

PUBLIC MEETING

Let's intensify our Opposition to Indian State's War on People

3 PM Onwards, 6 February 2012, Rajendra Bhawan
Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, Near ITO, New Delhi

JAN MYRDAL the internationally acclaimed author will talk on the War on People in India
SUJATO BHADRA will speak on atrocities by Joint Forces in Jangalmahal in West Bengal

The Indian government's war on people in central and eastern regions has entered its second phase with the deployment of the Indian army. The surreptitiously declared war on the people of this country codenamed Operation Green Hunt (OGH) which was launched in September 2009 by the Indian government is continuing unabated till today. In fact in the recent months, the ruling coalition at the Centre in connivance with political parties of all hues in power in the Central and Eastern states have intensified their brutal war on the poorest, most marginalized and oppressed people of the subcontinent. Contrary to the rhetoric of not deploying the Indian Army in direct combat, the Government of India has increased the number of troops in the region with the intent of crushing the growing people's resistance against its policies. It is well known that the

JAN MYRDAL

The Swedish author and columnist, Jan Myrdal, son of Nobel laureates Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, and a central figure in the protest movement against the Vietnam War, has penned more than 80 books, among which are *Confessions of a Disloyal European* (1968), *Report from a Chinese Village*, *The Silk Road* and *India Waits* (1986). He has written fiction, plays and books on literature, art, politics.

He is a prominent supporter of the civil liberties movements in various countries, a trenchant critic of US imperialism and Israeli colonial settlements in the Middle East. He has also made a number of feature films and TV documentaries.

Two years ago, at the age of 83, Jan Myrdal travelled in the tribal heartland of Bastar and personally interacted with the tribal people and the leadership of CPI (Maoist). His book *Red Star Over India* is an account of his trip which deftly combines India's present with its past. The English version the book is released in the Kolkata Book Fair on 28 February 2012.

first batch of 2000 Army personnel were sent by the government to the forests of Narayanpur District in the Bastar on 3 June 2011 with a plan to occupy an area of 600 square kilometres, albeit in the name of Jungle Warfare Training. Just six months later, another 2500 personnel descended on the forests of Bastar on 4 November 2011. Though the Central and Chhattisgarh governments maintain that they have set up this so-called Jungle Warfare Training Centre in Bastar merely to put pressure on the Maoists and to dominate the region militarily, the real purpose is to hand over the vast swathes of mineral-rich forested lands to the Multinational Companies and to evict the people who have stood up to defend their jal-jangal-zameen, their very existence.

The involvement of the army in this war is more than what meet the eyes. Senior army officials were appointed long before OGH was initiated two-and-half

years ago to guide and coordinate the 'counter-insurgency' operations involving more than two hundred thousand police-paramilitary joint forces. The launch of OGH further institutionalised the Indian Army's role under the Unified Command Structure of joint operations of the four different armed forces – the civil police of various states, Special Armed forces raised by different states (like the C-60 of Maharashtra, SPOs of Chhattisgarh, SOG of Odisha and Greyhounds of AP), paramilitary forces under the Union Government and the Indian Army along with the Air-force and the Navy. The Union Government's public posture that the Army will not be engaged in combat with the Naxalites is only to hoodwink the democratic sections of the public in the country and to safeguard its image in the international domain as the much-advertised "largest democracy" in the world. Such claims fly on the face of the license to kill, handed out by the Indian government to the Air-

force and the Army: while the former reserves the 'right' to commit aerial bombardments in the name of 'self-defense', the latter does not even require such fig-leaf of an excuse as it has been made clear that the army will not wait to be first shot by the Naxalites, but will be the first to fire upon anyone it suspects to be a Naxalite. Indian Army's operations are being expanded in the war zones where the adivasis and other communities are resisting the sell-out of natural resources to international and domestic monopolies, displacing and decimating the local people. In order to deceive the democrats in the country and outside, the rulers – who are fighting against the most deprived sections of the people – have tried to justify their war as an act of curbing 'left-wing extremists' or Naxalites / Maoists. No doubt Naxalites / Maoists are part of the larger resistant movement today in all these regions, but this does not justify the ruling elite's war on the citizens of this country.

Due to the stiff resistance faced by the Indian state's Armed forces from the wretched of the earth in these regions, the 'democratic' Indian state has followed the policy of raising private armed vigilante gangs. That the corporate sector in India also has time and again asked the Government to further institutionalise such gangs through concrete material and other supports so as to enable the easy loot and plunder of the resources in these regions is an open secret that few have noticed. The list of such private armed groups formed and led by the joint armed forces of the government in central and eastern India is a long one: Salwa Judum and Koya Commandos (now legalised) in Chhattisgarh, Sendra, Nagarik Suraksha Samiti, PLFI, Jharkhand Prastuti Committee, Tritiya Prastuti Committee in Jharkhand, Shanti Sangams in South Odisha, and Harmad Bahini or what is now called Bhairab Bahini in West Bengal, and so on. And these are only a few of the vast number of private armed gangs being propped up by the government to kill and brutalise our fellow citizens by spending the tax-payer's money. All these forces are under the directions of the Unified Command of the Indian government and the Home Ministry. These publicly-funded private gangs are killing thousands of people branding them as Naxalites/Maoists. If we add the private armed gangs maintained by the local warlords, the mining mafia and other corporate houses supported and patronised by the Indian state, the number of common people who are resisting their oppression and are killed by the government forces in the War on People shoots up exponentially.

The War on People is not restricted to the rural and mineral-rich forested regions of India alone, but has also reached its urban enclaves. It has spread to encompass all the urban and semi-urban regions from where support and solidarity is extended to the rural regions – the mainstay of the resistance movements. Democratic voices are stifled and choked everywhere. Thousands of democratic individuals and hundreds of peoples' organisations that boldly raise their voice of protest against this War on People are jailed, tortured, threatened or killed in fake encounters. It is important to note here the detailed statement of the Minister of State for Home Affairs Jitendra Singh in the two houses of Parliament showing organisations such as Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF), Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners (CRPP), People's Democratic Front of India (PDFI), Democratic Students Union (DSU), CPI (ML) (Naxalbari) and other parties and people's organisations as "being watched" closely by the eyes and ears of the government. That "being watched closely by the eyes and ears" of the government is to provoke a sense of siege mentality in the psyche of the general public vis-à-vis such organisations so as to segregate them from the vast democratic mass movements that they are part of. Further the minister has gone ahead to brand RDF, CRPP, PDFI and DSU as the frontal organisations of the CPI (Maoist). It is evident that all these organisations have been successful in rallying the voices against the murderous campaign of the Indian state to facilitate this largest land grab ever since the time of Columbus let alone the attendant loot and plunder of resources of the people. So it becomes inevitable for the Indian State to see to it that such voices are criminalised by profiling them as 'anti-development' and hence against the 'national' interest. This fascistic tendency to suppress the democratic voices is a needed strategy for the belligerent ruling forces that are entangled in crisis with the deepening economic crisis world-wide.

The Indian rulers facilitate the unbridled plunder of people's resources and labour to help the imperialist countries come out of their economic crisis, while the people fall prey to starvation, diseases and planned genocides of the state. This situation is certainly no better than the old colonial policy of Columbus and his brand of land-grab that decimated numerous indigenous tribal communities. The only answer is to intensify our opposition to Indian State's War on People in the name of Operation Green Hunt.

Forum Against War on People

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