

REPRESSION IN BIHAR

A COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS



LOKSHAHI HAKK SANGHATANA
AUGUST 1990

CONTENTS :

INTRODUCTION - WHY THIS REPORT...	1
NEGLECT OF LAND RESOURCES : THE MISFORTUNE OF BIHAR	3
POLICE RAJ IN BIHAR : A DOCUMENT	5
APPENDICES	13
BEGUSARAI IN THE SHADOW OF POLICE TERROR	23
APPEAL TO THE GOVERNOR FOR RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS	26
AMARJEET SOHI'S LETTER TO THE PRESS	28
IDDR RELEASE ON ARREST OF MKSS LEADERS	31
MKSS LEADERS' LETTER TO THE CHIEF MINISTER, BIHAR	32

Cover Photograph : Krishna Murari Kishan.

INTRODUCTION - WHY THIS REPORT...

The vast majority of the people of Bihar, the second largest state in India, depend on the land for their livelihood. Much of this population work as sharecroppers or farm labourers, earning barely enough to sustain themselves and their families. They toil on land that is largely owned by a few landlords, in quantities far in excess of the land ceiling laws. The last two decades have seen the rise of a number of mass movements demanding the implementation of land reform laws, the payment of legally stipulated minimum wages, etc.

The government's response to these agitations has been to let loose a reign of terror, in the form of a brutal police, and landlord armies, confident of protection by the State. The state government has been supported in its policies by the central government, particularly by the enactment of numerous repressive laws which legitimise the arrest, detention and torture of activists and sympathisers of democratic movements.

Though the Janata Dal came into power in Bihar promising to stop this repression, the last eight months have proved that it is no different from its predecessor in Bihar and the rest of India. In this context, the All India Federation of Organisation For Democratic Rights (AIFODR), of which Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana is a member, decided to take up a campaign against repression in Bihar. In this booklet, we have published letters by political prisoners in Bihar today, which demonstrate that conditions have in no way changed from Congress rule.

On February 18, 1990, a convention on "Police Repression in Bihar" was conducted in Delhi by the Lok Sangram Morcha, a newly formed mass front constituting seven mass organisations in Bihar. As background material to the present situation, we are publishing the report to this convention by the convenor of Lok Sangram Morcha. Besides giving an account of the role of landlord armies the report also contains information on the massive police presence in the state, and on police atrocities on activists and common people.

Even where there has not been an organised movement, there is brutal police repression on the peasantry in the context of land. As an example, the climate of repression is described in the report of a police killing in Begusarai.

The reports have earlier been carried in AIFOFR's bi-monthly paper, In Defence of Democratic Rights.

Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana, Bombay, August 15, 1990.



Shackles being removed from M.K.S.S. leader Arvind Kumar's feet after a High Court order.

NEGLECT OF LAND RESOURCES : THE MISFORTUNE OF BIHAR

In Bihar, land resources are the most important productive resources. These are a direct source of employment and income, and the employment and income of 70 per cent of the state's workforce is directly connected to land. One fact is absolutely clear -- that the productivity of the land is greatest when the control of the land is in the hands of the tiller.

In this connection a study (a joint survey by Narayan Singh, Institute of Social Studies, and the International Labour Organisation) confirms this. The survey revealed that holdings of the size one to two acres were the most productive. The holdings of this size were more productive than the holdings of two to 10 acres and of over 10 acres by 20.4 percent and 40.8 per cent, respectively. The productivity of one-to-two acre holdings was also 0.4 per cent greater than that of holdings of less than acre. The reason is probably that the holdings of less than one acre are usually cultivated by poor farmers and share-croppers who cannot obtain more productive techniques and facilities.

A very large percentage of productive land is still in the hands of feudals, not the tillers. The spread of the semi-feudal productive system in Bihar is not little even today. They give land to the share-croppers to till, and in Bihar even today 20 per cent of the cultivable land is tilled by sharecroppers.

In the context of other basic resources, too, land has been the victim of neglect. As a result, the scope of technical assistance has been even more faint. Irrigation is a necessary condition to the technical development of agriculture. To make successful use of the production-increasing technology of High Yielding Variety seeds and fertilisers, one needs assured and controlled supply of water. Whereas 91 per cent of Punjab's cultivable land is amply supplied with irrigation, in Bihar the figure is only 36 per cent. In Bihar, there are possibilities for irrigation, but they have not been properly exploited.

By 1988, only 59 per cent of India's irrigation capacity

was in use, whereas in Bihar this proportion is even lower - 48 per cent. Bihar's agriculture is low in the use of electricity, too. In 1987-88, in Bihar's agricultural sector, the per capita consumption of electricity was just 12 kilowatt-hours, whereas the all-India figure is about three times this, and in Punjab the figure is 190 kilowatt hours.

Between 1951 and 1987, the annual rate of growth of Bihar's agriculture has thus remained at 1.8 per cent. During the same period, the corresponding figure for Punjab is 4.7 per cent; the nation-wide figure, 2.8 per cent, is also better than that of Bihar. As a result of the neglect of agriculture, the industrial picture of the state too has remained dismal - whereas expenditure per worker in industry and mining has been, per worker, 25 times the amount in agriculture.

As a result of all this the state has remained trapped in a stage of backwardness. In 1988 the estimated population of Bihar was 812 lakh, of which 260 lakh constituted the workforce. Of them, 17 lakh were employed in the organised non-agricultural sector. Of the total workforce, 10.8 per cent are self-employed on prosperous fields, whereas 215 lakh are unemployed, or under-employed. Among them are farm labourers, rural artisans, poor peasants, sharecroppers, etc. These people are condemned to a destitute existence. The number of educated unemployed is nearly 12 lakh. In this fashion, 82.7 per cent of the state's workforce are oppressed, the dregs of society. Of them, 80 per cent, that is, about 170 lakh, are in the villages.

— P.H. Prasad,
Director, Institute of Social Studies, Patna

POLICE RAJ IN BIHAR : A DOCUMENT

Dotted with fortified camps of the police and various para-military forces, Jehanabad district and its adjacent areas in Gaya, Patna and Nalanda districts, look like a battle-field. The Bihar Military Police, the Border Security Force, the Central Reserve Police Force, and the Gujarat Armed Police have also been deployed in Aurangabad, Rohtas, Palamau and Hazaribagh districts. According to some knowledgeable sources, Jehanabad district alone had 4,200 additional forces by October 1988. Part of this 'additional force' has been stationed in the district headquarters and in different police stations, while the rest is deployed in at least 77 well-equipped camps spread all over the district (see Annexure 1). Schools and other public places have been occupied for these camps, disrupting normal life. For instance, in Jehanabad district itself, in village Mokar the forces have occupied a high school; in Sikaria an upper primary school; and in Amain a middle school. Large-scale combing operations are being carried out during the night, involving raids in hundreds of villages. According to official reports, 862 "extremists" have been arrested in Jehanabad, Gaya, Aurangabad and Palamau districts (Times of India, Patna edition, 29th January, 1989). Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of the arrested persons are landless agricultural labourers of the Dalit castes. Quite a few of them are women and children. During the last six months, at least 17 activists of different democratic mass-organisations have been killed in so called encounters with the police (see Annexure 2).

The present phase of police action, code-named "Operation Rakshak", was planned soon after the visit of Union Home Minister Buta Singh to Jehanabad in the middle of August 1988. A joint action programme to eliminate "left-extremism" from Bihar was worked out by the Central security organisations in consultation with the state administration. The Director General of the state police, J.M.Qureshi, and Chief Secretary, Arun Pathak, visited Delhi to finalise the plan on 30th August. District Magistrates of Jehanabad, Gaya and Aurangabad were summoned to Patna on 1st and 2nd September for instructions. In the initial phase, 25 "most affected" blocks of the three districts were selected for

large-scale combing operations. Later, the programme was to be extended to other "extremist-infested" districts in the central Bihar region. The state government envisaged deployment of 15 to 20 battalions of additional para-military forces for the Operation. Initially, however, four battalions were sent to assist the state police in starting the Operation. More and more battalions rushed in, till vast areas of central Bihar were gradually converted into virtual concentration camps.

CLASS-BIAS OF POLICE ACTIONS.

For years, Bihar has earned notoriety because of organised attacks by private armies of landlords, on the masses of poor agricultural labourers. Medieval feudal exploitation and oppressions are rampant in the Bihar countryside. Big feudal landlords like the "Maneater of Manatu" and the Mahant of Bodhgaya comfortably wield thousands of acres of land under the hoax of Congressite land-reforms, while millions of agricultural labourers are still forced to live on a meagre wage of one seer of poisonous Khesari, despite the much-publicised 20-point programme of the government. Violation of the dignity of the women of labourer-families is the rule of the land. High government officials, sometimes even Chief Ministers, have been chosen from among big feudal law-offenders. A dreadful alliance between feudal landed gentry and a corrupt administration has grown over the ages and has made the life of the downtrodden unbearable.

Earlier, when there was a lack of general awakening among the rural poor, boots and cane lashings sufficed to silence individual protests. But the decade of the 1970s brought new awareness among the agricultural labourers (the poorest stratum of the peasantry), the Dalits, and the Adivasis. They began to organise themselves into different democratic mass-organisations and entered into the political arena for the first time on a significant scale. Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samity (MKSS), Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha (BPKS), Krantikari Kisan Committee (KKC), and Bihar Kisan Samity (BKS) are some of these independent organisations of rural poor working in the central Bihar region. The demands raised by these mass-organisations are quite simple. They demand payment of government-stipulated minimum wages;

the acquisition and distribution of Benami lands and of lands vested in the hands of the government; the end of social oppression by upper-caste landlords on Dalit labourers; and the implementation of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. It is the struggles, which have emerged for the realisation of these demands, that have been branded as "left extremism" by the governments in the state and the Centre.

As the protest against feudal exploitation and oppression took on a mass character, earlier forms of oppression proved ineffective to keep the people in subjugation. Various private armies were therefore organised by the landlords on caste lines. Bhumi Sena, Brahmarsahi Sena, Kunwar Sena, and Lorik Sena are only some of the numerous gun-wielding gangs of marauders set up by the landlords in connivance with the local political magnates of the ruling party. Thus the formation of the Bhumi Sena, the most dreaded of all private armies which is responsible for the killing of several dozens of mass-organisation activists; was masterminded by a Congress (I) MP Mahendra Singh nick-named "King Mahendra". Similarly, the private landlords' army in Palamau responsible for the killing of the first general secretary of the MKSS, Krishna Singh, is personally led by Vijay Singh, a local Congress (I) leader and brother of the Governor of Assam.

These private armies have successively attacked villages of agricultural labourers, committing massacres, arson, loot and gang-rape of Dalit women. Belchi, Bishrampur, Parasbigha, Pipara, Kansara, Narhan, Koriachatar, Nonhi-Nagwan and Danuha-Khagritola massacres bear testimony to their heinous crimes. They have also attacked public meetings and peaceful processions of mass-organisations in many places.

These ghastly crimes of the private landlord senas continued unabated for several years without drawing the attention of the government. No special offensive was launched against those criminals. On the contrary, the government organised and deployed the Special Task Force to throttle popular protest. In May 1983, the open and legal conference of the MKSS at Karua village in Jehanabad block was disrupted by a savage police attack. Mass meetings of the MKSS, the BPKS and other organisations were banned and ruthlessly

disrupted in a routine manner; processions were forcibly dispersed; innocent people were arrested indiscriminately; and midnight raids were conducted in the hamlets of agricultural labourers. The police went to the extent of opening fire on a peaceful meeting of the MKSS within the walled premises of the Gandhi Library at Arwal in 1986. Twenty-three men, women and children were killed and several others were injured. The firing was reminiscent of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, except this version occurred in "independent" India. None of the official enquiry reports on the massacre was published. Not even a single guilty police official was punished. And no judicial enquiry was ordered to investigate the incident. As many of the unofficial investigations by eminent citizens and jurists have established, the Arwal massacre was not an aberration or the handiwork of any particularly cruel police officer. It was part of a pre-meditated plan to drown the people's movement in a pool of blood and to terrorise the masses into meek submission.

In the wake of the Arwal massacre, when the whole nation and even world opinion was demanding punishment of the guilty, the government went on instead to ban the MKSS under an obsolete colonial statute. Ironically enough, as a local newspaper reported, the decision to rob the MKSS of its freedom was taken on 15th August - the day the nation celebrates as Independence day.

The recent phase of police action - Operation Rakshak - is not new in its class bias. In June and August 1988, Lorik Sena was again on the rampage, killing several dozens of agricultural labourers in Nonhi-Nagwan and Damuha-Khagritola. Instead of apprehending and punishing the culprits, Buta Singh declared war against "left extremism" - that is against those who have resolutely stood for the interests of the downtrodden millions. This time also, the war against the people was declared on 15th August, 1988. What seems most disgraceful for the nation is that the border security force, supposed to safeguard the country's border from external enemies, is utilised against its own people for securing undemocratic privileges for a handful of landlords.

ROOT CAUSE OF AGRARIAN UNREST :

The continuing semi-feudal land relations and social structure in the countryside are the root cause of the agrarian unrest in Bihar. Investigations carried out in Palamau district

by the Lok Sangram Morcha reveal that the landlords of Palamau possess huge quantities of land above the stipulated ceiling. Some of them have over 5,000 acres of land (see Annexure 3).

The picture differs in detail from district to district, but everywhere most of the land is nevertheless concentrated in the hands of the upper-caste landlord families. The Dalit castes as a rule have no land. Despite the tall claims of the government about the success of land reforms, hardly any land was available for distribution.

The wages of the agricultural labourers are appallingly low. Whenever the labourers have demanded the stipulated minimum wage, they have been treated with gun-fire. The police administration did not come to the help of the struggling labourers, rather they always sided with the employers. In central Bihar regions, the issue of minimum wage remained an important one, though land concentration is less there.

Social values arising out of this semi-feudal economic base and a corrupt bureaucracy have made the situation worse. Physical torture of agricultural labourers, molestation of Dalit women, forcible deprivation of fundamental rights of the people - all constitute a daily routine. The situation was further aggravated by the office-seeking political parties of the ruling classes who want to utilise caste contradictions and other medieval values in order to preserve and expand their vote banks.

Disgusted by all this, the rural poor of Bihar have taken upon themselves the task of democratising the society. They are surging forward in their battle for democracy - braving jails, bayonets and bullets. What the bureaucracy did not implement despite its elaborate legal powers, the people are now implementing through struggles. They have gone on strikes, pressing their demand for implementation of the Minimum Wages Act. They have recovered benami lands from the grasp of landlords. They have protested against the violations of the fundamental rights that adorn our Constitution.

A glorious chapter of democracy is being written in the blood and tears of the downtrodden millions. It is this present unrest that promises a heavenly calm in the future - a dignified human existence for all members of the society.

All lovers of democracy must welcome this struggle for democracy.

To hoodwink the people and to divert them from the path of struggle, the government is resorting to carrot-and-stick tactics. Alongside "Operation Rakshak", the government has undertaken a reform programme which has been pompously called "Operation Siddharth". The latter operation envisaged implementation of land reforms and enforcement of minimum wages, in its first phase during the current financial year (1988-89), at a cost of Rs. 31 crore (of which Rs. 10 crore was to be from the Centre). However, DM Jehanabad, Anita Pal, later reported that no progress could be made till early December for want of funds. According to her, implementation of land reforms was impossible since several plots mentioned simply did not exist. This is the real picture of the much-publicised "Operation Siddharth". To be sure, the corrupt bureaucracy would eat up the lion's share of the sanctioned fund as they have done on earlier occasions.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF THE POLICE :

A) Police Looting During Raids : Before searches are conducted in a house, the inhabitants are forcibly driven out. The police use this opportunity to loot whatever valuables and properties are available in the houses. (A few examples are cited in column 7 of Annexure 4).

B) Torture of Prisoners in Police Custody : Savage third degree treatment is used on prisoners to extort confessions. They are sometimes hung upside down and beaten with sticks or rifle butts. At times the hair from the detenu's eyebrow, head and moustache are uprooted. When the injured prisoners ask for water, often the police only offer them urine to drink.

C) Killing Prisoners in Police Lock-up : Between March 1988 and December 1988, altogether 15 prisoners were tortured to death in police lock-ups. (See Annexure 5.)

D) Unprovoked Firing on People : In the last seven months (July 1988-January 1989), the police opened fire on masses of people on at least 13 different occasions. As a result of this 21 persons have been killed and an equal number injured. (See Annexure 6.)

E) Rape of Women by Police : There are 5 recorded instances of rape by the police in 1988. On 18th and 19th February 17 police personnel raped at least 5 women in Paradia village, Jasidih P.S., Deoghar district. None of the policemen was punished as all were reported "missing". In another incident, on 12th April, at Ghatiyari village under Sundar Pahadi P.S. in Godd district 6 tribal women were raped by policemen. The villagers had resisted the attempts by Mahajan Lalchand Mahto to grab their land. The police had intervened on the Mahajan's side. Many villagers were also beaten. In yet another incident in village Birajpur in Dumka district 2 women of the Pahadia caste were raped by 4 policemen and a chowkidar. When the people protested, the police opened fire, injuring two persons. On 28th December police raped 2 women and molested 6 others in Kolhua village in Mujaffarpur district. When the people demonstrated against this, one of their leaders, Satyanarayan Thakur, was called to the DIC's chamber and mercilessly beaten. On 5th September, a woman was raped by Havildar Chandrika Singh in Lohardaga. Apart from this, police misbehave with women during raids (some instances are mentioned in Annexure 4, column 9).

The crimes committed by policemen are on the rise since they are given free rein to ravage civil society. Actually very few of the crimes of policemen get reported for fear of retaliation. People face far more terror, brutality and atrocities than appears from the picture presented here. Unlawful detention, torture, killing and rape have become common practice with the police in Bihar.

DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL :

A number of activists of different mass organisations, such as the BPKS and Indian People's Front, have been detained under the National Security Act. Virendra "Vidrohi," a popular poet, was arrested and put under NSA. Amarjit Singh Sohi, a cultural worker of Indian citizenship who came from Canada to attend the inaugural meeting of the Lok Sangram Morcha, was arrested while he was visiting Jehanabad. He was branded as a Khalistani terrorist, though it is well known that he and his organisation, the Punjabi Literary Association, have been valiantly fighting Khalistani terrorism

in Canada. He has been detained under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, and is to be tried in camera by a special court. No one, not even his lawyer, was allowed to meet him in prison.

The ruling landlords of semi-feudal Bihar first tried to preserve their exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses through the stranglehold of their murderous private armies. That stranglehold having been crushed by the powerful democratic movement of the toiling millions, the State has come to the rescue of its masters. A virtual Police Raj has been imposed in Bihar.

Lok Sangram Morcha, Bihar, appeals to its countrymen and women to rise in protest against the imposition of Police Raj in Bihar. It would be fatal to believe that such repression would remain confined within the boundary of a single state. The ugly head of authoritarianism is rising - casting its shadow throughout the length and breadth of the country. These events in Bihar will be repeated all over the country. We cannot allow our motherland to be molested at the hands of the crusaders against democracy. Let us stand bravely shoulder to shoulder with the fighting millions of Bihar to hold high the banner of democracy.

WE DEMAND :

- Immediately withdraw B.S.F., C.R.P.F. and Gujarat Armed Police from Bihar.
- Immediately release unconditionally all political prisoners including Virendra Vidrohi, Madhu Singh and Amarjit Singh Sohi.
- Withdraw all false court-cases against the activists and supporters of different democratic organisations.
- Stop using black laws.
- Revoke ban on MKSS, MCC and other democratic organisations.
- Stop killing in the name of encounters and prosecute and punish the guilty officers.
- Prosecute and punish the landlords who violate labour and land-laws.
- Revoke the gun-licenses of all tyrant landlords and disband private armies.
- Force the Union Home Minister Buta Singh and the Azad government to resign.

- Report of the Convenor, Lok Sangram Morcha.

ANNEXURE - I

POLICE FORCE DEPLOYED IN JEHANABAD DISTRICT (as on 1st January 1989)

Jehanabad Block : Bazar Samiti (500), Govt. Hospital (500), S.S. College (500), Kisan Bhavan (12), Eraki Rly. Station (36), D.M. Office (12), Jehanabad Rly. Station (24), Jehanabad Chowki No. 1 (12), Jehanabad Chowki No. 2 (12), Karauna, P.S. Bldg. (18), Kalpa P.S. Bldg. (18), Mokar High School (18), Sikaria Upper Primary School (36), Amain, Middle School (24), Parasbigha (Pvt. House) (24); **Kurtha Block :** Kurtha High School (12), Kishan Bhavan, Kurtha (12), Kinjar (12), Sohraiya (12), Dilhari (12), Manikpur (12), Sultanpur (12), Sakurabad P.S. (24); **Mukdampur Block :** Tehata (12), Pai Bigha (12); **Ghosi Block :** Ghosi Block Office (12), Bandhu Ganj (24), Okari P.S. (12), Devara Math (24), Hulas Ganj, P.S. (35), Kairwa (12), Gandhar (12), Sukhiyawan (12), Dhuriyari (12), Parawan (12), Tira (12), Liber (12), Aliganj (24), Charue (12), **Kako Block :** Kako Block Office (12), High School Kako (12), Bhelawan (12), Khalispur (12), Nagawan (12), Nonhi (12), Satanpur (12), Damuhan (12), Timplepur (12), Auma (12), Maniyawan (12), Piranji (12), Mayi (12), Mugal Bigha (12), Bhadsara (12), Nagawan High School (12); **Karpi Block :** Telpa (12), Imamganj (12), Autala (36), Kotesar (12), Kansara (12), Ganiari (12), Pariyari (12), Mazidpur (12), Kinjar (24), Kalyanpur (12), Rampur Chai (12), Kinjar Vyapar Mandal (12), Deokund (24); **Arwal Block :** DSP Office, Arwal (12), Badarabad Kisan Bhavan (12), Mehandiya (24), Kater (12), Kamta (12), Haibatpur (12).

ANNEXURE - 1A

POLICE CAMPS IN PALAMAU DISTRICT

Chhatarpur Block : Uday Garh, Dagara Nauri Bazar, Charai;
Hussainabad Block ; Ghaghora, Baniadih, Kajoli; **Bishrampur Block :** Tisibar, Malwaria, Dala, Pandu, Lohara, Kauriya, Ratnag; **Panki Block :** Hotai, Navagarh; **Hariharganj Block :** Pibra.

ANNEXURE - 3

BIG LANDLORDS OF PALAMAU DISTRICT (above 50 acres of land)

Name	Location	Land Possessed (acres)
Jagishwar Singh Mauar	Manatu	6000
Naroo Singh	Daltanganj	5000
Lt. Shyam Bihari Singh	Chatarpur	5000
Raja Saheb	Chainpur	3000
Bhaiya Saheb	Nagar Estate	3000
Not Available	Lodigarh Estate	3000
Not Available	Raunka Estate	3000
Saguna Pandey	Patan	2000
Ram Chandra Singh	Hariharganj	1500
Bijoy Singh	Chatarpur	1000
Jagnarayan Pathak	Haider Nagar	1000
Not Available	Bishrampur Estate	1000
Tapeshwar Pandey	Patan	1000
Bal Singh	Patan	500
Subodh Singh	Daltanganj	500
Hans Raj Singh	Daltanganj	500

ANNEXURE 2: POLITICAL ACTIVISTS KILLED BY POLICE DURING LAST SEVEN MONTHS
(June 1988 to December 1988)

Date of Killing	Place	Name	Age	Victim Organisation
01.06.88	Bandubar	Dr. Birender Singh	32	Jan Mukti Parishad
01.06.88	"	Ram Bali Singh	30	"
04.06.88	"	Krishna Singh	28	"
30.10.88	Chatua	Shyam Pd. Mahato	85	Indian People's Front
30.10.88	"	Balakiya Debi	30	"
30.10.88	"	Rijhni Debi	35	"
09.01.88	Betari	Sanjay Chaudhari	25	Bihar Kisan Samiti
15.11.88	Fantheit	Satandeo Chaudhari	45	Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha
15.11.88	"	Sakaldeo Yadav	25	"
15.11.88	"	Nand Yadav	16	"
27.12.88	Ehadasi	Keshav Thakur	25	CPI(M-L) (Liberation)
27.12.88	"	Jamadar Das	28	"
27.12.88	"	Gorakh Ram	22	"
N.A.	Caya-Aurangabad	N.A.	N.A.	Krantikari Kisan Committee
N.A.	"	N.A.	N.A.	"
N.A.	"	N.A.	N.A.	"
N.A.	"	N.A.	N.A.	"

ANNEXURE 8: RECENT POLICE REPRESSION ON MASS ACTIVITIES

Date ①	Place ②	Victim Organisation ③	Police Action ④	Other Details ⑤
11.07.88	Patna	Rihtas Karmachari Sangh	Lathi charge	On procession
12.07.88	Patna	Teachers' Organisation	Lathi charge	On procession
01.08.88	Ranchi	Tempo Drivers' Organisation	Lathi charge	On procession
Aug. '88	Darbhanga	University Employees' Orgn.	Lathi charge	On procession.
11.08.88	Damuha-Krugari	N.A. (Harijans)	Lathi charge	On gathering
14.08.88	Bandgaon-Singbhum	N.A. (Adivasis)	Huts gutted	—
24.08.88	Arrah	N.A.	Lathi charge	On Tazia Julius
20.08.88	Copalganj	H.A.	Lathi charge	On procession against police repression
19.08.88	Ranchi	Government employees	Lathi charge	—
31.08.88	Janshedpur	Students & shop-keepers	Lathi charge	More than 50 inj.
10.09.88	Kragaria	CPI & CPM	Lathi charge	About 200 injured
10.09.88	Chhapra	All India Khet Mazdoor Sangh	Lathi charge	On peaceful Dharma
07.09.88	Sivan	CPI	Lathi charge	On demonstration
10.09.88	Krugaria, Begusarai & Sasaram	Students	Lathi charge	On demonstration against price-rise corruption etc.
Sept. '88	Nawada & Sasaram	Students	Lathi charge	—
10.09.88	Katihar	Janata Party	Lathi charge	On demonstration
Oct. '88	Joghari	Hunger striker	Lathi charge	More than a dozen were also arrested
20.10.88	Janshedpur	Crowd of Durga Puja	Lathi charge & firing	16 persons died in collusion and one in police firing
30.11.88	Fatura	State government employees	Lathi charge	4 injured

25.11.88	Enabva	Bihar Kisan Samiti	Lathi charge	4 leaders detained & flags were torned
01.11.88	Mishwan(Kurtha)	Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha	Lathi charge	21 persons including women injured
20.12.88	Bhagalpur	Students	Lathi charge & firing	More than 2 dozen injured
22.12.88	Jehanabad	IPF	Arresting	150 arrested
Dec. '88	Bhagalpur	ISA	Arresting	—

ANNEXURE 6: POLICE FIRING OVER SIX MONTHS

(July 1988 to January 1989)

Date	Place	Died	Injured	Other Details
09.08.88	Sahibganj	1	-	-
05.09.88	Paharpur P.S.	1	-	People were not allowing the police to cut a peepal tree
11.09.88	Dudh Katora	1	-	-
17.09.88	Barh Town	1	1	-
24.09.88	Mainhari	-	5	-
30.09.88	Siswan village	5	-	24 rounds fired
30.10.88	Chatua	3	5	Demonstration against illegal arrest and torture in police custody
12.11.88	Satkhari	2	5	Women were also molested
15.11.88	Panhit	3	-	-
23.11.88	Helechi	1	-	-
20.12.88	Tetiyabagber	1	-	SP Mongyr ordered to arrest the O.C. and others u/s/302
20.01.89	Chenari	1	1	5 days' Chenari band
29.01.89	Pakari Pakohi	1	3	-

ANNEXURE 4: RECENT POLICE RAIDS

District Block Village ①	Months ②	Number of Houses Raided ③	Destruction ④	Loot/ Kurdi ⑤	Arrests ⑥
Jehanabad (Dt.):					
Karpi Block:					
Barhar:	Oct. '88	1	Hut	Doors & Other Household goods	-
Lodhipur	Aug. & Dec. '88	3	-	"	-
Bara	Aug. '88-Jan. '89	1	-	All valuable clothes, & utensils	-
Nagawan	Nov. '88	4	-	"	-
Hazipur	Dec. '88	2	Tile Roof	"	-
Jhunathi	Nov. '88	2	-	-	1
Hirakpur	Oct. '88 & Jan. '89	1	-	-	-
Jhikatia	Sept. '88	1	-	-	-
Badapur	Dec. '88 & Jan. '89	5	-	-	-
Gulabganj	Dec. '88-Jan. '89	8	-	-	-
Bajitpur	Jan. & Feb. '89	2	30 huts & roofs of huts, utensils, & other implements worth Rs.2000	-	-
Dora	Jul. & Aug. '88	1	Kacha House	-	1
Crachar	Dec. '88	1	-	-	-
Andhra Chowk	Aug & Dec. '88	1	-	-	-
Sikhibigha	Dec. '88	1	-	-	-
Azad Bigha	Nov. '88	1	-	Wrist watch, money etc	25
Nhajuri	Oct. '88	1	-	-	-
Rigahi	Oct. '88	1	-	-	-
Rampur	Oct. '88	1	-	-	-

Kurtha Block:

Terahampur: Oct. '88
 Jadu Bigha Aug. '88

Biharpur Aug. '88
 Mushahari Aug. '88
 Sarta Aug. '88
 Mahua Bigha Aug. '88

Anar Block:

Madan Singh Oct. '88
 Katola Sarta -

Go. Kendua -

Jehrabad Block:

Shahpur -
 Pinjore -
 Alampur -
 Garwan -
 Sarnan -
 Gansa -
 Bhadosi Nov. '88

Makampur Block:

Tehta Office July '88
 of MKSS
 Pirganj July '88

-	-	-	-	-	-
30	-	-	-	-	Several taken into custody & released
25	-	-	-	-	"
15	-	-	-	-	"
18	-	-	-	-	"
10	-	-	-	-	"
25	-	-	-	-	-
41	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-
30	-	-	-	-	2
2	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	6

Grains, clothes
& Utensils

Valuables

Papers &
Documents

(Contd....)

Patna (Dt.):

Misauri Block:

Indo	Dec. '88	1	House destroyed	All household property	35
Kharaliya	Dec. '88	1	"	"	-
Khanpura	Dec. '88	1	"	"	1
Chainpura	Dec. '88	2	-	-	-
Atauli	Dec. '88	1	-	-	-
Mahadeopur	Dec. '88	1	-	-	-
Mura	Dec. '88	3	-	-	1
Bhagwananj	Dec. '88	3	-	-	1
Masourthi	Nov. '88	1	-	Papers, documents	1

Paliganj Block:

Kampura	Jan. '89	1	-	All properties	-
Dibrapur	Jan. '89	1	-	-	-
Bibipur	Jan. '89	1	-	-	-
Bishunpura	Jan. '89	3	-	-	1
Murlika	Jan. '89	1	-	"	-
Dahia	Nov. '88	1	House destroyed	-	2
Aukhara	Dec. '88	1	-	-	1
Allipur	Jan. '89	2	-	-	2

Rohas (Dt.):

Irabhua Block:

Betari	Nov. '88	1	-	-	2
--------	----------	---	---	---	---

Kauratta Block:

Darnagar	Dec. '88 & Jan. '89	1	-	All properties	-
----------	---------------------	---	---	----------------	---

Rohas Block:

Majhiwan	Jan. '89	1	-	Clothes & utensils	1
----------	----------	---	---	--------------------	---

ANNEXURE 5: DEATH IN POLICE LOCK-UPS

Date	Name of Victim	Police Station	District
10.03.88	Sheetal Singh	Gola	Hazaribag
17.03.88	Ram Pawitra	Harnaui	Nalanda
25.05.88	Babu Lal Yadav	Kharagpur	Mungyr
05.06.88	Ghaghan Yadav	Gogari	Khagaria
22.06.88	Rheem Shanker Pandey	Naubatpur	Patna
25.06.88	Anandi Paswan	Balia	Begusarai
09.07.88	Jay Kumar Mahto	Mohanpur	Deoghar
31.08.88	Ram Lal N.S	Jamshedpur	Singhbhum
02.10.88	Nagina	Tarwara	Siwan
03.10.88	Wadehesh Pal	Samastipur	Samastipur
13.10.88	Harshanker Sahni	Karya	Muzaffarpur
29.10.88	Ganesh Sahni	Vidyapatnagar	Dalsinghsarai
09.11.88	Sanjay Chaudhari	Bhabhua	Rohtas
18.11.88	Sukhe Singh	Nowgachia	Purnia
31.12.88	Madik Mian	Simari	Hazaribagh

ANNEXURE 7:

Total Number of Jails in Bihar

*Sub jails: 33; Divisional Jails: 28;

Central Jails: 8; Total: 69.

*Total Capacity: 23,384 Prisoners.

Prisoners in Different Jails (1988)

Name of Jail	Prison's Capacity	Actual Number of Prisoners
Gaya	1032	1600
Bhagalpur	765	1500
Ranchi	333	1227
Ara	400	776
Chaibasa	253	527
Jamshedpur	198	454
Biharsharif	128	250
Munghyr	453	808
Sasaram	72	553
Aurangabad	78	350
Gopalganj	55	282
Sindega	79	229
Khunti	42	239

People's Union for Democratic Rights
(Delhi), 'Terror in Jehanabad', April
1989.

Political Killings in Bihar: A Compilation

January 1980-June 1983		Number Killed
Description of Attackers		108
Landlords or their men		60(65)
Police		5
Landlord and Police		7
Others		5
Unknown		5
	Total	185(190)
January 1984-April 1986		Number Killed
Description of Attackers		72
Landlords or their men		81
Police		18
Landlords and Police		2
Others		2
	Total	180
May 1986-January 1988		Number Killed
Description of Attackers		84
Landlords or their henchmen		29
Police		2
	Total	113

BEGUSARAI IN THE SHADOW OF POLICE TERROR

(In the past month, March 12 to April 12, there have been seven occasions on which police opened fire on people in Bihar. Twenty people were killed as a result and several more were injured : In Purnea (5 killed), Siwan (2), Singhbhum (1), Gaya (5), Giridih (0) and Begusarai (7). The Begusarai incident is considered the most heinous of all by opposition parties who are to hold an all-party convention in Begusarai on April 23 and organise a bandh for 3 days thereafter. The following report discloses the social background and the reasons for which such firings are indulged in by the police.)

IDDR, May-June 1989

BEGUSARAI (BIHAR), 7/4/1989 :

In a case under Sec. 144, the SDO Court of Begusarai (Bihar) gave the order that Ram Naresh Singh of village Madhol, Begusarai district, be allowed to cut the crop on a certain land. The SDO also ordered the CO to get this crop cut. The CO told Ram Naresh Singh to cut the crop but did not himself go to the farm for the cutting. Reportedly on 3.4.89 when Ram Naresh Singh's father was cutting the crop, the constable, having taken a bribe from the opposing party, reached the field and stopped him from cutting the crop. At this, the father of Ram Naresh Singh showed the constable the court order. But the constable disregarded the court order and began to hurl abuses at the old man.

Just then Ram Naresh Singh arrived, and seeing the excesses of the constable became enraged and engaged in a heated argument with the constable. The constable, abusing Ram Naresh Singh, began to beat him. At this point Ram Naresh Singh pushed down the constable and captured his revolver. He caught hold of the constable and made him sit in the field itself, saying that he would let him go only after the SP arrived.

The SP arrived, and the father and son reported the events to him and asked him for justice. The SP told them softly that they would be given justice and they should return the revolver. Ram Naresh Singh returned the revolver to the constable. Upon which the SP ordered the constable to arrest father and son and to beat them up thoroughly.

The constable took both farmers to the Khodavandpur police station and began to thrash them horribly. Seeing this injustice, thousands of people gathered at the police station to oppose it. So the constable took the two farmers to Cheria Beriarpur police station. Reportedly the constable beat the father and son here so ruthlessly that the two were in a half-dead condition. Even further, the constable thrust a lathi into the anus of the unconscious Ram Naresh Singh.

Thereafter, afraid that either of them might die in the police station itself, the constable hurriedly sent them to the jail. But before any treatment could begin, Ram Naresh Singh was dead. Enraged at the event, the people surrounded the main hospital of Begusarai and demanded Ram Naresh Singh's dead body. But the police was not willing under any circumstances to give the dead body to the people. The people who were gathered at the site showered stones on the SP and other police officers who were there and abused them angrily. Moreover, they did not allow the police to smuggle away the dead body. And they demanded the hanging of the guilty constable.

The SP said that he had not asked the constable to beat the fellows; the constable did that by his own will. "We have charged him under Section 302 (for murder) and have suspended him". Even then the people's anger did not subside. The people got the post-mortem done on the dead body in the presence of doctors. The SP then got some local people together and, on the excuse of taking the body to the village, smuggled it out in a jeep and had it burnt instead in secret. Seeing the massive upsurge of people's wrath in protest against this act, all the opposition parties held a meeting and gave a call for a bandh on April 6, 1989.

On April 6, every one took part in the bandh. In the entire district all shops and establishments, transportation, schools, and other institutions were closed. Lawyers too boycotted the courts. The situation was extremely explosive in many places. In front of Cheria Beriarpur police station thousands of people demonstrated and thundered slogans against the police crime. In response, the police fired indiscriminately into the unarmed crowd. In this, four people were killed on the spot, and several more were injured.

In this criminal act, too, the same guilty constable, who the SP had claimed had been suspended and was being proceeded against under Section 302, led the attack. The dead bodies were brought to the public hospital at Begusarai for post-mortem. Reportedly, Ram Naresh Singh's grieving wife committed suicide. Enraged by all these occurrences, the people set fire to a police van in Behat Chowk. The constable was beaten and humiliated. Thousands of people gheraoed the public hospital at Begusarai. The Government sent a large police force to the spot. Here, too, the police let loose a savage attack on the people. The people resisted by throwing stones and bricks. But here, too, three persons were killed in police firing and several more injured. All three dead bodies were disposed of in secret by the police. Elsewhere, as well, there were several incidents of stone throwing and breakage.

The whole district is under the shadow of terror and the situation is tense. There is intense hatred and rage against the Government and its police machinery. People are talking about this in all the villages of the district.

- an advocate, Begusarai District Court.

RELEASE BIHAR POLITICAL PRISONERS

To
The Governor
Bihar.

We wish to call your attention to the cases of two, out of the many, political prisoners languishing in the jails of Bihar : Virendra "Vidrohi" and Amarjit Sohi.

When the Chief Minister of Bihar visited the hamlets of Damuha and Khagari on August 13, 1988, and inquired after the victims of yet another massacre of dalits by "dacoits" in the pay of landlords, the people of the area, far from being soothed, were further agitated. For only two months before, after a similar massacre of dalits by the same culprits at the nearby Nonhi-Nagwan, the same Chief Minister had similarly come to condole the grieving, assert that he would take action against the culprits, and declare that he would resign if such a massacre occurred again. In protest against the administration's consistent refusal to defend the rural poor against landlord-dacoit barbarities, a local poet, Virendra "Vidrohi", smeared the face of the Chief Minister with 'kaajal'. This protestor was arrested, tortured, and charged under Sections 124-A (sedition) and 307 (attempt to murder), I.P.C.

Amarjit Singh Sohi, a Punjabi cultural activist settled in Edmonton, Canada, has been active in the Punjabi Literary Sabha of Edmonton, which has been opposing Khalistani terrorism and its supporters in Canada -- for which Sohi had been threatened by those sections. During his visit to India, Sohi had taken part in various cultural programmes and activities of the Inquilabi Kendra (Punjab). He was also a member of the Association For Democratic Rights (AFDR) Punjab, a constituent of AIFOFR. Sohi went in November 1988 to visit and study areas of the peasant movement in Bihar. He was arrested by police in a raid on village Azadbhiga on the night of November 13/14. Immediately the police presented a trumped-up case claiming that they had captured a "Khalistani terrorist"(!) and thereby "proved" a nexus between terrorists and the Bihar Naxalite Movement. Sohi was apparently personally tortured by R.P.Prasad, DIG(ID). Sohi's picture was flashed to the papers as that of a "Khalistani". But very shortly the Jehanabad District Magistrate (who was later summarily transferred)

categorically denied there was evidence to suggest that this was the case; and soon even the police version dropped this shameful slander. Yet Sohi has been kept in prison.

Both these men have been jailed not for any criminal offence but for their political views, specifically for their support for the movement of poor peasants and agricultural labourers in Jehanabad district. The All-India Federation of Organisations For Democratic Rights demands they be released forthwith, and requests your immediate intervention in the matter.

-- Convenor, AIFOFR.

AMARJEET SOHI'S LETTER TO THE PRESS

To

January, 1990.

The Editor

Sir,

For about 14 months I have been imprisoned in the Central Jail Gaya on case 168/88 of Karpi Police Station (Jehanabad). Cases have been foisted on me under Secs 147, 148, 149, 307, 354, 414, 120B, 216, 124A, I.P.C.; 25B, 25, 35, Arms Act; 17, CLA; and 11 (a) TADA. Through this letter I wish to draw your attention and that of all justice-loving people to my case and the police tortures inflicted upon me. Your newspaper has printed the police statements regarding me, which are absolutely fictitious and pure falsehoods. Through this letter I wish to convey to you my side,

My name is Amarjit Singh Sohi, and I am a resident of Sangrur dist., Punjab. Some years ago I went to my brother's place in Canada, and became a member of a progressive cultural organisation, 'Punjab Sahitya Sabha', which is a firm critic of Khalistani terrorists and of their supporters in Canada. In the past, I and my brother have received threats from the terrorists. We and our organisation have good relations with the Amritsar Natak Kala Kendra (whose director is Gursharan Singh). On my return to Punjab from Canada I became an active member of this troupe. I took part in the activities of 'Revolutionary Centre, Punjab', and 'Association For Democratic Rights, Punjab' (AFDR). When Revolutionary Centre and Amritsar Natak Kala Kendra were invited for the inaugural meeting of Lok Sangram Morcha in Dalmianagar, Bihar, I went for the occasion. After taking part in the meet on November 7, 1988, I toured the rural areas of Jehanabad district with the Mazdoor Kisan Mukti Manch, where various organisations are carrying on the peasant movement. My intention in touring Jehanabad was to encounter the peasant struggles first hand in order to prepare a detailed report. It was at this time that, in Azadbigha village (under Karpi police station), I was arrested.

After the arrest police behaved with me in a foul fashion.

In Azadbigaha village itself police began beating me. Then they took me to Aurangabad and kept on beating me, and attempted to get me to confess to being a Khalistani. They wanted me to confess that I had come there to give training to Naxalites. Then I was taken to Jehanabad, where a senior officer, R.R. Prasad (D.I.G., C.I.D.), personally tortured me. After the Jehanabad District Magistrate intervened, the torture was stopped. I gave my statement before the D.M., which the police distorted and twisted, and got the distorted version published in the press. When police were unable to obtain proof of my being a Khalistani, I was remanded to Patna, where I was tortured again. I was forced to stand for hours with my arms raised and my legs spread. For some nights and days I was not allowed to sleep. When, after bearing much torture, I was broken, I was forced to make a fictitious confession before the C.B.I. I was threatened with being shot, and I was also told that my family had been arrested, and that they too were receiving torture.

Now a fresh charge has been levelled against me. I am being called a dangerous Naxalite and an agent of the Indian People's Association of North America. The police have no evidence that I am a Khalistani, nor that IPANA is a dangerous organisation spreading Naxalism in India. Police have also tried to bring me under the National Security Act, in order that my case not come up in court. The amazing fact is that my statement has, as yet, not been recorded in court.

Even in jail, I am being subjected to several types of tortures. I am made to spend the whole day in a tiny cell. Not having permission to leave the cell has had a bad impact on my health. For some months I was given hospital food but now the food I am given is atrocious. I have to date received no clothes from the jail. I am not given permission to meet anyone. In fact, even my family is forced to wait up to two to three days to get a chance to meet me. I have asked for permission from the jail authorities to meet reporters and hold a press conference, to which there has as yet been no reply. As a result of not receiving permission I am forced to try to inform you of my situation through this letter without the knowledge of the jail authorities.

I am being denied all rights. I have full hope that you will print this letter in your newspaper in order that people can learn the truth about my case.

- Amarjit Singh Sohi, Central Jail - Gaya.

ARREST OF M.K.S.S. LEADERS

Instead of removing police camps, releasing political prisoners, punishing police officers guilty of atrocities (eg. Arwal), withdrawing the draconian Terrorist Act, disbanding notorious private landlord armies, removing the bans on peasant organisations like Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samiti (MKSS) and on certain communist revolutionary groups, the new Janata Dal Bihar Government has arrested, on March 26, the general secretary of the MKSS, Arvind Kumar, a state committee member, Vijay Kumar, and a Jehanabad district committee member, Jit Ram. The state level leaders of the MKSS were kept after their arrest in custody for four days without production in court, indicating that there were plans to secretly kill them in a fake 'encounter'. It was only after various organisations protested that they were remanded. The police foisted false cases of theft and dacoity on them. Thereafter, the Chief Minister promised a delegation of the Lok Sangram Morcha on April 6 that the three would be given political prisoner status. Instead, press reports of April 13 stated that Arvind Kumar was put in chains (i.e. his hands and feet were tied to rods), as a result of which he cannot move about at all. Vijay Kumar, who suffers from a brain cyst and consequent epilepsy, has not been given Gardinol, as a result of which his life is in danger. This despite the fact that his illness was reported in the press as early as April 1. Disturbingly, the Bihar Government has requested in Court that the prisoners be shifted from Bankipur Central Jail (Patna) to Bhagalpur Camp Jail, whereas all the cases foisted on them relate to incidents in Jehanabad and Patna. AIFOFR demands the immediate unconditional release of these three MKSS leaders, Amarjit Sohi, Virendra Vidrohi, and all other political prisoners in Bihar, and condemns this repression on the legitimate peasant movement.

- In Defence of Democratic Rights, March-April, 1990.

M.K.S.S. LEADERS' LETTER TO THE CHIEF MINISTER, BIHAR

Respected Chief Minister,

On April 6, 1990, you had a detailed discussion with the delegation of the Lok Sangram Morcha regarding the release of political prisoners, restoration of civil liberties, withdrawal of the ban on democratic organisations, withdrawal of TADA, NSA, and other laws, and other serious political issues. You also assured the delegation that in 15 days you would discuss and clarify your stand on the following : the release of cultural activists Amarjit Sohi and Virendra Vidrohi; conferral of political prisoner status on us at Bankipur Central Jail; medical treatment of our important comrade and fellow political prisoner Vijay Kumar (a.k.a. Chhedi Lal Mahto) who is suffering from a deadly illness; that we three would not be involved in false cases; a stop to police repression; action against the police officers responsible in the Banjhi and Arwal massacres; the lifting of the ban on Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samiti and MCC; and other issues.

Regarding this, organisations of students and youth, various democratic peasant organisations, organisations struggling for the establishment of civil liberties and hundreds of intellectuals from Bihar, Bengal, Punjab and Delhi, have repeatedly appealed to you. But it is a matter of regret that you have not fulfilled any one of these assurances. As yet there are no steps taken for the recognition or release of political prisoners. Despite your press statement, Amarjit Sohi and Virendra Vidrohi are still behind bars. After the High Court order you yourself came to the jail to request that the chains and rods on our feet be removed. But despite your accepting the demand to grant the three of us political prisoner status, we are not being conferred this status. In this connection the concerned jail superintendent and collector, Patna, have been written to, to which we as yet have received no reply. We do not know why you have as yet passed no written orders on this question.

Despite being deserving of political prisoner status we are being treated in jail worse than ordinary prisoners.

Out of 24 hours, we three are kept for roughly 20 hours in three tiny, separate cells, away from ordinary prisoners. We are given just mats to lie on and even in the heat, just blankets to cover ourselves. There is no facility to protect us from mosquitoes, as a result of which we lose sleep the entire night. Despite the fact that there is a fan in the cell, the electricity is deliberately cut, whereas in the general ward the electricity remains on in the day. No magazine is given to us to read. Neither soap nor clothes are given to us for use. Even to meet visitors all sorts of obstacles are placed. Let alone meet ordinary prisoners, we are hardly allowed to meet one another. By contrast, even dangerous criminals and unsubmitive prisoners are allowed to wander freely. All the facilities of the jail are illegally available to them.

Is not this treatment of us by the administration illegal and inhuman? And it is a matter of regret that all this is being done on merely the charge that there is a rumour that we will attempt to escape from jail, when to date not a single example can be given of a person from our organisation escaping from any jail in Bihar. It is on this same excuse that the administration is conspiring to send us to the Central Jail, Bhagalpur, so that the hearing of our case can be delayed for a long time.

How proper or just is it to deny any prisoner his facilities and rights on the excuse of baseless rumours and sheer suspicions? Both from the point of view of law and humanity, this behaviour, not merely with political prisoners, but even ordinary prisoners is barbarian and improper. Behind this, is the administration anti-people intention to take vengeance at work? Are these not the symbols of torture given to political prisoners in colonial jails?

Doubtless your action against corrupt officers of Bankipur Central Jail is praiseworthy. As a result, there was temporarily the desired improvement in the condition of the jail, but this improvement was very insignificant. Even now ordinary prisoners have to struggle against many types of problems. I have also tried to attract the attention of the prison warden and the superintendent to these problems.

Not only at Bankipur, the situation of all Bihar jails is unfortunate. Ordinary prisoners are forced to live in the shadow of the loot and terror of corrupt jail officialdom.

If, rather than attempting to win popularity by completing some superficial measures and making grand speeches in the style of Congress leaders, you wish to really fight corruption, then my suggestion is as follows : On the one hand, special supervisory committees of honest and justice-loving persons be constituted who can keep contact with ordinary prisoners, hear their complaints and attempt to solve their problems; and on the other, a favourable situation be created for ordinary prisoners, living in the shadow of corrupt officers, to raise their voice for their rights.

Our important comrade and fellow prisoner, Vijay Kumar (a.k.a. Chhedi Lal Mahto), a long-time sufferer of epilepsy needs an operation to save his eyesight, and also needs facial surgery. We have repeatedly demanded that he be sent to Calcutta for this purpose, where such operations have been satisfactorily been carried out in the past. But no attention has been given to our demand. If, in the absence of proper treatment, he becomes mentally and physically incapacitated, we will be forced to conclude that your government has knowingly incapacitated him politically.

Again, your assurance that we (myself, Vijay Kumar and Jit Ram Singh) will not be arrested on false cases has turned out to be fake. On the orders of senior officers, the police of Phulwarisharif, Masandhi, Bhagwariganj, Vikram, Jehanabad, Karpi, Paliganj and other stations have made us suspects in dozens of false and serious cases of murder and dacoity. Surprisingly, on the one hand the Janata Dal continues to consider the TADA (Terrorist Act) a black law, and on the other is using it full steam. You should not be surprised that, apart from the three of us, the Jehanabad police have successfully used TADA on 46 other persons. The only reason for the use of this black act is to prevent the normal judicial procedure of awarding bail, so that we can be subjected to jail for a long spell and kept apart from the peasant movement.

Regarding police repression your government shows no appreciable difference from the earlier government. Surprisingly, on the one hand you talk of finishing off feudalism, and on the other hand you have given free rein to special police and para-military forces as well as feudal thug armies such as the 'Sunlight Sena' to carry on brutal repression in order to ruthlessly crush the anti-feudal peasant movements

in Central Bihar, particularly Palamu. The arrest of hundreds of peasant activists, the looting of their houses, and their killing are still going on apace. Neither have you as yet realised a white paper on the Arwal and Banjhi massacres and taken steps to punish the guilty officers, nor have you taken any significant measure in the direction of removing the illegal ban on MKSS and the MCC.

In this situation it is natural that anger against your government has arisen among all democratic sections. We appeal to you to take serious steps before your newly elected government is forced to face a militant mass movement :

- 1) Remove the ban on MKSS and MCC.
- 2) Release all political prisoners and withdraw all false cases.
- 3) Issue written instructions to give us political prisoner status and make arrangements for our ill comrade Vijay Kumar to receive proper medical treatment.
- 4) Stop the government conspiracy to send us to Bhagalpur.
- 5) Release cultural activists Amarjit Sohi and Virendra Vidrohi without delay.
- 6) Stop repression on the Bihar peasant movement and democratic movements of other classes. Remove special forces and paramilitary forces from Palamu and disarm and arrest the 'Sunlight Sena'.
- 7) Stop the use of black acts such as TADA in Bihar. Release without delay 150 persons including ourselves, arrested under this Act in Bihar.
- 8) Release a white paper on the Arwal and Banjhi massacres, and arrest and strictly punish the guilty officers of those massacres.
- 9) Stop the corruption and terror of corrupt officers in all jails in Bihar. Set up special supervisory committees for this purpose and create favourable conditions for ordinary prisoners to raise their voices against corruption.
- 10) Stop the use of colonial jail practices such as shackling prisoners to rods or to the bars of the cell.

Arvind Kumar
General Secretary, MKSS
Vijay Kumar
Jit Ram Singh
Office bearers, MKSS

LAND REFORMS HELP FEW IN BIHAR

The land reforms act has proved to be a virtual non-starter in Bihar even 28 years after its implementation.

An annual report of the revenue and land reforms department says the Land Ceiling Act implemented in April 1962 has so far benefitted only 2,92,470 landless, though their number, according to the 1981 census, stands at 73.40 lakh in the state.

The report says the condition of the landless is pitiable. Thousands of land dispute cases are pending before various courts in the state, it says.

- Patna UNI, August 7, 1990.

ABOUT LOKSHAHI HAKK SANGHATANA

Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana is a democratic rights organisation which has been working in Maharashtra for the last 11 years. It has not only investigated, but also carried out mass propoganda on, issues such as the following : attacks on tribals, deaths in police custody; slum conditions and demolitions; caste and communal riots; firing on workers and slum dwellers; persecution of the Bombay Policemen's agitation; repression on textile strikers; massacre of political dissidents in Tamil Nadu; and each of the government's new black laws.

LHS is a member of the All India Federation of Organisations For Democratic Rights (AIFOFR). AIFOFR was formed in 1982 and held its first conference in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh in May 1982. It has held a number of national campaigns, such as against the missile base at Baliapal, Orissa; against state and communal terrorism in Punjab; an investigation of the causes of drought.

AIFOFR CONSTITUENT ORGANISATIONS : Association For Democratic Rights (AFDR), Punjab; Ganatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (GASS), Orissa; Janatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (JASS), Rajasthan; Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana, Maharashtra; Organisation for the Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR), Andhra Pradesh.

ASSOCIATES : AIFOFR associates, West Bengal; AIFOFR associates, Kerala.

LOKSHAHI HAKK SANGHATANA FACT FINDING REPORTS

Repression in Dahanu; Where It Comes From.

Slum : Workers' Colony.

Communal Riots or Police Repression? An Enquiry into the Police Firing in Cheeta Camp.

Drought in Maharashtra : Natural Calamity or Government Policy?

Death in Thane Police Custody : A Report.

Terror in Jawhar : An Investigation into the Assault of tribal activists - the report of an independently constituted fact finding team.

Contractor Raj at Bombay Airport.

For Copies, Write to Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana, Room 10, Laxmi Nivas, 697, Katrac Road, Wadala, Bombay 400 031.

AIFOFDR REPORTS :

Missile Base in Baliapal : Assault in the Name of Defence.

Punjab : A Report to the Nation.

READ AND SUBSCRIBE TO IN DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS'

English bimonthly of AIFOFDR. Subscription rates : Rs. 20 per year. Write to Rajani X. Desai, C/o 8D, B Building, Harbour Heights, Off Victoria Bunder Road, Colaba, Bombay - 400 005.