

The assassination of MRS INDIRA GANDHI by her Sikh body guards and the tragedy at Bhopal has once again turned the world spotlight on India, that unhappy land beset with endless strife and suffering.

State dignitaries from over 90 countries paid glowing tribute to INDIRA GANDHI as the prime minister of the "WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY", as a leading member of her sex and as a charismatic leader. Some of her followers paid their tribute in a less orthodox manner, namely, by slaughtering over 2 000 Sikhs (10 000 according to Maneka Gandhi) and by inflicting grievous bodily wounds on many times that number.

Even white South Africa, through P.W. Botha, sent condolences. Expectedly, the Natal Indian Congress, an affiliate of the UDF held a memorial meeting and asked "INDIAN" merchants to close their businesses for a few hours. Others wrote lengthy newspaper articles extolling MRS GANDHI'S virtues.

### ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY

We, in Action Youth, judge individuals, organisations and governments with the inflexible yardstick of their relationship with the workers and peasants and with the the weakest and most helpless sections of the population i.e. the aged, the children, the sick, the crippled and the destitute.

An individual is either FOR the oppressed and exploited or AGAINST them. There can be no fence sitting on this score. Further, if a person is FOR the oppressed and exploited, then that commitment must be universal. In other words the commitment must apply to ALL the oppressed and exploited all over the world.

### GANDHI - CHAMPION OF THE OPPRESSED?

It is common knowledge that Mrs Gandhi has been held in high esteem by a section of the S.A. oppressed because of her anti-apartheid statements and because of her financial and other assistance to certain organisations. That, however, is insufficient to honour her as a champion of the oppressed. The real test is the treatment by Mrs Gandhi and her ruling party of the over 600 million workers and peasants and their families in INDIA.

We need to look at the position of workers and peasants of India after almost 40 years of political independence from British rule. Relevant questions to be asked are: Is the wealth of India being equitably and fairly distributed amongst its people so that none starves and is ill-clad? Are all its people provided with decent housing and proper medical care? Are basic human rights strictly enforced so that its people can live, work and prosper in peace?

### STRUGGLE OF THE POOR IN INDIA

The wretched of the Indian earth rose time and again to bring about radical change in Society. But each time they rose, they were crushed by the might of the Indian Army. There was the revolt in Telangana, Hyderabad in 1950 and there was the rise and spread of the Naxalite Movement in West Bengal in 1967. Both these uprisings were peasant based with land redistribution as their main objective. Both were ruthlessly crushed.

The various governments of India, without exception, made their standpoint very clear. Any attempt by the workers and peasants to redistribute the wealth and natural resources of India would not be tolerated. The wealth of the factory owners and landowners must be protected even if it means bloody massacres.

### THE ART OF DECEPTION

The Indian Rulers have perfected the art of deception.

They eloquently say the right thing but do the opposite. They profess to be socialists and in the name of socialism uphold capitalism and feudalism. Bribery and corruption are condemned but those who condemn, practice these vices on a grand scale.

# INDIA

## SOME FACTS AND FIGURES .

From the documentary film " BEFORE THE MONSOON " we learn that :

- (1) 46% of agricultural land in India is owned by a mere 6,8% of the landowners.
- (2) R12 million of public money was lost by the Late Sanjay Gandhi in an enterprise to manufacture the " peoples' car". Only 7 cars were produced.
- (3) Before " Independence " 40% of the population lived below the poverty datum line. 30 years later 70% of the people live below the poverty line.
- (4) During the state of emergency in the state of Kerala AL-ONE, there were:  
8021 detained  
1618 tortured by the police while in detention.  
28 died of torture.

From the book "INSIDE INDIA TODAY" by DILIP HIRO, we learn that:

- (1) Rural labourers earn as little as ONE RUPEE (about 10 cents) a day plus a meagre breakfast and lunch.
- (2) Urban labourers earn about THREE RUPEES a day.

This is the picture of real India - a system maintained , upheld and defended by all governments of India including those led by Mrs Gandhi.

- (3) Businessmen and company directors earn from 5 000 to 50000 rupees a month.

From the journal RACE and CLASS (XVI, 4 1975) we learn that:

- (1) There were 35 000 political prisoners in 1975 , most of whom were members of the Marxist Naxalite Movement and who were brutally treated in prison.
- (2) During the great Railway Strike of 1974 , over 50 000 strikers were detained. Later 10 000 were dismissed and 100000 were demoted

From the publication of the Minority Rights Group called "The UNTOUCHABLES OF INDIA" we learn that:

- (1) 90% of the "untouchables" live in rural India where they are mercilessly exploited.
- (2) Whole families and neighbourhoods have been murdered.
- (3) In 1978 reported cases of these atrocities was 15053. Many other cases remained unreported.

THE TOOLS OF DECEPTION ARE WORDS - SEDUCTIVE WORDS OF A BRIGHT FUTURE, OF A LAND OF MILK AND HONEY. THE POWER OF WORDS IS SUCH THAT THE DARK DEEDS ARE FORGIVEN BUT NOT FORGOTTEN. IT IS BUT A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE MAGIC OF WORDS WEAR OUT. WHEN THAT HAPPENS ASIA'S SECOND GIANT WILL SHAKE THE WORLD!

### APOLOGISTS

There have been and still are many apologist for Mrs Gandhi. They will all tell us about the enormity of India's problems, its vast population, the deep roots of the caste system , the ignorance of its population and the backwardness of the people. To us this is nothing less than a COVER-UP for the oppression and exploitation of the workers and peasants.

What of those movements like the Naxalites and DALIT PANTHERS who attempted radical change in India ? Why were such organisations crushed and their members killed or thrown in prison?

The truth of the matter is that Mrs Gandhi and her governments have shown that their true commitment was to defend , protect and uphold the exploiters and oppressors of the millions of down trodden workers and peasants.

Those persons and organisations who have sung Mrs Gandhi's praise whilst concealing the other side of the picture have themselves practiced a deception on the people of this country.

### Hey, Indira

When I heard you call 'Abolish poverty,' my heart was filled to bursting, hey,  
Running I voted for your symbol, the cow and calf nursing, hey!  
When will your promises be fulfilled?  
When will happiness reach our homes, Indira?  
The chaos of inflation lies before us now.

The rich are rolling on their sofas, luxuriously lounging, hey,  
We are starving, half-exhausted, bitterness abounding, hey!  
If you have any love, let it flow out,  
Take a look and think about it, Indira,  
The chaos of inflation lies before us now.

The landless now are organizing, building unity anew, hey,  
If capitalism is not destroyed, we'll see that it's your funeral too,  
All now say, no more can we stand -  
Then take revolution's flag in hand . . . Indira,  
The chaos of inflation lies before us now.

*Song of the*

United Women's Anti-Price-Rise Committee