

West Bengal killings denounced

Monday 2 April 2007, by [CHENG Eva](#) (Date first published: 30 March 2007).

On March 23, hundreds of thousands of people from all over India converged in Delhi to express their anger at the killing of peasant protesters on March 14 by police and thugs aligned with the West Bengal Left Front (LF) government. Those killed were resisting eviction from their land in Nandigram. Similar killings also happened on January 7. The mass rally was preceded by two days of cultural protests.

Organised by the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, the rally fell on the 76th anniversary of the martyring of independence heroes Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru. With the executioner's rope over his neck, Singh shouted "Inquilab Zindabad" ("Long live the revolution"). The CPI(ML) rally was called "Inquilab rally" in memory of these heroes. Bhagat Singh's nephew Jagmohan was a speaker at the rally.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) dominates the LF government, which has held power for 30 years in West Bengal. The CPI(ML) was the result of a 1968 split from the CPI(M), after the newly elected LF government crushed a 1967 uprising of the rural poor in Naxalbari, in the state's north.

More details of the March 14 massacre have come to light. According to a fact-finding report conducted by the Association for Protection of Democratic Rights and Paschim Banga Khet Majdoor Samity (an agricultural labourer organisation), authorised by the Kolkata High Court, at Bhangabera on the outskirts of Nandigram a group of mostly women and children were praying on March 14 when, without warning, police started indiscriminately firing on them. Those who tried to escape were hunted down by CPI(M) thugs disguised as police.

According to the report, "Children were murdered indiscriminately; bodies have been thrown to nearby Chuniburi river. The children of primary schools at least eight in numbers have been killed by the murderers and then all those children were buried in a particular place near Bhangabera area."

The report revealed that the cops and hooligans then went on to ransack and indiscriminately fire upon the villagers' huts, killing and injuring more. No less than 100 people were injured. Some victims were too scared to go to the hospital.

"A good number of women have complained that they have been raped, sexually abused and molested by police personnel and the murderers of the political party [the CPI(M)]", says the report.

The report accused local CPI(M) MP Lakhman Seth of having engaged "professional murderers" to finish up the atrocities initiated by the police.

In an interview published by the *Hindustan Times* on March 20, CPI(ML) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, who has led a fact-finding team to Nandigram, claimed while a precise death toll isn't yet established, bodies are being discovered every day. He added: "Many bodies were dumped, many were buried overnight and roads built on them. Our team has come back with horrifying tales and reports."

Bhattacharya said that many victims had “chopper” wounds. “From when did policemen started carrying choppers? It means that CPI (M) goons must have accompanied the police. They were wearing police uniforms but their slippers gave them away. There were cases of women being gang raped as well. There were many cases where the women were mutilated. It was a cold-blooded, pre-planned carnage.”

P.S.

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