is no more than somewhat wiser and more talented than the others. But where do wisdom and talent come from? Talent belongs to the category of knowledge



## Duhring's Apriorism

and is not something endowed by nature. Although man's wisdom and ability are related to the degree of perfection of his brain, the evolution of his brain has been the result of man's longtime labour and the development of language. As the human brain itself is a product of labour, how can man's wisdom and ability be separated from social practice? Moreover, physiological differences between people cannot explain at all that talent is naturally endowed because they only constitute the natural material foundation for the development of talent and provide the possibility for this development. The real forming of talent is acquired through tempering and study. All such assertions as born "talent," "all-embracing talent" of leaders are nothing but out-and-out lies! Wisdom and ability can be derived only from social practice and from the masses. Chairman Mao has contributed greatly to the development of this question. He pointed out: The brain of any hero and outstanding man can only play the role of a processing plant and its raw material or semi-finished products come from the masses. The lowly who personally take part in practice are most intelligent and truth is in the hands of the masses. Only when the leaders first become students of the masses can they become the latter's teachers. According to this view, geniuses are not isolated individuals, but are the representatives of the classes. They come from the masses, and are most adept at concentrating their wisdom. If there were no masses, there would be no genius. The masses are the real heroes and the genius or heroes and leaders is the concentrated expression of the wisdom of the masses, the classes and the party.

### Scientific Socialism Emerges and Develops on the Basis of Revolutionary Practice

Why couldn't people like Saint-Simon found scientific socialism? Was it because they lacked genius? No. Engels regarded Saint-Simon as a man of genius, but no genius can go beyond the limit set by his time. It was because of the historical conditions that people like Saint-Simon fell into utopian socialism. At that time capitalism was in its period of ascendancy and the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie had not developed yet, so it was impossible to foresee the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Why could Marx and Engels found scientific socialism? Was it merely or mainly because of their genius? The answer is no. As to Marx's genius, Engels only mentioned it on a few occasions and never specially stressed it. On the contrary, Engels stressed in many places in Anti-Duhring and his other works the historical and practical conditions which gave rise to Marxism. In the era of Marx and Engels natural science made tremendous

advances and the three great discoveries of cells, transformation of energy and the evolution of living things provided strong scientific proof of dialectics. On the other hand, in the words of Engels, **"certain historical facts had occurred which led to a decisive change in the conception of history,"** i.e., the first workers' uprising in Lyons, France, in 1831 and the Chartist movement – the first nationwide workers' movement in England which reached its climax between 1838 and 1842. These facts showed that with the development of big industry and of the bourgeoisie's newly seized political rule, the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was raised to the principal contradiction in the most developed European countries. Marx and Engels were able to found their theories precisely because they personally took part in revolutionary practice at that time, read many books, studied large quantities of material in natural science and social history, studied the economic structure of capitalism and its inner contradictions and summed up the historical experience of the international workers' movement. As Engels put it: **"Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes – the proletariat and the bourgeoisie."**

Man's practice is a process of continuous development and will never be ended; so is man's knowledge. People's knowledge at any given stage of development is relative truth which contains factors of absolute truth but is not absolute truth. What is absolute truth? Chairman Mao has given a precise definition: **"The sum total of innumerable relative truths"** constitutes absolute truth. **"Innumerable"** means countless and knowledge cannot be completed. Therefore, no individual can exhaust absolute truth and enjoy absolute scientific authority. Putting on airs as an absolute authority who "knows everything," Duhring advertised his goods as the "final and ultimate truth" and bragged that his thinking was able to exclude any tendency to a "subjectively limited conception of the world." Engels scathingly refuted this fallacy, pointing out: Everyone's knowledge is limited by subjective and objective conditions and therefore cannot be of unconditional and paramount significance. The so-called "infallible" genius and superman who exhausts absolute truth simply does not exist. However, through the efforts of generation after generation, mankind is continuously approaching absolute truth.

Making Mao Tsetung Thought absolute and solidified in itself is counter to Mao Tsetung Thought. Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought has in no way exhausted truth but **ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of truth in the course of practice.** (Abridged)

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## Reports

# Martyrs of Dandakaranya

In 1999 eight comrades have fallen martyrs in Dandakaranya. These include one Divisional Committee (DVC) member, two commanders, four professional revolutionaries (PRs) and one DAKMS member.

On August 7, 99, Gadchiroli DVC member, **Com. Vikram**, was killed during a raid on a police station in Rajanandgaon (MP). Com. Vikram fell to enemy bullets while heroically leading the assault on the police station. His body, though, was not allowed to fall into enemy hands. He was carried away by his comrades and was laid to rest with full party honours. Com. Vikram had a long history of heroic struggles. Hailing from Husnabad (Karimnagar), he became president of the APRSU (AP

Ghosht), and at the time of his death there was a long obituary to him in the Nagapur daily, Lokmat. Today, a song in Gondi on Prabhakar's life, is one of the most popular, that resounds in the villages throughout DK. His martyrdom has become a rallying point for all tribals of DK.

**Com. Meenakka**, was a tribal girl from Ahiri-Etapalli area of Gadchiroli. She was first active in KAMS and then joined the squad in 1991. A consistent fighter, she learnt to read and write within the squad.

The other five comrades were martyred in the mountains of Abhujmad (MP). With the party having effectively increased its strength recently in the Abhujmad area the enemy forces are aggressively seeking to stem the expansion of this movement. They have set up a vast



Radical Students Union) in 1988. Later, he went on to become an organiser of the party in Hyderabad city. He was actively involved in the 1991 kidnap of Sudhir Kumar. In 1992 he moved to DK. Creatively, taking up all responsibilities given by the party, Com. Vikram was instrumental in building the movement, wherever he was allocated.

In the second week of March 99, **Com. Prabhakar**, commander of the Perimeli squad (Gadchiroli) along with **Com. Meenakka** were martyred, due to information provided by a treacherous informer. Comrade Prabhakar was one of the rising stars in the Dandakaranya revolutionary movement from amongst the local tribals. Born in a poor peasant family as Jurru Vadde, in Alveer village, while working as compounder in Prakash Amte's hospital at Hemalkassa, he got educated in their school. He excelled in the school and became chairman of the student organisation. In the village, he came in touch with the squads. Inspired by its politics he became an active member of the DAKMS..... a range committee member and then a central organiser. As repression was intense in 1991/92 he joined the squad. Here too he excelled and had become commander at the time of his martyrdom. There is a lengthy reference to him in the Marathi novel by Vilas Manohar (Eka Naxalvadi-chi

network of informers and are trying to corrupt the very backward tribal youth of this area. It is through this network that an entire LGS (local guerilla squad) and a DAKMS member, Com. Ramesh, were martyred.

The commander of this squad, 37 year-old **Com. Somanna (Atram Goranna)**, was one of the earliest local recruits in DK. When the Ahiri squad began work in Gadchiroli, Com. Somanna was attracted to the movement since 1982. He was one of the original organisers of the DAKMS in the area and later became a party member. In 1992, he sacrificed his family life and joined the squad, leaving behind in the village a wife and four children. On being sent to the Abhujmad area he was effective in integrating with the even more backward tribals of the area, organising and leading them. 28-year-old Com. Sabita (Midka Netam) was also an early recruit from Gadchiroli division. Having first worked in KAMS she joined the squad in 1990. When sent to distant Balaghat she quickly picked up the local language and effectively integrated and led the people. She returned to Gadchiroli in 1996 and was sent to the Abhujmad area in 1988. 34 years Com. Kavita was, at a young age, married into a village in Gadchiroli. Since



## Reports

# PW Guerillas Step up Armed Attacks Against State's Armed Forces

The ongoing people's war in India witnessed further victories in the month of September 1999 particularly in AP and Bihar. Even as the ruling classes deployed a large number of armed forces in the areas where People's War has been advancing in order to enact their election farce. The PW guerillas, with the support of the people, stepped up their actions against the reactionaries and enemy's armed forces throughout the month of September. The following is a list of major actions during September 1999.

- \* On September 1st a Sub-inspector was killed and two policemen were seriously injured when guerillas attacked them when they were moving on a motor byke near Jeddangi village in East Godavari district.
- \* On 4 September, Umesh Chandra, an Inspector-General of Police, notorious for his anti-people activities and responsible for the killing of senior leaders and several cadres of PW, was shot dead in broad day-light in the heart of the capital city of AP, Hyderabad, by a special guerilla squad of the PW. Two of the IGP's gunmen too were annihilated. (See last issue of *People's March*)
- \* On September 5, a special police constable was shot dead by PW guerillas in a busy market place in Parkal town in Warangal district. The AK-47 rifle that he was carrying was seized by the guerillas.
- \* On September 13, PW guerillas conducted a raid on Papannapet police station in Medak district bordering Nizamabad. Five police personnel including a head constable were annihilated in the operation. Later, when the police personnel perched on top of the PS building refused to surrender, the building was blown with dynamite. Simultaneously the guerillas also raided the residence of the sub-inspector of police, seized his pistol and

tied him up. 13 rifles were seized from the police station which included 3 SLRs. There was also an



Papannapet police station in Medak district in AP blown up by PW guerillas on the eve of the election

exchange of fire with the enemy reinforcements which reached the place within a short time. The guerillas, however, retreated without any casualty.

- \* On September 15, three days prior to the second phase of election in AP, PW guerillas annihilated the sitting MLA of the ruling TDP and a nominee for the Sirpur Assembly Constituency in Adilabad district, Purushottam Rao. The three gun men who were accompanying the MLA were also shot dead and their arms seized by the guerillas. Dressed in yellow uniform as TDP supporters, PW guerillas entered the TDP office in Sirpur-Kagaznagar town where the MLA was holding a meeting with his party activists. They shot the MLA and the three gun men who tried to come to the latter's rescue. The election to the Sirpur Assembly constituency was put off due to the annihilation of the candidate.
- \* On September 20, PW guerillas ambushed a police party which was combing the forest in Maha



### (Martyrs. . .)

her husband became a full time activist of the party, she while looking after the two children, actively sympathised with the movement. Later she took increased responsibility in assisting a DAKMS organiser. Finally, in 1996 she joined the National Park squad (from where she belonged) and went to the Abhujmad area in 1998 leaving behind the children with relatives.

**Com. Rakesh (Madkam Muttal)** who joined the squad after being with the Bal Sanghatan in South Bastar also went to the Abhujmad area in 1998. He was betrayed and killed by a local trader, turned informer.

All these heroic martyrs of DK have lived exemplary lives. Their blood has fertilised the soil of the developing guerilla zone in Dandakaranya. The blood-thirsty rulers think that by corrupting the people and planting spies throughout the area, they can stem the tide of the ongoing revolutionary movement. But the growing vigilance and alertness of the people are soon exposing these criminal agents. Let the enemy not forget that after the martyrdom of Com. Nirmala in North Bastar last year a huge nest of spies was discovered and annihilated. Money can buy a handful of spies and lumpens, it cannot stem the mass upsurge of an awakened people. □

## Reports

# 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the Victory of the Chinese Revolution in Dandakaranya Guerilla Zone

- by Ashok

It was a festive occasion on October 1, '99 for the 60-odd PW guerillas gathered at a South Bastar DVC meeting camp. The celebrations of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Chinese revolution at the camp began with a procession, which wound its way from the 'A' sentry post, down to the parade grounds. With banners and placards prominently displayed, slogans of 'Long Live Chinese Revolution', 'Long Live MLM Thought', 'Down with all kinds of revisionism', etc., rent the air in Gondi, Telugu and Hindi. At the parade grounds, standing in military formation, the camp stood to attention with the red salute, as DVC secretary, Com. Gopanna hoisted the Red Flag. After the song on the red flag, Com. Gopanna spoke of the ten comrades who had been martyred since the previous June '99 DVC meeting. Then, the entire camp, with guns turned downwards, stood in two minutes silence, paying homage to their departed comrades. Com. Gopanna, then briefly outlined the significance of the occasion, and called upon DVC member, Com. Naganna, to chair the meeting.

This meeting was in response to a call given by the DKSZC, to take a campaign in the Dandakaranya Guerilla Zone, through the entire month of October '99, on the 50th Anniversary of the Chinese Revolution. For this a DKSZC pamphlet was already in circulation, explaining the significance of this historic event. Present at the camp was also DKSZC secretariat member, Com.

(PW Guerillas . . .)

Muttaram mandal in Karimnagar district. Four policemen including a Sub-inspector were wiped out. The incident took place at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon near Dubbapadu village when guerillas triggered off a land mine when the police party was crossing a culvert.

The special police party consisting of 22 men, were travelling in a tractor when they stopped near a culvert, divided themselves into three batches and began to cross the culvert one after the other. The second batch consisting of the SI and three other police men were hit by the landmine when they were crossing the culvert. An exchange of fire took place between the guerillas and the remaining policemen for about an hour. But the guerillas retreated safely without any casualties.

\* In another attack in Boath area of Adilabad district, four rifles were seized in an attack on the Railway Protection Force personnel. The guerillas stopped

Latchanna.

Com. Naganna introduced the subject, linking it with their efforts to introduce cooperatives and mutual aid teams in South Bastar. He then called upon the speakers, and any others from amongst the guerillas, to speak on the occasion.

At the start, Com. Saleem, a guest at the camp, emphasised the historic significance of the Chinese revolution, specifically the fact that it has given the international communist movement Mao Tsetung Thought — raising Marxism-Leninism to a higher and more developed stage. He elaborated Mao's contribution to enriching Marxism in all its spheres — philosophy, economics, socialism, military warfare, proletarian tactics and specifically in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This was followed by DVC member, Com. Ganesh, recounting, in Gondi, the entire course of the Chinese revolution, till its victory in 1949. In this he emphasised how Mao's line of protracted people's war, new democracy, etc., developed in the course of struggle against the wrong lines of Chen Tu-hsui, Li Li-san etc. He specifically emphasised the need for applying this experience to the ongoing Indian revolution.

Then, from the audience, two speakers presented their views. First, SAC member, Sharada, recounted the

the train in which the RPF personnel were travelling and seize the arms.

In the above-mentioned incidents all of which had taken place in the month of September, a total of 17 police personnel were annihilated along with a sitting MLA of the ruling TDP. Atleast 20 rifles were seized from the enemy forces. This created panic among the state police officials, the politicians belonging to the various ruling class parties, and other reactionaries.

The series of successful armed actions in AP had shattered the web of lies floated by the state government and the top police officials that the People's War was finished, that a large section of the PW's followers have surrendered and so on. The police department is striving hard to protect themselves from the landmines by importing 'mine-proof' vehicles from Israel at a huge cost.

But can these mine-proof vehicles and sophisticated armoury save them from the people's wrath ? □



## Reports

sacrifices of the Long March. She elaborated how this had been necessitated due to a wrong line in the party, resulting in enormous losses. She said that it is only through such examples of heroic sacrifice that we can make the Indian revolution successful. Next, Com. Venkatesh, from a poor tribal background, now a section commander in the platoon, said that we have to wield the three magic weapons as effectively as in the Chinese revolution, in order to achieve victory. He added that 10 to 12 countries should be liberated in order to effectively counter imperialist encirclement. Further he said that some revisionists, seeing the defeat of the Chinese revolution, lose hope in the future of socialism. This, he said, was a wrong approach, emphasising the need to learn from the causes of the setback.

After this, DVC member, Com. Janaki, spoke of the period of socialist construction, elaborating the process of transformation from a new democratic economy into a socialist economy, and the intense class struggle that accompanied it. She emphasised Mao's historic role in discovering the laws of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the struggle against Liu Shao-chi's theory of productive forces.

Finally Com. Gopanna spoke on the great significance of the GPCR (Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution). He indicated the extent to which Liu Shao-chi's people had come to dominate the party in the 1960-65 period, and Mao's call to smash the capitalist roaders through mass mobilisation of the people. After recounting the GPCR, he emphasised the lessons to be learnt from it — stating that capitalist traits continue to remain within each of us, within the squads, within society .... and there is the danger of this asserting itself. The GPCR, he said, has taught us to be continuously alert against these wrong tendencies and the necessity to continuously fight it.

Com. Naganna then wound up the meeting appealing to all to learn from the Chinese revolution. He said, we face resistance to the implementation of our programmes, not only because of bourgeois ideas prevalent in society, but also from some fighters turning revisionist and leaving the movement. He emphasised that the Chinese revolution has taught us to never reduce our vigilance, and fight continuously through to the end. The meeting continued through the entire morning and was interspersed with revolutionary songs in Gondi, Telugu and Hindi.

In the evening, a cultural programme gave the celebrations a true festive character. Conducted by DVC member, Com. Sujata, songs, dance, poems, plays, etc., tapped the latent talent present. Com. Venkatesh presented a poem in Gondi on the Red Flag, the

Communist Party and MLM Thought. Com. Pandru presented in Telugu a poem on dalit oppression. Com. Hariam presented in Gondi a dialogue between an elder brother and his cousin-sister, where the former convinces the latter to join the KAMS. He also presented the theme song of DAKMS recently written in Gondi by CC member, Com. Bhupati. Com. Anil presented a short play based on a Chinese short story, 'Party Levy', signifying the importance of the village party unit. Com. Kamalesh from NT and now with the DK platoon, put on a mimicry. Tribal dances were also presented, some of which had social themes added to them. And to add to the festivities, the cooking team prepared sweets which were given to the entire camp in the morning and the evening.

Having launched the 50th Anniversary celebrations on October 1, village-level meetings began throughout South Bastar and Dandakaranya. An example was the October 7th meeting in Pidiya. It was attended by over 500 people, mostly DAKMS and KAMS members, from eight villages. The programme, conducted by the Byramgad squad, began by a long procession in one part (Tola) of the village. Slogans rent the air on the Chinese revolution and Mao's thought. The procession, walking in a disciplined two rows for an hour, settled on the grounds, also, in systematic rows. The red flag was hoisted by the young KAMS range committee member, Com. MN., who gave a short first speech. She said, that on this occasion we must vow to emulate the Chinese revolution and take the Indian revolution to success. It was truly astounding to see this teenage girl speaking before a large audience in the highly patriarchal tribal environment. Next to speak was DAKMS range committee member, Com. Dg, followed by the village DAKMS president. The latter said that we must make India socialist as happened in China. We must increase the cooperative work, and no information should leave the village to the enemy.

After this the squad members spoke, most of whom were from local tribals. Both Sunita and Madan, long-time squad members, spoke on the significance of the Chinese revolution and its application to their local work. Finally, Com. Kesanna, one of the early initiators of PW in Bastar, explained at length the Chinese revolution and its significance to the ongoing movement here. The meeting ended with a song on the NDR given by squad member Chandu and chorus by the local CNM troupe.

After the meeting was over, the 5-member CNM troupe was briefed by the squad; taking with them the banners and the DKSZC pamphlets on the Chinese revolution, they departed to the next village to continue the month-long campaign in their area. □

## Revolutionary Adivasi Movement Spreads to Southern Orissa

— from our correspondent in Orissa

Orissa, otherwise a backward state in our country, is showing a new hope for revolutionary movements; as the revolutionary mass movement is spreading to different pockets. About twenty five percent of the total population of Orissa is covered by 62 different tribes. Most of the backward hill and forest areas of the state are tribal. Other than the MNCS and other Indian compradors, these tribals are also exploited by local feudal lords — money lenders, businessmen, police, forest and other government officials. They are not only economically exploited by different non-tribal exploiters but also their culture and language are destroyed by the latter.

In this background the tribals of Rayagada and Gajapati districts i.e. Kuis and Soras have been organised under the banner of the Chasi-Mulia-Samiti (CMS) — a revolutionary peasant and agricultural labourers organisation. Since the end of 1995, the 'CMS' has been working in this area and fighting for tribals' right to forest resources and land. The organisation started its work in two to three Gram Panchayats of Padmapur block in Rayagada district. Within the span of this short period activities spread to about 30 panchayats of seven blocks of both Rayagada and Gajapati districts. Thus, the area of activities covers from the Ganjam-Gajapati border upto the Rayagada-Phulbani border through the Rayagada-Gajapati border.

This area is traditionally dominated by Kui and Sora tribes. Both these tribes have their own languages, cultures and religious faiths. About 75% of the population are tribes. Before 1947, the then kings of Jeypur and Parlakimidi, collaborating with British imperialism, exploited these tribes through different anti-people laws. To exploit these tribes through these laws, the local kings and the British rulers, sent their non-tribal agents to different pockets and started harassing the tribes. The tribals were loyal to the kings and their rules of exploitation. Taking advantage of this submissiveness of these tribes and with the help of the anti-people land laws, the non-tribal exploiters and their agents were able to occupy the traditionally owned tribal lands. Similarly, through the pro-imperialist forest laws the tribals lost their traditional rights to the forest. Through the excise policy of the then rulers the police and excise department started harassing the tribals. Out of fear of the laws, instead of using their home made liquor, the tribals started depending upon the non-tribal liquor merchants. These merchants taking the help of the local police, heavily exploited the tribals and occupied their lands. Thus the tribals became slaves on their own lands, lost their traditional rights to the land, forest and natural resources. Moreover, the newly infiltrated non-tribal exploiters

exploited the tribes by purchasing their agricultural and forest produce at a low cost. Some of these exploiters became money-lenders and intensified their exploitation to occupy tribal wealth and property. Taking advantage of these anti-people laws the police, revenue and forest officials started their ruthless exploitation of the tribes. It is also not out of place to mention that these tribes are dependent on shifting cultivation for their livelihood which is illegal as far as the government's forest laws are concerned. The forest officials had taken away their agricultural produce, birds and money to allow this so-called illegal cultivation.

Similarly, according to the laws, the waste forest land cannot be used for cultivation and the legal records (pattas) of the same cannot be issued to anybody. But the tribals are mostly dependent on forest lands for their cultivation. Moreover, the well-cultivated tribal lands and their houses have no legal records (pattas). To allow legal pattas for these lands the revenue officers have been collecting huge amounts of money from these tribes. These revenue officers are also involved in various conspiracies to transfer the tribal lands to the name of non-tribals.

For a small quarrel between tribals — like a dispute in a love case or marriage, or keeping a fire-arm or for any such so-called 'illegal' activity — the police officials demanded a heavy amount from both the sides.

With the transfer of power from the British to their Indian compradors in 1947, nothing has changed in the local exploiting structure. In the name of so-called democracy the same old kings and feudal lords were elected as local representatives from different political parties, upto the seventies. Continuing their old loyalty for these feudal lords the tribals did vote for them repeatedly. With the collapse of the 'Ganatantra Parishad' and 'Swatantra Party' of Orissa — the two parties of old kings and feudal lords — this tribal area was converted into a Congress vote bank. With the declaration of tribal reserved seats, some new tribal agents were coopted into the system. As the old kings and feudal lords and the newly rising local exploiters joined the Congress and the then Janata party (now it is BJD and BJP), their control over these political parties and the local politics remained unchanged. Newly elected tribal leaders started exploiting their own community and joined hands with the exploiters.

All the leaders of these parliamentary parties have been extending their support to these exploiters and in exchange they are able to collect votes through these exploiters. For the last fifty years people of this area have

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voted for different political parties — tribal and non-tribal leaders hoping for a better life. But the fate of the people have never changed. Instead, the number of exploiters and non-tribal infiltrators have been growing day by day. In the name of the different religious missionaries such as Christian missionaries and VHP many non-tribal new exploiters are also entering into the tribal areas. The same thing is happening in the name of NGOs. These missionaries and NGOs are not only helping the ongoing exploitation of tribals but have also been trying their best to destroy the tribal culture and heritage.

Traditionally these Kuis and Soras speak Kui and Sora languages respectively. They have faith in their own religion. On one side the government and the local exploiters are trying their best to convert these people into Oriyas. On the other side the Christian missionaries, VHP and the caste Hindu exploiters have converted all the tribals to either Christian or Hindu religion. These religious Hindu and Christian missionaries are teaching the people not to revolt against the government — the so-called living representative of the God. Instead, they are prompting the tribals to clash with each other in the name of religion and God. In British India the then rulers divided the Soras and Kuis in different states and districts to suppress their revolt. And now the rulers are dividing them in the name of religion.

In the last fifty years after the implementation of the so-called development programmes of the so-called independent government, the tribals have actually not benefited from this. There is no proper education facility and the schools are running only on paper. Neither are the non-tribal teachers interested to teach the tribals nor are the tribals interested to learn in other mediums like Oriya, Telugu, Hindi, English, Sanskrit etc. This is best witnessed from the fact that, while each Christian Sora person is able to read and write in the Sora language with a Roman script, yet they have remained as mass illiterate so far. It is best not to speak of the health facilities in these areas. Every year hundreds of people die of Cholera and Malaria. Other than this, hundreds of children also die off Chicken-pox. Taking advantage of this situation the governmental and non-governmental village quacks are looting the people. These tribals are living in low-cost thatched houses. In the name of reform programmes the government officials and NGO activists are looting the people — demanding a sizable amount for a roofing house, for a loan or for a subsidy. Though these tribals are cultivating paddy, Mandia, Ghantia, Suan, ganga, Kangu, Kandula (red grains), birhi (black grain) til, horsegram (Kolatha), Castor seed, different pulses, gingelly, mustard seed, plantain, pumpkin, sweet potato, gam, tomato, brinjal, chilly, arum, papayya, pineapple etc., most of the time they subsist on salt and chilly. At times they get forest produce such as jackfruits,

mangoes, berries, mahua, and some roots and leaves.

## Struggle Against Government Officials

In this situation at first the organisation started its fight against forest, revenue, police and other government officials. Mass meetings were conducted giving a call to boycott the forest and revenue officers and to assert the tribals' traditional right to land and forest. People boycotted the courts, jumped bail on forest cases, fought the forest officials unitedly and finally won a partial victory. Police officials and their local agents (chaukidars) were gheraoed at different times, in protest against their anti-people practice; police raids were faced with mass action. In 1996 the tribals of Anugur panchayat of Gajpati district were successful in such a gherao and the police department was compelled to shift its camp from that area. In 1998, at the time of the general election in the same place, 25 armed police were faced with 400 armed peasants to successfully implement the boycott call. In the land movement of Raba, Mandrabaju-Sindhba and also in most other places the armed police were confronted with armed mass action and at times police were even beaten up by the people. Tribal women played a most courageous role in all these events. And on December 8, 1998 the people of R-Udayagiri and Nuagada block gheraoed the R-Udayagiri police station in protest against the collusion of the local police with robbers. About five thousand armed tribals blocked the roads, cut off R-Udayagiri town from all other headquarters, beat up the police and corrupt government officials, broke into the sub-jail and killed two robbers inside the jail. Following the R-Udayagiri incident the police tried their best to arrest the tribals from the adjacent villages but failed due to mass protest in these villages. They were able to arrest only three tribal people and 24 non-tribals in this connection.

## Struggle for Land

Other than the struggle for selling surplus land the tribals are also organised under the banner of the 'CMS' to reoccupy their traditional lands, which were transferred to non-tribal occupiers legally or illegally. The tribal and non-tribal people of Lachhamanguda village of Padmapur block in Rayagada district occupied a 5-acre surplus declared pond, from the control of a known landlord of that area. The landless tribals of this village had also seized a big chunk of government land (Gochar) and started cultivation on it.

In the year 1996 the tribals of Augur Panchayat were organised to reoccupy 6-acres of tribal land and won the battle facing the armed police and the false cases foisted upon them. In 1997 tribals of Raba village of Mohana block of Gajpati district occupied 50 acres of tribal land which were under the control of non-tribals since the last 3 to 4 decades. Four comrades were arrested in this

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struggle and cases were foisted on many. Finally the tribals won the battle. About 400 to 500 peasants participated in this land struggle. In 1998, the land movement started in Mandrabaju and Sindhba of Mohana block, Murising-Tabarda of Nuagada block and in many other places of Gajpati district. Recently land struggles have also started in Lamber village of Chandrapur block of Rayagada district and in Duliponkal of Anugur panchayat in Gajpati district. In all these movements hundreds of peasants are participating to occupy the land and to counter police repression. Three police camps have been set up near the Mandrabaju village and one near Duliponkal village in the name of maintaining law and order. The police forces are not only exploiting the people, but also attacking their women folk.

### Struggle for Wages

The J.K. Corporation has been taking away bamboo from the Rayagada and Gajpati districts. The bamboo corporation has been exploiting the tribal and non-tribal workers with regard to wages and several other issues. In 1997-98 the bamboo workers were organised under the banner of the "Bana Sramika Sangha" and started a wage hike struggle with the support of the CMS. After a partial victory, the wage-hike struggle began to get more organised from the succeeding year. To assert the tribals' right on the forest it was decided that the company should be permitted to cut bamboos according to the decisions of the various village committees of the organisation. In this connection a 'save forest campaign' was also conducted. The company agreed to the organisation's decisions and wage rates were hiked by 15%.

In the current year wage struggles were also conducted with regard to various government developmental works. Before the struggle the contractors had given Rs. 25, instead of the stipulated Rs. 30 to working women. The organisation conducted struggles on the demand for equal wage for equal work and won. Soon after the declaration of 40 rupees as the minimum government wage, the organisation started another struggle and this is now being implemented at several places.

### Struggle against Government taxes

In some panchayats of this area taxes were collected from the tribals on their hens, goats, cows and buffalos. The organisation called upon the people not to pay these taxes and it was first implemented in Kerdang and Parimal panchayat of Nuagada block. Taxes were also collected from different local markets known as — 'hatas' on different goods of the peasants. Each year, at the time of the Dasahara festival, the local police have been collecting taxes on licenced and unlicenced private guns, which is not even legal according to the existing law. Recently the organisation called upon the people to stop

paying all these taxes and struggles have already started on these issues and it is reported that the tax system has been stopped in two or three local markets.

### Other struggles

Struggles are also being conducted against liquor trading and gambling, against theft of tribal properties by non-tribals, against corruption indulged in by various government officials and their other anti-people activities. In the day-to-day activities of the organisation, people have been organising themselves, conducting people's courts and punishing the culprits. The culprit may be a thief, may be a corrupt school master, a corrupt BDO, a molester, or a rapist; each one is punished according to the level of crime committed. In organising all these initiatives the Mandinera panchayat of Gajpati district has been in the lead. While the people of Mandinera succeeded in recovering the school property from a corrupt school master, the people of Khajurpada panchayat of Nuagada block were successful in collecting 10,000 rupees as fine from a molester and in sending him to jail.

In a molestation case, the district collector and police officers had to attend a Jan Panchayat. The Jan Panchayat was held in front of the Khaji Poda PS. The government officials themselves collected the sum of money (10,000 Rs) levied on the culprits.

A dalal, who earlier belonged to the CMS, stole money from the CMS fund and took shelter in the house of a money-lender in Nuagada of Rayagada district. Police came to rescue him. But the wrath of the people forced the anti-people elements to give Rs. 1500 to the CMS as a fine. The police too paid Rs. 300.

Recently some lumpens tried to attack an important activist of the CMS in Mandimera panchayat of Gajpati district. The lumpens were instigated by liquor merchants, as the CMS had been building a broad-based people's movement against the liquor business. A Jan Adalat was held in this panchayat and the lumpen was fined Rs. 10,000. The said lumpen surrendered before the organisation and admitted his faults in writing.

To conduct all these struggles more effectively, the organisation is restructured and village committees have been formed in the various villages. Taking two to five panchayat committees one area committee has been formed and there are 9 such area committees under the Rayagada-Gajpati divisional committee. Campaign and propaganda is being conducted to arm the people against the state. Inspired by the organisational activities and developments, tribal youths have been coming forward to devote their life for the cause of the people and revolution, becoming whole-timers for this noble cause. Let us hope to see a formidable guerilla front in this most backward region of southern Orissa. □



## Pakistan's Military Rule

— *Avanti*

On October 12 the military seized power in a bloodless coup in Pakistan. In a swift move, the armed forces took control of key establishments and put under house arrest the Prime Minister, his cabinet and the few top military personnel loyal to him. This is the 4th military coup in Pakistan since 1947.

The 32-month-old Nawaz Sharif government came to an end, soon after he announced the dismissal of army chief, General Pervez Musharraf, and his replacement by ISI chief, Lt. General Khwaja Ziauddin. In fact Musharraf, who was returning from Colombo, was denied permission to land at Karachi, and was informed of his dismissal during the flight. However, the airport was seized by local military commanders loyal to Musharraf, allowing the plane to land, facilitating the coup.

The two alternatives before the people of Pakistan : a highly autocratic business tycoon-turned-Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif; or the military dictators led by General Musharraf makes little difference. It is not a question of democracy versus dictatorship as made out by the Western media, but that of autocratic rule versus dictatorship. A fight between sections of the ruling classes for their gain.

Nawaz Sharif, in his 2 1/2 years rule, had been systematically concentrating all powers in his hands. With the 13th Amendment he stripped the President of his powers to dismiss the National Assembly and appoint the Service Chiefs; in late 1997 when he came in conflict with the courts he sacked Farooq Leghari and Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, appointing his own stooges; and in October last year he removed the army chief General Karamat when the latter sought to put controls on him. He launched brutal attacks on any sort of opposition to his rule and had arrested large numbers of journalists who wrote against him. He had amassed vast wealth, and on the eve of his detention he was moving into a new 450 acre palatial house. On the other hand the Army chiefs, make no pretense at democracy, and are open dictators.

The troubles for Sharif began with the Kargil episode. Cornered by an aggressive Indian military on the one hand, and with lack of support from the imperialists on the other, Sharif was forced to broker a humiliating retreat at the behest of Washington. This retreat, done at the instructions of Clinton, earned Sharif criticisms from various quarters. The people of Pakistan came out into the streets; guerilla groups vowed to avenge the betrayal; a 19-party political alliance of virtually the entire spectrum of the opposition (including PPP) came into being; and discontent was brewing within the armed forces.

Nawaz Sharif panicked and sent a high-level team of his supporters, including his brother, who is Chief Minister of Punjab, and ISI chief Lt.Gen. Ziauddin, to New York, with an SOS message. Shahbaz Sharif pleaded for help from the Americans saying that the Army was after his brother's blood. He also reminded the American bosses that his brother, the PM, had acted on US directives to withdraw from Kargil resulting in an extremely hostile environment in Pakistan; and hence it was their duty to intervene and save the Sharif government. He further assured them that Pakistan was willing to sign the CTBT. Ziauddin also prostrated before the Americans offering help on the Bin Laden affair and warned that if Americans did not act, Pakistan could fall into the hands of the mullahs in the Army.

The American administration then acted promptly to openly back Sharif against the Generals. The US State Department issued a statement saying that America would not "support any extra-constitutional means" — thereby openly intervening in the internal affairs of a supposedly 'sovereign' country. But its plans backfired.

Thinking that American backing was like a magic wand that would guarantee his continuation as PM, Sharif recklessly sacked General Musharraf and replaced him with none other than the same Ziauddin who had earlier fallen at the feet of the Americans. But Sharif and the Americans miscalculated. Musharraf was not like a Karamat. With the bulk of the Army backing him, he displaced the Sharif government, without a shot being fired in resistance. No doubt though, with the economy bankrupt and Pakistan dependent on IMF doles, this new government will also have no option but to kow-tow to the imperialists. What helped the generals was the people's lack of faith in the politicians of all hues, who were not only highly corrupt, but had most slavishly cringed before the Americans. Not only Sharif, but Benazir Bhutto too, is safely living abroad, and has been begging the US for help. Even that cricketer-turned-politician, Imran Khan, went scurrying to meet Assistant Secretary of State, Karl Inderfurth, during the peak of the crisis.

Now, the imperialists are using the carrot and the stick to beat the generals into line. The American administration, with its plot back-firing, talk of not "cornering the Generals, but engaging them." Britain, which ruled the Indian sub-continent with brutal savagery for almost two centuries, has been waxing eloquent about the need for Pakistan to return to "democracy", and suspended it from that colonial relic — the commonwealth. The IMF suspended financial aid to

(Continued in page 11 ...)

# People of Bengal-Bihar-Orissa Border Region Revive their Glorious Tradition of Militant Struggle

— Sukanto

## A Report From West Bengal

Since the last two and half centuries, the heroic people of **Midnapore** have been struggling against all types of oppression. Way back during the colonial period they fought against colonialism and later against semi-feudalism and semi colonialism. In each and every struggle the people are making sacrifices and becoming martyrs. At the end of the 18th century (1770 to 1790) they launched their first rebellion against the British rulers known as the first phase of the Chuar rebellion. The second phase of the rebellion started in 1799 and continued upto 1816, though it got weakened after 1806. The second phase of the Chuar rebellion was led by Durjan Singh and Rani Shiromani.

When this anti-colonial struggle faced a set-back, another revolt by the name Nayek rebellion was initiated and led by Achal Singh. This Nayek rebellion waged guerrilla war on British troops. The Britishers used cannons and other big weapons to suppress the movement and at last they succeeded. At the time of the independence struggle an area in Midnapore district, by name Tamulk, played a key role against the imperialists. The people of Tamulk liberated the entire area for some time by waging armed struggle. Again, after 1947, under the leadership of the undivided communist party, people participated in land struggles in large numbers. **This history of rebellions continued and the people of Debra and Gopiballabhpur participated in the revolutionary upsurge, under our Party leadership, during 1967-69 — the historical turning point of the Indian democratic struggle.**

In all these rebellions the sons and daughters of Garhbeta and Shalbhani participated and these places turned into focal points of struggle, particularly during the Nayek rebellion. In this way the people fought for the last 200 years against all types of oppression. After the setback of Naxalbari there was a period of lull. At this juncture the CPI(M) made inroads into the various centres of Midnapore and strengthened their position. The CPI(M) cadres initiated wage and land struggles in several villages and established unchallenged supremacy for nearly 2½ decades. Through this period the Congress was routed totally from this area i.e., particularly in the Garhbeta, Chandra Kona, Keshpur, Garhbeta-2 (Goaltore) blocks. To suppress its opponents the CPI(M) utilised all sorts of methods like threatening, fines, preventing agricultural works, destroying and looting property, thrashing and even killing. To implement these methods the CPI(M) leadership mobilised village people at first voluntarily and later forcefully. Gradually a muscle force emerged and they started to control the region. Since a section of the

CPI(M) leadership turned into a neo-rich and upper middle class, rich sections of Congress and other vested interests in the rural areas also joined the ruling CPI(M) party, and gradually even partial struggles were given up.

The CPI(M) also conducted gram panchayat elections and established its rule through this Gram panchayat system which saw the further growth of the neo-rich class. All government departments were filled with CPI(M) cadres.

Garhbeta and Shalbhani are watered by the Kasai and Sheelavati rivers. Once, way back at the time of the Chuar and Nayek rebellions, it was a dense forest area. Gradually the forests were cleared up and the area was transformed into a developed agricultural belt, particularly for potato cultivation. Irrigation canals were dug and the major chunk of cultivation is under wells/pump sets. Hence the area turned prosperous and is one of the biggest centres for potatoes in West Bengal. Even now a good part of it is under green cover with natural Sal and other trees. The West Bengal government also contributed its share, under the World Bank greenery programmes by turning thousands of hectares of land into Eucalyptus plantations. Through potato cultivation a strong potato syndicate emerged in Midnapore district, having control on political and financial matters. It had been backing the CPI(M) initially but is now patronising the BJP-TMC combine. Midnapore district consists of 35 Assembly segments and 5 Parliamentary constituencies and plays a crucial role in state politics. The broad masses of the down-trodden generally follow the red flag and are behind the CPI(M), in spite of their frustration and disenchantment with the CPI(M), as no other genuine red flag is present. After the outbreak of the clashes with the BJP and TMC, the people desire leadership of the genuine red flag. Village and other levels of the CPI(M) leadership fled the villages. So the people were not in a position to resist the BJP and TMC goondaism on their own. It was in such a background that PW organisers entered in the Garhbeta villages. At the time of elections more and more clashes took place and the villages turned into battle fields. In this situation, news poured into the area of the class struggles in the battlefields of Andhra, Telangana, Dandakaranya and Bihar. Now they are resisting the State and advancing the movement to a higher stage. The reports gave a general confidence on the revolutionary movement led by our Party.

## 'Democracy' of Vajpayee and Mamata's mask

The RSS entered roughly 15 years back into the

Keshpur belt. It established relations in villages and tried to rake up Hindu chauvinism. For this the RSS selected Karkhushima area, where minority people live, and tried to provoke the Dhanchoda area Hindus in 1989-90 against Muslims. In this area the RSS did not give importance of its traditional style of functioning to run RSS units, but secretly mobilised its forces and established relations with a section of lumpen and rich business people. The RSS tried to utilise the situation for its communal and fascist agenda under the garb of Hindutva and capitalising on the growing anti-CPI(M) sentiments among the broad masses. Then gradually the RSS supplied fire arms and trained its cadre in RSS camps. When the BJP took arms to counter the CPI(M)'s Alu (potato) Syndicate the other rural elite shifted its support towards the BJP and TMC combine. A legal set-up was also established through BJP units at district and block levels to co-ordinate the activities and secure legal cover for its fascist methods. When the TMC was formed and an electoral agreement was made with the BJP, from then onwards a joint front was formed and together these two parties started combined attacks and resistance to the CPI(M) in the Garhbeta-Chandrakona-Keshpur area. The leadership of this front emerged from the remnants of the Congress. Apart from this, an anti-CPI(M) section and a section of the leadership within the CPI(M) were admitted into the front to fight the CPI(M). Financial support was made available by the Alu Syndicate and through forcible collection from the masses. **The RSS runs military training camps for armed goons and supplies them arms and ammunition.** Let us examine two armed camps conducted by the BJP and TMC.

### Sandipur Camp

In this village situated in Garhbeta block, the BJP established a camp for its armed gang of 30 to 40 goons, who stay there regularly and attack villages when ever they feel. This gang leader was Swarup Sarkar who was also the leader of the block and districts units of the BJYM and BJP. The camp was hosted by the Sandipur business magnet Swapan Sarkar who is a money lender, has a fertiliser dealership, provision store and hails from a forward caste. The armed gang uses a portion of his house and a portion of the nearby school. Lumpen and goons of this panchayat and from nearby villages, were mobilised and kept in the Sandipur camp. These goons regularly move with fire-arms and raid villages at random. People were terrorised by the raids and a majority left their houses or paid a lumpsum as fines to stay in their own houses. Day and night the gang roams and terrorises villagers. Near this camp, a police camp exists to protect these goons.

### Ursai Camp

The Ursai village and Gram panchayat fall under the Keshpur block. The Trinamul Congress maintains an armed goons camp in this village with 40 members. Villages

nearby, like Marikhandh, Durgapur, Sampur, Damodarpur, Tara etc., which were once CPI(M) villages, are now forcefully turned into TMC villages. The villagers are fined 2 to 10 thousand rupees in general and more to pay particular fines. Through these fines they collect lakhs of rupees and run a goonda terror raj throughout the block. Krishna Douri and Nimai Maity host the goons in their houses. Both are upper caste (Sadgopu) landlords. Earlier these two were staunch supporters of the Congress and later, in the mid-80's, they joined the CPI(M). Not only do they shelter the armed goons of the TMC but also lead the gangs in raids on villages and mobilise the people through threats. These gangs spread terror and adopt the same tactics as the BJP, such as looting villages, which do not surrender to them.

Earlier the CPI(M) also behaved in a similar manner but only it did not keep its goons at one place. Prior to coming into power in 1977 there were regular battles between the Congress and CPI(M) for supremacy. According to a statement of the CPI(M) in the three years period between 1970-72, 640 cadres were murdered by Congress goons. Such is the power struggle going on in Bengal among the so-called Parliamentary parties. Now a section of the Congress leadership has changed its name to TMC and joined with the BJP to oppose the CPI(M). So the history of the last 3-4 decades is a live witness to the brutal crimes committed by these 'democratic' parties in their power struggle. But each time, the sufferers are the poor people. **All three parties have engaged in regular battles for supremacy by terrorising the common people. But all the three claim that the others are terrorising them. This is the democratic style of functioning of these three fascist forces. All are man-eaters and drink human blood.**

Now let us see how the goons rampage the villages and kill men and women in massacres. From end '97 onwards the CPI(M) leadership surrendered and ran away from the villages of Garhbeta, Chandrakona, and in '99, from Keshpur blocks. Those who did not surrender shifted from their native areas. The BJP and TMC goonda gangs roam the villages with fire-arms and improvised explosive devices. These gangs mobilise their cadre of the total block utilising from 200 to 2000 people, depending on the nature of the target. When they mobilise a big mob, generally 50% participate out of fear and 30 to 40% poor people participate at gun point. The families who fail to pay fines, are made to stand in front of the mob during an attack on a village. Only 10 to 20% support the BJP and TMC and participate willingly. In this region these goons have conducted atleast 100 such raids. If any resist, they are chased and killed or thrown into the flames. The mob will loot total villages at gun point and carry away the loot in trucks, bullock carts and on bicycles. After the rampage, only the walls of the houses remain without doors or even windows. These types of attacks can be made by any of

these three parliamentary parties. Whether it is the left (CPI(M)), or the communal (BJP), or the 'fire brand leader' Mamata's party, all implement the same terror attacks. The Police help all three and stand as mere spectators at the time of the raids. Later too, they do not arrest anyone irrespective of their party identity. One section of the poor who participate in the raids are transformed into lumpens. The goons attack women and sometimes commit rapes. This is the culture developed by the 'honourable' fire brand Mamata, Vajpayee and Jyoti Basu. Since the last two to three years the people have been terrorised. They want peace as well as a fitting reply to all the three fascist parties. Resistance began under the "People's War" leadership.

"People's War" started work in Garhbeta from 1998 December onwards. It started to mobilise the masses to fight against all the three armed bahinis patronised by the state. At first, for 2 months, PW organisers moved around to make contact with the broad masses. But it became problematic to survive amidst the two armed gangs, without fire-arms. So, according to the situation, party organisers first took small country-made arms. Later they switched over to rifles and shotguns to protect themselves and people from the ruthless attacks of the fascist bahinis. Soon after this the squad form of functioning began and revolutionary politics, particularly that of protracted people's war, spread amongst the people. They responded positively and invited the squad to their villages. Discussions started amongst the masses on counter revolutionary and revolutionary politics. **Where the PW organiser and squad members moved, only in those villages of Garhbeta did the people understand that it was only through arming the masses, that resistance to the goons of the BJP, TMC, CPI(M) was possible.** In this process the PW activists took the initiative to mobilise the peasantry on their demands. At first, the procurement price for potatoes was taken and a mass campaign was done in the Garhbeta, Goaltore, Shalbheni blocks of Midnapore in the months of February, March 1999. When the PW initiated this campaign, immediately the CPI(M), TMC entered on the same issue and called separate public meetings without any specific demands. This shows their hollowness. Meanwhile the BKMS (Biplabi Krishak Mazdoor Samiti), a mass organisation of the peasantry took the initiative to spread awareness among the masses to fight on these partial demands. When the PW activities started in Garhbeta, the police were on a constant vigil and informed the fascist bahinis to attack and suppress the PW. The Police threatened the masses not to cooperate with the naxals, saying that, if any one supports them blood will flow in the village and the people were instructed to join any of the three Parliamentary parties. The armed gang of Sandhipur under the leadership of Swarup Sarkar, began to hunt down the PW squad and threatened

villagers who were willing to help them.

### Sitanagar Firing

On the one hand the BJP started to threaten and attack directly, while on other hand they started to collect information of PW activities and started to feed the police with information, regularly. They not merely informed the police, but even pressurised them to move fast to catch and suppress PW cadres. In this process the BJP alerted its cadres and mobilised 200 to 300 regularly and waited to attack the PW squad. On May 13th the BJP got information of the squad and immediately brought the police. The police came and surrounded the house, where the squad had taken shelter. Meanwhile the people alerted the squad and they retreated from the shelter, but the police started to chase the squad. Then squad opened fire and retreated safely. When the squad retreated the police batch came to the village and arrested one BKMS activist. But immediately the people got mobilised, beat up the police and demanded that they release the arrested person. The police had to bow to the people's demand and left the village.

This news reached the BJP mob who was waiting nearby to attack the village and squad, but they dispersed with fear. In the entire Garhbeta the CPI(M) leaders almost vacated the area and the broad masses started to openly support revolutionary politics and the PW Party. So the BJP goons reacted even more negatively and started to mobilise more and more arms and cadre. **At this juncture the PW activists attacked the Sandhipur BJP armed camp and tried to catch its main leaders, like Swarup Sarkar.** But the squad could not identify their targets and spoke to the goons and other leaders, demanding that they stop attacks on villagers immediately, or face dire consequences. Later the PW Party Area Committee issued a leaflet exposing Swarup Sarkar's anti-people activities.

Even then they did not stop their attacks which actually increased, as the attacks on Nalpa, Kastaguda and other villages indicated. After the warning given by the PW activists at the Sandhipur camp, the BJP goons vacated the camp at night expecting an attack from the PW. They slept at secret places in the nights. At this juncture, on September 9th, the PW attacked Swarup Sarkar in his house at Sandhipur and killed him in broad day light. Through this killing the BJP camp got very nervous. Yet it started retaliatory attacks on the houses of PW cadres and supporters. At first they attacked the PW's ACM Com. Asit Sarkar's house and tried to molest his wife. But resisting the goons she escaped safely. Soon after, another gang attacked Ananta Sarkar (brother of AS) a clerk in a local government school and killed him on the spot. The next day the goons again attacked with big numbers AS's house and killed two of his in-laws, Kalipada Ghosh, Madan Ghosh and tried to kill another nephew Ashok



Ghosh, who recovered in hospital, but lost his two eyes. The killers continued their terror together with a big police detachment and higher officials and captured a 12-year-old boy from AS's house and beat him for two days, and finally killed him as well. From 9-9-'99 to 12-9-'99 the goons looted all the paddy, utensils and even doors of the houses of AS and other people of the village. After the incident, the Sandhipur police camp was beefed up with EFR and CRPF jawans but no culprits (known to all, including the police) were booked. **This incident proves how the BJP-TMC combine acted in a left front raj and the nexus between all these parties.** *Ganashakti*, the official organ of the CPI(M) WB State Committee, reported this incident as its first page lead, but no action was taken against either the culprits nor against the police officials present at the site of the killings. But the brother of Com. AS, who was in no way connected to the incident was kept behind bars in a false murder case. After the incident, large numbers of paramilitary forces were deployed and flagmarched in Garhbeta villages for 10 days. Almost all families vacated the villages and took shelter in friends and relatives' houses. This situation was utilised by the BJP to indulge in rigging with the help of central forces.

After Swarup's annihilation, the BJP goons and leadership fled the villages. The functioning of the armed gangs has once again changed after the incidents. During the day and night they move secretly, but continue their attacks on the people and revolutionaries. At the time of the 13th Lok Sabha elections all the three increased their armed activity in their respective areas. But the TMC is making inroads into the CPI(M)'s old bastis easily without any resistance. With their eyes on the coming Assembly polls, in 2001, all the three are increasing their goonda bahinis, which are no less a danger than the Ranaveer sena of Bihar or the Razakars of the erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad.

### People's Resistance

Around the issue of procurement price, all the areas of Garhbeta, Goaltore, Shalbani, Chandrakona, Keshpur, Belpahari, Lalghar are fertile grounds for waging class struggle and advancing it to higher forms. The terrain of this area is also favourable to resist the goons and state armed forces. The people's political consciousness is relatively high when compared to other areas of the district. The villages and families which were divided by the ruling parties have been won over to the revolutionary camp. Revolutionaries are trying hard to unite the masses and villages on the basis of classes and class struggle, to advance the agrarian movement to a higher level. They are educating and politicising the masses to come out from their anti-proleterian tendencies and the lumpenisation of the poor by the ruling classes.

In the 3rd week of September the West Bengal state police attacked Inda and Raika villages to nab PW activists and leaders.

Two days prior to the attack some comrades took shelter in Inda, but later left the village. After getting information, the police raided the shelter, thinking that underground comrades were taking shelter in the village. They caught the male persons of the house which the police suspected to be a hideout of the Naxalites and started to beat them, imagining them to be Com. AS and Com. Kamal. Villagers told the police party that the said naxalite team was not in the village. But the police continued to beat them. Hence, more than one thousand women of the Inda and Raika villages got mobilised and resisted the police. In the tussle with the police, one woman chopped off the finger of a policeman to express their anger against police behaviour. The police begged apology and ran away from the site. These incidents proved that the people were ready to fight militantly with the BJP, TMC and CPI(M) goons if a proper leadership and political line, with guidance was available. They are now expecting this from the CPI (ML) (PW).

Armed activity and armed formations at a village level, with higher levels of people's militia are needed; at the same time armed regular squads need to be also strengthened, expanded and trained to face the goons of all reactionary forces and the state. The people need also to be mobilised with great care and need to wage various types of struggles on various partial demands. Mass organisations need to function openly and in underground to face the enemy's onslaught. However, the movement will demand sacrifices and courage, to fight till the end, which should not be lacking in the revolutionary camp. From the beginning of the armed formations, the Party needs to caution its members not to take short cuts and wage battles with the enemy without the masses. Armed formations of various sizes, for different purposes needs to be developed, while at the same time, it would have to be combined with activity that consolidates the masses in mass organisations.

### Some partial struggles waged by masses

In various centres of Midnapore district people are organised to wage struggles on their genuine demands. Land Struggles: The Left Front government will claim that it has implemented land reforms through operation Barga and distributed land to the poor and landless peasantry. But the land which was distributed long back was given mainly to some cadres of the CPI(M) and its leadership. Till now, landless peasants are in large numbers in rural Bengal. Land concentration is less in some pockets of West Bengal; yet, the land question is still the main problem. Particularly where forest and other waste lands exist, people are willing to occupy those chunks and to cultivate

them for their livelihood. The Garhbeta block of Midnapore district and Raipur-2 block of Bankura district border villages, the peasantry occupied 75 bighas of land recently. In Takurpara, the people reoccupied 30 acres of land, which had been cultivated by them for 10 years, but was later occupied by the forest department, who planted cashew-nuts. The people of these areas are planning to occupy more and more land which are under the forest department or under semi-government and government farms or in many other farms.

### Jute seed farm workers struggle

In Durgapur village, there is a government farm of Jute seeds on 1000 acres of land. This farm was transformed into the personal property of the CPI(M) leadership. Earlier, a few thousand workers worked on this farm, but at present 1026 workers were on the rolls. According to the rules, the work force should be treated as permanent workers. But the CPI(M) rejected this, and did not give any permanent jobs to any one. The workers formed a union under the banner of "*Durgaband Jute Mazdoors Krishak Samiti*" and approached the High Court. The Court's verdict came in favour of the workers; even then the CPI(M) leadership disagreed to make them permanent apart from a handful belonging to their coterie. Then the workers decided to fight the CPI(M) under the leadership of the PW Party. The workers approached the Goaltore PW Party organiser and started reorganisation under their leadership. At first they gheraoed the CPI(M) leadership, and later, the farm officials. A struggle is going on for making the workers permanent, and to seize 600 acres of farm land which has not been cultivated for a long time.

### A rally for water

The Shalbani area is situated between the Kasai and Sheelavati rivers. In some parts, canals from the Karai were also dug but water is released for only a few days in a year, which will not fulfil the needs of the peasantry. This year, from April to June, people faced a severe shortage for water even to drink, let alone for animals and irrigation. The BKMS took out a campaign of around 40 villages of the Shalbani block and called for a rally to meet the officials. Around 200 people were mobilised from 20 villages and blocked the Midnapore-Asansol state highway for several hours. After getting an assurance from officials to release funds and make arrangements for water immediately, the BKMS withdrew the blockade.

### Other political rallies

At the time of the Kargil war, various mass organisations mobilised the masses in Calcutta, sub-urban and other areas, to counter the BJP, TMC's provocation and communal feelings on Pakistan and the Kashmir issues. In Sealdah and Belghoria of Calcutta city the BJP, TMC attacked the people to disrupt the meeting on the Kashmir

issue. In some other places, meetings were successful. The speakers spoke on the Kashmir problem and demanded a plebiscite, while condemning both the governments and Prime Ministers for the Kargil conflict. At the time of the 13th Lok Sabha elections the CPI (ML) [PW] and other revolutionary mass organisations took a propaganda campaign to boycott the sham elections. The Boycott campaign took place in parts of Greater Calcutta, Midnapore, Murshidabad, Nadia and Malda districts. Some villages (around 15) boycotted elections this time under the Party leadership and in some villages (say around 25-30) the polling percentage was very low. **In Calcutta a joint rally by three parties — the CPI (ML) [PW], the CPI (ML)(Central Team), the RCC (Maoist) — organised and mobilised around 2500 people in the rally.** At the time of elections the resistance in Andhra, Telangana, Dandakaranya and Bihar have inspired the people of the state a lot.

### People annihilate a class enemy in Murshidabad

In Murshidabad, people have been fighting under the leadership of the Party for a long period. Landlords, dacoits and Congress leaders have been attacking the Krishak Sangram Samiti (KSS) activists and suppressing the masses continuously. The Party and mass organisations are resisting these forces in different ways, including through annihilation. In the first week of June, one anti-people enemy was annihilated in Murshidabad and later in another action 4 persons were killed by the people. Under the Nawada police station, Rajpur is a village where the landlord-cum-moneylender-cum-Congress leader, Kader Shaik, acted as a cruel oppressor. On August 17th, the goons of the landlord attacked KSS activists and beat them seriously. To counter this, people, under the Party leadership, mobilised and attacked Kader Shaik and killed him. In this process his son and other two goons were also killed. People of this area were enthused by the attack and are getting organised more and more to fight with the other enemies of the people. The police have booked a case on KSS activists and have arrested Com. Akbar of the KSS.

### Arrests in Mayurbhanj district, Orissa

The border districts of three states — Bengal, Bihar and Orissa — were selected as a perspective area to wage and advance the class struggle to higher stage. To achieve this, revolutionary propaganda and contacting people of this remote backward Adivasi district Mayurbhanj of Orissa began. At first one centre, Bangriposhi was started; and later it was expanded to two areas i.e., Badampahar and Gurumoshani.

In the process of our work, Badampahar and Bangriposhi were merged and the area was called the Bangriposhi area. Mayurbhanj is a vast district with dense

forests, hills and rivers. Mainly a Santhal population lives in the forests, which is a backward area without any development programmes of the government. At the end of 1997, the police began to track down PW activities and by early '99 a Special Task Force was formed along with the beefed up police stations of Bangriposhi, Jharpukuria (Bombay chowk where NH 5 and 6 divides) and Bisoi in this area. Simlipal is a national reserve forest (Abhayaranyam) where a number of forest check posts exist. STF forces started combing operations and daily patrols from June '99 onwards. To gather information on PW activities and organisers, the STF depends on touts of the village, special forest staff and bad gentry, who are opposed to the Party's entry in this area.

However, since the last 3-4 months, police vigil and patrols have increased to curb the Party activities at the initial stage itself. The Bangriposhi organiser, Com. Ajoy, and member Com. Monica were arrested in Jantoria village of Simlipal forests on 1-8-'99. The STF of the Orissa police raided the house at midnight where comrades were taking shelter. The people of this area have already started to participate in partial struggles under the Party leadership. The arrest of the organiser hampered the local work to some extent. Later, to increase the suppression, the Orissa police arrested Kachiabeda village mass organisation activists who had initiated a wage hike struggle in a stone crusher. The daily wage was very low in the crushing work, where the worker gets only Rs.22 per day. After this, the owner of the crusher started to suppress the workers and informed the police regularly regarding the leadership. So, he was threatened by the workers to stop all his activities. In turn, the police arrested 5 youths including a woman activist. The Kachiabeda villagers approached the Bangriposhi PS officials and demanded the unconditional release of the village youth, which the police had to accept. In the mean while, police started regular patrols in Kachiabeda and nearby villages to keep a vigil on mass activities. The people opposed the patrols and harassment of the police.

Meanwhile, Dara Singh, a VHP activist and leader of Mayurbhanj area, started to kill minority Christians and Muslims which has been covered in the media in detail since the last one year. In the name of nabbing Dara Singh the police strengthened the patrol parties and increased harassment of the general people of this affected area. In the remote rural villages also some tension developed and people began to suspect new people as Dara Singh's men. The media and police contributed a lot to confuse people and create a fear complex about Dara Singh. In this context a 11 member team (9 PRs and 2 sympathisers) were caught by the police in Jarka village of Jharpukuria police station. A Party Area Committee meeting had been arranged on 15th September at a sympathiser's house in Jarka. Some touts of the village reported to the police station that some unknown people were assembled in the village. At

midnight the police raided the house and arrested 8 comrades who slept in the hall, and to arrest another 3 who slept inside, extra reinforcements were rushed from Bangriposhi, Bisoi and Baripada. In the exchange of fire 3 comrades were critically injured. Three rifles of .315 bore and 3 tapanchas (shot guns) were recovered by the police. The injured were shifted to Baripada and then to Cuttack. A debate started in the village on PW's Red flag and BJP's Saffron activities and people are openly owning the Red flag and are determined to get organised under the Party leadership notwithstanding the arrests. They are eagerly awaiting the release of the arrested comrades and are prepared to organise themselves under Party directions.

### A Report from Singhbhum, Bihar

Singhbhum district of Bihar is also part of the BBO perspective area. Ever since 1996, PW activists have been trying to penetrate into the heart of this Jharkhand area which has a glorious history of people's movements. Dumuria, Patka areas were selected to propagate agrarian politics. **Earlier, way back in the 1970's, under our party leadership, the BBO Regional Committee took the responsibility to organise the people in East and West Singhbhum and Mayurbhanj districts, as they are contiguous areas of the then historical struggle of Debra and particularly Gopiballbhpur. Again the CPI (ML) (PW) started work after a gap of 26 years.** In-between, none others entered this strategic area, that links the three important states of east India.

An Adivasi peasant mass organisation by name Neerai Gamta was started in 1997 and some partial struggles were led under the mass organisation's leadership in Dumuria block. In 1998 some wage struggles were again initiated in this area. From '97 onwards the so-called Jharkhandi parties' leaders and police have been threatening the people and demanding that they do not cooperate with the naxals. Regular press releases were issued by different Jharkhand parties' district leaderships to isolate Neerai Gamta in the rural areas. Ghatasila, Tatanagar (Jamshedpur) and other centres, were places from which police officials and Parliamentary leaders would collect regular reports and issue threats to villagers. Block and Tahasil officials also played their role to terrorise the people, when the latter initiated some demands, like issuing proper quotas from PDSs and government stipulated minimum wages. But the officials threatened the villagers for daring to make demands of the Babus. Being at a very preliminary stage of the movement, the people had feared a lot. Kendua is a remote village, where a Mahato (non-tribal) moneylender, contractor, PDS distributor and landlord has been harassing the people since the last 15 years. He occupied even non tribal lands, let alone those of lands of the Santhals. The local people waged numerous quarrels with the landlord and attempted to kill him twice but failed.

With the help of the police he always suppressed all voices of revolt. Finally the villagers got organised under the leadership of the Party.

Seeing this development, landlords again took the help of the police and arrested local leaders of the Neerai Gamta and two other village sympathisers. Later, the police started regular harassment in the villages. In this context, people decided to punish Kailash Mahato. This decision was executed by a special batch on July 5th 1999. In this area, where minority people live, a local armed squad (LAS) has been functioning to organise the people.

Earlier, two to three members of the PW Party moved together in plain clothes making contacts from village to village. When threats started from the police and Jharkhandies they moved with countrymade weapons and later shifted to a 5 member squad with rifles and SBLs. Soon, the number increased further.

Way back in the 80s, people of Singhbhum East and West played a militant role in the Jharkhand movement. Ghatasila, Tatanagar, Sarsona and other places were the focal points in this area. The leadership at the top betrayed the struggle, but the cadres and people spilled their blood for the cause of Jharkhand. Santhals, in general, are a militant tribe and have participated in rebellions since the past two centuries. Till now Kanu, Siddhu have been inspiring rebel leaders of the entire Santhal Community. At the time of the Jharkhand movement, the state government imposed cruel repression on thousands of young Jharkhandis. A number of new police stations were kept in the forest areas and even remote villages were terrorised for years together. Hence people have not yet overcome their fear complex of the repression, because there has been no continuation in the struggle. But the armed formations and politics of protracted people's war inspired them to wage a protracted war from the vast jungles of the Jharkhand.

### The Oppressive Tactics of the Government

During the last 3 years in Bengal, to fight against one armed fascist force, another armed fascist force has emerged. These two forces are practising the same methods that were practised in the Middle Ages. Even though all these parties always talk about Parliamentary Democracy, utilising armed gangs to capture votes is the norm. Now these three parties are trying to organise permanent armed gangs to establish 'Zones of Authority' in Bengal. Though the ruling CPI(M) has been forced into a defensive position temporarily in some areas, it will restart its attacks. The BJP-TMC combine, which is growing at an astonishing pace, getting arms and training from the RSS, is exercising its authority through the lumpenisation of one section of the poor. At this stage, the central and

state governments are trying vigorously to help the BJP-TMC-CPI(M) trio eliminate People's War which is backing the people by forming armed squads. **After the Parliamentary elections, this Fascist trio organised secret meetings at the state and district levels to eliminate People's War.** At the same time the CPI(M) is still trying to deceive people by waving the Red flag. Out of the paramilitary forces that were sent to Midnapore, the CRPF is retreating by phases but the EFR is still there.

Besides, on 10th October the SPs and higher officials of Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia of Bengal; Mayurbhanj of Orissa and Singhbhum of Bihar met in Raniband of Bankura district and planned the tactics to suppress the movement. They came to an agreement to organise regular meetings, joint attacks, achieve co-operation and information co-ordination to suppress the movement that is growing in these 5 districts of the three adjacent states. In addition, the central government is trying to co-ordinate Bihar with A.P., M.P. Maharashtra and Orissa; at the lower level, administrative units have been set up to implement the tactics of the central government to suppress the movement. The revolutionary movement should utilise the necessary tactics and alternative forms to retaliate against their methods. In view of the growing people's resistance against the atrocities that the Fascist trio have been implementing in the garb of Parliamentary democracy, the state has also entered the fray, in addition to the machinery of these fascist parties. The main task of the movement in these circumstances is to make extensive contacts and establish the party deep amongst the people to hit back these combined fascist attacks. The movement needs to concentrate and organise the poor people into the revolutionary movement and imbue them with revolutionary politics. It needs to adopt every method to protect the lives and property of the people from the armed gangs and their leaders and unmask the real face of these parliamentary parties among the people. Arming the people and mobilising them into class struggles in a big way needs to be the main task of the revolutionaries. □



# Finance Capital Today — World's Most Deadly Parasite

— Rahul

*(This is the third, and last part of the article. The previous two parts were appeared in May and September issues. In this part we shall deal the neo-colonial form and moribundness of finance capital)*

## Neo-colonialism — Finance Capital's Lethal Medicine

In this period of 'globalisation', in this decade of the 1990s, finance capital has turned more destructive, more ruthless, more treacherous than even in the colonial days. Smashing national borders, appropriating local industries, destroying national currencies, capturing raw material resources, controlling stock markets, dominating even culture, sports, entertainment..... such has been the merciless onslaught of finance capital not only against the third world but even against weaker capitalist/imperialist countries. The ferociousness of its maniacal drive to conquer, which was most crudely visible in South East Asia, Russia and Brazil, is destroying country after country, strangulating the very life-lines of their existence.

In Russia, during the very first injection of "shock therapy" in 1992, some \$500 billion worth of Russian assets — including plants of the military industrial complex, infrastructure and natural resources — have been confiscated (through privatisation programmes and forced bankruptcies) and transformed into the hands of Western Capital.<sup>36</sup> In Thailand, during the 1997 crash 56 banks and financial institutions were closed down on orders from the IMF and unemployment virtually doubled overnight. In South Korea the IMF 'rescue operations' unleashed a chain of bankruptcies, resulting in a shutdown of an average of 200 companies per day, throwing out 4,000 workers per day. With stockmarkets crashing the TNCs are moving in to take-over at throwaway prices, the huge South Korean chaebols. In Brazil the impact has been even worse with \$30 billion leaving the country in just three months since July '98, devaluation of the Real, massive inflation, closures of companies and banks, and huge lay-offs. In all the so-called bail-outs intended to 'rescue the country' not even a dollar entered South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia or Brazil; it was used to reimburse the 'institutional speculators'; to ensure that they would be able to collect their multi-billion dollar loot.

Never could even the colonialists dream of extracting such vast amounts of loot in such a little time, or so easily take over industry and finance at throw away prices. With capital markets (i.e., company's value on the share markets) having crashed, the TNCs move in for the kill. Between June 30, '97 and December 15, '98 the fall in value of stock markets was: Russia 88%, Indonesia 85%, Thailand 54%, Brazil 52%, South Korea 45%..... Currency speculation in Asia and Latin America has led to the dislocation of even

the local comprador bourgeoisie (let alone national capitalism) and the demise and greater subordination of the local business elites, leading to unprecedented concentration of global economic and financial power. In the wake of the IMF sponsored bailouts, global corporations have acquired control over numerous local enterprises and financial institutions.

Besides, central banks of third world countries have been reduced to pawns of international finances, with little or no independent powers left. Privately held money in the hands of institutional speculators far exceeds the limited capabilities of the world's central banks. The latter are no longer able to fight the tide of speculative activity. This was apparent on all occasions where the respective central banks in Thailand, Indonesia, Russia, Brazil, etc., first attempted to prop up their failing currencies by selling dollars, but finally gave up.

What has now been experimented with in South East Asia and Latin America is being institutionalised by the IMF in league with Wall Street Bankers. They are demanding and enforcing total deregulation of capital markets. A formal verdict to deregulate capital movements was taken by the IMF Interim Committee in Washington in April 1998. Also they are seeking to push through the highly dangerous 'Multilateral Agreement on Investments' (MAI) which defacto grants rights to Banks and TNCs to override national laws on foreign investments. What is more, the Wall Street Bankers are seeking greater control over the INW through their Washington mouthpiece, 'The Institute of International Finance'. With a number of initiatives, their aim is to gradually transform the IMF from its present international status into a full-fledged bureaucracy which more effectively serves the interests of the global banks. Leading this initiative are the 'big six' Wall Street commercial banks (including Goldman Sachs, Lelunan Brothers, Morgan Stanley and Salomon Smith Barney). Already there has been a close consultations between these Banks and the IMF during each crisis. Overshadowing the IMF, the US Congressional Appropriation Bill has identified precise loan conditionalities to be inserted in future aT bail-outs (including provisions which facilitate the dumping of US grain surpluses).

With the removal of all remaining barriers to capital movement and implementation of the MAI, the stranglehold of international creditors over the life-lines of the economies of sovereign countries will increase tenfold. The financial sharks of neo-colonialism seek to

fully deregulate currency markets and dismantle all state control over monetary policy. Neo-colonialism in the present decade has acquired a far more lethal and rapacious characteristic than earlier and if not resisted at every step, it will swallow up every aspect of the economies of backward countries. Countries will be devastated, its people ruined and even its limited sovereignty crushed.

### Moribund Capitalism

When the bulk of society is non-productive, capitalism has reached the epitome of its decadent, parasitical and moribund character. With the people of the world being pushed deeper into unemployment, poverty and destitution, with the shrinking of markets for commodities, with the diminishing opportunities for profitable investment, with the crisis resulting from an accumulation of surplus capital... greater and greater surplus capital gets deployed in speculative and pure financial outlets. This in turn further aggravates the crisis, as it further restricts growth of the market by not creating any new industry, involving labour power and only leads to militarisation and war. Yet it is labour and labour alone that is the source of all value and it is part of this surplus value which is looted through speculation. Like interest, rent, etc., this is the super-profits skimmed off the back of the toiling masses by the propertied classes. When billions were extracted by the speculators from the South East Asian crisis, the masses of entire countries were driven to pauperisation and unprecedented misery. **This capital is more pernicious, more devastating and more lethal in its ferocity against the people, but creates nothing, no goods, no commodities, no industry – except gigantic wealth for a handful.**

This characteristic of imperialist finance capital was pointed out by Lenin eighty years back when he said, “... *the development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when, although commodity production still ‘reigns’ and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the ‘geniuses’ of financial manipulation. At the basis of these manipulations and swindles lies socialised production; but the immense progress of mankind, which achieved this socialisation goes to the benefit of .... the speculators....*”

If this was the situation in the early years of the century, as we reach the end, it has become a thousand times more acute. In fact, in a country like Britain today a mere 21% of the workforce (or just 7% of the total population) are employed in manufacturing industries... and even of this, 10% are involved in the manufacture of armaments, a totally non-productive, wasteful occupation. The bulk of the population is involved in the service sector. But Britain is not alone in this. all the industrialised countries, and,

now, even the third world, have the service sector dominating their economics. This is evident from the following table :

**Distribution of GDP (%) - 1995<sup>37</sup>**

Country	Agri-culture	Industry		Service
		Industry Total	Of which manufacture	
USA	2	26	(18)	72
UK	2	32	(21)	66
Japan	2	38	(24)	60
Germany	1	38	(29)	61
France	2	27	(19)	71
Russia	7	38	(31)	55
Italy	3	31	(21)	66
Sweden	2	32	(23)	66
Brazil	14	37	(24)	49
Egypt	20	21	(15)	59
Thailand	11	40	(29)	49
Kenya	29	17	(11)	54
China	21	48	(38)	31
India	29	29	(19)	42

**Note :** ‘Industry total’ : comprises mining, manufacturing, construction, electricity, water and gas.

So, in the industrialised countries some 30 to 40% of the GDP goes towards productive activity in industry and agriculture, while the balance is in the unproductive service sector. In America a bare 28% goes to the productive economy, and this also includes the giant military-industrial combine. The huge service sector involves the entire banking, finance, insurance, real estate, tourism, transport and communications, entertainment, education, health care, etc industries, and also the running of the gigantic state machinery. The bulk of this is unproductive and lives like a leech off the productive economy. It goes basically to service the ruling classes, gather funds for them, provide them with leisure and entertainment, produce super profits for them, create a media that blinds and numbs the masses and develop a repressive structure that protects their interests. The situation is now much the same in the third world countries where anything from 40 to 60% comes from the service sector. Besides, even of the shrinking productive economy, a sizable section goes toward the armaments/space industries which is totally wasteful.

Can such a system have any rationale whatsoever ? It cannot... it can but go from one crisis to the next... and with each crisis, finance capital will push the burden of the crisis onto the masses of people, extricate itself,

(Continuation in page... 46)

# Comments on Teng Hsiao-ping's Economic Ideas of the Comprador- Bourgeoisie

— by Kao Lu and Charg Ko

*This article, which appeared just a few days before the martyrdom of Com. Mao Tsetung, clearly elucidates the ideological essence of Deng's pro-bourgeois/imperialist counter-revolutionary line, which came out into the open just a year later. This article indicates the enormous insight that the CPC, led by Mao, had about the real character of Deng's line. — Editor*

The arch unrepentant capitalist-roader in the Party Teng Hsiao-ping made many absurd statements about economic construction. In a nutshell, his economic ideas are essentially those of the comprador bourgeoisie. Domestically speaking, he represented the bourgeoisie and wanted to seize the leadership over the national economy from the proletariat and turn China's socialist economy into a bureaucrat-monopoly capitalist economy. In foreign affairs he practised capitulation and national betrayal and attempted to turn China into a colony or semi-colony of imperialism and social-imperialism.

## Reimposing "Direct and Exclusive Control of Enterprises by the Ministry Concerned"

After Teng Hsiao-ping took up work again, he imposed without the knowledge and approval of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao an economic administration system of "direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry concerned." This means a few top persons in the central ministries concerned could directly issue orders to enterprises in all parts of the country and exercise leadership over them. Enterprises of the same trade thus formed into a separate system operating by themselves, thereby liquidating the controlling power of the Party Central Committee and the local Party committees over the economy and negating the unified leadership of the Party committees at various levels.

As early as 1956, Chairman Mao pointed out that in order to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat, strengthen the socialist economic base and build a strong socialist country, it is necessary to handle correctly the relations between the central and local authorities and **"let the localities undertake more work under unified central planning."** This will bring the initiative of both the central and local authorities into play. However, Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping for a long time refused to implement this correct principle; instead, they lauded the imperialist trusts to the skies.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution smashed the two bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Biao. During the revolution, the masses and the revolutionary cadres rose in revolt against "direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry

concerned" and promoted the implementation of Chairman Mao's correct principle. China no longer has to ship grain from the south to the north nor coal from the north to the south. Deposits of coal, petroleum and natural gas have been discovered in the south. Small iron and steel, chemical fertilizer, cement, machinery and hydro-electric power industries have mushroomed in the various localities and output has multiplied, while many small and medium-sized cities have developed into new industrial centres. All this shows the absolute correctness of Chairman Mao's instruction that **"it is far better for the initiative to come from two sources than from only one."** This is of great and far-reaching significance to developing the national economy with greater, faster, better and more economical results.

After Teng Hsiao-ping resumed work, he lapsed into his old ways. On the pretext of exercising "centralized and unified," leadership, he wanted to "turn over to the higher authorities" what he called "key enterprises which serve the whole nation and require organized co-ordination on a national scale." If this policy had been followed, most of the big enterprises and the lesser ones working in co-ordination with them in all parts of the country would have been "turned over." This would inevitably have undermined the initiative of the localities and the broad masses of the people and sabotaged socialist construction as a whole. What Teng Hsiao-ping undertook to do fully shows that he was stubbornly opposed to Chairman Mao's principle of bringing into play the initiative from both the central and local authorities, that he wanted to reverse the correct appraisal of the Cultural Revolution, and that he wished to continue pushing the revisionist line and take the beaten track of imperialist trusts.

The system of "direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry concerned" is diametrically opposed to the Party's unified leadership. It is splittism and advocates the doctrine of "many centres" in opposition to the Party Central Committee; it is despotism and bourgeois dictatorship over the localities and the masses. The purpose of Teng Hsiao-ping's reimposing "direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry concerned" was the liquidation of our socialist economy through "rectification." This kind of "control" would inevitably divide up the socialist economy of ownership by the whole people and turn it into the "private property"

of respective trades. And the various trades and departments would become sharply opposed to each other. The overtly distinct division of labour would lead to undermining each other's work and the relations between them would be turned into capitalist relations of competition.

Since "direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry concerned" disregarded inter-departmental equilibrium in the national economy, it would inevitably undermine the rational distribution of the national economy and the multi-purpose utilization of resources and obstruct extensive socialist cooperation.

Teng Hsiao-ping's "rectification" of the economy by means of "direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry concerned" was intended to bring about a capitalist concentration of production and monopoly and enforce the revisionist practices of running factories by relying on experts, putting profits in command, offering material incentives, giving first place to production and putting technique above everything else. It also aimed at negating Chairman Mao's line and policies, concerning the socialist revolution and construction, at expanding and strengthening bourgeois right, at changing the socialist orientation and road of our enterprises and turning the socialist economy into a bureaucrat-monopoly capitalist economy.

### Pushing the Soviet Revisionist Managerial System

Resurrecting the economic administration system of "direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry concerned" and introducing the Soviet revisionist managerial system in the enterprises to exercise bourgeois dictatorship over the working class are two aspects of the bureaucrat-monopoly capitalism Teng Hsiao-ping worked for. Chairman Mao pointed out in 1964: **"Management itself is a matter of socialist education. If the managerial staff do not join the workers on the shop floor, can live and work with them and modestly learn one or more skills from them, then they will find themselves locked in acute class struggle with the working class all their lives and in the end are bound to be overthrown as bourgeois by the working class."** Teng Hsiao-ping always acted in contravention of Chairman Mao's instruction that **we must wholeheartedly rely on the working class**, and obstinately tried to push his revisionist line characterized by hostility to the working class. He openly declared that "reliance on the workers, peasants and soldiers is relative," categorically refused to regard the working class and the poor and lower-middle peasants as masters of the state, and denied that they had right to control the economy. He showed the utmost hatred for the

revolutionary action of the working class during the Great Cultural Revolution in criticizing the capitalist and revisionist managerial principles, rules and regulations, and he lost no time in mounting a vengeful counter-attack the moment he came into office again. He not only brought out again the set of rules aimed at "controlling, checking and repressing" the workers, but clamoured for dealing with them "as strictly as possible." This proves to the hilt that he was indeed the general representative of those **bourgeois elements sucking the blood of the workers** whom Chairman Mao had scathingly criticized.

Which political line is followed and which class wields the power of leadership in an enterprise are factors determining which class actually owns it. If Teng Hsiao-ping had been allowed to carry on with his revisionist line, the leadership of the enterprises would inevitably be seized by the capitalist-roads, the bourgeoisie in the Party, who would use the power in their hands to embezzle and squander huge amounts of wealth created by the working class and ride roughshod on the backs of the workers. In that case, the socialist enterprises would exist only in name and would be turned into bureaucrat-monopoly capitalist enterprises.

What Teng Hsiao-ping pushed was merely a carbon copy of the so-called "economic reforms" introduced by Khrushchov and Brezhnev. To develop bureaucrat-monopoly capitalism the Soviet revisionists energetically pushed what they called a "new economic system" with material incentives and putting profits in command as the core. They gave top priority to expertise and relied on specialists to run the enterprises, and the bureaucrat-monopoly capitalist class completely controlled the leadership over the national economy. The rules and regulations of their enterprises stipulate explicitly that the managers are vested with the power to sell, transfer or lease any part of the enterprises' means of production, to recruit and fire workers at will and to do whatever they like to the workers, that is to say, exercise bourgeois dictatorship over them. The Soviet revisionists exercise vertical leadership over the enterprises through the two-level organizational system of "ministry-production combine enterprises" or the three-level system of "ministry-industrial combines-production combine enterprises." These combines which are large in scale have centralized practically the managerial functions of the enterprises. By pushing this "new economic system" the Soviet revisionist renegade clique has intensified its monopoly and control over the enterprises throughout the country.

The reality of the Soviet Union is a mirror. It helps us to see clearly that once the socialist economy turns into a bureaucrat-monopoly capitalist economy, it will bring disaster to the labouring people. Powerless politically and exploited economically, the working people of the Soviet



Union today are having a very hard time. The Ninth Five-Year Plan, decked out by the Soviet revisionists as a "Welfare plan," has gone bankrupt; the rate of industrial growth is constantly diminishing; agriculture is in a hopeless mess; there are serious disproportions between the various departments of the national economy; and the contradiction between the worker-peasant masses and the handful of bureaucrat-monopoly capitalists is sharpening with each passing day. All this is steadily aggravating the political and economic crisis of Soviet social-imperialism. Teng Hsiao-ping's attempt to follow in the footsteps of the Soviet revisionists could only lead to a serious disruption of China's socialist relations of production and superstructure and destroy the socialist economy.

### "Major Policy" of Capitulation and National Betrayal

Chairman Mao has pointed out that under China's historical condition, those who stubbornly choose to take the capitalist road are in 'act **"ready to capitulate to imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism."** This was the case with Teng Hsiao-ping. In his eyes, the Chinese people were no good at carrying out economic construction or bringing about the modernizations of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology, nor, for that matter, was the socialist system of any help. The only feasible way to "speed up the technical transformation of industry and raise labour productivity" is to "import foreign techniques and equipment." For this purpose he put forward a so-called "major policy" under which China would sign "long-term contracts" with foreign countries, with the foreign capitalists supplying the "most up-to-date and the best equipment," to be "paid for" by China with its mineral products. This "major policy" was purely a policy of out-and-out capitulation and national betrayal.

In economic construction, whether to rely on the strength of our own people or worship everything foreign and rely on foreign countries represents two diametrically opposed lines. Chairman Mao has taught us: **"Rely mainly on our own efforts while making external assistance subsidiary, break down blind faith, go in for industry, agriculture and technical and cultural revolutions independently, do away with slavishness, bury dogmatism, learn from the good experience of other countries conscientiously and be sure to study their bad experience too, so as to draw lessons from it. This is our line."** Teng Hsiao-ping completely betrayed this line advanced by Chairman Mao. His so-called "major policy" actually opposed putting China's economic construction on the basis of the strength of the Chinese people and advocated instead "importing foreign techniques and equipment."

Whether or not to adhere to the principle of independence and self-reliance is not only an economic question but, first and foremost, a political one. An important means employed by imperialism and social-imperialism to control and plunder other countries is to monopolize advanced techniques and equipment and use their economic strength to check the other countries' development and carry out extortion, infiltration and expansion. In the world today, if a country is not independent and self-reliant economically, it cannot become politically independent or cannot consolidate its independence and is liable to fall under the control of one or the other superpower.

We hold that, under the guidance of the principle of independence and self-reliance, it is necessary to import some foreign techniques and equipment on the basis of equality and mutual benefit and in accordance with the needs of our country's socialist revolution and construction. But we absolutely cannot place our hopes for realizing the four modernizations on imports. If we do not rely mainly on our own efforts but, as Teng Hsiao-ping advocated, rely solely on importing foreign techniques copying foreign designs and technological processes and patterning our equipment on foreign models, we will for ever trail behind foreigners in our country's development of technology and even its entire national economy will fall under the control of foreign monopoly capital.

Some economists of the monopoly capitalists allege that industrially backward countries can only "take off" by relying on the techniques of imperialism. That Teng Hsiao-ping, with the label of a Communist Party member should chime in with such nonsense was a big irony indeed! This of course was not a mere coincidence. It showed that Teng Hsiao-ping's economic concepts fully met the needs of imperialism.

The Soviet revisionists' newspaper Pravda had advocated mortgaging Soviet resources to bring in foreign capital and experience and using part of the products turned out by the factories to be built to pay back the debts some time in the future. Teng Hsiao-ping's "major policy" is of the same stuff as that of the Soviet revisionists. The essence of this "policy" is to ask for foreign loans by selling out China's natural resources and state sovereignty.

Teng Hsiao-ping shamelessly asserted that his "major policy" had three "advantages," namely, the policy made it possible for China to export, to promote technical transformation and to absorb labour power. What kind of "advantages" are these? They mean nothing but this: the foreign monopoly capitalists would contribute money and equipment while China would supply the necessary labour power, thus the doors would be thrown wide open

for the imperialists to plunder China's natural resources and bleed its people. The Chinese people had more than enough of such "advantages" before liberation. If this capitulationist "major policy" of Teng Hsiao-ping's were followed, China would be reduced step by step to a raw materials supplying base for imperialism and social-imperialism, a market for their commodities and an outlet for their investments. And not only would the fruits of socialist revolution be forfeited but those of the democratic revolution would also be brought to naught. This fully reveals the ugly features of Teng Hsiao-ping who worked as a comprador for the imperialists and represented the interests of big foreign capitalists.

### Historical Experience Merits Attention

Historical experience over the past hundred years tells us that it is but an illusion to think that China can become strong and prosperous by depending on imperialism for techniques and loans to develop its economy. In the latter half of the 19th century, advocates of the "Westernization Movement" of the late Ching Dynasty stressed the need to "accept loans to develop the country." They considered that China's only "chance of making progress" and "way of survival" was to use the country's natural resources as mortgage to borrow large amounts of money from the imperialist countries and to "copy" foreign techniques to build up an industry. Things turned out to be just the opposite. It was these capitulationist ideas which suited the imperialists perfectly, to dump their surplus goods, export capital and carve up China. The "Westernization Movement" drained China's resources day by day and deepened her national crisis.

In the semi-feudal and semi-colonial old China, there were some people enthusiastically advocating "saving the country by industrialization." They deemed that the root cause of China's poverty and backwardness was her underdeveloped industry, and they believed that China would become strong and prosperous by developing industry and commerce on a large scale. They did not

have the courage to launch a thoroughgoing struggle against imperialism and feudalism but harboured the illusion that China could develop a capitalist industry without overthrowing imperialist rule. However, under the dual oppression of the imperialists and their lackeys, the destiny awaiting those advocates of "saving the country by industrialization" was either failure, with all their illusions rising in bubbles, or throwing themselves into the embrace of the imperialists and ending up in the same way as comprador capitalists. During his youth, Teng Hsiao-ping had cherished the idea of "saving the country by industrialization." In the decades that followed, his bourgeois stand and world outlook had not changed a bit. As the revolution develops in depth, his reactionary bourgeois nature became more and more exposed. From opposing the socialist revolution and attempting, to restore capitalism to taking even the mantle of the comprador capitalists and practising capitulations and National betrayal, Teng Hsiao-ping could not but end up in the same ignominious way as compradors in China's history.

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **"Only socialism can save China."** This is the historical conclusion arrived at by the Chinese people after protracted revolutionary struggles. Departing from Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, from the dictatorship of the proletariat and from the socialist road, it would be wishful thinking to hope for China's independence and prosperity and the Chinese people's freedom and happiness. Revolution is changing and can change everything. So long as we firmly implement Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, persevere in taking class struggle as the key link and adhere to the principle of independence and self-reliance and resolutely rely on and bring into full play the enthusiasm and creativeness of the broad masses of people, we will surely be able to build China into a powerful socialist state with modern agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology before the end of this century and continue to advance towards the great goal of communism.

— *From Peking Review No. 35, August 27, 1976*

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reorganise its capital and prepare for yet another crisis. The result : ever-increasing suffering of the masses, inhuman poverty and destitution, coupled with growing state-sponsored brutalities, to keep the people in check.

If society, on the other hand, were to really grow, prosper and flower, it would require that the minimum of people be maintained in the non-productive sector of the economy, with the bulk being involved in productive activity in agriculture and industry. But, this of course, is only possible if the profit motive is put to an end; if the leisure class ceases to exist; if the gigantic state machinery

is smashed, and a peoples' state is built with the bare minimum of a bureaucracy, and with a peoples' militia, courts and armed forces, for defence and order; if leisure and entertainment is made part of the life and culture of the masses, which helps to build bonds between people rather than alienate them as with the present TV culture; and where only those (able-bodied) who work, will have the right to live decently. But this is a socialist system of society... which can grow and flower only on the graveyard of imperialism. □

NOTES : (36) Bob Djurdjevic, 'Return Looted Russian Assets', Phoenix, August 30, '98; (37) Tata Year Book 1997-98; page 235.

# People Resist Elections Held At Gun Point

The 13th Lok Sabha elections were held in five phases spanning almost a month. The reason : the need to provide security for conducting a "free and fair" poll. By giving a week's gap between one phase of polling and another, the Election Commission sought to shift the armed forces from one region to another.

The polling booths which were categorised into sensitive, super sensitive and hyper-sensitive were spread



Army's brutalities on the election day in Kashmir

across the length and breadth of the country and cover all the areas of intense class struggles and nationality struggles, communally sensitive areas and areas where the ruling class sections are engaged in intense dog-fights.

The polling in several states was divided in such a way that the maximum armed forces could be deployed in the areas of class struggle and nationality struggle. The elections in the state of Bihar with 54 seats was divided into three phases. The elections in areas of armed struggle in AP were divided into two phases on September 11 and 18 while the election in the adjoining areas in MP which is part of Dandakaranya were held on September 25. The elections in a smaller state like Kashmir with just six parliamentary seats was also divided into two phases which ultimately became three as Anantanag had to go for elections on the day after the last phase, on October 4, due to the killing of the BJP candidate by the Kashmiri nationalists; the polling for the North East was held on September 25. Thus care was taken to move the maximum number of state's armed forces to the areas of struggle to foil the call for poll boycott given by the various organisations leading the class struggle and nationality struggle.

As usual, the armed forces were deployed in great numbers to see that a larger percentage of polling takes place in Kashmir, the North East and the areas where people's war is raging particularly in AP, Bihar and Dandakaranya. Large-scale violence was unleashed on

the polling days in these areas.

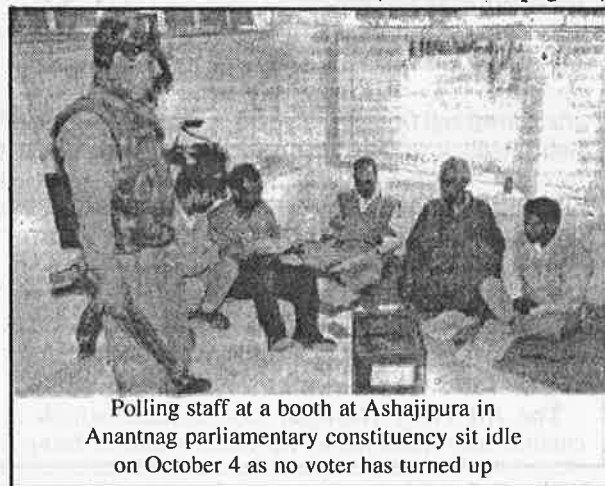
For instance, in Kashmir, the security forces fanned out into the countryside threatening people that they should vote and even pulling them out of their houses and driving them to the polling booths. A BBC correspondent reported both on September 18 and October 4, that he had seen people being herded together by the armed forces and forcibly taken to the booths in some villages.

In Haigam village, a 17-year old boy was killed when the armed forces opened fire on the people who refused to vote. In Shilwat village in Sonwari Assembly segment of Baramulla parliamentary constituency, three people were killed by these state-hired uniformed mercenaries enraged by the people's refusal to vote.

In spite of these terror tactics by the Indian state, the turnout in the Kashmir valley was very low. It was just 13.8 per cent in the Anantanag constituency and even less in the Baramulla constituency. The Sangrama Assembly segment of Baramulla recorded the lowest of 2.5 per cent and Sopore 5 per cent. The Pampore Assembly segment recorded the lowest of 0.9 per cent in the Anantanag constituency. Not a single vote was polled in about 180 polling stations in Kashmir as a whole. The call for a general strike (Bandh) by the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) evoked total response both on September 18 and October 4 paralysing normal life in the Kashmir valley. The APHC leaders told the reporters that "once again the people of Kashmir had shown to the world that they were not interested in a farcical exercise like this." All the leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) were placed behind bars during the election period.

In North Telangana, and other areas of intense class struggle in AP and Dandakaranya, a terror campaign was let loose by the police two months prior to the election

(Continued in page 47)



Polling staff at a booth at Ashajipura in Anantanag parliamentary constituency sit idle on October 4 as no voter has turned up

(Continuation of page 48...)

day as reported in the last issue of **People's March**. Thousands were arrested and kept in police custody for days; the activists in the villages were used as a human shield for the movements of the armed forces and for transferring the ballot boxes. In the villages known to be strongholds of the revolutionaries, the police selected some militants and forced them to cast their votes first to be followed by the others in the village. The pressure was particularly more in the villages of the movement's leaders such as Beerpur of Comrade Ganapathy to show to the world that the PW had no support among the masses. No wonder, the polling percentage was astoundingly high in these villages.

Police 'durbars' were held in most of the villages inspite of an earlier order by the AP High Court not to do so. Rallies were organised in the Mandal centres with former supporters of PW who were on police records for over a decade or so. They were also assured that their names would be removed from police records if they organised the polling successfully in their villages. In Warangal district alone about 3000 supporters of PW were mended up and forced to organise the people to vote. Each booth in the PW strongholds was guarded by 10-30 of the former activists who were threatened that they would be killed if the ballot boxes were carried away by PW activists. The harassment for these activists was so

much that even the generally mild Human Rights Commission issued a statement demanding that the police stop such acts immediately.

In spite of the strong-arm tactics by the state's forces, the resistance by the people led by the revolutionaries on the one hand and the nationalist organisations on the other has been quite considerable this time.

A total of 83 police and para-military personnel were killed in ambushes and land-mine explosions; three candidates were killed one each in Kashmir, Assam and AP; hundreds of arms were seized and polling disrupted in several places.

More important, the poll boycott slogan became even more popular and widespread this time. Voter turn-out was lower by 3 per cent when compared to the last general election; there was general apathy and no 'wave' of any sort. Even in the capital city of India, where the BJP won all the 7 seats, the turn-out was as low as 43 per cent. In Lucknow, the constituency of the Prime Minister, 18,000 voters responded to the call given by the Chunav Bahiskar Samiti (Boycott Election Committee) and only 200 out of the 5000 voters in Mohana town cast their votes. It is clear that poll boycott will become an important form of struggle throughout the country in future notwithstanding the massive deployment of the armed forces and the coercive tactics of the ruling classes. □

## Kashmiri People Step up their Struggle for Total Independence

On October 4, '99 over 1000 people in the Hajira valley, organised into small groups to avoid detection by Pak police checkpoints, attempted to cross the LoC. Pakistan police fought pitched battles with hundreds of pro-independence Kashmiri activists to stop the march into the Indian part of Kashmir. The Pakistan forces arrested 250 and ruthlessly beat up the people gathered near the border. The 'Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front' said that despite the Pakistani crackdown and firing by the Indian army it will continue its efforts to cross the Line of Control. The JKLF says it opposes the ceasefire line and demands an independent Kashmir.

Simultaneously, Indian troops opened fire along the 'border'. Sporadic intense Indian shelling and small arms fire was reported almost the entire length of the 720 km LoC.

The All Party Hurriyat Conference, which is continuously slandered by the Indian media of being a

'pro-Pak outfit', came out in open support of the JKLF bid to cross the LoC. Hurriyat spokesperson, Abdul Majid Banday, strongly condemned the use of force by

Pakistan. He added that "all Kashmiris" do not recognise the LoC and that the Hurriyat was totally supportive of the bid by the JKLF to send men across the border.

From this it is clear that the Indian government's propaganda that the Kashmiri movement is only 'Pak-sponsored terrorism' is a big hoax. Also the Pakistani ruler's so-called support to the Kashmiri freedom fighters is not for their struggle for freedom, but merely a scheme to

annex Kashmir to Pakistan. But, by this action the Kashmiri people and the Hurriyat, have clearly stated that they are for the total independence of Kashmir, that they do not recognise the so-called line of control or Pak-occupied Kashmir which artificially divides the Kashmiri nation, and that they are opposed to being dictated to, by either the sharks in Delhi or Islamabad.



Activists from the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front chant slogans demanding an Independent Kashmir at Hajira, a border town in so-called Pak-occupied Kashmir