

# Red Star Over India



The account is a political analysis of the 'greatest internal security threat' to the nation. After forty four years of the spring thunder the Naxalite movement haunts the status quo. It, despite its many shortcomings, doesn't go into the oblivion, rather comes back and tries to uphold its alternative social structure and politics. The author Jan Myrdal after spending a fortnight among the protagonist of Jantana Sarkar, questions the military solution as the panacea of all 'evils'. He, on the contrary traced back to history and testifies what the Maoists are upholding today, the justice, equality and liberty, are the forgotten chapters of the Indian freedom movement in general and various government resolutions in particular. You may agree or disagree with the author's opinion, but you can not neglect.

The author Jan Myrdal (born 19 July 1927 in Bromma, Stockholm) is a Swedish author, leftist-political writer and columnist. He is an honorary doctor of literature at Upsala College in New Jersey, USA, and a Ph.D. at Nankai University in Tianjin in China. He has lived at various times in the United States, Afghanistan, Iran and India. Myrdal is an eclectic author, who has developed a wide range of special interests in topics deemed obscure by many, and who seeks to place art, literature and popular culture in an ever-political context of historical and social forces. He has written books on such diverse subjects as Meccano, wartime propaganda posters and French 18th-century caricature art.

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# RED STAR OVER INDIA

As the Wretched of the Earth are Rising  
Impressions, Reflexions and Preliminary Inferences

Jan Myrdal



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Impressions, Reflexions and Preliminary Inferences.

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To the memory of  
Hari Sharma  
1934 - 2010  
Friend, Scholar, Comrade



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## A PERSONAL NOTE AS AN INTRODUCTION

In February 1950 I arrived on the ferry from Dunkirk to Dover early one morning. I was the only passenger. The immigration officer looked at me. He was suspicious. I was young and had all my belongings in a rucksack. But I had travelers checks and French francs.

What is the purpose of your visit?

Visit my parents-in-law.

What is their name?

Kali and Paula Ghosh.

He stared at me.

They can't be your parents-in-law. That's an Indian name.

Call them in London and ask, I said.

I am the one to decide, he said. Not you.

Then I was cross examined. They stripped me. A doctor put on rubber gloves and ran his fingers up my rectum.

Nothing there, he said.

I was not allowed to telephone my parents-in-law and not to take contact with my embassy.

I am going to deport you, the immigration officer said. You are an undesirable alien.

He carefully put a stamp in my passport on page 22. Then he smiled and stamped first a vertical and then a horizontal bar over it. "Immigration officer (20) 16 Feb 1950 Dover".

## INDIA'S INSURGENCY BATTLE

In a country where one in five people live under the shadow of insurgency, it is a battle far tougher than Kashmir or Iraq or Afghanistan. India's richest lands, home to its poorest people, are set to become the country's main theatre of conflict in a massive new push against Maoist rebels over the next five years

and beyond, in impossible terrain and in impossible conditions.

India has finally decided to take the 42-year-old insurgency head-on. In terms of scale and terrain, it is set to be one of the world's toughest battles against insurgency. The main battleground, Chhattisgarh's remote, deeply forested Bastar region - home to some of the world's best iron ore - is ten times the size of Kashmir Valley and has vast swathes under the domination of the rebels for at least two decades.

Hindustan Times  
July 4th 2010

## I

*"India is a country of poor people. But it is not a poor country."*

R. Palme Dutt  
India Today, 1940

## A NOTE ON THE PRESENT CIVIL WAR IN INDIA

The Hindustan Times is right. There is civil war in India. A war that has been developing starting with the Naxalbari armed agrarian uprising 1967.

No wonder. As the Gross Domestic Product goes up with about 8% a year the recent Oxford University study found that 55% of India's population of 1.1 billion, or 645 million people, exist in poverty. About one third of the world's poor live in India. The hungrier are getting hungrier. In that Global Hunger Index India ranks below sub-Saharan Africa. (421 million poor in eight Indian states and 410 million poor in the 26 poorest African nations).

Officially the Indian government does not call it civil war. It has preferred the term "Low intensity conflict" that was coined by the British general Sir Frank Edward Kitson based on his experience in fighting the Mau Mau in Kenya, the insurgents in Malaysia and the IRA in Northern Ireland. But on the first of December 2007 the Indian Army became the first force in the world to come out with a doctrine on "sub-conventional warfare" laying down guidelines and strategies for conduct of counter insurgency operations in urban and rural areas. Releasing the doctrine, Army chief Gen J J Singh said army specialists drawing upon their almost four decade long experience in combating insurgencies had penned down the guidelines for future operations. From the government side this sub-conventional warfare is waged by the armed forces of the government, regular police and

terrorizing groups like Salva Judum, Green Hunt or the more official COBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action).

The most oppressed in the Indian society are the untouchables in the Indian caste society, the dalits. Together with the tribals, the adivasis, they constitute a quarter of the Indian population. For the present Indian ruling class of feudal remains, comprador bureaucratic capitalists and home-grown dollar billionairies these Indian citizens/subjects are a wholly expendable group. They are as oppressed and as starving as when I first came to India during the monsoon of 1958 fifty-two years ago. Then I was totally shocked.

I still am.

But the real situation is worse than that. The first time I read a serious book on India was in the spring of 1941 when I was 13 going on 14. In my parents' library I found a copy of "India To-Day" by R. Palme Dutt on their desk. They had just received it from a friend in London. I started reading. What R. Palme Dutt wrote seventy years ago on British India is still true about the Republic of India:

Two facts stand out in the present situation of India.

One is the wealth of India - the natural wealth, the abundant resources, the potential prosperity within reach of the entire existing population, and of more than the present population. The other is the poverty of India - the poverty of the overwhelming majority of the people, a poverty beyond the imagination of any accustomed to the conditions of the Western world.

Between these two lies the problem of the existing social and political order in India.

p. 39, Rajani Palme Dutt, *India To-Day*, London, Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1940

R. Palme Dutt was one of the great intellectual and political figures of the European, and international, labour and communist movement in the 20th Century. After seventy years his "India Today" remains one

of the very best books on India. That is so despite its flaws. They were - and are - typical.

The Naxalites as well as most present day Indian historians, politicians and writers speak of 1857 as "The first Indian War of Independence 1857 - 1859." Albeit with a different historical interpretation. That a communist such as R. Palme Dutt was unable to understand the national character of the war 1857 provides a key to explain both the defeat of the popular movements in our - the imperialist - countries this last century and the problems of the democratic movement in India today.

For the colonial British 1857 was - and remains - "The Mutiny". One of the latest British books on the subject is Julian Spilsbury, "The Indian Mutiny", Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 2007. The blurb on the back of the paperback edition is typical, it begins:

The summer of 1857 saw a shocking mutiny by thousands of Indian soldiers who turned on their commanding officers. They murdered their superiors, hunted down women and children and burned and slaughtered their way to Delhi.

Such has been the official view of the ruling circles in our countries. During WW2 - like during WWI - the German propoganda focused on the crimes of the British. But as for 1857 the "Oberkommando der Wehrmacht" in the internal teaching material for the German armed forces in 1942 pointed out:

1857 was the first and until now only great rebellion against the English. But it was no popular rising but partly a mutiny by the troops and partly a rebellion by dissatisfied elements from higher strata such as great landholders and former officials of the Mogul emperor. (p. 48. F. J. Vöhrenbach, "Indien", "Tornisterschrift des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht. 1942/Heft 71. Nur für den Gebrauch innerhalb der Wehrmacht").

But this was not only an imperialist view, it was one generally shared by writers on the left, communist and others. In Moscow on August 10, 1922 Manabendra Nath Roy at that time one of the leading figures of the Comintern, the Third International, signed the introduction to the first Comintern book on India. In it he stated:

In the rising of 1857 we can see the first serious attempt to overcome the British rule; but in no circumstances can we characterize it as a national movement. It was but the last spasms of the dying feudalism. (p. 120. Manabendra Nath Roy, "Indien". 1922 Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, Carl Hoym Nachf. Hamburg).

This was echoed by R. Palme Dutt in 1940:

The rising of 1857 was in its essential character and dominant leadership the revolt of the old conservative and feudal forces and dethroned potentates for their rights and privileges which they saw in process of destruction. This reactionary character of the rising prevented any wide measure of popular support and doomed it to failure. (*India Today* p. 274).

Marx and Engels wrote articles on India and the war for the New York Daily Tribune. These were strongly anti-imperial and anti-colonial. Marx pointed out that the real cruelty and outrages were not those of the sepoy but "England's own conduct in India". ("The Indian Revolt", September 4 1857). But the formulation "The First Indian War of Independence" was not his, it was born out of the nationalist independence movement in India half a century later and as far as I know was first used 1907 by the twenty-three year old V. D. Savarkar who was to become the figure head of the ultra right.

But here the question gets more complicated; how Marx and Engels judged and wrote during the different - and very complicated - struggles of their time became after the Erfurt Program was adopted

by the congress of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in 1891 internationally transformed to a rigid ideology; a Marxism. Marx had protested against this during his life time; Engels continued to point out that this rigidity (a theory outside and above historical change) is against the basic thoughts of Karl Marx.

As far as I can see Marx and Engels also in their letters wrote about 1857 as a "revolt" and an "insurgency". It is only in the editorial notes to MEGA 2 in 1990 I find 1857 defined as a "Volksaufstand"; popular rising.

But the Chartist leader Ernest Jones had from the beginning taken a sharper stand. On July 4 he wrote:

You working men of England will be called on to bleed and pay for the maintenance of one of the most iniquitous usurpations that ever disgraced the annals of humanity. Englishmen! The Hindus are now fighting for all most sacred to men. The cause of the Poles, the Hungarians, the Italians, the Irish, was not more just and holy ... you men of England will be called on to spend your blood and treasure in crushing one of the noblest movements the world has ever known ... Fellow countrymen! You have something better to do than helping to crush the liberties of others-that is, to struggle for your own.

This difference becomes more visible as Jenny Marx in her letter to Friedrich Engels 11/14 August 1857 makes a rather snide - or rather Eurocentric - remark about Ernest Jones:

... he makes all Indians to Kossuths and hails the Indian patriots. (MEGA 2, III/8 p.458).

But to be able to make use of the way that Marx discusses one has to remember both that he had got his main information on India and Indian society from the works of François Bernier (1625 - 1688),

Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779 - 1859) and official British material of the time and that much of his work on India was written for the press on scanty information. On 15 August 1857 he wrote some words that every working writer recognizes to Friedrich Engels about what he had sent the New York Daily Tribune on the Delhi situation:

This is on the supposition that the present reports are true. It is possible that I disgrace myself. However it is then possible to get out of it with some dialectics. I have naturally written in such a way that I also in the reverse case will be right. (MEGA 2, III/8, p. 140/141).

This makes it understandable that neither communist intellectuals nor liberal democrats such as Jawaharlal Nehru could see 1857 as this First Indian War of Independence until after the Quit India movement 1942, the Navy Mutiny 1946 and official Independence 1947.

But by 1957 the first Indian War of Independence was in India the accepted term. If you look more closely on the material about popular anti-feudal risings and movements of the time it is also - as I pointed out in "India Waits" - the correct term. For the communists who were going to take the road of Mao Zedong it was the armed struggle in Telengana 1946 - 1951 that clarified the view of 1857.

But R. Palme Dutt did not see this, he also did not really understand the struggle of the dalits and adivasis. Neither did he have a clear understanding of what the multi-national character of India implied and he underestimated the role of religious ideologies. The reason for this was not simply that he was born with an Indian father and a Swedish mother. In fact his father, Upendra Krishna Dutt who was a brilliant surgeon, was a progressive close to the many Indian nationalist leaders visiting England and also practised as a "sixpenny doctor" in the poorer communities of Cambridge; his mother Anna Palme was from the old Swedish financial family Palme and the paternal aunt of the future chairman of the Swedish Social Democratic party and Prime Minister of Sweden, Olof Palme. But Rajani Palme



Ujjaji Subhas Chandra Bose standing on the western shore of the Indian archipelago of Andaman and looking out over the Bay of Bengal to mainland India.



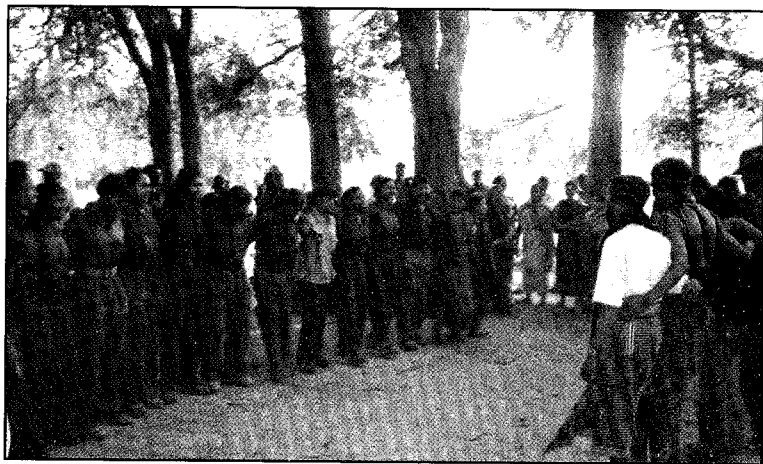
On the way to a mass meeting



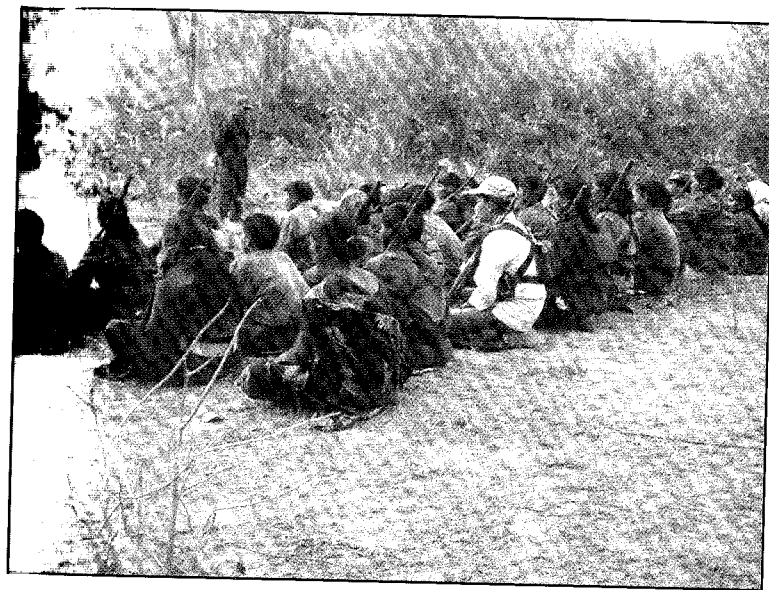
The evening's dance begins. Photo : Jan Myrdal



Another day begins for the Guerrillas



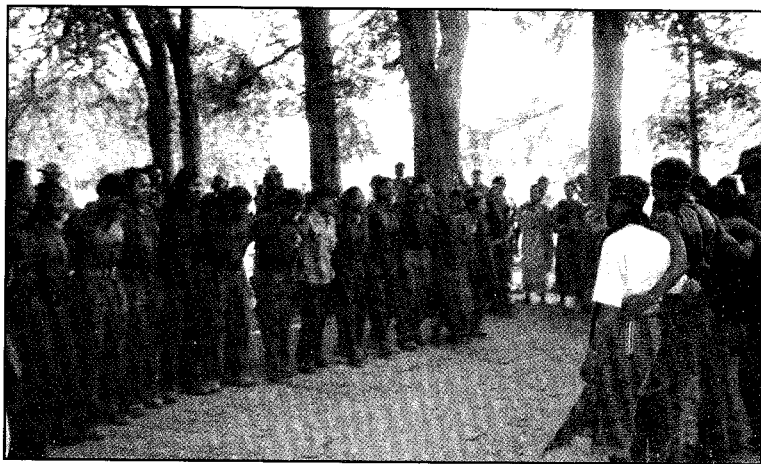
Women of all ages gather to watch a dance performance. Photo : Jan Myrdal



Morning roll call in the company. Male and female soldiers are in the same units. Indian newspapers reported that the People's Guerrilla Liberation Army has about 15,000 to 20,000 soldiers.



The evening's dance begins. Photo : Jan Myrdal



Women of all ages gather to watch a dance performance. Photo : Jan Myrdal



Another day begins for the Guerrillas



Morning roll call in the company. Male and female soldiers are in the same units. Indian newspapers reported that the People's Guerrilla Liberation Army has about 15,000 to 20,000 soldiers.





On the way to a mass meeting in the jungle. Photo: Jan Myrdal



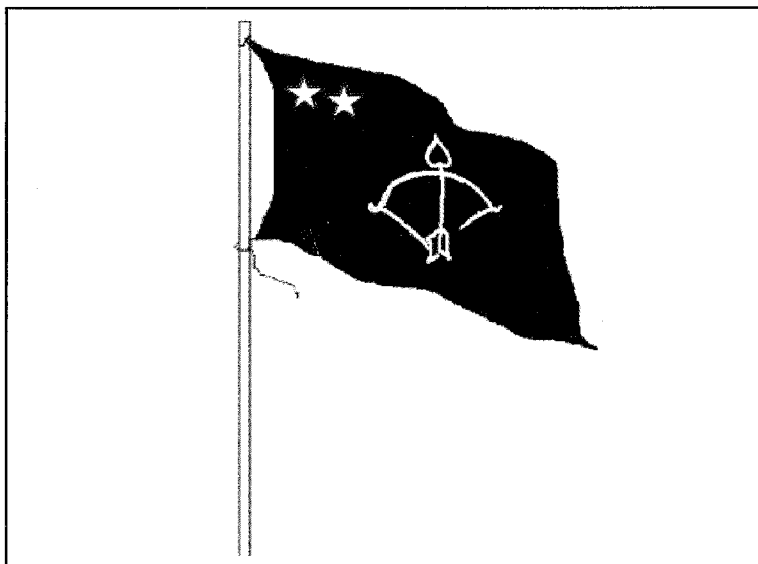
The local dance troupe is in place. Photo : Jan Myrdal



On the way to the meeting place. Note the flag in front! The two stars and a bow and arrow, the flag of the new revolutionary state power. Photo: Jan Myrdal



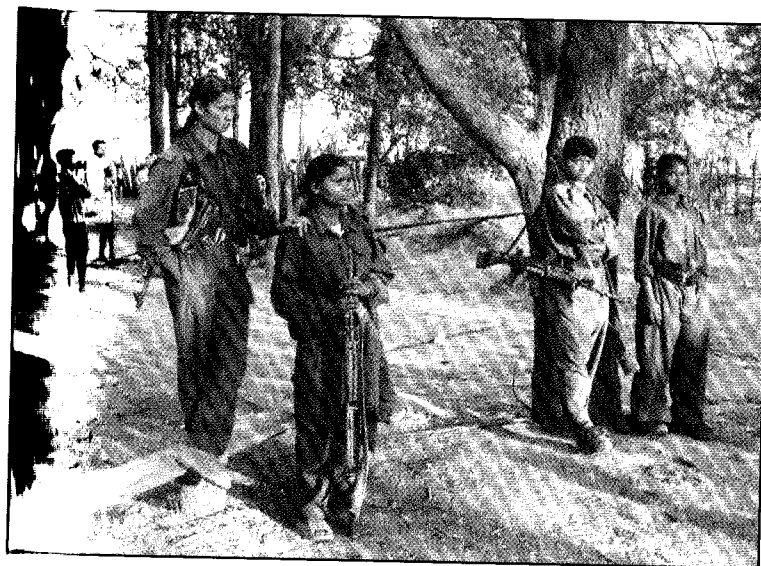
Gathering for a meeting. Both civilians and soldiers participate. It was the local Janathana Sarkar who went through this work with us. Photo: Jan Myrdal



Flag of Jantana Sarkar



Meetings are held across India in support of the Adivasi and Dalit struggle. Convention Against War on People draw full house at their meetings.



Women Guerrillas in a leisurely mood



Time to make supper. Photo: Jan Myrdal



In a meeting. Photo : Jan Myrdal



Young women represent about 40 percent of the Guerrilla Army of the People's Liberation. Many of them have command positions  
Photo : Jan Myrdal

Dutt was born and grew up in the United Kingdom and despite all his knowledge of and love for India his India was a theoretical India; the British Government had for political reasons not allowed him to go to India; he was not able to see for himself.

For good and bad the communist R. Palme Dutt despite his strong theoretical anti-colonial and anti-imperialist stance in practice became typical of that westernised Socialist and Communist tradition that Nguyen-Ai-Quac (Ho Chi Minh) harshly criticised July 1 1924 at the Fifth World Congress of the Communist International.

It is important to quote out of that speech from more than eighty years ago because it explains the consequent disaster of the official communist parties; both those in the imperialist countries and those in the colonial and dependent countries who were following the official line from Moscow:

Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that so long as the French and British Communist Parties have not brought out a really progressive policy with regard to the colonies, have not come into contact with the colonial peoples, their programme as a whole is and will be ineffective because it goes counter to Leninism.

According to Lenin, the victory of the revolution in Western Europe depended on its close contact with the liberation movement against imperialism in enslaved colonies and with the national question, both of which form a part of the common problem of the proletarian revolution and dictatorship.

What have the bourgeois class in the colonialist countries done towards oppressing so many people enslaved by them? They have done everything. Using the means given them by the State administrative machine, they have carried out an intense propaganda. They have crammed the heads, of the people of the mother countries with speeches, films, newspapers, exhibitions and every other means, so that they have a

colonialist outlook; they have displayed before their eyes pictures of the easy, honourable and rich life which seems to await them in the colonies.

As for our Communist Parties in Great Britain, Holland, Belgium and other countries - what have they done to cope with the colonial invasions perpetrated by the bourgeois class of their countries? What have they done from the day they accepted Lenin's political programme to educate the working class of their countries in the spirit of just internationalism, and that of close contact with the working masses in the colonies? What our Parties have done in this domain is almost worthless. As for me, I was born in a French colony, and am a member of the French Communist Party, and I am very sorry to say that our Communist Party has done hardly anything for the colonies.

To this traditional "Western" communist tradition that I remember so well from the post WWII scene in East and West Europe came R. Palme Dutt's unswerving loyalty to the Moscow center even when it was beginning to rot from the core. This explains why his advice to the Indian communists when they in Comintern were placed under what in reality was the tutelage of the very small Communist Party of Great Britain came to have politically destructive effects in India.

This is not strange. Karl Marx who could quote Friedrich Schiller: "Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht" - World history is the final Doomsday - wrote on April 9, 1870 to Siegfried Meyer and August Vogt in New York on the colonial (Irish) question. His words still go a long way to explain both the present conflict on "immigrants" in Europe and the United States, the imperial politics in the neo-colonial era and the continuous impotence of the "left":

Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps. ... This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the

press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.

But the evil does not stop here. It continues across the ocean. .... It makes any honest and serious cooperation between the working classes .... impossible. It enables the governments of both countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge off the social conflict by their mutual bullying, and in case of need, by war with one another.

Though truth, like the Devil's foot is always cloven. Take the English educated African students in England who became the future leaders of the African independence movements. They got their first political education by reading what R. Palme Dutt wrote in his columns in Labour Monthly and they kept on reading this even when they had moved into presidential palaces. Yes, R. Palme Dutt was, although that is seldom acknowledged today in official media, one of the intellectual leaders of the Twentieth century. This is what makes his book from 1940 still one of the very best introductions to India.

Officially India is now independent and while the Indian people below the upper middle class still live in what R. Palme Dutt called "a poverty beyond the imagination of any accustomed to the conditions of the Western world" the rich are as formerly getting richer and richer. The wealth of 36 Indian billionaires constitute a third of India's gross domestic product. They are disgustingly rich and behave like other such ruling classes always have. They are morally upset when the oppressed and starving demand their right. They have - as their class brethren in Sweden or the United Kingdom or the United States - talked with horror in their Parliament and their press if victims defend themselves as in India today when private goondas or regular forces of the ruling class - Salva Judum and Green Hunt - kill, rape and torch to establish law and order.

India has never been "non-violent". Neither from the rulers or the ruled. As a movement against the rulers non-violence gave rise to a library of books but it was not non-violence that forced the British to (partially) leave. The oppressed masses have always been struggling. Then as now. That everyone who looks at an uncensored history of South Asia knows. But the ideologically determined censorship about writings on India from the time of the Empire and onwards was so thoroughgoing that even officially non-political books for young people like the standard English version of Jules Verne "The Mysterious Island" was purged in Britain. Jules Verne's original text on Captain Nemo and 1857 was considered subversive and thus politically rewritten to suit British imperial interests.

The British had to give up their official rule in 1947 because they were broke; because the "Quit India" movement during the war had been far stronger than their official censorship then allowed to be published; because the trial against the former Indian National Army officers in the Red Fort in Delhi and the Bombay naval mutiny showed that the British could no longer rely on their armed forces. But they left behind a state structure as an instrument for repressing popular discontent that was taken over lock, stock and barrel.

Gandhi was historically important. In many ways he was a political genius (the Salt March for instance) but the "non-violence" played no really decisive part in the history of these determining popular struggles against the protracted - often extreme - violence of the rulers against the people in South Asia.

The projects and the policies in India I have witnessed this more than half a century that officially have been aimed at the uplift of the unnecessary 25% of the population in the bottom layer of Indian society have not been only officialese and hot air. There has been much idealism. But the idealism has been as socially inefficient as morally laudable. What I have in reality witnessed though is that the projects and policies have provided a pleasant livelihood (partly by direct corruption) for bureaucrats, "aid workers" (from state organisations in different countries or from non governmental organisations) and a

multitude of politically servile writers in India and outside.

I remember sitting an evening in 1960 with my friend Bertil Mathsson from the International Co-operative Alliance in his house in Sundar Nagar when the door suddenly opened and a man walked in. He was a Swedish aid official just transferred from the then East Pakistan. He looked at us and said:

- I put aside a hundred thousand crowns (at that time a sizeable sum) a year; what do you gentlemen do?

He was corrupt of course. We, silently looking at him, were not in that league. Not all foreigners in India were. But I have seen many like him. The whole system of international aid programs reeked with the sweet smell of corruption. I remember 1959 when we lived in Defence Colony in Delhi the California publisher who handled the educational film strips by Gun Kessle (pictures) and me (text) on Asia visited us. He wanted to take us along to a neighbour who was throwing a party.

He handles American counterpart funds in India. He swims in money. I just got him to fund a project of systematising all the types of rural Indian pottery with an IBM punched card retrieval system. That will keep me in business for a couple of years. If you have anything to suggest he just opens the faucet and money will be pouring out!

I and my wife Gun Kessle went along to the party; drank good whisky, saw most of the people we knew who were working with different projects in the international aid business in Delhi but we were careful not to ask the host for money.

The international aid society in India was centred on the big cities like that of the British Empire. But of course there was then as now a real India outside the big cities. The mofussil it was called by the British.

That mofussil was always teeming with rebellions large and small. The oppressed fought back. With the exception of the that great insurrection of 1857 which in India nowadays is officially known as "The First war of Independence" these ever recurring rebellions have most often been inked out of official history. But if you look at history

from below, from the point of view of people, the history of British India is a history of recurring popular uprisings.

In these mofussil rebellions and revolts people have mostly been fighting the ruling elites - foreign and domestic - in a traditional manner with bows and arrows, knives and sometimes guns and bombs and fighting for traditional social aims. There has been a cleavage between the popular social struggle in the centres and that in the mofussil.

A cleavage that explains and in turn is explained by the dichotomy of present Indian society. On the one hand nuclear weapons, satellites and the most modern industries and on the other hand a mass poverty where a hundred thousand or so poor peasants commit suicide because they cannot pay the money lender.

India is a country with the largest illiterate population in the world and at the same time has some of the most superior scientists and best universities in the world. Or, to take a personal experience, in New Delhi you find far better book stores than in Stockholm. They are not only filled with imported books. Beside all the published Indian works in the different national languages you will find that India is the third largest market for publishing titles in English. Also; in Mumbai or Kolkata you might have the pleasure of taking part in intellectual discussions on theoretical - engineering, historical, literary, physical, political, social, what have you! - problems on a far higher level than in Scandinavia and Northern Europe.

This has political implications. The political discussions and actions among what is called the Indian middle class (which, mind you, is no class in the middle) are free as in colonial Great Britain hundred and fifty years ago. It is in India a present day social scientist can sit in a library finding material for his reasoned condemnation of the surrounding society in official governmental records as did Karl Marx in the "Blue books" of his time in the British Museum.

As far as I know it is now only in India one can go to official government records and read:

Committee on State Agrarian Relations and Unfinished Task

of Land Reforms, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Volume I (Draft Report), March 2009] Conclusion - The Biggest Grab of Tribal Lands after Columbus

A civil war like situation has gripped the southern districts of Bastar, Dantewara and Bijapur in Chhattishgarh. The contestants are the armed squads of tribal men and women of the erstwhile Peoples War Group now known as the Communist Party of India (Maoist) on the one side and the armed tribal fighters of the Salva Judum created and encouraged by the government and supported with the firepower and organization of the central police forces. This open declared war will go down as the biggest land grab ever, if it plays out as per the script. The drama being scripted by Tata Steel and Essar Steel who wanted 7 villages or thereabouts, each to mine the richest lode of iron ore available in India.

In most of present day Balkans, Southern Europe, France and Germany - and until recently in the whole of Latin America - discussions and actions that Indian "middle class" intellectuals quite normally participate in would open the prison doors to them. Many - most - present day Indian intellectuals are not conscious of this "Indian exception".

In the United States where the "first amendment" still is partially respected in contradistinction to the legal situation in Europe, where officially comparable legal safeguards are lacking or defect, such a behaviour would anyway shut the doors to the "official debate" for them and they would experience social, intellectual and academic ostracism.

In India these "middle class" intellectuals can talk and print openly until the moment one or another representative of the ruling class in legal, "intelligence" and police fields find that they have crossed the invisible line. Then they can be imprisoned for long years, beaten,

tortured and also killed in so called "encounters". "Encounter", a word as Indian as chapati for a procedure known to any police officer in Italy in the thirties or in a modern narco-state: if you can grab so called subversives without being seen by hostile witnesses with pull; you kill them and leave them by the roadside! (In the Third Reich they called it "Shot while trying to escape").

Do you need an example? Take Kashmir! Officially India holds that Kashmir is an integral part of India. As far as I know no other government would publicly and clearly agree. Neither would the United Nations. For diplomatic reasons their representatives would prevaricate, speak darkly. But in principle and between four eyes they agree that the resolution adopted by the United Nations Kashmir Commission on January 5 1949 (and officially accepted by both India and Pakistan the following day) still is the only rational solution:

I. The question of the accession of Kashmir to India and Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite.

All of us who were politically conscious and active at that time remember what the official diplomats and politicians now prefer to forget; the way in which the Indian government with military might had organized the "accession" of the small Junagadh and the large Hyderabad as it with diplomatic sleight of hand had organized the accession of Kashmir. The Indian government representatives consciously lied to the United Nations. Whatever happened they would not allow the Kashmiris to decide their fate by "the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite." The reason was that they - like the Pakistani government - believed that in such a case the Kashmiris would decide to be independent. As Nepal. Despite the military might of the Indian government the Kashmiris through their actions still show that they want the implementation of the January 5 resolution. The Indian government does not. That is the reason why the blood of Kashmiris have flowed in the valley for now sixty years.

If you are a well known Indian intellectual you could write this with more measured words - and survive. If you were less well known you would be jailed or just killed. As a foreigner I would probably only get my visa revoked.

But of course it would be possible for the government to charge even the well known with "sedition". According to Criminal Law Amendment Act 1961. section 2 "questioning the territorial integrity of frontiers" is sedition and according to a recent ruling this applies also to foreign nationals not residing in India.

The Indian state is further at once both of a strange Dickensian character where justice is bogged down with circumlocution offices in decade long legal battles and at the same time the same state is seemingly bound by no legal restraints when it suddenly bares its teeth and shows brutal and open class violence.

Take a typical case. Today on October 28 2010 the Times of India can report:

Ex-police chief sentenced for 40-year old Naxal murder case. A CBI special court in Kochi on Thursday sentenced former inspector general of police K Lakshmana to life in prison forty years after Naxalite leader A Verghese was killed in an 'encounter'. .... Nair recounted that after Verghese was arrested from his hideout in Tirunelly, Lakshmana addressed the constables guarding the prisoner. He asked any four to raise their hands if they were willing to shoot Verghese - handcuffed and blindfolded. Nair said when he refused to raise his hand, Lakshmana reportedly said many police officials also got killed in encounters and accidents. Soon Nair realised the danger and agreed. And finally, he was selected to kill Verghese.

The press thus reports that after forty years of legal and journalistic battles a criminal and murderous inspector general is found guilty of the murder of a Naxalite leader.



But the same press also calmly reports that in July 2 the spokesperson of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), Azad, was, according to all evidence, murdered and left in the Adilabad jungle by the Andhra Pradesh Special Branch Police in a fake encounter. They could catch him as they had been informed that he was going to pass through on his way to a meeting of the party leadership that was preparing for the peace talks; the mutual cease-fire solution, that Union Home Minister Chidambaram had been exchanging letters on with the party with the idealistic and respected Swami Agnivesh, the recipient of the alternative Nobel Prize, the "Right Livelihood Award" 2004, as go-between.

This double political reality have both given the political movements in India mass strength and emasculated them.

Charu Mazumdar in the late sixties gave a theoretical foundation (through what is now called the "Eight Historic Documents") to another type of communist movement than the flaccid mainly upper caste movement of the time and thus initiated the politically conscious armed struggle of a new type. The Naxalbari rising 43 years ago was truly a peal of "Spring Thunder Over India" as the People's Daily in Beijing wrote on July 5 1967. Official China has long since abandoned that view but since then the people on the underside of India have not only fought but fought consciously, politically. This has been a qualitative leap in the Indian class struggle.

In 1980 I discussed the heritage of Charu Mazumdar with the then communist leader and naxalite Chandrapulla Reddy in Mumbai and he sent me to Andhra Pradesh. Though not only were the armed squads of his party there rather weak - even if full of spirit - but his faction was like other Naxals of that time, as he himself told me, parts of a deeply split movement without any leader of an all-India stature.

This time, thirty years later, I and my old friend, Gautam Navlakha from the People's Union for Democratic Rights in Delhi and the Economic and Political Weekly in Mumbai were invited to Dandakaranya for discussions with the General Secretary, the Politburo of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and the leading cadres of

the armed forces.

The present situation was much different from that of 1980. The splits among the Naxals are being overcome. The party is now an All India party and a revolutionary and democratic state organisation with deep roots in Indian history, the Janathana Sarkar the people's power is in the guerrilla zone now step by step supplanting the state organisation of the ruling class. The armed force the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army - is already strong enough to inflict real and heavy military losses on the government forces.

Much has happened in the years since then and there have been many changes. Charu Mazumdar is long since dead in jail - murdered by some also among high police officials - but the historical importance of his words and actions are still in practice growing. As the General Secretary said in the interview he gave us:

Our great beloved fore-founder leaders and teachers, Comrades Charu Mazumdar and Kanhai Chatterji ... led an ideological and political struggle ceaselessly for a long time against the revisionism and modern revisionism of the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Through this struggle only the backbone of the revisionist parties' had broken down which resulted in a breakthrough in the Indian communist movement. By the result of this great struggle in all spheres by comrade Charu Mazumdar and other genuine Maoists, the great Naxalbari armed peasant uprising broke-out like a Spring-Thunder. Then a new history began. Then onwards our two great leaders upheld the red banner of Naxalbari and lead the New Democratic Revolution.

In general Charu Mazumdar was and is "the fore runner" but of course he in his time made mistakes. Also Karl Marx made mistakes when he wrote on India (the unchanging villages for instance). The Communist Party of India (Maoist) have corrected them just because



they are naxalites and see Charu Mazumdar as a genuine maoist and a founder of the party.

But as these theoretical and practical mistakes still are quoted in the literature on the naxalite movement it is important to discuss them. In the main they are three.

1) Expressions such as "Chairman Mao is our Chairman" were wrong and hurtful. No foreign leader can be the leader of any party in any country. Chairman Mao himself struggled against such tendencies in the international movement.

2) "Previously, under Comrade Charu Mazumdar the line had been to disregard mass organizations. Later we rethought and after going through an intense self-critical review, we acknowledged that there were some mistakes in the earlier years and on that basis, in order to advance, we rebuilt the movement. The Self-Critical Review was made in 1974; it was by 1977 August that forces within the party were convinced. And in practice it was reaffirmed by Party Andhra Pradesh State Conference in September 1980 that marks the beginning of a new practice." (The general secretary in his interview with us).

3) Charu Mazumdar especially from december 1969 on developed a theory - and practice - of a quick victory in igniting the revolution through annihilation of individual members of the class enemy by armed groups working in secret. Other class enemies would then flee and a liberated village could be formed. As a political theory and practice this can be understood by comparing with the line of different anarchist groups in other poor agrarian societies such as those of nineteenth century Russia, Italy and Spain.

In Russia for instance the narodniks, later organised as the "Narodnya Volya", People's Will used terrorist tactics. Lenin's older brother Aleksandr Ulyanov who was a leading member took part in the attempted execution of tsar Alexander III and was hanged 21 years old on 20 May 1887. Lenin wrote in his "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution" in Pravda, January 22, 1925 that:

They displayed supreme self-sacrifice and astonished the

whole world by the heroism of their terrorist methods of struggle. Their sacrifices were certainly not in vain. They doubtlessly contributed - directly or indirectly - to the subsequent revolutionary education of the Russian people. But they did not, and could not, achieve their immediate aim of generating a people's revolution.

This "annihilation line" had a certain success but led to great defeats and was criticized both inside and outside the party (and horrified the Chinese leadership when they read that Charu Mazumdar wrote that only he can be a revolutionary who is prepared to wash his hands in the blood of the enemy). The Communist party of India (Maoist) has long since through discussion and self criticism while seeing the great revolutionary role of Mazumdar corrected this deviation and defined the "annihilation line as not according to the theory and practice of "united front" and "protracted war".

For me it is important to let readers the world over know something about this struggle by giving a personal account of what I see and how I evaluate this mounting war for a decent life by the oppressed of the earth in the light of what we have experienced the last seventy or so years.

But it is their country and their war. They need no advice from ever so well meaning foreign friends. I try to keep in mind what Rewi Alley told me in Beijing during the turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution in China:

Remember it is their country!

That the oppressed always are right against their rulers is as true in India 2010 as it has been through history. But my role as a writer is to try to explain the struggle and make readers outside India and maybe also in India better understand why and how the people struggle. I am not to tell them in India what to do and how to do it.

As I am writing this I read the Times of India 12 April. It seems that I also have other readers; official ones:

With Maoists threatening more Dantewada-type attacks, the Centre has asked states and Central Reserve Police Force to be on their toes and is also studying Maoist chief Ganapathi alias Mupalla Laxman Rao's recent comments about new 'war tactics'. Fresh alerts were sounded late on Saturday and repeated on Sunday in view of the Naxals' warning.

Although the forces have been on full alert since the massacre of 76 security personnel on April 6, the Centre asked commanders in war zones to take adequate precautions sensing that the ultras' warning may not just be plain rhetoric.

Taking cue from what Ganapathi recently said in an interview to Swedish author and columnist Jan Myrdal, Central Reserve Police Force's operational strategists, meanwhile, are 'revisiting' the Maoist chief's rare utterances on crucial issues including how the Naxals have been positioning themselves to gain ground.

A senior official said, 'We are not in a position to take any threat lightly while waiting for its authenticity. After all, such threats are in tune with Ganapathi's line as broadly revealed in his recent interview.'

The forces are now trying to figure out what Ganapathi meant when he told Myrdal that Maoist guerrillas would chase the security forces' base camps like 'honey bees'.

Referring to the 22-page interview given somewhere in the jungles of eastern ghats in January, the official said, 'It is important to know them if we want to counter them'.

Also now I see on the net that the present Indian rulers "beareth not the sword in vain" (Romans 13.4). The Home minister P. Chidambaram on Thursday May 6th 2010 goes out of his way to warn what he calls "the intellectuals". He warns writers like me and Gautam Navlakha and Arundhati Roy that have gone to Dandakaranya with the aim to report on the situation:

Government Asks People to Be Vigilant of Communist Party of India (Maoist) propaganda.

It has come to the notice of the Government that some Maoist leaders have been directly contacting certain non governmental organisations/intellectuals to propagate their ideology and persuade them to take steps as would provide support to the Communist Party of India (Maoist) it is brought to the notice of the general public that under Section 39 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, any person who commits the offence of supporting such a terrorist organisation with inter alia intention to further the activities of such terrorist organisations would be liable to be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years or with fine or with both. General public are informed to be extremely vigilant of the propaganda of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and not unwittingly become a victim of such propaganda.

This is being issued in public interest so that the general public are aware that the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and all its formations and front organisations are terrorist organisations whose sole aim is armed overthrow of the Indian State and that they have no place in India's parliamentary democracy. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) continues to kill innocent civilians including tribals in cold blood and destroy crucial infrastructure like roads, culverts, school buildings, gram panchayat buildings, etc. so as to prevent development from reaching these under-developed areas.

I expect that most readers understand that this government description of the activities of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) is far from correct. But I am not sure that the readers outside India - or even in India - know how extraordinary this "section 39" that the government refers to is. Thus I will quote it. Not even openly fascist

## II

## BACK TO INDIA

Newly re-married after becoming a widower I was working in Maputo during autumn of 2009 trying to understand the complex developments in Mozambique since independence in 1975 and the end of the civil war 1977 to 1992.

But India was not far from my mind. I thus on the net read and printed out what Siddharth Srivastavi reported in Asia Times on September 29 2009 that

the government of India is preparing to launch its largest and best-organised offensive ever on the four-decades-old Naxalite (communist rebel) insurgency that affects hundreds of millions of people across vast swathes of the country.

There are plans to involve more than 100,000 federal paramilitary forces in the campaign, with the troops even being withdrawn from violence-wracked state of India-administered Kashmir. India plans to involve its own defence forces and has sought input from American security officials on how best to root out the leftist rebels.

I had just come back to Sweden when late on New Year's Eve as my wife Andrea Gaytán and I were preparing a traditional family dinner for the new year I got a message from the Communist Party of India (Maoist). I was expected in twelve days time to meet the General Secretary and other leading comrades of the Party and the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army in the Bastar forests of Dandakaranya in the Eastern Ghats.

Andrea and I discussed the situation. I then started ordering an airline ticket on the net for New Delhi from Turkish Airlines. It was possible for me to go as I could use a Swedish state Literary Fund grant for a lecture on Strindberg in India to finance the ticket. (I later did lecture on Strindberg and Swedish literature at the university in Delhi).

That I got this invitation on New Years Eve 2009 is after all not so strange. In one way I had been expecting it after reading about the increased government war on the naxalites.

It is now fifty-two years since I came to India the first time. I then lived there for some years and have since often been in India writing about ancient art and modern politics.

Thirty years ago I reported on how I with Gun Kessle and my daughter Eva Myrdal visited and followed Maoist armed squads in the then "disturbed areas" in Andhra Pradesh. Not many so-called "Western" writers had then done so. After that visit I finally was able to finish the book on India I had begun in 1958.

The first Indian edition of that book "India Waits" (Sangam Books, 1984) ends on page 387 with the words:

On our way down from the camp in the Eastern Ghats, a middle aged man approaches us as we are taking a break by the Godavari River. He is a bamboo-cutter of the Koya tribe and almost entirely naked. He wears only a goji, a scant loincloth. He laughs and opens wide his arms. He is wiry and strong. 'Lal salaam!' he says. 'Revolutionary greetings! The world is ours!'

That book has been published in several editions in India in English and other languages. It was that book that led to me now being invited to Dandakaranya by the Indian Communist Party (Maoist). The leading comrades had read "India Waits".

What I wrote thirty years ago and the stand I then took is thus the reason both why I got this invitation and that as soon as I got it knew that I had to go back to India to hear what Ganapathy, the General

Secretary, and other responsible leaders of the Indian Communist Party (Maoist) are saying.

I am biased. We all are; there is no such social animal as an unbiased observer. I do believe that in the long run it is the struggles of the people ("the common man" as was said when I grew up in the New Deal New York) that forms and decides history. But the run might be very long. I am not clairvoyant. I do not have a crystal ball. Only readers long after my time will know the final answer. Not I.

Now I am eighty-four. One morning in the jungle of Dandakaranya when I was lying awake in my sleeping bag, I realised that I will be long dead in another thirty years. As it is unlikely that I will be alive and working even in ten years I will never know the final outcome of the present struggle.

Looking back at the popular struggles, hopes and horrors during these last eighty years or so I feel like the old troll in the saga:

Seven oaken forests I have seen grow and decay but as yet no deliverance. Just because of my bias, my beliefs and hopes I am not able to see only an utopian view in front of us. Dystopia is not a literary genre. It is a very real human possibility. After all continental Europe had to endure nearly three hundred years of oppression and mounting serfdom from the defeat of the peasant wars to the victory of the French revolution.

The war the Indian elites are waging against their people is not of yesterday, not even of yesteryear or only of the post independence era. The war against the people has become more acute these last years as they are defending themselves on an increasing scale.

The people of India have never been just passive victims in this long struggle of the rich against the poor. They have fought back. They did so before the British came, they did so during the British rule and they still do.

But for the last forty-three years since Charu Mazumdar and his comrades initiated the armed uprising in Naxalbari - the struggle has changed quality. A popular armed struggle has been developing. The armed squads I described thirty years ago have grown: They are now the

People's Liberation Guerrilla Army and already an alternative government structure, the Janathana Circar, is under development in Dandakaranya. Though the road is long and the Communist Party of India (Maoist) does not state when it will be able to achieve a decisive victory in the protracted People's War or even if it will so already during the next decades.

I read that the Union Home Secretary Gopal K. Pillai on March 5 2010 told a seminar on "Left-wing extremism situation in India" that the Maoists plan to win victory by 2050 to 2060. I would be surprised if any of the responsible naxalite leaders really had been discussing the future in such very definite terms. It would not be very Marxist or Maoist!

In 2010 I was not the only "outsider" in this guerrilla zone in the Eastern Ghats. I was there together with my old friend Gautam Navlakha. Later as the winter turned to spring, also Arundhati Roy came to Dandakaranya.

We had all been invited by what according to the Indian government are the enemies of the state: the "Maoist rebels".

As the Indian government has closed its war zones in what they label as "the red corridor" through India and is trying to censor information and even spread outright lies about the "red danger in India" it has been and is important for the Communist party of India (Maoist) to get observers both foreign and Indian to come to Dandakaranya.

Thus not only am I writing but at least two other reports from Dandakaranya and from the struggle and work of the Maoists have been written just now. There is an important difference though; the two other texts are by writers from India; Arundhati Roy and Gautam Navlakha.

Arundhati Roy published her fascinating story "Walking with the Comrades", in Outlook March 21 2010. CHECK EXACT OTHER PUBLICATION!! She is a great writer, not unlike our Swedish Sara Lidman. Gautam Navlakha from the Political and Economic Weekly in Mumbai and the People's Union of Democratic Rights in Delhi who

had been with me in Dandakaranya published his very carefully documented piece "Days and nights in the Heartland of Rebellion" on the net in Sanhati April 1 2010. CHECK EXACT OTHER PUBLICATION Read what they have written!

My perspective is different from that of Gautam Navlakha and Arundhati Roy. I am a generation older and also from a specific revolutionary, anti-imperialist and "tiermondiste" tradition. Not only was the French Revolution two centuries ago, the Paris Commune of 1871 and the 1917 Russian Revolution of determining importance in that tradition but so was also the Mexican Revolution from 1912 onwards, not to speak of the recent Chinese revolution.

The Naxalites I met in Andhra Pradesh 2000 and now in Dandakaranya 2010 were in my eyes markedly like their predecessors in these former great revolutions driven by peasants and what the French traditionally call the "menu people", small people.

Now in 2010 I when I am over eighty I am intellectually and politically marked by both the historical successes and the severe defeats of these decades.

The large French Communist Party I experienced after 1945 has dissolved in thin air after being unable to take a clear political stand for anti-imperialism against "French" interests. (The first Indo-China war 1945, the massacre in Algeria 1945, the Magascar rising in 1947, the struggle for the independence of Algeria). "The French working class sees Ageria as three French departments" a French comrade with whom I had worked at the same desk in the Budapest headquarters of the WFDY said to me in Paris 1955 when I asked him why not the party but only Left wing intellectuals spoke out clearly on Algerian independence.

The Mexican Revolution and the Mexico of Lazaro Cárdenas that helped to shape my early teens survives mainly on murals since seventy years ago. Russia has officially negated both the Russian Revolution and Lenin's words since more than twenty years. The present Russian government does not even want to officially mark the hundredth anniversary of Tolstoy's death as the Russian Orthodox Church

excommunicated him 1901. In Mexico like in Russia and the post-war people's democracies of Eastern Europe revolution and socialist aspirations seem to have been supplanted by what could be called modern kleptocracy. In China the outcome of what Mao Zedong called the "two line struggle" led to a defeat for his revolutionary line and as the "capitalist roaders" could build on the economic and social gains his policies had created since 1949 this has made China a globalised economic superpower but one with growing and appalling economic and political differences between rich and poor.

But still these revolutions did change the world. Even the "restoration" of 1814 was but a confirmation of the defeat of aristocracy as a class and the legal establishment of the new class that took power in France 1789 - 1805. When I turn around and look back on the whole of these two last centuries, the 19th and 20th centuries, I can, despite everything, only with Galileo say: "Eppur si muove"; But it does move!

More important for what I write on India is that even if I have spent many years in India I know that I am not an Indian, I have a non-Indian ethnical and national background. Fifty years ago I believed - as we all did in the "left" of that time - that ethnical and national background was in the large picture unimportant details. Now I unfortunately know better.

During the visit Gautam Navlakha and I had long formal discussions with three leading party representatives: Ganapathy, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Maoist); Sonu, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and Murali who was just released from jail. He had before being arrested and jailed been a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in charge of South West Regional Bureau.

When we were to leave the guerrilla zone we were given extensive authorised transcripts of these talks ending with the conclusion:

Everywhere the Party leadership, People's Liberation Guerrilla Army comrades and people warmly arranged Send-off

Programs and expressed hearty wishes for good health and long long life to comrade Jan Myrdal and best wishes to comrades Jan Myrdal and Gautam Navlakha and these comrades have also spoken with great pleasure and expressed gratitude for the cooperation of all comrades to make a success of their mission.

I quote this as I don't want to give the impression that I was and am some kind of "neutral observer". Such animals don't exist. After having read Marx and Lenin - and Edgar Snow! - and taken part in the Anti-Fascist youth work during WW II I "organized" myself 1943 - as we said at that time. I have thus been a "comrade" for the last sixty-eight years even if I for reasons of what I saw and see as the decay of the communist parties around the then Soviet Union I now for close on fifty years have been a non-party communist. This should be clearly said.

I will use some of that material that was given me as I left Dandakaranya in what I write. But important is that the reader has the possibility to read exactly what they were saying to us in their official position as party representatives about the history of the movement and the present situation without any rewriting by me. They can do so by going to "Documents" in <http://www.RedStaroverIndia.se> I am there giving these texts integrally as a documents together with one comment by Azad, the then Central Committee spokesman on what the General Secretary said about negotiations and one text by the General Secretary on the new democratic state power.

It is important to understand the difference between my "reflections" and the documentation!

Dandakaranya is known for malaria and other fevers. As we left the guerrilla zone in Bastar I got a kind note from Akhila, the cadre who had been talking to me about the situation of dalit women in Andhra Pradesh. She wrote: "The malaria here is dangerous. Please take a precautionary dose up to three months."

She was right, Gautam Navlakha got ill and survived only by getting

hospital treatment in time. I was hit by something after coming back. But according to the doctors in Skinnskatteberg what hit me wasn't malaria. What it was they didn't know. The first week after coming out of the jungle, in Delhi and Mumbai, I had been quite alright. But I must have got infected by something in the jungle. Coming back home to Sweden I fell ill. Then I was quite unwell and bleeding; most of the time unable to work for close on three months and after that very tired; I still am.

## III

## RAISING THE QUESTIONS

The Indian government is right; the Communist Party of India (Maoist) has a good organisation all over India. Even in the big cities! It was still dark night when the plane from Istanbul arrived but I was met at the airport by a young activist I had never seen before and led to a taxi that then winding its way through the night took me to a secure place.

I didn't find that necessary. I had planned to go to a hotel. After all from an official Indian point of view it was nothing strange about my coming back to India. I was going to lecture on Strindberg and Swedish literature. But the young comrade said that I was now "UG"; underground. As such I was his responsibility.

He took me to an old hostel. It had been built in the late nineteenth century. Planned as a place for Jesuits to work and to sleep in even during the blast furnace North Indian heat of May. The rooms were vast and the ceiling high. But when I came it would still be some months until the pre-monsoon heat. It was now very cold. I was freezing. Of course I knew that the winter in Delhi could be cold. I had after all lived through many winters in our small place in Defence Colony in the late fifties and early sixties but this time I was not prepared. I had thought that I was first going to a modern hotel in Delhi and then south to the Dandakaranya jungle. I had organised my packing accordingly.

The vast Jesuit room was cold and damp. I tried to put on all my clothes to get some sleep. But I was shivering. The young militant though, he slept soundly on his canvas cot with just a rain coat as a cover. He reminded me of my own youth nearly seventy years ago when

we in the youth movement had sought to harden ourselves in face of coming trials. But as I am older now and no longer in my teens my teeth were chattering. This made the young comrade wake up and become worried.

When the responsible party representative just then came with a bag full of literature for me to read in preparation for the journey to the Eastern Ghats they both looked at the shivering me. It was then decided that the young comrade should go to the bazaar to come back with warm underwear, a woolen sweater and a small electrical heater for the old man.

Afterwards that day when I went down to the dining room one of the other old men at the table close to the door rose up and approached me. He congenially asked me if I to was a padre. I was not, but I knew that the hostel was a Jesuit hostel. That explained why I had been placed there. In India too the Jesuits are influenced by Liberation theology. Thus they are often part of what nowadays loosely could be called an Indian democratic front.

In this cold Jesuit hostel room I then lay reading on my bed close to the new electrical heater. I was dressed in most of the warm underwear the party had organised for me and I read the books and magazines and underground texts the party had supplied me with to make me better understand the present policies and work of the Naxalites.

I thought of the old padres in the dining room and remembered when in Cuba 1967 I worked with the ICAIC (Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos) on a film about the international aid racket for the Swedish television ("The Helper") and at night when it was too hot in the hotel room to sleep I took out my type writer and worked on "Confessions of a Disloyal European" (Pantheon Books New York 1968).

With the friends from the ICAIC we had discussed the just published anti-colonial and anti imperialist encyclopaedia of Pope Paul VI "Populorum Progressio":

My respect for him, and for the party he represents is due to that I find him honest both on the difficulties and the possibilities facing the movement:

Overall, the enemy has declared all-out war on the people in the name of internal security, and in the name of danger from Maoists. We are relatively strong in several rural areas of the country. But at present our forces are weak, we are weak in urban areas, and we are also weak in workers and among petty-bourgeoisie. The People's army too is weak and its weapons are inferior to the enemy. These are our weaknesses in general. To strengthen the people's army and work in urban areas are some of most important urgent tasks. The Unity Congress of our Party has clearly announced a strategic plan and has given enriched documents for improving in these fields. On the other hand, social contradictions are sharpening very fast. Along with above urgent tasks, our Party is concentrating to unite more and more people. If we succeed in this, we can make a leap in the revolution. We are hopeful about the emergence of a united front. In this new situation, it is one of the foremost tasks of Indian revolution. We strongly feel that it is not only our task but the task of all revolutionary, democratic, progressive forces.

For broadest possible unity, we cannot have sectarian approach towards friends of the New Democratic Revolution. At present several forces are lined up against the enemy. We have to let them develop too. In the united front on some issues, there would also be representatives of oppressive classes. We can not expect them join our ranks, which is a long way ahead. Right now we need to firmly stick to our strategic goal, and for that tactically we need to remain flexible.

More clearly, there are two different kinds of United Fronts. One, between people, and the other between people and enemy (a section/group/ persons from enemy classes) using the

contradictions among the enemy. The Party has to do that. This scope is there to some extent on some issues. We call it the indirect reserves of the revolution which can be used carefully. If we have clear understanding that they are not our class allies, then we would not have right opportunist deviations. We need united fronts of this kind for the success of the revolution. The Indian Left largely, like the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party Marxist had trailed behind the bourgeoisie and degenerated.



## IV

## A FURTHER DIGRESSION ON PRINCIPLES

I am an eighty-four year old writer who took political consciousness as a fifteen-year old during the Stalingrad spring of 1943. That continued to shape my outlook as I lived through all the political changes these last nearly seventy years. For me now to write about maoist revolutionaries in the jungles of the Eastern Ghats in India is thus not to write a travelogue in general.

Many friends from he so called "left" both in and outside of India wonder about the Naxalites, they write me and talk to me. There are questions of principle that should not be answered by general comments from me but ought to be clarified by direct quotes from documents and official statements. I will here take up four questions and try to answer by quotes from official Party documents.

The first concerns how the Communist Party of India (Maoist) views the national question. The party program that was formulated at the Communist Party of India (Maoist) unity congress 2004 states:

20. India is a multinational, multi-lingual country comprising many cultures. ... In India too, the ruling classes, subservient to imperialism, had transformed the country as a prison-house of nationalities under the so-called slogan of 'unity and struggle' of the country. It is in such a context that the ongoing nationality struggles in various parts of the country today are advancing by assuming various forms including armed struggle. The struggles of the Kashmiri, Naga, Assamese, Manipuri and other nationalities in north-eastern region are

already going on by assuming the armed form. The people of these oppressed nationalities are not only fighting for their identity but also for the just cause of achieving their honourable right of self-determination, including the right to secession and the demand for secession.

This formulation is a development of the change in the paragraph of the RSDLP(B) Programme that Lenin had proposed in 1917. The general wording "The right of self-determination for all member nations of the state" should be changed to the more concrete text: "The right of all member nations of the state to freely secede and form independent states."

This is thus a traditional Leninist statement. In later years we experienced how Article 17 in the 1936 Constitution of the Soviet Union that was written in that Leninist tradition in political reality proved to be an empty phrase. "Article 17. To every Union Republic is reserved the right freely to secede from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

Also we who experienced the aftermath of WW2 as anti-nazis and anti imperialists remember with dismay how an officially communist party like that of France in the post-war period reacted to the right of oppressed peoples to "armed struggle" (Indochina, Algeria). As the years passed it became evermore clear that Leninism in the West was as Ho Chi Minh had pointed out in 1924 - corrupted.

That the words in the Party Program are not only a verbal Leninism but that in present day day India places the Communist Party of India (Maoist) outside the pale of the existing Indian state was clearly stated in the answers the spokesperson of the central committee Azad - three months before he was lured into a trap and murdered by the government forces - gave to "The Hindu" about the united front on April 14 2010:

We consider national liberation organizations like the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, the United

Liberation Front of Assam, the People's Liberation Army of Manipur, and the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front in Kashmir as part of the wider democratic forces fighting the Indian state. We consider the various non-parliamentary trade union organizations, various progressive organizations belonging to the religious minorities which are persecuted by state-backed Hindu fascist organizations; various organizations of dalits and other oppressed castes, adivasis and women; the non-parliamentary organizations that are fighting for demands like separate Telengana, Gorkhaland, Vidarbha, Bundelkhand and so on; the organizations that are waging struggles against the Special Economic Zone's, mining and other so-called development projects leading to massive displacement of people; organizations fighting against the Liberalisation-Privatisation-Globalisation policies of the reactionary rulers; those which boldly confront the growing authoritarianism and unbridled state repression resulting in fake encounters, mass murders, and violation of all fundamental rights of the people; and so on, as part of this broad-based non-parliamentary democratic people's front.

The second question concerns the Western "war on terror" and is really an elaboration of what Azad said about the support to the Kashmiris and other groups fighting for their rights against the Indian state. Not only India but everything part of or close to the "west" - including my own until some years ago still officially non-aligned country Sweden but now with troops serving NATO in Afghanistan - is participating in the international war on "terror" that the United States is leading. Many on what is - or believes itself to be - the "Left" are either ideologically participating in this war or at least seeing "jihadism" as a main danger. On September 10, 2009, the Maoist Information Bulletin asked the General Secretary Ganapathy about this:

MIB: What is your Party's stand regarding the Islamic jihadist

movements? Do you think that the growth of these movements will be helpful to the revolution?

The answer is principal. The General Secretary refers to what Lenin had said against the views of M. N. Roy from the second congress of the Comintern in 1920 onwards. People in our countries working in the solidarity movements would do well to keep it in mind:

GS : Islamic jihadist movements of today are a product of imperialist, particularly the US imperialist, aggression, intervention, bullying, exploitation and suppression of the oil-rich Islamic and Arab countries of West Asia, countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia etc, and the persecution of the entire Muslim religious community. As part of their designs for global hegemony, the imperialists, particularly the US imperialists have encouraged and endorsed every war of brazen aggression and brutal attacks by their surrogate state of Israel. American imperialism had directly carried out the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, bombed Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan and other countries. Moreover, after the 9/11 attacks, there has been virtually witch-hunting and continuous persecution of the Muslim community all over the globe. Atrocities on the Muslims have reached horrendous proportions unheard of since the persecution of the Jews under Hitler. Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, Bagram airbase, etc. remind us of Auschwitz under the Nazis. With the instigation of the American imperialists, pogroms of Muslims and Palestinian Arabs are being organised similar to the Jewish pogroms under Hitler.

Our Party unequivocally opposes every attack on the Arab and Muslim countries and the Muslim community at large, by the imperialists, particularly the US imperialists, and their reactionary lackeys in the name of 'war on global terror.' In fact, Muslim religious fundamentalism is encouraged and

fostered by the imperialists as long as they serve their interests such as in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and other countries.

Islamic jihadist movements have two aspects: one is their anti-imperialist aspect, and the other their reactionary aspect in social and cultural matters. Our Party supports the struggle of the Muslim countries and people against imperialism while criticising and struggling against the reactionary ideology and social outlook of Muslim fundamentalism. It is only the Maoist leadership that can provide correct anti-imperialist orientation and achieve class unity among the Muslims as well as people of other religious persuasions. The influence of the Muslim fundamentalist ideology and leadership will diminish as the Communist revolutionaries and other democratic-secular forces increase their ideological influence over the Muslim masses. As Communist revolutionaries, we always strive to reduce the influence of the obscurantist reactionary ideology and outlook of the Mullahs and Maulavis on the Muslim masses while uniting with all those fighting against the common enemy of the world people i. e. imperialism, particularly American imperialism.

A third important question is how the Communist Party of India (Maoist) sees itself. Is it a part - a leading part if you want - of a United Front or the sole representative of the struggle against a corrupt class government. In his statement to "The Hindu" Azad as a spokesperson for the Central Committee stressed what the General Secretary had said. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is not the lonely and only progressive force:

... the fact is that the Communist revolutionaries are politically (i.e., in terms of its programme), a part of the wider democratic stream of all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces in the country. This is the essence of our programme of New

Democratic Revolution, which seeks to unite all those opposed to imperialism, feudalism, comprador bureaucratic capitalism into one broad front to overthrow these enemies and establish a government comprised of the four-class alliance of the working class, peasantry, urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie. Once you grasp this political basis of our New Democratic Revolution it will not be difficult to understand why we are trying to form numerous tactical united fronts as part of forming a strategic united front in various States and at the all-India level.

To identify the organizations or parties that can be called progressive (usage of the term "democratic" would be more appropriate) and patriotic, one has to see not only whether they have any anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-state or anti-authoritarian aspect included in their political programmes, but also their actual practice. We consider most of the Marxist Leninist revolutionary forces as part of this front.

There are also a large number of intellectuals and other democratic individuals who are concerned about the well-being of the people and the sovereignty of our country at large. We consider all these as genuine patriotic forces that are deeply concerned about the future of our country, about the well-being of the overwhelming majority of the Indian people rather than that of a tiny practical class that runs the country through the so-called mainstream parliamentary parties.

I am obviously leaving out the names of the organizations and individuals who, in our opinion could play a crucial role in the revolutionary transformation of our country into a self-reliant, genuinely democratic society. Today we are passing through a phase of Indian McCarthyism that brands every form of dissent and anyone who questions the authoritarianism of the Indian state as Maoist in order to legitimize its witch-hunting and brutal repression.

A fourth question regards how the Party views other political organisations on the "left". As the General Secretary said the different smaller Maoist and Marxist-Leninist parties and groups in India are not traitors but instead still politically less conscious allies - or potential allies - in the struggle.

But a question of great importance in India is the relations to the traditional Communist Party of India and the in Bengal reigning Communist Party of India (Marxist). In the latter case there is violence. Many accuse "the Maoists of killing the cadres of the CPI (marxist)". In the same statement Azad discussed this:

Now coming to your specific question regarding the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Are they not a part of the wider democratic and patriotic forces? I would say YES and NO. As far as the rank and file cadre of these parties is concerned, there is still some amount of sincerity and zeal among a section of them to work for the well-being of the people. But the leadership has completely capitulated to the exploiting ruling classes and pursues a reformist line that would only help sustain the status quo albeit with a few cosmetic changes. Here too, we have to differentiate the Communist Party of India from the Communist Party of India (Marxist). We do not place both the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the same category.

The Communist Party of India leadership has been critical of the policies of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has consistently opposed counter-revolutionary vigilante gangs like Salva Judum propped up by the State and central governments, and is opposing the Opération Green Hunt launched by the Centre. One can witness the reactionary anti-people nature of the policies of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), especially in States where it is in power. Singur, Nandigram, Lalgath, and a host of other names have stripped

the Communist Party of India (Marxist) of its guise of anti-imperialism and anti-neoliberalism. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is not even a thoroughgoing democratic force, let alone being Communist. However, we are prepared to join forces with even these revisionists if they come forth into non-parliamentary struggles on the basic issues of the people, and to the extent they uphold democratic values.

It is wrong to say we are assassinating the cadres of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). We are confronting the armed onslaught by the storm-troopers like the Harmad Bahini and other armed [men] maintained by their party leaders by putting up courageous resistance. The struggle against the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is part of the class struggle of the people against exploitation and oppression. We challenge them to an open debate on any issue. Despite their diplomatic and opportunistic stand that their fight with the Maoists is mainly political, they are in the forefront in the war waged by the Indian ruling classes against the Maoists. Unable to confront us ideologically and politically, their leaders and spokespersons have unleashed a vicious campaign of outright lies and slander against the Maoists.

We call upon the cadres of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other so-called left parties to come forward to unite with other forces to fight against the disastrous policies of the central and State governments, to unite with others to oppose the brutal war waged by the reactionary rulers guided by the United States imperialists against the Maoist movement and all forms of democratic dissent. We are prepared to unite with all sincere and genuine forces in these parties who take the side of the broad masses of people.

## V

## TO DANDAKARANYA

When I was told that we were going to Dandakaranya together with Gautam Navlakha it made me both glad and surprised. I have known him ever since he was in Sweden a generation ago. According to the Times of India there is in Indian intelligence circles a belief that Gautam Navlakha arranged for me to go to Dandakaranya. But that is simply not so. The contact to the present leaders of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was established in another way. To put it simply they had read me and there were also some comrades still alive and active who remembered me from 1980.

As Ganapathy, the general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) explained in the interview:

Since Jan Myrdal wrote the book "India Waits" in 1980s in which he talked about the movement there have been several developments in various aspects both political and military. It was since then, that we saw the development of a perspective, taking into account the concrete Indian specificity. There were only few experienced leaders that were left from the days of Comrade Charu Mazumdar. Many had gone into right deviation, some into left deviation and only few had come here. So, largely it was a new generation, a new youth, and to turn them into experienced cadre, a lot of time had to be invested. When you, Jan Myrdal, had come here in 1980, the party was still undergoing this problem.

It was only another 6-7 years that proper leadership would emerge in the context of People's War.

About our trip all the way from Delhi down to Dandakaranya there is not much else to say than it was well organised. But it worried me during the first part of the journey that the morning plane from Delhi to Raipur was delayed at take off. We sat in the plane on the runway for a couple of hours.

The car that had been rented was waiting for us at the airport in Raipur when we at last arrived. But as we had a more than 300 kilometre drive in front of us we understood that we would arrive at the agreed meeting point much too late for contact that day. This meant that we also had to stay overnight at a hotel in Jagdalpur which I didn't like. I knew that according to police regulations for this area I as a foreigner would have to fill in a long form with questions about why, what places and for how long I was visiting Bastar. In the hotel I did really get such a form to fill in and I wrote my answers.

I didn't write that I was here in Bastar on the invitation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) but neither did I lie. To lie to police and authorities is always dangerous. You are liable to ensnare yourself. Instead I did as one can do in such cases. I wrote darkly, artistically. Mainly about my interest in the art and culture of the adivasis. The tribals of Bastar are masters of the art of cire perdue, lost wax casting. They are the inheritors of this popular tradition of metal craft from the times of the Indus valley culture of Mohenjodaro and Harappa to today. I was not being untruthful in this even though I didn't write that this once again proves that it is the people and not the upper crust rulers that are the driving force in history. But if I when writing kept this conclusion back neither was I writing anything the police could use.

Of course I was worried that we had missed our contact. Though the instructions were for us to try making the contact the next day if we had been unsuccessful the first. We did as we had been told. The next day we first waited and waited in the sun and I wondered. Then contact was made and after that everything should go smoothly. But it had been decided by the party that my more than eighty years old knees made it difficult for me to cross the river with the others at that point.

They left and I remained looking at a new temple at the river bed the Hindutwa forces had erected to sanscritise the adivasis.

After an hour or so extra waiting I was then picked up by a motor cycle. I held on to the young driver with my bag in my lap. After crossing the Indrawati river by a detour and driving for an hour or so the young motorcyclist left and I had to wait again. I stayed in a shed at the roadside for some time before I was picked up by the others coming up a side road in a jeep.

We were not alone on this jeep going inland towards the jungle. Villagers, men and women, coming back from the market stopped it and then climbed aboard. As I am decidedly not looking like an Indian I was kept half hidden behind them. The road was not bad, here and there it was even being repaired. We drove on this road for some time stopping now and then to let people leave or come on board. Then we turned off the road and soon the villagers left us as we continued on a rutted track that after a few more miles got ever worse. When the track got so bad that even the four wheel drive jeep got stuck and could no longer manage it we descended and began to march with two local comrades in the lead.

To avoid the police camps we had to leave the footpath a couple of times. Then we were marching on a barely discernible track through the jungle as a detour before coming back to the path far from the camp we avoided. After marching in this way a couple of hours a group from the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army in smart new uniforms led by a young adivasi woman suddenly appeared from another track in the jungle. They welcomed us and she took over the lead.

It was a tiring walk for me and I felt my knees beginning to really hurt. We continued walking, passing several villages. Often we made detours round them keeping to the outskirts. I tried to keep up with the others but as I was two generations older than the young adivasi soldiers, I had to rest now and then when my arthritic old knees gave me too much pain. I felt that I was becoming a burden to them. The guides tried to cheer me up:

- It is only a couple of hours more.

When we were going to cross the first river they wanted to carry me over on a bamboo stretcher. That they had orders to do. But as the water was low I could cross over barefoot. When we had reached the other shore and was to enter a denser jungle they made a fire and some tea.

- We cook all water. It is dangerous to drink uncooked water.

As the trail now climbed up steeper hills in deep jungle the march became still more difficult for me. The young People's Liberation Guerrilla men, and women, told me that they now had to help me if I was not to delay them far too long.

- They are expecting us since yesterday.

I had to let them make a bamboo stretcher (on which I could sit) and then carry me when the terrain was too rough for my knees. As they were four young men - and women - carrying me it was not a heavier burden than their normal kit. But mainly I was able to walk by myself. As we continued through the jungle I saw beside the trail and sometimes directly on it deep traps. They were now uncovered so we could see them and not tumble into them.

Our people here are hunters, a comrade said. The traps they have used during the centuries against animals they also use against intruders.

These traditional traps were protection against such armed groups as the government sponsored terrorist Salwa Judum. Now during the present Green Hunt these traps protect the adivasis and their villages against the intrusion by official governmental anti-naxalite forces like CRPF (the Central Reserve Police Force) and COBRA (the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action). As these are often strangers to the jungles it is difficult for them to avoid well camouflaged traps. When the government forces march on what they believe is a well trampled trail the ground below their boots suddenly gives way, they tumble down and are trapped.

I looked at these uncovered traps as we on our march skirted them.

They are dangerous. Here in Dandakaranya the protracted people's war is a peoples war also in the sense that it is conducted by the local people with traditional means.

It is politically typical, and important, that the new local state power of the revolution in Dandakaranya, the Janathana Circar, has its own flag. A red flag with two golden stars symbolising the adivasi and the dalit peoples. But to the right beside these stars is depicted a golden bow and arrow. That is the traditional weapons of the adivasis. They are silent and deadly.

We were told not to stray from the track the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army led us on. The jungle was riddled with traps. Not only the ordinary traps we could see now they were uncovered. There were hidden ones too; mines. The same type of improvised explosive devices that is being used against ISAF - the United States, NATO and suchlike - forces in Afghanistan. The war in India as in Afghanistan is a guerrilla war conducted by both traditional and modern means and weapons.

We marched on as night was approaching. I have never been in this part of India before. I have been to Orissa in the north east and Andhra Pradesh in the south but now I am in Chhattisgarh or to be more precise I am in the old Bastar state walking through the jungle of Dandakaranya.

This is no remote part of India. It is not only on the map that this jungly and mountaineous region is at the very spine of the country. I had read about this jungle, the abode of the demon Dandak, when I was in my teens. I was then reading the determining epics from different cultures and among them the Ramayana.

As we marched I tried to remember more of the Ramayana. If I had been born and brought up in India then the thirteen years Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were exiled here in this land of demons, Dandakaranya, would inevitably have been central in my imagination. If I had not been a Moslem of course, or a Christian. Then I would have other subliminally determining holy tales. But I would even in that case as being an Indian know also of these tales from the Ramayana. The

jungle around the trail we were walking along is at the very core of Indian consciousness.

All the comrades walking with me as dusk draws close will know the story of Rama. Though they also know that the Ramayana is not the reason why Dandakaranya is now at the center of India's revolutionary red belt.

Still the great epics are of importance. Traditionally we on what could be called the European Left have underrated the way we all are formed by the culture, the traditions in which we grow up. Mao Zedong rightly saw the necessity of "sinizing" marxism to make it possible for the theories to be of use to the Chinese people. Many European so called Marxists do not understand this. But when I was living in India more than forty years ago I came to read Marx and Engels more closely.

There was a double necessity for me to do this. 1956 D. D. Kosambi in "*An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*" pointed out that central formulations in what Marx wrote on India in the New York Daily Chronicle in 1853 were wrong and misleading. The social condition in India did not "remain unaltered since its remotest antiquity, until the first decennium of the 19th century". Neither is it correct that: "Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society."

That words Marx had written could be wrong was no surprise to a scientist working in the tradition of Marx like D. D. Kosambi. Marx was a more than brilliant thinker but his words were not divinely, supernaturally, inspired. That both he and Engels often had to make clear.

Take the first sentence in the first section of the 1848 "Manifesto of the Communist Party";

The history of all human society, past and present, has been the history of class struggle." For the English edition of 1888 Friedrich Engels wrote an important footnote to this sentence that later has been

included in all editions: "That is all written history. In 1847 the pre-history of society, the social organization existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then Haxthausen ...

Many so called Marxists seem to forget this foot note. There are no "inspired" texts for marxists! When I in Delhi half a century ago was rereading their writings in an Indian cultural surrounding outside my own traditional North-European I to my surprise found something that theologically oriented writers like Richard Buchbinder and Bob Claessens were going to prove academically; there were more Biblical allusions, references and quotations in the works of Marx and Engels than such from German philosophers like Hegel and Kant, from British economists or the Greek and Latin classics.

It was thus closely reading Marx and Engels in India that I came to see these references and allusions sticking up like sore thumbs in their texts. In Europe I had not seen it. No wonder, we had grown up in the same culture and gone more or less (Marx read Greek and Engels both Greek and Hebrew which I did not) to the same type of schools. We all, Marx and Engels too, naturally express ourselves from inside our cultural tradition. This does not invalidate the general theories.

Mao Zedong mentioned this when he talked with his niece: "Conversations with Wang Hai-jung, December 21, 1970", a text widely circulated in China during the cultural revolution and now available in India by the Communist Party of India (Maoists) in their study material:

Chairman: Are you required to study the Holy Bible and Buddhist sutras?

Hai-jung: No. Why should we read them?

Chairman: How can you do translations or handle foreign affairs if you do not study the Holy Bible or the Buddhist sutras?

He also recommended her not only to read the great Chinese classical poems by Tu Fu and novels like "Dream of the red chamber"

but also to read Liao Chai, the late Ming, early Qing, collection of stories of ghosts and foxes by Pu Songling. ("The fox spirits in Liao Chai are kind-hearted. They voluntarily help mankind," he told her). If he had been German he would in the same way have recommended his young relative not only Grimmelshausen and Goethe but the stories of the Grimm brothers.

As dusk was quickly falling I thought that the comrades helping me on this difficult march in the jungle have to take this cultural specificity into account, they must correct for drift, a sailor would say. To do as Mao Zedong did in China when he sinicised Marxism. They must indianize the expression of the theories, as Charu Mazumdar did. For us who are, or consider ourselves, to be both rational and in the great tradition the understanding of this is necessary.

But worse, history, look at the recent break-up of Yugoslavia as an example, proves that many of us who consider ourselves more or less rational communists and revolutionaries are not conscious of this and thus are, often with horrific consequences prone to be bound and linked by semi-conscious cultural traditions. Overdetermination as it has been called since Freud.

It was deep night when we were nearing the camp. The last kilometres had been very difficult. We had to march along deep ravines where we had to seek foothold between big jagged stone blocks. Here close to the camp there were sentries posted. I heard our escort talk to them in the dark. At long last I saw some lights in the deep night far ahead of us and as we came up out of the ravine there was a long line of People's Liberation Guerrilla Army women and men greeting us. As we passed them they saluted us one by one with raising their clenched fists and greeting us with "Lal Salaam", Red salute, before shaking our hands.

We were tired but the tea that was served was hot. It woke me up. As I had drained my first cup I saw a group coming out of the jungle down another track. They sat down around us. It was difficult to see their faces clearly in the flickering light. They asked about the journey, if it had been difficult for me. They asked about the situation in



Europe. I overcame the tiredness and my aching knees and back and tried to say something rational about both the deepening economic and political crisis and the popular movement against the imperialist wars.

The social-democratic class collaboration - the "Middle Way" - as it was called in the thirties finally collapsed in the last decades of the Twentieth century. The "Welfare state" was dismantled. In Sweden as elsewhere in the imperialist states the "labour" and "left" politicians took the political responsibility for this. Which is not surprising as they are no longer mass based and mass financed organizations but rather financed by and thus parts of the bourgeois state structure.

Of course people struggle. The class division in society is becoming ever more painfully acute. Objectively the class struggle is sharpening. You can read about these struggles every day from the United States and Sweden as from France or Germany. But it is mainly a blind and spontaneous struggle without organization, consciousness and leadership. This is not strange. In the United States the working class organisations were smashed after WWII and the McCarthy period. In all our countries the trade unions and officially "left" parties have been emasculated. This is a very serious situation.

This has also had its impact on the anti-imperialist work. Even my country Sweden which was until a decade ago when the words dropped out of political fashion - officially non-aligned, is now serving the United States interests with soldiers in Afghanistan. But the solidarity movement exists, it is a broad based front with both bishops and old social-democratic politicians active. It is our hope that this will be able to grow until we are strong enough to force the government to begin to change its policy. But there is a danger. That danger is typical.

The official political Left, is verbally against this colonial war. But when it comes to political realities the leaders of the Social Democratic party has directly told the United States ambassador that the party whatever their official declarations as opposition had stated supported the United States policy in Afghanistan and the Balkans. Or to take another example - the officially anti-NATO Socialist Left party in Norway enters the government as a "Left" force and then takes

political responsibility for sending Norwegian troops as NATO troops to support the United States imperialist war in Afghanistan. Tactics, they call it. That sort of behaviour has been typical of the European "Left" since the beginning of the last century.

Today Sweden is sending troops to fight in Afghanistan as a NATO force. An important part of the struggle of the solidarity movement in our country has been and is to try to take the troops home. I am not at all sure that we will succeed.

But it is necessary to remember that we or rather our predecessors in the then Socialist Youth Movement did manage to stop the Swedish war against Norway in 1905. Lenin pointed to that as an example. We did play our part in keeping Sweden out of WW I (even though several comrades were jailed for that) and we also played a part in organizing a broad front in keeping Sweden from joining the Nazi "Crusade" in 1941. That struggle I remember very well from my own youth.

I fear though that we this time as the crisis deepens and new imperialist wars loom will be as powerless as were our comrades in France and Germany in 1914. But then on the other hand the mass mobilisation the world over we took part in for the "Stockholm appeal" in 1950 was of importance in hindering the United States from unleashing an atomic World war at the time as was the international Anti-war movement against the United States war in Indo-China in the nineteen-sixties. One should neither indulge in false hopes or give up all hope and be cynical.

The comrades sitting around us in the dark made no comment on what I said about the difficulties and dangers facing the solidarity movement in Sweden and in Europe as a whole. But what then made me really sit up was that a comrade who had been introduced as just as "GIS" began talking about very central theoretical questions on industrialisation and modernisation.

There is not only one road to a technologically higher development. The question is if not the type of large scale industrialisation that was typical for the Soviet Union and still is typical in the Western countries is less a purely rational technological solution than it is a capitalist



I now understood who he was. GS was in the typical Indian fashion an abbreviation for General Secretary.

What I found fascinating was the open way in which he, "the GS", and his comrades here in the jungle discussed this, the essential question of the different roads to industrialisation and economic development which the main body of "Western" communists had swept under the carpet. Must it be a dirigist economic leadership from the top, from Gosplan or the State government or the Party CC? Thus in reality keeping and reproducing "bourgeois rights" as Mao said. Why not turn the process upside-down? People are not stupid. After all we on our side have always said that the people are the driving force. What does that imply for the economic and technological development after capitalism?

But what was also important was the comradely spirit of the discussion. That was markedly different from what I had experienced among communist party officials both in France and in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the forties and fifties.

During all the talks I during these weeks in Dandakaranya had with the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), Ganapathy and the other leading comrades from the Politburo and Central Committee I got the same impression. This has made me hopeful.

Gautam had brought an extra sleeping bag for me and that first night in the jungle as I lay between him and the young Bengali comrade with the ground sheet under me and a plastic cover high above us to keep the leaves and insects from falling on our faces I tried to sort out my thoughts about India.

The night was deep and except the unseen sentries out there everybody was sleeping. I thought about what my then father in law Kali Ghosh was telling me in 1948 in South Swedish Kaffatorp, where I and my first wife had a cottage. He was trying to explain the reason behind the horrors, the communal violence and murder of Partition in 1947:

- The British left us with that. Divide and rule! They followed

that traditional imperial policy to keep the sub-continent forever at war with itself.

Kali was an old Bengali revolutionary, in his youth a Bengali terrorist as his name implied, now after a generation in England both marked by his wife, Paula Wiking who was a communist party member, the London correspondent for the Swedish party paper "Ny Dag" in Stockholm (I had edited her texts from London in my last year there as a cub reporter 1946), and by his respect, or rather admiration, for Nehru.

The break up of the Empire, the British India, was a historic event. It marked our generation also in Europe. Kali and I discussed it at length. Was it a real independence or just a political sham, a spurious imitation of independence?

I lay there in my sleeping bag thinking and formulating. In fact I was in the dark silently writing a chapter in my head: A breakfast in Bhubaneswar. Or: What Indian independence?

## VI

### WHAT INDEPENDENCE ?

*"If an indigenous government took the place of the foreign government and kept all the vested interests intact, this would not even be the shadow of freedom..."*

Jawaharlal Nehru,  
"Whither India?", 1933

Officially independent India is engaged in a war against poverty. The phrase in itself is doubtful as it was coined by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 to gain popular support among the underprivileged in the United States as he was stepping up his war of aggression in Vietnam. But the phrase still sounds good as when Simon Denyer reported for Reuters 2009:

"India marks 60th anniversary urging war on poverty."

NEW DELHI, Aug 15 (Reuters) - Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, speaking on the 60th anniversary of independence from British rule, said the country needed to work harder to fight poverty, ignorance and disease despite fast economic growth.

India cannot become a nation with islands of high growth and vast areas untouched by development, where the benefits of growth accrue only to a few

he said on Wednesday from the ramparts of New Delhi's historic Red Fort behind a bullet-proof glass screen.

Sharpshooters were stationed on nearby buildings as Singh spoke, while troops and armed police guarded roads and key buildings around

the country on a day traditionally marked by violent attacks by separatist militants or Maoist rebels.

"The problem of malnutrition is a national shame," he added. "I appeal to the nation to resolve and work hard to eradicate malnutrition within five years."

Manmohan Singh was not the first prime minister of India talking about waging this war. Despite other political differences the ruling elite, prime ministers and editorial writers they all have said so ever since India became formally independent in 1947. In fact they have with different phrases been restating the resolution of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay 1929:

In the opinion of this Committee, the great poverty and misery of the Indian People are due not only to foreign exploitation in India, but also to the economic structure of society, which the alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order therefore to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the conditions of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities.

But despite this avalanche of good intentions from the ruling elite and despite the different official development schemes employing lakhs of Indian officials and despite the locust swarms of both more or less idealistic and of purely profiteering Non Governmental Organisation's settling on India and despite the new growth rates nothing very much has changed down there at the bottom of Indian society where the dalits and adivasis live in a poverty deeper than that of the so called underprivileged in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact for very many of them the official war on poverty has been a war on the poor as they have been hounded from their forests and driven of the land in the name of progress.

The explanation for this is not that the elite politicians of India are

exceptionally evil. Some of them have been, that we all know, but in general they have had good intentions. But, as has been pointed out in our European culture by moralists and theologians from St. Bernhard of Clairvaux onwards: "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions."

Take Jawaharlal Nehru as an example. As he politically and intellectually was of the same generation as my parents and they too like him were influenced by Anglo-Saxon liberal and socialist thought of the same Fabian hue and moved in similar international circles - anti-imperialist and anti-fascist - in the late nineteen-twenties and early nineteen-thirties, I had of course heard about him and read him ever since I was growing out of childhood.

It was Kali Ghosh who in my early twenties when we became relatives came to give me a deeper understanding of India. He said that as an Bengali he had as a boy been deeply affected by Bankim Chandra Chatterji's Ananda Math.

That was not a measly non-violent sermon. By reading it I began to see Krishna of the Bhagavat Gita in a new light. There are many paths that lead to social and political consciousness. For me as a young boy in the Bengal of those days this was the road that led to awakening!

At that time I had not read Bankim Chandra Chatterji's novel. Now when I have Kali is long time dead. But I should have wanted to discuss with him exactly how he and his friends and comrades were influenced by it.

Like many of his friends Kali as a student became a member of "Anushilan" to defend the unity of Bengal. Later on he worked both in the student organisation close to the terrorist organisation "Juguntar" which was merging with "Anushilan" and was active in the Congress.

In December 1928 the Indian National Congress met in Calcutta. The situation was complicated. The older Nehru, Motilal Nehru, who here at the Calcutta meeting presided for the second time, advocated a dominion status as the only real possibility. Jawaharlal Nehru spoke for independence. Gandhi was against the independence resolution as it

could split Congress. He wanted to avert that split by the proposal that if Britain did not concede Dominion Status within a year, the Congress was to demand complete independence and fight for it, if necessary by launching civil disobedience. But Jawaharlal Nehru had promised Kali to speak for the independence demand. Then just hours before Jawaharlal Nehru should hold his speech he suddenly refused. It had taken Kali and two other party comrades who were active in Congress two hours to convince Subhas Chandra Bose that he had to stand up and speak out against Motilal and Jawaharlal. But Bose lost. Kali then began writing in the "Swadhinata"; at that time organ for the "Juguntar" (later on from the forties the name was resurrected by the CPI). Bhupendra Kumar Dutt and Aron Gupta wrote the leading articles and Kali shared the editorial work with Jotish Bhowmick.

In April 1930 the nationalists occupied the Chittagong armoury. That was the deepest British defeat since 1857. The British immediately began mass arrests. "Swadhinata" decided to publish the leading article "Bravo Chittagong". As the paper anyway was going to be suppressed it was better to go underground with an article advocating violent armed uprising.

Kali now also worked with sabotaging the Bengal telegraph lines. The Congress leader Motilal Nehru the father of Jawaharlal whom they had got to secretly help finance the operation leaked, did not keep quiet; did not understand the need for absolute silence in a conspiracy. Some comrades were arrested. Though Monoranjan Gupta, Rashik Das and Kali was in liberty and managed see to it that nearly all the Bengali telegraph lines were cut at the same time.

Together with dr. Narayan Roy Kali worked with bombs. The effects were good but the bombs were difficult to hide in the clothes.

He was not a communist then. Kali said as did as most of his terrorist comrades at that time that the communists just talked about revolution when it was necessary to live revolution. But for Kali as for so many like him it was the Meerut conspiracy case that began to change him to a communist. It was the then biggest political trial in India. On March 20 1929 32 persons, among them socialists and trade

unionists, had been arrested and charged with being communists conspiring to "deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India". As the case dragged on the communists among them used the court as a sounding board to spread their ideas to the Indian public. 31 of them were convicted in the spring of 1933 but after appeal the prisoners were let out of jail in the summer that year. The case that was aimed at crushing the beginnings of a communist movement had back-fired. It was in reality only after that trial that a Party with a centralized apparatus could come into being in India. In practice this meant that it was only in 1934 that an Indian party could begin to function as a section of the Communist International.

Kali and his comrades now planned to liberate a quarter of central Calcutta and rise the flag of Independent India. The British would have to use air bombardment and artillery. That would show the world that their Empire was built on sand. But the 25th of August Ania Sen and Dinesh Mazumdar failed when they threw two bombs at the car of the chief of police in Calcutta. Ania Sen was caught and then killed as the Police used, and use, to do. Encountered we would say.

On August 31 1930 Kali was taken by agents of the Special Branch Intelligence Department in Calcutta. The police had rounded up 3,000 Bengali terrorists. But India was marked by semi feudal ideas then as now. The real head of the Intelligence Bureau was a relative to Kali, a cousin. The cousin said:

- You are a shame for the family.

He then said that Kali would be in prison for seven years. Or at least five years. That would be shameful. To spare the family this shame Kali could accept being deported to England. In the spring of 1931 he was conducted to the ship that would take him to London.

It is important to understand that this is no anecdote in general but represents a considerate policy of the Indian authorities both before and after Independence. In his reminiscences "Naxalbari. Before and After" (p. 286 - 289, New age Publishers 2009, Kolkata) Suniti Kumar Ghosh who had been the first editor of "Liberation" in 1967 wrote:

On August 21 - 22 1971 some days after Saroj Datta's arrest and martyrdom, my wife and elder daughter were taken by the police to the office of the Special Branch (SB) of the Calcutta police at Lord Sinha Road. The deputy commissioner of the SB said to my wife that it was not befitting a learned man like me to involve myself in the politics of assassination and that my wife should persuade me to go to England for which they would make arrangements. (When sometime later, an associate of Ashim Chatterjee was arrested at Deogarh, the police allowed him to go to England instead of sending him to prison). My wife said that if I was a learned man and preferred this path, it would not be possible for her to persuade me to leave it. She added that the police too were assassinating people. The deputy commissioner said that these assassinations were reprisals. Disappointed at my wife's answers, he said that they would show my dead body to her in three months or earlier.

Then as now in many countries in Latin America or South Asia; the revolutionary sweeper will just be eliminated, the politically active peasant or lower middle class intellectual is apt to be killed in an "encounter" but the "black/red sheep" in a family from the ruling class like Kali or Suniti Kumar Ghosh could be just deported. Kali accepted.

In England Kali became a communist, though I don't know if he, like the Swedish/American wife he married, became a real card-carrying Communist. Kali also worked as a journalist with left wing Congress and later the new independent India government and as a correspondent of the "Blitz" in Bombay/Mumbai. During this period he more and more changed to become an admirer of Jawaharlal Nehru.

I myself found that Nehru was affable in a diffuse way when we met at different functions in New Delhi in the nineteen-fifties. Then during the All-India Writer's Conference in Bhubaneswar I and my wife Gun Kessle had a long breakfast with him and the then vice-president of India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on January first 1959. In the beginning it was rather pleasant. I talked at length about Artur



Lundkvist who 1958 had been among those awarded "The Lenin Prize for Strengthening Peace among Peoples".

After travelling in India and meeting Indian writers in 1952 he presented Indian novels such as "Kuli" by Mulk Raj Anand and "So Many Hungers" by Bhabani Bhattacharya to a mass audience in Sweden.

- Through novels like those the Swedish readers can get a better understanding of Indian realities, Nehru said.

There are reasons for me to write this about Artur Lundkvist. As a writer he was very typical of the European - or United States - left wing writers of his time and their contacts with India and what was called "The Third world". He wrote books on his travels in Africa, Latin America, China and India. They were published in the whole "Eastern bloc" of that time. Now they are getting dated as he wrote from a Freudian perspective and came to see the sexual repression in India as important as the economic.

Also he, like Jawaharlal Nehru, was part of my life from the early nineteen-thirties. He was a boy from a poor peasant background who had gone to Stockholm and outside all academic life had become a leading critic, poet, novelist and the organiser of the modernist movement in art and literature. He was very active in the same literary/political groups as my parents. Freudian, somewhat marxian and very modernistic. At home we had all his books. When I was six or so I had learnt how to read in his early volumes of vitalistic poems.

As a critic introducing new literature from the United States, Europe, Africa, Latin America and India he had for a couple of generations had a determining influence in Sweden. Artur and I knew each other. When I was becoming established as a young writer we appeared together at different political and literary meetings. He at that time thought that I was promising.

At the conference in Bhubaneswar I had spoken of the need to do like him and work together with the trade unions to organise the spread of a literature making the world easier to grasp for "the common man". A People's Literature was a literary and a political necessity. Artur

Lundkvist had used his own position as a critic to get the rather stolid Swedish Social Democratic trade union establishment to finance the publication of writers such as Bhabani Bhattacharya in 65,000 to 70,000 copies.

Later on in Sweden we were rather close for some years. At the 4th of July in 1967 we appeared together as speakers in a large mass meeting in front of the United States Embassy in Stockholm. The ambassador and the crowd collected in the Embassy drinking G and T betrayed their Revolution, we said. The people of South East Asia in armed struggle for their freedom against the invading armies from Washington defended even that revolution. Artur Lundkvist came with a strongly worded support for the public burning of the Star Spangled Banner. It was an effective gesture, he said, as the United States government for psychological reasons reacted violently against it. Burn the rag! Whatever the police said and did.

Then our ways parted. Politically and culturally. This too was typical. He became vice president of the World Peace Council as I was condemned in Moscow as a tiermondist. He also entered the Swedish Academy and began to handle the Nobel prizes. ("Helped the King to shake hands", as we said). But we both had to publish our very different texts in the same conservative Stockholm paper. I because the Social Democratic Aftonbladet found me to be too critical of both the United States and the Soviet Union and Artur because the liberal Dagens Nyheter found him becoming reactionary as he had entered the Swedish Academy.

When his hundredth anniversary was to be officially celebrated in 2006 I was invited by his wife, the poet Maria Wine, to speak. He was, as I then said, and meant, typical for his whole group. Yes, he was one of us from the European intellectual Left and also a great figure and a great Swedish writer. But not only the times had changed the European intellectual canon had changed with the new wars. His present conservative colleagues from the Academy did not come. They now, as they did when he was young, treated him as a dead dog. That was typical. He - like Sartre or Laxness or Dreiser and Brecht was not



forgiven for having been an actively anti-imperial writer.

I also thanked Dr Radhakrishnan. As representative of India in UNESCO 1953 he had defended my rights when the United States officially declared that as they "were investigating Jan Myrdal" they detained my mother - at that time director of the UNESCO Department of Social Sciences - as she came from Paris to the Idlewild airport.

That the United States declared that it was "investigating" me in Sweden was in itself strange. I did not live in the United States. I had not applied for a visa to the United States. According to the then valid Swedish criminal code participating in such an "investigation" for a foreign government against a citizen or resident of Sweden was a crime; carrying a sentence of two years in jail.

The "crime" that got the United States authorities in Sweden to employ agents for breaking the Swedish law and then in Idlewild to apply what the German nazis called "Sippenhaft", "kin liability", to my mother was that I then worked for preparing the Third World Festival of Youth and Students 2 - 14 August 1953 in Bucharest.

A younger generation should know that we then during the coldest year of the "Cold War" got more than 30,000 young people from 111 countries to take part. Our motto was: "No! our generation will not serve Death and Destruction!" This was a conscious struggle of solidarity against specifically the United States war against the Korean people and the French colonisers in Vietnam and Algeria.

Then suddenly the atmosphere at the breakfast table changed. Nehru began talking to Dr Radhakrishnan about the Chinese. A Chinese delegate at the Afro-Asian Writers Conference in Tashkent who had been speaking about the importance of the ideological struggle against imperialism and colonialism and racism in literature had also mentioned the necessary struggle against casteism. The more Nehru dwelt on that the Chinese had talked about caste the more coldly furious he became.

- These Chinese, they are always nagging at us! They are deliberately anti-Indian!

It surprised me. Not that I really had believed in a political reality of the post-Bandung slogan "Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai" but this was the first time I heard about the then growing conflict on the highest level between India and China. Three months later came the Tibetan uprising and then the open border conflict.

Gun Kessle and I discussed why Nehru had reacted so violently to a discussion on the necessity of combating casteism. Caste and the horrors of caste discrimination in India was something we then living in India witnessed and reacted against daily. But there was nothing really strange about caste. The caste in India was not so exceptionally Indian. If you looked closely at the caste conflicts and analysed them you always landed in class. In fact that was how the intellectuals and communists we at that time met in India discussed it.

When I in an evening late in the fifties mentioned how ethnicisms like anti-Semitism had been instrumentalised as a tool by the Tsarist power in old Russia - divide and rule! - then Sarada Mitra, whom I had known and worked with since 1953 and who was very typical of the official Indian Communist intellectuals of that time, first talked about how the communal killings had been organised in Calcutta 1947 and then began discussing the Marwari money lenders and the Deccan riots of 1875.

The social history and role of the Marwaris in India and the Jews in eastern Europe were similar as was the way these conflicts were used by the ruling circles.

Gun Kessle then pointed out that it was Nehru who had explained the real situation of the dalits in 1936 during his presidential address at the Lucknow session of the National Indian Congress that she just had read:

The problem of untouchability and the Harijans again can be approached in different ways. For a socialist it presents no difficulty for under socialism there can be no such differentiation or victimization. Economically speaking the Harijans have constituted the landless proletariat and an

economic solution removes the social barriers that custom and tradition have raised.

We could discuss and explain them but the examples of caste conflict and caste oppression we saw around us in India in 1959 were as disgusting and destructive as those we could read about from 1936 when Nehru had talked about them. The difference was that the Nehru we met no longer seemed to see them as they really were in his India; it was as if he believed, or wanted to believe, that they in principle had been solved by some legal strokes of a pen.

India was now in a formal way politically independent but as Nehru himself had written in "Whither India" 1933:

If a government took the place of the foreign government and kept all the vested interests intact, this would not even be the shadow of freedom..

He was right of course. History proves it. Could the dalits in today's formally independent India be called free? One needs only to look around in India. Freedom is for the privileged few, not for the majority of the Indian people. For them India is still not free. This is not so strange, it is a question of class and class rule and is explained by the history of Indian independence.

Yes, how had India achieved her formal independence from Britain?

The whole history of the British rule in India had been a history of revolt and rebellion from the Indian people. From the side of the rulers it had been a tradition of fine words on the rule of law coupled with an extreme extra legal ruthless and murderous repression. Jawaharlal Nehru knew it well. Among the books he had read as a prisoner in Ahmednagar was the subversive booklet "India Ravaged" published, by "Free India" in January 1943. It wanted to give:

...an unvarnished objective picture of the frightfulness practiced by the British Government in India under the guise of crushing the uprising which followed the arrest of Indian

leaders on the 9th of August 1942.

But suffice to say that there is no form of atrocity ascribed generally to 'other' civilized Governments which the British have not practiced by way of reprisals in India, whether in 1857 or 1919 or August - December 1942, and are not practicing currently. As against 70 lives lost on the Government side, the estimated number killed on the people's side either in course of encounters or wanton stray shooting at unwary or harmless individuals is 25,000.

But that reads as if it was a text issued 2010 by naxalites about the present government policies in India!

How come that a liberation movement which had such tremendous popular support and was politically lead by people as intelligent and in many ways as integer as Jawaharlal Nehru ended up like this? That liberation movement has created a Republic of India where the government now more than sixty years after Independence prides itself of an economic growth of some eight/nine per cent for the few in a sea of poverty? An independent India where the government violently and with armed force defends policies that are keeping the majority of the people poor and for its own profit is pressing around a quarter of the population down in a utter poverty close to the level of cattle?

Jawaharlal Nehru himself had in reality explained this when he described the growth of the Congress in his Autobiography:

Our national movement had originally begun because of the desire of our upper middle classes to find means of self-expression and self-growth, and behind it there was the political and economic urge. It spread to the lower middle classes and became a power in the land; and then it began to stir the rural masses who were finding it more and more difficult to keep up, as a whole even their miserable rock-bottom standard of living.

Jawaharlal Nehru was in that way an exceptional figure as he early

on was clear-sighted enough to see and describe the dichotomy of the class that was to inherit India from the British. The class that then would keep the reins of power in independent India until today. Intellectually he knew that he had been formed by his class and his upbringing. The study in England had formalized his ideas. But he was unable to jump over his own shadow:

My politics had been those of my class, the bourgeoisie. Indeed all vocal politics then (and to a great extent even now) were those of the middle classes, and Moderate and Extremist alike represented them and, in different keys, sought their betterment.

## VII

### A NOTE ON SPLIT VISION

The difficulty with a unified world view is like for the stepsister in the Grimm story trying to fit the foot in the slipper that Cinderella lost at the king's party. You have to cut the toe or the heel off and it still does not fit. I thought about that story as I looked up from the keyboard and saw the magazine on the desk beside me:

Number 309 from 16 february 1944 of the official Japanese picture magazine *Sashin Shūhō* (Photographic weekly) "edited by the Bureau of Information". The cover (in the West it would be the back cover) shows the Netaji (respected leader) Subhas Chandra Bose standing at the western shore of the Andamans looking over the waters of the Bay of Bengal towards India. He wears the uniform of Azad Hind Fauj, the Indian National Army (INA) of the Arzi Hukumayt-e-Azad Hind (Provisional Government of Free India) he leads.

That magazine was in the folder I had opened for another text I am concurrently writing. One for the catalogue of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm to an exhibition during the spring of 2011 of Japanese Meiji era political *ukijo-e* from the Satsuma rebellion and the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 with the Kiyochika Kobayashi caricatures "Hurrah Japan One Hundred Collected Laughs". It was a donation by Gun Kessle and me, not only because the museum lacked prints from that period but we had wanted to visually explain how the ordinary Japanese were during a long time indoctrinated to commit the horrible war crimes of the Second World War. Properly organized and presented the popular images of a certain period make the dominating ideas of that time clearly visible to a present day public.

Of course there was an academic indology at the Swedish

universities seventy years ago - even if it was traditionally determined by German university traditions. There was also in the foreign policy institutions a certain discussion about India - even if it traditionally had a British bias. But during the war there was in the partly state controlled Swedish press not much real news about India and certainly not much on the independence movement. Or rather the only papers that really covered stories such as the then role of Gandhi and Nehru in the Congress and the Quit India movement in 1942 or the Bengal famine of 1943 (a militarily-politically engineered genocide when some 3.000.000 or much more Indians died from starvation and malnutrition) were pro-German and openly Nazi papers. (The German legation in Stockholm also distributed material on Indian independence movements but not as much as it had in the former world war 1914 - 1919). In occupied Europe; Belgium, Denmark, France, Norway the situation would be similar.

It is typical that the prestigious liberal Swedish news magazine of the time, "Nu. Världshändelserna inför världsupinionen", in August 1942 (No. 33, page 6) published the article on Gandhi and the Quit India resolution under the heading: "India. From fakir to quisling" (Indien. Från fakir till quisling") and i.a. wrote: "... a development from fakir to quisling that might be a consequence of the increased senility of the seventy-three year old saint ... " ... en utveckling från fakir till quisling, måhända sammanhängande med den tilltagande seniliteten hos det sjuttioåriga helgonet..." Bose was during the war as far as I can see only mentioned once (No. 30, 21 July 1944 p.6) as: "... the to Japan absconded Indian quisling number one, Subhas Chandra Bose." (...den till japan avvikne indiske quislingen nummer ett Subhas Chandra Bose). The independence movement in India was thus construed as part of the Nazi propaganda.

Looking at this picture of Subhas Chandra Bose I know that his portrait now hangs in the Indian Parliament, that he stands as a patriotic statue in different cities (and marble statues of him are sent from Jaipur all over the country) and that the Kolkata international airport today is named "Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International

Airport". Also I now know that not only official India but the naxalites regard him - like Bhagat Singh - as one of the patriots in the freedom struggle.

But he had gone to Germany, Nazi Germany, at the beginning of the war and then (by submarine which is an adventure in itself) to the Japanese. His Indian National Army had taken a leading part in the Japanese Arakan offensive in 1944; reaching British held territory and hoisting the flag of his Free India but at that late stage of the war unable to continue.

In 1944 I would have known something about his role in the independence movement in pre-war India. I did thus not see Subhas Chandra Bose as a direct traitor like Doriot in France or Quisling in Norway but rather as someone like how I then saw a Wang Jingwei who went over to the Japanese occupiers and became the chairman of the collaborationist government of the "Republic of China" in Nanjing.

But this my opinion was in itself due to lack of information and already here the perception gets fractured. Also Aung Sen in Burma and Sukarno in Indonesia had worked with the Japanese imperialists as patriots against the European empires ruling their native countries. They too, like Subhas Chandra Bose in India, are now national heroes but Wang Jingwei is despised in China as he was despised both by the Goumindang and the Communists at the time of his death in 1944 and today. There is not one Asian vision.

The cleavage between "the West" and India goes deeper than that. For a large part of the "Left" in a colonial India ruled by the British it was not the Ribbentrop - Molotov pact that was a determining political and ideological shock (as it still is considered in the West). It was the Churchill - Stalin pact. Afterwards we can discern the determining reasons behind the Soviet policy up to the Nazi invasion and also read the diplomatic papers about the way leading circles in Britain and France tried to convert the phony war against Germany to the "true war" against the Soviet Union.

We especially those of us who at that time worked politically against Hitlerite Germany also know how necessary the Second World

War slogan of a "peoples war" was. (It was at that time not the maoist concept of "people's war"; for communists it was formulated as a general political directive by J. V. Stalin in his speech on July 3 1941 as; "a united front of peoples standing for freedom and against enslavement and threats of enslavement by Hitler's fascist armies") It was in this situation that the Communist Party of India was unable to formulate a both principled and independent policy based on their national situation like the Communist Party of China led by Mao Zedong did.

The Communist Party of India instead unthinkingly followed the wording of the official Moscow line during the Second World War, it interpreted the war as a common struggle of the British and Indian peoples and thus cooperated with the British authorities as part of this Peoples war. (Leading comrades even informed on the Indian patriots during the quit India movement). That they condemned Subhas Chandra Bose as just a traitor was part of policies that isolated the party from the Indian people.

Subhas Chandra Bose probably died in an air crash in Taiwan on August 18 1945. The British captured some 23,000 soldiers of the Indian National Army. In November that year the British began the trials, first against the leading officers, at the Red Fort in Delhi. The protests against these trials began immediately and in February and March 1946 the Royal Indian Navy and Royal Indian Air Force mutinied.

## VIII

### WHAT TERROR ?

We were moving to a new camp nearly every day. Here in Dandakaranya there is as yet, whatever the Government said, no real Liberated Area, just a Guerrilla Zone. For security reasons we thus seldom stayed more than one or two nights in each camp.

Already at the the second camp when we drank tea at night the young adivasi women soldiers from the People's Liberation Guerilla Army discussed the armed struggle and the raids they had taken part in. What had been successful and what not.

Two of them had taken part in the Nayagarh operation in February 2008. It was well planned military offensive. The aim was not only to attack the armory, the police stations and police training school but to get arms.

After cleaning up the police stations we isolated the town, disconnected all communication lines and blocked all entry points then we asked people to stay indoors while we emptied the armory.

But we had miscalculated. The haul of arms and explosives was much larger than what we had expected. These AK-47s are from there. We filled the vehicles but were unable to bring it all back. We had to dump nearly half. That pained us.

They had taken part in many fights and were proud of the raids. They should be. These young adivasi women had proved themselves as efficient fighters. The People's Liberation Guerilla Army carries solar power driven accumulators for their printing presses and personal computers. Now the young women fighters on a PC showed me photographs and videos of a long line of dead jaws; young men, boys nearly.

They walked into our ambush; we detonated our prepared powerful landmine and followed up with intense fire. We then took their guns.

Yes, the naxalites have killed in this civil war in India. Though there is no comparison to the number of Iraqis or Afghans the United States and their willing allies have killed in Iraq or Afghanistan; or which is more relevant with the the number of victims in India for the official and the less official Indian government forces.

But most of these dead by naxalite actions are young men in uniform: Jawans, official soldiers or policemen. Others have been private goondas, undercover informers and doras - landlords.

I begin here with the dead jawans. The official Indian government policy is that it these are victims of terrorists. Naxalites are terrorists.

This government policy binds the Indian Government to a close cooperation with the United States authorities. The armed struggle in Dandakaranya is not a local struggle in jungles far away but as Washington sees it inside the purview of the United States global "War on terrorism". This is important to clarify.

As I was going through this typescript for publication President Barack Obama of the United States was preparing for his state visit to India. It is a visit that was not only of interest for the foreign policy relations in Central, South and South East Asia. It was a visit of direct importance to Dandakaranya. In the Hindustan Times for October 29 I read:

"Counter-terrorism top agenda for Obama in India".

Counter-terrorism co-operation between India and the US would be on top of the agenda of President Barack Obama when he travels to Mumbai and New Delhi next week, the White House said on Friday. ... "We have unprecedented cooperation with the Indian military. We do more exercises now than we have ever before with them. And our relationship on counter-terrorism and subjects of the like is

tremendously important," he said.

"This will be the subject of some of the talks that the President has with Prime Minister Singh and the subject to the very first stop on the trip," Gibbs said in response to a question.

This is a rapidly growing region of the world; Asia and India is a rapidly growing -- it's the largest democracy in the world. Its economy is moving quickly. And our investment -- our partnership is paying benefits in our ability to increase our exports and create -- and support jobs here in America. Both of those will be highlighted by the President on this trip, Gibbs said.

The United States involvement in the ongoing war in Dandakaranya is not only ideological ("War against terrorism"), it has as the White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said economic reasons: "our investment".

Thus President Barack Obama had prepared for his state visit to India by reading the United States Department of State report "Country Reports on Terrorism - India" dated 5 August 2010:

India remained one of the countries most afflicted by terrorism with over 1,000 deaths attributed to terrorist attacks in 2009, primarily in Kashmir, the Northeast, and the Maoist affected "Red Corridor.

1] According to Home Minister Chidambaram, groups affiliated with the Communist Party of India (Maoist) had pockets of influence in 20 states, but were primarily active in 223 out of India's 545 Parliamentary districts across eight states known as the "Red Corridor", comprised of West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told Parliament that

Maoists/Naxalites insurgent groups represented the most significant threat to domestic security. Maoists/Naxalites conducted numerous attacks against police and local government officials and bombed railways, killing civilians and disrupting services. No American citizens were victims of Maoist/Naxalite-related terrorism during the year. Foreign companies were reportedly targeted for extortion. In June, the central government banned Maoist/Naxalite groups under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act of 1967. Chief Ministers from the most affected states agreed to cooperate with the MHA to launch joint operations against the Maoists/Naxalites along inter-state borders. MHA established counter-insurgency schools for police officials in Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Jharkhand. The central government deployed additional security forces in Chhattisgarh and Orissa, and announced plans to deploy to eight additional states.

The special relations between the United States and India in this war is of long standing but had been formalised the summer of 2010. In "The Lift. Legal Issues in the Fight against Terrorism" Mathias Vermeulen (research assistant of Martin Scheinin, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism at the European University Institute) on August first 2010 reported:

"US, India sign Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative

On July 23 United States Ambassador to India Timothy J. Roemer signed the Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative (CCI) Memorandum of Understanding along with Home Affairs Secretary G.K. Pillai, who signed on behalf of India. The signing is the latest evidence of the close and effective cooperative efforts between the United States and India on counterterrorism, information sharing, and building capacities.

The India-US Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative calls for

closer cooperation between the two countries' commando and special forces, an Indian government statement said. India said the pact also aims to increase "exchanges between coast guards and the navy on maritime security" and establish procedures to undertake joint investigations.

Timothy Roemer, the US ambassador to India, who signed the agreement on behalf of Washington, said:

In the coming days and months there will be even closer information-sharing and collaborative efforts on issues ranging from bomb blast probe and major event security to mega-city policing, cyber and border security, he said.

The diplomat said the pact was forged on the sidelines of a state visit to the United States by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last November.

President (Barack) Obama and the (Indian) prime minister have acknowledged the common threat that international terrorism poses to all people, Roemer added.

Yes, there is a real terror in India. But terror of another kind than that which President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Washington had agreed on forging a pact against. A pact later strengthened between president Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the state visit of President Obama to India when they met privately at the prime minister's home in Delhi just before the official dinner for President Obama on November 7 2010.

That pact against terror is in reality a pact by the rulers against the uppity poor, in India primarily against the danger posed by dalits and adivasis demanding their right.

Why President Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed on this pact is after all just an expression of their social role as class representatives in the present civil war in India; a war for control

over the mineral riches. In India that is no secret. Neelesh Misra discussed the Naxalite dominated areas and reported in the Hindustan Times November 13, 2009:

If you map the forest wealth, the mineral and the poverty of India, it's a complete match," said Sunita Narain, head of the Centre of Science and Environment.

The Maoists are gaining support due to the decades-old angst over mining, forest rights, and land acquisition -- to spread their influence, through subtle and drastic measures.

In June, a small group of Maoists walked up to the weekly market in Lohandiguda village 340 kilometres south of state capital Raipur, and at close range shot dead Vimal Meshram, 42, an influential tribal leader and a very vocal supporter of the Tata project. Then, in full public view, they walked away.

Tribal people make up only 9 per cent of the country's population, but more than 40 per cent of the land used to build development projects has been theirs, according to government estimates.

A just-released government report blames the government and companies like Tata and Essar for a corporate takeover in the hinterland of Chhattisgarh, warning of "the biggest grab of tribal lands after Columbus."

"This open declared war will go down as the biggest land grab ever, if it plays out as per the script," said the rural development ministry-commissioned report, chaired by the then-minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh. "The drama being scripted by Tata Steel and Essar Steel who wanted seven villages or thereabouts, each to mine the richest lode of iron ore available in India.

Both companies dismissed the allegation.

This is ridiculous ... there is a formal Memorandum of

Understanding, the land was allocated, the whole process was done in a legal manner. There is no land grab," Sanjay Chowdhary, Hindustan Times.

Terror is a reality today. But what is terror? People like Vimal Meshram will be shot as they are seen as the tools of exploiting groups like Tata Steel. But there is real terror in India. A very rational terror organised by the government.

There is a very simple economic reason behind the government policy of driving the adivasis from their land and if necessary raping the women, burning the villages and killing off the uppity among them; those who struggle to keep their ancestral lands. It is a question of securing corporate profits. Class war in other words. As Business Week of April 7th 2010 explained the situation:

Deadliest Maoist Raid Highlights Mittal, Posco India Challenge.

The deadliest attack on Indian security forces in four decades of left-wing conflict underscores the challenge companies including ArcelorMittal, Posco and NMDC Ltd face in investing in mineral rich states.

Maoist rebels killed 76 officers in an ambush yesterday in the eastern state of Chhattisgarh, where NMDC operates its biggest iron-ore mine. In neighboring states, ArcelorMittal, the world's biggest steelmaker, and South Korea's Posco have yet to start their \$32 billion projects because of protests over land.

According to Business Week this has stalled "more than \$80 billion of projects in India that would double national steel output. Yesterday's attacks are a setback to India's efforts to rid the eastern states of left-wing guerillas and open up regions rich in iron ore, coal, bauxite and manganese to investment.

Most of the mining assets in India are present in the Maoist belt,



which is a threat as more mining can't take place and new leases can't be executed,' Santha Sheela Nair, secretary at the mines industry, said in a March 5 interview. ... 'Containing the Naxal movement is integral to raising India's energy and mineral self sufficiency,' Deutsche Bank AG's Abhay Lajawala and Anuj Singla wrote in an April 2 report. 'Unless the Naxal resistance abates, the high levels of risk associated with doing business in Naxal-infested regions will deter investment.' ... India needs to counter the terror tactics that risk hampering industrial growth, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, or Ficci, said in a November report.

Just when India needs to ramp up its industrial machine to lock in growth and when foreign companies are joining the party, Naxalites are clashing with mining and steel companies essential to India's long-term success, the report said.

But if the international mining capital has just moved in there is also an old, an ancient terror. What terror is that?

As the question is not new, not even of this century or the last I will go back to a text that has been determining my world view. I read it in May 1940 as I lay reading on my heaving berth in the "Mathilda Thordén" going north through the arctic storms between Greenland and Iceland to escape from German submarines. We were going with contraband for Sweden; gasoline, munitions and airplanes to Petsamo, the only port open. Denmark was occupied by the Germans, the Allies were evacuating northern Norway. Sweden was surrounded.

"Mathilda Thordén" was without safe conduct from either the Germans or the Allies but my father had decided that we had to go back to Europe on it. It was the only chance.

The English aristocracy are sending their children to safety in the United States but we are of peasant stock, we go home in case of danger, he said.

I was not convinced that it was such a good idea, but I had as young

teenager no say in the matter. Next year my parents went back to the United States. He over the Soviet Union, my mother over Portugal and Great Britain. I was left with my grandmother in Sweden. But that is another story.

As we were going to slip out of New York harbour Ralph Bunche had come on board to say goodbye. He was my father's assistant. He gave me a thick book. "To Jan as a memory of America", he wrote on the fly leaf. It was an edition of the main works of Mark Twain. As I lay in my berth during that North Atlantic storm reading "A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court" I came to a paragraph Mark Twain had written in 1889, one that has come to determine my world view ever since:

Why, it was like reading about France and the French, before the ever memorable and blessed Revolution, which swept a thousand years of such villany away in one swift tidal-wave of blood-one: a settlement of that hoary debt in the proportion of half a drop of blood for each hogshead of it that had been pressed by slow tortures out of that people in the weary stretch of ten centuries of wrong and shame and misery the like of which was not to be mated but in hell. There were two "Reigns of Terror," if we would but remember it and consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the "horrors" of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak; whereas, what is the horror of swift death by the axe, compared with lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty, and heart-break? What is swift death by lightning compared with death by slow fire at the stake? A city cemetery could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which we have all been so diligently taught to shiver at and mourn over; but all France could hardly contain the coffins

filled by that older and real Terror-that unspeakably bitter and awful Terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserves.

Eighteen years later, during the monsoon 1958 I drove on the Grand Trunk Road over the border from Lahore to India. After some time in India it dawned on me that I was living in the same reality as once the Connecticut Yankee in Mark Twain's story. My private life could even be called pleasant and interesting. My wife painted. I was working with the typewriter. We had our rooms on the upper story of a subardar major's house in Defence Colony, in the afternoon we were visiting the bookstores around Connaught Place, having drinks and discussions with different friends and acquaintances in the gilded diplomatic and comprador ghetto of Chanakyapuri and more importantly having intensive intellectual debates with comrades among the Indian intellectuals. But then ... when we moved outside this charmed circle the stark reality of Indian life for the majority rolled over us like a mighty ocean wave: a "lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty, and heart-break."

To leave that enclosed foreign, upper-class and upper caste enclosure was to see the reality of India:

Certain savage-looking beings, male and female, are seen in the country black, livid, and sun burnt and belonging to the earth which they dig and grub with invincible stubbornness. They seem capable of articulation and when they stand erect they display human lineaments. They are in fact men. They retire at night to their dens where they live on black bread, water and roots. They spare other human beings the trouble of sowing, plowing and harvesting and thus should not be in want of the bread they have planted.

But that was not written on India, it was written in 1689 on France by Jean de La Bruyère. A century later the "ever memorable and blessed

Revolution, which swept a thousand years of such villany away in one swift tidal-wave of blood" broke in France

The romantic India is a figment of novelists, tourist industry and movie makers. But even so life in the India above the dividing life is as interesting and pleasant (and intellectually inspiring) for those individuals and classes that are elected to it as life was for their class in Paris during l'ancien régime. As on France of that period many interesting books are published about that life.

But there is in Indian reality this other India. An India that is like France outside the privileged areas in the eighteenth century. This is not un-known. Older Indian writers - as Mulk Raj Anand for instance - and many good contemporary writers like Palagummi Sainath and Arundhati Roy has in horrifying detail described this the popular reality of Indian life. The hunger, the oppression and even the mass suicides out of despair.

These writers are good writers but they are not lonely witnesses, not by any means. The situation for the undertrodden in India is no secret. If you go to the more or less liberal press in India you will find reportage after reportage on the plight of the dalits and adivasis. You will find detailed descriptions of the daily regular horrors when the government forces, regular and non regular, and the doras with their goondas are persecuting them. For the adivasis and dalits of India it is as for the peoples of Kongo-Kinshasa. They are hounded and murdered and their women raped and mutilated for the profit and security of the rulers. As in eighteenth century France these horrors are no secret to the enlightened.

Yes, the stories of murder and planned sexual abuse for political and economic reasons I heard this year are like the stories I reported 30 years ago. But with a difference. Then the stories were also of a mainly spontaneous albeit often very violent and even cruel - popular response to the ruling class oppression that the party tried to control.

These spontaneous individual killings are against our policy. They resemble the annihilation line that was a mistake. But in practice it is a very difficult question.

Now thirty years on when the revolution already had its own state structure - the Janathana Sarkar - in the villages we asked the general secretary about the wider issue of the new legality:

"Q: Where do you place democracy in the working of the Party? Meaning the right to strike, the right to dissent, and the right to freedom of expression.

A: This is a very important question; however there is no confusion in our Party. We need a new democratic state in which other than the Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie, the landlords and imperialists all others will have real or genuine freedom. Other than enemies of the people, for everybody there would be real or genuine democracy. In addition, I may say that while preparing the Policy Program of the Revolutionary People's Committees /Janatana Sarkars, we have studied the experience of Gram Rajyas of the historic Telengana armed agrarian revolution, the Policy Program of Chinese Soviets, the People's Barrio committees of the Philippines, the Revolutionary People's Committees of Peru, the United Revolutionary People's Councils of Nepal and also studied the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In accordance with above we have all the fundamental rights including that every voter has the right to recall any elected person, even has the right to bring any one in position of authority who works against interest of the people to court in order to prosecute them.

In terms of the four great freedoms declared by Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution ("the right to speak out freely, air views, hold great debates and write big-character posters"), other than the big-character posters on the wall, all the rest freedoms have been ensured by the Policy Program of the Revolutionary People's Committee /Janatana Sarkar. As the level of development in the Janatana Sarkar advances we would also follow the freedom for "big character" posters. According to the constitution no physical punishment for political opposition will be allowed, anybody had right to politically differ and even unionize. The Indian state is trying to control dissent and therefore people want revolution. We would not

repeat the same mistake. Besides, for any mistakes in prosecution, the person has the right to appeal to the village Revolutionary People's Committee, to higher levels and even to the Party. For instance, in one of the extension areas, there was an incident where in collusion with the Inspector General of Police, 33 members belonging to two villages became agents of the enemy. In this context our comrades went and handled the issue. While villagers wanted to give capital punishment to the main agent of the police, the party interceded to give a chance to that person to realize his mistake."

But still the social reality makes it difficult to fully implement this outside of, or on the fringes of the guerilla zone. Take the stories of the war against women in Andhra Pradesh Akhila was telling me of:

- The question of the Jan Adalat, the people's court is a question of increasing popular consciousness in the anti-feudal struggle. The dora has all connections, he is a friend of the officials. To protest to the authorities is both useless and can be dangerous. Now a dora for instance takes all the electricity delivered to the village for himself, to illuminate his own house. But one man speaks up. He is a moslem. What does the dora do? He sends his goondas to beat up the man and then he rapes his wife. He aims at punishing the dalits by destroying their dignity. At that stage the party comes to the village and intervenes. A people's court hears all the evidence and reaches the verdict that the goondas have to be beaten up themselves to teach them a lesson but their lives to be spared while the dora is to die. This was considered by the people to be justice and it strengthened not only the women and the muslims but raised the self esteem of the dalits as a whole. They regained their dignity, they were not to be treated like this anymore.

- Or take another case. The landlord was powerful and sexually cruel. There were but one or two women in the whole village that had not been raped by him. He went through the village surrounded by his goondas and when he saw a girl or grown up woman he desired the goondas stood guard around him while he raped her. In the morning the family of the raped then had to go to his house through the village parading his soiled under clothes.

—The party then intervened. The people's court reached the verdict that such goondas have to have their arms and legs broken, the dora himself has to be eliminated. This does not mean that the party condones physical violence or the death penalty. But in such cases as this these sentences do not only express the popular will they are necessary to help the utterly oppressed to regain their sense of dignity and become conscious of their rights.

Yes, it is difficult in the reality of harsh class struggle, but the party is now getting a political hold on the hatred against goonda violence in the villages. I remembered what I had written about retaliation in Kothagudem thirty years ago in "India Waits":

There was a notorious goonda whom even the police feared. He had run his village for the landowner for twenty years. He raped a washer-girl and she drowned herself in a well for shame. Four students from Warangal were in town. They called him out to the bazaar. He came. He was foolhardy and feared no one since he was confident of his power and strength, and since no one had dared to stand up to him in 20 years. When he arrived at the bazaar, the students caught him with a lasso and tied him up. Then they cut off his hands and nailed them to the shop wall. Above the severed hands they placed a sign which read: 'This is what happens to those who lay hands on the people's women.'

When they saw this, the people in the bazaar drew back in horror. They stood there in total silence and gave the four students plenty of room when they left. Their emotions were mixed with fear. But now the incident has become the subject of a song.

## IX

### SINGING THE POETRY OF THE PEOPLE.

But already as I the evening in the second camp looked at the pictures and videos of the dead jawans it was as if I heard Cherabandu Raju singing "Ma loni" in our Hyderabad hotel room thirty years ago. The police were in the lobby downstairs. They were following Cherabandu Raju and were checking on us. I was recording him and his voice was weak. He was to die thirty months later of brain tumors and was already marked by the illness. I taped him singing for the record I later published.

He had written the song in prison then when thirty-five poets in Andhra Pradesh had been jailed for literary crimes during the Indira Gandhi "emergency". It was a song directed both to the prison guards and to those comrades who meant that all policemen and guards were, and always would be enemies. It could have been a song to these dead young jawans I was looking at in the pictures. The text was thirty years ago translated to me by Subba Rao:

You are one of us. You belong to us. You have become a policeman for your living. But now you point your bullets at those who sacrifice for a better life. Brother, dear, is that a life to live? The old ones walk to the grave. Your little brothers and sisters trail stones. But you send bullets against their hearts. Still, you are one of us. You belong to us. Some are rolling in luxury and abundance. The poor suffer in destitution and misery. That's why all the poor are rising now. They want you to take your place among them. To be a human is to have pride. When the masters order you to keep your mouth shut, think

of the truth. Today the legions of demons rule. Starvation and destitution has filled you with tears. You suffer without even having a house of your own, not even a courtyard. You are poor, but don't let yourself turn into a murder weapon against your own flesh and blood. Your ordinary relatives have gone to the forest. The vultures rule the country. The masters who have given you the rifle are traitors against your country and your family. You are one of us. You belong to us. Brother, dear, now you are doing wrong when you send your bullets against the hearts of your brothers and sisters.

That song could have been written to the dead jawans and their still living fellows now engaged in hunting down and killing adivasis and naxalites in Dandakaranya.

It had become a very popular song. When Indira Gandhi at that time used troops to put down the police in riot against her policies the policemen sang this song as the army moved against them. It is still a song that talks directly to the poor jawans the government use against the people.

Cherabandu Raju was one of the great post-independence young Telugu poets, a modernist who represented what was called the "naked poetry". But as the struggle had become more intense in Andhra Pradesh after Naxalbari and he had read Mao Zedong on a literature serving the people he made a choice between becoming a poet for the rulers with beautiful - albeit modernistic - words and a poet who took part in the struggle and wrote songs that talked directly to the masses. In 1970 he had been one of the founders of the "Revolutionary Writers Association", known as VIRASAM - Viplava Rachayithala Sangham. (That now once again is outlawed by the government).

One of his most powerful songs was the formally very simple "Padutam, padutam". It became the political prisoner's own song during the Indira Gandhi "emergency". When the political prisoners were taken to the courtroom linked with iron chains they began singing "Padutam, padutam" beating time with their chains. It is still sung by

the political prisoners in Indian jails:

We sing, we sing that the people is our leader, that the power of the people is winning. We sing the song of liberation. It is written by Naxalbari. We sing, we sing that the people is bleed white but that the struggle of the people will reconquer the fruits of work. We sing, we sing.

Yes, Charubandu Raju was not only a great Telugu poet but a naxalite poet who belonged to the "People's war" group. The revengeful and petty government responded by time and time again throwing him in jail and even at the time when they knew him to be approaching death trying to hasten his death by starving him.

But he is not a poet who was. He still is a poet typical for the strong literary and art movement that the Naxalites have been - and still twenty-eight years after the death of Charubandu Raju - are organising and leading as an integral part of the social struggle all over India.

In 2008 the Party was to sum up the experience of the last forty years of Naxalite struggle for an international audience: "The Blazing trail of the Maoist revolution in India." Then it took the motto of the speech from Cherabandu Raju:

"The ray of hope in the eyes of the hungry  
Has disappeared like a desert path  
The tents of faith blown by the wind  
Have been in ruins long since  
Now the bones worn of patience  
Must in unison root out this tree of darkness  
With battle axes and spikes

Cherabandu Raju, Let not this country be deceived again."

But, organising and leading are words that can point the wrong way. The Naxalite movement is a movement that is both a political

expression of the struggle of the peoples of India and also an ideological influence that has been and continues to be a determining factor in the literature of the people. To explain this I want to quote what I wrote about this aspect of the modern literature of India and the importance of Naxalbari for literature twenty seven years ago. I wrote and published this on the death of the greatest of Telugu poets, he who had inspired and formed also Cherabandu Raju: Sri Sri.

In the heat of the afternoon of June 15, 1983, one of the world's great poets suffered a heart attack and died. He was 73. In the Swedish press however, there was not even a short notice to be read. Perhaps there was some short note tucked away in the French or British papers; if there was I didn't see it.

The silence in Europe is not surprising, seeing as the poet died in Madras and was Asian, an Indian. What is more, he was a Communist-not some Goulash Communist, Eurocommunist or communist of some other variety of radish politics, however. He was a real communist, red straight through. He died in Madras. His language was Telugu, a major, beautifully poetic language with a rich literature. But it is an Asian language, and its great and long cultural tradition is not French, British or American. Cultured Europe, which gets itself into a tizzy over the opinion of this or that/Parisian cafe scribbler on the structure of poetry, doesn't even know the name of the language 40,000,000 southern Indians use to give expression to their experiences, knowledge and emotion.

The obituarist D. Anjaneyulu writing in Indian Express, June 16, 1983 concluded with the words:

He was for Andhra Pradesh what Nazrul Islam was for Bangladesh, Pablo Neruda for Latin America and Mayakovsky for Soviet Russia. He remains poet of the revolution, the ever ephemeral herald of the future.

Goethe, of course, was right when speaking with Eckermann on Wednesday January 27, 1827, he stated that one has to look out over

the world so as not to fall into the delusion that what one wrote was the only poetry and was of particular value. But unfortunately he was mistaken when he claimed that the epoch of world literature was at hand. One hundred and fifty years after that discussion, the epoch of world literature is still so far off that one can safely assume that Europeans who work with literature do not even recognize the name of that great poet who died in Madras in the summer of 1983.

His people knew and loved him by the name Sri Sri. Because of his language he was also reluctantly loved by his class enemies. They considered him a renegade, a flouter of religion and a caste-breaker. His full name was Srirangam Srinivasa Rao, and he was born into an orthodox middle class family in Visakhapatnam on January 2, 1910. It was there that he attended school. Later he studied at Madras Christian College and received a degree in Zoology in 1930. By then he already had a reputation as a poet, a promising -if romantic and slightly reactionary- youth. In 1928, at the age of 18, he had made his debut with Prabhava, a thin, little volume of confidently constructed, romantically religious poetry in traditional style.

This was a great period for Andhra literature. In later Indian literature history the two decades 1915-1935 in Andhra are compared with the age of Pericles in Athens or the Elizabethan period in England. The poets of the Andhra Renaissance, people such as Vecresalingam Panthulu, had shattered the ossified written language and recaptured the spoken tongue for literature. A constellation of great poets, unknown in Europe, created an extensive body of literature lyric and epic poetry, religious hymns and topical poems. This was also a time for novels and dramatic works in Telugu.

Sri Sri's breakthrough came in 1933 with Suptaasthikalu. His rejection of orthodoxy and reaction signalled an attachment to romantic modernism, and, at the same time, a return towards the popular, religious, Shaivaitic poetry.

Now he became a bard of the new technology and industrialism, vitalist and machine-worshipper, socialist and revolutionary. It was labor that created the world and all its wealth. It was the working

Srikakulam here in Andhra and peasant revolt smoldered across the land. If one seeks heroes, look no further- heroes such as Charu Mazumdar, weaver of the revolution's red scarf, and Vempatapu Satyanarayana and Adibhatla Kailasam, brilliant jewels of Andhra, and all the other thousands of immortal martyrs of whom the poor now sing.

When Sri Sri turned 60 and it was time for the grand, official homage, students came and politically posed their question to the assembled poets:

Which side are you on, you poets? On the side of the struggling poor masses or the cruel government?

In Germany, the young radical students had lived to see their beloved Goethe become the poet of indifferentism. Sri Sri was great, a Goethe of his time and one with his people. He did not become indifferent. 1970 was the jubilee year, the year of homage. From the Chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, the poor national poet was to receive a great prize, a large amount of money and the acclamation of the powerful. But Sri Sri spurned the honor and the money, choosing instead to participate in the founding of Viplava Rachayitala Sangham, the Revolutionary Writers' Association, which openly advocated the Naxalbari way.

In the years that followed he took part in the efforts of the Revolutionary Writers' Association and worked toward the establishment of the Indian Revolutionary Writers' Association. He defied the authorities. They were even obliged to imprison him a short time, this national poet they had once tried to co opt. And all the while he wrote.

For the poetry movement in Andhra, for thousands of poets and millions of listeners and readers, Sri Sri's work from the years after 1970, collected in Maro Prasthaanam, is a fantastically young, creative continuation of one of Indian literature's great and liberating life works.

Now he is dead. Even European workers and students who have

never heard of him are the poorer for it. But the revolutionary poetry movement for the liberation of India's people, which he served and inspired, goes on stronger than ever.

Now in 2010 I was to go to Hyderabad once again. I was to meet Varavara Rao and Gaddar and other comrades. But this year I was too tired, to go there. In fact I was already getting ill and after Bombay I had to go back to Sweden directly.

But in 1980 I had met Charabandu Raju and other poets and singers from different revolutionary groups and recorded their songs on a small recorder. Some years later Subba Rao, now deceased, had helped me in translating the lyrics. The sale in Sweden was very small and the international edition we tried to distribute via London was simply unsold. The reason was political. The singers were from different groups and at that time the movement was deeply split between hostile groups and as there then was no possibility of unity between what could be called "Indian communist revolutionaries" no group could accept all the singers I had recorded on my small tape recorder. I would hope - see appendix - that the situation is now different and that it would be possible to take notice of and hear what unites!

I remember how we thirty years ago were sitting in the deep jungle night around the camp fire with the armed squad in the Godavari hills. They were singing a dirge by Agade Chenniah, their homage to R. Rama Narasanya. It was deeply moving. I recorded it and Subba Rao - now longtime dead - translated the words to English in his notebook as the group sang.

I believe that these words say something about the Naxalite movement then - and now:

Brother R. Narasanya is immortal. Like a torch for the masses he is. Born a worker he strived to secure the fruits of work for the working. He studied the classics. He followed Lenin. He went the way of Mao Zedong Thought. He led us towards the future. He was standing in front. He wanted equality and took to arms. The land to the tillers! he said. He divided the land in

Khammam, Warangal, Srikakulam, Karimnagar and the two districts of Godavari. He woke up the people of the tribes and led us on the road of struggle. The enemy set traps. The enemy captured him early one morning before sunrise. They captured this brother, this brother who was unarmed. They took him to Malakpet, Hyderabad. Our beloved leader fell into the hands of the police. They took him to Marsampet in the district of Warangal in the mountains of Chihalgutta. The son's of whores tore out his nails when he answered them: "I am going the way of the revolution". They shot him shamelessly to death in the imprisonment. The blood of this great leader was collected on the ground. The people screamed loud and cried bitterly. The enemy had to flee when the people then took the way our brother had showed. Immortal he is in the hearts of the people. A brilliant example he is to us, our brother Rama Narasanya.

## X

ON THE POLITICS OF INFIRMITY AND  
CULTURAL SPECIFICITY

As I woke up the night was still deep in the jungle around me. I could hear the comrades breathing calmly alongside me. They were all sleeping. A sentry was passing the camp out in the jungle. I could see the torch light moving.

I had been writing an article in my sleep. I had written: In Sweden where the official ideology during many centuries was dominated by the protestant Church and Bible reading was made compulsory even for poor peasants not only did literacy among the (male) population become general from the seventeenth century we who had passed the outer limit of the Biblical age - fourscore years - had only evil days to look ahead to. Did I really agree?

I had woken up in the middle of this question because I had to pee. That is not strange. When you are over eighty you usually go up a couple of times each night. At home this is not difficult. I roll to the side, put my feet on the floor, take hold of the bookshelf, stand up and walk. I do this quietly in order not to wake my wife. But now I am laying flat on my back on the ground sheet in the jungle. I think I can manage to sit up with my legs crossed as if I was doing yoga. That I can. But then?

I have nothing to get my hands on and to use to haul myself up to a standing position, a walking one. Even if I could turn around and begin creeping on my knees I won't be able to stand up until I have left the ground sheet and creeping over the mud have reached a tree to hold on to.

I suddenly remember the day last winter just before my wife flew to



visit her family in Mexico. I had walked to the cellar, a good Swedish earthen cellar down in the garden, I use it for wine. Never warmer than + 10 Celcius in the summer heat and never colder than + 4 Celcius in the coldest night in winter. Originally it was dug sometime in the mid 19th century for potatoes. Now I had taken up a bottle of Beaujolais. It was a cold day. It had been snowing for the last three weeks. The path up to the house was enclosed by snow walls more than one meter high. Then suddenly I slipped. I fell. Lay on my back clutching the bottle. I lay with my feet higher than my head on the path enclosed by these walls of snow. If I had been younger I would just have turned around and stood up. If the weather had not been so very uniformly cold the last weeks the snow melting and freezing would have formed a crust, giving me something to hold on to. Now I tried to turn over on my stomach. But I could not. I suddenly remembered the small alligator Nelson had given me when he came back from Florida in 1939. If you turned it on its back and stroked its stomach it could not move.

I shouted. My wife heard me. She came, took me by my hands and helped me up.

Remember not to go by yourself to the cellar when I am in Mexico, she said. Nobody can hear you shouting here in the forest and even if you have your Mobile and use it to call for help from the health service or the police they have so many miles to drive that you will have frozen to your death before they arrive.

Yes, old age has its problems. I wake the young adivasi comrade from the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army sleeping next to me. He understands and calls another comrade. I stretch out my arms towards them and they take me by my hands and haul me up to a standing position.

As long as I stand I can walk and go to pee by myself. But I am not able to squat and shit. The knees do not allow it. That is if I get to a squatting position I will not be able to stand up again by myself.

— You are like grandfather, one of the young comrades says. His knees are also worn out.

They then take an ax and quickly make me a latrine of the same

type as in the Swedish army, a thick branch to sit on which is hanging on the forks of two trees above a shallow trench.

Later on during my stay in Dandakaranya the comrades helped me take baths. Gautam Navlakha when he came back from longer walks told me how good it was to go to the well the comrades had dug for the camp, take a bucket of water and go aside to douse himself. For me that was not so easy.

I don't need any book to tell me that one of the irritating details of old age is that so many things that used to be so simple become more difficult when you pass the eighty. Washing properly when you are out camping for instance. At home I can take a shower by myself even though I don't enter a bath tub without asking my wife to be ready to help me get up if something happens.

Of course I can find a place in the shade without too many ants and insects. With some difficulty I can even draw a bucket of water and carry it there by myself. But as my knees are bad and give me pain I simply can't continue the procedure and pour the bucket over me and wash myself. I have to get help. Out here in the Dandakaranya jungle I got help from the young comrades.

There is a very real political reason why I am writing this. It is usually not done from writers on what is generally called "the Left". Not only because it seems too private but because it is otherwise so easy by focusing on present economic and social issues to overlook very real cultural differences. We avert our gaze also because whole issue of "cultural" differences has become the preserve of the ultra-right - in Europe as well as in Japan, India and Southern Africa. But in fact that very fact ought to make us look more closely. After all cultural and national differences and specificities do exist.

If you want an analogy "cultures" are like languages. They are ultimately historically socially formed; it is possible to see how social relations, later class relations, form them. But that fact is not enough. The perspective has to be longer than that of our present era of class society to understand the development of languages and formulate correct present policies. This I thought about as the young comrades

helped me to wash myself in the jungle.

Take the view of old age as an example. Also in regard to growing old India and Sweden are on extreme ends of the scale. The average life expectancy is about twenty years longer if you are born in Sweden instead of in India. Even though the infant mortality rate distorts the picture of grown ups reaching old age. Illness and starvation and oppression also make the life of many elderly in India miserable. But that is not the whole story. There is a difference in the attitude to elderly, a cultural one with a long history.

There is in Sweden a wide spread belief that in the past that when people became too old then these old people were often led by their extended families to a cliff and themselves jumped to their death or were pushed over by the family members. As all members of the extended family had held their hands on to the log there was no personal guilt. The un-translatable word for this place is "ättestupa", a "gens precipice" you might say. In literature it is mentioned in the "Gautrek saga" from late 13th century. The legends are localised to several hills with mythological names mainly in south Sweden.

Another version of the same tale is that when the old man or woman had become unable to work, but still wanted to eat then the extended family would take a club with a very long handle, an "ätteklubba" a "gens club" and each one from the extended family would place his/her hand on the shaft so that the guilt would not be personal and then the club would descend on the old relatives head, smash the skull and deliver him/her from life to death. There are churches in south Sweden where such clubs were said to have been stored.

The reason for this killing off of the aged was said to be poverty; the villages were utterly poor and the small plots gave barely enough to feed the family of the son who had taken over. Of course people, also old people, have been killed through the centuries in the deep poverty of rural Sweden. Some were given "white", as arsenic was called. You might also when an old grave yard is shifted find a skull here and there with an iron nail driven through the skull.

This was no expression of "genetic" or "natural" evil. Deep rural poverty, dearth and regular periods of famine and real starvation in an Arctic outskirts of Europe during long centuries (the last real famine in Sweden was 1866/7) formed this cultural tradition of killing the old and infirm. It could possibly be seen as a social custom that made it possible for my ancestors to survive despite the climate. However it also has left deep cultural scars in our present life.

There are two facts that ought to be kept in mind here. Despite centuries of investigation no solid evidence has been found that there ever in Sweden has existed a real "ättestupa" or "ätteklubba". It seems just to be a wide spread Swedish folk fantasy; a rationalization of a traditional behaviour. At the same time if you go to classical popular literature like the Nordic "sagas" or the Indian popular tales you will find a certain difference in the description of the elderly. Which makes the story grim. Sweden is not a nice culture to grow old in. Not that we are the only culture known for killing off elders. I remember in China being told of how grandmothers gave up eating during famines so that the younger might live. In southern Tamil Nadu deep rural poverty drives the family to give the old and no longer productive what is euphemistically called an oil bath; thalaikootal.

But there is a difference. We can make fun of the gerontocracy of the United States senate. Though in Sweden even formerly important and well known politicians, or journalists are socially erased after the pension age. Even if they continue to physically live until after eighty they are non existent; socially non existent.

There is a welfare system in Sweden as in other late capitalist states. This is the effect of reformist class struggle. During the last generations the municipalities have thus built beautiful houses for the aged. Well known architects have done wonders. There are single rooms, or small apartments for the inmates. The media report on the happy and contented aged.

Old people are officially taken care of. But behind that social surface the picture becomes different. In reality they are often starved to death. When they no longer are able to take care of themselves and

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Old people are officially taken care of. But behind that social surface the picture becomes different. In reality they are often starved to death. When they no longer are able to take care of themselves and

their hands shake, they are in many places I know of no longer allowed to eat with other inmates and the food that is placed before them is tasteless industrial food often produced and packed a long time ago somewhere else in the European Union. Then they simply don't have the interest to eat any longer. They die. There is no difference if the aged is housed in an expensive private home for the aged or in the social security home. Nobody kills them. But they are treated as poor people in India treat their so called holy cows. When they no longer are of use they are bound to a tree. They eat all the grass they find. But as the rope is short they soon are without any grass. Nobody kills them. There is no blood on any head. The cow has just chosen to die.

This death of old people in Swedish institutions in what could be called anorexia is seen as normal. Every one in our social services knows this. Old people just stop eating and then die. Of this we have good statistics. There is this unofficial under side to the social service in Sweden. The weak old woman falls out of her bed and pushes the button of her alarm. The staff sits gossiping, drinking coffee, eating cake and are in no mood to be disturbed.

— Let her ring!

My aunt Elsa took care of me when I came to Sweden during the war. She was a teacher, a local politician for the Social Democratic party. When she was past ninety she was placed in a nice flat for the aged. But she often fell. When she had died and was to be placed in her bed it was evident the linen had not been changed for a long time. She had slept in her old dried feces. At her funeral only one person from the nursing home came. He was a syrian immigrant; he had talked to her. For the Swedish staff she was just "Old Elsa".

Old people have traditionally been disliked in our Swedish culture. Even if official Sweden does not want to talk of this it is easy to prove from popular sayings and tales. In recent decades this folk-emotion has been reinforced by two other popular political trends; youth culture and feminism. The Swedish word for an old man, "gubbe", is strongly

pejorative. Of course the staff in the institutions for elderly is underpaid. People work there because they have not found any better work. They are on the lowest rung of the working class.

Many Swedish writers have written on the traditional scandalous treatment of the aged in Sweden. Ivar Lo-Johansson wrote so forcefully on the subject in the nineteen-fifties that he forced through reforms. But still one does not in civilised political society talk out loud how the aged are treated in Sweden. Specially not if you yourself is old and dependent on social service. But even if it is seldom seriously written about in our press the mis treatment of the aged is more normal than not. The trade union - shameful to say - tries to keep its eyes closed. A trade union member protesting against the general behaviour towards the elderly will be considered dis-loyal. Sweden is not a nice country to become old and infirm in.

If you don't believe my you need only to go to Sweden and observe how the aged are treated riding on a bus in Sweden and compare with those elderly entering a bus in southern France.

In countries like China, India, Iran, Mexico Spain the social situation is often very difficult and life span short, but culturally the aged are not disliked like in Sweden.

The young adivasi comrades from the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army now helping me to stand up in the middle of the night when I need to pee don't know that their behaviour is culturally specific. They believe that it is normal. I know that it is not.

I lay awake in the jungle. It is night, the comrades all around me are sleeping again and I try to formulate the problem. It is not just a question of the individual physical disabilities of getting old. They will vary but for most of us in every community and every age we have to pass through illness and pain before we die.

For all of us, it will be mainly uncomfortable to get old and die. That can be expressed in art as in the medieval European wood-cuts of the Art of Dying or the Dance of Death or by Buddhist sutras and Christian prayers.

Of course there is a difference between getting old as one of the

destitutes in our countries, sleeping under the bridges in Paris (in the gutters of lower Manhattan or in the Stockholm parks), or getting old as one of the rich and privileged. That is one of the reasons why we strive for a better and more just society.

But even so we know that there is a difference between cultures and traditions about how aged are treated and seen. It is with these traditions as with language (and as with gestures, facial expressions and body language); the structure is socially determined but in a far longer time sequence.

In a totally socialist world I would prefer to become old and have to die in a society with cultural traditions from southern Europe, China, the adivasis of India or the indigenous of Mexico. I shudder at the thought of ending my life in a Swedish institution. Death and old age in Sweden will during the foreseeable future - even in a socialist Sweden - be a cold and very unpleasant experience! I hope I can find a way out in time!

I am quite convinced that politically active friends and comrades in my country will not accept or even understand what I have now written.

There are slight sounds of snoring and deep sleep on the ground sheet around me. I am also not quite sure that the comrades would understand me if I told them of this.

But I might be wrong.

In fact, the more I think of it the more I think they would understand. After all they take care of their own grandfathers!

## XI

### IN THE CAMP

Gautam had gone to the Abuz Maad region for a couple of days. The march there and back would be difficult. The government forces were trying to blockade the area totally, to not even let in salt. It was decided that I would not be able to go along. I would be a hindrance. Gautam would have to pass a heavily patrolled road, slip through. With my bad knees I would be a danger to the whole group.

The print shop driven by solar cells moved with us and I was given a set of internal Party documents to read in order to give me a better understanding both of the history and the present problems of the Party.

When we were going to leave Dandakaranya and go back to Delhi we had to give all our written notes. They were burnt - but before that they were copied and we got each one a very small chip. So small that it could be swallowed if we were caught on our way back. But the books I could keep even if they were internal.

- The enemy has already got hold of copies!

When we were not moving and no program was prepared for me I lay on my ground sheet in the jungle reading.

Two of the documents on the history of the movement had been prepared for the "Unity congress" in 2007:

"Political-organisational review-report of the Maoist Communist Centre of India." (102 pages).

"Political organisation review of the People's War." (132 pages).

These reports on the history of the movement were concrete, honest and self-critical. The third document had been adopted by the 9th Congress-Unity Congress: "Strategy and tactics of the Indian

Revolution." It gives the present guide-lines for the Party. Among the points I noted as specific were:

More and more nationalities may come into armed confrontation with the reactionary Indian state that is keeping them in a state of subjugation and denying them their right to self determination. As a considerable part of the enemy's armed forces will inevitably be engaged against the growing tide of struggles by the various nationalities, it will be difficult for the Indian ruling classes to mobilise all their armed forces against our revolutionary war. (p. 39).

"In the guerrilla zones and in those areas where our work is going on with the task of forming Liberated Areas we should organise the people into struggles by rallying them around the following slogans: This takes place through the Revolutionary Peoples Committees, as part of capturing the state power.

1. Overthrow feudal authority; establish people's political power under the leadership of the landless and poor peasants and agricultural labourers.
2. Take over the lands of the landlords, the lands of the government, and other exploiting institutions and distribute them to the poor and landless peasants!
3. Build armed people's militia!
4. Stop repayment of debts and interests to landlords and money-lenders!
5. Stop paying taxes, cess, and levies to the government!
6. Right over the forests belongs to Adivasis and the toiling people. Stop the plunder of forest wealth by imperialists, comprador bureaucratic capitalists and big contractors!
7. Develop agriculture and cooperative movement! Increase production and achieve self-reliance in every sphere!" (p. 62).

Women, dalits, adivasis and religious minorities are the most important of the social sections to be taken cognisance of by

the party of the proletariat leading the revolution in the concrete conditions prevailing in India. (p. 117). ... But in addition to feudal and capitalist oppression, they (women) suffer from male-chauvinist domination and patriarchy. (p. 119). ... So in order to emancipate women, besides the class-struggle, we have to carry on struggle in the political, ideological and cultural sphere that are breaking out either spontaneously or under the leadership of petty bourgeois feminist organizations against social discrimination, oppression and exploitation while at the same time we should expose the limitations of those leadership. (p. 120). /.../ India is a deeply caste ridden society where caste oppression and Brahminical superiority is widespread. Dalits are the lowest rung of this ladder facing the inhuman practice of untouchability. (p. 120). ... The religious minorities like the Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others constitute around 15% of the Indian population. They are often the targets of attacks by Hindu chauvinist political parties and Hindu fascist gangs and suffer from discrimination by the Indian state that is biased towards the Hindu majority. Among the religious minorities the Muslims are being specially targeted in recent times." (p. 123).

To achieve this a revolutionary class-consciousness should be ensured through our political activity among the urban poor. We have to build up a vast network of secret party units with the advanced section of the working class that comes to the fore, particularly through political mobilization. We have to build up secret armed defence squads and open defence teams, from the very beginning itself with the working class youth to organize resistance against the attacks from the goondas engaged by managements and other exploiting sections and also from the state's armed forces." (p. 130).

Of special interest to me was the 192 pages long material for the "Leadership Training Programme" 2009 of the South Western Regional Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Maoist). It was both very direct in its self-criticism and very practical:

It quoted the Central Committee guide "Our Work in Urban Areas": "the party organization should be secret, the more secret the better. Whereas, a mass organization should be open, the wider, the better." (p. 21).

As Mao has said, what we need to build is a Bolshevized Party whose core of leadership comprise of Professional Revolutionaries with a vast underground network. Without such a vast network, the leadership and organizers cannot move amongst the people like a fish in the water. Not having built such a network and having built activities in a legalistic way makes us prone to the enemy attacks where we find it difficult to survive. Today the enemy's methods of intelligence gathering are far more sophisticated than what existed in the Russian and Chinese revolution. If we have to survive and grow against their encirclement and suppression campaigns, we need much higher levels of secret operations than existed then. This is inconceivable without a massive underground network. The strategy of Low Intensity Conflict of the enemy must be understood in depth in today's context and specific measures taken. (p. 66-67).

Much of the training program was devoted to the "Question of Underground Functioning."

We have the history of Indonesia, Greece and numerous other countries where the reactionaries did not stop at butchering lakhs (hundreds of thousands) of communists or even more dissidents. Even in the Latin America and Central American countries, the massacres of Guatemala for example, would

make the repression that we have faced to now look minor. When we know this history and when we openly declare that people's war is our path, could any concept of legalism be anything but suicidal. We have already paid a heavy price over the last few years. The movement in what was our strongest state has been decimated (Andhra Pradesh). Often we interpret the phrase "utilizing legal opportunities" to mean function legally until the enemy suppresses. This amounts to "function legally until it is too late to function at all." Communists must have foresight and not act blindly. We know the enemy will clamp down so we must prepare for that when in fact there are legal opportunities. Utilizing "legal opportunities" means precisely this; build the movement in a big way taking the bulk of the new cadres to the underground. It also means maintaining both the legal and also the underground network of the mass organizations, so that when the legal is smashed the underground can continue to function." (p.84/86).

I continued to read until night. Next morning we broke camp. As we were moving through the jungle I looked at the young comrades. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is a communist party but as a maoist party it is also as a communist party different from the parties I knew and grew up in. Take an example:

Marx had written that the ideas of the ruling class become the ruling ideas; that I had of course read and heard about in the Young Communist league since my teens. But it had not been explained to me and other young - or older - "western" communists in our study courses as in the "Leadership Training Programme":

We say that we are communists, but are born and brought up with the values of the prevailing ruling classes. When we join the Party those ideas do not disappear by themselves. Besides, we live in society in which such feudal and bourgeois

values are rampant and quite naturally impact us. In such a situation, there is need for consistent struggle to change ourselves. Some of our incorrect values are deep-rooted in our subconscious and built around a number of insecurities. ... Though we may suppress them under some conditions, they assert themselves in other conditions even more aggressively. "

In India these subconsciously determining values

are also intricately linked to the caste system and ideas of ingrained superiority (and of inferiority), where every caste grouping has a sense of superiority with respect to those lower down the hierarchical ladder. The ideology of feudalism, brahminism, are so deeply rooted that it afflicts all including the victims of the system, though it is stronger amongst those at the top of the ladder. With this comes arrogance, ego, intolerance, contempt for labour, and varied other forms of assertion of superiority. ( p. 184).

If I had written that chapter in the "Leadership Training Programme" I would have pointed out that this is not specifically Indian. In other parts of the world the ruling class ideas and values take other forms. I can today see on television how the Horthy-fascist values of eighty years ago reappear out of the collective subconscious and take material form in the streets of Budapest as uniformed marching groups once more shouting 'nem, nem soha' - no, no never - against the treaty of Trianon from 1920. (The really instructive part about that is that these groups are a base for the present government in a Hungary that just taking the presidency of the European Union!)

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) has learned from Mao Zedong during the Cultural revolution in China and is attempting to do what the European communists failed to do; taking up the fight against sub-consciously determining reactionary values. What was worse among official communist parties in Europe from the thirties to

the nineties, was that the very idea of the necessity of combating such subconsciously determining reactionary values among the masses was seen as anti-party Freudian and Reichian ideologies.

The maoist concept that "without communist values, a genuine proletarian party will not become a reality and petty-bourgeois values will corrode the Party and slowly destroy its revolutionary vitality" was also for the then dominant orthodox Communist ideologies considered pure reactionary idealism.

As I walked with the young comrades and my knees were hurting I thought about all those theoreticians in the then Soviet Union and the so called "real socialist" countries and "Euro-communists" that wrote book upon book about Mao Zedong as an idealist, a reactionary idealist for pointing this out. Some of them might still be alive but their whole society was at time decaying around them.



## XII

### THE STANDING WAVE !

It was towards the end of our stay and the comrades had established a new camp in the Bastar jungle not so far from a village the name of which I don't know and didn't ask for.

– It is better if you don't give too exact locations of villages and places later when you write, the General Secretary, Ganapathy, had said to me the first day.

– Don't worry. I can't write what I don't know, I answered.

We were all sitting in the shade drinking tea and talking. The General Secretary had been discussing the questions we had raised. In the break the comrades had also been talking about different letters they had received from Western journalists.

– It is always better to receive them. Invite them to come. Most journalists that ask to come here will be reasonably honest. Even if they are hostile some information seeps through to the general reader, I said.

Then Gautam Navlakha, who is a leading and responsible civil rights campaigner raised an important discussion in principle. On behalf of the People's Union for Democratic Rights he asked the General Secretary if the Communist Party of India (Maoist) could state that it would honour the Geneva conventions in the present de facto war.

The General Secretary was quiet for a moment then said that it was an important issue which raised many questions and that the party would carefully consider it.

I took no part in that discussion.

But I will now. It is a question that is not one that only concerns India. It is an important question and has so been for a very long time.

A very long time.

Gautam Navlakha was of course in theory right. The stipulations in the Geneva accords on international and non-international conflicts were in 1997 by the International Committee of the Red Cross recognised as rules of customary international law valid for all states. If the parties in the present conflict in Dandakaranya will follow the Geneva accords that would be of great help to the people.

But was it feasible? What role do, or rather can, the official humanitarian ideals and arguments play in class societies during grave social conflicts when the oppressed classes have risen up like now when the Maoists are conducting a "Protracted People's War" in India?

That war is no tea party, as Mao expressed it. The present civil war in India is bloody and ugly.

I had myself after my last visit to this region thirty years ago written on what I then had seen and directly heard of the horrifying ruling class violence, the mass rapes, the killings. This time I had heard the same stories and I had also read the rather honest reports in Indian papers and magazines, both mainline and those more or less on the left. The class cruelty in India is as well documented today as it was after 1857.

At the same time the Maoists, "enemies of the state" as the government says, are in official Indian media and by the government spokespersons accused of indiscriminate violence, death to innocent civilians and destruction of public and private property.

The General Secretary had in his talks with us taken up the accusations against his party to refute them.

– People and Maoist revolutionaries do not want violence or armed struggle with anybody. Only if it is unavoidable they take up arms and resist their enemies.

But as violence in class conflicts is not specific for India and violence in India did not start with the struggle in Naxalbari 1967 also the questions on the Geneva accords, the rules of war, facing the General Secretary and his party are not new. To get this in perspective and thus understand the real complexity it is necessary to take some steps back.

Listening to Gautam Navlakha I thought about a discussion in Paris April 1871 that I had been planning to write about last year before going to Africa. One that prefigured our talk here in the Indian jungle 2010.

According to the minutes for Thursday April 27 1871 published in the "Journal Official de la Commune de Paris 1871" (the reprint was from 1872 and I had bought it from a bouquiniste on the Quai Saint-Michel when I was living in Paris in the fifties) Gustave Courbet had submitted a communication to the Commune session saying more or less what Gautam Navlakha just had been saying.

Gustave Courbet, was not only a great French realist painter; one of the greatest in fact, he was also a political man on the left, a revolutionary and a communard. The session of the Commune on the 27th of April was opened by citizen Jules Allix :

The president read out the following communication by citizen Courbet:

In a message from the government in Versailles addressed to the prefects on the tenth or twelfth of this month M. Thiers announced that the war against Paris would be pursued with the same energy and without stopping at sacrifices like that of the North American states against the Southern states.

Leaving aside the inexactitude of the comparison (as here it is Paris that fights for liberty and human rights) I observe that M. Thiers when comparing us to the South states has not thought about our rights as belligerents.

After pointing out that the Versailles forces on the orders of M. Thiers were executing prisoners and that when general Duval surrendered with 1,500 men these men were executed and as Duval protested he was shot as well, Courbet continued:

It is time that Europe recognises our rights and citizen P. Grousset should commence by demanding from all peoples

the formal recognition of our rights as belligerents. This is a question I specially recommend to the commission of exterior relations.

G. Courbet.

P.S. It is more than hundred and one days that we fight the government of Versailles both morally and with arms.

Citizen Léo Meillet replied as member of the commission of exterior relations that already several days ago he had the honour of receiving the minister of the Republic of Ecuador together with several other envoys of southern republics and thus knows from a good source that appeals have been made to the Versailles government to get us recognised as belligerents.

At the session April 28 citizen P. Grousset stated that the question of addressing Europe and the world had been discussed in the delegation of external relations for which he was responsible:

but not for an appeal but as a protest against the infamous violations of the laws of war by which the government in Versailles has sullied itself. ... Today the facts are known; the press has spread them, the opinion of all civilised peoples can be formed. .... Who could accuse us, our Commune and its defenders of a single act that is not according to the usage of war among all the civilised peoples? We conduct war loyally, we do not use guilty methods!...

Soon 140 years will have passed since the Paris Commune. But both the democratic achievements of the Commune (the new state structure in Dandakaranya, the Janathana Circar is politically inspired by the Commune as well as by the own popular Adivasi traditions) and the legalistic mistakes that contributed to its fall are of present day importance. What more, there are reasons to keep in mind la Semaine Sanglante, the Bloody Week. Then Thiers took revenge on the people of Paris with mass executions of more than 30,000 men, women - and

children. Thereafter his Versailles government continued with the legal repression. 37,000 arrested, 18,000 condemned. Prison sentences, executions and deportation.

Adolphe Thiers, historian of the French revolution and liberal politician, was totally ruthless. What is more, his was a typical and traditional response from the ruling class whenever their privileges had been under attack from what the French then called "little people". Take small Finland as an example. When the "whites" with help of Swedish volunteers and German troops were victorious in the Finnish civil war 1918 some 20,000 "red Finns", poor peasants and workers, were executed or starved to death in the prison camps. It would take several generations before the victorious bourgeoisie - and their Swedish class brethren - even would acknowledge the fact of the massacres.

This also explains why citizen P. Grousset was wrong when he thought that when the facts were known the opinion of "all civilized peoples" would condemn the atrocities of Thiers and the Versailles forces. With a few exceptions; Marx and his followers, old chartists, some liberals, refractory writers like August Strindberg and the Russian exiles it was the condemnation of the Commune that was universal.

But there is a difference between then and now. It can be clearly seen if you compare Paris 1871 and India 2010. In 1871 only some artists like Courbet and a handful of writers; Rimbaud, Vallès, Verlaine, de Villiers de L'Isle-Adam and to a certain extent Victor Hugo were more or less sympathetic to the Commune and its aims.

The rest of the whole group that later on became known as "the intellectuals", were hostile. That openly reactionary writers like Alexandre Dumas and Maxime Du Camp would dislike the Commune is not surprising. But also George Sand who had been a socialist in the 1848 revolution had not only lost that belief and condemned the Commune. Other nowadays highly respectable writers reacted with what can be called a visceral bourgeois class hatred against the democratic measures of the Commune. Flaubert who had found the repression against the Communards to mild and that it was necessary

to end universal suffrage even held that the Commune had committed a crime against natural right when rent payments to landlords were suspended for nine months. Zola who was less blood thirsty wrote that the decision by the Commune to forbid night work by the bakers was ridiculous and that to abolish the distinction between natural and legitimate children was just a service to those who fathered a bunch of bastards.

In India 2010 the situation is very different from that in France 140 years earlier. Even if the openly Maoist intellectuals are few (propagating Maoism is as construed by the government a crime) the majority of the middle class intellectuals and academics are in different ways supportive of policies for the rights of dalits and adivasis. Not only magazines that are considered to be on the "Left" like Economic and Political Weekly and Frontier but also general news magazines like Tehelka report on the killing, looting, burning of villages and mass rapes.

The regular armed forces conducted the mass killings in Paris 1871. In India 2010 they try not to take part in and become openly responsible for the mounting repression in the "red belt".

A sizeable part of what is called the middle class in India know that it is not possible to bring the praxis of Salwa Judum against the adivasis in Dandakaranya, of Green Hunt or COBRA all over India in accordance with what according to the International Red Cross is customary international law valid also for the Indian state.

It is enough to compare press reports in main line magazines on what is happening in Dandakaranya with the text of Article 27, of the Fourth Geneva Convention :

Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity. Women shall

be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault. Without prejudice to the provisions relating to their state of health, age and sex, all protected persons shall be treated with the same consideration by the Party to the conflict in whose power they are, without any adverse distinction based, in particular, on race, religion or political opinion. However, the Parties to the conflict may in regard to protected persons as may be necessary as a result of the war.

In this situation for the General Secretary to state that the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army would follow the Geneva convention and for him to demand that the government of India would instruct their forces do the same could seem politically rational.

Though this could, and possibly would, be seen by that public as an empty, and thus devious, gesture on the part of the Naxalites. Everybody in India knows that the Indian government would refuse to accept adivasis, dalits and their political friends as belligerents or accept that the people in Dandakaranya are civilians with the right to be protected. The British Empire from which they inherited their state power always refused to accept that customary international law ever applied in their colonial wars. Likewise the United States. As their war in West and Central Asia approaches its tenth year and their own losses mount and mount the United States government as yet shows no sign of officially accepting that it is at war in Iraq and Afghanistan and that any Geneva accords could apply.

Still India 2010 is not France 1871. There is a theoretical possibility that Gautam Navlakha could be right.

But as I had written that sentence I opened The Hindu for July 2 2010 on my computer. There i saw a picture of a dead man lying on his back with an AK-47 beside the body in what looked like a jungle area. The text began:

The Andhra Pradesh police on Friday said that it had shot dead top naxalite Cherukuri Rajkumar alias Azad, along with an unidentified cohort in an exchange of fire in Adilabad district, close to the State's border with Maharashtra.

But there had been no exchange of fire. The villagers heard nothing. The post mortem revealed he had been shot at point blank range. In reality - as became clear during the coming weeks - he had been murdered by the government agents and dumped in the jungle after being picked up on his way to a government inspired discussion with other senior party leaders on peace terms between the government and the Communist Party of India (Maoist) brokered by Swami Agnivesh.

As I looked at the picture of the dead man I knew that I - and Gautam - shared a responsibility for his death. His blood came on our heads. I will explain.

When we published our interview with the General Secretary we had decided to write as an introduction:

In particular we draw attention of readers to the General Secretary laying down concisely his party's stance on the issue of talks in light of the disinformation spread by the Union Minister of Home P Chidambaram that CPI (Maoist) had "scoffed" at the Indian Government's offer for talks. Indeed he told us:

To put concisely the main demands that the party has placed in front of the government [of India] for any kind of talks are

- 1) All-out war has to be withdrawn;
- 2) For any kind of democratic work, the ban on the Party and Mass Organizations have to be lifted;
- 3) Illegal detention and torture of comrades had to be stopped and they be immediately released. If these demands are met, then the same leaders who are released from jails would lead and represent the Party in the talks.

This triggered both a general discussion in the Indian press and a

discussion in the party. On April 14 the Hindu published a 12, 262 words long "Response by Azad, Spokesperson, Central Committee, CPI (Maoist)". I quote from the relevant parts of that text:

"In an exclusive interview to The Hindu, Azad, spokesperson of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), answers in writing questions on his party's attitude to dialogue with the Union Government.

The Maoists also have their preconditions for talks. In his recent interview to Jan Myrdal and Gautam Navlakha, Ganapathy made the following formulation on the issue of talks (see from our text above):

My question is whether these are realistic preconditions. For example, the "all out war" can be suspended first before it is "withdrawn," i.e. a ceasefire, so why insist on its withdrawal at the outset? Are you asking for a ceasefire or something more than that?

Secondly, you want the ban on the Party and its mass organizations lifted and prisoners released. Usually in negotiations of this kind around the world between governments and insurgent groups, the lifting of a ban is one of the objects of talks rather than a precondition and the release of political prisoners an intermediate step. Is the Maoist party not putting the cart before the horse, making demands that the government may be unlikely to accept as a starting point, rather than positing the same as one of the end points of the proposed dialogue?

Azad: I concur with the logic of your arguments. It is logically a valid argument that such demands could be resolved in the course of actual talks and not as a precondition for talks. But you must also understand the spirit of what comrade Ganapathy has said in his interview given to Mr. Jan Myrdal and Gautam Navlakha. Some clarification is required here. I will try to clarify what comrade Ganapathy has said.

Firstly what he meant when he said the government should withdraw its all-out war is nothing but a suspension of its war, or in other words, mutual ceasefire. Let there be no confusion in this regard. What Chidambaram wants is unilateral ceasefire by Maoists while the state continues its brutal campaign of terror. On the contrary, what the

Communist Party of India (Maoist) wants is a cessation of hostilities by both sides simultaneously. This is the meaning of the first point. A ceasefire by both sides cannot be called a precondition. It is but an expression of the willingness on the part of both sides engaged in war to create a conducive atmosphere for going to the next step of talks.

Secondly, if peaceful legal work has to be done by Maoists as desired by several organizations and members of civil society, then lifting of ban becomes a pre-requisite. Without lifting the ban on the party and mass organizations how can we organize legal struggles, meetings etc in our name? If we do so, will these not be dubbed as illegal as they are led by a banned Party? According to us, the ban itself is an authoritarian, undemocratic, and fascist act. Hence the demand for the lifting of the ban is a legitimate demand, and, if fulfilled, will go a long way in promoting open democratic forms of struggles and creating a conducive atmosphere for a dialogue.

Thirdly, what comrade Ganapathy had asked for is that the government should adhere to the Indian Constitution and put an end to the illegal murders in the name of encounters, tortures and arrests. We must include the term "murders" which is missing in the third point. There is nothing wrong or unreasonable in asking the government to stick to its own constitution. As regards the release of political prisoners this could be an intermediate step as far as the nature of the demand is concerned. However, to hold talks it is necessary for the government to release some leaders. Or else, there would be none to talk to since the entire Party is illegal. We cannot bring any of our leaders overground for the purpose of talks.

But then the Hindu opened another question; the way in which the Communist Party of India (Maoist) had been nearly crushed and their followers decimated in Andhra Pradesh after it had agreed to enter talks.

"If the government believes the Maoists "misused" the Andhra talks, your party believes the dialogue there was abused by the authorities to identify and then target your leaders. How, then, do you

hope to deal with the risks of once again entering into a dialogue with the Indian state?

Azad: The talks we held with the Congress regime in AP provided us with important lessons. And these lessons would guide us in any future talks with the governments of the exploiting classes. It would be too simplistic to conclude that the police could identify and target the leaders by utilizing the talks interregnum. They used it to some extent just as we used it to take our politics widely among the people in the State and outside. The setback we had suffered in most parts of AP is not a fall-out of talks but due to several inherent weaknesses of our Party in Andhra Pradesh and our failure to adopt appropriate tactics to confront enemy's tactics. This is an entirely different subject and can be dealt at some other time.

What is of relevance here is that the talks in Andhra Pradesh have given us a rich experience and important lessons. If at all a situation for talks arises once again - which we do not foresee in the near future given the inexorable compulsions on the government from the corporate sharks for total control of the mineral-rich region - we can instruct our leadership in various prisons to take the responsibility. Our General Secretary had explained this in the course of his interview with Mr. Jan Myrdal and Mr. Gautam Navlakha. The mistakes committed in AP during talks with the government will not be repeated."

The mistakes at that time led to the party coming out in the open for discussions with the government. There were mass meetings and demonstrations with a hundred thousand and more. Then the government hit back. As Akhila said:—

- I survived. I was kept hidden in an earthen cellar as Saddam Husein in Iraq. But they did not find me.

But the mistake was repeated 2010. The corpse of Azad the representative of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) killed in an "encounter" on July 3rd 2010 as he was coming to a discussion on a possible peace with the government is proof of that.

### XIII

#### KITTEN, KITTEN !

I remember from 1940 some teen age street kids up around 127th street in New York who liked to kill stray kittens. They used to catch them by using some young innocent kid to call sweetly:

- Kitten! Kitten!

When the kitten then trustfully came out towards the smiling kid the older kids stretched out their hands and despite the protests of the younger kid grabbed the kitten and strangled it. The Indian government tries to handle Naxalites in the same way.

Our words from the interview were used to set a trap. Then P. Chidambaram just waited until he could stretch out his grubby hands and do the planned deed. Thus:

Swami Agnivesh had together with other concerned Indian intellectuals been active for a mutual cease-fire solution and during the spring of 2010 he acted as a peace broker in contact both with the Communist Party of India (Maoist) through the the Central Committee representative "Azad" and the government of India through P. Chidambaram, the Minister of Home Affairs of India.

The Indian government used Swami Agnivesh just as it used our words as a bait in order to be able to grab and kill "Azad".

This becomes evident when you read the correspondence:

Letter from the Home Minister, P. Chidambaram, to Swami Agnivesh:

May 11, 2010

Dear Swami Agniveshji,

I learned that you led a group of social activists on a peace march from Raipur to Dantewada between May 6-8 2010. I have also learned

that you advocated a cessation of violence for 72 hrs "by either side before continuing the peace process". I congratulate you and thank you for your efforts.

While I respect your views and urge you to continue to help find a solution, I would like to clarify the Government's position for your kind consideration :

- (1) The CPI(Maoist) should announce that they will abjure violence. To start with, they could say that they will not indulge in any violent activities beginning a specific date, say, June 1 2010. (This is only an example and it could be an earlier date too).
- (2) Once the announcement is made, the Central Government will consult the Chief Ministers of the affected States and prepare a response well before the specified date. The response will include an invitation to the CPI(Maoist) to hold talks.
- (3) On the specified date (say, June 1), we would expect that the CPI(Maoist) will stop all violent activities. We would closely observe whether the CPI(Maoist) will maintain the position of "no violence" for 72 hours. It goes without saying that, during the said period of 72 hours, the security forces will not conduct any operations against the CPI(Maoist).
- (4) It is our hope that talks will begin during the period of 72 hours when there is "no violence".
- (5) Once the talk begins, we would expect that the CPI (Maoist) will continue to maintain its position of "no violence" until the talks are concluded.

I would appreciate if you could kindly keep the contents of this letter confidential. This is in line with what I told you when you met me a few days ago. However, I would encourage you to reach out to the CPI(Maoist) and persuade them to accept the Government's offer for talks, the sole condition being that the CPI(Maoist) should abjure violence.

With regards,

Yours sincerely

Sd/- P. Chidambaram, Home Minister, New Delhi, India

The letter was forwarded to "Azad", the spokesperson of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), who answered Swami Agnivesh

May 31, 2010

Regarding the proposal for talks made by Mr. P. Chidambaram in his letter to Swami Agnivesh

Dear Swami Agniveshji,

We heard that you and other democratic intellectuals had gone on a peace march in Dantewada in the first week of May 2010 braving the disruption organized by the goons of the BJP and Congress. You might have realized how the state government and the Centre are determined to sabotage any attempt to bring peace to the region and to prevent anyone from making efforts in that direction. We appreciate the efforts of well-meaning intellectuals and social activists like you to bring peace to the region. We also appreciate the efforts made by you to convince the Union Government to come forward for a cease-fire and dialogue with our Party which had prompted the Union Home Minister to state the Government's position on the issue.

We had gone through the letter written to you by the Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram dated May 11, 2010 which mentions the Government's position on the peace process and its offer for talks with the CPI (Maoist). The essence of his letter is that "the CPI (Maoist) should announce they will abjure violence" and specify a date from which they will not indulge in violent activities; should "stop all violent activities" from that date for 72 hours, and that the security forces will not conduct any operations against the CPI(Maoist); that "talks" would begin "sometime during the period of 72 hours when there is no violence"; and that the CPI(Maoist) should "continue to maintain its position of no violence until the talks are concluded."

We had already stated publicly our Party's position on cease-fire and talks with the government several times in the past.

Once again we appreciate the efforts made by you and many others who earnestly desire to bring peace.

We hope that you will pursue your mission of bringing peace taking into consideration the suggestions mentioned by us in this letter. We look forward to positive results for your well-meaning efforts.

With regards,  
Azad,  
Spokesperson,  
Central Committee,  
CPI (Maoist)

As a reply to this letter of June 26 2010 Swami Agnivesh acted and on June 26 he could inform "Azad" that:

"With the consent and facilitation of the central government I recently met Ghandy (the jailed Kobad Ghandy, senior Central Committee and Politbureau member) and Sanyal (the jailed Narayan Sanyal, Central Committee member) for about 90 minutes each to discuss how to arrive at an understanding between the Maoists and the government. ... My meetings with Mr Ghandy and Mr Sanyal were very cordial and their response was very positive towards the peace and dialogue process," Agniveshi said, adding Ghandy spoke of the need for confidence building measures, including protection of tribal rights and release of political prisoners. (Hindustan Times 18 September 2010).

Thus was the stage set and the trap arranged for the Andhra Pradesh Special Branch Police to capture and kill what their masters considered to be an enemy of the state.

The civil war now continues despite all the efforts of Swami Agnivesh and other liberals and democrats.

The party spokesman Kishenji on telephone told the Press Trust of India

Azad had been killed as he was on his way to attend a Central Committee meeting in Dandakaranya to discuss the Home

Minister P. Chidabaram's letter to Swami Agniveshi on peace talks. The party concluded that the killing was a proof of the insincerity of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Konijeti Rosaih: "It is apparent that the Center does not want talks, because it is speaking of dialogue and yet killing our members.

At some stage it is necessary for the Naxalite movement to talk to the government. But I hope the leaders will be careful, more careful than they were in Andhra Pradesh, more careful than they were before the government murder of Azad.



## XIV

## LEAVING THE GUERRILLA ZONE

Leaving the zone took far longer time than entering it. There were government patrols searching the area. Twice we had to turn back and camp unobtrusively in the jungle for the night. While we waited the young adivasi comrades were reading and studying. At the third attempt when we at last had evaded the patrols we crossed the river bed, now nearly dry, and reached the track. We took farewell of the comrades. I knew that I would never see them again. A four wheel drive jeep was waiting to pick us up. The jeep had to twist and turn on and out of dirt tracks until it reached a road that took us to the national highway and up to Kondagaon.

There I first went around with a local taxi to find some workable cash dispensers where I could use my American Express card while Gautam tried to book us on a next day flight from Raipur to Delhi. The driver that took us to Raipur was helpful but volubly disliked the naxalites. In Raipur we did as I use to do in such cases, stopped at a hotel luxurious enough that we would not be disturbed by the authorities; Hotel Mayura in this case. The next day I was in Delhi to lecture on August Strindberg and Swedish modernism. I then flew to Mumbai where I spoke about the criminal war in Afghanistan before going home.

It ought to be evident from what I have written that not only for the sake of the Indian people I would hope to live to see a revolutionary change in India along the lines of the Naxalites. But I will not live to see that; that is not possible. I am eighty-four and my age forbids it. I will be dead in time for that necessary change in India.

Though it is not only a question of personal age. To have lived

through the great hopes and great horrors of these last more than eighty years carries a price. You cannot help knowing the age of the epoch we are living through.

To clarify that I will go back to last century. In 1907 Jack London wrote "The Iron Heel". His contemporaries in the world socialist movement of that time found him too pessimistic. Most of these socialist readers who found him lacking in optimism then died in the trenches or at home in the Spanish flu.

In 1923 Anatole France introducing his book to the French public wrote:

The two insurrections which constitute the material of this book to which I am introducing the reader are so sanguinary ... that one asks oneself if they could ever be possible ... I should not myself believe they could had I not before me the example of those June days of the suppression of the Commune in 1871, reminding us that all is allowable against the poor. The Proletariat of every country ... has proved a temptation to the Iron Heel. ... Plutocracy will perish. Already, in its very strength we can perceive signs of its ruin. It will perish because all caste government is vowed to death. It will perish because it is unjust. It will perish, swollen with pride and at the height of its power, just as slavery and serfdom has perished ... I cannot tell you that Oligarchy will perish at once and without a struggle. She WILL struggle. Her last war will perhaps be long and of varying fortunes.

The first time I read "The Iron Heel" was in the summer of 1940. I was thirteen and had just got back to a Europe in a dark age where Hitler not only seemed victorious, but was victorious. Some details in the book were of course dated. But the main story was all there. It still is. What Jack London wrote in 1907 and Anatole France in 1923 remains valid also in this century when I am eighty-four. The epoch is the same!

I was fortunate in getting the possibility to go to Dandakaranya in 2010 and there experience what could be the beginnings of an India for the people. But I am also conscious of the Iron heel that according to Jack London is to rule and enslave the world for still some centuries!

## XV

### THE NEGATIVE POSSIBILITY

For me to look back on the seventy or so years I have tried to understand what is happening in the world is like looking through a turning cardboard tube lined with mirrors towards the pattern formed by small coloured glass bits. That is as looking in the kaleidoscope the science teacher had me build in Lincoln school in New York 1938. Change is the only stable state to be seen.

As I am writing this the reformist "welfare states" are crumbling and in Europe the far right proto-fascist organizations are gaining ground. Recruited not only from the de-classed middle strata but also from the working class. For these groups the "immigrants", (the "Muslims") that were imported as inexpensive work force when the native population were no longer for societal reasons able to reproduce themselves are a threat to be hated. The phenomenon is not new. Karl Marx described it.

When Lenin fifty years later reported to the Second Congress of the Communist International on July 26 1920 about the work of commission for the national and colonial question he said:

I would also like to emphasise the importance of revolutionary work by the Communist parties, not only in their own, but also in the colonial countries, and particularly among the troops employed by the exploiting nations to keep the colonial peoples in subjection. Comrade Quelch of the British Socialist Party spoke of this in our commission. He said that the rank-and-file British worker would consider it treasonable to help the enslaved nations in their uprisings against British rule.

Lenin did not accept that this was the position of the workers in general but only of the "workers' aristocracy". That had been a point of discussion between M. N. Roy and Lenin in the commission. M. N. Roy had originally written:

"In exploiting colonial masses, European Imperialism is capable of giving a number of slops to the metropolitan proletariat." On July 25 1920 Lenin had got "proletariat" changed to "workers' aristocracy". Looking back at the ninety years that have passed since that debate I am not sure that Quelch and M. N. Roy were wrong.

Anyway, if you look at the minutes from the congress you can see that the report by Lenin and the agreed theses read by M. N. Roy on the National and Colonial question were adopted nearly without discussion. The European delegates were mainly uninterested.

Lenin well knew -and wrote - about the situation in the former International. Some anti-imperial and anti-colonial verbiage combined with practical support for the imperial and colonial of their "own" government. The Third International was to be different. But looking back on these ninety years it is evident that M. N. Roy proved to be right when he in 1922 wrote:

It was never more necessary to keep in mind that the world stretches beyond the borders of Europe and America. After capitalism having transformed the center of modern civilisation to a waste-land, it searches for new fields of work. If it would be successful in this it is very possible that the European proletariat falls in the most horrible degeneration instead of being able to rise to a victorious revolution." (p.XII. "Indien". Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale. Carl Hoym Nachf. Hamburg).

M. N. Roy became a non-person in the Soviet encyclopedias and the official Communist parties when he broke with the Comintern after nine years of service. But he had a major influence first in Bengal terrorism, then the Mexican Revolution, the Comintern and later back

in India, after prison first in Congress and then on his own. It is important to read him. In this case he - unhappily - was prove to be right.

That is shown by the rise of fascism, the horrors of WW2 and all the following genocidal wars and the utter impotence of the so called socialist and communist parties.

These words by M. N. Roy nearly ninety years ago help to explain why the world I had thought that I had seen as a child is gone. Now what was once the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has been broken up. There is no longer any union or any soviets or socialism. In the re-born Russia the Orthodox church has been officially revived and it has declared the rather stupid and reactionary last Russian Tsar one of its saints.

But that fate of the once mighty Soviet Union is not stranger than the fate of the 1792 Republic in France after 1815. It was not an inevitable development in either case - such inevitability has no reality - and history did not come to an end 1815 or 1989 or with the death of Mao Zedong and the rise of Deng Xiaoping in China. One should not judge hastily. As I walked through the jungle with smarting knees I tried to remember where I first had read the answer Zhou Enlai was supposed to have given when asked about what he thought of the outcome of the French Revolution:

- It is to early to tell.

Many call the reply apocryphal. I had thought of asking him when we met, but never did.

But off course it is a correct statement. Afterwards in camp I thought about that as I looked at the sleeping young adivasi comrades. They were from a generation even younger than my grandchildren, so young that they wondered and were surprised when they heard I had really met and talked with historical figures like Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.

Still if their struggle and the revolution they are taking part in were to be successful far outside the borders of Dandakaranya these now very young communists would have to come to grips with the

appearance and social role of what would then be official truths also about their own history. Even after their victory - in India or worldwide they ought thus keep in mind what Karl Marx wrote in the People's Paper on September 10 1853 on the still ongoing controversy about the role of Bakunin that one ought not to be

astonished at the discovery, that a controversy involves antagonistic opinions, and that historical truth cannot be extricated but from contradictory statements.

Here I want to refer to the "Documents" you can find on the net at <http://www.redstaroverindia.se> The first question we asked in the published interview with the General Secretary Ganapathy in the jungle of Dandakaranya was: "How do you envisage becoming a national power in India?"

The Times of India 12 April 2010 quoted government sources that they were carefully studying his words to us.

Yes, that "The Iron Heel" will use its murderous might in India to trample down any threat to its power as it has in so many other countries these last centuries is clear. Of course I hope that the Communist Party of India (Maoist) will be able to survive this onslaught. The statements of the General Secretary and what I read in texts such as "The Leadership Training Programme" gave me some hope.

One day towards the end of my visit as we had settled in a new site the General Secretary talked to me about the history of tribal revolts in Bastar and their importance for the present struggle. All over the guerrilla zone people were celebrating the centenary of Bhumkal, the great tribal revolt of 1910.

- I would suggest that you read some of the works of professor H. L. Shukla. They will give you a background. Begin by these two; you will find them in Delhi.

He then wrote out:

H. L. Shukla. History of the the People of Bastar. A study of Tribal Insurgency. Sharada Publishing House, Delhi 1992.

H.L. Shukla. Bhumkal. The Tribal Revolt in Bastar. The Story of Gundadhur and his Movement. Sharada Prakashan, Delhi 1991.

He was right. Professor Shukla describes the history of Bastar as a continuous series of twelve armed revolts against the British. Revolts against oppression. The great Bhumkal 1910 became the most famous:

The plan was chalked out with meticulous care and very secretly; hence the detective police gang got neither scent nor clue of the imminent uprising and the impending assault on the different government establishments. The plan consisted of a programme for the setting up an 'Independent Revolutionary Government' with Gunda Dhur as its head by paralysing and destroying the universally hated foreign administrative system and emancipating Bastar from the bondage of foreign subjugation." (Shukla, History of the People of Bastar. p. 228).

Bhumkal was a typical poor peasant rising. Professor Shukla writes about one of the rebel leaders:

Pedas distinctiveness as a revolutionary is also evident in the choice of his method of operation. We know from the Garhmiri people that his target of attack was the British Raj. However, as he had chosen the Dandami Maria youth as his comrades in arms, he launched his attacks at the opening stage against the village money-lenders who were the direct and immediate oppressors. He therefore, started his armed campaign with lightning raids against the money-lenders and collected by force their money, ornaments, and arms. And - this is significant - the armed bands, under his direction piled

up, at every centre of the village, all records, documents and debt-deeds and set fire to them amidst tumultuous exultation of the oppressed Adivasis of the area. Thus he consolidated his position among the Adivasis and became a legend in his lifetime. (Shukla Bhumkal. *The Tribal Revolt in Bastar*. p.77).

The British left records and secret documents. But as professor Shukla points out the real story of the rebellion and its leader Gundha Dhur is to be found in the oral tradition and the Bhumkalgit, the Song of the Revolutionary.

"Hark! Hark! O venerable men

We will recite the rebel-song"

But there is a second aspect to the question. In Dandakaranya the Party now has the dalits and adivasis as their base. They have risen. But that does only mean c. 25% of the population. If they slip when they rise, if the Party will not be able to organize the masses outside the area and the revolt thus becomes a real revolution these 25% can suffer the fate of so many of their fellows in other lands. Extermination is a reality.

The Iron Heel in India will ask for help from both fellow capitalists, investors from the United States and the European Union as well as organizations in India and abroad officially labeled as "left" and explain that something drastic has to be done as the Adivasis hinder the development of mining and hydroelectric power. It is important to understand that this argument will be effective. The CPI (M) in West Bengal is not only linked to monopoly capital but has made that link a theoretical party platform as did Labour in Great Britain and the state financed officially socialist and leftist parties in the other imperialist countries.

History can then repeat itself. The primitive conquistador genocide in Mexico was developed to a higher stage with the genocidal "Indian Removal Act" of president Andrew Jackson in 1830. For the next sixty years until the final elimination of armed autochthonous resistance at Wounded Knee in 1890 poor European immigrants were organised to

drive out the "Indians" from their land to their death and themselves for a while take their land. They were told - and they believed - that this was liberty.

One should never forget the negative possibility. He who does that ought to turn around and look back a century or two and experience the great fear.

Yes, there is hope in Dandakaranya. But already the bells of the Iron Heel are tolling in Washington, in NATO and in governmental Delhi. Europeans or Americans need not to ask for who these bells toll. They ought to know that by now.

Coming back to Delhi from Dandakaranya in the "red belt of India" feels like it must have felt coming back to Xian from Yan'an in northern Shaanxi seventy years ago.

But I didn't come back after spending four months there. I was only in the Indian jungle a little more than two weeks.

Whatever the differences between the revolutionary Chinese center in the dry less land of northern Shaanxi of those days and the camps of the present day Indian armed revolutionary struggle in the Bastar jungle of Dandakaranya today - and whatever the outcome of the present struggle will be - it is thus important not only to give the reader personal impressions but also authorized and quotable texts from the responsible leaders of the revolutionary struggle.

During the time spent in Dandakaranya there were long formal discussions with three leading cadres; Ganapathy, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Maoist); Murali, just out of jail. He had before the arrest and jail been member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and in charge of South West Regional Buro and Sonu, member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

As we were to leave we were given authorised transcripts of these talks. The General Secretary Ganapathy noted when he gave the transcripts of these three interviews:

- you can take this fully or partially as our official information.

To these three official Communist Party of India (Maoist) texts

from Dandakaranya I add the "clarification" by the Central Committee Spokesperson Azad on certain aspects to the text of the interview that the General Secretary Ganapathy gave us. This is important both as a background to his murder and to clarify the discussion within the Communist Party of India (Maoist). I also add a text by the General Secretary on the new form of government taking form in the Dandakaranya guerilla zone.

As it is important to make these long authoritative texts available in their unedited entirety they can be found on the net as [redstaroverindia.se](http://redstaroverindia.se)