

been drawn into regular, accountable channels. The point to note is that at least a part of the black money generated in the entire operation has been laundered and made white in the form of deposits in trusts. In this sense, at least. Antulay's collections bear a close resemblance to the bearer bonds floated under the Union government's aegis by our Finance Minister who commended

his scheme precisely on the ground that the incentives and opportunity he was offering to black money hoarders would result in mopping up black money and putting it in regular financial channels as white money. It would appear that Antulay has done a better job in this respect in his own way than the Central government could do with its bearer bonds scheme.

Revival of 'Encounters' in Andhra

K Balagopal

ON the night of July 22-23, two alleged 'extremists', Ravindra Reddy and Parsaiah, were killed at Suryapet town in Nalgonda district, in what the newspapers described as a 'strange encounter'. What was strange about the encounter was the unusual element of fantasy in the story the police put out.

This killing, the fifth since September 17, 1980, brought the tally of deaths in the revived series of 'encounters' in Andhra to eleven. Though the first of them took place in Warangal, all the other four happened in neighbouring Nalgonda district — a fact that the Nalgonda district Superintendent of police has quite vocally regarded as a feather in his cap.

The state witnessed about 350 'encounter' deaths of naxalites before and during the Emergency, without anybody excepting naxalite fellow-travellers bothering to protest; and of course dacoits of UP and MP have an even longer history of 'encountering' policemen and nobody protests even today. Subsequently a slight reprieve was afforded when Indira Gandhi forgot that bourgeois games are played according to bourgeois rules, and the opposition politicians themselves were made victims of police brutality. They came out of jail transformed into ardent, if temporary, champions of civil liberties and there followed a thorough exposure of 'encounters' in Andhra — first by the unofficial Tarkunde Committee and then by the deliberately aborted official Bhargava Commission. But the reprieve ended about a year back — on September 17, 1980.

That day, or rather that night at 10 pm, Papa Rao and Mogili, residents of Desaipet, were arrested in Girmajipet, right in the heart of Warangal town. A lot of people witnessed the arrest but later, when some members of the AP Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) visited the area, nobody — including family members of the two men — was willing to talk to them. At 12 midnight, they were killed at

Gorrekunta, a village 6 kms from Warangal. What is noteworthy is that in this case, as in most cases, the 'encounter' took place while the 'extremists' were in police custody. It is said that Papa Rao and Mogili had earned the wrath of the Congress (I) sarpanch of Gorrekunta village, but it is doubtful if that itself can explain the 'encounter'.

The second in the series took place about 20 days later, on October 5, 1980, at Manchinillabavi (literally, drinking-water well), a village 10 kms from Nalgonda town. The victims were Venkatarama Sarma, Venkata Reddy and Jangaiah. The state government, perhaps as a novelty, ordered a magisterial enquiry by the Revenue Divisional Officer of Nalgonda. Filing an objection with him, representatives of APCLC, PUCL, Citizens for Democracy and AP Democratic Lawyers Association objected to the enquiry on the ground that neither the identity of the dead, nor that of the killers, nor the fact of the killing, was in doubt. "The legal position is that these police personnel have committed murder, and they are seeking protection under one or other of the provisions contained in Chapter VI of IPC ... it is for them to establish the existence of circumstances bringing their case within anyone of the general exceptions contained in chapter VI of IPC...[and] it is for the court of sessions to accept or reject such a plea." It is needless to add that this applies to every 'encounter' since the police have never denied the killing; equally needless to add, no prosecution was ordered.

The third took place eight days later at Suryapet, a town that has an almost legendary status for those who can recall, at first hand or second, the Telangana peasants' uprising of 1946-51. The victims were Lingaiah and Naipal Reddy. The police story is as follows: they came to know that a gang of 12 naxalites under the leadership of Mandada Ravindra Reddy (the same Ravindra Reddy who was killed on July 22

this year) would attack a certain special police outpost outside the town during the night of October 13. They cleared the place before hand and hid behind bushes, waiting for the naxalites' attack. In the attack no policeman was injured but two of the naxalites died. And how old were these two heroic terrorists who gave a fight to the finish to forewarned armed and waiting policemen? Naipal Reddy was a 16 year old high school student and Lingaiah a 17 year old junior college student. More importantly, much before the alleged attack, Lingaiah had been arrested while drinking tea in a hotel in Suryapet on the 13th morning, and a number of people witnessed this. Naipal Reddy had also been arrested in a nearby village.

After that there was a long gap till June 27 this year when two persons, described as naxalites, were killed in an encounter near Tungaturti village, once again in Nalgonda. The name of one of them was given as Elisha alias Elabanda, but the police did not know who the other was (nobody seems to know anything about him). As the editor of a Telugu monthly acidly remarked, 'the police do not even know his name but they not only know that he is a naxalite, they even know which naxalite group he belongs to.' Like some modern electronic sensing instrument the police pick up everything, and just everything, they need to know.

Which brings us to the latest and the most 'fantastic' encounter — that involving Ravindra Reddy and Parsaiah. But even brutality has a certain logic and there is a reason why the story had to be so unusual. Ravindra Reddy and Parsaiah, unlike most encounter victims, had a 'past'. They were co-accused, along with many others, in the Secunderabad Conspiracy case, and Parsaiah was also an accused in a bank robbery case at Nidigudem. They had jumped bail and were absconding. In their hunt for these two the police had recently searched Hostel E of Osmania University, Hyderabad, at gun-point. It was suspected that they were being protected by students some of whom have themselves been victims of vicious brutality on the part of the police. Finally, on July 21 the two were arrested at Khammam by an anti-naxalite squad. The fact of the arrest appeared in the Press and this is what made things difficult for the police, for now a routine encounter story would not do. In the event, the story put out by the police and/or press (for it is not clear who fathered this fantastic fib to what extent) says that while the police were

taking the prisoners to the station after producing them before a magistrate, four masked men attacked and stopped the jeep (I), threw chilli powder into the eyes of the prisoners and fired four rounds at them (to 'silence them', you know, as they do in American gangster films); the gallant policemen tried to avenge their prisoners but could not hit even one of the masked men.

The real story is otherwise. After being arrested in Khammam on 21st, Ravindra Reddy and Parsaiah were severely tortured for more than a day and then produced, in a helpless state, before a magistrate at Suryapet, at midnight of 22-23rd. Ravindra Reddy is said to have pleaded with the magistrate to keep him in judicial custody since he was certain the police would not leave him alive. The magistrate refused, and while they were being taken from his house they probably tried to escape,

for they were killed within five yards of the magistrate's house. People in the neighbourhood heard the shots and it is indeed completely out of the question that the magistrate himself did not hear them.

This encounter was the latest but certainly not the last. The DSP of Nalgonda is known to quite openly express an almost personal enmity towards naxalites and a resolve to put an end to them. He has recently issued an order banning the sale, in Nalgonda, of not only the official organs of the Marxist-Leninist groups but also some literary and cultural journals. His activity has impressed the Andhra Pradesh government so much that according to a rumour floating around Hyderabad, he might be transferred to Warangal to see whether he can repeat his performance there.

implemented in this entire region. By many devious methods the labourers are forced to accept Rs 3 or Rs 3.50 per day as wages.

The iron ore mines have no minimum wages notification. Thus the labourers are left to their bargaining power and the average weekly income of these labourers is Rs 15. Even this meagre payment is withheld in some of these mines for as long as two to three months,

Illiteracy of the tribal labourers, lack of communication, etc, have so far effectively thwarted any serious attempt at the local level to implement these elementary provisions of labour law. Other provisions like provident fund, holidays, bonus, gratuity, maternity leave, compensation for injuries, etc, are unheard of in these mines.

Haphazard and illegal mining has become the order of the day in Kolhan. Vast areas of tribal agricultural land have been dug up and are lying idle all over Kolhan and the rayats are still paying land tax on these lands and lands under mining operation. The unbridled mining contractors indulge in direct illegal mining and unwarranted extension of lease areas causing enormous loss to the national exchequer and irreparable damage to the tribal agriculturists.

The tribals, illegally dispossessed of their sole source of livelihood, eventually became coolies in the mines themselves or migrate to the brick kilns and stone quarries of north Bihar, West Bengal or Uttar Pradesh. With more and more areas being dug up by the contractors for minerals, the enormity of this illegal dispossession of the tribal people grows day by day.

The backwardness of the tribal people, their timidity and withdrawing nature and their weakness for alcohol are being exploited to the maximum to pauperise them. Because the mining department of the Bihar government actively encourages the illegal mining and because this exploitation and injustice are so widespread, any determined local and organisational effort to rectify this serious situation is brought to nought.

The Singhbhum General Employees' Union, Chaibassa, has called for the complete abolition of private ownership of the mines and for the setting up of a corporation directly under the management and ownership of the Central government to run the mines, not with the sole intention of commercial profit-making but also with an eye to the welfare of the local tribals whose land and labour contribute so enormously to the nation's progress.

BIHAR

Illegal Plunder of Mines and Tribals of Kolhan

(By a Special Correspondent)

KOLHAN — the land of the Kol tribe — comprises the Chaibassa, Khuntpani, Jhinkpant, Tonto, Jagannathpur, Noamundi, Majhgaon, Kumardungi, Manjhari and Tantnagar developmental blocks of Singhbhum, the southern-most district of Bihar. This is an area of 3,108 sq kms with a population of 5.23 lakh, according to the 1971 census. Kolhan is extremely rich in mineral deposits. Iron ore, china clay, lime stone, chromite, manganese, etc, are available in enormous quantities. Besides, one-third of Kolhan consists of forests of a very high quality.

In spite of the fact that Kolhan is a major depository of such national wealth, the inhabitants of Kolhan — the Hos, Mundas, Oraons, Gopes, Tantis and other scheduled tribes and backward classes — have been the worst hit by the development of mining and commercialisation of forests.

The whole of Kolhan is extremely backward. It has only 1,344 kms of roads, of which hardly 26 per cent is usable throughout the year. 'Of the total number of 783 villages, hardly 50 are electrified. Schooling is a formality gone through by those who have cash incomes. Agriculture is the sole means of livelihood known to these tribals. "But with their lands being taken away

from them for mining operations, more and more of the habitants of this area are becoming paupers and coolies.

Kolhan is part of Chhotanagpur and the Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 applies to the area. This law was enacted to give special protection for tribal lands. Accordingly, no tribal land in Chhotanagpur can be alienated without the written permission of the Deputy Commissioners and then too only for limited purposes of industries, education, mining and religion,

Kolhan has roughly 250 mines, most of which are privately operated by contractors. In blatant contravention of the explicit provision of the law laying down the procedure for acquiring land for mining purposes from the tribals, these contractors drive out the tribal rayats from their agricultural lands, destroy their worshipping and burial places, give a nominal sum as compensation and start mining, often with the help of the local police.

The labour situation in these private mines is inhuman. The Central government, which is the appropriate authority, has notified that in china clay and lime stone mines the minimum wages for unskilled labourers has to be Rs 6.65 per day. Except for a handful of mines, this minimum wage is not