

RISE IN REVOLT !

OH ! OPPRESSED DALITS



Rythucoolie Sangham (A.P)

Affiliated to All India Kheth Mazdoor Kisan Sabha (AIKMKS)

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A FEW WORDS

Sixty six years are over since the transfer of power had taken place in India. Still, the attacks are continuing against the dalits unabatedly in various forms and on various occasions in our country. Attacking the dalits in their localities enbloc, murdering and severely wounding them with hunting knives, destroying their homes, properties together with the food grains, imposing social boycotts, creating a reign of terror, pushing them out of the villages and subjecting dalit women to atrocities and indignities had become a daily and routine affair in the country and state.

The landlord pettandari forces are resorting to these attacks against the dalits and the oppressed people to protect the interests of the exploiting ruling classes. In this they are having all the backing from the Govt. and police administration. The exploiting and the caste chauvinist forces are finding it simply intolerable whenever the dalits are demanding their right over the land; better living conditions; the right to live with self-respect; when ever they are defying the authority of landlord pettardari forces; refusing to vote to the political party supported by them and are trying to walk with their hands high before their eyes. So, they are resorting to inhuman attacks against the dalits. They are tightening their hold on the society by employing the force. The state which stands in support of the perpetrators of these attacks is nakedly and determinedly denying the dalits their rights and

just aspirations. The forces who are waging these attacks may change when ever there are changes in the land owners and pettandari dominations. But it is none but the dalits who are always suffering from and becoming the victims of these attacks.

The countless and ghastly attacks like the one that occurred in Karamchedu, Neerukonda, Chunduru, Keelavenmani, Vempenta, Belchi and Pipra are repeatedly exposing the nature of present exploiting system. The attacks, honour killings, harassments are taking place against the dalits and women in countless number not only in AP, but Bihar, Odisha, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, UP, Tamil Nadu and other states. Even the murders committed in the name of so called black magic and banamathi come under this category.

The ruling classes are throwing their own constitution into dustbins and resorting to the violation of peoples rights only to ensure an uninterrupted continuation of the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in our country.

They are waging the attacks against the adivasis who are fighting for their right over the land and forest and against the general masses of people who are fighting for their just demands.

The people are able to defend themselves from the attacks of upper caste chauvinist pettadars where ever they are organised and in the practice of class struggle. They are also withstanding the repression let loose by the state in support of the pettandary forces and standing for the resolution of land problem.

The attacks in Manugopala on November 4, 1997; the attack in Duggeru on November 17, 1997 in Makkuva Mandal of Vizianagaram district; the attack in Bommanahalli of Anantapur district of July 4, 1998; the attack on the oppressed people in

Tumrukota village of Palnadu area on June 29, 2009 were only the result of the resistance put up by the oppressed people against the pettandars. The people could defend their rights by their resistance. There are many instances of this kind which are not mentioned here but can be found in the history of peoples movements.

The communists and the mass organisations committed to the objective of ending all forms of oppression and exploitation in India had led and are leading many a struggles of dalits, women, adivasis and other oppressed people with this objective. Carrying this best tradition forward, the Rythu Coolie Sangham (AP) is busy in the efforts to organise and unite the dalits, women, adivasis and other oppressed people into an organised movement against the exploitation and oppression. It is leading the movement of oppressed people in several areas and is busy in the efforts in to orientate the oppressed people towards the struggle for their right over the land and the right to live with self respect. Here we are reproducing some statements, leaflets and articles released by our leadership while leading the struggles and spelling out our reactions in the context of happenings on various occasions. We hope that they will help to develop the consciousness of the masses of suppressed and oppressed people.

State Executive Committee
Rythu Coolie Sangham (Andhra Pradesh)
Affiliated to **All India Kheth Mazadoor Kisan Sabha**
(AIKMKS)

Hyderabad,
25.8.2012.

RYTHUCOOLIE SANGHAM (ANDHRA PRADESH)

State Team's Report of Investigation on LAKSHIMPET ATTACKS

**Condemn murderous Attack of caste Chauvinist
Pettandars on Lakshimpet Dalits!**

**Arrest and Severely Punish Botsa Vasudeva Rao Naidu's
murderous Gang Responsible for Attack!**

A five member team of RCS(AP) led by Com. S.Jhansi the state president of RCS(AP) with Com.D.Verma, the state Asst. secretary, RCS (AP), Com. Tandra Aruna, the state ECM, Com.B.Narsinga Rao, the vice president, Vijayanagaram District, Co.Adari Apparao, the State leader, AIFTU(New) as its members has, made a detailed investigation into Lakshimpet attack. The team went to lakshimpet on 19th June 2012. It met the family members of the people who died in the pettandar's attack and conveyed its condolence to them. It met the wounded victims of attack in Srikakulam and Vishakhapatnam hospitals and also their families it expressed its sympathies to them. It consoled and gave confidence to them. It expressed its support and solidarity to their just struggle. On the same day, it held a press conference in Rajam of Srikakulam district and explained its observations on the attack against the Lakshimpet dalits and its background. The team placed certain concrete demands before the people. Here is the RCS(AP) state Team's report of investigation.

On 12th June 2012,i.e., on Tuesday, at about 7.30AM Kapu pettandars of Lakshimpet have resorted to murderous attack against

the dalits of same village by mobilizing their relatives too from other villages. The husband of Lakshimpet village Sarpanch happened to notice the attempts of Kapu pettandars to mobilize all their men. He informed that the Kapu pettandars armed with lethal weapons are rounding up the Dalit Street. Yet, none of the police officers responded to it. The kapu pettandary chauvinists have pushed themselves into the houses of dalits with axes, daggers, iron rods and bombs and carried on their attack for three hours and created a havoc. They targeted some specifically, and hit them with big stones. They repeatedly pierced their bodies with daggers. They just cut the hands of those into pieces when they tried to prevent the attacks. They pierced the two eyes of a dalit, Bodduri Papaiah by name, with daggers. They pierced the bodies of women with iron rods in an unexplainable manner. They have killed the husbands in a most brutal way right before the eyes of their wives. In this massacre, Nivarti Sangameshu (40), Nivarti Venkat Rao(60), Burada Sundar Rao (35), Chittiri Appadu (20) have died right on the spot. 42 marks of dagger attacks were found on the body of Nivarti Sangameshu. Boddu Papaiah (60) died in Vishakhapatnam KG Hospital after a week because of serious wounds, loss of two eyes and serious damage of two kidneys. Thus 5 lives were lost because of this murderous attack. 23 people, having lost legs or hands, are helplessly lying in Srikakulam District Govt. hospital. Some more, who have suffered serious wounds, were found lost in deep sorrow. They are overwhelmed by the grief and pain for the loss of their near and dear in the attack and reluctant to come to the hospital. The murderous gang had thrown out even the infants. When Sangamma, a woman, went to fetch water from a distance of two Kms, she was attacked by 10 people. They broke her earthen pot and hands into pieces. They destroyed the house-hold material. The murderous gang carried on its aggressive expedition hitting and killing-for three hours while abusing the people, 'you, mala bastrads! You too need lands!' The dalit street in Lakshimpet was turned into

a pool of blood. Only after everything was over, the police reached the village leisurely at about 12.30 in the afternoon.

Murderous Attack Carried on as per a well Laid out Design

Kapu pettandars of Vangara Mandal planned for this murderous attack well in advance. On the 11th night itself, they mobilized their relatives from other village on 3 autos and one tractor. Even some women and children, who were mad with caste chauvinism, also have taken part in this attack. That day, the police too have left the village emptying the picket on the plea of by-elections in Narsannapet constituency. Therefore, this was a ghastly and one-sided attack on the part of Kapu caste Chauvinist pettandars backed by the ruling party, economic and muscle power and with total support from the police.

Kapu pettandars tried to spread false propaganda that the clashes between the dalits and themselves in Lakshimpet were there for quite a long time and the June 12 (2012) incident was only a part of them. At one place, this gang has propagated that the incident was only the result of dalits attempt to occupy a disputed land. At another place, they have indulged in a despicable propaganda that the dalits had thrown smoke, bombs at them. As the entire media was busy in by-elections, the news of this attack did not get a state wide coverage.

What was the Real Cause of Attack?

In the year 2000, the state govt. had decided to construct a reservoir at Madduvalasa near the confluence of Suvarnamukhi-Vegavati Rivers in Srikakulam district. It identified Kottisha, Koppara, Devakavada, Narendrapuram, Gudivada and Lakshimpet villages as areas that may be submerged in it. It acquired about 3000 acres of land from farmers for this purpose. The govt. paid the compensation to the farmers who lost their lands at the rate of Rs.2 lakh 50 thousands

per acre. But it seized the lands of dalits without paying them any compensation on the plea that the lands cultivated by the dalits were assigned lands. The govt. has shown discrimination against dalits even in paying compensation for the houses in the villages which were assessed to be submerged. These were a plot of 250 acres of land beside Lakshimpet in the lands taken over by the Govt., but which will not submerge. Lakshimpet kapus had occupied 190 acres of this land, though it does not belong to them. 80 dalit families are cultivating 60 acres of land (45 cents per family). Dalit families of Lakshimpet living in the houses beside their own houses and those families cultivating even a few cents of land was simply unbearable for the Kapu caste Chauvinists. So they pledged themselves to chase away the dalits from the village by all means.

Discrimination and Harassment of Dalits

Botsa Satyanarayana of this district and kapu by caste, is not only a state Minister but also the state President of Congress. His wife, Botsa Jhansi Rani is a MP from this area. His followers, Botsa Vasudeva Rao Naidu had been exercising this domination as an ex-Mandal president of Vangara.

The Botsa faction which monopolizes the entire power would see that the fruits of Govt's. A welfare schemes do not reach dalits. They would be acting revengefully towards the dalits. They obstruct the implementation of MGNAREGA, old age and other pension schemes, loans at 25 paise interest reaching the dalits. They were subjecting the dalits to so many hardships by not extending or blocading any type of help to the dalits.

Even today, the "two glass" system, untouchability are continuing in Lakshimpet and nearby villages. The students belonging to kapu caste have refused to eat the midday meals in the govt. schools on the plea that it was being cooked by the dalit women. At last, they have agreed to eat the food only when Botsa Vasudeva Rao has arranged the cooking by the persons from Kapu caste. This

will make it clear how deep rooted and hardened are the practices of untouchability and caste discrimination even among the castes which claim themselves to be backward.

Now, about Kondru Murali- a MLA, dalit and a Minister. He is only confined to save his post by acting as a dalal of ruling (Congress) party and serving the kapu caste chauvinism. He never took initiative to solve the problem of Lakshimpet dalits and stand in their support. He reduced the dalit woman Sarpanch who won the Lakshimpet panchayat on reservation basis into a name-sake president and had subjected her to many types of humiliations. Just one instance, where this panchayat sarpanch was made to stand before them throughout the meeting is enough for one to understand to what frenzied level their caste Chauvinism has gone here.

Attacks against Dalits and Spectator's Role of Police Machinery

Even in 2010, the Kapu pettandars attacked the dalits when they were cultivating their own lands. Dalits have filed a complaint against it in Vangara police station. But, nothing was done. Finally, the court washed hands by its verdict that no side should cultivate the land. Here is the main cause of dispute between the dalits and kapu pettandars. With this, the kapu pattendars incited their own people further against dalits stating that the dalits are obstructing them from cultivating 190 acres of land in their own possession.

Bosta Vasudeva Rao Naidu, Avula Srinivasa Rao the local kapu pettandars had been inciting kapus for some time to wage physical attacks against the dalits. When Ravudamma, a dalit women was collecting the dung cakes in the fields, she was abused in vulgar words taking her caste name and attacked. The police, however, has thrown her complaint into a dustbin. The dalits have complained to the police higher officers about the door to door threats of pettandars that they would 'kick out the dalits from the village'. But it was futile. Nizarti Rambabu- a dalit student of fourth standard was severely

beaten for leaving his slippers before the house of a kapu while paying in the street. Even at this time, the police remained as a mute spectator. When Nivarti Ravudamma, Kalamati Chinamma questioned when they were threatening the dalits with death, they were mercilessly beaten. The police, who were busy in the service of ruling party politics, remained unmoved. Nivarti Ravudamma had died after a months because of this beating. Even after, this the kapu caste chauvinists attacked chittari Appadu. The police washed their hands by filing a nominal case. The police picket was continuing in Lakshimpet since that day. But the police vacated even this picket on the plea of Narsannapeta by-elections. Thus they waved a green signal for the ghastly massacre.

An Attack Aimed at Forcing Dalits to Leave the Lands and Become Migrant Labour

Regrettably, the two dalits-the victims of attack as well as kapu caste chauvinists had voted for Congress and got its MLA and MP elected. Till the last moment, to dalits believed that MP Botsa Vasudeva Rao for the resolution of their problems. Papaiah who was attacked and died in KG Hospital was keeping Rs.20,000 and 20 grams of gold for safety with Botsa Vasudeva Rao who was responsible and asked him to several times for its return. But Vasudeva Rao was refusing to give saying 'why you need it now'. On the other side, Botsa Vasudeva Rao was conspiring how to chase the dalits totally out of the village. The kapu pettandars had resorted to such a ghastly attack against the Lakshimpet dalits with all the backing from the party in power, economic support and the support of district administration. This was an attack aimed at making it clear to the dalits: "You need no land; no proper houses. Either go as migrant labourers leaving to them the lands and houses or work as farm servants under them". Dalits had been living with all mental agony suffering many harassments, physical attacks and feeling that they were left with no alternative except suffering lonely cruelties in the hands of pattandari classes. Kondru Murali who belonged to their

own social class, too extended no help whatsoever to them. On the contrary, he was only indicating through his behavior that the dalits must remain subjugated under the kapu pettandars and must not raise questions about the lands and other issues. Botsa Vasudeva Rao's name-whom all with one voice point out as the main person in the murderous attack on Lakshimpet dalits-was mentioned as accused No.45 in the FIR. This shows how shamelessly the rulers are standing by the kapu caste Chauvinists.

Let us Stand by Lakshimpet Dalits! Let us Unitedly Struggle till they Win the Right over the Land !

Lakshimpet dalits had to sacrifice six lives only because they asked that the Govt. lands that were being cultivated by them for the last 10 years must belong to them. Kapu pettandars have broken even the hands and legs of dalits who were living as wage labourers with no properties whatsoever. This kind of attacks are repeating everyday in our state and country which have completed 65 years of 'parliamentary democratic system.' The civil society must bow down its head with shame for this sorry state of situation. All these years, the landlord pettandars forces had been conspiring to deny the dalits the right over the land which was needed by them to live with self respect. They had been resorting to brutal attacks. Let us propagate widely among the people condemning the kapu pettandars murderous attack on Lakshimpet dalits. Let us stand in support of Lakshimpet dalits.

Demands :

- * Arrest and severely punish Botsa Vasudeva Rao Naidu and other Kapu Pettandars who resorted to murderous attack against the Lakshimpet dalits.
- * Every dalit family in Lakshimpet must be ensured the right over the land.

- * Ex-gratia must be paid to the deceased families and wounded people.
- * Action must be taken against the district administration which failed to prevent attack on Lakshimpet dalits.
- * All kinds of medical aid be provided to the victims undergoing treatment in Srikakulam Govt.Hospital till their complete recovery; food arrangements be provided to those who are attending them. The govt. must provide the money needed by the families for the maintenance of their life for one year.
- * A special court be set up right in Lakshimpet and the culprits be punished immediately.
- * All the Govt. schemes like NAREGA and others be made 'available to the Lakshimpet dalits.

All the oppressed people must unitedly struggle for land. Food and self respect to prevent the repetition of Kanchikacharla, Karamchedu, Neerukonda, Chundur, Vempenta, Pyapili and Lakshimpet attacks. Let us get organize to eliminate the exploitative caste system which is ruining the society. Let us struggle for a right to live to all the oppressed people to live with better living condition and self respect.



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SYMBOLS OF SEMI-FEUDAL INDIAN SOCIETY: Murderous Attacks on Dalits by Upper Caste Landlords

Ruling classes have been crying hoarse over the last six decades that are most committed to the advancement of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward castes and the minorities.

These ruling classes have been claiming that they are working to eliminate the caste system, entrenched in the Indian society for thousands of years, that they are providing educational and employment opportunities for the lower castes, and that they are providing protection for the lower castes against exploitation and incentives for their advancement. They make these claims and pronouncements whenever they can, and especially during the Independence Day and the Republic Day celebrations. However, we must note that these are false claims.

The hierarchical system of caste allows every caste higher on the ladder to oppress those castes lower on the ladder. That is why Dr Ambedkar called it not division of labour, but division of labourers.

The rulers of independent India, who took over the reins of power after the colonial rule, have done nothing but to collaborate with imperialism, big bourgeoisie and the landlord classes. They are also Hindu hegemonists, upper caste ideologues and practitioners of patriarchal ideology. That is the reason why, despite the tall claims of a well worked out constitution and a democratic and secular Indian state, caste system has not declined in the Indian society even after

sixty five years. The resurgence of brutality of medieval age in newer forms oppression on dalits is causing anxiety for the social thinkers.

The ruling classes have only implemented piecemeal reforms, several schemes and sops to people, only with a view to winning elections and capturing political power either at the centre or the state level. Effectively, all these schemes have not succeeded in improving the lot of the poor even marginally.

The ruling groups have found a way to appease and win the favour of articulate sections among the dalits, and have them declare their support for the various piecemeal policies of the political parties. These articulate sections are shown up as representatives of the dalit and lower caste masses. In the Indian electoral democracy where votes can be bought by currency notes, the lower sections of the society are used for the purpose of achieving political power. However, the rulers do not desire any real improvement in the condition of these sections. Merely extending the reservation policy every ten years that was first introduced in 1950 is shown up by them as their commitment to the cause of the depressed groups.

If there is at least a marginal improvement in the condition of dalits and other lower castes, it has happened as a result of concerted and spirited struggles which have taken place under the leadership of communist and revolutionary parties and dalit and progressive organisations that are working for the cause of dalits. These struggles have sometimes forced the hand of the ruling groups to introduce certain ameliorative measures, to introduce certain legislations providing for reservations for the oppressed groups in legislative and local bodies, and to introduce the so-called SC/ST Atrocity (Prevention) Act of 1989.

Even today, more than 70 percent of Indians live in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture. However, even now majority of stake of ownership of land continues to lie in the hands of the rich and the upper castes. As a result, only such individuals of the oppressed

groups who act in accordance with the wishes of the landlord groups, are allowed to contest and win elections. Such lower caste representatives become puppets in the hands of the landlord sections and implement their mandate. Ordinary and poor dalits cannot even go close to the arena of electoral politics. The ruling classes are deceiving the people showing the nominal presence of dalits in the legislative bodies as "empowerment of dalits" and "participation in the state power".

Despite the huge expenditure of money and propaganda by the governments that untouchability is a grave crime subject to the severest punishment, and despite their claim that the SC/ST Atrocity Act is under transparent and impeccable implementation, there is no stop or end to the atrocities perpetrated on dalits. The administrative machinery and the police force who are supposed to implement these measures are under the beck and call of the ruling groups, and therefore we know why there is such non-implementation. The cumbersome and prolonged process involved in registering and pursuing complaints at various levels discourages the affected groups and individuals to make any headway, and allows the culprits to escape without any punishment.

However, when it comes to draconian legislations that suppress people's protests and rights, the state is seen to be most efficient in implementing the repressive measures. The governments are sometimes forced to bring about progressive legislations, but we should understand that this happens mainly because of the relentless struggles waged by the people demanding resolution of their problems.. However, the rulers claim the credit for introducing such legislations. At the same time, they dilute the implementation of those progressive legislative measures and merely use them to conduct propaganda for their own benefit during elections. It is the need of the hour to organize people into struggles for the implementation of these legislations, as well as into struggles for the resolution of the problems faced by the people by making them aware of the exploiting nature of ruling classes.

Some argue as evidence for the 'decline' of caste as a facts that people of various castes travel together in the means of public transport, that they dine together in restaurants, that they mingle and eat with one another during wedding celebrations, and that they come together in workplaces. However, this is merely a limited and superficial change. This is the cumulative result of various factors viz. the inherent and natural contradictions in the society, the struggles waged by the people for social change, and spread of progressive ideas, which forced the rulers to take certain ameliorative measures leading to very slow mobility in the society. But this limited social change falls way short of a true and substantial change, and there is no reason to overtly celebrate it.

At the same time as the ruling classes claim significant advances in the fields of science and technology, in space science and ocean research, we are witnessing incidents of brutality against dalits that reminds the barbarity of middle ages.

There are still many forms of caste oppression prevailing in Indian society today, such as -slavery, bonded labour, burning individuals alive, mass rapes of dalit women, stripping women and parading them naked, selling or enslaving women for money, excommunicating entire families, preventing them for entering temples, prohibiting friendship, courtship and marriage between dalits and other castes, 'honour' killings of dalit persons who violate the prohibitions, practice of discrimination against dalits at educational institutions, and so forth. These are just a few instances of the widespread oppression taking place with regularity in Indian society. We notice them if only we keep our eyes a little open. They are also reported in the newspapers all the time.

Such instances only reflect the semi-feudal nature of the Indian society that is still persisting. The viewpoint of some intellectuals that feudalism has almost disappeared from the Indian society is contradicted by the evidence of these various instances of oppression.

They also reveal the interesting working of imperialism which preserves the feudal features of the Indian society even while it introduces certain changes to facilitate new forms of economic exploitation.

Our immediate and most important political task is to fight feudalism in rural areas, to oppose imperialism that has co-opted feudalism, and oppose the comprador bourgeois class by organizing a people's front under the leadership of the working class and stage a people's democratic revolution. The real economic and political power of the ruling elites lies in their ownership of land, and we must understand land to be a key resource in Indian society. The poor peasants must occupy the temple lands, waste lands and banjar lands, forest lands, government lands in addition to lands that belong to the landlords, and lands that have been taken away for the purpose of setting up SEZs. Then only there would not be any repetition of the massacres of dalits as was happened at Karamchedu, Neerukonda, Chunduru and so on.

Uttar Pradesh: Honour Killing of Girl for Falling in Love with Dalit boy

21-year old Kesar, hailing from an upper caste, fell in love with a dalit boy in Hara village of Meerut district. When her family opposed their love, she eloped with her lover. But unable to tackle the pressures of resistance, she quickly returned home. However, on January 5th, 2012, her family considered her act to be an unforgivable crime and killed her.

Maharashtra: Stripping the Mother of a Dalit Man who Married an Upper Caste Girl and Parading her Naked in the Village

On 9-1-2012, in Malegaon village of Patan taluk of Satara district of Maharashtra, when a girl hailing from an upper caste background fell in love with and married a dalit man, the man's 45-year-old mother was captured by the upper caste landlords, stripped

naked and paraded in the village for the fault of being the mother of the errant man. While the police were initially reluctant to register case, they were eventually forced to do so after the hue and cry and press coverage.

Karnataka: Murder of A Highly Educated Woman in the Name of 'Honour'

When a college lecturer in Mysore, hailing from upper caste, fell in love with and married a dalit man, her brother waylaid and killed her on March 15th 2012, and later hanged her to make it appear that she committed suicide.

Andhra Pradesh: Another Gruesome Murder in the name of 'Honour'

In Chaulapalli village of Kesampet mandal of Mahabubnagar district, a backward caste girl by name Madhavi fell in love with a dalit boy Ashok and they decided to marry. Madhavi's parents were totally opposed to this, and forced Madhavi to drink insecticide on January 5th 2012. While some villagers noticed this and hurried to admit her in a hospital, it was too late and she died. The parents conducted the crematory rites in a hurry so that all evidence and investigation could be obliterated. What an irony that a backward caste family, in spite of suffering indignities at the hands of upper castes, metes out the same treatment to dalits who they think are inferior to them? What a pernicious institution is the caste system and its ideology?

Karnataka: Killing one's own Daughter for Marrying A Dalit boy

In Abalawadi village of Karnataka, when Suvarna, aged 22 and belonging to the Vokkaliga caste which was a ritually low caste but in recent history transformed into a prosperous and dominant caste, fell in love with a dalit man by name Govindaraju, aged 27,

Suvarna's father Ramakrishna took both of them captive and right in front of the dalit man's eyes, killed his daughter. Govindaraju somehow fled and saved his skin. He has been moving around in cognito for the fear of getting killed. The story came to light when Govindaraju mentioned it to some press reporters. A case until date has not been registered by the police.

Uttar Pradesh: Even Minorities are not Exempt from Caste Ideology and Prejudice

In the Pink City of Lucknow of Uttar Pradesh, a Muslim woman by name Rubina, aged 28, married a dalit man, and by way of reprisal, her brothers Allauddin and Nizamuddin, attacked her with steel rods and beat her to death. Though three years had lapsed since their wedding and there was a beautiful three-year-old daughter, they were not deterred!

Madhya Pradesh: Attack on Dalits for Complaining against Upper Castes

That the dalits possessed a little land in the village of Pagaribangla in Madhya Pradesh was unacceptable to the upper caste Thakurs of that village. To interrupt agricultural work and tasks in dalit fields was a constant refrain. When Jagadish, a dalit farmer noticed that a thakur committed theft and took away the water pumping electric motor from his field, he complained at the police station. Though the police refused to register complaint, Thakur landlords became livid at the attempt to complain and hacked away Jagadish's limbs with axes and sickles on 30-1-2012.

Andhra Pradesh: Attack on Dalits for Complaining against Landlords, and Destruction of their Property

In Ramanepalli village of Beluguppa mandal of Anantapur district, landlords blew a small dispute out of proportion and began hostility with dalits. Dalits then went ahead and registered a complaint with

the police. Landlords became furious that a case was registered, and entered the fields of dalits and destroyed various kinds of agricultural machinery and implements. They set on fire their haystacks on 8.2.2012. When the dalits brought this to the notice of the police again, the police winked at the accused and said they had gone absconding.

Andhra Pradesh: Attack on Dalit for Asking for Payment of Wage

In Annaram village of Rompicharla mandal of Guntur district, when Nannam Peddulu, a tractor driver belonging to a dalit caste, asked for a payment due to him, upper caste landlords took him captive and beat him up on 12-2-2012. They later poured kerosene on him and burnt him alive. However these landlords propagated a story in the village that they killed him because he tried to molest a woman of their family.

Andhra Pradesh: Making a Dalit Worker who Asked for a Higher Wage drink Urine

In Gudali village of Kota mandal of Nellore district, dalit landless farm workers work on the farms of affluent and upper caste landowners. When one of them asked to increase the wage for loading sand in the tractor from Rs.150 to Rs.200, landlords tied him up to a temple pillar and beat up him on 5.4.2012. When he became thirsty and asked for water, they forced him to drink urine.

Maharashtra: Extraction of Bonded Labour; Burning alive of Dalit for not Repaying Loan

In the 500 families of Chimbolisindphana village of Maharashtra, majority are from dalit backgrounds, and the Maratha landlords are a minority. One dalit family in that village took a loan from one of the landlords and for repayment committed to bonded slavery. As this was happening, landlord became furious that the debt incurred was not repaid and set on fire a dalit man who succumbed to burn injuries on 11-1-2012.

Bihar: Cutting off the Limbs of a Dalit for not Repaying a Loan of Rs.300

In a village in the jurisdiction of the police station of Arwal in Bihar, landlord Sushil Singh and his henchmen attacked a 20-year dalit man by name Ramsagar Chandravamsi with deadly weapons for not repaying a loan of Rs.300 on 20-2-2012. In this attack, Ramsagar lost his limbs. A police case was not allowed to be registered. Moreover, it was claimed that the injury happened in a train accident, and though admitted to the Patna Medical College Hospital, proper medical care was not dispensed. Only after the incident got publicity was there any attention shown to the victim.

Haryana: Untouchability Issue: Attack with Sickle for drinking Water out of Earthen Pot

In the Sanyana village of Fatehabad district of Haryana, a dalit named Raju is a daily wage worker. On 16-2-2012 when he returning from a trip to a neighbouring village, he felt thirsty and drank water out of a pot placed near the field. Upper caste farmer who watched this became enraged and attacked him with a sickle, and as a result Raju lost his hand. He is still recovering from the attack, and his limb may be permanently disabled.

Andhra Pradesh: Ban on Festival Celebrations by Dalits

In the Padutla village of Gopalpet mandal of Mahabubnagar district, on the day of the festival Sankranti, dalits were not allowed to carry out their customary procession. When a complaint about this was made to the local police inspector, dalits were attacked with stones in the very presence of the inspector.

Bihar: State Protection for Landlords who Attacked Dalits

In Chotikalpa village of Jahanabad district of Bihar, upper caste Rajput landlords and dalit families called by the name Manjhias

co-exist. Manjhis work on the lands of Rajput landlords. Dinesh Manjhi, a young dalit man, was attacked on 30-3-2012 on the ground that he was defiant by Rajput youth with lathis and stones and brutally killed. They thereby signaled to the rest of the Manjhis to behave properly. A local TVchannel filmed this entire episode live. Police who were witness to the murder instead registered a case against Dinesh's father and arrested him.

Andhra Pradesh: Attack to Express Rage at Dalit Getting Land

In Bodhanam village of Atmakur mandal of Kurnool district, dominance of faction leaders and upper caste landlords prevails. A dalit farmer who resisted the attempt of the landlords to take over his land went to court and won the case and land. Faction leaders became enraged and attacked the hapless farmer with murderous weapons and gravely injured him.

Andhra Pradesh: Attack on Dalit Labourers by Upper Caste Landlords

In Jaggarajupalem village of Marripadu mandal of Prakasam district, 20 dalits who went there to work in tobacco fields erected temporary huts near a community hall. On 17.1.2012 Landlord Gangavarapu Mallikarjuna Rao went there with 20 of his henchmen and pulled down the huts and threw all of them on to the street.

Andhra Pradesh: Attacks on Dalits Depriving them of House Sites

In Kasipadu village of Pedakurapadu mandal of Guntur district, landlords misappropriated most the 7 acres of land that belonged to the local Hanuman temple. When dalits submitted a petition that the small chunk of land left after the misappropriation be allotted them as house sites, landlords occupied that land as well and attacked the dalits and injured several of them.

(Janashakthi, 20.4.2012)

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DESPERATE FURY INEVITABLE

- Tarimela Nagi Reddy

Foreword

It was three decades back in 1971-72 Comrade T. Nagi Reddy wrote this book. It was written as a part of his famous statement made before the Sessions Court during the proceedings of Hyderabad Conspiracy case.

The first and second generations of communists had organized the downtrodden SCs, now called dalits, and BCs on the class and social basis. Then the SCs were named as Harijans and their habitats as Harijanawadas. With the entry of capitalist relations into the agricultural sector, particularly the method of paying in cash came into vogue, they were used to be called agricultural workers. Com. TN used the terms Harijans, agricultural labourers, upper castes, upper caste savarna hindus. Today the toiling masses belonging to SCs, BCs and rural poor upper castes are rallied as dalit, as Rytucooli, as rural poor, as dalit cooli and as agricultural labour in the organizations that are working with different orientations. What were their living conditions three decades back? Com.TN with examples clearly explained how the upper caste landlords and the state had oppressed and exploited them. He extensively quoted from the analyses made by many with democratic and progressive outlook. He also gave excerpts from the reports of the government's commissions, bourgeois media and bureaucrats, who could not but mention the facts of life and warned the government to recognize the fact uncovered by its own commissions.

Three decades back he summarised the essence of the situation in one word - "Desperate Fury Inevitable". He explained with the statistical data the growth of number of rural toilers, the growth of landlessness among them, their increasing alienation from land and their declining incomes.

He explained the brutal forms of bonded labour, wage slavery, caste system and untouchability in various states. While describing various incidents of violence against dalits, his expressions were filled with anger and anguish.

"Social, economic and political contradictions are developing into direct confrontations as the landlords taking law into their own hands with ferocity unheard of at any time in the past. The Ku Klux Klan is being outdone" he analysed. He declared in the open court that, "armed landlords have created and are creating a situation wherein there seems to be no way out except armed confrontation in defence of their legitimate rights by the rural poor".

"Harijan village is so defenseless today that even where he knows he has been wronged and authority is ready to help him secure justice, he does not dare complain for fear of reprisal from the privileged part of the society".

"Land reforms have helped flatten the agrarian pyramid but not touched the base. The result has been a sharpening of tensions between land owning caste hindus and landless harijans. Social thrust of the Green Revolution is in the same direction".

"Though certain changes did take place in society, these were mainly within the caste system of feudal structure, instead of breaking away the institution. Forms may have changed but fundamentally caste remains the same".

"The reason for this is that, during all these years, there was no fundamental change in the character of Indian economy which remains essentially semi-feudal and semi-colonial in character. Even the differentiation of wealth in an economy of commodity production led to further intensification of the caste institutions".

Thus he concluded that "desperate fury is inevitable". He mentioned many a number brutal attacks on dalits perpetrated by the upper caste landlord sections from various states like Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh to drive home the point that violence stalks the rural scene.

The developments during the last two decades have moved in the same direction as delineated by Com TN. The welfare schemes of the government, co-operative banks, reforms by government and the set of economic reforms as part of imperialist globalization have created a neo rich class in the rural India. And the violence on dalits had increased many folds during the last 30 years.

The National Commission on SCs and STs observed in its 6th Report (200-01) that "many reports have revealed that the causes for atrocities on dalits revolve around land disputes, land alienation, bonded labour, refusal to pay minimum wages".

In general, the reasons for atrocities on dalits remained more or less same after 30 years. The Reports of dalit human rights watch, Sakshi, showed that the reasons for attacks on dalits are going to court for justice, demanding restoration of right over land, water and forest, attempt to practice the occupation of their choice, for freely casting their votes in elections, wishing to participate in community festivals, acting with self respect, refusing to obey the blind beliefs of upper castes etc. here we are publishing this report as an appendix.

- Viswam

*[Republished from the **Annual Bulletin of**
Rytucooli Sangham(AP) 2003]*

Agricultural workers constitute the single biggest section of our country's population - 12 crores out of 44 crores according to the 1961 census - 25 per cent of the total population, or one-third of the rural population. They are the most exploited, socially oppressed section of our people in many respects, treated worse than the Negroes in America or the Blacks in South Africa.

The agricultural policy of the Government, the system of distributing credit as well as high yielding seeds, fertilisers, pesticides has only helped the intensification and the polarisation between haves and have-nots in the rural system. Whatever be the talk of the government in relation to land reforms, the hundreds of crores of loans from I.D.A. (the affiliate of World Bank) to various state governments for distribution of tractors, combines, oil engines, electric motors, and other necessities of the rural rich, will in action only mean greater concentration of land and result in growth of agricultural labour in the rural areas.

These economic facilities do not reach the small farmers and "many of the small farmers belonging to the Harijan community are not aware of the facilities by the extension agency. Loans given under the intensive manufacturing scheme of the samithi rarely reach the small cultivators who suffer from social disabilities."

("Agricultural Development and Small Farmers : A Study of Andhra Pradesh", Gogula Parthasarathy : Andhra University 1971, Page 68).

Where the new techniques have taken root, land prices have risen three, four or even five times and land-owners, especially the

big ones, are in no mood to share with others the benefits brought by better farming methods. Their attempt is to get rid of tenants altogether and resume land for so-called self-cultivation, making use of the virtually unlimited supply of hired labour. Tenants are in this way being reduced to the position of landless labourers.

The increase in numbers of the rural labourers, which is mainly agricultural labour, is a growing phenomenon in India today.

Growing Rural Labour

According to the Second Labour Enquiry, of the estimated 66.6 million rural households in 1956-57, 24.5 per cent or 16.3 million were agricultural labour households. In 1963-64, according to the National Sample Survey (19th Round), there were about 67.6 million rural households in India, of which 17.2 million, or about 26 per cent were rural labour households.

We had noted in the chapter "**Is India on the Way to Industrialisation?**" that there has been no fundamental change in the occupational pattern in the country between industry and agriculture. The same is true in the rural economy.

Between 1901, and 1969, the proportion of agricultural workers to the total work force fluctuated around 70 percent of the total population; though the proportion of agricultural workers to the total work force remained stationary at about 70 per cent, in absolute terms there was an increase from 97.2 million to 132 million.

The following table shows the percentages of rural labour households in rural houses in various states of India. In the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal more **than one third of their respective rural households** constituted rural labour households. Rural labour is predominantly agricultural labour, constituting 82 per cent of the total rural labour.

TABLE: 14.1

**Rural Labour Households to Total Rural Households
in States, 1963-64**

State	Per cent
Kerala	36.7
Andhra Pradesh	34.7
Bihar	32.9
Orissa	30.0
Madhya Pradesh	22.9
Assam (includes Manipoor & Tripura also)	15.0
Rajasthan	11.8
Tamil Nadu	36.3
West Bengal	33.8
Maharashtra	30.0
Mysore	23.6
Gujarat	19.8
Uttar Pradesh	15.2
Punjab (includes Delhi & Himachal Pradesh)	14.9
Jammu & Kashmir	2.5
All India	25.5

The latest available figures show that, out of a total of rural population of 434 million, over 100 million owned no land at all and another 185 million owned less than five acres per family. Most of those who owned less than five acres of small patches of land are

also mainly agricultural labour. The following table shows the percentage of agricultural labour households to the total rural households in 1963-64, state-wise.

TABLE: 14.2.

Agricultural Labour Households to Rural Households

(per cent)

States	1963-64
Andhra Pradesh	29.1
Assam	11.7
Bihar	26.3
Gujarat	15.8
Jammu & Kashmir	1.0
Kerala	27.2
Madhya Pradesh	19.5
Maharashtra	26.6
Orissa	26.5
Mysore	19.5
Punjab including Himachal Pradesh	12.2
Rajasthan	4.5
Tamil Nadu	30.9
Uttar Pradesh	12.4
West Bengal	27.4
All India	20.9

The percentage of agricultural labour households to total rural households is above the all-India average in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Landless Labour

Labour without land is a growing phenomenon today. The growing capitalist relations and commodity production ruins small production, reducing petty cultivators and tenants into landless agricultural labour creating a rural proletariat without the means of production. He is left with his own labour power and nothing else to sell in the market for his living.

As Lenin had said in his book "**Development of Capitalism in Russia**"

"Machines lead to the concentration of production and to the practice of capitalist Co-operation in agriculture", and "where the employment of machines is particularly wide-spread (Novorossia) is also distinguished by the quite considerable size of its farms". The systematic employment of machinery in agriculture ousts the patriarchal 'middle' peasant as irrevocably as the steam power loom ousts the handicraft weaver".

Thus the growth of commodity production in agriculture, growing capitalist relations in the countryside, concentration of production, and the increasing employment of machinery, ousts small and middle peasants from the land increasing the numbers of landless labourers.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the policies being adopted by the ruling big bourgeois - landlord class in India is also increasing the army of the rural proletariat. This is clear from various studies on the impact of the '**new agricultural strategy**' in India.

The following table gives the percentage of distribution of agricultural labour households, by category of households with land and without land, in 1956-57 and 1963-64, showing the increasing trend towards the growth of the rural proletariat without land.

TABLE: 14.3**Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households by Category of Households :1956-57 and 1963-64**

	With Land		Without Land	
	1956-57	1963-64	1956-57	1963-64
Andhra Pradesh	33.0	27.3	67.0	72.7
Assam	29.7	40.3	70.3	59.7
Bihar	61.2	47.3	38.8	52.7
Gujarat	27.1	13.7	72.9	86.3
Jammu & Kashmir	32.8	50.0	67.2	50.0
Kerala	56.1	69.9	43.9	30.1
Madhya Pradesh	38.9	50.0	61.0	50.0
Maharashtra	27.1	28.6	72.9	71.4
Mysore	34.5	31.0	65.5	69.0
Orissa	53.0	44.8	47.0	55.2
Punjab	11.0	14.5	89.0	85.5
Rajasthan	35.8	39.6	64.2	60.4
Tamil Nadu	34.5	29.0	65.5	71.0
Uttar Pradesh	54.3	51.5	45.7	48.5
West Bengal	33.4	37.8	66.6	62.2
All India	41.6	38.8	58.4	61.2

The all-India average of agricultural labour households without land out of the total agricultural labour households has increased from 58.4 per cent to 61.2 per cent during 1956-57 and 1963-64. The states in which such an increase of households of landless agricultural labourers could be reckoned are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Mysore, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The states where the percentage of landless agricultural labour households to

agricultural labour households is greater than the all-India percentage of 61.2, are Andhra Pradesh (72.7), Gujarat (86.3), Maharashtra (71.4), Mysore (69.0), Punjab (85.5), Tamil Nadu (71.0) and West Bengal (62.2).

As for the percentage distribution of agricultural labour households, by categories, about 33 per cent of the households had some land in 1963-64 as against about 42 per cent in 1956-57. According to Agricultural Labour Enquiries, the percentage of landless labour to total agricultural labour which was 50 in 1950-51 increased to about 57 in 1956-57 and according to National Sample Survey, the percentage was about 61 in 1963-64.

"The percentage of landless agricultural labour has, thus, been increasing during all the years of developmental planning."

The impact of the 'green revolution' after 1963-64 in areas where intensive cultivation has progressed has not been studied yet in its sum total. Certain studies made so far have proved that this growth in the numbers of agricultural labour has been significant in areas where the new strategy has been implemented intensively.

Francine Frankel, who undertook a study of socio-economic relations of the peasantry under the impact of the new strategy, came to the Conclusion that, "the majority of 80 per cent in the rice belt have experienced a relative decline of their economic position; and some proportion, representing unprotected tenants cultivating under oral lease, have suffered an absolute deterioration in their living standard.

"In fact, in areas where high-yielding varieties of rice have been successfully introduced, this tendency towards economic polarisation between large farmers, on the one hand, and the majority of small owners, owner-cum-tenant cultivators, and share-croppers, on the other, has already begun." (Mainstream, December 13, 1969).

Agricultural labourers and landless peasants, including landless share-croppers in the villages he studied in Burdwan district, numbered 39 per cent, 52 per cent, 67 per cent, 59 per cent in the four villages for which he was given detailed data. He further notes that "the project officer and IAD" staff support the general interpretation suggested by this data that the overwhelming majority of agriculturalist families in Burdwan district are either completely landless or operate uneconomic holdings of usually less than three acres." (Ibid: Page 20). "in West Godavari district about 60 per cent of agricultural families are actually farm labourers." (Mainstream, December 27, 1969). 'The largest portion of agricultural population in Palghat district - about 85 per cent are farm labourers.' writing about Ludhiana, he says that "the inefficient farmers, that is, the small farmers who cannot afford the new technology, will ultimately find the gap in returns to investment on large and small farms so great that they will sell their holdings and leave agriculture. Similarly, the tenant class will begin to disappear."

He concludes his review of the impact of this new strategy saying that this "has already produced large numbers of unemployed young men in the villages... who may present serious socio-economic and law and order problems in the years to come". "rapid deterioration in 'good-relations' between landowners and agricultural labourers" has already led to the first confrontation between landlord and labour factions.

He foresees increasing confrontation of these polarised forces. He declares :

In other parts of the wheat belt ,for example, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where the majority of cultivating households operate holdings of less than 10 acres, where inequitous tenurial arrangements are an additional drain on the meagre resources of the small farmers, where the incidence of landless labourers is higher, and where the level of industrial development is low, it is difficult to see more than a small section of agricultural population being able to realise significant

benefits from the wheat revolution. Indeed, the gain of these areas are likely to be even more heavily skewed; the increase in disparities larger; and the rate of displacement greater than can reasonably be expected to be absorbed through the creation of alternative job opportunities outside agriculture [and this would lead to] increasing instances of class confrontation in rural areas. This emerges clearly from a consideration of agricultural modernisation and social change in the predominantly paddy growing districts of West Godavari, Tanjore, Palghat and Burdwan.

The question arises as to who is mainly responsible for the creation of this confrontation in the rural areas? Who is responsible for the increase in land concentration? Who should be held responsible for the growing numbers of agricultural labourers? Or, in other words, who is responsible for the creation of this revolutionary situation?

Is it the revolutionaries or the party in power?

Average Income of Agricultural Labourer

When we discussed the question of per capita income, we had noted that nearly "70 percent of the rural population in 1967-68 were found to be at poverty level", even according to the diagnosis of the Reserve Bank of India. Agricultural labour is the main chunk of this group of the population living on almost starvation diet in India. Not only are their wages the lowest, but the incidence of unemployment is highest. According to a study in **Economic Times**, it has been found that the incidence of unemployment is as high as 15 per cent of agricultural labour households as compared to 3 per cent for other rural households (September 25, 1970). Even of the agricultural labourers who are employed, except for the attached labourers, the others do not find employment all the year round. In most of the dry cultivation areas, employment at the highest is not more than 150 days in the year; in the irrigated areas, too, full employment is available only in the sowing and reaping periods - in all the other periods it is only haphazard and partial employment.

The following table gives the average annual income per agricultural labour household for two different years 1953-54 and 1963-64. The data are for all India, though comparable statewise data are not available.

TABLE: 14.4

Average Annual Income Per Agricultural Labour Household by Source : All India

Source of Income	Annual Income (Rs.)		Percentage to total (Rs.)	
	1956-57	1963-64	1956-57	1963-64
(1) Cultivation of land	32.15	42.54	8.3	6.4
(2) Agricultural wages	281.08	544.55	72.9	82.5
(3) Non agricultural wages	56.96	33.33	14.8	5.1
(4) Other sources	15.19	39.47	4.0	6.0
Total	385.38	659.89	100.0	100.0

Source: Economic Times, August 9, 1970.

The average annual income per agricultural labour house, which was Rs. 385.88 in 1956-57, increased to Rs. 660.19 in 1963-64 - recording an increase of about 71 per cent.

The basic feature to be noted here is the greater dependence of the agricultural labourer on agricultural wages in 1963-64 than in 1956-57. Whereas in 1956-57 the percentage of agricultural wages to his total income was 72.9 percent, it increased in 1963- 64 to 82.5 per cent. There was an absolute fall in income from non-agricultural wages and other occupations from Rs. 56.96 in 1956 - 57 to Rs.33.33 in 1963-64. It is evident that even meagre possibilities of other occupations in the rural sector have dried up.

The Economic Times Research Bureau reports on November 18, 1970, that average daily earnings of agricultural labourers declined

from 207 paise in 1950-51 to 203 paise in 1956-57 and increased to 297 paise in 1964-65.

For any one living in the villages, these figures as average earnings are fantastically high. However, what with more than three-fourths of the area under dry cultivation, where wages are as low as 50 paise even today in quite a number of remote areas; taking into consideration the large number of unemployed; considering that a large part of the year is without employment; this '*average*' is not possible even in most developed areas.

Even so, let us consider these data from a different angle. These figures from the two Agricultural Enquiries of 1950-51 and 1956-57 and the data released by the Central Labour Bureau for 1964-65, show that 'although in terms of money the wages of agricultural labour recorded an increase of about 37 per cent in a period of 14 years, real wages actually declined by about 5 per cent during the period'. The following table produced by the same Economic Times article clearly underlines the same fact.

TABLE: 14.5

Indices of Money, Real Earnings of Agricultural Labourers

Year	Indices of Money Earnings		Indices of Real Earnings	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1950 - 51	100	100	100	100
1956 - 57	94	94	94	94
1964 - 65	137	145	95	100

"Though the state governments have adopted minimum wage regulations, in actual practice the labours get much less than the minimum fixed."

Therefore, the rise in prices has not only eaten up his increments completely, his position has actually become worse. Consequently

the wide gulf between the economic conditions of the rural labour and the top class of rural society has further widened.

We must also remember that wages are paid in various ways. Various forms of feudal relations exist, even in areas where commodity production and capitalist relations have developed. Sometimes the wages are paid in cash and in quite a number of places and quite a number of times - especially in the reaping season - they are paid in kind; sometimes partly in cash and partly in kind. "Capitalism penetrates into agriculture particularly slowly and in extremely varied forms" (Lenin), with the result that various forms of capitalist relations along with feudal exploitation co-mingle to make an excessive burden on the rural poor.

The feudal relations in our countryside are prevalent almost every-where. They have preserved almost all their medieval supremacy of the landlords over the peasantry in the villages. In the following pages, a few instances of feudal methods of exploitation will be given as examples of the prevailing and growing tensions in the villages. There is yet prevalent in the overwhelming parts of the country, a system known as 'debt bondage' or 'debt slavery'. A correspondent writing in Economic Times on June 1, 1970, on the state of the Harijans in Mysore describes the system as follows:

There is then the 'Jeetha' system - the pernicious practice of a system of bonded labour - something akin to slavery practiced by the early American settlers. It is said to be practiced in parts of Hassan district and also in south Kanara, north Kanara, Chikmagalur and Shimoga districts. The Elaya Perumal Committee describes the system thus: 'according to the Jeetha system, the agricultural labourers are advanced petty sums of money in time of their need. They are bound in such a way that they are not able to repay the debt out of their meagre wages because under the terms of the bond they got food, cloth, and small salary only. The result is that they are not only unable to repay the loan but also have to add to it. Consequently their debt

increases. Even their children are obliged to take upon themselves, the repayment and become involved in it.

Thus the lords of the land have even retained the jurisdiction over their 'labourers'. They have preserved almost all their medieval practices, including various forms of free labour. It is true feudalism is flourishing more in some localities than in others, but the fact is that nowhere has it been entirely destroyed.

For example, the system of attached labourers is prevalent all over the country. Writing about Burdwan district Francine Frankel reports that "permanent relations between land owners and labour still persist; they are particularly common in parts of the district dominated by larger holdings. In fact, with the introduction of intensive cropping, the necessity of having assured labour at peak cultivation period, actually tended to strengthen the system of permanent land-owner stroke labourer relations." (Mainstream; December 13. 1969).

This system is based on local traditions and customs. They are 'employed according to a traditional arrangement by which agricultural labour families are permanently attached to the family of a land-owner, usually from one generation to the next.... Those interviewed reported cash payments ranging from Rs. 110 to Rs. 150 annually and varying amounts of paddy, averaging six to seven maunds a year. In addition, they ordinarily receive two or three meals a day and during the year three or four dhoties, one woolen wrapper, oil, bidi, and paddy straw for thatching their houses." (Ibid, Page 22).

Thus the attached labourers are characterised by debt bondage, caste restraints, tie-in allotments of land, indicating prevalence of precapitalist features of employment of labour. Attached labourers are tied down by loans, repayment of which were practically impossible.

Moreover, in many cases the employers give the attached labourers house-sites and land sometimes on a share-cropping basis.

In South India large numbers of farm servants known as **padiyala, pannaiyala, pulayas, paleru, jeeta, etc.**, work year after year, if not generation after generation for the same landowner families.

Such a medieval system of bond slaves, according to the Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Report, is on the increase. The percentage of attached labourers among all agricultural labourers increased from 9.7 percent in 1950-51 to 26.63 percent in 1956-57. **There is no doubt that considerable section of the agricultural labourers in India are victims of pre-capitalist exploitation;** semi-feudal feature of wage payment in kind is prevalent in vast areas of our countryside. It was revealed by the Second Agriculture Labour Enquiry Report that the employment situation as well as the terms and conditions of employment have markedly worsened over time.

Apart from low wages and inhuman living conditions, the agricultural labourers are victims of unemployment and under employment. Even according to the note submitted by the Central Statistical Organisation to the All-India Seminar on Agricultural Labour in 1965, they are employed only 200 days a year.

The agricultural labourers are not part and parcel of the village. They are forced to live outside the main village, in separate **ghettos**, under horrible conditions, without any common facilities such as wells for drinking water, roads, street lanes. etc. They are mostly illiterate.

When such are the conditions, and they are becoming worse with feudal appropriation and exploitation taking open forms of violence against agricultural labour (many more instances will be given later in this chapter), it is disgusting to note that the Soviet revisionists are showering praise on the Congress government for having implemented 'partial bourgeois agrarian reform'. In an article published in *Izvestia*, September 4, 1970, they write : "The bourgeois agrarian reforms carried out in India for all their inconsistency - they do not solve the agrarian problem in favour of the peasantry and do not

eliminate the archaic production relations in the countryside - have, nevertheless, dealt a blow at feudal landlords, the princes and zamindars". In their service to the Indian bourgeoisie, the Soviet revisionists seem to be more loyal than the king himself.

Even the *Economic Times*, June 1, 1970, calls this system no better than 'age-old serfdom'. As Ranjit Das Gupta has written, "The intertwining of the pre-capitalist methods of exploitation and the capitalist method has subjected the underprivileged groups of rural India to absolute and relative impoverishment".

In addition to this, they are socially oppressed in our caste ridden society. The overwhelming majority of agricultural labourers belong to untouchable or backward castes. Social ostracism of those castes is worse than the whites attitude to Negroes in America. They are obstructed from using the wells, tanks, temples, and other public places.

The reason for this is that, during the British period, there was no fundamental change in the character of the Indian economy which remained essentially semi-feudal and semi- colonial in character.

Even after the transfer of power from the British to the Indian comprador class, no fundamental changes in the economic, social and administrative spheres has been achieved. Even to this day, the character of the Indian economy has remained essentially semi-feudal and semi-colonial. Forms in some respects have changed, but fundamentally caste has remained the same. The system of Panchayat Raj, the growth of green revolution, the growth of commodity production in the countryside, have only helped the ruling big landlord and the big business class to increase their domination through the revivalist and obscurantist social ideology based on castes.

The primary condition for lifting agricultural workers from this horrible state in which they have been forced to exist is the elimination and extermination of landlordism. Fundamental changes in the agrarian structure and social relations in the rural areas can be achieved only through an agrarian revolution.

Untouchability

The problem of untouchability is inter-related with the problem of rural land relations. The extent and magnitude of the problem of untouchability is the reflection mainly of the economic lot of the scheduled castes, and a reflection of an economic society with feudal social and economic relations which are still strong.' The economic relations in the countryside are such that they are entirely dependent on the high caste landlords.

Due to the "increasing power of what is called in India the rural elite", "the caste system is probably stronger today than it was at the time when India became independent. Caste is so deeply entrenched in India's traditions that it cannot be eradicated except by drastic surgery." ('Asian Drama', Page 279)

The problem of untouchability can be solved only by a hundred per cent democratic revolution capable of smashing to smithereens the feudal landlord hold in the rural areas, under the impact of mass uprisings, by total elimination of landlordism.

Tension has been growing between landlords and agricultural labourers in various pockets in our country. Writing in the *Economic Times* (July 9, 1970) about the tensions in Thanjavur, in relation to the intensive agricultural district programme, the paper's special correspondent noted that "the disturbing aspect is the running feud between the landlord class and the agricultural labour in half a dozen taluks constituting the eastern wing of the district" culminating in a "ghastly incident in which 42 persons, mostly women and children, were burnt alive". Struggle for fair wages unleashes the fury in unimaginable magnitude, among the landlords on the downtrodden agricultural labour.

Scheduled Castes and Tribes in India

More than one-fifth of the India's population belongs to the category 'scheduled castes and scheduled tribes'. By the 1961 census,

scheduled castes and scheduled tribes formed 14.6 per cent (6.44 crores) and 6.8 percent (2.9crores) of the country's total population. Every seventh person in India, on an average, belongs to scheduled caste category, while every fifteenth person in the country belongs to the tribal group.

The percentage of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to the total population, statewise, as per the 1961 census, is as given in the following table :

TABLE: 14.6

Name of the State	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Total
Andhra	13.82	3.68	17.50
Assam	6.17	17.29	23.56
Bihar	14.00	9.05	23.05
Gujarat	6.63	13.35	19.98
Jammu & Kashmir	7.98	-	7.98
Kerala	8.49	1.26	9.75
M.P.	13.14	20.63	33.77
Madras	18.01	0.75	18.76
Maharashtra	5.63	6.06	11.69
Mysore	13.22	0.81	14.03
Orissa	15.75	24.07	39.82
Punjab	20.38	0.07	20.45
Rajasthan	16.67	11.67	28.34
U. P.	20.88	-	20.88
West Bengal	19.73	5.88	25.61
INDIA	14.67	6.87	21.54

A statewide analysis of the distribution of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes shows that 25 per cent of the total scheduled caste population is concentrated in Uttar Pradesh and one-tenth, each, in Bihar and West Bengal. Half the tribal population in the country resides in the three states of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and West Bengal. Nearly 90 per cent of the scheduled caste population and more than 97 per cent of the tribal population in the country is residing in the rural areas. They form 15.97 per cent and 8.16 per cent, respectively, of the rural population.

Literacy among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population is very poor in India compared to the general literacy rate. The 1961 census shows that only 10 per cent of them are literates as against 24 per cent for the general Indian population. Among the literates, the majority constitute those who are **"literate without education level"**.

The overwhelming majority of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribe people are in the rural areas, and most of them are engaged in agricultural labour. As such, the emancipation of these people cannot be achieved separately and in isolation from the general problem of rural poverty. This cannot be achieved without revolutionary redistribution of land and forcible and violent overthrow of landlordism. In short, the problem of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes can be solved only through a revolutionary change in the socio-economic structure of the country as a whole.

The State of Harijans

Economic Times produced a series of articles on the state of the Harijans in 1970. A few extracts reveal the fact that they - the lowest stratum in society both economically and socially - are being treated worse than serfs of medieval society.

IN PUNJAB : They have to live in Bastis away from the socially better-placed community. They are not permitted to draw

water from wells of the people of 'high castes'. Although there are hand-pumps in the village, the Harijans are not allowed to touch them in Dehra village in Dera Basia sub-division. Last year, a socio economic survey was carried out, by the planning forum of the local Mahendra college, at village Daun Kalan, a model village in the vicinity of Patiala. It was found that though the village was economically well advanced, having a high school, a post office, an industrial training centre, a primary health centre, and other amenities, yet it was socially backward, so much so that the Harijans were not permitted to draw water from the wells of the localities. In the village high school, there was not a single student belonging to the scheduled castes though there was no bar on admission. The overall rise in prices has forced the landless labour to demand a better wage and, wherever they did so, they face resistance from the land-owning class. Trouble arose about three months ago when the foundation stone of a village school was laid by a Minister and the Gram Panchayat donated land for a playground of the school. Incidentally, the playground include a part of such land which was within 'lal-lakir' (residential units of the village) and was not 'shamlat' land within the meaning of Punjab village common lands Act. While donating the land the panchayat ignored the hard fact that the Harijan families would be put to great difficulty in case no passage was provided in front of their homes. A barbed wire was raised around their houses, by February 20, 1970. On March 22, a study team of the Punjab Pradesh Congress (R) led by its president Mr. Zail Singh visited the village and found entry to two houses completely blocked. **"Such incidents have multiplied during recent days throughout the state, because the police mostly acted as a silent spectator."**

The problem of untouchability is basically the problem of social and economic inequality. Harijans are considered a necessary cog in the age-old agricultural production system meant to provide cheap labour to the land-owning classes.

The old social order is resisting the new trends as a result of which a huge majority of Harijans are condemned.

Even after two decades of Independence, the social economic conditions of scheduled castes in Punjab have not registered any marked improvement according to an official survey recently conducted in the state.

*A number of instances have been given in the report where other classes used their **economic power as one of the weapons** against those depressed classes in the villages, particularly in situations when the scheduled castes make attempts to exercise their rights. It has taken the shape of their eviction from land. discontinuance of their employment, and stoppage of their remuneration as village servants.*

The report pointed out that the per capita income of the scheduled castes population in the rural area of the state was Rs. 194 as against Rs. 483 for the general population for the year 1963-64 (Economic Times, June 29, 1970).

IN MADHYA PRADESH :

- (1) A Harijan labourer was prevented from working at the construction site of a temple.
- (2) In one case, in a temple constructed by Harijans themselves, they were prevented from offering worship.
- (3) In Mandazur, one Chamar bridegroom was made to get down from the horse on which he was riding, because it was the privilege of the caste Hindus.
- (4) Untouchability is also practiced in selected institutions. Reports are often received that, in the Panchayat meetings, elected Harijan members are made to squat on the floor, outside the main door of the meeting hall, while caste Hindu members occupy chairs.

"Various reasons are being listed for the ineffective enforcement of the untouchability law". One of the main reasons is "the indifference of the police towards such complaints. Such offences are generally

committed by people of high caste, who also happen to be influential persons of the area. In addition to this, feudal landlords furnished a large percentage of high government officials."

"Land to the landless Harijans is a perpetual demand in the state. Allegations of discrimination, partiality, favouritism, and watering down of the provision of the scheme of land reforms are often levelled by the representatives of the backward communities. In fact, the situation has become so explosive that unless the government evolves a fool-proof procedure, it might explode any day." (Economic Times, May 24, 1970).

IN MYSORE :

Recently, a party of press men, who were taken to a village in Kolar district by some Harijan leaders, were shocked to find that Harijans are still prevented from drawing water from common wells and are literally ostracised by the higher castes.

As a result of age-old serfdom, the Harijans have almost lost their faculty of reacting to injustice. Thus, the inequities have been solidified by the rigid social stratification, of which the caste is the most significant manifestation. Political decentralisation, or panchayat raj, has strengthened their position further till by offering them more opportunities for political office and patronage. M. M. Srinivas, has described the inherent conflict of interests as follows :

"The rural elite has emerged as a class keenly conscious of the political and economic opportunities lying before it. It does not have any inhibitions about exploiting these opportunities to its own advantage... A basic contradiction needs to be mentioned here. In implementing programmes for the benefit of rural areas, government officials tend to be guided by the rural leaders who are part of the rural elite. But it is forgotten that there is a fundamental conflict between the interests of the rural elite and the rural poor. The rural elite are, as a group, aggressive, acquisitive and not burdened by feelings of

guilt towards the people they exploit. Hierarchy and exploitation are so deep-seated in rural India that they are accepted without questioning. Neither the urban politician nor the administrator can do without the rural elite and the latter know it." (Yojana, October 1, 1961).

Thus democracy itself plays into the hands of petty plutocracy.

In such circumstances, it is no wonder that contradictions are growing in the rural areas going to the extent of violent clashes. wherever and whenever the Harijans and other backward caste rural poor assert their social rights, or fight for better wages, the socially superior high caste landlords make use of this division of caste to throttle this legitimate assertion of their rights by all violent means. There are innumerable instances of these people beaten and even killed appearing in the Press. There is no hideous crime that is not perpetrated against untouchables and backward classes.

Violence Stalks the Rural Scene

With the growth of the power of the rural elite, there is growing violence in the countryside. In recent years, unheard of atrocities committed against the poor in the rural area, especially on the low-caste section, have been growing in number. Social, economic and political contradictions are developing into direct confrontations, with landlords taking law into their own hands with a ferocity unheard of at any time in the past. The Ku Klux Klan is being outdone. Nazi atrocities in Germany on Jews are being re-enacted in India's countryside by the all-powerful feudal landlords. It is my opinion that armed landlords have created and are creating a situation, wherein there seems to be no way out except armed confrontation in defence of their legitimate rights by the rural poor.

According to the Union Home Ministry's information, 93 Harijans were done to death in different parts of the country in 1969. The office of the scheduled caste commissioner has reported 355 cases of harassment of Harijans, some of them involving rape and murder.

Rarely have the culprits been brought to book. Rarely is the violator of the law punished. This criminal indifference of the authorities is not accidental. These limbs of the State are closely linked with the upper strata of the society, which is the main rural base of the Government. Harijans, as agricultural workers and landless peasants, are the worst exploited not only economically but socially.

I propose to bring to the notice of the court various incidents that have been reported in the 'respectable' Press, from which it is explicit that it is the landlords, under the supervision, blessing and connivance of the administrators, who have been responsible for the violence in the country. I would like to ask : Is it not the legitimate duty of the people to counter violence with violence?

Let us first look at the facts - at the magnitude of the issue confronting us before we come to any conclusion. For, that would give us an idea of the type of feudal gangsterism stalking this land, an idea of the various issues involved and a glimpse of various methods adopted by the landlords.

Patriot on December 11, 1968, reported that an attack of armed gang on Harijan cultivators took place in Dharmkot-Zira section of Ferozepur district in Punjab. In this incident, huts were set on fire, crops were destroyed, and the cultivators were tied up and beaten. The paper remarks that it would not have been so disquieting but for the fact that it is the latest of a series of such outrages which have not been confined to one or two states. There have been a series of incidents all over the country in which Harijans were murdered, their women molested, and their dwellings smashed up. There is a sinister pattern in the way Harijans have in recent months been terrorised and bullied in A.P., M.P., U.P., Rajasthan and elsewhere. "Sympathetic noises from the top will not end this untenable situation. Drastic action to purge the administration of caste-mongers is the only alternative to the Harijans organising themselves for self defence."

Now let us take the incidents mainly in the years 1970-71.

National Herald of May 28, 1970, reports that 54 Harijans belonging to 13 families were rendered homeless after their homes were set on fire allegedly by a large group of caste Hindus on the midnight of May 20, in Masania vilage in Dhenkanal district of Orissa.

Statesman, August 7, 1970, reported that in Tamdei village of Sambalpur four brothers belonging to a Gonda (Harijan) family were burnt to death on July 18, over the question of fishing rights.

Indian Express, in an editorial on August 6, 1970, writes as follows: "In recent months, there have been several other instances of atrocities committed against Harijans primarily because of their being Harijans. Following a petty quarrel between a caste Hindu and some Harijans, all huts in the Harijans quarter of an Orissa village were set on fire in May. A shocked Rajya Sabha was recently told by an M.P. from Maharashtra how a young Harijan woman was burnt to death in her state nearly two months ago. Reports about Harijans being tortured for drawing water from certain wells or for entering temples continue to come from many parts of the country.

"In most states the problem of untouchability is **getting mixed up with the question of land reforms...** This has created new tensions in rural society dominated by the upper castes. The Bhubaneswar report about killing of some Harijans in a clash over possession of land in a village near Puri is a significant pointer. **The question of wages of farm labourers is another source of conflict.** The way the Harijans of a village near Patiala were harassed by the local panchayat a few months ago over the wage issue was truly incredible. Their houses were fenced off by barbed wire with the help of public funds because they refused to work for a daily wage of Rs. 2.50 which was less than half the nominal rate in the case of non-Harijans in the area.

"Even more shocking than these incidents is the apathy of the authorities. The state governments appear to have failed signally in securing for the Harijans their legitimate rights".

Patriot reports on December 20, 1970, an incident in which the Harijans were being evicted from the lands which they have been cultivating for quite a number of years.

"According to Bahadur Singh, sarpanch of the village Ganna Qind, in Phillavar tehsil in Jullundur district, Punjab, 24 Harijan families were allotted a plot of land by the government. After they had developed this land and installed a tubewell, one senior police officers of Ludhiana district, in collaboration with the revenue officer of the area, got the allotment cancelled. To get possession of the land he organised a police raid on the Harijans of this village in which one woman was seriously wounded. **A report was lodged and no action has been taken.**

"The story of Harijans of Talwand Canal is that one senior officer of co-operative societies is seeking to get Harijans evicted from the land in this village through bogus entries in the revenue records in favour of his relatives."

Times of India, March 24, 1971, reports that Choti Khatu, a fairly big village with a population of 4,000 wears a deserted look. About 30 to 40 Baori (scheduled caste) families lived in and on the out skirts of the village. The 12 houses owned by the Baorjs, some of them pucca, were demolished by miscreants. Four huts in the fields were burnt. The panic stricken villagers who fled have left behind all their possessions - rags, broken chappals, lanterns, charpoys and flour grinding stones. Even earthen pots used for storing foodgrains were smashed and the grains were carried away.

Thirty-year-old Pipli, mother of five children said, "I and three others were dragged out of our houses on the evening of March 9 and beaten up mercilessly. Afterwards, some people brought Jarhwali, who was carrying her six year old child in her arms. She too was belaboured so, the child died in her arms".

Another woman also called Pipli, was beaten up and kicked despite being in an advanced stage of pregnancy. She gave premature birth the same day.

Times Of India, March 26, 1971, reports about a social boycott of Harijans organised by the president of a village panchayat in Mysore State. How total the boycott was can be seen from the fact that the village grocer did not sell provisions to Harijans, the blacksmith and the potter refused to have any dealings with them, and even the priest barred their entry into the local temple.

"One panchayat in Punjab is said to have gone so far as to order Harijan houses to be 'walled off' from the rest of the village. Panchayats are supposed to foster democracy at the grass roots. but in practice many of them function like tiny oligarchies."

Patriot, June 21, 1971, reports on Kurja Harijans fleeing landlord terror, "About 15 Harijan families of a village in Bulandshahr district of U. P. have fled their homes following a reign of terror let loose by a big landlord there."

"It was the reluctance to do a certain job by a Harijan lad of 18 years that made the Harijan basti the victim of landlords anger, who threatened to shoot them and to escape it the 15 families fled their homes" and "are now in the capital, to meet and seek redressal from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. and are camping under a big tree outside Teen Murthi".

"The landlord felt offended at the protestation of 18-year old Shohanlal, who, after working three or four hours of household chores at the landlord's house was refused a break for tea, even though the boy went home only after he completed the work.

"Even so, the landlord felt aggrieved. He, along with his nephews, went to the boy's home and beat him. When his mother protested she too was kicked on the belly. The boy's young wife was treated in the same manner. When the boy's father who was then absent tried to raise the issue with the village panchayat, it refused to take cognisance of the incident. A complaint lodged with the police the next day has had no effect. On the other hand, the Harijans were told to settle the dispute with the landlord."

"When neither the boy nor his mother went to the landlord's house to do the household chores for the next two days, the landlord again visited the Harijan basti and threatened to shoot them all if they did not report for work the next day.

"Struck by terror, the Harijans collected whatever they could from their houses and fled in the night and reached Delhi by train from Khurja."

'Patriot', June 22, 1971, makes an editorial comment on the rural anger. The rural landlords practising their privileged morality have increasingly set regressive social standards across the country. Thakurs, Gounders or Reddys, they all use the Harijan ghettos outside the villages for the daily conscription of cheap labour, or dead of the night forays for women and will not concede them any civilised rights as part of society.

"There have been many Kanchikacharlas in Andhra Pradesh after the first tragedy, huts full of 'rebellious' Harijan labourers burnt in Kilvenmani, and many groups of terrorised men, women, and children, have fled U. P. border villages to Delhi and **there does not seem to be anything much any one can or will do** because most seem to accept that this is all part of the Indian condition - only some regretfully. The U. P. land - owner who threatened to shoot a family and drove them out of their village was only following standard practice. The outraged Gounders of the Coimbatore village, hit where it hurts most by the elopement of one of their girls with a Harijan boy, may be preparing for a small war of their own. **For both, police help is assured since force identified itself with the ruling** or powerful interests not the weaker sections..... Though 'dadas' are emerging among the Harijans who will sell the community's interests, **it looks as though a rural confrontation of some magnitude is inevitable unless the police** are de-linked from the land-owners and the State apparatus moves to protect the weaker sections."

Blitz, August 21, 1971, reports how in Kanail village, in Gorakhpur, a Harijan boy, Samuru, was tied to 'Khamia' and beaten by an ex-zamindar whose fields he refused to plough when the zamindar insisted the boy should work free for him as his family and forefathers allegedly owed him Rs. 1,32,000.

"Denying the existence of a slave trade amongst the tribals of Wynad, Kerala's Minister for Harijan Welfare admitted that there was a system under which the tribal people were tied down by contract for a particular period to individual landlords."

"A marriage party of Harijans was allegedly beaten up by Rajputs in Bikaner village temple, while in Ganganagar district a Harijan was beheaded and thrown in a well."

Statesman, August 22, 1971, reports that Harijans were stunned by the announcement of social boycott, made in Duneka village, two miles from here (Moga) last night.

"The Harijans were told by the beat of drum that they would not be allowed to step on farms owned by the people in the village."

"The social boycott reportedly follows the Harijans' demand for wages in excess of the rates fixed by villagers of the area."

Patriot, September 2, 1971, reports the ejection of Harijan cultivators of common land in the village Kheri Ganeran, 12 miles from Patiala, which has whipped up tension in the village.

"The total area of the village common land is 380 bighas of which 107 bighas had been leased out to Harijans for cultivation for the last several years by the village panchayat. Now, the entire common land area in the village is in the possession of the high caste cultivators."

Patriot, September 2, 1971, Mr. Sunder Sing, General Secretary, Congress Legislature Party, today alleged that the Harijans in Punjab were being harassed and ousted from their land. He also alleged that the Harijans were being killed on the false pleas that they had become Naxalites.

Times of India, September 8, 1971, in Current Topics says: "How can Harijans be blamed for feeling that there is built in hostility against them in the administration? A new road had been constructed in a village in South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu for their 'exclusive' use. It appears that the caste-Hindus of the village objected to the pollution of the regular road by the Harijans."

The conscience of the ruling class is shocked when they hear that South African whites put up boards for railway compartments and hotels. "Dogs and Blacks Not Allowed". Yet this 'soft-hearted' ruling class is no worse in their treatment of village poor.

Hindu, September 10, 1971, reports two cases of assaulting scheduled caste persons for entering a temple, figures today in the Maharashtra Assembly during question hour.

One incident occurred in Deogaon village Ahmednagar district on April 20. In another incident, a 60-year old Person of the same caste was beaten up by a sarpanch of Govhan village in Sangli district on May 22 last as he entered a Hanuman temple.

"When the opposition members demanded disclosure of the names of **the accused the Minister expressed his inability to furnish them.** He, however, promised to Produce the names in a day or two according to the direction of the Speaker".

Patriot, of September 11, 1971, reports of terror stricken Harijans fleeing a Rajasthan hamlet, Palwala Jataun, a small village in Bassi tehsil of Jaipur district in Rajasthan 'today without a single Harjan. All the 40 Harijan families of the village have fled their homes in the wake of terror let loose against them.

"The incident was a sequel to the **village cobblers to refusal mend free of charge** the footwear of the caste Hindus. Such refusal was contrary to the traditions still followed in many Rajasthan villages that the cobblers mend old footwear of these persons free of charge."

"A mob of caste - Hindus started wanton attacks on Harijans, indulged in arson and looting. About 10 Harijan houses were turned to ashes."

"These people (Harijans who had come to the capital) complain that in many villages the Jats and the Thakurs were terrorising the Harijans. They had virtually made it impossible for any cobbler to live in the village. They also sometimes forcibly occupied the lands of Harijans or deliberately destroyed the standing crops from their fields".

Times of India, in an editorial on September 15, 1971, says: "There is hardly a week which does not bring to light a fresh instance of the practice of grossest kind of discrimination on grounds of caste." After giving the instance of denying the use of public road to Harijans in a village in South Arcot, the editorial says that, this is a case "not just of discrimination but a reign of terror instituted with impunity under the very nose of government that reveals in anti-Brahmin militancy".

"The Harijan village is so defenceless today that, even where he knows he has been wronged and authority is ready to help him secure justice, he does not dare complain for fear of reprisals from the privileged part of the community, which, as the South Arcot example shows, can make life impossible for him. **Land reforms have helped flatten the agrarian pyramid but not touched the base.**"

"The result has been a sharpening of tensions between land owning caste Hindus and landless Harijans. Social thrust of the Green Revolution is in the same direction."

Patriot, September 18, 1971, talks of casteism running amock in Behara. "The Harijans of Behara, victims of a barbarous assault, are bitterly complaining that the days of serfdom are not yet over".

"The chamars of the village traditionally remove the dead animals. It has been obligatory all along as a part of the job of the landless

labour **whose current wages are** Rs. 3 a month and half kg. of coarse grain a day."

"At a meeting on Sunday, the chamars decided not to remove dead animals any longer. The decision was unanimous".

On Tuesday, a group of caste Hindus, some Thakurs and other influential persons, ransacked the Harijan basti; their shed roofs were set ablaze. Pots and pans were broken. Women and children were beaten up indiscriminately. The rampaging crowd did not leave until they killed one person. It is believed that the object of the attack was to terrorise them into continuing to perform the traditional services.

Times of India, September 21, 1971, reports how a **Rajasthan Harijan tribe fights exploitation**. The Reghars, a community of scheduled caste people, have fled Palawala, Ramura, Paterha and Bakri villages in Jaipur district following a series of clashes with the landowning caste Hindus the past two months.

It is socio-economic tensions that have led to these clashes. "Part of the trouble is traceable to politicians who have been resisting socio-economic changes in the countryside."

FEUDAL RELATIONS :

The Reghars had for decades been skinning cattle, tanning hides, manufacturing and repairing charas(leather buckets) for drawing water from the wells - and repairing old shoes.

"While they used to be paid cash for providing new **charas**, they had to accept foodgrains at harvest time for the rest of their services."

"With the growing socio-political consciousness, these arrangements are no longer acceptable to the community of Reghars. With the growing money economy, it is but natural that the Reghars are insisting on wages in cash for their services."

"A large number of meetings have been held over the past few months to press the demand for a better deal for the Reghars. At one of these meetings the Reghars decided not to skin cattle or repair old charas and shoes unless paid in cash".

To counter this agitation of the Reghars, "the farmers setup Kisan Sangharsh Samithi to hit back at the Reghars". The Samithi decided to impose social boycott on the Reghars. They took back the fields leased out to Reghars on a share - cropping basis. The Reghars were also banned from grazing their cattle in common graying lands. They were prevented from going to their fields or houses through traditional short-cuts. They were not allowed to draw water from private wells. The supply of provision from village shops was stopped.

At Palewala, 300 to 400 Jats and Brabmins with their servants surrounded the houses of the Reghars, beat up the men and women, as well as children, and looted their Property.

At Bakri, the Reghars were prevented from taking water from a private well.

In some instances, the Reghars were prevented from taking possession of land allotted to them by the government.

"Despite these reprisals, the Reghars seem determined not to rear old charas or shoes. They are equally bent on not accepting foodgrains in lieu of wages."

LAND FOR THE POOR :

As this demand of the landless poor, the bulk of whom belong to the scheduled castes, continues to grow in intensity, the Congress government more and more has intensified its propaganda of land reforms on one hand and has been stealthily helping a concerted move to oust them even from the small bits of land that agricultural labour possessed. The following bit of information in Patriot of September 14, 1971, is of interest.

"In Porbandar taluk of Gujarat, 20 Harijan families have been driven out of a village where they had lived for generations, their crime being that they owned small places of agricultural land."

"In the Patiala district of Punjab, influential persons are in illegal possession of Nazul land transferred to Harijans, in connivance with the officials."

"In U. P. districts of Bulandshahr, Agra, Hamirpur, Nainital, Baharaich, etc., what was revealed by the preliminary survey reports of distribution of fallow land to the landless is disconcerting. In the majority of the cases, land has been found to be allotted by the village land management committees to those who already own big slices of land or have other sources of income, as per the provision of the existing land law which treats even a person, whose parents own enough land, as landless." Though the government claims that most of the waste and surplus land has been distributed among the scheduled castes and from time to time produces impressive statistics to substantiate it, in actual fact hardly any land has come into their physical possession."

"Under the circumstances, if the scheduled castes plan direct action, they are more than justified. It is also widely alleged that the authorities are resorting to a more suitable device to deprive the Harijans and other poorer people of the land they had been in possession of for generations, by acquiring them for public purposes. Cases of land acquired for Meerut University along the Ghat Road and for other similar public purposes in Aligarh are being cited in this connection."

Desperate Fury Inevitable

These incidents cannot be dismissed as these unrelated to the class war now aging in our country in various forms. Some of the problems in rural India of today arise from the fact that economic relations which have become outdated still persist in our villages due to the unbalanced economic development of India.

The traditional system of caste interdependence, under which poor peasants and labouring class mainly belonging to lower castes attached themselves to the landlord families, still persists.

Those people belonging to the upper castes, who had previously lived on tributes and taxes from the producing and serving castes as feudal rent-receivers, maintained their social and economic domination under British rule in the newly evolving class structure. Their rule in society was further established and strengthened after the comprador bourgeoisie and the landlords took over power from British imperialism. The co-operatives, bank loans, better seeds, fertilisers, and other economic benefits which the rich classes, belonging to the upper castes received, along with the establishment of panchayats, samithis, and zilla parishads, which gave them a direct link with the administration from bottom to top strengthened them not only economically but also politically.

On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the low - caste people, the serving castes, remained at the bottom of society as landless and semi-landless labourers.

Thus, though certain changes did take place in society, these were mainly within the caste system of the feudal structure, instead of breaking away from the institution. Forms may have changed but fundamentally caste remains the same.

The reason for this is that, during all these years, there was no fundamental change in the character of the Indian economy which remains essentially semi-feudal and semi-colonial in character. Even the distinction of wealth in an economy of commodity production led to further intensification of the caste institutions. As Ranjit Das Gupta in his book "Problems of Economic Transition" states

"Planning efforts and various agricultural development programmes, including the much lauded new agricultural development policies, helped to increase disparities between region to region and

between different strata within a region benefiting most the large land owners and the upper strata of the peasantry [and has given) a new life to this hierarchical caste structure and even strengthened it in certain respects in the rural areas."

"The dimension of the problems flowing from the pervasive persistence of the inequalitarian caste structure is revealed by reports of burning alive of women and children of Harijan agricultural labourers in Tanjavur district of Tamil Nadu and the spate of violence against scheduled castes going on widely in separate parts of the country".

This "solid foundation of oriental despotism", as Marx brilliantly exposed, continues to exist with all its ferocity, strengthening "stagnatory, undignified and vegetative life", "contaminated by distinctions of caste and slavery".

But the rural masses are awakening. Slowly, but steadily, a sense of revolt against economic and social despotism is growing. "While the promises given to rural masses are belied", writes Yogesh Vajpeyi in National Herald in his series of articles on '**Indian Village**', "awareness is dawning among the sufferers that this state of affairs cannot be tolerated any more". And the villagers are **realising that the tables cannot be turned upside down by playing the game according to rules of those at the top.** "This is a dangerous stage, for after the realisation that the conventional means are ineffective comes desperation, and direct action germinising out of desperate fury is rather uncontrollable."

(National Herald, May 10, 1970).

It is no wonder that the masses have come to believe that "It is utterly useless to professedly use merely legal means of resistance against an enemy which scorns such scruples." (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels : "German Revolution and counter Revolution", Page 110).

Therefore, if the class character of the revolt of the exploited some-times expresses itself in certain castes, and if the supression of the downtrodden exploited classes takes the character of a brutal

war against certain castes, it in no way obscures the basic character of class struggle. During British rule, the rural masses were so much steeped in the motion of caste and communal segregation that even their political and economic revolts sometimes took a peculiarly obscurantist character, as was the case with the Mopla Revolt in Malabar.

Here is how Engels, the greater partner of the founder of scientific socialism, **Karl Marx, analyses the so-called religious wars of Medieval Europe**; *"Even the so-called religious wars of the sixteenth century involved positive material class interests; those wars were class wars, too, just as the later internal collisions in England and France. Although the class struggles of the day were clothed in religious" shibboleths and though the interests, requirements, and demands of the various classes were concealed behind a religious screen, this changed nothing in the matter and is easily explained by the conditions of the time.... the revolutionary opposition to feudalism was alive all down the middle ages. It took the shape of mysticism, open heresy, or armed insurrection, all depending on the conditions of the time."*

('The Peasant War in Germany').

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FORMS OF UNTOUCHABILITY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

*[We have published a part of Com. Tarimela Nagi Reddy's Court Statement, **India Mortgaged**. The report of 'Dalit Human Rights Watch' (Sakshi) being published here confirms what Com. TN wrote.]*

1. Not allowing dalits to draw water from the community wells.
2. Stopping the supply of drinking water in the dalits basties.
3. Cutting of the electricity supply to the dalit basties.
4. Separate glasses for dalits in hotels.
5. Serving food to dalits at the end in the context of public festivals.
6. Not allowing dalits to sit in the public places.
7. Allowing dalits to draw water only after the upper caste people have used it.
8. Asking dalits to clean their plates, etc at the time of public festivals.
9. Not allowing dalits to enter into the temples.
10. Not allowing dalits to sit in the first row in the churches.
11. Not allowing dalits to wear shoes while passing through the upper caste basties.
12. Prohibiting dalits from using the umbrella in upper caste basties.
13. Not allowing dalits to wear good dresses in front of upper caste people.

14. Dalits are required to get up in buses when the upper caste people board it.
15. Alloting separate seats for dalits in the buses.
16. Alloting separate seats for dalits in the schools.
17. Not allowing dalits to sit down in village panchayats.
18. Prohibiting dalits from taking houses on
19. Insulting with abuses by taking the name of the caste
20. Dalits, as a rule, must beat the drums in the programmes of public festivals and funerals.
21. Denying the voting right to dalits.
22. Deleting the names of dalits from the voter lists.
23. Unleashing violence in the context of elections.
24. Using dalits as bond labour
25. Denying the rights over the means of livelihood.
26. Not paying minimum wage for work.
27. Not allowing the religious processions of dalits to pass through the streets of upper castes.
28. Not providing the water to irrigate the fields of dalits.
29. Denying the right of agriculture to the dalits.
30. Not allowing dalit leaders to exercise their powers after winning an election.
31. Prohibiting dalits from bathing at common bathing ghats.
32. Refusing to perform hair cutting to dalits
33. Harassing the educated dalits for wearing good dresses.
34. Free labour: to remove the dead bodies.
35. Free labour: to remove human excreta with hands.
36. Denying the right to change the profession.
37. Forcing dalits to work without remuneration on the eve of religious festivals of upper castes.

Comments

There are several laws to protect the rights of dalits. Yet, the dalits in AP are subjected to atrocities endlessly in one form or other. We see a general feature in the reasons for the murders, social ostracisations and atrocities committed against the dalits. Dalits in AP are questioning untouchability which is in vogue for generations. They are questioning the caste system which is responsible for it dalits are trying to change the age-old practices. They are protesting against the practice of untouchability. They are questioning the high-handedness of upper caste and asserting their rights over the land, demanding better wages and trying to utilize their right to vote. All these had become an eye-sore for the upper caste people who are to tolerate any changes in the villages and are out to continue the situation as it was. The atrocities are occurring as a consequence of it.

In many instances, the dalit youth are the victims. These are the people who are educated to one extent or other, cherish the feelings of self-respect, defy caste oppression and restrictions and wish to lead an independent life.

Dalits are subjected to atrocities whenever they assert their rights. Every case we mentioned above has its own background. The domineering classes. Who are unable to tolerate the growing consciousness of rights among the dalits are subjecting dalits to social, economic and cultural oppression. Their economic and social rights are violated because of untouchability which is at the root of all conditions.

Untouchability is a serious economic oppression. It denies dalits the minimum means of livelihood like water, land, wages and job opportunities. It is condemning to enslavement to the upper castes for generations.

Untouchability is oppressing the dalits politically. At many places, the upper castes deny the right to vote to the dalits. Dalits are attacked and their properties are destroyed when they vote a candidate

opposed by the upper castes or even when they try to avail their right to vote.

Untouchability is a social oppression. It denies the dalits the opportunity to live with self-respect and dignity. Dalits cannot wear the cloths of their choice. It is a crime worth death punishment for a lower caste person to wear shoes even by mistake. Dalits cannot air their views freely if they are opposed to the views of upper castes. They cannot marry a person of their choice. Dalits must occupy a seat in a bus only after the upper caste passengers are seated. Dalits must bear the scolding in the name of caste and must suffer the humiliation and indignity of taking tea in glasses separately allotted for them.

Untouchability is cultural oppression. It decides whether a dalit can take part in the cultural life of the nation or not. Dalits must lend a free labour when a temple is being built in a village. But they are not allowed to enter the temple once its construction was over. Dalits must beat the drums whenever there are public festivals in the villages. But they cannot hold their own festivals. They must provide free services whenever there are marriages or deaths in the families of upper castes. But when there are feasts, the dalits must sit at the tail end of the row. They must lend free services whenever there are deaths in the families of upper castes. But the dalits cannot take the dead bodies of their own families along the streets in the village.

Thus, the untouchability is a sum total of violation of social, economic, political and cultural rights. The upper caste people resort to and are resorting to murders when the dalits are questioning the violation of these rights by the upper castes, and when the upper castes fear that their domination will be affected by it. They resort to rapes, inflict serious wounds, loot and burn down the houses of dalits. All this is a reality happening every day. Denying the right to live means denying all the rights. Because, there is no meaning for other rights if there is no protection to life and if one cannot even live.

(Annual Bulletin of Rythucoolie Sangham (A.P.) - 2003)

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Condemn the Massacre by the Landlord Pettandary Forces of Karmachedu Harijan Street! Carry on Movement to End Social Inequalities!

On July 17th (1985) morning, some landlords with all backing from the rulers and mad with pettandars tendencies have attacked a harijan street in Karamchedu village of Prakasham district in Andhra Pradesh. This gang has gone all out in its attack. It has shown no differentiation between the aged, children and women and went on a beating spree everyone whoever came in its way. By now, 7 people have died. Several women were molested.

The people of Harijan Palle (a small village) ran helter-skelter for life. Since the day of attack, the palle has become a desert. Leaving their homes and belongings, the people are living under an open sky in Chirala town. The cause of this attack was trivial. The mistake lies with the said attackers themselves.

On July 16th evening, one person began to quarrel with another person when the later pointed out that his act of washing the cattle on the bund of drinking water tank may dirty the drinking water. He began to quarrel over it. He scolded and flagged one woman, Suvartamma with a hunter when she questioned why he was needlessly quarrelling. Unable to bear the insult, she has resisted him with the earthen pot in her hand. It was a good blow on feudal arrogance and male chauvinism. This act, therefore was commendable.

The person who started the quarrel and clash went and told about the incident to the sections of landlords and pettandars in the

village. These landlords and pettandars have close links with the rulers and administration. They congregated at a place, hatched a plan and unleashed the attack against the Harijan Palle on the next morning. The reign of terror and devastation on 17th July (1985) was only a consequence of it.

The oceans are nothing before the tears shed by the people dispossessed by the attack. The roarings of seas sound weak before the cries and wails of people. 38 years had gone by 'since the so called independence. The methods of a few paracities in a nation, or tribe against the toiling people whom they consider 'lower' are continuing as usual.

Our society is rotten and stinking with caste and class differences. The landlords and neo rich are doing everything to protect this rot as it is in order to continue their exploitation and oppression.

The oppressed classes and oppressed people continue to be divided into different castes. They are demanding social equality and social respect. They are declaring that 'we too are human beings, social beings and deserve to live with dignity and self respect like others'. They are declaring that they would no more tolerate the oppression and subservience. These urges are most justified.

The landlords and pettandars, who are out to continue to enjoy all the avenues of exploitation, could not simply agree with this kind of upsurge in the consciousness of oppressed people and their attempts to stand beside them as socially equal. These were the same people who remained crushed under their feet till yesterday. As Com. T.Nagi Reddy had pointed out in his 1973 Court Statement, India Mortgaged,; "where ever and whenever the Harijan and other backward caste rural poor assert their social rights, or fight for better wages the socially superior higher caste landlords make use of this division of caste to throttle this legitimate assertion of their rights by all violent means"(458). They sought to exercise their authority over the entire society and the poor who are sustaining it with their toil.

In the last 38 years the rulers had been carrying out the same discredited policy of caste discrimination which was pursued by the erstwhile monarchies and colonial rulers. Barbarous and hateful practices like treating some from among the toilers as 'avarnas', keeping them away from the houses of others and the social activities, practicing untouchability and ostracizing them are kept alive under the patronizing eyes of rulers. Together with these hateful methods, the landlords are continuing their attacks against the poor unabatedly.

The attacks and atrocities and continuing on the so called avarnas, adivasis and women in Maharashtra, Gujarat, UP, AP and other states. A news item in the press reported that the landlords had hacked to death 6 Harijans together with a pregnant woman brutally in Raswal of UP on July 24, 1985. 12 adivasis were ghastly murdered in Banji village of Bihar.

Koteslu was burnt alive in Kanchikacharla village in Krishna district of AP. A ghastly incident had occurred in Paritala, Bhimavaram Sarpanch was killed. Atrocities were committed on Harijans in Addanki Taluka. And, also in Konkaluripeta, Venkatakrishanapuram (Guntur District) and Emani during Brahmananda Reddy and Vengal Rao regimes. Beginning with Pallamkurru massacre in East Godavari district, Padirikuppam to the present Karamchedu attack during the TDP regime and Congress regime-all were the attacks and violent acts carried by the landlords and pettendars backed by the rulers against the weaker sections.

We can come across not even a single instance where the rulers had punished the landlords and pettendars who had committed so many brutalities and heinous acts against the poor and Harijans. Through their hegemony over the constitutional, executive and judicial machinery the rulers are always showing bias towards the landlord forces. The Govt. declare that it is their sacred duty to carry out the laws. But they are always standing by the landlords and pettendars and thus adding to the strength of their atrocities against the Harijans.

A Govt. can be of Congress mark or TDP mark or any other. But all of them are one and the same in this respect.

During the British period and "even after the transfer of power from the British to the Indian comprador class, no fundamental changes in the economic, social and administrative spheres had been achieved. Even to this day, the character of the Indian economy has remained essentially semi-feudal and semi-colonial. Forms in some respects have changed, but fundamentally caste has remained the same." (India Mortgaged, 0.453). these classes are further strengthening their domination through "the revivalist and obscurantist social ideology based on castes". Here lies the root cause for this worst situation and for the ghastly acts of the landlords in Karamchedu or any other place.

There was a time when the poor of all castes stood united under the leadership of Communist party in Karamchedu even though there was dominance and affluence of landlords in the village. The people stood up and resisted the indignities meted against them by the landlords. The poor of all castes united took part in the Romperu Banjar Satyagraha. They faced the jails and repression collectively. They had won the land. They unitedly defended the tenancy lands. Washerfolk, barbers, Harijans, poor and middle class had unitedly fought the 1953 panchayat elections defying the landlord atrocities. The poor and middle class people had unitedly foiled the landlord conspiracies in the dispute over paddy transplantation.

The rural poor and the peasants always stood by those who were in the thick of the movement even during the national movement. They extended help to it in various forms.

At one time, the poor in AP as well as other states were united under the leadership of Communist Party and carried on the struggle for their rights and for a new society. Revisionism and neo revisionism, which had raised their heads in the Communist Movement, had emasculated the organized strength and fighting vigour of the

poor. On the other side, the left adventurism among the poor. This situation has offered a fine opportunity for the landlord and pettandari forces. The organized strength of the poor has gradually eroded. The poor classes 'faced divisions under the influence of the ruling classes. The landlords had gone berserk in their activities taking advantage of the situation. They revived their atrocities and indignities against the poor in various forms. The same landlords who kept mum in 1980s when the police was shooting dead the protesting tobacco farmers are now inciting and rallying some farmers in the name of caste and for an attack against the poor.

At a time when the landlords and pettandari forces are hatching conspiracies to divide the people in the name of caste the only way open for the poor is to get themselves united and organized to resist the indignities and violence as they had done earlier. This is the only way available for the poor in Karamchedu or any other village.

The landlords have taken the support of TDP which is in power. They were engaged in committing atrocities against the poor using the support of whatever the party was in power at the time.

The sections of ruling classes in the TDP in power and those in the Congress yearning for power are rousing emotions among the poor to divert from the issue of killing in karmchedu. They are playing the drama of mutual blaming by charactering it as a 'law and order' problem.

The real problem is: "There was no fundamental change in the character of the Indian economy which remains essentially semi-feudal and semi-colonial."

"The primary condition for lifting agricultural workers from this horrible state in which they have been forced to exit, as Com.TN pointed out in India Mortgaged" is the elimination and extermination of landlordism". Fundamental changes in the agrarian structure and social relations in the rural areas can be achieved only through an

agrarian revolution"(453). Therefore, the poor in every village must get themselves organized and take the path of agrarian revolution.

We must demand the AP Govt. for an immediate resolution of following demands:

- * The landlords and pettandars involved in the crime must be severely punished.
- * Proper conditions be ensured immediately to restore normal life for the poor people who fled away from the village out of fear in the face of inhuman attack.
- * Seize the land of those who committed the crime and distribute the same among the families which suffered the losses.
- * Distribute the surplus land of landlords and the Govt. banjar lands and temple land among the poor.
- * All the rural poor are to get themselves organized to resist the exploitation and atrocities of feudal landlords
- * Denounce the inhuman murderous attacks of landlords and pettandars against the Harijan rural poor in Karmchedu.

28.7.1985

**State Committee
UCCRI (ML)**

(Janashakti - 5-8-1985)

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CHUNDUR ONLY AN INSTANCE OF BIG BOURGEOIS - LANDLORD RULE

Chundur is a village in Guntur district in AP. 800 dalit families live here. Of them, 200 families eke their lives on some petty and non-agricultural jobs. 500 families are landless. The land possessed by 100 families is nominal. Only 3 families have one acre each. Rest of the families possesses only 25 to 50 cents of land each. Most of the families have no other way except toiling in the lands of landlords as coolies, farm servants and tenants. Dalits of this village suffer from the social discrimination and oppression.

Yet, some youth of this village are relatively better placed as compared to dalits in other villages because of other jobs and education. The consciousness, self-confidence, the tendency to question the caste chauvinism and getting organized that are growing among the dalits, more particularly the youth, was simply intolerable for the upper caste landlords. So, the upper caste landlord forces, the Govt. machinery, police and the top leaders of parties have joined together to 'teach a lesson' to dalits so that the spread of consciousness of Chundur youth to other villages can be checked and their upper caste chauvinism and the class exploitation can be perpetuated. They resorted to an inhuman massacre in a planned way against the dalits of Chundur village.

Their massive onslaught started at about 10 .am on August 6, 1991 and went on upto noon. The upper caste landlords from Chundur, Valiveru, Modukuru, Vellaturu, Kollipara and other villages came in

tractors and jeeps and went on hunting the dalits. They caught hold of dalit people, who were running away in fear for life, broke their legs and hands and brutally slaughtered them with knives and axes. Twenty one dalits have disappeared as a consequence of these attacks. The slaughterers have simply pushed the dead bodies into the gunny bags and have thrown them into the drain of nearby Tungabhadra Drain.

Exactly after a month, the custodians of the Constitution who stood in support of the upper caste land lord chauvinism's massacre of Chundur dalits on August 6th 1991 have, once again, proved the 'distinction' of their Constitution.

On Sept 10, at about 3.pm, the police have deliberately shot dead Kommerla Anil Kumar, the Vice President of Dalit Struggle Committee. They resorted to most heinous, ghastly violence in a planned way against the dalit victims who were on an indefinite hunger strike. They have seriously wounded 25 people. They have brutally beaten Anil Kumar's father along with three other persons who were taking the wounded Anil for treatment. Anil Kumar's father Raja Ram said that the police have aimed their guns and fired Anil from behind his back when Anil was pacifying the people who were standing in the way of police van while it was trying to move Devarapalli Prasad and Maddi Daya Sagar (in an attempt to break the hunger strike) to Guntur hospital. He said that he saw the police shooting his son before his own eyes and the police resorted to lathi charge against him when he was taking his son hit by the bullets on a cot. Not only the police did not bother to take his son to the hospital, but also did not extend co-operation to him. At the same time, L. Ellai Perumal, an ex-MP from Tamil Nadu helped to carry Anil Kumar in his car. Kommerla Raja Ram has narrated these facts with all pain. When a Correspondent questioned, 'whether stones were pelted at the police by the dalits? 'Can the police shoot down the people for pelting the stones, was his reply. He also said: 'one can understand from this act of police how revengeful they were. They straight away

aimed their guns and shot at my boy instead of firing in the air.' What one can understand from this? It means that the police thinks that it can use the same Constitution as and when it wishes to trample under the feet the freedom of speech, right to hold meetings, protest and agitate the said Constitution is darned to have bestowed on the people.

The police have turned the entire village into an open jail as part of the policy to blockade the help and support to the masses of dalit people in Chundur from outside. In response to this, the Dalit Struggle Committee too chose not to allow any official from entering their own camp. Curiously, the District Collector has reminded the people that the authorities have every authority to visit Chundur and its dalit locality as they are a part of the district. But the Collector here seems to have forgotten that the people as well as all the citizens of India have the democratic right to go any where in the Country. He is forgetting the fact that Katti Padma Rao, a dalit leader was taken into police custody in Ponnuru when he was on his way to Chundur to prevent him from entering the village. Many others too were not allowed to go to Chundur. The rythu coolies, rural poor and workers were obstructed from taking part in Guntur Chalo programme of Aug 28 (1991) organized by several mass Organisations to express their support and solidarity to the rights of dalits and the victims of ghastly massacre. All this has only exposed the real nature of the State. All wings and all institutions of this state acted in a co-ordinated manner to foil this programme. It has foisted false cases against some people.

The Govt. which could turn its face other side, allow the Reddy landlords and rich peasants to form the so-called "Sarva Janabhyudaya Samiti;" call for a Guntur bandh; unleash violence and destruction against the dalits in the Hostels of AC College and extend protection to the boys of landlords by, resorting to firings even on the passers by, has resorted to the firing against the poor at the camp of hunger strike in Chundur. It took the life of a 25 years' old dalit youth in this course.

However, the district officials could not avoid from admitting one fact. They said: "The conditions which existed in Chundur before Aug 6th (1991) massacre exist in many a villages and these conditions too need to be set right." Accordingly, is it not clear for the authorities that no one need to incite the dalits in the villages and the social tensions that are existing for generations between the oppressed and oppressors are a consequence of social contradictions and social oppression continuing for generations? From this, what is wrong if various mass organisations, rythu-coolies, rural poor, workers and women's Organisations come out in solidarity movements and demand the removal of the causes at the root of landlord chauvinism?

What is wrong if they demand the seizure of the lands of those responsible for the massacre and distributing the said lands among the victims of the massacre? Why the Govt. is not taking such steps when the laws are in favour of such step? Dalit people and mass organizations are raising this demand hoping that such steps would, atleast to an extent, strike at the economic basis responsible for this chauvinism.

But, instead of taking these steps, the Govt. is trying to make mockery of the very aim of the Dalit Struggle Committee by its offer to dole out one lakh rupees for one life and Rs 10,000 for one who suffered molestation. Thus it sought to hit a blow at the organised strength of dalits and the growing solidarity movement around it. It is trying to water down the democratic movement by bringing the SC and BC Ministers and MLAs into the scene.

For generations, the suppression and appeasement continue to be a weapon used by the exploiting classes against the oppressed people. The people are realizing that these two are the two sides of the same coin. The divide and rule is a policy used by the exploiting classes against the oppressed classes and forces who are getting organized and resisting the exploiting classes.

Here is a point to note. The President, the head of this 'great' Indian State, did not give time even for an interview when the dalit

MPs sought to take the atrocities that were committed against the dalits through out the Country to his notice. Dalit MPs who belonged to all parties and committed to remain within and serve the present constitutional system may have their own interests as well as politics. But the President's attitude was only a pointer to his denigrating attitude towards the dalit people.

Many presidents had come and gone. As it happened in the tenure of all other Presidents, the brutalities against the dalits and oppressed people are continuing in Venkatraman's period too. It is the same Constitution which is in vogue in all these periods. The dalit MPs knew it well. Therefore, their worry was nothing other than that they were not given a chance to even shed the crocodile tears!

In the meanwhile, within one month alone, the series of massacres and atrocities were committed and "chundur" were re-enacted in various districts of our state like (Praguturu) Mahabubnagar; (Pardhi) Adilabad; (Gokarajapalli) Krishna; (Chalakurti) Nalgonda; (Gurajala) Guntur and other states like (Lakhimpur) UP; (Bharai) Haryana and many other places which have not come to light.

The incidents like this had been occurring in the last 40 years of rule under the Indian Constitution. Therefore, Chundur is only one instance in the Comprodar-landlord rule in our Country.

The masses of dalit people must , therefore, get themselves organized in the movement of oppressed classes. They must get themselves prepared for the resistance.

Dalit organizations are waging struggles against social discrimination and for the eradication of caste system. The caste and class oppressions are being perpetrated by the upper caste landlord sections in the rural areas who wield political power. The caste oppression and the land issue are inter related. The problem of eradication of caste is inalienably linked with the issue of land distribution. The struggle for land is the underlying factor for all the

attacks and atrocities that are continuing all over India. It is only the change of class basis of exploitation that puts an end to caste oppression and removes its pervading influence in the super structure that is Ideology, culture etc.

Eradication of caste and emancipation of dalit and exploited people is closely linked with the land to the tiller and the success of agrarian revolution. It is the urgent task today to co-ordinate the struggles of dalits against caste oppression with the class struggles and to make them part of the struggle for New Democratic Revolution, so that a casteless and classless society could be build.

[Compilation Article of August 20, 1991 & Sept 20, 1991 Janashakti (a Revolutionaries Fortnightly Magazine) Articles about Chundur massacre]

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Beware of Us!

We will come! We will come!
We will come with our own calculations!
We will come with our own estimations!
We will come!
We will come to answer you!
Red tears are our weapons of Revolution.
Hard labour is our capital
And we will come with the sword of wisdom.
We will come, We will come!
Wearing the question mark as our crown!
We will translate our thoughts into action!
Before our bright rays of light,
You can't hide your dark atrocities!

- Sikha Aakash



RISE IN REVOLT
OH ! OPPRESSED DALITS

All the oppressed people must unitedly struggle for land. Food and self respect to prevent the repetition of Kanchikacharla, Karamchedu, Neerukonda, Chundur, Vempenta, Pyapili and Lakshimpet attacks. Let us get organise to eliminate the exploitative caste system which is ruining the society. Let us struggle for a right to live to all the oppressed people to live with better living condition and self respect.



A Publication of
Rythu Coolie Sangham (AP)

RISE IN REVOLT!

OH ! OPPRESSED DALITS



(AIIKMS)