

Dear Friends,

I am pasting the contents of the letter I have recieved from Sathyu and Nityanand Jayaraman, both of whom have pulled out of the Environment and Occupational health workshop that CHC is facilitating, they have also verbally informed me that Thanal another group that was to participate is also pulling out. the reason for the pullout is the Nandigram massacre - and their letters are self-explanatory.

We need to ponder over the issues and come up with a sensitive and appropriate response.

sincerely

rakhal

Dear Rakhal,

16.03.07

I regret to inform you that the Corporate Accountability Desk of the Other Media, and our coalition – Collective for Economic, Social and Environmental Justice – has decided to not participate in the People's Health Movement meeting in Bhopal. This is because the Bhopal meeting is organized by persons directly affiliated to the CPI(M). I am sure you are aware of the disturbing events in Nandigram. I am currently in Kolkata. The reports are horrific and the stalinist conditions do not allow any room for verification.

However, eyewitness reports that were conveyed second hand to me indicate that CPI(M) cadre arrived with the police on the 14th carrying large plastic bags. The bags were subsequently seen used for shovelling in dead bodies, many of which were thrown in the Haldia river. Several women, who were reportedly gang raped are also missing. Even more shocking that the massacre is the response of the AIDWA leader Brinda Karat and other senior politburo officials, and the lack of moral indignation from other lesser party persons, including the Bhopal organizers, the silent ones too are guilty ... of silence.

The CPI(M) has many individuals who are conscientious and sensitive, but not many of these have yet shown the courage to raise their voice against the party.

Separately, we are also extremely disturbed and agitated at the CPI(M)'s plans to invite Union Carbide – Dow to West Bengal, rumouredly to invest in the Salim Group's chemical hub in Nandigram / Haldia. Our letters to CPI(M) politburo have elicited no

response, and the West Bengal Chief Minister has responded cryptically that he, "will do nothing unethical."

It would be an understatement to say that we are outraged by the aggressiveness of the CPI(M) and the vehemence with which they defended their acts of violence against innocents. In our minds, the CPI(M) like the BJP with its Gujarat Pogrom has carved a special and infamous place in history, and we invite our other friends to join us in conveying to the CPI(M) that they are not welcome at gatherings of public spirited people unless they repent and make amends to the people of Nandigram and Singur. We remain committed to the process initiated to build a People's Health Movement and are hopeful that PHM coordinators will exert their moral pressure on errant members and ensure that PHM's mandate truly embraces the spirit of human freedom and dignity.

Sincerely,

Nityanand Jayaraman
Corporate Accountability Desk

dear friends,

i am sure all of you are aware of the situation in nandigram, west bengal where cpm cadres along with armed policemen and with the full support of the state government killed people who are protesting taking over of their land by multinational companies. so far 28 bodies have been found. cpm big wigs continue to justify this fascist attack.

you are also aware that several of the organizers [both individuals and organizations] of nha are people closely connected to cpm. i know the people in madhya pradesh are mostly cpm cadres or members of cpm front organizations. these individuals continue to parrot what their leaders say. i think the NHA will be a farce if we let the cpm people be among the organizers. please add your voice to ensure that people connected to cpm are removed from the organizing and other committees.

looking forward to your response,

satinath sarangi [sathyu]

bhopal group for information and action

Dear Sathyu, Nitya and friends,

—The Nandigram situation has been disturbing for all of us and we fully share our solidarity and sympathy with the families who lost their near and dear ones in the unprecedented police action. We also share our outrage and disappointment with such events in Democratic India.

However as one of the key-members of the Peoples Health Movement, in India and globally, we in CHC ~~fully oppose your think that the suggestion you have made is inappropriate in the given situation, undemocratic, anarchic and not very healthy at this point of time. suggestion~~

The Jan Swasthya Abhiyan is a network of networks bringing together over 20 associations, campaign groups and peoples movements and includes some organizations that ~~may have links to political parties. epm-epm-links-but~~ However, the structure, organization, decision making and process of evolution that so many of us have supported with great commitment over the years is that of an inclusive coalition focussed on the health of the people. While the relative strength of different constituents may vary from state to state, the strength of a local constituent should not distract anyone from the essentially pro people and pro health nature of the JSA. It is inevitable for such confusion to occur when there is a process of building links with progressive organisations as well as networking on any issue in India. However, for the sake of Health for All NOW, it is important to keep focussing on the issues rather than on individuals and organizations. We feel that the most appropriate response would be to raise and discuss the issue within the network, with the ultimate aim of the health of the people as the uppermost consideration. It is quite another matter if in a state or two some states some epm-epm-linked organization or cadres are more involved or less involved. You cannot escape their reality when building links with progressive organizations or networking on any issue in India. Removing people who are not directly involved in Nandigram event is a highly undemocratic suggestion.

The National Health Assembly has many sessions where we can discuss the issue in various democratic ways, to understand the complexity and evolve various responses. During the first Peoples Health Assembly in Savar, Bangladesh, the Indian delegation along with some others led a similar protest to oust Richard Skolnik, the head of the World Bank's Health Division who had been invited to a session 'World Bank meets the people'. We negotiated a process amidst the usual emotion and outrage to ensure that both democratic dissent and democratic dialogue ~~be was~~ allowed in the Health Assembly.

~~We~~ We think we need to discuss and dialogue around the issue and not make emotional and knee jerk ~~hasty~~ suggestions that could themselves be considered as anti-anti-people, in the long run. There has been a lot of mobilization and raising of expectations of people from all over the country (and PHM globally) who are attending the assembly to share concerns and experiences. JSA symbolizes a very inclusive coalition where diversity of opinion has been respected even as we evolve collective positions and initiatives towards people's health. ~~Suggestions of the sort you have given would be totally disruptive. Disrupting of this long-standing process.~~

In addition to all other reasons, NHA-2 assumes greater significance because the wide-of range of issues being discussed over the three days represent all the key challenges that people's health has to face in the era of globalisation. This calls for a greater effort at bringing together of people's groups, movements and organizations. While expressing our solidarity with people's struggles everywhere we would still counsel inclusive dialogue without any forms of finger-pointing on any member of the coalition. We also fully respect that individuals who have been invited to share their concerns on various health issues in the assembly may choose to interpret events in their own way differently and stay away for their own reasons choose to respond differently, but we would request all these friends to do so in ways that will strengthen the people's health alliance and not weaken it.

Best wishes,

Your ~~Sincerely~~ friends at CHC,

Ravi, Thelma, Premdas, Chander, Rakhal, Naveen, Ameer, Asha.

CHC Team.

Dear All,

Many of you would have seen the mails circulating that link the preparations around the NHA II and the recent very unfortunate and distressing incidents in Nandigram.

I am not going to attempt an analysis of what happened at Nandigram or the

whole process that led up to it. Not because we as concerned citizens should not do so, but because that is not really the intent of this mail. We can, if people feel necessary, conduct such an analysis in the JSA through a mechanism that we have a consensus on.

But before getting into the substance of the issue that relates to the NHA II specifically, I would like to step back a little. The JSA, in the last 6-7 years has been an important effort in India at alliance building. This is significant in a situation where movements are divided in so many ways in the country. As all of us know, this has not been an easy process. In order to build this alliance and keep it going has required large investments by all of us in terms of time, effort and resources. Perhaps the single largest factor that has kept us going is the perception that the "enemy" is too strong to be ignored or to be confronted by any of us individually. To a large extent, in the JSA, while being aware of our differences and while respecting them, we have been able to keep a strong focus on our basic objective.

Personally, I would submit that the first call that we need to take in the current context relates to our perception regarding the necessity to keep alive this alliance. Clearly, this alliance will not survive any attempts to "witch hunt" for the "enemy within". I myself would think that it would be extremely unfortunate, but its not something that we can prevent unless ALL of us share a common desire to keep this alliance intact. That does not mean that we sink all our differences or that we decide that we have ONE position on all issues. But it DOES mean that we have respect for each other's positions and debate issues within certain boundaries. If we think that is not possible, then logically we move to the next step of dismantling the JSA.

Coming back now to the immediate context. Some of the mails circulated in

this context articulate a position that would mean an end to the alliance that the JSA has come to mean. I am not contesting the legitimacy of such a position, but only pointing to the consequences. It is for us to decide if we go along with this position or disassociate with it. I am clear in my mind that rejection of such a position does not constitute condoning the police action in Nandigram. But it means that we decide that we still retain respect for the commitment of different partners in this alliance, even if we disagree with them on various issues.

Its for us to collectively decide where we wish to go from here.

In Solidarity,

Amit Sen Gupta

Amit,

I am not clear from your email whether you think that JSA WILL break up if we take a position on Nandigram. It need not if we do not want to and if you are committed to the larger cause of people's health.

Respecting differences is one thing – coming out of a difference in analysis such as it is - but we need to at some point of time see that what has happened is a terrible violation of human rights and dignity putting as some say even Gujarat 2002 to shame (although I do not share the analogy). I am not even talking of taking a position on SEZ mediated development, the resulting trampling of worker rights, the lack of democracy, the "sellout" to the very forces of globalisation and international capitalism which we all have been very concerned about and so on and so forth.

As friends and allies, we are supposed to point out, indeed it is our duty, when one of us goes wrong and grievously at that.

I think Nandigram is a terrible blot - coming as it is from a government with otherwise such laudable goals elsewhere. I compare this to Emergency 1975 where some of us chose to keep quiet -that is if we as JSA keep quiet.

Sincerely,

Chinu Srinivasan

Dear Amit and friends,

Like all of you, we are deeply distressed with the unfortunate incidents at Nandigram and have been receiving messages telephonically and by email from various friends and CHC contacts including Sathyu, Nity and others, who had been invited to the Environment and Health Workshop at NHA-2. We had an urgent meeting of the CHC team this morning and we have taken the following action.

- 1) We have written to Satyu and Nity, sharing with them our distress at the unfortunate incidents, but have clearly taken a stand that their suggestion for action is undemocratic, anarchic and unhealthy. We have defended the inclusive nature of our coalition and have rejected emotional and hasty decision-making, emphasizing that JSA respects diversity, as we evolve collective position, and there is need for greater solidarity rather than finger-pointing and disruptive action. While we respect their decision to stay away, we have requested them to do so in ways that will strengthen the people's alliance and not weaken it.
- 2) We would like to respond to Amit's email by assuring JSA of our commitment to solidarity and alliance building, not only at NHA-2, but beyond it as well. And we are willing to join any efforts to emphasize this collectivity, including preventing disruption of NHA-2..
- 3) We also believe that we should look at Nandigram, Chhattisgarh and other acts of violence and conflicts as representative of deeper dynamics in our social-economic-political milieu which have a bearing on health, and take JSA stands and initiatives even while respecting the diversity and plurality of JSA. This needs to be based on facts and evidence gathered and analysed collectively, without succumbing to knee-jerk reactions. As Amit has pointed out these initiatives will "have to respect each other's positions and debate issues within certain boundaries". A suitable occasion should be found whenever feasible.

In solidarity,

Ravi, Thelma, Premdas, Chander, Rakhal, Naveen, Ameer, Asha.

CHC team

Dear Friends,

Greetings from CHC!

The recent events at Nandigram are extremely distressing, and its occurrence in democratic India is a shame. JSA constituents involved in the SEZ issue as well as invitees to the workshop have raised the issue through emails and phone calls.

Given the timing of the unfortunate incident so close to NHA2, and the fact that over 1200 health activists from all over the country will be assembling in Bhopal for the NHA2, it is important to use this opportunity to evolve an adequate and comprehensive response. This response should keep the health of the people as the foremost consideration, in keeping with the aims and objectives of the JSA. Moreover, like all the previous endeavours, the response should be evolved through a democratic process, where the issue takes precedence over individuals and organizations and their affiliations.

The SEZ issue, state sponsored violence, and indeed all forms of violence are health problems, and thus the need for a JSA response is obvious.

The withdrawal of individual participants and their call for the removal of certain JSA constituents must be taken for what they are, the opinion of a group of individuals whose work we value enough to invite them to speak at our assembly. The final stand of JSA on this issue and the process to evolve this stand has to be done within the framework and aims and objectives of JSA.

In solidarity

Dear friends,

In the context of the recent mails concerning the Nandigram firing and NHA-2, we have the following responses and suggestions in our personal capacity:

a. Firstly, we personally would like to express our strong condemnation of the firing in Nandigram, which has led to at least 14 persons losing their lives, and injuries and major distress to many others. We feel that such situations should be resolved through sustained democratic, political dialogue.

b. Secondly, after some reflection we feel that despite the gravity of the incident, we do not feel that NHA-2 is an appropriate platform, or as of now JSA is an appropriate forum to resolve this issue. There are two reasons for this – firstly so far in the JSA coalition while we have responded to developments which are directly related to health policy, health systems and key health determinants, we have generally not had a tradition of responding *as JSA* to the many larger socio-political developments (although many of us might have responded to these individually or through other forums) – a few examples of such major incidents being the Iraq invasion, Mumbai bomb blasts, police atrocities in Kashmir and the North-east, Salwa Judum related killings in Chhattisgarh, Khairlanji massacre of Dalits, police firing and atrocities on those protesting against SEZs in Dadri (U.P) and Mann (Maharashtra) etc. etc. We can collectively decide to now depart from this tradition, but that would require at least a basic consensus in JSA for this, also some understanding about what kind of broader socio-political issues JSA will be responding to as a body in the future.

Also, in a broad coalition like JSA, there is not likely to be unanimous consensus that the Nandigram issue be taken up or added to the agenda for discussion during NHA-2.; we know that there are likely to be significantly differing opinions on this issue within JSA.

c. Having said this, we suggest that as concerned citizens, we could definitely find ways of expressing concern on this issue that do not disrupt the proceedings during NHA-2. For example, all those who are concerned about this development may decide to organise a separate discussion on this incident at a different venue in Bhopal on one of the evenings between 23rd and 25th March, and might invite everyone to discuss the issue. Similarly there might be other forms of expressing concern and anguish while continuing 'democratic dialogue' within the JSA coalition.

d. Finally, we would like to suggest as a significant point for future discussion within JSA – the issue of Public health impact of SEZs and large industrial enclaves. As we seek to 'defend people's health in the era of globalisation', we need to recognise that SEZs and similar industrial enclaves which permanently and irreversibly displace people in large numbers, often without any planned rehabilitation programme, are likely to become an increasingly important social issue with its own public health impacts in the coming period. Further given the waiver of environmental controls and doubtful status of Public health services within SEZs, we feel that a thorough discussion on this within JSA would be a valid exercise. We could plan such analysis and exchange in the near future, if it is accepted as a valid concern in JSA.

To conclude, we feel that the incidents at Nandigram are deeply unfortunate, and are likely to have their reflection in certain differences of opinion within JSA, which are unavoidable. Nevertheless, if we recognise the value of continuing the JSA coalition which includes members of various socio-political persuasions, we need to decide about which kind of issues we can fruitfully discuss and hope to resolve within the broad coalition that JSA is today, and which issues are better addressed in other ways, aside from the JSA platform.

With regards,
Abhay and Anant

Mr. Chander's Reply 07/16/3/07

Dear Dr. Ravi

I feel the letter is OK, It can go immediately. Good that you have given the example of how the World Bank issue in Dhaka was handled.

Regards

Chander

Dear Sathyu, Nitya and friends,

The Nandigram situation has been disturbing for all of us and we fully share our solidarity and sympathy with the families who lost their near and dear ones in the unprecedented police action. We also share our outrage and disappointment with such events in Democratic India. However as one of the members of the Peoples Health Movement, in India and globally, we in CHC think that the suggestion you have made is undemocratic, anarchic and not very healthy at this point of time.

The Jan Swasthya Abhiyan is a network of networks bringing together over 20 associations, campaign groups and peoples movements and includes some organizations that may have cpm links but the structure, organization, decision making and process of evolution that so many of us have supported with great commitment over the years is that of an inclusive coalition. It is quite another matter if in some states cpm linked organization or cadres are more involved or less involved. You cannot escape this reality when building links with progressive organizations or networking on any issue in India. Removing people who are not directly involved in Nandigram event is a highly undemocratic suggestion.

The National Health Assembly has many sessions where we can discuss the issue in various democratic ways, to understand the complexity and evolve various responses. During the first Peoples Health Assembly in Savar, Bangladesh, the Indian delegation along with some others led a similar protest to oust Richard Skolnik, the head of the World Bank's Health Division who had been invited to a session 'World Bank meets the people'. We negotiated a process amidst the usual emotion and outrage to ensure that both democratic dissent and democratic dialogue was allowed in the Health Assembly.

We think we need to discuss and dialogue around the issue and not make emotional and hasty suggestions that could themselves be considered as anti-people, in the long run. There has been a lot of mobilization and raising of expectations of people from all over the country (and PHM globally) who are attending the assembly to share concerns and experiences. JSA symbolizes a very inclusive coalition where diversity of opinion has been respected even as we evolve collective positions and initiatives towards people's health. Suggestions of the sort you have given would be totally disruptive of this long standing process.

In addition to all other reasons, NHA-2 assumes greater significance because the wide of range of issues being discussed over the three days represent all the key challenges that people's health has to face in the era of globalisation. This calls for a greater effort at bringing together of people's groups, movements and organizations. While expressing our solidarity with people's struggles everywhere we would still counsel inclusive dialogue without any forms of finger-pointing on any member of the coalition. We also fully respect that individuals who have been invited to share their concerns on various health issues in the assembly may choose to interpret events in their own way and stay away for their own reasons, but we would request all these friends to do so in ways that will strengthen the people's health alliance and not weaken it.

Best wishes,

Your friends at CHC,

Ravi, Thelma, Premdas, Chander, Rakhal, Naveen, Ameer, Asha.

CHC Team.

Ravi Narayan

From: "rakhal & subha" <subharakhal@gmail.com>
To: "Community Health Cell" <chc@sochara.org>; "ravi narayan" <ravi@phmovement.org>; "Ameer Khan" <vijayameer25@rediffmail.com>; "Asha Thotta" <thotta.asha@gmail.com>; "Eddie Premdas" <premdas@sochara.org>; "Premdas E.P." <e.premdas@gmail.com>; "abhay shukla" <abhayseema@vsnl.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2007 7:18 PM
Subject: Fw: Appeal from Nandigram

Original Message -----

From: Sanjay Sangvai

To: milindchampanerker@hotmail.com ; yamini mishra ; miloon@unv.org ; Mishka Zaman ; pss@narmada.net.in ; pss@narmada.net.in ; Nava Thakuria ; nba.medha@gmail.org ; nandinioza_deccanherald@rediffmail.com ; Maju Varghese ; manisha_m@mail.com ; manthan ; Madhoo N ; Manju Menon ; Malavika Vartak ; mitalimathkar@rediffmail.com ; Milind Kokje ; milind.murugkar@gmail.com ; feroze mithiborwala ; himanshu upadhyaya ; rsd@pn2.vsnl.net.in ; Admiral Ramdas ; Rohit Prajapati ; rakesh diwan ; rifat mumtaz ; Justice Rajinder SACHAR ; rajanbarrett@yahoo.co.in ; sandeep kumar pattnaik ; samkale@gmail.com ; datebandra@yahoo.com ; satishkamat@indiatimes.com ; Preeti Sampat ; sahil joshi ; Leo Saldanha ; sari@nytime.com ; sarosh_bana@hotmail.com ; Sarvodaya press Service ; debaranjan sarangi ; amit sen gupta ; NACHIKET... Janata Amar hain! ; Amitabh gmail ; jathialy@amnesty.org ; amit@igc.org ; Aman Namra ; AMOL ; amulya ; arunkhore@hotmail.com ; arvindgokhale@vsnl.com ; aruna roy ; Aravinda ; Abhay Vaidya ; abhaynikalje@yahoomail.com ; abhi mat ; abhijitatre@hotmail.com ; Ammu Abraham ; abdul jabbar ; Dionne Bunsha ; dipti bhatnagar ; daniel mazgaonkar ; Yogesh Dewan ; dds satheesh ; Dr. Upendra Baxi ; Deepika D'souza ; justice daud ; asha damle ; dailyprabhat@rediffmail.com ; Rajendra Sathe ; Ravi Sangvai2 ; dadhichnishith@hotmail.com ; Dave Bleakney ; darryl@vsnl.com ; damani@akamai.com ; vijay darp ; Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathan ; gautam desai ; gautamsingh12@yahoo.co.in ; Gautam Bandhopadhyaya ; gvgodbole@hathway.com ; gautamnavlakha@hotmail.com ; rinchin@gmail ; pratapchatterjee@gmail.com ; Ganesh Nochur ; tanu gango ; girija_godbole@yahoo.com ; Subhash Gatade ; dinkar gangal ; Gabriele ; geojosh@rediffmail.com ; Shalmali Guttal ; gos@bol.net.in ; gorrepati samyuktha ; shiv narayan gour ; Narendranath Gorepatti ; sumana.ramanan@reuters.com ; rajivkhandekar@hotmail.com ; rajivjshah@indiatimes.com ; Rajesh baba ; Manshi Asher ; madhavg@sakalherald.com ; asitmarx sdfdsdf marx ; smita.nair@expressindia.com ; lokpune@pn3.vsnl.net.in ; a.namra@mp.bhaskarnet.com
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Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2007 7:14 PM

Subject: Appeal from Nandigram

AN APPEAL FROM NANDIGRAM AND KOLKATA/ March 15, 2007

AS CPM RUNS AROUND FOR A SCAPEGOAT, POLICE & CADRES KILL 125 IN NANDIGRAM MASSACRE: PEOPLE CALL TO STAND BY THEIR STRUGGLE

As the death count of March 14 carnage in Nandigram by the W.Bengal Police and CPM cadres has reached 125, the people, organizations and activists of Nandigram and Kolkata called upon all the people, who value the democracy, human rights and equality of freedom to come to Nandigram and be with the struggling people.

Though the cadres of the ruling Communist Party (Marxist) are blocking the way, the High Court Order on March 15, asks the government to facilitate the people to visit the area for enquiry of help. "The people must show their resolve against the Fascist ways of the so called progressive government and party" said Samar Das, a senior activist from National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), W. Bengal.

The ruling CPM through its cadres has imposed an undeclared censorship on the media and people. It is indulging in double crime – first by beating the Nandigram people to pulp and killing them. But it does not wish the nation or people to see what is happening. "Its like Stalinist days, when you are not allowed to say that there is injustice nor others are allowed to hear or film it", says Mr.Das.

And the great Red-wash effort is on. Their cadres and their septuagenarian elite are afraid to own up the responsibility of this police action. The CPM bosses are making the same statements which a Narendra Modi or Sunderlal Patwa or Sharad Pawar make. Same 'outsider hand',.. same 'Naxalites' and very same Opposition people 'who do not want to see W. Bengal to progress'.

While the power holders in CPM have themselves ordered the large police contingent with a planned strategy of carnage on such a large scale, they are now finding everyone else to blame. If only repairs and 'restoring the civil society' had been their objective, did it need 3000 police force with AK-47 rifles? So they have devised the new excuse of 'people exploding bombs on police'. They are in power and that power to like totalitarian state. No one in W. Bengal can go to a Government hospital or school and college, if he or she is not in good books of the CPM boss in that area. And people making the bombs do not undertake protest actions.

There was statewide denunciation of the CPM act. Its own allies in state government, Revolutionary Socialist Party and Forward Bloc called for 'bandh', while the Communist Party of India (CPI) severely criticized the carnage and the decision to send such large posse of police. The intellectuals, artists, social and political workers of all hues have rapped the state government action. The Governor, Mr. Gopal Gandhi, called the killing as "horror" and wanted the state government to restrain itself.

It is Bloodbath, War on People.

About 125-130 men, women and children were killed by the police and the cadres of the ruling Communist Party of India (CPM). Many dead bodies were thrown by police into the nearby

river. The dead bodies of children were thrown onto the trenches dug by the villagers to stop any encroachment, and they were filled with soil to make roads – like post-Godhra carnage in Gujarat. According to the people the cadres and police have devastated the Sonachura village; they killed the people, drove them out, looted the houses and raped scores of women. People are seething with anger against the CPM cadres. It is bloodbath; it's a war on people " said Sumit Chowdhury, renowned writer and journalist.

In fact all the villages are ransacked, devastated by the cadres and police. They have blocked entry to journalists and other organizations and one journalist was kidnapped and intimidated to keep quiet. Armed CPI(M) cadres are mixed with the police, fired upon villagers and then attempted to enter the villages. Another group of party activists cordoned off the entire area checked all vehicles to prevent journalists from entering the scene of violence. Several scribes were beaten up. "We wont allow the media to enter the village. So far you were running the show. Now it is our turn," East Midnapur CPM chief and M.P. Lakshman Seth said bluntly.

On March 14, over a 2000-strong police force armed with AK 47 rifles attempted to enter Nandigram, which has been cut off from the rest of the state for over two months now by villagers resisting land acquisition for setting up an SEZ. The first barricade was put up by women and children who resisted the police from entering the villages. The police fired tear gas shells and then rubber bullets and finally live cartridges.

The sudden raid came as a surprise for the villagers as they started running here and there to maintain a safe distance. It was a horrific sight as armed policemen were seen dragging villagers out of their houses and beating them.

"It is like a war. I don't know where my family members are. I never expected such an attack from the policemen," Saber, one of the villagers of Gorchakraberia said. Around 10 am the entire area turned into a battlefield. "I can see every were bodies are scattered all over paddy field smeared with blood. Those who were injured are screaming for help but instead of providing any aid policemen were seen kicking them with their boots," Ehsan one of the local villagers told a journalist over telephone.

Nandigram, Tamluk hospitals were ill-equipped to treat this barrage of injured people. Most of the victims are women and children (in school uniform too). Many contacts in Nandigram are putting the number of injured above **200**. All these people were brought to the hospitals by the relatives and neighbors. Police on the spot have not helped even a single victim to avail medical help. There are many more injured lying in the interior villages, unable to move out for want of any means of transport and also for apprehension of getting killed if found by the marauders.

The Plan

The plan to push in police into the trouble-torn and tense area was chalked out by the CPI(M) top brass last Saturday. They were under pressure from the East Midnapur unit of the party led by MP Lakshman Seth who felt that the CPI(M) would permanently lose ground in the area unless barricades were removed and 'normalcy' was restored in Nandigram. A large section of the CPI(M) secretariat was also of the same view and felt that the manner villagers were keeping the administration paralyzed for over two months was creating a bad precedent.

According to the strategy, the police was asked to remove resistance, enter the villages and 'restore law of the land'. They were to be followed by CPI(M) activists, who would "reinstall civil society" in Nandigram. According to Samar Das, unprecedented police force – more than 3000, came on the periphery of Nandigram, " Police were drawn from all districts in Bengal.

They have what they wanted to do. Now, we must be here, to be with the Nandigram people - from all over India. "

"No one is 'outsier' here. All are Indians and human beings. It is mischievous on part of Buddnadeb, Biman BASu and their Sitaram Yechry to all others as outsiders. A true Marxist would never call anyone like that. Ask Sitaram Yechury, an M.P. from Bengal, where he is from? The CPM is becoming offensive out of its guilt complex" said Manav Kamnble, a prominent Dalit social activist in Pune, while addressing a meeting held on on March 15 to condemn the Nandigram carnage and announce Action 2007 of NAPM.

Similarly, large numbers of activists and organizations protested at CPM office in Mumbai. The Saravidaya activists protested in many district places in Maharashtra. These protests would go on increasing, till the CPM comes to senses and talks with the people.

Sanjay Sangvai

3/19/2007

Ravi Narayan

From: "Ravi Narayan" <ravi@phmovement.org>
To: <chc@sochara.org>; "Eddie Premdas" <premdas@sochara.org>; "Subha Rakhal" <subharakhal@gmail.com>; "Ameer Khan" <vijayameer25@rediffmail.com>; "Asha Thotta" <thotta.asha@gmail.com>; "Naveen_CHC" <naveen@sochara.org>; <chander@sochara.org>
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2007 5:57 PM
Attach: Dear Sathu.doc
Subject: Nandigram and NHA-2

Dear Thelma, Eddie, Rakhal, and the CHC team,

I just read the mail from Satyu and I feel the whole CHC team should respond together perhaps with suggested modifications to prevent any emotional run away reaction. Have just been in touch with Ajay who feels that all of us from outside MP including National JSA and members should respond. Call if necessary so we can decide the next steps.

Best wishes,

Ravi.

3/19/2007

Dear Sathu/ Nitya and friends,

The Nandigram situation has been disturbing for all of us and we fully share our solidarity and sympathy with the families who lost their near and dear ones in the unprecedented police action. We share your outrage and disappointment with such events in Democratic India.

However as one of the key members of the Peoples Health Movement, in India and globally, we in CHC fully oppose your undemocratic and anarchic suggestion. The Jan Swasthya Abhiyan is a network of networks bringing together over 20 associations, campaign groups and peoples movements and includes some organizations that may have cpm links but the structure, organization, decision making and process of evolution that so many of us have supported with great commitment over the years is not a party organization but an inclusive coalition. It is quite another matter if in a state or two some cpm linked organization or cadres are more involved or less involved. You cannot escape the reality when building links with progressive organizations/networking on any issue in India. Removing people who are not directly involved in Nandigram event is a highly undemocratic suggestion.

The National Health Assembly has many sessions where we can discuss the issue and show various forms of democratic dissent if some participants want to do so. During the first Peoples Health Assembly in Savar, Bangladesh, the Indian delegation along with some others led a similar protest to oust Richard Skolnik, the head of the World Banks Health Division who had been invited to a session 'World Bank meets the people'. We negotiate a process amidst the usual emotion and outrage to ensure that both democratic dissent and democratic dialogue be allowed in the Health Assembly. I think we need to discuss and dialogue around the issue and not suggest emotional knee jerk reactions that could themselves be considered as anti people, in the long run. There has been a lot of mobilization and raising of expectations of people from all over the country who are attending the assembly to share concerns and experience. Disrupting it at this stage by suggestions of this sort is rather undemocratic. While expressing our solidarity with people's struggles every where we would still counsel restraint and creative dialogue,
Yours Sincerely ,

Ravi, Thelma, Premdas, Chander, Rakhil, Naveen, Ameer, Asha.
CHC Team.

Ravi Narayan

From: <prem_john@vsnl.net>
To: "Ravi Narayan" <ravi@phmovement.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 17, 2007 2:40 PM
Attach: Nandigram.doc
Subject: Re: Fw: Get the CPM killers out of NHA

My dear Ravi,

There are some professional agitators, professional dissenters who are the bane of civil society. That is why we are in the mess we are in. Please see attached a letter that i have written which can be used as you see fit.

Prem

20/3/07

Dear Amit and friends
Dr Prem ^{John} who heard about recent developments
has also sent his news as a representative of
ACHAN and PHM which I thought would be good to
share with all of you.

Best wishes

Ravi

3/19/2007



Asian Community Health Action Network

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Madras 600 105 India
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17th April 2007

Dr. Ravi Narayan
Advisor, Community Health Cell, Bangalore and
Steering Council Member, People's Health Movement

Dear Ravi,

What has happened in Nandigram saddens me and is a deplorable exercise of power by the so-called leftist forces. History tells us that over and over again, such events have occurred worldwide, often perpetrated by those who claim to represent the people. History also tells us that ruling classes, of whatever ilk, right or left, rule primarily for their own benefit and only peripherally for the benefit of others.

But of deeper concern is the knee jerk reaction of some people who are willing to go overboard and throw the baby with the bath water! We condemn what has happened in Nandigram unequivocally but to bring it into and let it interfere with positive, people's action such as the National Health Assembly in Bhopal shows short sightedness of the worst kind. Professional agitators are not going to get civil society forward. What we need at this point in time are cool heads which can analyse the situation and come up with the right answers. What are we doing about the unacceptably high infant mortality rates, especially among the landless, socially excluded people? What are we doing about domestic violence, again on an unacceptable scale? The violence in Nandigram is nothing compared to these.

People's Health Movement is an inclusive movement that seeks to have what we believe is a rainbow coalition across the continents. What we need is a coalition of believers and fellow travelers in order to create a critical mass of people who believe that another, healthier world is possible with the current resources that we have. If we start to fight amongst ourselves, the opposition which is formidable indeed, will treat us with the contempt that we deserve. Our movement will be marginalised and will come to nought.

In solidarity,

Prem Chandran John
Co-Chair, Steering Council
People's Health Movement

Ravi Narayan

From: <ctddsf@vsnl.com>
To: <ajaykharebpl2003@yahoo.co.in>; <cehatpun@vsnl.com>; <chauhkhath@yahoo.com>; <jvarghese@cmai.org>; <chc@sochara.org>; <sundararaman.t@gmail.com>; <deepa.venkatachalam@gmail.com>; <vakkan2000@yahoo.com>; <sama.womenshealth@gmail.com>; <aidwa@rediffmail.com>; <narendra531@rediffmail.com>; <guhaamitava_@hotmail.com>; <ravi@phmovement.org>
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2007 9:20 AM
Subject: re: Nandigram and NHA II

I had intended to send the mail below to just all of you as I do not think this is the time to get into a email debate on the larger list. I see, however that Rakhal has already put Satinath Sarangi's mail on the pha list, so I was forced to send a part of this mail on the list as well. Please do consider the suggestions at the end.

Amit

Dear All,

Many of you would have seen the mails circulating that link the preparations around the NHA II and the recent very unfortunate and distressing incidents in Nandigram. I am writing this mail to all of you who are central to the JSA organising process.

I am not going to attempt an analysis of what happened at Nandigram or the whole process that led up to it. Not because we as concerned citizens should not do so, but because that is not really the intent of this mail. We can, if people feel necessary, conduct such an analysis in the JSA through a mechanism that we have a consensus on.

But before getting into the substance of the issue that relates to the NHA II specifically, I would like to step back a little. The JSA, in the last 6-7 years has been an important effort in India at alliance building. This is significant in a situation where movements are divided in so many ways in the country. As all of us know, this has not been an easy process. In order to build this alliance and keep it going has required large investments by all of us in terms of time, effort and resources. Perhaps the single largest factor that has kept us going is the perception that the "enemy" is too strong to be ignored or to be confronted by any of us individually. To a large extent, in the JSA, while being aware of our differences and while respecting them, we have been able to keep a strong focus on our basic objective.

Personally, I would submit that the first call that we need to take in the current context relates to our perception regarding the necessity to keep alive this alliance. Clearly, this alliance will not survive any attempts to "witch hunt" for the "enemy within". I myself would think that it would be extremely unfortunate, but its not something that we can prevent unless ALL of us share a common desire to keep this alliance intact. That does not mean that we sink all our differences or that we decide that we have ONE position on all issues. But it DOES mean that we have respect for each other's positions and debate issues within certain boundaries. If we think that is not possible, then logically we move to the next step of dismantling the JSA.

Coming back now to the immediate context. I am appending below one of the mails by Satinath Sarangi that has been circulating (which Thelma has already circulated to some). It articulates a position that would mean an end to the alliance that the JSA has come to mean. I am not contesting the legitimacy of

3/19/2007

such a position, but only pointing to the consequences. It is for us to decide if we go along with this position or disassociate with it. I am clear in my mind that rejection of such a position does not constitute condoning the police action in Nandigram. But it means that we decide that we still retain respect for the commitment of different partners in this alliance, even if we disagree with them on various issues.

I will now proceed on the assumption that we are of the opinion that the JSA should continue as an alliance. I also got the impression that this is a shared understanding amongst most, if not all of us, based on the telephonic conversations I have had with many of you. If such is the case, then I would like to propose the following:

- 1) We should not try to "reply" to mails such as the one from Satinath Sarangi already circulated by Rakhal on the pha list. Email exchanges on contentious issues tend to fast careen out of control and do more harm than good.
- 2) We decide that we shall be united in preventing a disruption of the NHA. This could mean many things. Those who amongst us think it is possible and useful can enter into a dialogue with people like Sathyu and others. It could mean being physically present to prevent disruption of sessions during NHA II. It basically means that our affirmation that the NHA II should proceed should be visible in our collective and individual actions during the NHA II.
- 3) There have been some suggestions that we have a separate session in NHA II to discuss Nandigram. Personally I think that it would be counterproductive as it would be difficult to hold such a session within certain boundaries of rational and informed debate at this stage, especially given the kind of positions that have already been circulated (the mail is just one of them). A debate cannot be conducted if one party to the debate has already been condemned and hanged. But the issue will come up possibly in some of the sessions. We should be prepared to brief chairpersons of sessions and be present to ensure that a distinction be made between raising an issue (which is absolutely legitimate) and hijacking a session on one issue.

Finally I would strongly suggest that we restrict this exchange amongst ourselves, and not extend it to the pha list, for example.

I look forward to your reactions.

In solidarity,

Amit Sen Gupta

Ravi Narayan

From: "Abhay" <abhayseema@vsnl.com>
To: "community health cell" <chc@sochara.org>; "Ravi Narayan" <ravi@phmovement.org>
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2007 5:52 PM
Attach: Nandigram response.doc
Subject: Re: Draft for comments

Dear Ravi and other friends at CHC,

Anant and myself agree with your position that to call for 'expelling' all persons linked with CPI-M from JSA would be undemocratic. We agree that there is a need to maintain space for both 'democratic dialogue' and 'democratic dissent'. We have drafted a letter for the JSA e-group in this context which is attached.

Concerning your draft, the only thing we are not very sure is how a 'Skolnik-type' protest could be allowed without significantly disrupting the proceedings - however this can be further discussed.

Do let us know your comments on our draft which we plan to circulate on the JSA e-group tomorrow.

With regards,

Abhay

| ----- Original Message

3/20/2007

Lib.
Nandigram Issues

Community Health Cell

From: rakhal gaitonde [rakhal@sochara.org]

Sent: Monday, March 19, 2007 10:55 AM

To: ravi narayan; Community Health Cell; Eddie Premdas; Premdas E.P.; Naveen; Ameer Khan; Asha Thotta

Subject: on the nandigram massacre

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Thirukazhukundram!

This note is in connection with the discussion over the week end and draft letter circulated by Ravi to all members of the CHC team.

At the outset I would like to highlight the various issues that need to be identified within what seems a single issue. While the immediate triggering factor for this discussion is the violence in Nandigram and the letter (now on the PHM -NCC) from Nity and Sathyu, there are issues within issues. These include:

- Our individual stand on SEZs
- Our individual stand on state sponsored violence and repression of public opinion.
- Our individual stand on the best way to respond to such an incident.
- What we feel JSA's stand should be (our contribution, suggestions to JSA).
- How this should be taken up at the NHA2 in Bhopal.

SEZs

As far as SEZs are concerned, I think in principle we are against these sort of sops to the private sector, especially when it harms the life and livelihood of the poor and marginalized. That the CPI(M) government has a much more progressive policy with regards to SEZs has been acknowledged. However I need to study the issue more before coming up with a more nuanced stand on the SEZ issue.

State sponsored violence

As far as state sponsored violence is concerned, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind about a stand. It has to be condemned. In my mind whether it is the BJP, the Congress or the CPI(M) it does not make a difference. In fact if anything given the CPI(M)s claims to being a people's government etc. it is more shocking.

Moreover I firmly believe that this is a health problem, a public health problem.... and definitely needs to be addressed by the JSA.

What I feel is the best way to respond

3/19/2007

There is no doubt that we need to respond, however I feel that withdrawing is not the best way of responding. We need to raise protest, and raise a discussion at all possible fora, and extend solidarity with affected groups. A strong statement from as many like minded groups will certainly help, and i feel we should send one – there are two online petitions doing the rounds – prabir has put them on the mfc egrouop – we can see them and sign them both individually and as CHC.

JSA's stand

Both SEZs and State sponsored violence are certainly health problems, and there is no doubt in my mind that JSA needs to take a stand. However I do see the point that there are numerous other critical issues over which the JSA mobilization has taken place, and this should not become the total focus of all our discussions, however given the timing of the incident, and the horrific nature of the event we need to take a stand, and a sensitive and comprehensive one.

I don't believe that the JSA stand should be influenced by the presence of the BGVS or any other group – for the simple reason that NAPM is also an equal constituent, and such considerations will only fuel further controversy – and can be construed to support the allegations of nity and sathyu.

JSA should take a stand independent of these considerations – and our stand should be focused on the issue rather than the party.

Both Nity and Sathyu are not strictly speaking organizational constituents of the JSA – so their action is merely challenging – not disruptive. We should give them the freedom to respond to the horrible situation as they please. JSA should stick to its principles of coming up with stands / taking positions.

At the NHA2

I feel that at the NHA2 there should be space to discuss the issue. Either by arranging a special discussion within the NHA2, passing a resolution or other forms of innovative, creative but democratic dissent.

However I am confused

- Does it mean anything that so many people (not only nity and sathyu have withdrawn) are seeing the role of CPI(M) in the JSA as so prominent? While it may be dismissed as their wrong reading of the situation – could it also be that we in JSA need to look at this issue more seriously? What in our actions have led to this misunderstanding – Why is MPBGVS and not MPJSA the core organizer?... or is it? In the hindi pamphlet – note the contact address etc. given the decision making within the JSA and the inordinate influence of the BGVS (shared on many occasions) can we blame people for taking this stand? Of course this should not influence our stand on Nandigram.... but this is an issue that is concerning me.
- While I understand the great difference between the politics of the BJP and the CPI(M), in a situation like the Nandigram how does / can one treat them differently? We are refusing to engage with BJP and its front organizations.... This is certainly not a plea for interaction with the BJP.... but I am confused and would like clarification.

In solidarity

3/19/2007