

Carry Forward the Heroic Anti-Imperialist Traditions of 1857!!

CELEBRATE THE OCCASION ON A GRAND SCALE FURTHER DEVELOPING THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST TRADITIONS OF OUR COUNTRY!!!

— CALL OF THE CPI (MAOIST)

Press Release: May 5, 2007

Exactly 150 years ago on May 10th the first salvo of this great rebellion was fired. What started as a mutiny of the Indian soldiers soon turned into a prairie fire and became a great people's war. This people's war engulfed large parts of India embracing Oudh, Rohilkhand, Bundelkhand, Sagar, Narmada, Nagpur, Hyderabad, many districts of Bihar, Agra, Meerut, Punjab, Delhi, parts of Bengal and other places. In magnitude, depth, as also in significance, this rebellion was unparalleled in the long history of both independent and colonial India. Primarily anti-colonial, it was at the same time directed against the feudal forces. It was the soldiers of Meerut who set the ball rolling on the 10th of May. Mutinies followed in several stations of the north. In Bundelkhand, Jhansi took the lead. In many areas, British army officials were attacked and killed. At Jhansi, the rebel soldiers released all prisoners.

But this no longer remained a revolt of the armed forces. It spread to the entire peasantry and artisans. A few weeks after the Revolt began, British rule was virtually wiped out in north India. In all cases of rural uprising, violence was directed against those institutions of power with which they interacted directly and immediately, namely tehsils and thanas. Thanas and tahsils were attacked, records destroyed and government officials driven out. All vestiges of colonial rule were in the process eliminated. While confiscating the ill-gotten property was the principal form by which people asserted their power, arming themselves was the principal means by which they did so. The weapons chosen were anything that was available from matchlocks, spears, scythes, and iron-bound lathis, axes, etc to weapons seized from the British. British political power and that of their lackeys were practically demolished over entire Northern India.

The revolutionaries set up their own 'Court of Administration' for an independent India free from foreign control. It was set up with representatives from soldiers and civilians with two representatives each from the infantry, cavalry and infantry and four from the civilians. Each of these representatives was elected by majority vote from their own constituencies. This smaller body elected a president and a vice-president by a majority vote. This supreme body acted in a judicial capacity and also established different courts for discharge of judicial duties. Taking of bribes and other malpractices were firmly suppressed. The body took upon itself the task of administration of

the land, maintenance of peace and order in the captured territories, collection of loans from the mahajans and the conduct of war. The emperor exercised no control over these affairs.

Not only did the militant masses fight the British and their lackeys they also established a new power in a rudimentary form. Such is the heroic history of this great uprising, which is as relevant today as it was over 150 years back. The direct British colonial rule has been replaced by the neo-colonial rule of the imperialists. The country continues being robbed through indirect means ever since the so-called independence of 1947. This robbery has increased phenomenally ever since the implementation of the policies of imperialist globalization in the country. The loot of our country today by the imperialists and their lackeys has reached gigantic proportions. Nothing but another Great War for Indian Independence can save this country from total devastation. On this occasion of this 150th Anniversary it is only such a message that must be sent to the vast masses of our motherland. It must be shown that if the masses revolt it is possible to seize power and smash the rule of the robbers, both Indian and foreign.

Today, while all establishment parliamentary parties are celebrating the event they are primarily doing so to hide their outright betrayal of the country and its people to the imperialists, particularly the US. While taking up a mass campaign we must expose their hypocrisy and false pretenses. We must call on the masses to continue in the revolutionary traditions of 1857 and also Bhagat Singh whose birth centenary is being celebrated this year. Both represent the great anti-imperialist and patriotic traditions of the masses of our country which is being taken forward by the Maoists and other democratic and revolutionary forces of the country.

Let us turn this 150th year of the historic 1857 uprising and Bhagat Singh birth centenary into a great festival of revolt in all parts of the country. Let us build this anti-imperialist tempo in every nook and corner of the country; starting from May 10th and culminating in huge actions/meetings/celebrations on Sept.28, the birth centenary day of Bhagat Singh.

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