

vest in long-term productive projects, if they can get much higher returns on speculation?

Finally, there is also the political angle of this fight. The policies outlined by Sapir imply a war against the financial powers which have taken over the world economy and are looting it to the bone, destroying humanity with it. There is no way that we will be able to sneak in a better system in any one part of the world, without defeating that financial oligarchy worldwide. The war launched by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt against Wall Street gives us an idea of what it will take to defeat the oligarchy. And today, just as in Roosevelt's time, a positive U.S. role is indispensable in order for global economic reorganization to succeed.

Real growth and stability in the economy will only be reestablished when the neo-liberal axioms adopted nearly 30 years ago are rejected, in favor of the approaches of Franklin Roosevelt, Charles de Gaulle, and Konrad Adenauer.

Drought Ravages India, Pakistan, Afghanistan

by Ramtanu Maitra

Intense summer heat and years of scanty rainfall have created a crisis-like situation in southern Afghanistan, the provinces of Baluchistan and Sindh in Pakistan, and at least five states in India. Reports indicate that more than 50 million people and large herds of cattle have been affected. Since the monsoon rains, if they come at all in their full glory, are still a month and a half away, the drought may pose serious economic and human problems to the struggling South Asian nations. Pakistan and Afghanistan have sought international aid, and Pakistan has also deployed Army personnel to conduct relief work.

The drought in Afghanistan and Pakistan struck following eight years of scarce rainfall in the sparsely populated, desert-like land, an almost 100,000-square-kilometer area north of the Tropic of Cancer. Because the population is small and nomadic for the most part, the crisis, if food for the people and fodder for the cattle are delivered, will remain manageable. Nonetheless, a large number of cattle, though tolerant to dry conditions, have already vanished, and many families have begun migrating northwards, waiting for less harsh climatic conditions.

India Is Worst-Hit

In India, the situation is more serious, because the areas affected are well-developed, residentially and commercially. Although the intensity of dryness in the five affected states is less than that in Afghanistan and Sindh, the people are less

adjusted to such harsh conditions. Among the states affected are Gujarat and Rajasthan, two states that form the Great Indian Desert. Two other states, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, are located partly in the rain shadow of monsoons. Also affected is the state of Orissa in the east. In India alone, about 50 million people have been affected, while cattle are dying in the hundreds.

The drought has hit areas that are highly vulnerable to erratic rainfall. During the last two monsoons, this area, with the exception of Orissa, got much less than its expected annual average of 16-30 inches of precipitation. There was no rain last winter, and it was no surprise that the drought has shown up in the area, which experiences, throughout the months of April and May, temperatures hovering around 112°F or more. The real danger now is of yet another monsoon failure in the area. In that case, a massive human tragedy may occur.

If concrete measures are not implemented to overcome the water shortage of Rajasthan and parts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh, such disasters will revisit the area time and again. The complex system of monsoon winds, orientation of mountain ranges, variability of rainfall, and erratic cyclones in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea, lead to excessively low rainfall regions and pockets of rainshadow areas, which are not well defined. Saurashtra, a prosperous part of Gujarat, is now encountering a severe drought, but will start receiving water from the \$5 billion Narmada River Valley Development Project, beginning next year.

As of now, Rajasthan and Gujarat are the most affected states. Twenty-eight out of 32 districts of Rajasthan are drought-stricken. Some observers claim that this is the worst drought that Rajasthan has faced in the last 100 years. In Andhra Pradesh, 18 out of 23 districts have been declared as drought-hit — affecting 18,000 villages. There are allegations that the district administrators violated the guidelines set forth by the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) and have aggravated the situation. Based upon NRSA's findings over the years, the state government had barred the boring of deep tube wells in certain areas. But the administrators, in the absence of any remedial policy that would ensure water to the people, ignored the guideline, and allowed the wells to be bored. This has lowered the groundwater table in those areas, causing the tube wells to run dry.

Orissa, located on India's east coast, is hardly recovered from the cyclone that killed thousands and made hundreds of thousands homeless last fall. Now, people of the state are finding out that the cyclone did more damage than what was visible to the naked eye. It made existing water tables brackish and saline in places. Today, in these places, freshwater is not available even at a depth of 1,500 feet.

Whose Fault?

While warning signs for the drought were all over the place, neither the national government in New Delhi nor the