

MSAD Newsletter

Issue No. 5

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MSAD Activities

After successfully circulating the fourth issue, MSAD is presenting the fifth issue of MSAD-Newsletter. MSAD received various suggestions as well as inspiration from various quarters. The editorial team is hopeful that this issue, as the earlier one, will be welcome by all our readers.

(Continued in page 2)

10 December: A call for unity

It is to remind on this occasion of the International Human Rights Day that the notions of dignity and equality as recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should enable the world community in envisioning through practices of these notions a world free from domination, repression and injustice. Similarly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights emphasise on the significance of political aspirations of the people in order to ensure self-determination as founda-

(Continued in page 4)

Nupi Lan: Continuing the struggle

“We begged for rice and in return received bayonet wounds and wounds from the gun-butts. For one handful of rice we paid two handfuls of blood”. Testimony by Salam Tomba Singh SI No. 10/s/0, Manipur State Durbar Criminal Case No. 4 of 1940., 13/03/1940.

“In order to enable us to live with full dignity and preserve our honour along the line of our tradition and culture, our fight against crimes and atrocities committed by the army, which are occurring in front of everybody’s eyes, is going on without a break from 14 May 1980 onwards....”. Excerpt from a Pamphlet circulated by the Communication group, Manipur Nupee Kanglup, Kangleipak (Manipur), Imphal, 27/5/1980

“Go back Indian Army...Indian Army Rape Us ...Indian Army Take our Flesh ...We are all Manorama’s Mother.” Slogans of the nude protest at Kangla ,Imphal, 15/07 2004

“I am disappointed with the discriminatory policy of the Indian

(Continued in page 6)

(MSAD Activites Continues . . .)

We would like to remind our readers that Publication of MSAD-Newsletter is a step to bring to the fore interaction between MSAD Executive Committee and the wider public. The Newsletter carries at least one article on every issue to engage with questions concerning various issues of democracy, rights and grassroots politics, students’ movement and welfare. MSAD is of the opinion that we need to have an ambience for having talks on these issues. MSAD-Newsletter is just one small step toward this.

23-10-2008: Election Committee conducted scrutiny of the candidature contesting election for the MSAD Executive term 2008-2009. The Election Committee declared Nongmaithem Bonney and Moirangthem Bimol elected uncontested for the post of General Secretary and Cultural Secretary respectively.

27-10-2008: Oath taking ceremony of the newly elected executive members of MSAD was held at the Open Air Theatre, University of Delhi (North).

01-11-2008: On the occasion of the KUT festival of the Kuki-Chin-Mizo communities, MSAD distributed greeting cards conveying the message of love and fraternity.

03-11-2008: An interactive discussion on *Ethno Origin and Cultural Unity of the People of Manipur* at Arts Faculty, Delhi University (North). Noted writer and social activist Mr. Hareshwar Goswami initiated the discussion.

09-11-2008: Election Committee declared the following individuals elected / nominated to the respective Executive Post/ Committee mentioned against each name: M. Sanjoykumar (Vice-President); N. Joskeny (Organisation Secretary); N. Alex (Finance Secretary); N. Manishwar & I. Ibungo (Human Rights Committee); Kshetrimayum Dayabati, Makakmayum Farnaz, Krispa Ningombam & Rajkumari Pintu (Women Committee); Khoirom Bankimchandra, Khoirom Santosh, Kumam Foleshwor, Mayanglambam Bobby & Elangbam Deepak (Academic Committee); L. Sanju @ Chalamba (Sports Committee); Khagembam Surjit & Kshetrimayum Manichandra (Cultural Committee).

20-11-2008: N. Manishwar (Human Rights Committee) attended annual congress of the People’s Democratic Front of India (PDFI) at Ambedkar Bhawan, New Delhi.

23-11-2008: Release of the annual calendar of MSAD at India International Trade Fair (IITF), at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

24-11-2008: An interactive discussion on the *Current Political Situation in Manipur* was organised at the Open Air Theatre, Arts Faculty, University of Delhi (North). Social activist Mr. S. Sanjoy (AMUCO) delivered

a speech on the background and the trend of armed conflict in Manipur.

25-11-2008: An emergency joint meeting of the members of MSAD, Manipur Information Centre (Delhi) and Manipur Pavilion (IITF) decided to take up legal action against security guards of the Manipur Pavilion who lathi charged upon Sanjoy. The Manipur Pavilion paid monetary compensation to bear medical expense of Sanjoy.

30-11-2008: MSAD volunteers K. Foleshwor, Jemson, Motilal, N Alex, Th. Shantikumar, Ksh. Deepak, Ksh. Rabikan, N. Arun donated nine units of blood to Th. Dolendro, a hypo-plastic bone marrow patient of Bashikhong, Imphal.

01-12-2008: MSAD felicitated Ms. M. C. Mary Kom and Miss L. Sarita for winning Gold and Bronze medal respectively at the fifth AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships held in Ningbo City (China) in November 2008.

02-12-2008: The Election Committee received; (1) Nomination form submitted by Oinam Sandhyarani Chanu for the post of President and (2) joint resignation letter undersigned by M. Sanjoykumar (Vice-President), Nongmaithem Bonney (General Secretary), N. Joskeny (Organisation Secretary) and N. Alex (Finance Secretary).

07-12-2008: The Election Committee, Reference No: EC/MSAD/Election/10/07-12-2008, declared that, "...keeping in mind complexity of the underlying issues, and for the larger interest of MSAD; (1) that the Election Committee has accepted the resignation tendered by the above mentioned persons, (2) that the application for the post of President by O. Sandhyarani Chanu has been temporarily made 'provisional' until a fresh election for MSAD has been officially declared by the Election Committee, (3) that existing Committees (Academic Committee, Cultural Committee, Human Rights Committee, Sports Committee & Women Committee) shall remain functional and M. Bimol Singh, only remaining executive member (Cultural Secretary) shall work in tandem with the Committees under the supervision of the Advisory Board and Election Committee until a fresh election is conducted (4) that the date of election shall be announced 'effectively' taking into account the immediacy of constituting Executive Committee of MSAD and (5) that the above decisions were derived at with due deliberations and rigorous examination of the prevailing conditions surrounding MSAD.

10-12-2008: International Human Rights Day was observed at Delhi University (North)

11-12-2008: MSAD volunteers M. Bimol & M Bobby donated blood to N. Rupachandra, a brain tumour patient.

12-12-2008: Nupi Lan Day was observed at Delhi University (North).

15-12-2008: A delegation of MSAD conducted an investigation into the case of molestation and harassment of two Manipur women by landlord at the

wee hour of the early morning of 13 December at Sikanderpur, Gurgaon, Haryana (henceforth Gurgoan Crime).

24-12-2008: A Joint Body Meeting, attended by officials of Hmar Students' Association Delhi, Manipur Information Centre (Delhi), Manipur Students' Association Delhi, Northeast Helpline, Northeast Voice, SSPP (Paite Students), Vaiphei Welfare Association and Young Paite Association, to take up collective action against Gurgaon Crime, was organised under the initiatives of MSAD at MIC office, Baba Kharag Singh Marg, New Delhi. MSAD raised the seriousness and racial dimension of the crime and proposed for a peaceful demonstration. The members attended expressed their solidarity with MSAD and pledged with their moral and political support to the proposed demonstration.

29-12-2008: A peaceful demonstration against *Racial Discrimination on Northeast People*, in response to the criminal assault on two Manipuri women on 13 December by landlord, was collectively organised under the initiatives of Manipur Students' Association Delhi on 29 December 2008 at DLF (Phase 1), Sikanderpur, Gurgaon, Haryana State. The demonstration was attended by above hundred persons, including members of All India SC/ST Students' Federation, Assam Students' Association Delhi, Hmar Students' Association (Delhi), Kuki Students' Organisation Delhi, Maring Students', SSPP (Paite), Sikkim Youth Association, Vaiphei Student (ZILLAI) and Zelianrong Students' Union Delhi. The demonstration began with an assembly in front of the house where the crime was committed and it was followed by a march on several streets of Sikanderpur. Pamphlets, printed in English and Hindi languages, narrating the criminal act of 13 December and conveying the message of peace and love were circulated widely.

(10 December: A call for unity continues . . .)

tion for freedom and justice. Ideas about strengthening and protecting them, and of course, the politics around these ideas have today reformulated the notion of dignity and equality. Today, various sections of the humanity, be it cultural, political or social, have successfully started to bring these ideas to the domain of intensive political engagement and mobilisation.

The provisions of the Declaration and the Covenants allow free choice of programmes for economic, social and cultural development for each nation (e.g. Manipur) to pursue and urge every government to follow the path to democracy, peace and development through such programmes. In light of the spirit of the Declaration and the Covenants, the people of Manipur have been struggling for democratic rights of equality, freedom and dignity. However,

what follows since the beginning of these struggles is a series of brutality of the Government of India through explicit military repression, atrocities and violation of human rights. As a consequence of these undemocratic and militaristic practices of the Indian Government, Manipur stands today completely dehumanised, and terrorised; its economy completely pauperised and the society irreversibly disarrayed. Thousands of cases of rampant killing of innocents, assassination of children and women, detention and enforced disappearance are becoming the order of the day, all under clearly defined objectives of the Government of India to efface any form of democratic struggle in Manipur.

India's geo-strategic interest and the greed for expansionism, both economic and political, which are vividly shown in various strategies of the Government of India, has now become powerful source of justification for and legalisation of the intense form of using terror by the State as a technique to gain the economic and political ends. What is developing in Manipur is an increasingly contested ideology of the Government that seeks to suspend democratic rights, concretise economic displacement and political marginalisation. As a result, development is completely out of question. Productive forces, especially the youths, are utilised in militarization projects of the State by giving them job for containing the struggles for democracy. Manipur's identity of being a nation and its values is now gradually under a threat.

Manipur Students' Association Delhi (MSAD) believes that our struggle for democracy should take new strengths to further intensify the inspiration of Universal Declaration of human Rights. On this solemn occasion of the International Human Rights Day, that is 10 December 2008, we extend our solidarity to all those who are fighting for democratic rights in different parts of the world and at the same time, call for unity of the oppressed and exploited peoples across the globe to rise up together and fight for justice, democracy and peace.

A BRIEF ECONOMIC PROFILE OF MANIPUR

* Manipur's per capita net income (SDP) based on a quick estimate at current prices is Rs. 11,370 for 1999-2000 as against the All India Average of Rs. 16,047. The range employment in the state service sector is very limited with 71,508 persons employed in 2001-2002 out of a total population of about 23 lakhs. In 2001 nearly 10, 00,000 [ten lakh] of people live on irregular and limited income.

* In the primary sector 50% of the main workers are engaged in agricul-

tural activities. Agricultural labourers with negligible area of arable land for cultivation has increased from 28,613 in 1981 to 47,350 in 1991 and to 1,20,991 in 2001. Marginal labours who do not have any cultivable land and who survive on an average of 100 working days have been increased from 38,322 in 1981 to 55,528 in 1991 and more than doubled in 2001. The decadal growth rate of marginal workers is at 32.9 %.

* Industrial growth remains stagnant with micro enterprises (79,555) and the small-scale units (8771). This accounts for larger segment of the industrial sector. Whereas most of the state-owned corporations have been closed 30.86 % of small scale industrial units are sick and 90 % of micro enterprises are in trouble.

* The people have lost their control over natural resources (including land) as a result of constitutional restrictions. For instance collective right of the people of Manipur over their land, wetlands and waters are regularly de-regulated by Indian laws (e.g. Articles 3, 270 and 272 of Indian Constitution, Land Revenue Act 1960, Land Acquisition Act 1894, etc) and transferred for private use to foreigners, government agencies and corporate bodies for economic exploitation. Forests are stripped off, water bodies destroyed, agricultural lands submerged and residential areas displaced through mismanagement of projects (e.g. Loktak Hydro Electric Project, Tipaimukh Project, etc.) and neglect of maintenance.

* There has been steady increase in the number of poverty from 5.29 lakhs in 1987-88 to 7.19 lakhs in 1999-2000. Only 12.41 % of the households in Manipur have access to modern toilet facility in 1997 (National Human Development Report, 2001, - page 171) and 37 % safe drinking water (Economic Survey, 2004-05)

MSAD

New Delhi: 8 December 2008

(Nupi Lan: Continuing the struggle continues . . .)

Government ...I shall never give up my stand without fulfilling my demand". Excerpt of the Press statement delivered by Irom Sharmila, New Delhi, 06/11/ 2006.

Dear Friends,

The Nupi Lan of 1939, fought under the leadership of Manipuri women against British colonial policy, that culminated in the struggle for the establishment of self-rule, has generated an unwinding path of resistance against all forces of oppression. What was taken as a war cry against the colonial atrocity

has in the course of the struggle duly become an epitome of the relentless struggle against all forms of repressive agents; British rule in the past and today against India Government. It was a milestone; a battle where each wound inflicted by colonial oppression echoes the cry of the undying will; each step a milestone of resistance in the sojourn of all forms of atrocities so forth; each cry beckons the never-ending harrowing memories of these voices that shall find the spirit whenever the undaunted will embark upon all stark forms of oppression.

Nupi Lan was an anticolonial struggle as elsewhere in the world during the period. Where there is oppression, there is resistance. That is the spirit of Nupi Lan left for the generations to come. Colonial free trade policy produced famines of 1920 (that sparked off Bazaar Boycott) and 1939. Consequently there was widespread starvation all around while the unceasing free trade policy further aggravated the food scarcity to such an extent that people had to feed on stems and roots. On 12 December 1939 women raised their arms and started fighting the colonial apparatus to bring an end to the colonial exploitation. The general parlance of Nupi Lan heralded the unshakable ground whereof all continuing process of struggle till date finds its will to fight against all unjustifiable wounds and atrocities.

The impact and repercussion of Nupi Lan against colonial oppression duly finds its cognisance in the struggle against whatsoever forms of institutionalised atrocities in all times. Nevertheless, the struggle for emancipation from all oppression has taken a shifting process yet the overall approach of struggle never took a backseat. This is rather an obvious fact since Manipur was annexed to the Indian Union in 1949. From that moment onwards Manipur has been a witness to repressive policies of the Indian state. Since 1958 the continuing force of resistance against Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) has taken undue grievances in many forms of glorious sacrifices, mortifications and abnegations. Twenty six years of resistance that the Manipuri women instantiated in the form of Meira Paibee movement has today become a proven capacity to challenge the oppressive measures of the Indian state. The trepidation that has stirred with one of the greatest awe struck sight that has found its place in the pages of history of resistance against state terrorism is the nude protest at Kangla on 15 July 2006. The daring protest, which was the last straw of resistance, exposed all the turmoil fervently enforced upon from all varied forms of institutionalised oppressive agencies. The Nude protest represents the bulwark of resistance against the savagery of AFSPA. In this relentless struggle it would not be overrated to highlight the long struggle of Irom Chanu Sharmila. It is not a struggle of one woman; it is a voice of that human will, a voice of the wound that has been leashed incessantly; the fate of justice that has been sealed prolonged to the people of Manipur. Nupi Lan finds its torchbearer in the faith of one woman

who has been on fasting for the last six years demanding the complete repealing of AFSPA. Nupi Lan has today got epitomized in the undying will of Sharmila.

The forms of discrimination and oppression that the people of Manipur have been witness to the British colonial rule and which is continued by the Indian state have portrayed a picture of an uncertain life, an undignified existence and a wounded psyche. One thing is for sure that still the fact of oppression is deeply rooted in the institutions and establishments of the Indian state and in its operation in Manipur. Colonialism exists and we know this from our experience. Now, the undying spirit of Nupi Lan has definitely offered a powerful resistance. The generation, which we are one at present, needs to take on this challenge for we have the same experience as our precedents had many decades back.

We resist these oppressive structures of which the AFSPA is one such obvious installation. We want to live with security and dignity, a life properly protected and lived. The blazing ideals of the anticolonial resistance by Manipuri women have in its course acquired an intensified stage. We need to take these ideals forward as a tribute to the spirit of the Nude protest and the stage we have so far reached will certainly be the most cherished and purest honour to the rebelling spirit of Irom Sharmila. Let's fight AFSPA in the spirit of Nupi Lan and that is precisely a decisive moment of offering our tribute to the women of Manipur for their undaunted courage and pride.

“Apunbana Yaifarae”

New Delhi,

9 December 2008

** The two documents were reproduced in the original format.*

MSAD OFFICIALS AT PRESENT

M. Bimol (Cultural Secretary); Th. Chinglenkhomba, N. Manishwar & I. Ibungo (Human Rights Committee); Kshetrimayum Dayabati, Makakmayum Farnaz, Krispa Ningombam & Rajkumari Pintu (Women Committee); Khoirom Bankimchandra, Khoirom Santosh, Kumam Foleshwor, Mayanglambam Bobby & Elangbam Deepak (Academic Committee); L. Sanju @ Chalamba (Sports Committee); Khagembam Surjit & Kshetrimayum Manichandra (Cultural Committee).

Issue Editors: Praem Hidam & M. Bobby Meetei

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