

Chapter: VI

Involvement of the Students in the Naxalbari Peasant Movement and After (1967-1977)

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Chapter VI

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● **Introduction**

In 1967, the outbreak of an agrarian movement at Naxalbari, in the outskirts of the Siliguri Sub-division of Darjeeling district, was an event of great significance not only in the history of the agrarian movements but also in the subsequent movements also. The name 'Naxalbari' is now a well-known place in the political atlas in India. The peasants of this area protested against the age long Jotedars' domination. One significant feature of the movement was the participation of students in the movement at par with peasants. But till now, their role was not highlighted by any scholar or historian. In this chapter, a humble attempt is made to highlight and locate the role of students in the Naxalbari Peasant Movement.

● **New Dimension of Student Movement**

During this time the student movement broke away from the vestige of its past and took a new line of operation. At first it denied any stewardship of any political party. In fact, it grew into an indomitable off spring of the society. This was an age of marvelously new age of protest and rational opposition to anything conventional.¹ One can mark this time as one of acceptance of any argument with cautious examination of its truth. In the 19th Century Bengal Renaissance Derozio gave leadership to a vibrant Young

Bengal. The achievement of such a scale cannot stand up right by the age rational opposition, which we have already referred to. In brief, the youth of the then Bengal was a bold and fourth right man. This man was irritated too much by the adverse situation of his time and endeavoured to raise himself to the highest height, which was more than his in born greatness. These are the circumstances, which explain very clearly this youth's sense of revolution. Often the sensibilities of this youth would explode violently if his individualism and sense of right were interfered with.²

However, from what has been discussed above it must not be concluded that every youth of that times Bengal was like others. In fact, it was just an idealization of a young man who devoted himself to revolutionize and otherwise outdated social system. But here too a risk of over simplification of a social phenomenon runs in this act of idealization. Statistically in the student and youth movement, the active participation of the students and youth was to the turn of twenty to twenty five percent. But this movement could be as powerful as many others provided it with unquestioning support. Already a reference has been made to the explosion of anger of students but that was a mixture of socio-economic and political reactions. This was the witch's brew of every movement.³

In the year 1967, when student movement reached its climax the 4th General Election was held. Along with this election, Assembly Polls in some of the states of India were also conducted. West Bengal was one of these states. People's grief became terrific at this time and demonstrations started to manifest people's disapproval of the

attitudes of the National Congress Party, the then all India ruling party. Disintegration in the Congress party was seen. With this background the leftists in West Bengal started their preparation with full force for the election, which was announced to be held in the month of February, 1967.⁴ On the eve of the election of 1967, CPI(M) promised in their Election Manifesto that they would end the police interference in stopping any democratic movement, if they were ever brought into power.⁵ Seeing that the promise which made by the Left Front, the leftist students began an extensive publicity campaign in support of them. After the election, it was found that the leftist had won the battle for power and as a consequence **14 Party United Front Government** was formed. West Bengal got Mr. Ajoy Mukherjee, the leader of Bangla Congress as the Chief Minister of the United Front Government.⁶

● Looking at Naxalbari

In the Assembly Polls of 1967, Jangal Santal of CPI (M) was chosen as a candidate from the Naxalbari Assembly Seat. His supporters of Naxalbari and the students of North Bengal University in a body campaigned for him. Nathuram Biswas, the then student leader of Naxalbari area said, *"We campaigned widely in support of Jangal Santal and against Government, police and jotedars. We participated in different meetings and processions. To side with us some students from NBU took part in this publicity drive. In spite of this intensive and extensive campaigning, Jangal Santal courted defeat in that election by a margin of 4000 votes. Ishwar Tirki, a candidate of congress won the poll. Jangal Santal might have failed in the contest but we did not lose heart because Left Front in West Bengal achieved victory and*

United Front Government was established under the leadership of Mr. Ajay Mukherjee. We believed that, henceforth, all our problems would be solved, atrocities usually committed by jotedars and the police would come to an end. But within a few days things began to take a reverse direction to frustrate us.”⁷ Kisan Chatterjee, veteran Student Leader of 60s, NBU, of this time held the same view. He said, “In 1967 election, we continued our campaign at Naxalbari and Siliguri for the Left Front. Being satisfied by the election promises offered by the CPI(M) and keeping in our mind the evil of the bad administration of the Congress Party. We, especially Dilip Bagchi, Pabitra Pani Saha, Kumkum Bhattacharyya, Ranjit Chatterjee, Probodh Sarkar and Amit Sen took part in the election campaign. But the victory of the Left Front did not bring about any changes in the hitherto repulsive political landscape of west Bengal. This was a starter of the jingoist movement of the students who were then much agonized by the frustrating volte-face of the Left front Government.”⁸

In the March of 1967, after a few days of the oath taking ceremony for the Left front Ministry, the victorious MLA as well as a big land owner Ishwar Tirki beat Begul Kisan, a bargadar (share-cropper) in his farm for uprooting him from his homestead. When the Peasant Association of Naxalbari protested against this conspiracy Ishwar Tirki struck out his gun. At this, the peasants went to the police and complained them of this incident. The police in response went to the area of violence not to arrest Ishwar Tirki but to nab the member of the victimized Peasant Association. The adverse impact of this incident was reflected in the behaviour of the peasants and students. The students went in a procession demanding the immediate arrest

of Ishwar Tirki without blinking at his crime.⁹ It can be said that this was the background of the armed peasant uprising that took place at Naxalbari.

On 18th March 1967, at Rambola Jote of Naxalbari a convention of peasants was held. In this convention the decision of launching armed struggle against Government, Police and Jotedars was taken. On the 7th May same year at Bandarjhuli of Naxalbari area divided all the land holding among the peasants and handed over all powers of administering these lands to them. It was decided that the police would not be allowed to enter the villages. All the weapons of the jotedars would have to be seized and with them the peasants would have to be armed. Above all, as that decision said, all sale deeds of all lands would have to be gutted.¹⁰ Some students of NBU and the students residing at Naxalbari supported this decision of the Peasants' Association. From a statement made by Kisan Chatterjee, it came to be known that a band of students of NBU went to different villages of Naxalbari to bring out paddy and rice from the houses of jotedars for distributing among the needy peasants under the leadership of Kisan Chatterjee, Dilip Bagchi and Pabitra Pani Saha.¹¹

The incidents of 24th and 25th May of 1967 rocked the whole world. Till today the circumstances that led to this incident and the incidents themselves are a mystery to many of us. On the 24th May 1967, a big detachment of the police entered the villages of Naxalbari to resist the peasants from carrying on with their armed looting and plundering. The police had at that time an additional responsibility to save the jotedars too. Hundreds of armed peasant

attacked the police with bows & arrows, stick and lances. They killed a police named Sonam Wangdi on the spot. Another police officer Mr. Narayan Chakraborty was pierced by a number of arrows and being wounded thus he began shouting, "save me, save me". Seeing that the situation was taking an untoward direction other policemen got back. But the next day i.e. 25th May, a number of policemen and Para-military forces made forays into these villages killed indiscriminately 11 persons. Among these 11 persons 9 were women, a child and a farmer.¹² Later, after a survey and an interview with Khokan Majumdar the name of eight women and one peasant could be known who were killed in police firing. The names of the persons killed in this incident were identified as Dhaneswari Devi, Phulmati Devi, Goudrou Shaibani, Simaswari Mallick, Nayenswari Mallick, Sonamati Singh, Surabala barman, Shyamaswari Shaibani and Kharsingh Mallick. Thereafter, Naxalbari High School police camp of different kinds was posted against any such armed insurgency. Not only at the Naxalbari High School, but also in rural areas and tea gardens police camps started working to the same effect. Inevitably, the rebel peasants went into the hideouts and from there they continued to direct their followers in their struggle against the Government atrocities. During this time youths and students of Naxalbari carried information about the rural peasants to different hideouts and vice-versa.¹³

After this peasant uprising of Naxalbari a big section of youths and students community began deliberating on revolutionary politics and even some of them plunged into the activities to contribute to the revolution for the emancipation of the peasants and labourers.¹⁴

It seems that the Naxalbari struggle created a stir among the students of North Bengal University and Presidency College who organized demonstration in support of the peasant struggle.¹⁵ According to Kisan Chatterjee, the then veteran student leader of NBU, the problems of the peasant always posed to be social problem to them. They claimed that they were aware the demands and the aspirations of the peasants much ahead of the day when the Naxalbari uprising occurred. Many students regularly attended different meetings and assemblies of the peasants. That is why they considered the peasants' want and aspirations as social problem.¹⁶ While explaining the reason that drove Naxalbari to the peasant upheaval Kisan Chatterjee enlightened us about the background of the students' participation in the movement: *"80% of the students of the whole of West Bengal come from the families of the peasants and workers. Therefore, these students are well aware of the day to day problems that plunged the peasants and workers. This made us to believe that the problems of the peasants of Naxalbari were the problems of our society as a whole. So, we did not hesitate in jumping into the movement irrespective of our party loyalty and ideological belief."*¹⁷

After the Naxalbari uprising the Government appointed a few loyal informers for tracing the Naxalites, hiding in the rural areas. Taking the help of these informers the police combed the villages and perpetrated atrocities in the houses of few peasants. Even the women of this place were not spared. This torture continued time and again. When the news of this torture reached NBU, about 70% of the students of the University began to protest these police excesses.

They decided that they would stop the police vehicle at Shibmandir area near NBU. As per this decision about 50-60 students of NBU in the middle of June in one morning stopped three to four police Jeep coming from Naxalbari. The Jeeps were carrying a few peasant arrested at Naxalbari. There were some informers in these Jeeps who used to help the police in arresting the peasants. The news of the intersection of the police jeeps went to the Hostel of NBU and near about 300 students reached Shibmandir areas which strengthened the students' assemblies. They started beating the police without any let-up or hindrance and then snatched away the arrested peasant from the police custody. Immediately, the SDO of Siliguri Sub-Division arrived at the place of incident and to him a demand for an unconditional release of the prisoners was placed. The SDO ordered a release of the arrested peasants after understanding the seriousness of the situation. One thing deserved to be mentioned here is that the students snatched away the informers from the police Jeeps, shaved their heads, putting around their necks wreaths of shoes and they were made to walk in the streets of Shibmandir.¹⁸ This was a manifestation of the fume of grief accumulated among the students of NBU for a long time.

Immediately, after this incident three students were suspended from attending the class by the University Authority on charge of intercepting police vehicle and snatching away prisoners. They were also accused of forcefully taking away food grains from the house of Jotedars. These three student leaders were Kisan Chatterjee, Dilip Bagchi and Pabitra Pani Saha. Students started a big rally against the suspension order of the University. This movement gradually spread

throughout West Bengal. The agitating students placed a charter of demands before starting their movements. The demands were:

1. Immediate withdrawal of the suspension order served upon Kisan Chatterjee, Dilip Bagchi and Pabitra Pani Saha.
2. Withdrawal of the security force and the police by declaring the emergency as null and void.
3. Immediate holding of examinations after restoration of peaceful and normal condition in the University without any delay.
4. Nullifying all cases against the students and withdrawal of arrest warrant against them.

After these demands were placed by the agitating students, Prof. A. C. Roy, the then Vice-Chancellor, NBU arranged a convention. But the agitators boycotted the convention and clearly opined that the day to day administration of the University could not be continued only with the help of police and military.¹⁹

Close on the heels of the snatching of the imprisoned peasants from the police custody by the students of NBU, the students were suffering from police atrocities and anti-social repression. After the snatching was committed, anti-socials of Siliguri were set on the students. The supporters and leaders of Naxalbari movement dwelling Siliguri apprised the students of NBU of these atrocities. These made the students of NBU very alert about the reality of the situation²⁰. In the month of 1967, one day at noon a band of armed miscreants came outside, a Truck entered in the University and

began searching for the pro-Naxalbari students. The news of this eventuality reached the Hostel and massive number of students came out armed with sticks and clubs. They encircled the miscreants and beat them black and blue. Noticing that the situation was going out of control, the NBU authority called off the police and Paramilitary forces in the University campus and closed the Hostels, postponed all the examinations sine die. Prof. A. C. Roy, the then Vice-Chancellor issued an order to the students to vacate the Hostels instantaneously. The agitators left the Hostels and went home.²¹

Although, the agitators went home, the movement did not stop completely. On 22nd September, 1967 Kisan Chatterjee was arrested at Suri of Birbhum District and this triggered of a fresh demonstration, which spread throughout West Bengal. At noon of 30th September, 1967 students of different localities of Calcutta assembled at the University of Calcutta and in protest against the arrest of Kisan Chatterjee. A long procession of the students marched towards the Writers' Building. When it reached to Esplanade (East), was obstructed by a police cordon. Four representatives from this procession of students met the Hon'ble Education Minister and submitted to him a deputation. Speeches by different student leaders like Dilip Bagchi, Saibal Mitra, Ajjul Haque were delivered before this cordon procession. In the speeches protest was sounded against the arrest of Kisan Chatterjee and other students. The speakers demanded their release from jail and the acquittal of Jangal Santal and other peasants, arrested in connection with the Naxalbari movement.²²

● Movement shifted from North to South

A tremendous reaction among the students of Calcutta and its adjoining areas was seen after the incidents involving Naxalbari areas of 24th & 25th of May, 1967. Thereafter, Students' Federation led by CPI (M) faced with disintegration into two belligerent fractions. The fraction led by Dinesh Majumdar began propagating for CPI (M) which was a party to the Naxalbari Movement among the students. On the other hand, Saibal Mitra, Asim Chatterjee, Dilip Pain, Santosh Rana sided with the armed peasant struggle of Naxalbari.²³ The latter group, after the day of Naxalbari uprising started sticking posters on the walls of different colleges including the Presidency College and the University of Calcutta in support of the revolutionary peasants. Here, mention must be made of the fact that the posters were posted in the name of Students' Federation.²⁴

In 1967, on 24th June a convention was held in the Rammohan Library Hall of Calcutta in support of the armed peasant struggle of Naxalbari. The group which was carrying on with this political works remaining within the CPI (M) was the organizers of this convention. In this convention 'Naxalbari Peasant Struggle Assistance Association' was formed. The students who were moved by the spell of the Naxalbari movement were mostly the leaders and supporters of CPI (M).²⁵ These students improvised a revolution which could change their society with the romantic enthusiasm of the youth. The Chinese Communist Party analyzed this movement and told that they were the '**Resounding Thunder of Spring**'.²⁶

With thunderous clamours the students of North Bengal and Calcutta rose up to the occasion.

In view of the series of incidents that took place in Naxalbari in the name of the peasant struggle purging of the Naxalbari path began in the West Bengal Unit of the CPI (M). Within 1967 many party members were expelled from the levels of State Committee, District Committees and Local Committees. Among those expelled were Charu Majumdar, Saroj Dutta, Sushital Roychaudhury, Souren Bose, Kanu Sanyal and many others. Mainly, at the initiative of all these expelled party leaders the 'All India Co-Ordination Committee of Revolution' (AICCR) was formed on 13th November 1967. These expelled leaders began publishing 'Deshabrati', a Bengali weekly and 'Liberation', English Monthly. The news of the publication of these two news papers the supporters of Naxalbari movement and innumerable students and youth felt deeply influenced. These two news papers had an identical and ideological stand with the '**Chhatra Fauj**' which was published by the radical students.²⁷

Following the occurrence of the peasant struggle of Naxalbari, revolutionary functionaries among students got separated into two different parts. These two fractions were Chhatra Fauj and Presidency Consolidation respectively. Almost, all Colleges of Calcutta and Jadavpur got themselves entangled with any of these fractions. They looked upon the Naxalbari peasant struggle as a peoples' liberation war of India. The Chinese Communist Party particularly came out with full support for the Naxalbari peasant struggle. These acted as a fantastic inspiration to the radical

students. The aim of the students was to destroy the sources and the roots of rural feudal exploitation. Side by side with it they wanted to uproot the roots of imperialism from different levels of the society in India.²⁸

On the issue of supporting the Naxalbari peasant movement, Chhatra Fauj and Presidency Consolidation were involved in a severe mutual internecine battle. One can get a proof of this battle of opinion from an article, anonymously written and published in Deshabrati. This anonymous writer of the article sent out a call, said, *“Friends, petty bourgeois, petty Trotskyites bourgeois and jingoist economists have become very active in different spheres of life. They do not organize a student on the basis of the politics of agrarian revolution. They are misleading the students by making them party to movement for achieving the fulfillment of limited demands. They are engaging the students in making political propaganda works and forming organization to start movement for highlighting very trivial issues. They are reactionaries and revisionists. Comrade starts struggle against these political opportunists”*.²⁹ This letter published in Deshabrati was mainly a focus on the belligerence of the Presidency Consolidation and Chhatra Fauj with each other. Although, the two fractions were torn by political conflicts between them, the events of Naxalbari cast on indelible spell over them.

In reality the Naxalbari incident was never an expression of simple version of theoretical and imaginary programme of action. The students actually found in it a living and realistic schedule of action against the cruel reactionary forces of India. Social transformation

was not merely a word of books- this stood out as an outstanding truth in Russia and China. India, along with these countries was a fertile ground for starting this transformation as an irrefutable support to this claim of the revolutionaries. The Naxalbari uprising is always offered as a proof of this.³⁰ But leftist students were disarranged by the Naxalbari phenomenon. Fractional differences bungled the ideological unity among them. In 1967, the fact that came out as a stark truth was that Communist Students' Federation were faced with a three part division- one part of it was led by CPI, another by CPI(M) and last but not the least the followers of the Naxalbari peasant struggle i.e. the Radical Students' Federation.³¹

Right at the start of 1968 going along the part of Naxalbari began to gain strength by degrees. The students were gaining strength spontaneously, although, they did not have any central organization. In many of the colleges of West Bengal a storm started to rage very easily. At the beginning of 1968 in the election that was held at Bangabasi College Students' Federation inspired by neo-fangled politics occupied 60 seats out of 68. The opposition students' wing was the Chhatra Parisad led by Subrata Mukherjee which was pitted against the Students' Federation. This victory in the Students Union election at Scottish Church College and City Commerce College created as sensation in the College Street locality.³² Everywhere in West Bengal Naxalite Students could strengthen their bases and this was proved by a report published in the Ananda Bazar Patrika. From that report of 9th March 1968, it could be known at that time an official survey was undertaken. This survey revealed that in 65

colleges of the state the Naxalite candidates won in the Students' Union election.³³

Students supporting path of action raised various political issues in the above said elections. These were global movement against imperialistic exploitation, comparative study of the roles played by China and Soviet Union in different national liberation movement, Vietnamese liberation war, the revolutionary way of China, the agrarian revolution spreading in India, Naxalbari phenomena and that of the first United Front Government of West Bengal to name a few. On the basis of these political issues the foundation was made for fortifying the stand of the Naxalbari path.³⁴ In fact, after the Naxalbari uprising the students wanted to highlight their revolutionary profile for liberating the oppressed classes of the state.³⁵

● **How far the Students conscious?**

How far student community was conscious about the social realities can be ascertained by dividing it into three parts. First of these three parts is the political consciousness and this part is very well organized and usually led the students' demonstration. To the second part belonged a group of active workers who usually works keeping the leadership at the centre. Some of these workers were conscious, some less conscious and still others were there who usually took part in different students' movements on account of either on the ground of humanity or democracy. In almost all the students' organizations these democrats and humanists were usually account for large number. The third part of the student

community was a mammoth crowd of students who never supported any organization but jumped into action whenever these movements gained maximum momentum. They came like powerful cascades and they recede whenever they look the adequate stimulation for doing it. This is the usual picture of the political behavior of the student community as a whole. But when Naxalbari came into relief as a spot of revolutionary rebellion the intra-community could not any more disturb the students in uniting very strongly for the cause of representing very stubbornly the oppressed classes of their society. A large scale political and social awakening took place in the psychology of the students of West Bengal. This was proved clearly when in 1968 Dharmveer, the then Governor of West Bengal advised the dismantling of the United Front Cabinet. Then it was the radical students who protested very hardly against this decision of the Governor, whatever might be the reason of the fall of the United Front Government, the way of suspending the Government was not at all taken lightly by the radicals. Loud and severe protest was made by the radicals against these showdowns by the Government.³⁶

In 1968 on 20th February, the Cabinet of Dr. Prafulla Ghosh was rendered inactive by an official directive. President's Rule came in the wake of it. It lasted for one year in West Bengal. During this time the supporters of Naxalbari movement became the victim of police atrocities. At this time many of the Naxalite workers and leaders were arrested and the rest went into hideouts. Mid- term poll fixed on the date of 9th February, 1969 came with a bang. Election was held and the United Front came out with absolute majority. The

second United Front Government was formed. Within a few days of the formation of this Government, a bloody conflict took place between the youth of CPI(M) and the radical students. In this conflict, a worker of DYFI, Krishna Roy by name died. Excitement spread in the College Street area after the death of Krishna Roy. Thus, began a protracted conflict between the two groups, which is still continued.³⁷

● Formation of Radical Student Wing

Another historic event occurred following the path of Naxalbari politics in the days of Second United Front Government. On 22nd April of 1969, on the birth day of Lenin in Calcutta in a secret meeting of AICCR the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) or CPI(M-L) was constructed. In a public meeting on 1st day of May, 1969 at the foot of Sahid Minar Comrade Kanu Sanyal, one of the eminent Naxal leaders announced the formation of such a party. On the day of announcement of CPI (M-L) the presence of radical students and youth was impressive.³⁸

After the announcement of the formation of the CPI(M-L) the radical students and youth worker keeping the political directives of the RYSF high above participated freely in putting the political programme of action of the CPI(M-L) into reality. Students, supporters of Naxalbari path of action, were attracted by the activities of the Communist Party of China. They propagated the message and the spirit of the **Redbook** and the philosophy of Mao-Tse-Tung. They began sloganeering, as 'the chairman of China is our Chairman'. The radical students left cities for villages to work hand

in hand with the peasants there. They sacrificed themselves in making a stronghold of peasant movement in the rural areas of West Bengal. A struggle for political emancipation started in the country thereby necessitating collection of small weapons, organizing secret association and making safe hideouts. They started movements against the ruling class for saving the peasants from the tortures of jotedars. If needed, they even took resort to politics of man haunting. Thus, in 1969 during the regime of the United Front Government the deliberation of the radical students and youth and their activities began to surface day after day in the different parts of the state especially in Calcutta, 24 Parganas, Midnapore, Birbhum, and Siliguri.³⁹

● 6:7 Spread of the Movement

The spread of the Naxalbari Movement and its violent character panicked the Congress Government at the centre, and the United Front Government in the state. The fears of the two Governments were mainly due to the revolutionary outcry of the Naxalite students. They called the supporters of Naxalite movement to take part in the campaign of 'Let's move to the villages'. In this campaign several skirmishes between the hooligans of the jotedars and the Naxalites, three persons were killed. A proof in support of this incident can be found in the issue of Ananda Bazar Patrika of 7th May, 1969. The report reads like this: "*Sudeb, Sashi and Gurudas were killed in the hands of the goondas of Jotedars at Keshpur Police Station. Among these three persons Sudeb Chakraborty was a student and the rest two were peasants.*" In Calcutta too the radical students clashed with their opponents. This made the Govt. anxious.

Following this incident, in the **Rajya Sabha**, the Union Home Minister appealed, “*all to unite against the Naxalite*’⁴⁰ In West Bengal Mr. Jyoti Basu, the then Deputy Chief Minister of the United front Government, remarked that, “*the Naxalites were half political and half antisocial elements*”.⁴¹ In a rally in the Maidan of Calcutta Mr. Promod Dasgupta, the then prominent leader of the CPI(M) told that, “*if the police handed over to them the Naxalites, they would given them the proper dressing down within a matter of 24 hours.*” He went further to wonder, “*whether the guns of the policemen were jammed with condoms, otherwise how came it that the Naxalites did not die of bullet injury.*”⁴² In a straighten reply to this brazen reactionary stand of the CPI(M), Mr. Kanu Sanyal asserted that, “*they would counter to violence with violence.*”⁴³ In this way the whole perspective of move to village campaign was turned into a theatre of armed encounters, murders and police repressions.

Mr. Charu Majumdar, the main organizer and the first secretary of the CPI(M-L), in the continuing circumstances wrote an article which featured a call to the students and youth. An extract of this article published in **Deshabrati** “*...in every stage of the national movement of India youth and student of Bengal sacrificed all their personal interest selflessly. They made the message of liberation and the struggle for it reach village after village undauntedly. They tackled bravely the policy of the repression of the police. They kept themselves busy day in and day out for working as political ideologues after ending violently the ‘dream of making career’ though being studious scholars. In this time when a new age is coming into being when the imperialism is about to face complete destruction, when in countries*

all over the world revolution blazing to daunt the reactionaries, when the revolutionary fire has spread from Naxalbari to Srikakulam, from Assam to the Punjab, then this self sacrificing students and youths of Bengal should take over the responsibility of propagating revolutionary politics among the labourers and peasants. They must be attentive to the case of impoverish and landless peasants in this regard."⁴⁴ On the 5th March of 1970, in another article published in ***Deshabrati***, Charu Majumdar addressed the students, "Now leave your schools and colleges and begin pursuing the end of revolutionary by all means."⁴⁵ After reading all these articles radical students began engaging themselves in various destructive activities.

With the call that Charu Majumdar blared to the students and youths demonstration of their grief began to take place here and there increasingly. They involved themselves in different thrilling adventures. They started to destroy the icons, burning libraries, destroying regularly different educational institutions. They even infiltrated M.M.G. led by Ananta Singh in order to commit dacoity in various banks for realizing political aim.⁴⁶ They did not spare such high profile national heroes like Gandhi-Subhash-Rabindranath and like. Their busts were broken and pictures sullied.⁴⁷

● **After Naxalbari and the Students**

In this background of the politics of West Bengal in the beginning of the decade of 1970s it became clear that the trend of the politics of the 60s has begun to turn to something new. The tidal waves of the student movement started by the radicals began to suffer waning. They began to differ openly. The CPI(M-L) theoreticians like Sushital

Roychaudhury and Asit Sen publicly decried the politics of the radical students and youth attacking educational institutions and violent haunting of acclaimed social and political leaders. The revolutionary path taken by the radical students ran directly counter applied Naxalism. The disintegration of the CPI(M-L) foreboded an expected disintegration in the radical student movement. The wrong politics of the CPI(M-L) stifled the protest movement of the radical students.⁴⁸

An evaluation of the performance of the Naxalite students of this time the party organ of the SFI said, "To put this nefarious plan of the Congress to action educational institutions have been chosen as places for putting its forces on display. These forces used 1200 Naxalites to launch attack on the revolutionaries. From 1970 to 1971, the authorities of 250 schools announced closure of them for a few days to stop implementation of these measures. Some workers and leaders of BPSF were murdered. Teachers, Professors and even the Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University were became the victims of this politics of assassination. Prof. Gopal Sen, the then Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University was killed because he wanted to hold examinations and withdrew CRPF from the campus of it. Bimal Das, the then Head Master of Durgapur High School was tied to a chair and then burnt up. Prasanta Sarkar, the then joint secretary of BPSF, Nadia District, was put to death while he was going to take his examination. Thus, began a series of murders daily."⁴⁹

In the first part of the 1970s it became clear that the intensity of the student movement was dying down. The pioneers including the

numberless youth and students began working for bringing a radical change in the political system of the country in the second half of the 1960s. The failure in the organization of the revolutionary programme frustrated these pioneers. For this the radical students and youths beat a tragic retreat. In the first half of the year 1971 after the Bangladesh Liberation War, a vacuum in the political scene of West Bengal became conspicuous because of the backing out of the radical students from the path of democratic movement. The said vacuum was inevitably filled up by the SFI and Chhatra Parishad, ostensibly the self-seekers. This makes it clear that the terrorist activities of the radical students could not get any favourable support from the society. It was a tactical failure. Not only in India, but also in America and Europe the high waves of the radical students' movement were gradually receding back to non-entirety. The armed adventures of the youth and students of Srilanka fizzled out after the Government there trembled for a time, which was a result of violent shake off done by the rebels.⁵⁰

During this time economic crisis rocked the people tremendously, caused by slackening production, rising prices and growing unemployment. In West Bengal, the economy was virtually drifting into chaos from 1972-1973. Acute shortage of power led to loss of production from 1973-1974. Assistance from the Union Government towards meeting the grim situation of West Bengal was extremely inadequate. Even the then Chief Minister of the State was expressing his dissatisfaction with the Union Government for not complying with the request of the state for larger resources in the Fourth Five Year Plan. At this time a strong student and youth movement sprang

up against rising prices, food shortage, high unemployment and Government corruption.⁵¹ Meanwhile, in 1974 the BPSF and SFI organized a Conference with the demand for low-cost paper, kerosene and free Madhyamik education. A huge number of college and university students attended the conference.⁵²

● **Summing Up**

Therefore, it is true that the students being stimulated by the Naxalbari flare up could realize the importance of the necessity of attending to the problems of the peasants. They repeatedly proposed to occupy the position of power through armed struggle. But their idea about the problems of the peasants and the armed struggle for removing them was not clear. So, the leftist movement deviated from the Naxalbari path of action and degenerated terroristic aggression of the CPI(M-L). Not only that, the demonstrating youth and students began to be refused by the glowing of the Naxalite way of politics and the new terroristic belligerence.⁵³ In fact, the exuberance in their endeavour to topple the existing system of the idealist revolutionaries in understanding where laid the differences between the euphoric Naxalism and Neo-terrorism.

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