CHAPTER -III

RADICAL LEFT MOVEMENT IN TELANGANA

The countryside in Telangana, the northern part of the Indian state of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, has been witnessing an armed rebellion. Thousands of young men and women, inspired by revolutionary ideology, have taken up arms to put an end to what they call an exploitative socio-economic order and to overthrow the existing state power. The main objective of their struggle is to bring about a peasant revolution according to the Chinese model in India. These revolutionaries are organized and led by the most radical faction of the Indian Marxist-Leninist party CPI (ML). Historically, the roots of the contemporary CPI (ML)-led movement in Telangana lie in the Srikakulam Naxalite rebellion of the late 1960s. The Srikakulam rebellion, in turn, is considered to be a continuation of the Naxalbari peasant struggle.¹ Therefore, the current movement in Telangana is also regarded as a yet another expression of the naxalite phenomenon.

Beginning in the early 1970s and continuing since, the Telangana Naxalite movement is perhaps the most long-drawn revolutionary people’s struggle in Indian history. Over the years, the movement has grown both in intensity and magnitude and has become the most dominant aspect of the social and political life in northern Andhra Pradesh. The movement is perceived as a serious challenge to the law and order situation in the state. However, the larger significance of the movement lies in the fact that it is a socio-economic movement manifesting itself in a revolutionary political form. Although it is derivative of the Naxalbari movement and the Srikakulam struggles, the Telangana Naxalite struggle has nevertheless acquired a

character and identity of its own. This Chapter tries to map the trajectory of the Telangana naxalite movement. It seeks to describe the nature of the movement and how it progressed over the years; and finally, to draw parallels and contrasts between the Telangana Naxalite movement and the naxalite movements of the late 1960s.

**THE GROWTH OF NAXALISM IN TELANGANA**

The CPI (ML) and the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Centre (henceforth APRCC) played an important role in leading the struggle in Telangana. It was the APRCC that initiated the struggle. The question as to how the Naxalite activity spread to the Telangana region has much to do with the APRCC’S tactical line.\(^2\) After its withdrawal from the scene in Srikakulam, the actions were based on a theory of uneven development. According to the APRCC, “India with its size and socio-cultural diversities presented not just one but different stages of development of revolutionary situation”. From this theoretical standpoint, the APRCC classified areas on the basis of regional variations into two groups: 1) areas with active struggles, 2) areas with party organization and inactivity as far as the movement was concerned, and areas with no organization and no activity. The leaders of the APRCC: T. Nagi Reddy (TN), D. Venkateshwara Rao (DV) and Chandra Pulla Reddy (CP) - toured parts of AP to propagate the line of “graduated and protracted struggle”. Of the three regions of erstwhile AP --Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana, at first, the Coastal and Rayalaseema districts were tested for revolutionary potential.\(^3\) However, the APRCC was unable to start any militant mass movements here. These areas were

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more useful in getting financial support for the party. The party’s attempts at starting mass movements met with more success in the Telangana districts. As the APRCC began to organize movements in Telangana, differences in ideological and methodological position between its leaders started to plague the movement. While CP and his followers insisted on a more militant approach in leading struggles, very much akin to that of the CPI (ML), the other two leaders - TN and DV continued to assert the APRCC’S original tactical line of “graduated and protracted struggle”. In 1970, the APRCC split into two distinct groups, one under the leadership of CP and the other led by TN and DV.⁴

Meanwhile, the CPI (ML) Andhra unit, after the complete withdrawal of struggle in Srikakulam, also started to concentrate its efforts on Telangana. The most significant development on this format of the Naxalite movement was the breaking up of the CPI (ML) at the national level. After the death of the party ideologue Charu Mazumdar in July 1972, the party disintegrated into myriad groups and factions. The major reason for the split in the party was the differences with the party’s high command, Charu Mazumdar. The failure of the Naxalbari and Srikakulam movements proved the ineffectiveness and still more the disastrous nature of the ‘adventurist line’ propagated by Mazumdar. The rumbling of discontent with the tactical line of the party that began with the closing of the Srikakulam chapter finally resulted in the breaking-up of the party immediately after his death. The party at the national level split into two champs, the pro-Charu and the anti-Charu factions. The anti-Charu faction was led by Asim Chaterjee and S.N.Singh and the pro-Charuite group was represented by Mahadev Mukherjee.

The implication of this split for the Naxalite groups in AP was that it led to the breaking up of the CPI (ML) Andhra committee also. The group that had the largest following was the faction led by Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, which was pro-Charuite in its ideological and tactical position. This group joined the Pro-Charu camp at the national level and together they formed the Central Organizing Committee (COC). The CP group united with the anti-Charu S.N. Singh group to form the Provisional Central Committee (PCC), while the TN group joined the anti-Charu group to form the Unity Committee of Communist Revolutionaries of India {UCCRI (ML)}.

It is interesting to note that all three linkages with respective national level factions proved to be short-lived. By 1980, all three groups in Andhra resumed an independent existence. Many other tiny groups emerged through further splits and dissensions. But none of them could pose a serious challenge to the domination of the first three. Of the three, the group led by Kondapalli was the most powerful. Until 1980, this group functioned under the banner of the COC even though the alliance with the national level faction was long broken. In 1980, this group formally came to be known as the People’s War Group (PWG) and since then it has represented the mainstream of the Naxalite movement in AP. Before an attempt is made to study the nature and different aspects of the Naxalite movement led by PWG in Telangana, it is important to analyse why the movement has occurred in this part of the state.

Therefore, the study will now examine the historical and political influence and other particularities in the Telangana region which have precipitated the rise of a people’s movement here.

The Roots of Naxalite Movement in Telangana

The Telangana Naxalite movement is primarily a socio-economic movement and therefore the roots of the movement are also essentially socio-economic in nature. A look at the conditions in Telangana even as late as the 1990s, presents a grim picture.⁶ Glaring economic inequalities, feudal social relations, an ever growing army of agricultural labourers and overall economic underdevelopment of the region are striking.⁷ The economic and social dimensions of exploitation in this region were summed up in the following words:

While the Telangana region itself is known as a backward area, still more backward are the Karimnagar and Adilabad districts.⁸ The striking factor in these districts is the extent of concentration of land in the hands of the top few which gives the landlord a political power which enables him to reign unchallenged. A cursory glance at the still prevailing social customs alone is sufficient to understand the degree of feudal exploitation. The social norms of behavior which the landlord imposes have to be scrupulously followed, whereby a peasant cannot wear white clothes, he cannot wear chappals (footwear) in the presence of the landlord and cannot send his children to school.⁹

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Further, the proportion of agricultural labourers in Telangana is one of the highest in Andhra Pradesh. In the districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar and Warangal the number of agricultural labourers living below the poverty line was as high as 95.8 percent whereas in other parts of AP it is recorded to be between 50 and 60 percent.\textsuperscript{10}

The living conditions of the poor peasants in the Telangana while no doubt oppressive and miserable, are not too different from those experienced by people in other parts of rural India where revolutionary type movements have never occurred. Hence, socio-economic deprivation alone may not be an adequate reason to account for the manifestation of a revolutionary peasant struggle in Telangana. What then could adequately account for the occurrence of this prolonged revolutionary struggle? It can be argued here that three factors have played an important role in this regard: first, the social structure of the Telangana region; second, the role of the political system and the political elite; third, and the organizational capacity of the communist parties operation in Telangana. Each of these factors will be examined in greater detail in the following pages.

\textbf{INFLUENCE OF POST-INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENTS ON SOCIAL STRUCTURE}

This study is now examine the impact of the developments in post-independence period on the social structure and relations between the various classes in rural Telangana. The most significant development on the agrarian front in this period was the introduction of technological innovations in agricultural production to increase food output. This strategy popularly referred to as the “green revolution,” laid emphasis on the use of high-yielding seed varieties, fertilizers, pesticides and

tractors in the agricultural production process. The general overall effect of green revolution on India was that it had led to a substantial increase in agricultural output. However, the impact of green revolution was not uniform in all areas. The implications of this strategy for the socio-economic profile of Telangana are crucial for our understanding of the Telangana movement.

The area that benefited most from the green revolution was ‘wheat belt’ of northern India which covers the states of Punjab, Harayana, and parts of Uttar Pradesh, which, even before the introduction of green revolution, were known to be agriculturally productive regions. Owning to the profitability of agriculture, the peasants in these areas, both rich and middle class, were seriously involved and were more willing to invest in agricultural production. Therefore, when the methods associated with the green revolution were introduced, the peasants in these areas took up agricultural on capitalist line and became a class of enterprising commercial farmers.

In erstwhile AP, in contrast, large scale mechanization of agricultural production did not occur. The landlords and rich peasants in this region were not willing to invest much in agricultural production on their own, seeking only the inputs for irrigation which the state provided through its irrigation projects. The main effect of the green revolution, however, was that because of the introduction of modern irrigation projects by the state, larger tracts of land were brought under cultivation and

\[\text{Robinson S. Margarite.} \quad \text{Local Politics: The Law of the Fishes. The Law of the Fishes : Development Through Political Change in Medak District, Andhra Pradesh (South India) New delhi: Oxford University Press, July 1989,} \quad \text{Pp. 44-48.}\]
new cash crops were introduced. This had the effect of increasing the demand for agricultural labourers. With increased employment opportunities, the bargaining power of agricultural labour was greatly strengthened. The most important benefit of this increase in demand for agricultural labourers was that in addition to the opportunity of gainful employment it also gave the agricultural labour a sense of social and psychological freedom. This is well brought out by Frankel in her study of the effects of the green revolution on West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. She argues:

With greater opportunities for work, casual labourers can now earn as much and more than permanent labourers. The landless no longer need to seek the protection of a permanent patron-client relationship in order to ensure their livelihood. On the contrary, they are in a position to choose their employer and even bargain over terms. This increase in concede the independence and dignity of agricultural labourers..... Landowners grumble at these trends, yet seem reconciled to the erosion of old status relationships and their replacement by new contractual agreements based on mutual satisfaction of both sides.

Frankel, in her case study of West Godavari district, relates the social and psychological freedom earned by the agricultural labourers to their poor response to the efforts of the communist parties in organizing and leading peasant movements here.


It must be noted, however, that the social benefits of increase in demand of agricultural labourers did not have the same effect on all categories of landless labourers. It is the ‘casual’ labourer as against the ‘permanent’ and ‘bonded’ labourer that benefited most in this deal. The reason for this is obviously the absence of any previous agreement or any other sort of obligation of the casual labourer towards a particular employer, in contrast to the tied down situation of the bonded labourer. In Telangana, the social and psychological benefits of the green revolution were denied to the majority of landless labourers as bonded labourers were relatively larger in number in Telangana owing to the past feudal social structure. Perhaps it is this denial of social freedom that has made the agricultural labour class in Telangana more susceptible to adopting more radical and violent means for fulfilling their demands.

In sum, the social structure of the Telangana region is a representative of the semi-feudal and semi-capitalist order. As a result, the poor peasants of this region were subject to two forms of exploitation. First, under the impact of commercialization they suffered from the economic exploitation of the capitalist system. Second, due to the persistence of medieval feudal social institutions in the modern era they also suffered from the social exploitation of the feudal order. Thus, the social structure of the region had resulted in sharpening class contradictions in this region.


AGRARIAN SCENARIO IN NORTH TELANGANA

The Naxalite movement very actively in the north Telangana during the 1970s, it is necessary to understand the agrarian conditions of the region. Socio-economic conditions in the Telangana countryside, despite the state’s agrarian reformist intervention, presented a country of oppressive landlordism. The ecology of this region presented extremely unequal land ownership patterns, and the dominance of landed exploitative social relations showed the implementation of the tenancy and land ceiling legislations in poor light.

In the early 1970s most of the villages in the district of north Telangana were still dominated by the landlords, as in Telangana of the 1940s. Dora usually dominated not only his village, but also a cluster of villages. Most of the doras belonged to the Velama, Reddy and in some cases Brahmin castes. The variety of labour services extracted by doras from different castes in the Telangana countryside could be classified into two categories. The first form is the one related to the production process; the second is that which takes place outside the production process. Vetti (forced labour), which was a predominant form of labour exploitation and subjugation in the Telangana countryside until the 1940s, when the peasantry and agrarian poor rose in revolt against such a practice, continued in its form and spirit until the 1970s in certain pockets of northern Telangana, such as Karimnagar, Warnagal, and Adilabad. This refers to all forms of ‘extra-economic’ exaction of labour and goods.

The *vetti* system can be defined as a deformed version of the *jajmani* relationship.\(^{18}\) The violation of the principle of exchange and mutual co-operation is the quintessence of the *vetti* system. Which prevailed in certain part of Telangana until the 1970s, the peasants were required to supply *vetti nagallu* (a free supply of ploughs) for a requests number of days to the landlord; demands were also made upon the peasants to supply *penta* (organic manure), regardless of their own requirements. Shepherds, who usually charged a certain amount to farmers for resting their flock of sheep on their farms during the night, were to rest *vetti mandallu* (sheep herds) on the landlords land. Artisan such as blacksmiths (*Kammari*) and carpenters (*Vadla*) were required to repair the agricultural implements of the *dora* without any payment.\(^{19}\)

In the case of agricultural labour castes such as the Madigas and Malas (*called vetti madigalu and vetti malollu*), *vetti* services were to be rendered to the landlord for requisite number of days on a priority basis during peak agricultural season, when there was a high demand for labour. Even when payment was made, it was less than what was paid by the rest of the farmers. *Vetti* is not limited to services and goods related to agricultural production alone but quite significantly extend to domains outside the production process.\(^{20}\) Every caste had to supply its services and goods free of charge to the *dora*. Thus, the *Goudas* (toddy-tappers) had to reserve certain high yielding Palmyra trees for the *dora*, tap them and supply the produce freely.


village *Kumvari* (potter) supplied pots; *Chakalis* (washermen) and *Mangalis* (barbers), in addition to their caste occupation-related services, had to perform other household chores at the *gadi* (residence of dora).21

The Telangana is also witnessed another change in the late 1960s. With the entry of industrial products into a rural market, traditional, rural artisan communities experienced a gradual decline of their economic position and significance in rural society. Two numerically large communities that felt the impact of this competition on their livelihood patterns were the traditional handloom products in to the rural markets, which eroded their livelihood, caused their entitlements to decline. This forced the men to shift to work with the power looms and their women to *beedi* making. Technical change in agriculture led to a decline in demand for leather chapels, as preference was given to industrially-produced *chappals* (footwear). This forced the Madigas to turn to agriculture as an alternative form of income. This only increased the pressure on agriculture and created surplus labour facilitating the ‘landed classes’ hold on the labour. This scenario formed the backdrop of the agrarian unrest for the class politics and mobilization in rural northern Telangana.22

Although the beginning of peasant unrest were visible in the early 1970s, it is only the post emergency period that an increased and expanded mobilisation of the agrarian poor was witnessed in northern Telangana. The defeat of the congress party government at the centre, a sense of relief from long months of emergency rule,

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21 Ibid.

22 Personal Interview with Kurra Rajanna, on August 16th, 2014.
during which even minimum democratic rights were denied, paved the way for popular assertion from below.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{POLITICAL FACTORS}

Two political factors have played an important role in making the region ripe for revolutionary movement. The first is the politics of land reforms in the State and the second is the process if political accommodation in AP.

\textbf{THE POLITICS OF LAND REFORMS}

Since independence the Indian government has undertaken several land reform measures to reduce economic disparities on the agrarian scene. The land reforms initiated by the state can be classified into three types: 1) legislation for the abolition of intermediaries; 2) legislation for tenancy reforms and; 3) land ceiling legislation.

The abolition of intermediaries was the first major step of the state in the direction of land reforms. Under this piece of legislation feudal systems of land tenure such as the zamindari and jagirdari systems were to be completely abolished. The Andhra Pradesh Estate Abolition and Ryotwari Tenure Amendment Act of 1948 led to the dissolution of the jagirdari system in Telangana and rythuwari tenure was established throughout Hyderabad State.\textsuperscript{24} The abolition of the jagirdari system undoubtedly put a formal end to an outright feudal setup. Illegal extraction of revenue

\textsuperscript{23} The proceedings Bhargava commission, constituted to examine the question of the violation of the human rights and fake encounters, the developed coastal region has, in a substantive sense of confidence among the CPI(ML) groups.

by jagirdars was completely stopped.\textsuperscript{25} However, the jagirdari abolition had resulted in the dissolution of a class of wealthy landlords and the emergence of rural middle-level landlords.\textsuperscript{26} It is in this context that the Reddy caste’s rise to political power occurred in Telangana. Under the rule of the Nizams, some of the Reddys’ merged with the medium landlords. In this manner, a broader and firmer base was acquired by the Reddy community to project its political power. This development coincided with the inauguration of electoral politics and the rise of the Congress Party to power for the first time in the erstwhile state of Hyderabad. The Reddy landlords of Telangana continued (and still continue) to dominate the Congress Party in the region ever since, i.e. even after the merger of the Telangana region into the larger AP state in 1956.

(Under the Nizam) there were Reddi holders of jagirs…..but Reddis were not prominent in administration or in politics……. The Reddis were always landlords--whether with large, medium or small holdings--but under the Nizam their power until the 1930s was localized and outside the capital. With the police action and the abolition of jagirs, the powerful Reddis to emerge were the medium landlords.\textsuperscript{27}

Tenancy reforms were the second set of land reform measures undertaken by the state. These reforms were meant to protect tenant cultivators from unnotified evictions and exorbitant rents imposed by landlords and to ensure security of tenure to sought to ordinary tenants into a class of protected tenants. In erstwhile AP an act to this effect-- Andhra Pradesh (Telangana area) Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act,


\textsuperscript{26} M.S. Robinson. \textit{Local Politics : The Law of Fishes: Development through Political Change in Medak District, Andhra Pradesh (South India)}, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988, p.51.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p.55.
was passed in 1950. Twenty-eight percent of the tenants in Telangana became either owner-cultivators or protected tenants as a result of this act. But, it must be noted that this act was first implemented in the 1950s, soon after the Telangana peasant uprising, when the influence of the CPI was still strong in Telangana. But, when the Congress party came to power in 1950, the power of the Communist Party got reduced and the rural elite began to exert their influence once again. Many landlords challenged the act in the law courts and this allowed many an unscrupulous landlord to escape the rigors of this law and to evict unprotected tenants.

The third category of land reform legislation was related to land ceilings. Soon after independence the Indian government recognized the need to redistribute land in rural India in order to break up concentrations of land ownership and also to ensure employment and a reasonable standard of living to all. A model version of such laws was recommended by the central government and several state governments enacted legislation on such lines. In erstwhile AP, the Andhra Pradesh (Telangana area) Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act imposed limitations on the maximum area and ‘individual’ could own.

Of all the categories of land reforms, the land ceiling laws have always been the most controversial and difficult to implement. Litigation has been only one of the villains of the piece. Lack of political will compounded by the compulsions not to upset the interests of political support structures and vested interests is another significant factor. In erstwhile Andhra Pradesh landlords have always been a very powerful pressure group. With quite a few of them in positions of political authority

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in the state, the landlord lobby has been slowing down legislation and the implementation of the ceiling laws began, a group of eight hundred landlords form the state met the Prime Minister Mrs, Indira Gandhi and appealed for a re-examination of land ceiling laws. Although in this case the landlords attempt failed, the influence exercised by this group was still considerable in contributing to delays and circumventions in the implementation of the act.

The wide array of land reform measures initiated by the state brought about several notable changes in the agrarian structure in Telangana even though the problem of rural poverty could not be efficiently handled. The jagirdari abolition reforms had only benefited the landlords and rural elite. The tenancy and land ceiling laws, which could have, if properly implemented, improved the conditions of the poor and landless peasants, remained only on paper. However, the major impact of these state policies was that of raising the expectations of the people. Also, the few minor changes that were brought about as a result of these reforms had the effect of emboldening the masses to demand further changes in their conditions of living. Given the magnitude of the agrarian problem on the one hand, and the absence of political will and administrative and judicial impediments on the other, the state was unable to meet the demands of the people. Thus, the Telangana Naxalite movement could in one sense be regarded as a revolution of rising expectations of people leading to a flood of frustration.

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SRIKAKULAM MOVEMENT:

BACKGROUND

On 31st October 1967, at Levidi, in Parvatiapuram agency area situated on the north-eastern tip of Andhra Pradesh, two tribal peasants were shot dead by agents of landlords. This confrontation was the culmination of an extensive history of struggles by the jatapu and the Savara tribals -and also constituted a turning point for the future course of history.31

Parvatiapuram agency belonged to the Srikakulam district and was about 300 square mile in area. Adivasis or tribals who resided generally on the forest hills of the region were known as Girijanulu. The forest played a vital role in their day-to-day living. They survived on ‘podu’ or what was well-known as shift farming, under which bits of forest were cut down and burnt. The land was then cleaned and used for harvesting the crops, mostly food grains. They depended on this kind of cultivation until the British people came to power.

In earlier times, the Adivasis used to enjoy ample privileges and rights over the produce of the forests- Fruits, roots, leaves and wood. However, during later times, the regulations brought for the protection of forests banned their access to miniature forest products for household uses.32

As in the other parts of rural India, here also the hold of the moneylenders was strong over the poor tribals, several of whom were reduced to landless labourers, and they disposed of their rights on the forest and were forced to live in miserable conditions as wage labourers in their own lands. The local administration firmly implemented a set of laws for forest protection depriving the Adivasis from a secured life and disrupting their social life. Meanwhile communist teachers began working among the tribals by the 1950s. It should be noted in this connection that the tribals of this region had a streak of militancy. From 1922 to 1924, in the Vishakhapatnam Agency nearby Srikakaulam, tribals fought a war against the British, under the leadership of Alluri Sitaramaraju who used guerrilla strategies against the British rulers.\(^{33}\)

The cluster of communist teachers who organized the Girijans for a movement against illegitimate extractions by the landlords and for better wages was led by Vempatapu Satyanarayana, who settled down among the tribals. He used to be addressed as ‘Goppa Guru’ or chief guru among the tribal population. His militancy struggles against the local landlords made them inconvenient and there were a number of efforts to kill him between 1960 and 1967. Under Satyanarayana’s leadership, an organization called *Girijan Sangham* was set up to struggle for the betterment of the tribals. Its first meeting was held at Mondemkhal in January 1961.

The movement which began for enhanced wages and against persecution by forest officials rapidly developed into a rebellious struggle for the right to yield on wastelands. After the split in the Communist Party in 1964 and until the formation of

CPI (ML), Satyanarayana and Adhibhatla Kailasam another teacher who was working among the tribal peasants in the Parvatipuram Agency, led the movement.\textsuperscript{34}

The police were fast reacting. Thousands of Girijans were detained, and a number of cases were booked against the poor tribals. Verifying the conspiracy between the political parties behind the landlords and the police, a newspaper reporter commented’ …they (the political parties) relied and continued to rely heavily on the police to keep the tribals in check..\textsuperscript{35}

Nevertheless, neither the high-handedness of the landlords, nor police pressure could break the wave of the Girijans’ militancy. By 1967, the landlords were forced to raise the wages of the laborers and grant two-third share of crops to the share-croppers. These successes made the tribals’ trust in political associations stronger.

The administration was, however, getting alarmed. After the Naxalbari rebellion in May-June 1967, the authorities, apparently apprehending similar troubles in the Parvatipuram Agency, set up police patrol. The landlords under police security sought to reassert themselves and continued their violence on the Girijans. Following conflicts, Section 144 was declared in 200 villages form 24\textsuperscript{th} July to 25\textsuperscript{th} August 1967.\textsuperscript{36}

It was against this background that the 31\textsuperscript{st} October episode happened at Levidi. A Girijan convention was being held on that date at Mondemkhal. Some Girijanms on their way to the convention were beaten by the landlords at levidi. As a


fight developed between the *Girijans* and the landlords’ men, the latter brought out their guns and shot dead two peasants.\(^{37}\)

During this period the CPI (M) party supported the poor tribals and condemned police action and demanded the government to implement the laws which were brought for the benefits of the tribals. They further demanded the state government to take necessary steps and vacate the *shavukars* and illegal landlords from tribal areas. However, there party did not support the revolutionary guerrilla struggles. Thus the Communist revolutionaries working among the tribals, who were until them members of the CPI(M) suspected the party because of the insensitive attitude of the Andhra Pradesh CPI(M) leadership towards the subjected tribals.\(^ {38}\)

By early 1968, police atrocities augmented. Special police camps were brought into the affected areas. By March, hundreds of villages were attacked and many tribal small peasants were arrested and put on bar.

In Burajaguda village of Seetampet Agency, peasants were assaulted by hired goons of the landlords. A police fire took place on tribals in Peddakaraja village which was under Sivinpet police station.

In September 1968, the judgement of the Levidi case was declared. Those charged of killing the tribals were not found guilty. This judgement, along with the police oppression, hardened the attitude of the tribals. The Marxist revolutionaries

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explained to the peasants that in the established socio-economic set up the legal system were a sign of the welfare of the ruling feudal class.\textsuperscript{39}

Therefore, the revolutionary party asked the tribals to free themselves, fight against the landlords and state machinery which had until them worked only for the benefit of the ruling classes. ‘……if we have to carry on our activity on any people’s issue, our struggle should be higher in form aimed at seizing political power.’\textsuperscript{40}

For this purpose, the Srikakulam communist leaders took the initiative to accept the strategy of the communists of Naxalbari and contacted the All-India Coordination Committee for Revolution - (AICCR).

The Andhra Pradesh CPI (M) state committee mainly the dissident group rejected the central committee’s official draft on the question of the ‘big bourgeois’ which ruled the country which was of a comprador-bureaucratic nature a characterization which the CPI(M) was not ready to recognize.\textsuperscript{41} For dissident Andhra communists, the ‘comprador nature consists mainly in its trading character in addition to industrial aspect, bureaucratic character in its growth with the main assist of the State machine’.\textsuperscript{42}

Thus, two branches of armed struggle developed in Andhra Pradesh one in Srikakulam in the North-East, the other covering the Telangana region; the former led


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
by Tarimalla Nagi Reddy-TN, Devulapally Venkateshwara Rao-DV, Ramanarshaiah, Chandra Pulla Reddy, Baththalu Venkateshwarsa Rao and Rayala Subhash Chandra Bhosu.\textsuperscript{43} However, these two branches originally divided into two groups due to ideological tactics and strategies regarding how to proceed with the revolutionary movement.

THE DIFFERENCES IN LEADING THE REVOLUTION

The differences were primarily concerning the strategies to be followed. Nagi Reddy and his faction - Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Committee - (APRCC) which was formed in March 1968 were in favor of a mixture of legal and extra-legal resists, and assumed in a lengthened groundwork, essentially through economic struggles, prior to the initiation of a complete armed movement. The communist revolutionaries of Srikakulam, were motivated by the armed struggle especially by the strategy of annihilation of the enemy of Bengali Naxalbari or All India Co-ordination Committee of the Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR), which was formed in May 1968 and their experience in their won district, were in favour of immediate way out to arms.\textsuperscript{44}

The Srikakulam district organization of the communist revolutionaries was politically revitalized at this time by the active support offered by a group of young communist medical and engineering graduates. The majority of these young blood graduates who were in their early life realized the liberal Congress government’s acts of interruption and attracted to Marxism in mid-1960s. The Naxalbari revolution and


\textsuperscript{44} Mohan Ram. \textit{Maoism in India Delhi}; Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1971, Pp. 196-200.
the ideological disparities within the CPI (M) facilitated them to take a step forward in the political understanding, and they slowly amended to the politics of agrarian revolution. Medical students in 1968 formed the Naxalbari Sangeebhaava Committee in Guntur. Youth leaders like Dr. Bhaskara Rao, Dr. Mallikarjuna Rao and other established relationship with revolutionary leaders such as Vempatatpu Satyanarayana. The Guntur group actively involved themselves in recruiting the middle class youth into party activities and getting the arms ready.

Differences between the Srikakulam communist and the State Coordination Committee got widened by 1969. The Srikakulam wing decided to declare the war on landlords and state with full support and alliance from the Bengali Naxalbari Committee, while the Nagi Reddy group maintained an autonomous strategy even though they accepted the Naxalite movement.

The Srikakulam communist sent Tejeswara Rao Chowdhary to Calcutta in October 1968, for a dialogue with Charu Mazumdar. After Tejeswara Rao’s discussions, the newly formed Srikakulam district coordination committee arranged a secret meeting at Boddapadu where it was determined that an armed struggle should be initiated without delay.


Guerrilla ‘dalams’ (or squards) were formed in the plains as well as in the Agency hills of Srikakulam, with the eventual objective of capturing power by conquering the existing government and launching a people’s democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat. 48

GUERILLA STRUGGLE IN SRIKIAKULAM

The guerilla movement advanced on 24th November 1968, by the forceful cutting of crops from the land of a rich landlord at Garudahadra, near Boddapadu. Another important triumph was that on the following day in pedagottli village of the Pravatipuram Agency area, about 250 Girijans from different villages armed with bows, arrows and spears, under the leadership of Vempatapu Satyanarayana, attacked the house of a notorious landlord-cum-money-lender, Teegala Narasimhlu-and took possession of his saved paddy, rice, other food grains and property worth about Rs. 20,000. They also detained documents, promissory notes and other records that had bound the tribal peasant all these years to the landlord through loans. 49

Several similar actions followed and the communists were able to raise daily wages and jeethagla or paleru’s (paid servants) remuneration, provide the right to have share in crops to peasants and distributed 5000 acres of cultivable land to tribals. More importantly, revolutionaries made efforts to free the tribals from ancestral debts. 50

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By 1970, the Srikakulam armed struggle received a set back as leaders - Sathyam, Kailasam and others were annihilated by the police. Police forces set fire to 300 tribals during the revolt.\(^{51}\)

Apart from this, the revolutionary communists organized secret convention at Guththikonda Belam, Pedugurall mandal in Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh from February 19\(^{th}\) to 21\(^{st}\) 1969. Panchadi Krishna Murty, Tejeswara Rao Choudary, K.G.Sathyramurty, Y.Koteswar Rao and his wife Mani, Aruna, Mamidi Appalasuri, Shaik Buday, Mulpuri Venkata Rathnam, Kondapally Seetha Ramaiah and his son Kondapally Chandra Shekar attended this convention and it was addressed by the Bengali Naxalabari leader Charu Mazumdar.\(^{52}\)

Tejeswara Rao Choudary was elected as state committee secretary and Kondapally Seetharamaiah was included in the party after the expulsion from United CPI party in 1964. After this meet K.G. Sathyamuty and Kondapally Seetharamaiah were given the responsibility to organize the party in Telangana region and the remaining members concentrated on coastal Andhra.

While the movement was gaining pace and spreading in the north eastern parts of Andhra Pradesh under the Srikakulam group, on 7\(^{th}\) February 1969, the AICCCR disaffiliated the Andhra State Coordinating Committee, particularly the Nagi Reddy group from the coordinative activities. On 22\(^{nd}\) April, 1969, the Bengal Naxalite rebel


communist formed communist party of India (Marxist Leninist) -CPI (ML) which was actively associated with Srikakulam revolutionary group. Simultaneously in the Telangana region, the political developments among the rebellious communists were taking a different form.\(^5\)

**REORGANISATION**

The original CPI (ML) that led Srikakulam struggle almost disintegrated, both at national and state levels with heavy repression on one hand and internal divisions on the other, by 1972 and there were attempts to rebuild the party or at least to coordinate the struggles in various areas. It was Andhra Pradesh State Committee that took lead in this direction and by January 1974, the CPI (M-L) Central Organising Committee was formed with remaining forces of the CPI (ML) from West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Kashmir, Punjab and Tamil Nadu to coordinate and unite the revolutionaries in different states.\(^5\)\(^4\) As part of the unity and consolidation efforts, it was also decided to critically review the past experience and pave the way for future. Thus by November 1974 the COC had developed a Self Critical Report and Road to Revolution, a new strategy and tactics document. These two documents humbly accepted the left sectarian mistakes of the past and suggested several corrections. The corrections included setting up mass organisations and adhering to mass line without

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leaving armed struggle and continuing boycotting parliamentary path, the two distinct features of Naxalbari - Srikakulam line.⁵⁵

**EMERGENCY**

However, when the attempts of the COC to set up mass organisations and spread its influence both in Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere were beginning to take shape, there was a severe jolt on the movement in the form of proclamation of Emergency in the country on June 25, 1975. The party hardly began implementing its policy of establishing mass organisations with an experiment in forming Radical Students Union (RSU) and preparing to form Radical Youth League (RYL) and Raithu Cooli Sangham (RCS). With the proclamation of Emergency and suspension of fundamental rights, it was not possible for any democratic activity and the RSU could not take up its work openly in educational institutions.⁵⁶

Even as half of Virasam members (35 out of around 60) were arrested and any person with remote Naxalite leanings was under surveillance and threat of immanent arrest, the members of RSU chose to go to villages to evade arrest. Particularly, their work in Karimnagar and Adilabad districts in analysing rural agrarian social structures, forms of exploitation and the need to wage struggles paved way for mobilising and organising agricultural labourers and small peasants in a big way.

The 20-point programme announced by the government at that time came in handy for these students in their campaign of exposing the shallowness of ruling class policies. By making people demand the implementation of some "welfare" measures

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⁵⁵ Ibid.,

of the programme, these students could easily demonstrate that the government was not sincere enough to translate its promises into practice. Based on this realisation the students could persuade people to take up militant struggle path and inculcated the idea of agrarian revolution as the only alternative.\textsuperscript{57} The RSU provided a fertile recruiting ground for People’s War Group cadres and significantly expanded the original nucleus of activists. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the RSU active on high school, college, and university campuses in the Telangana region and everywhere in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh organised indoctrination trips for students styled as a “Go to villages” campaign on the model of Mao’s China.\textsuperscript{58} These campaigns reaped fruitful results in hundreds of villages with thousands of poor agricultural labour and small peasant masses rallying behind radicals.

**RYTHU COOLI PORATAM IN SIRICILLA AND JAGITHYALA**

The Sircilla and Jagityal taluqs of Karimnagar district were important centers to the peasant struggle in Telangana region after the emergency period. These two taluqs saw initial attempts at agrarian mobilization in the early 1970s, inspired by the Naxalbari and Srikakulam uprisings.\textsuperscript{59} The beginning of peasant movement in this area is seen as a result of the spread of the message of revolution from the tribal areas to the plains. Huge repression and the declaration of a state of Emergency in 1975 imposed severe restrictions on people movements and forces. The lifting of the Emergency and the coming to power of the Janata Party at the centre tremendously

\textsuperscript{57} Jagithya Jungalmahal (Telugu), Hyderabad: Kranth Prachuranalu, 2011, Pp.11-16.


changed the political conditions in the state and the country. The promise of improved civil rights paved the way for the Rytu Cooli Sanghams to come into the open and organize the rural poor for better social change.

The issues highlighted upon and the demands put forward in these struggles can be broadly discussed into two types. The first was the refuse to perform *vetti*, pay *mamool* and approach the landlord for arbitration of disputes, etc. The second category consisted of demands for higher wages, which were below the minimum wage prescribed by law, repayment of huge sums of money collected from the villagers as *dandugalu* (fines) and bribes taken earlier, and the return of lands forcibly seized from peasants, etc.

Demonstrating the popular response, the Sangham forced landlords to yield to the former category of demands. The initial success in villages such as Nimmapally in Sircilla and Maddunur in Jagityal demonstrated the possibility of organised protest succeeding in making landlords concede without much resistance. The spread of these success stories encouraged people in other villages to follow suit. It is no exaggeration to suggest that in the initial phases of the struggle, a mere call of ‘social boycott’ worked wonders, as this meant that, apart from stopping agricultural operations on the landlords’ farms, no washer men or barbers would be available to provide (even paid)

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services at the landlord’s gadi. This social boycott of the landlords by service castes in particular caused great inconvenience to their normal everyday lives.\textsuperscript{63}

Thus, in the early stages of the peasant movement, ‘social boycott’ was used as the main form of struggle to exercise considerable social pressure on landlords and to isolate them in villages. The people in these villages stopped rendering vetti services, carrying disputes to the landlord and offering mamools and bribes.\textsuperscript{64} It is interesting to note that attempts were made to settle the disputes through public hearings. The success in this regard enthused people to push further for the second category of demands. What is noteworthy is the fact that in a number of places the RCS conducted public hearings to enquire into illegal exactions such as mamools and dandugalu, land-grabbing – both private and public or common – and landlord atrocities.\textsuperscript{65} The landlords in these places were made to pay back huge sums to the people.\textsuperscript{66} Similarly; attempts were made to settle disputes among the poor people.\textsuperscript{67} As said earlier, huge tracts of the poramboku, shikam, temple lands, forest lands and lands illegally held by landlords were distributed to the landless.\textsuperscript{23} Further, the demand for an increase in the wages of agricultural labour, palerus (farm servants) and tendu leaf\textsuperscript{68} collectors were articulated.


\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{68} Tendu leaf is used in beedi-making .The beedi industry is a major employer of women in Telangana district.
The main issues taken up in the villages during this phase of the struggle can thus be summed up as follows:

Here the study list out some of the unendurable methods of oppression and exploitation perpetrated by the landlords. These landlords actually deserve to be called as despots of middle ages. Their oppressive activities can be listed endlessly. Here we deal with some prominent practices only:

1) Money extortions variously called as gifts, nazaranas, fines and compensations.
2) Tributes: Annual mamools for each caste are fixed. Besides that, a certain amount should be paid as tribute on the occasion of joy, sorrow or dispute.
3) Vetti: Labour, ploughs, sheep herds and goat herds, milk, provisions, vegetables, and all kinds of services should be rendered to the landlord free of cost.
4) Bonded labour.
5) Expulsion from village.
6) Usury.
7) Appropriation of commons and government lands
8) Encroaching patta lands of poor and middle peasants.
9) Commission on sale and purchase of land and other assets.
10) Brokerage.
11) Exploitation of forest produce.
12) Processing and appropriation of loans from Land Mortgage Banks and Cooperative Central Banks.
13) Charging both the parties huge sums of money in the name of settling disputes.

14) Threats and intimidation.

15) Atrocities on women.

16) Social oppression.

17) Mamools from traders and contractors of various works.

18) Maintaining private armies.

19) Keeping licensed and unlicensed lethal weapons.\textsuperscript{69}

Given the substantial material interests involved in this, landlords opposed the demand to raise wages and surrender lands forcibly occupied from the peasants and the illegally controlled common lands. To achieve these demands, various forms of mobilization and methods of protest such as demonstrations, \textit{gheraos}, strikes, and, of course, social boycotts, were adopted by the RCS. As the movement expanded and the organizational structure of the RCS spread out following the \textit{JaithraYatra} held in Jagityal town, the injury not only to landlords’ \textit{pettandari} (domination) and pride but also to their material interests became substantial and expansive, and they sought to quell the unrest.\textsuperscript{70}

Reaction to the movement evolved in two phases. In the first, the landlords’ response was local. They tried to organise gangs and use them against the peasant activists and to break the RCS network. Thus, beating up workers, raiding their


houses and unleashing terror became a common feature of the landlords’ reaction.\textsuperscript{71} The landlords’ resorting to violent means forced the RCS to shift away from its initial strategy of peaceful protest. The peasants’ organised resistance led to a further escalation of violence from the landlords.\textsuperscript{72}

The second phase of reaction to the peasant movement developed with the direct involvement of the State in the agrarian conflicts. As the movement expanded and an organised resistance was built up against the landlords, State reaction assumed a new form. Thus, the entire area was declared a ‘disturbed’ area, under the Suppression of Disturbances Act, 1948.\textsuperscript{73} This act was enforced to tackle the spill-over effect of the Telangana peasant struggle on the region of coastal Andhra ‘to make better provision for the suppression of disorder in the Madras Presidency’, and defines a disturbed area as one ‘for the time being declared to be disturbed area by a notification under section 3.\textsuperscript{74} The section referred to conferred the powers to declare thus to the subjective satisfaction of the provincial government, which so decided must notify the same in the State Gazette.

This response is a clear instance of the State understanding rural tensions as ‘law and order’ problems and suppressing them through violent means, rather than going to the root of the problem, i.e. the socio-economic basis of rural unrest. This


understandably generated its own dynamics: violence leading to further violence, without any light at the other end of the tunnel.

The two *taluqs* of Sircilla and Jagityal were declared ‘disturbed areas’ in the month of October 1978 under the Suppression of Disturbances Act, 1948.\(^75\) It facilitated the possibility of collaboration between the police and the landlords, thus making the life of peasant activists that much more difficult as they had not only to face the landlords’ force but also the organised might of the State.\(^76\)

**THE PEDDAPALLY STRUGGLE**

With the declaration of Sircilla and Jagityal *taluqs* as ‘disturbed areas’, attempts were made to extend and expand the movement to the neighbouring areas by forming RCS units. The movement in Peddapally *taluq* thus assumed importance as the next phase of the peasant struggle.

Peddapally, the third largest *taluq* in Karimnagar district, is important due to the two major Telangana industrial centers of Ramagundam and Godavari Khani, known for the thermal power project, coal mines, fertiliser and cement factories that are located there. It had a population of more than three *lakhs* in the 1970s, half of whom were workers. Agricultural labourers comprised only 55% of the workforce.\(^77\)

This *taluq* also displayed iniquitous land relations. Making best use of the loopholes of land ceiling laws, the landlords, belonging predominantly to the Velama

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community followed by Reddy, Kshatriya and Brahmin castes, continued to own and control hundreds of acres of land. A study by the District Weaker Sections Association of the Congress Party identified 94 landlords with a land ownership of 70 to 400 acres, and stated that around 16,000 acres of land ‘was transferred to various fictitious names overnight’ in the taluq. In this taluq, two or more big landlords, often belonging to different castes, dominated many villages. Thus, many villages often presented a picture of ‘rigid caste divisions’. This was reflected not only at the grassroots level in political competition for political power, positions in Panchayat Raj institutions and for a share in the resources made available for agricultural and rural development, but also in the political factions at taluq and district levels.

What is paradoxical about this region is the fact that, despite the concentration of modern industries providing substantial employment to the labouring classes of the neighbouring villages, feudal relations of production were prevalent in the countryside. The following extract from a report on the peasant struggle captures the essence of social relations in agriculture in the countryside:

‘The taluka president of the Radical Youth League could think of only four landlords in the whole taluq who had tractors (in contrast to Jagityal where many landlords have turned modern). None of the landlords shows any interest in crops other than paddy and millets, and even then they do not go in for fertiliser-hungry high-yielding varieties but stick to the traditional ones. This is in spite of the fact that

Ibid.,


Peddapally now gets water from the Pochampad project (on the Godavari river), as a consequence of which the price of land has appreciated from about Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 20,000 per (wet) acre. Further, the clue for the absence of the impact of new wealth on the agrarian relations and prevalence of pre-capitalist agriculture could be seen as a consequence of the practice among the members of the landed gentry here to “either consume or ‘invest’” the surplus in mercantile activities rather than “to transform it into productive capital.”

As the same report further observes:

‘Unlike the rich kulaks of Green Revolution Andhra, the landlords of Peddapally do not even invest in rice mills. Husking is done domestically, though many of them use machines for the purpose. Most of the surplus goes into PWD contracts (including the Pochampad canal itself), shops (the favourite being the ‘wine’ shops), and real estate in Karimnagar town or Hyderabad city.’

In spite of advanced industrial activity in the towns and this taluq, as in the case of Sircilla, Jagityal and most parts of Telangana, extra-economic forms of exploitation such as vetti, dandugalu and social and cultural degradation of the vast masses by the landed gentry were witnessed. This scenario in Peddapally created favourable conditions for the peasant struggle. If the repression the area of Sircilla


82 Ibid. p. 815.

and Jagityal necessitated an expansion of the area of struggle, then the emergence of a land market and a hike in land prices following the Pochampad project were also important factors in increasing the landless and poor peasantry’s hunger for land.

Thus, the struggle in Peddapally was initially organised around two issues. The issue of repayment of people’s money, collected by landlords in the form of *dandugalu* and *mamools*, was a major demand in the earlier phase. The value of the exactions was estimated and the demand to repay that amount back to the people was made. In addition, substantial donations were also demanded from landlords as reparation for their unjust actions in the past.

The second important issue was that of the distribution of *porumboku* and *bancharai* (the village grazing and wasteland) to the landless. As discussed earlier, these lands were invariably in the hands of the local *pettandar* after forcibly occupying these lands with the RCS’s help, an important aspect of the struggle was that these lands either be *equally distributed* on an individual basis among the landless or used for *collective farming*.

The movement’s major achievement lies in the fact that within the period of six months it took to expand, the practice of *vetti* and the collection of *dandugalu* and *mamools* completely stopped. The wages of agricultural labourers increased from Rs. 3–4 to Rs. 6–7 per day, whilst the increase was from Rs. 800 to Rs. 1,200–2000 per annum for a *palero* or farm servant. In a number of villages, the *poramboku* lands

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were occupied. However, although around 600 acres were available to be occupied, the peasants were able only to cultivate 30 acres.  

As the movement expanded in the taluq, the reaction from the powers-that-be also increased. Police camps were set up in the villages that had seen hectic activity by the RCS. The methods of repression employed by the police for crushing the people:

‘… make a macabre reading. They destroyed crops by driving animals into fields ripe for harvesting or by stopping water supply and starving the crops (it is a general rule that water from the local tank has to pass by the landlords’ field to reach other people’s fields and so the police only have to enlist the help of the only-too-willing landlords to stop water supply to the peasants’ crops); if a peasant has a motor to draw water from a well, they would smash the motor and throw it into the well; if a peasant went into hiding they would raid his house and throw clothes, utensils and bags of paddy into the well.  

TENDU STRUGGLES

The struggles in Manthani have a special place in the history of the Karimnagar peasant movement. Located on the easternmost part of the district, the taluq includes 57% of all forests in the district. While the western part of Manthani consists of plains, the eastern part bordering Sironcha and Bastar in Mahadevpur area,


is mostly forest area. It is this geographical specificity that gave rise to struggles around the tendu leaf issue.  

Tendu leaf is used in the making of beedis (country cigars). Karimnagar and Nizambad are important northern Telangana districts with a large concentration of beedi manufacturing units owned by both outside manufacturers and local persons. Manthani’s importance lies in the fact that its forest area is a major source of the tendu leaf and that it supplies the beedi factories in the district.

Tendu leaf collection is a seasonal occupation, taking place during the months of April and May. As this is the period when hardly any work is available for agricultural labourers, tendu leaf collection is the major source of sustenance during this lean season. Both children and women are engaged in this occupation in a major way.

Collected tendu leaves must be sold to a contractor at his kallam. The right to purchase the leaf is auctioned to contractors by the government. Although the unit of auction generally consists of four to five villages, contractors bid for more; in fact, a few major contractors dominate the whole exercise of auction. Contractors collect

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the leaves from the people through a network of *kalladars* (those who manage *kallams*).\(^{92}\)

The tendu is purchased in bundles of 100 leaves. The minimum rate for a bundle in 1975 was five *paise*. Even this was not paid properly and promptly. Contractors used to pay only four *paise* per bundle. The poor people involved in the strenuous collection of tendu leaves had to give a requisite number of bundles as *vetti*, ‘the first bundles brought to the *kallam* each day and one bundle each in the name of deities like Pochamma, Maisamma, etc.’\(^{93}\) The people were made to suffer further on account of the mischief and corruption of the petty *kalledars* employed as a collection agent by the contractor. The *kalledars*, paid a miserably low salary, resorted to various devious methods to augment their income. Thus, in addition to the collection of their share of ‘*vetti* bundles’, *kalledars* used the rejection of bundles as a device to deceive people. The *kalledars* would pick up the bundles rejected as spoiled, and make money on them.

This scenario gave rise to the famous tendu leaf struggles of the late 1970s. The struggle was for putting an end to the system of extracting *vetti* bundles, for the unreasonable rejection of leaf bundles by the *kalledars*, and for the payment of five *paise* per bundle as per the government stipulation. Later, struggles were launched for an increase in the purchase rate from five to ten *paise*.

The struggle for higher piece rates and against the high-handedness of contractors and the petty corruption of the *kalladars* at the time of leaf collection was

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a regular feature of the CPI (ML)’s mobilisation strategy in the forest areas of northern Telangana districts such as Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Warangal and Adilabad. These struggles, in addition to those of women beedi workers, played a crucial role in preparing the ground and building a broad mass base for the CPI (ML) groups in this region.

STATE RESPONSE TO THE NAXALITE MOVEMENT

One cannot deny the fact that Naxalite Movement, from any perspective, from its inception to the present day, is a social movement. Any social movement strives for social transformation for a better society. And Naxalite movement, if not now at least in its initial phases, worked for the social transformation. They strove for the upliftment of the downtrodden. How to understand the acts such as rising of minimum wages of the labour or abolition of vetti (forced labour) or distribution of land to the landless but to agree the pro-poor stand of the Naxalites and the violence that they unleash? Here Azad says (an official spokes person of CPI (Maoist)) though a Naxalite, the logic and weightage of the argument cannot be denied.

“The question of violence is the single most important thread passing through all the articles. No real communist is for violence per se. Communists are for a peaceful social system built around equality and justice. But when they seek to work for such a system they are attacked most brutally. This has been the case ever since the birth of the


communist movement. They have been massacred and exterminated right from the days of the Paris Commune. It would be naïve to think that the Indian ruling classes, who have a lengthy record of violence unleashed on the oppressed masses, are any better. Besides it is not just State violence that people face; in a class society, as in India, violence is endemic to the very system and the oppressed masses are exposed to it in the course of their daily lives – by the feudal authority and by factory managements, and also as a result of untouchability, patriarchy, etc.”

We can argue that the use of violence is from two sides, the State and the Naxalites. But the State has also tried other tactics to tackle the Naxalite movement while it is vague that the Naxalites have also tried any such strategies.

It can be classified State’s response into two types - coercive and non coercive

**NON-COERCIVE MEASURES**

When the Naxalite struggle broke out in the Telengana districts in the early 1970s, the state government, then ruled by the Congress (I) under Chief Minister J.Vengal Rao, introduced some socio-economic welfare measures in the affected areas. These reforms show that the state government did in fact recognize socio-economic deprivation as one of the causes behind the uprising. During this phase (1970-1983), the state adopted mainly a 'preventive approach' towards the spread of Naxalite influence. Just as in Naxalbari and Srikakulam, the state did not show any sympathy towards the Naxalites and continued to look upon them as a bunch of

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criminals indulging in unlawful activities and used force to put an end to the Naxalite movement. However, it also tried to draw the rural poor away from the Naxalite influence by offering them certain economic benefits.97

Providing Livelihood:

Agricultural co-operative banks were opened in the affected Telengana districts to provide loans to agricultural labourers and tribals. Agricultural equipment including diesel engines and cattle -sheep and milch animals – were distributed among the poor. These were meant as immediate measures to relieve the masses from poverty and to provide, in the short term, a source of livelihood to the poor.

Land Reforms:

Apart from these rather less substantive measures, the Congress (I) government in AP also undertook an aggressive campaign for land reforms. Of the three categories of land reform laws which were discussed in the previous chapter–abolition of intermediaries, tenancy reforms and land ceiling laws- the last category and the most important of these, the land ceiling laws, officially began to be implemented during this period. It was precisely during this period that the revenue department in the state began filing declarations of the size of land holding from all land owners in the state.98

The government's socio-economic reform programs of the 1970s did not help in improving the lot of the poor and landless in Telangana. In the first place, the


government's immediate welfare measures were not a major success as they were not proportionate to the magnitude of the problem of rural poverty. Even for the few who benefited from them, these measures proved very inadequate. Second, with regard to the more critical measure, land reforms, the government dragged its feet on implementation. The government's attitude reflected not just a lack of seriousness, but a complete absence of political will about the implementation of land reforms.

The government laid emphasis on more superficial and ad hoc welfare measures, which were also inadequate, in preference to substantial long-term socio-economic reforms. The government did not seem very serious about the question of rural poverty but only appeared to make it an issue for political purposes. Thus, much of the talk about socio-economic change in the countryside was of little significance.

The same can be said about the successive governments which came to power after Congress I. when Telugu Desam Party (TDP), the first non-Congress Party in Andhra Pradesh, came to power in 1983, it came with huge promises. Once, during his (NTR) election campaign, NTR termed Naxalites as ‘true patriots’. After forming his government he announced 30 days truce period and had urged the Naxalites to join the mainstream. He had extended the period twice. He had also announced rupees 100,000 to the surrendered Naxalites to help them in rehabilitation.

Throughout its regime, the TDP government relied chiefly on such-efforts at reconciliation through negotiation to tackle the Naxalite problem. Other welfare

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measures aimed at improving socio-economic conditions of the poor in rural areas and bringing about much-needed change in the agrarian structure were ignored.101

By the end of 1989, the Congress (I) returned to power in AP. This time the Congress (I) government took a more conciliatory and accommodative stand on the Naxalite issue, much in contrast to its ruthless and uncompromising approach in the late 1970s. This was perhaps in response to the civil liberties movement in the state which had repeatedly put pressure on the government to soften its approach towards the -Naxalites. Soon after coming to power, Chief Minister M. Chenna Reddy released all the Naxalite prisoners held without trial. He also announced a policy whereby all legal activities of the Naxalite groups would be allowed. More importantly, a socio-economic welfare package was delivered to the affected areas to wean people away from Naxalite influence.102 Plans to accelerate development of the nine 'Naxalite districts' were drawn up and implementation of these plans was entrusted to the local people, especially tribals and youth who were regarded as vulnerable to Naxalite influence. Usual bureaucratic procedures like government licensing for contracts were relaxed in order to eliminate corruption and red tapism. After Chenna Reddy's exit, his successor N. Janardhan Reddy, adopted the same approach.103

This time, the state government seemed a little more serious about socio-economic development in rural Telangana, although it once again remained silent on

the question of land reforms. But again, the government’s efforts were not adequate
to meet the magnitude of the problem of rural poverty. Meanwhile, in a less
repressive atmosphere which permitted legal activities, the Naxalites were able to
regroup, reorganize and extend their mass base. Following this, there was an increase
in Naxalite activities in the state. Eventually, the government abandoned its soft
approach and relied more on coercive means to put down the Naxalite activities.

COERCIVE MEASURES

The Naxalite movement is considered a serious challenge to the maintenance
of 'law and order' in the state, and governments have often responded in ways they
considered appropriate to meet the challenge. As in Naxalbari and Srikakulam, in
Telangana also repeated attempts were made to crush the movement. During the
1970s, the Congress (I) government in the state made several efforts to nip the
movement in the bud. In this phase, the state government was outright anti-Naxalite
both in ideology and in practice. Its attitude perhaps stemmed from the bloody story
of Srikakulam which was then still very fresh in everyone's memory. This period
represents the most outwardly repressive phase of state response.

The attitude of the government was reflected even in rhetoric. J. Vengal Rao,
who was the Chief Minister as the Telangana Naxalite struggle unfolded, took tough
stand towards these rebels as he took towards the insurrectionists of the Srikakulam
rebellion of the late 1960s. As early as 1971, just when isolated incidents of
Naxalite activity were reported from Telangana, the state launched a police force on a

105 K. Balagopal. “Murder of a Veteran Democrat” Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 21, No. 50

106 Thupaki Rajyam: Peruguthunna Nirbhandam Meedha Nivedhika, Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh
military scale to crush the movement. Nearly 100 police camps employing 15,000 policemen were set up in the Naxalite affected districts of Khammam and Warangal. In addition, section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CRPC), according to which citizens are prohibited from moving in groups of more than 2 persons, was frequently imposed in those rural areas. Night time curfew was also imposed in these villages. The tough stand of the state did not, however, help in bringing down the movement.

Between 1971 and 1974 the Naxalite movement spread to almost all districts in Telangana. In 1974 – the pre-Emergency period – when Naxalite violence reached its zenith and a series of attacks was launched against landlords in rural Telangana, the state government went a step further in seeking the co-operation of the central government in inducting one of the paramilitary forces, the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force), to quell the movement.\footnote{107}{K. Balagopal. “Two ’Missing’ Women of Karimnagar”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.26, No.5, February 2, 1991, Pp. 201-205.}

In the following year, the imposition of national Emergency struck a serious blow to the movement.\footnote{108}{Azad. “Maoists in India: A Rejoinder”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 41, No. 41 Oct. 14-20, 2006, Pp. 4379-4383.} At a time when even democratic opposition was not tolerated, the state's attitudes towards -open and violent opposition was all the more tough. As a result, in the Emergency period the movement suffered a serious setback. All Naxalite groups went further underground.\footnote{109}{K. Baagopal. “Chenna Reddy’s Spring”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 25, No. 12 (Mar. 24, 1990), Pp. 591-595.} Even non-violent popular mass movements could not be organised. The success of state repression was such that the Naxalites had to confine their activities to publishing radical literature secretly.\footnote{110}{Mallepalli Laxmaiah. “Vuththara Telanganalo Thupaki Rajyam” Suprabhaatham (Telugu) Jan-Feb. 1996: 1-9.}
When, in 1977, the national Emergency was lifted and the Janata Party came to power at the centre, the tense atmosphere of the Emergency period gave way to a relatively relaxed political climate. Support for restoration of liberal democratic principles of freedom of opposition got a boost. Everywhere in the country, the state governments had to be accountable to the public and press charges against atrocities that were committed by the state apparatus during the Emergency times. In AP also a similar movement for the restoration of civil liberties got underway. While it was, no doubt, felt in some official quarters that the pressure against the movement ought not to be relaxed, such was the reaction to the Emergency that governments were frightened of continuing with repressive policies even against violent challenges like the Naxalite challenge. Thus, immediately following the lifting of the Emergency there was no option but to abstain from using repressive means.

Making a virtue out of necessity, the AP government put forward a conciliatory stance towards the Naxalites. Paradoxically, this enabled the Naxalites to regroup their forces and start a more aggressive campaign against the state. In the early 1980s when the Naxalite movement gained substantial momentum and when normality was restored in the political atmosphere, the state government once again reverted back to its coercive methods. In 1978, the two Naxalite strongholds – Sircilla and Jgithyala taluks, both in Karimnagar district - were declared to be disturbed areas.\footnote{K. Balagopal. “Chenna Reddy’s Spring” \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}. Vol.25.No.12, 1990, Pp. 591-595.}

Under the AP Suppression of Disturbances Act\footnote{It was in M. Chenna Reddy’s government that brought in this act in 1978.} the police were allowed to open fire on mere suspicion at anyone. The disturbed areas proclamation can be
regarded as a sort of mini-Emergency declared by the state government vis-a-vis the Naxalites. It was virtually a legitimization of police rule. It was this measure that helped in liquidating the Karimnagar peasant struggle discussed in the previous chapter.

The change of ruling party in the state legislature and the coming to power of TDP in 1983 did not, however, change the overall state policy towards the Naxalites. As noted earlier, this phase was marked by simultaneous efforts at peaceful reconciliation and brutal suppression. On the one hand, the government appeared to have made a dramatic change in its attitude towards the Naxalites. Initially, it even praised the naxalites as 'true patriots' and made pious appeals and rewards for the so-called surrender of Naxalites. On the other hand, the government did not abjure dependence on coercive methods to tackle the problem.

One of the most unpopular policies of the NTR government was the move to liberalize arms licenses to help people defend themselves against Naxalites. This step of the TDP government was severely criticized and opposed by the general public and bureaucracy alike. Many interpreted this move as a deliberate attempt of the state government to strengthen the position of the landlord class in the rural areas, for the new policy would benefit only the rich. Others thought the policy was an irresponsible move which would only result in an increase in crime. In view of the public criticism, the government could not go ahead with the new policy. Another major step taken during the TDP regime was the government's creation of an elite police force called the "greyhounds" meant specifically to tackle Naxalism. This
special police squad was to consist of 800 personnel provided with sophisticated arms
and specially trained for guerrilla warfare.\textsuperscript{113}

In 1989, when Congress(I) returned to power in the state legislature, the Chief
Minister, M.Chenna Reddy, had for a while given a degree of freedom to the
Naxalites. After a brief phase of attempts at peaceful coexistence with the Naxalites,
the state, in response to a growth in Naxalite activities, once again became
determined to 'wipe out the Naxalites. A marked alteration of government policy
from a softened and conciliatory stand to an outright repressive stance is once again
visible in this phase. The AP special police, some central paramilitary forces and a
special task force of plainclothesmen began patrolling in villages in rural
Telangana.\textsuperscript{114} Five battalions of CRPF were deployed in Adilabad district alone
which since the late 1980s had become the strongest Naxalite foothold. A landmark
event of state repression was the official ban on the PWG on May 20, 1992, in
response to the PWG's violence. The ban gave unlimited powers to police and
paramilitary forces which significantly deterred naxalite activities in the following
months.\textsuperscript{115}

So far, specific policies pursued by the two state governments in AP – the
Congress(I) and the TDP – to meet the naxalite challenge have been outlined. Apart
from these, there are also other coercive measures commonly used by both the
Congress and the TDP governments in response to the Naxalite movement in the

\textsuperscript{113} Malllepalli Laxmaiah. \textit{Dalita Paksham Part-I}, Hyderabad: Centre for Dalit Studies Publications,
November 2010, Pp. 35-38.

\textsuperscript{114} Thupaki Rajyam: \textit{Peruguthunna Nirbhandam Meeda Nivedhika}, Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh

\textsuperscript{115} For details see Venu Gopal, N. "Fake Encounters: Story of Andhra Pradesh." \textit{Economic and
Political Weekly} 2007, Pp. 4109-4111.
state.\textsuperscript{116} In fact, this package of coercive measures is common to other parts of the country as well, where violent confrontations against the state have become manifest. The common package, known as TADA (the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act), emerged in 1985 in response to the violent secessionist movements in Punjab and the north eastern states. In time, this Act also came to be widely used in AP to meet the naxalite challenge.

TADA permitted police to arrest persons suspected of being involved in criminal activities against the state and retain them for an unspecified period without trial. In AP thousands of arrests have been made under this act. Innocent villagers who were suspected of aiding the naxalites, tribals, rural youth, journalists and civil liberties activists were booked under TADA and retained in prison for months or even years without even being produced before a magistrate, much less given a proper trial. Under constitution which in spirit incorporates the principle that every person is innocent until proven otherwise this act represented a mockery and in fact an antithesis of the legal system. It is a threat to the fundamental rights of citizens guaranteed in the constitution.

In AP the state governments, both TDP and Congress, have resorted to the use of TADA as a means to curb Naxalism. In practice, TADA did indeed have a deterring effect on the spread of the Naxalite influence. The fact that in recent years the movement has become isolated from the masses and has become confined only to a limited number of people who are known as hard-core Naxalites can be, to some

extent, attributed to the effectiveness of this act. It could deter potentially sympathetic groups from joining the Naxalite cadres.\textsuperscript{117}

Along with TADA, there is the AP Suppression of Disturbances Act, which, as mentioned earlier, provided the state government with wide arbitrary powers of detention, search and seizure in areas declared as disturbed. This act has been declared in the naxalite affected districts in Telangana a number of times since 1978.\textsuperscript{118} This is the only law which in effect allows the police to open fire on groups of people on mere suspicion of being engaged in violent activities. This law gives the executive wide powers to confront violence and has been widely misused by the state. While in theory, this law permits police to act only if the suspect is armed and poses a considerable challenge to life and liberty of other citizens; in practice, the police have used the law to indiscriminately kill innocent people.\textsuperscript{119}

The so-called "encounter killings" in recent years are a consequence of this act. Typically, an 'encounter' is an incident in which armed naxalites confront the police somewhere in a thickly forested area and an exchange of fire takes place between the two. The accidental death of a Naxalite in such a confrontation is described as an encounter killing. While this is what an encounter is understood to be, the reality is quite different. In the majority of cases it is neither true that the victim is an armed naxalite activist nor that he/she died after making an attempt on the lives of the police, thereby creating a situation where the police had to fire back in self-


defense. In most cases, the victim is an unarmed villager who is taken into custody by the police on mere suspicion and shot dead in cold blood in the forest areas.\textsuperscript{120} According to one estimate, 1066 encounter deaths have been reported in AP in the period between 1968 and 1993.\textsuperscript{121} Most are instances of terrorism producing legal sanction for state terrorism which soon gets out of control in the dialectic of insurgent terrorism versus state terrorism. It is particularly against such state-sponsored terrorism that the civil liberties movement got started in AP.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES MOVEMENT

The Indian constitution is almost unique among the third world constitutions and for that matter even among those belonging to the so-called western democratic world in incorporating a chapter on fundamental rights enforceable through judicial review. Though certain provisions compromising the true spirit of democracy, such as preventive detention, are written into the constitution, the courts have afforded protection against the rigors of this provision.

A vigilant public opinion buttressed by a free press has also been a watchdog. Various associations promoting civil liberties have monitored the record of the government in the preventive detention area. However, there have been several instances, especially in times of acute crisis, when the government has resorted to extra-legal methods in order to deal with dissident groups.\textsuperscript{122} There have been equally strong reactions from civil liberties associations protesting and condemning


\textsuperscript{121} “Mystery killings by the police,” \textit{Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee Report}, June 6, 1987.

government actions. So effective has been the pressure from such groups that the government has often been forced to respond by taking certain remedial measures.

It is in the context of the state response to the Naxalite movement that the civil liberties movement in AP started. The civil liberties movement in AP today is headed by an organization of mostly urban middle class intellectuals, academics, writers and lawyers, known as the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC). Before the formation of the APCLC there were other civil liberties groups like the organization of Peoples Union Democratic Rights (PUDR) and Citizens for Democracy, an organization established by Jayaprakash Narayan.

The role of civil liberties groups has been mainly in protecting the rights and liberties of minority dissident and radically protesting groups like the Naxalites.123 The AP government's use of outright repressive means in dealing with Naxalites has attracted the attention of these groups and they have since been putting pressure on the government to adopt democratic methods in dealing with the Naxalites. Since the post-Emergency period, the civil liberties groups have been constantly exposing the extra-legal and unlawful methods adopted by the police, such as encounter killings and illegal detentions.124 Often these groups have forced the governments at the centre and the state levels to check their policies and at times take serious remedial measures to correct them.125


The civil liberties groups, particularly since the post-Emergency period, have been involved in conducting inquiries into alleged violations of the human rights code by the state. In 1977, in the period following the rise of the Janata Party to power at the centre, Jayaprakash Narayan, as president of Citizens for Democracy, set up a committee headed by Mr. V.M. Tarkunde to collect evidence about the use of extra-legal means by the state vis-a-vis the Naxalites. The Tarkunde Committee, after a thorough investigation, concluded in its report that there was sufficient evidence to warrant a judicial inquiry into all so-called 'encounters killings' in AP. Further, the committee also concluded that the AP government was heavily involved in the 'crimes' against the Naxalites. It recommended that the central government institute a judicial inquiry into the encounter deaths that took place during the emergency period.

The Bhargava Commission was formed as a consequence of the recommendations. But it was the state government, under the direction of the centre, which constituted this commission. In fact, Justice Bhargava's name was suggested by the central government. The main purpose of the Bhargava Commission was to collect facts about the allegations of murder, torture and brutal treatment of naxalite prisoners and to suggest alternative administrative measures to deal with this problem in the future. However, the commission was not told to pinpoint the responsibility for the crimes (if any were committed). In the first few months of the inquiry, various non-governmental civil liberties groups participated in the proceedings of the

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128 Ibid.
Bhargava Commission. But, as the inquiry gained momentum, the state government's interference in the procedures of the commission increased.\textsuperscript{129} One significant method of manipulation was the insistence of the government that the commission hold some of its sittings in camera as the issues unfolding before it were highly sensitive. This insistence of the state government came in response to threats from police officials to resign if further evidence before the commission were not gathered in camera.\textsuperscript{130} With this, private civil liberties groups withdrew from the proceedings of the Bhargava Commission. Some of them instituted their own fact-finding committees.

Meanwhile, the Bhargava Commission, even within the narrow scope of its operation was eliciting evidence and it became evident both from the nature of the evidence gathered and the comments and remarks that Justice Bhargava was making during the inquiry that state government officials, especially the police, were coming under heavy indictment.\textsuperscript{131} Soon the commission itself was wound up and its report never saw the light of the day. The whole Bhargava Commission inquiry proved only to be a farce, a half-hearted measure by the state to pacify civil liberties groups. Its importance is limited to being a symbolic gesture of the state's concern for civil liberties.\textsuperscript{132}

The next major step taken by the Indian state towards protection of civil liberties was the establishment of a human rights commission by the central

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Mohan Ram. "Getting away with murder," \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}. September 3, 1979, p. 1209.
\end{itemize}
government. In view of the pressure from prominent human rights bodies like Amnesty International and civil liberties groups in various parts of the country, the central government formed a national human rights commission in 1993 under the chairmanship of Justice Raganath Mishra. Within a year of the formation of the NHRC, the APCLC, which had been the most active civil liberties association in the State, submitted a complaint against the AP state government concerning the incidents of encounter killings of Naxalites. The commission responded with alacrity and a fact-finding committee of the NHRC visited AP in August 1994. The inquiry proceedings of the NHRC reveal the power exercised by the police in AP. All potential witnesses before the commission, particularly one member of the APCLC, were repeatedly harassed and even beaten up by the police. In spite of such obstacles, the commission conducted its inquiry. The report of the NHRC is yet to be published.

PEACE TALKS

A situation has emerged in Andhra Pradesh, particularly in the Telengana area, where the States and its agencies show little respect for law and life and the Naxalite parties too practice ruthless violence regardless of people’s concerns and sufferings. While one death is as tragic and as a meaningless as another, over 2500 persons have been killed by the State in police encounters during the past 35 years, and almost as many have lost their lives at the hands of Naxalites during the same period. In this discourse of violence that has been engaging the State and the Naxalites, the society is

getting progressively brutalized and people becoming increasingly, insensitive, often reduced to passive spectators.\textsuperscript{134}

The idea of the ‘Peace Talks’ was put forth by Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) in 2000.\textsuperscript{135} The CCC stated that its purpose was to bring down the violence levels from all sides as well as more responsive and law-abiding governance, and an end to the excessive use of force. Initially Naxalite were not keen to participate in the talks and even the Government did not respond enthusiastically.\textsuperscript{136}

Despite these obstacles, the CCC continued to try and persuade both the Government and the Naxalites to engage in a dialogue.\textsuperscript{137} In May 2002 the PW unilaterally declared a ceasefire and appointed two representatives, a revolutionary poet and a singer, to discuss the modalities for talks with the Government. From 4-11\textsuperscript{th} June they met two state cabinet ministers appointed by the Government for this purpose, but these ministers lacked power and a clear agenda.\textsuperscript{138} The Government was only interested in a unilateral surrender of the Naxalites. The 2002 talks were not taken seriously and consequently the CCC's initiative was not successful.

In the May 2004 elections, the Congress Party promised in its manifesto to hold talks with the Naxalites. And after the Congress Party came to power, the Chief


Minister immediately announced the stopping of police encounters and combing operations for Naxalites and called for talks. The CPI (ML) – Peoples War (Politburo and State Committee) as well as CPI (ML) – Janashakti announced their readiness for talks and a ceasefire on their part, if a ceasefire was announced by Government. The Government announced a “ceasefire” for a period of three months commencing from 16 June 2004, at the initiative of the Home Minister of the State, a series of discussions took place on various aspects of modalities for talks with the emissaries of Peoples War/Jana Shakti, the Committee of Concerned Citizens and others. The ban imposed by the State Government on the CPI (MdavorthyL) Peoples War and its allied organizations which was in force for almost nine years was allowed to lapse on 21 July 2004. For the purpose of having a conducive atmosphere for talks, there was an exchange of letters between the Government and the CPI (ML) -Peoples War,CPI (ML) Janashakti parties laying down the ground rules, to be followed during the period of the talks (commonly known as ceasefire agreement). A set of seven ground rules was also agreed upon. A monitoring Committee was also set up to oversee the adherence to the ground rules.139

After finalization of the modalities and the tentative agenda; the Peace Talks actually commenced on the 15th October 2004. The Government team was led by the Home Minister Mr. Jana Reddy, and consisted of some other ministers as well as leaders of the Congress Party. The team of Mediators included Mr S.R. Sankaran, Shri K.G. Kannabiran and six others. The CPI (ML) -Peoples War (which has since become known as CPI (Maoist), after the merger with Maoist Communist Centre) and CPI (ML) -Janashakti were represented by their State leaders. The discussions were

completed in regard to the first two items of the agenda (out of a total of eleven). The first item was in regard to the democratic atmosphere including withdrawal of cases against people for agitations; release of political prisoners; removal of price on the heads of revolutionary leaders and controlling of mafia and anti-social elements. The second item was discussed in great detail was land distribution to the poor, including issues relating to lands of tribal people. The first round of talks ended on the night of 18th October 2004 in a cordial atmosphere with the hope of meeting again for the next round to discuss other items such as self-reliance.\textsuperscript{140}

The government termed the talks cordial and productive but the Naxalites described them as unsatisfactory because the Government had given no concrete assurance. The mediators described the talks as historic and appealed to both the parties to maintain their restraint on the ground and hoped that the next round of talks could be convened in a month or two.\textsuperscript{141}

But the next round of talks almost became impossible. The Government neither showed any signs of extending nor extended the period of ceasefire. The cabinet met on December 16\textsuperscript{th}, when the ceasefire was due to be extended but said nothing thus smashing any possibility of second round of ‘Peace Talks.’ And the statements of the then Chief Minister Y S Rajeshekar Reddy that there would be no talks with Naxalites about peoples’ problems and there would be no toleration of armed men and women further reflected the Governments intentions.\textsuperscript{142} The absence of any concrete agenda from the Government’s side and not providing the suitable


\textsuperscript{141} Committee for Concern Citizens(CCC), \textit{Report on Peace Talks:} Hyderabad: CCC Published, 2006, p 78.

\textsuperscript{142} K. Balagopal., “Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh: Have we heard the last of the Peace Talks?” \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, Vol. 26\textsuperscript{th} March, (2005), Pp. 1323-1328.
platform for second round of talks showed the Government in poor light and raised serious questions about its commitment in resolving Naxalite problem peacefully.

On the other hand Naxalite parties gained a fresh ideological ground and sympathy among common people. During the last decade, Naxalite became infamous for causing loss to public property and killing police and political leaders. This talks provided them a chance to show the public that they fight for the public issues like land distribution to the poor, free access to education and healthcare, regional underdevelopment, corruption by government officials, etc., when Naxalite leaders included these issues in their agenda. This was also evident when scores of people went to meet the Naxalite leaders when they were stationed at the government guest house with their problems asking the leaders to include them in their discussions with the Government.

However Radical Left Movement suffered a huge loss in terms of their cadre and top leaders. Soon after Peace Talks Top leader Riyaz was killed in an encounter.

There was a huge conspiracy behind ‘Peace Talks’ Covert operations was in full swing and through its intelligence wing the State

Government traced out important locations and Maoist hideouts in Nallamala forest and began the process of extermination.\textsuperscript{146}

There was a severe repression on the party activities. They were pushed back from their strong holds to Chattisgarh and Madya Pradesh.

\textsuperscript{146} Maoists in India:Writings & Interviews By Azad, Hyderabad: Azad Friends Published, 2010, Pp. 74-78.