

NOTE

Inveterate Maoists?

S M writes :

After they abducted Sukama's Collector Alex Paul Menon, the Maoists have demanded that certain people rotting in the prisons of Chhattigarh be released. Two kinds of people are mentioned in the letter listing their demands. First, activists from various political parties, and secondly, members of their own cadres. The activists of the first hue work within the democratic process, and are elected representatives hailing from Congress and CPI. They have little to do with the Maoists or with violent activities of any kind. All of them have been framed in false cases by local contractors, political opponents, and corrupt police and put in prisons.

Kartam Joga : Kartam Joga is a senior CPI leader. He is the vice president of the Konta Janapad. When he raised his voice against atrocities committed by the Salwa Judum, he was dragged to the police station, hung upside down, and mercilessly beaten. He is a co-petitioner (along with Nandini Sundar and Manish Kunjam) in a case against Salwa Judum in the Supreme Court. When he demonstrated in the Supreme Court that children are unable to go to school in Dantewada because the schools have been occupied by security forces, the Chhattisgarh Government panicked. In a breathtaking lie, it told the Supreme Court that security forces had already vacated the premises of all the schools, and that the petitioners in the case can themselves investigate this, but just three days later, they arrested Kartam Joga who has since been languishing in a Chhattisgarh prison.

Vijay Sori : Vijay Sori is an activist from the Indian National Congress, and is an official of the Farmers' Congress, a subsidiary of the Congress party. He is close to Konta MLA Kovasi Lakhma Ram. Vijay Sori was also against Salwa Judum. Dantewada's SSP SRP Kalluri started harassing Vijay Sori. One day, Kovasi Lakhma and Vijay Sori decided that enough was enough and went to meet with SRP Kalluri in his Dantewada office. Kalluri threatened MLA Lakhma, asked him to get out of his office, and boasted that he would not rest until he had sent Vijay Sori to prison. Vijay Sori was later framed in a case of attack on the house of Rajput Congress leader Avadhesh Gautam. Gautam, who hails from Uttar Pradesh, is an erstwhile police officer, and currently works as a contractor. He has reportedly close links to police officials in Chhattisgarh. In a recent hearing on Vijay Sori's bail petition, the Chhattisgarh High Court observed that in order to prolong the judicial process, Gautam has deliberately failed to appear in the court, and for this reason, the Court ordered that if Gautam does not testify in the court in the next three months, the bail petition of Vijay Sori and other accused should be presented again.

Lala Ram Kunjam : Lala Ram Kunjam used to work for Essar. He had also given away his land to Essar for construction of a pipeline, but later the company withheld his wages. Essar also reneged on its promise of providing employment for the local unemployed. For this reason,

Lala Ram Kunjam became quite active in the movement against Essar's forcible acquisition of tribal lands. His involvement in the movement annoyed the local leaders and contractors. For this reason, Avadhesh Gautam again allegedly colluded with the police in framing him in a false case and threw Kunjam in prison.

Sudaru Kunjam : Sudaru Kunjam hails from the Kadampal village and is a CPI member of the district Panchayat of Dantewada. He was involved in a quarrel with Avadhesh Gautam during the elections. Now a false case was registered against him, and he was also thrown in prison.

Sannu Mandavi : Sannu Mandavi is the erstwhile president of the Kuakonda block panchayat. Local contractor and Rajput leader Avadhesh Gautam also lives in this block. Gautam wanted a contract for all the activities of the Panchayat all to himself. However the well laid plans of the contractor were being frustrated because of fierce opposition from the charismatic young adivasi leader Sannu Mandavi. And Mandavi was thrown into prison.

All the prisoners mentioned above are adivasi leaders of various political parties and are victims of a conspiracy hatched by the unholy nexus of corrupt non-indigenous leaders, and corrupt police. No policeman has ever lost his life in apprehending (or more appropriately, abducting) them. Therefore the truth is light years away from the shrill and incessant propaganda that these folks are inveterate Maoists, and that policemen have lost their lives while trying to apprehend them. □□□