

NUPI LAN

**In the spirit of the struggle
We resist all forms of oppression!**

“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 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

Please take part
Organised by Manipur Students' Association Delhi

Nupi Lan Observation

Venue: Delhi University Garden, Opposite VC office, University of Delhi, Delhi-7

Date: 12 December 2008

Time: 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.