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Maoist Violence – I

I would like to congratulate you for writing the editorial “Violence of the Oppressed” (EPW, 8 June 2013). What you have written is correct. But you have not written three important things.

First, the violence of the oppressors have partly also dehumanised the oppressed, even their revolutionary leaders. At the moment, revolution is a far cry and for the oppressed adivasis what matters today is bare survival. It is anger and thirst for revenge that drive the Maoist fighters when they kill their oppressors. It is naive to demand of them that they should respect the Geneva Conventions; they probably have not even heard of such things.

Second, it is true that central India is witnessing “the biggest grab of tribal land after Columbus”. But can India’s middle class and the common people, other than the adivasis, prosper without this process? Can India become an economic superpower without this process? The answer is, “No”.

The alternative is to give up this whole pursuit of prosperity. There are, after all, limits to growth. Gandhiji knew this, but our present-day leaders appear ignorant.

Finally, even if the pursuit of prosperity is given up, unbridled population growth will continue to cause conflict and violence. Paul Ehrlich said long ago, addressing political activists of the left, “Whatever your cause, it is a lost cause unless we control population”.

Saral Sarkar

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II

I do not subscribe to the views expressed in the editorial, “Violence of the Oppressed” (EPW, 8 June 2013). Your editorial supports Maoist violence, which is wrong. Every day police atrocities take place but hapless citizens do not resort to violence. Similar is the case with victims of judicial excesses or corruption, who may have no voice, and yet do not resort to violence.

The Maoists attack bridges, railway stations, hospitals and other public institutions. This goes against their claim

of fighting for the poor. These facilities are used by the oppressed. The Maoists are nothing but underworld gangs and they indulge in extortion and forcible recruitment. Their violent means have seriously impeded development and it is in their vested interests that no development takes place in the regions they control. It is high time that the government uses air power, like armed drones and foliage penetration radars, to tackle these ruthless terrorists.

Deendayal M Lulla

MUMBAI

J S Verma

Sriram Panchu’s article “A Tribute to J S Verma” (EPW, 11 May 2013) was informative and illuminated the imprint of the late Jagadish Sharan Verma on the Indian judicial system and public life. I would like to add that one of his key contributions was to our educational system through his report on teacher education. Justice Verma was the chairman of the high-powered commission appointed in May 2012 by the Supreme Court on teacher education. The commission submitted its report “Vision of Teacher Education in India: Quality and Regulatory Perspective” in August 2012. The report recognised the absence of an institutional mechanism in the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) to review norms and standards of teacher education institutions in a continuous and systematic way. The commission recommended that the NCTE should develop comprehensive guidelines for innovative teacher education programmes as well as a teacher education, assessment and accreditation centre. J S Verma has left us a worthwhile legacy.

Vargheese K A

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Attacking INSAF

We the undersigned are shocked and dismayed at the Government of India’s action against Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF), a national coalition of 700 people’s movements, social action groups and progressive intellectuals with an active presence in 15 states