CHAPTER III
ORGANIZATION
Centrist political parties consider that their roles are exclusively concerned with mobilization of votes, and hence there is a tendency among them to ignore the problem of organization. However ideological parties of both extremes, left and the right, view that the questions of organization is of crucial importance. Especially leftist parties maintain a reciprocal relationship between its programmes and mass membership organization. Leftist parties evoke at least three important differences from centrist parties: 1. They have a formal membership criteria and a strong grass-roots organization. 2. Authority is more clearly allocated and visible. Organizational integration and effective intra-organizational channels of communication are worked out. 3. Career patterns of party members are more highly institutionalized and leaders tend to be recruited and promoted from within the organization. Forms of loyalty and service to the organization are important considerations.

The importance of organization in revolutionary movements increases as the movement's leadership lacks

charismatic appeal, as its regime access is low, as the ruling political elite and its coercive apparatus remain unified, and as the revolutionary struggle is protracted through time. Normally leftist movements are characterized by a broad range of functions - ideological, electoral and governing. The electoral function, although important and even crucial, is viewed not as an end-in-itself but as a means to an end. Political power is sought through the electoral process for implementing principles, programs and policies. Both winning power and exercising power are subordinated to the ideology of the party. In such a situation, the organization of successful movements must maintain effective command and communication links between leaders and followers. It must recruit and co-ordinate the efforts of activist minorities drawn from the society's various social strata. It must sustain the movement's members and their ideological commitment and ensure logistical support for their revolutionary activities. It must adapt to the new conditions as the revolutionary process is extended through time. 3

3. The attributes, functions, structural characteristics, party processes and evaluative criteria of the centrist and leftist parties are explained in the two works, Neumann, S. Modern political parties, (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1956).
See Appendices 3.1 to 3.4.
Organizations are built up with special structural specificities, as according to the demands of goals perceived by the leftist movements. The ends and means of these organizations are thus reflected in the ideological statements made explicit. As the socio-political ecologies change with every society, the nature of injustice may also vary, causing the solutions to be different. A uniform pattern of solutions are relevant only to the uniform pattern of injustices. Therefore the contents of the ideologies change and organizations quickly grasp these variations, to be purposive enough. Accordingly the goals sought, the means adopted and the time taken for achievement, all these differ from organization to organization, and from one movement or party to another movement or party.

This naturally causes differences in standards and terms of evaluative criteria also. A strong underground revolutionary organization should have the minimum of factional conflict and a clearly established chain of command running from the top of the organization's hierarchy to the bottom. It should be capable of surviving the onslaught unleashed by the ruling classes and the loss of leadership caused periodically in bloody encounters. On the other hand the organizational strength of open revolutionary movements is measured by the
extent to which the movement institutionalizes the recruitment and training of its cadres, provides formal mechanisms for their socialization and continuing indoctrination in the norms of the movement, maintains channels of communication that facilitate feedback from the rank and file to the leadership, and creates functionally specific suborganizations charged with clearly defined tasks.

As they see the domination of feudalism and semi-colonialism in India, the various Maoist groups of the CPI(ML) decide that the only possible solution is revolutionary capture of state power through armed insurrection and individual annihilation. This ideological determination warrants only an underground movement. But the non-Maoist parties, both the CPI and the CPI(M), have matured through experience and now they believe that the revolution through parliamentary strategy is ideally suited to Indian conditions. These parties act as the vanguard of the proletariat. To create the mass base, they have arranged for the functioning of several suborganizations, which could be allies in the revolution. Thus the Maoists function secretly while the non-Maoists function openly.
In this chapter, Section I describes the organizational structure of the communist parties. Section II presents a picture of the mass organizations of the CPI and the CPI(M). In Section III brief conclusions are mentioned.

Section I: Organizational structures of communist parties.

(i) Organization of CPI:

The communist party of India is the political party of the Indian working class, its vanguard, its highest form of class organization. It is a voluntary organization of workers, peasants and of toiling people in general, devoted to the cause of socialism and communism.

The CPI used to follow the constitution as amended at its Third Congress held at Madurai during the period 1953 to 1958. At its Fifth Congress at Amritsar in 1958, the CPI added a few new structures to the old constitution. Therefore both the old and new constitutions have relevance even to-day, as far as organizational issues are concerned. 4

The CPI declares that any Indian citizen, 18 years of age or above, who accepts the programme and constitution

4. See Appendices 3.5 and 3.6.
of the party, agrees to work in one of the party organizations, to pay regularly the party membership fee and to carry out the decisions of the party shall be eligible to membership. However admission into CPI is rather strict. New members are admitted to the party on individual application and through a party branch on the recommendation of two members, who give maximum truthful information about the new member to the party. The general body meeting of the party branch admits the new member to the party as a candidate member. After six months of service to the party, the member has a right to full membership.  

The structure of the party is based on and its internal life is guided by the principles of democratic centralism. Democratic centralism means: (a) All leading organizations of the party from top to bottom shall be elected. (b) The minority shall carry out the decisions of the majority, the lower organizations shall carry out the decision and directives of the higher organs, the individual shall subordinate himself to the will of the collective. (c) Periodical reports, collective decisions, paying heed

5. The details of membership, party pledge, membership cards, renewal of membership cards, resignation from the party, membership fee, duties of party members, rights of party members, etc. are explained in the articles IV to XIII of the CPI constitution. See CPI, Constitution of the community party of India (New Delhi: CPI, 1975), pp.6-12.
to criticisms are vital  
(d) The higher organ must consult 
the lower organ when any issue affecting the latter is decided by the former.  
(e) Policy-statements can be made only by the central leadership.  

The primary unit of the party is the Branch. It is 
organized on the basis of the village, panchayat, municipal 
ward, industry, factory, occupation or institution. The 
functions of the branch are:  
(a) to carry out the directions of the higher committees  
(b) to win masses in its locality for the party's organizational and political decisions  
(c) to build up and participate in mass organizations in its locality  
(d) sale of party journals and publications and  
(e) collection of membership fee and levy and party finance.  
The General Body meeting is the highest organ for the branches 
and the branch committee elected by the General body, is 
endowed with all powers.  

Intermediate party organs are organized between the 
branch and the district councils, in such places as taluqs, 
blocks or subdivisions. A local conference, consisting of 
delegates elected by the conferences of the branches in the  

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6. Article XIV, Ibid.
area, is held every year immediately after the membership renewal campaign. This local conference elects a local council and a local committee for continuous functioning.

In a district the district conference is the highest organ. It is convened once in three years by delegates elected by branch conferences and local conferences. This conference elects a District Council to function as the highest authority in the district in between two district conferences. The district council meets once in two months. Also the District Council elects a District Secretariat or District Executive including a Secretary to carry the work of the party in between two sessions of district council.

In a state, the state conference will be the highest organ, composed of delegates elected by district conferences. The functions of the state conference are: (a) to discuss and act on the political and organizational report of the state council (b) to determine the line of the party and mass work in the state (c) to elect delegates to the All India Party Congress (d) to elect the State Council (e) to elect the state control commission (f) to hear and decide on the report of the state audit commission and (g) to hear and decide on the report of the state control commission.
The State Council consists of not more than 125 members and it meets once in four months. Therefore it elects a State Executive Committee consisting of 31 members. Executive Committee is responsible for the implementation of decisions and the directives of the state council and other higher bodies. As it meets normally once in two months, this organ has come to possess practically all power.

Above the state conference, the CPI provides for the national conferences, by the name "All India Party Congresses". It is composed of delegates elected by State conferences. As this congress meets once in three years, a National Council is elected with authority to decide the political line of the party. The 125 member National Council meets once in six months and therefore it elects a Central Executive Committee to function in between the two sessions of the National Council. The CEC meets once in two months (a) to convene regular sessions of the National Council (b) to guide and assist the state councils (c) to guide the party press and publications (d) to direct the work of the party in parliament (e) to direct the party's work in mass organizations (f) to organize party education (g) to control party finance and (h) to maintain relations with fraternal parties. Also the Central Executive Committee sets up departments and committees for discharging
specific tasks. The functions of the Chairman, General Secretary and Secretariat are also governed by the Central Executive Committee. Thus the authority runs through the General Secretary, Central Executive Committee to Secretaries and State Executive Committees.

However it is not the structure that gives vitality to the organization. An organization becomes successful in the quality of its functioning. Measured by the nature of its functioning the CPI in Tamil Nadu has registered meagre progress.

Although there is a vast potential to increase its membership, the CPI membership in Tamil Nadu had remained low and it had never crossed 17% of the All India membership. An analysis of the district-wise membership of the Tamil Nadu CPI shows that the party is heavily dependent on the agricultural interests of Tanjore, Tirunelveli and Coimbatore as well as on the industrial labour of Coimbatore, Tirunelveli and Tiruchi. Of the 16 districts in the state, the party membership is heavily concentrated in the 8 districts of Tanjore, Tirunelveli, Coimbatore, Ramnad, Tiruchi, Salem, Madurai and Madras. In

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7. See Appendix 3.7. See also, Organizational Department of National Council, Drive for Annual review of party cards and recruitment of New Members, Party Life, Vol.II, No.10, October 1966, p.17.
8. See Appendices 3.8 and 3.9.
the remaining 8 districts there is very little of the party activity and membership.\(^9\)

A direct consequence of low membership was the chronic deficit in party finances. Time and again the state council had issued the plea: "Immediate collections for building the party and sustaining the organization and the urgent need to regularise budgets, accounting and auditing by the respective party organs must be realised."\(^10\) Generally the party finances are realised through both direct and indirect sources. The general sources are: (1) Subscription and contribution or levy from members. (2) Donation from sympathizers. (3) Income from the sales of party literature and journals. (4) Periodic collections from the public. (5) Levy on the salaries of party MPs and party MLAs. (6) Political funds of mass organizations. (7) Income from properties. The important indirect sources of CPI finances are: (i) Gifts and aids from foreign agencies in various forms. (ii) Donations from private corporations.

Even a large membership will not enable a party to strengthen its finances unless it has effective means of

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9. See Appendix 3.8.
realizing the subscription. The communists find it really
difficult to collect the membership dues, levies, and
contributions from MLAs and MPs. As they never demanded
from positions of power, donations are little. The party
summarily depends on its own collection from the people,
membership dues and sale of literature. The levy on
legislators is extremely small as not many CPI legislators
are elected. 11

Meagre finances inhibits the growth of the party in
three important ways: (1) conducting party schools for the
members becomes difficult (2) propaganda to the general public
becomes rare and (3) organizational activity of the party
retards.

The CPI had been planning the installation of a party
school with permanent equipments. So far, the aim has not been
realised. Running 3-Day party schools for the teachers and
One-Day party schools for the members had been a difficult

11. Interview with P.lanickam, Secretary of the CPI in
Tamil Nadu on 23.5.81. However the Secretary refused
to part information with regard to annual accounts
of the party and the mass organizations. The political
organizational reports of the party and the mass
organizations do not contain even a single reference
to the financial position. See also
Choudhury, S.D. For a regular collection of Levies from
task so far. However it goes to the credit of the CPI, that they have evolved a competent syllabus for party education, which aims: (1) to reeducate the old members who have dogmatist understanding of marxism and fail to apply it to the changing and complex situations and (2) to educate the new entrants in the very principles and policies of the party.

The Audio-visual and other mass-communication techniques have been thoroughly exploited by the political parties of Tamil Nadu to capture the attention of the electorate. Journals, Dramas, Cinemas, Narrative Songs like 'Villu Pattu', Radio, Public platforms for excellent oratories are all skillfully utilised. However the CPI depends mainly on pamphleteering and political speeches by its leaders for propaganda. For want of money, it has not moved to expensive media like dramas, cinemas and exhibitions. Actually the party runs the following journals for propaganda: (a) Janasakthi (a Tamil political weekly), (2) Thamrai (a Tamil cultural monthly) and (3) Marxia Oli (a Tamil theoretical monthly). Their circulation is very

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13. 46 hours of teaching in (a) Marxian philosophy (b) Political economy (c) Theory, tactics and historical experience of the International communist movement and (d) CPI: Short history, programmes and constitutions, See Appendix 3.10 and Narayanan, S. Some Experiences in party education, Party Life, Vol.VIII, No.6, June 1972, pp.19-22.
limited and they could not increase the propagation of
marxism among the people. 14

Thirdly the paucity of funds has led to labyrinth of
organizational problems. The branch is not functioning well.
Members lose interest in the organization and they come to
believe that the problems of the masses can be easily tackled
by the legislators without mobilizing the people. Branch
meetings, local conferences, district conferences and the
meetings of various committees are not held periodically.
Minute books are not maintained and even attendance registers
are not opened. Full time workers continue to decline. Members
of the party refuse to work in mass organizations. Legislators
take very little interest in the organizational matters. 15
Plans for mobilizing the people with special programmes go
unimplemented. 16 This cyclical inactivity easily affects the
state council. Actually the state executive committee functions
with 12 clear departments with specific tasks. But all these
departments report their inability to achieve their targets. 17

14. See Appendices 3.11 and 3.12.
15. Vijayakumar, V. On functioning of party branches, Party
Manickam, P. Planning the implementation of the Cochin
Congress decisions, Party Life, Vol.VIII, No.2,
February 1972, pp.22-23.
Farooqi, M. Problem of Inactivity among party members,
16. Rajeswara Rao, C. Building the volunteer organization:
Janaswā Del, Party Life, Vol.VI, No.7, July 1970,
pp.8-10.
17. Tamil Nadu CFI, Organizational report for the 12th State
Srinivasan, A. Tamil Nadu: Experiences of Basic level
organizational conferences, Party Life, Vol.XVII,
No.4, February 1981, pp.32-36.
In spite of financial weakness, the CPI in Tamil Nadu has been meticulous in conducting the periodical state conferences. Within thirty years starting from 1951, it has arranged for the conduct of 12 conferences and the thirteenth is ensuing. It sends delegates promptly to the All India party congress. 18

Thus the CPI in Tamil Nadu is now caught in a dilemma: its financial stringency forces the party to abandon several of the roles ascribed to a leftist party. Set in a complex situation of functioning of amidst All-India and at least two powerful regional centrist parties, the CPI is now being pulled more and more to the task of winning elections and sustaining itself. Its dream of building the unity of left and democratic forces looks strange and its strength in the electoral and organizational fields do not provide any hope of achieving power. It is torn asunder between leftist ideals and centrist situations on the one hand, and between perceived goals and paralyzing weakness on the other. The result is that CPI stands with all characteristics of a monolithic formal organization with continuing decline in all its activity.

(ii) Organization of the CPI(M):

The CPI(M) is the revolutionary vanguard of the working class of India. In its aim of establishing socialism and

communism through the establishment of the state of dictatorship of the proletariat, the party guides itself by the philosophy and principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The CPI(M) admits any person residing in India, eighteen years of age or above who accepts the programme and constitution of the party, agrees to work in one of party organizations, to pay regularly the party membership fees and to carry out the decisions of the party, into one-year candidate membership. Then the party branch concerned, admits him into full membership. 19

The organization of the CPI(M) is based on the principles of democratic centralism. Actually the structure of the CPI(M) incorporates the useful experiences of the post-Amritsar period of the undivided CPI. The three important features of the CPI(M) constitution are: (1) It has abolished local conferences (2) It has not created the intermediary institution of National Council, State Council and the District Council and (3) It has not bifurcated the top authority into Chairmanship

19. Membership details, party pledge, membership fee and levy, duties and rights of members are explained in the articles IV to XII in the CPI(M) constitution. See CPI(M), Constitution, (New Delhi: CPI(M), 1968), pp.1-5.
and General Secretaryship. Actually the CPI(M) has retained the pre-Amritsar constitution of the undivided CPI, and has adapted it to its own requirements.\textsuperscript{20} The party functions with branches and branch secretaries at the local level; District conference, District committee, District secretariat and District Secretary at the district level; State Conferences, State committees, State secretariat, State Secretary and State control commission at the State level; and, All-India party congress, Central committee, Central secretariat, Politbureau, General Secretary, Central control commission and the Credentials committee at the national level.\textsuperscript{21}

In its functioning the Tamil Nadu CPI(M) also has not registered a boom in its membership. The party has conceded that DMK’s hold on the urban and rural poor was preponderant. So far it has continued to grow and ebb, not reaching more than 14% of its all-India membership.\textsuperscript{22} The party draws its support heavily from the industrial labour of Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai and Madras and from the agricultural labour

\textsuperscript{20} For its organizational structure See Appendix 3.15.
\textsuperscript{21} See Articles XIII to XVIII of the CPI(M) constitution.
\textsuperscript{22} See Appendix 3.16.
of Tanjore and Madurai. The party is weak in the state as a whole. The party acknowledges that they are not able to wage successful battle against the Dravidian ideology which have been championing aggressively the cause of Tamil Nationalism. 23

Contrary to expectations, the financial position of the party is not affected by the very low number of membership. Probably, the party approaches people from a position of confidence, as they enjoy power in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. At least the Tamil Nadu CPI(M) does not beg money from the party centre for its organizational activities. The party has a regular system of giving annual calls for party funds which are collected from the mass of sympathisers rather than from a few individuals. Thus the financial status of the CPI(M) is satisfactory, the party making skillful use of direct and indirect sources. From here moderate success in conducting party schools, propaganda work and organizational activities flow. Yet the party itself reports several organizational flaws in the rank and file of CPI(M).

The 60th resolution of the Salkia plenum wanted the following: (a) Regular party schools to train teachers for

schools in states (b) There should be schools for cadres in mass organizations (c) The centre should prepare a common syllabus for party schools etc. In Tamil Nadu CPI(M) has no regular party school and it has conducted too few a schools for its members.

The financial wellbeing of the party has allowed it to run a Tamil daily Theekathir which has a circulation of 6000 copies. It also publishes a Tamil cultural monthly "Sennalar" with a sale of 2000 copies. However CPI(M) also believes in speeches in public platforms. It derides the use of cinema and other audio-visual media for political propaganda. Hence the influence of CPI(M) becomes limited only to literates and middle classes quite too often.

Organizational problems are also quite many in the CPI(M). The present mode of party functioning does not produce a sense of participation among party members in shaping party policies. It is due to two causes: (1) reporting to lower units and reporting from lower units is not carried out systematically in time and (2) there is no review of mass struggles and campaigns conducted by the party. This leads

24. Ibid. p.79.
to elimination of criticism and self-criticism in the party. Secondly there is absence of division of labour in various committees. As a result one or two comrades, especially the Secretary, often function in the name of the committee leading to (i) concentration of power and bureaucracy (ii) inefficiency and (iii) undermining of the important concept of collective leadership. 25

Thus the CPI(M) is a small organization trying to inject the principles of marxism-Leninism amidst the lower middle classes of some 6 districts of Tamil Nadu. Its philosophy and activity have not reched the other districts. Though small in its membership, the organization is able to collect sufficient money which shows its efficiency. As most of its members are young the party is able to work actively and certainly it is not overwhelmed by its own problems. The CPI(M) remains as a small organization but with vitality and hope. This is amply reflected in the 4 All-India party congresses and 4 State conferences of the CPI(M). 26

CPI(M), Political organizational report of the Tenth Congress, (New Delhi : CPI(M), 1978), pp.86-90.
26. See Appendices 3.17 and 3.18.
(iii) Organization of the CPI(ML):

The CPI(ML) declares itself as the political party of the proletariat of India. Its theoretical basis is Marxism-Leninism - Mao Tse-tung thought. It wants to overthrow the rule of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the big Feudal Landlord classes, the agents and lackeys of US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism. It wants to establish the People's Democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat through the path of armed struggle. It sets three tasks for itself to defeat the enemies of the people: (i) the building and strengthening of the party with criticism and self-criticism and link it with the masses; (ii) a People's Army under the leadership of the party must be raised; and (iii) a United front of all revolutionary classes and groups must be engaged in armed struggle under the leadership of our party.

An arduous nature of work awaits for any one who wants to become a member in CPI(ML). Any member of the working class, the toiling people, the peasantry, revolutionary middle class or any other revolutionary element who resides in India and has reached the age of 18 years is eligible for the membership of the party, provided he accepts Marxism-Leninism - Mao's Thought as the guide to action, accepts the programme and constitution of the party unit, pays regularly
party membership dues and levies, and is ready to go to rural area for rousing peasant masses for agrarian revolution. At least six months record of work among the people for applicants from the working class and the peasantry, one year's record of work for applicants from middle class and middle peasant origin and two year's record of work for others are checked before a full membership is granted. 27

The party follows the principle of democratic centralism for its organization. 28 The organization of the CPI(ML) is pure and simple. It does not maintain elaborate institutions giving way to theoretical niceties. As its functions as an underground movement, the party does not bother about formal legitimization processes. 29

After Charu Mazumdar's death in July 1972, the CPI(ML) has divided itself into several factions. Several individuals and prominent leaders of the movement got out of the party, content with showing their sympathies to the party. Hence a classification of various factions into some broad groupings is not easy, given the shifts in political position, movement of individuals from one movement to another, mergers and splits

27. For membership details See Chapter II of the CPI(ML) constitution.
28. See Chapter III, Ibid.
29. See Appendix 3.19.
etc. Broadly speaking, these groups can be divided into pro-Charu Mazumdar and anti-Charu Mazumdar groups for theoretical convenience. Because of the proliferation of Marxists-Leninists-Maoists countrywide, they are called as maoist groups' or as 'Naxalite groups' and the original name of the party is attributed to none.

Twenty four such naxalite groups operate in India now. Some of them follow mass line and some others follow the base line. In Tamil Nadu there are six maoist groups now. (1) In Dharmapuri and North Arcot districts a naxalite group has functioned under the leadership of Kannamani. Its provocative stance earned to it the name 'ginger group'. It has been pro-Charu Mazumdar in its policy of Individual annihilation and it resents mass line. However the group is now subdued.

30. Interview with Thiru Kumaraman, I.P.S., Superintendent of Police, Q Branch, Government of Tamil Nadu, on June 3, 1981. However the Hindu reports on 25.5.81 that there are thirteen maoist groups in India. The leaders of some of the groups are: Venu, Kamusanyal, Satya Narain Sinha, C.P.Reddi, Vinod Misra, Nagabhushan Patnaik, Ajit Sinha, S.N.Sinha, A.V.Aryan, etc. See also Dasgupta, B. The Naxalite Movement - An Epilogue, Social Scientist, Vol.6, No.12, July 1979, pp.3-20.
(2) In Madurai, Ramnad, Tirunelveli and Tanjore districts another naxalite group has functioned under the leadership of Macchakalai, D.S. Mani and P.V. Srinivasan. This group also close links with Vinod Bisra group of North Bihar. This group also believes in individual annihilation. After extensive activities in the period 1969-1972, the group has dwindled now.

(3) At present a new line of integrating and organizing the energies of all naxalite groups in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu is underway. The name of the group is AITOC - (All India Revolutionary Organizing Committee). This group also believes in Charu Mazumdar's policies.

(4) In Kanyakumari district Das Ahan has organized a naxalite group with pro-Charu Mazumdar and pro-Lin Piao principles. However the important deviation of this group is that it believes in 'Pass Line'.

(5) In Coimbatore district another group has been organized by Raghavan with the name "Tamil Nadu Organizing Committee". This group believes in 'Pass Line' along with pro-Charu Mazumdar and pro-Lin-Piao principles.

(6) Finally the most powerful and potentially active group in Tamil Nadu has been organized by A.M. Kothandaraman in Salem district. The activity of this group extends to North Arcot, South Arcot, Chingleput and Madras districts also. A.M. Kothandaraman also happens to be the General Secretary of the All India People's War Committee. This group does not want to follow blindly the policy of individual annihilation. The group believes that pro-Charu
Mazumdar principles should be suspended for a while, so that more vigorous and protracted attacks may be launched in future. Meantime the group must organize the people in rural as well as urban areas. This policy of A.M.Kothandaraman of extending naxalite activities into urban areas, in contravention to Lin-Piao's principles and of suspending individual annihilation for a while, in contravention to Charu Mazumdar's principles, has invited the wrath of other Naxalite groups in Tamil Nadu. They castigate A.K.Kothandaraman as the 'first rate opportunist', but the point is that the principles of Kothandaraman spring forth from the hard experiences with reality.

With regard to their membership these naxalite groups do not show any impressive figures. Kannamani group in North Arcot has a membership around 3000, Vinod Misra group in Tanjore has about 500 members, AIROC has about 300 members, Das Azan group has about 150 members, Raghavan group has about 400 members, and Kothandaraman group has about 6000 members. 31

The chief instrument of propaganda of these groups is the publication of underground revolutionary literature, and the secret meetings among its members. Due to financial and other constraints the organizational activity of these groups

31. Interview with Thiru Kumarasamy. Ibid.
is not much. The revolutionary literatures appear in small booklets for a stretch of a few weeks. Then they are suppressed either by the police or they change the names for fear of suppression. 32

The effectiveness of these organizations mainly depend on their capacity to withstand the onslaught unleashed by the state apparatus, with the aid of police and the statutes. So far the Maoist groups in Tamil Nadu are unable to withstand the police suppression. They are kept under constant vigil and check. 'Operation Ajanta' has very nearly wiped out the naxalite leadership in North Arcot District. Kaliaperumal was not able to do much because of his constant imprisonment. 33

Also, in police-naxalite encounters several leaders of inimitable courage and devotion, like Seeralan, Chakkaravarthy and Belan, etc., have lost their lives. The Maoist groups find it very hard to replace them. As the revolutionary zeal of a Maoist group is normally built around a radiant personality, the movement or the group has scattered as soon as that leader was arrested or got killed. 34

32. Araikooval(Challenge), Pudu Mulai(New Leaf), Idi Muzhakkam(Big Thunder), Nokku(Perspective), Manithan(Man), Samaran(Egalitarian), Vidivu(Dawn), Sentharagai(Star), Parinamam(Evolution) and Redayam(Shield) are some of the short-lived revolutionary booklets published mainly by Kannamani, Kothandaraman and Vinod Misra groups.

33. The Hindu(Madras), dated September 29, 1980.
34. The Indian Express, dated September 21, 1980.
It is not possible to assert if the Chinese theory of Dravidian Nationalities is of any help to the Naxalites in Tamil Nadu. Naxalism in Tamil Nadu has arisen in response to socio-economic injustices in the rural area. A few radiant personalities have built up a few movements and while they are trying to make their presence felt, state suppression has removed them away from the scene. The movement immediately subsides awaiting for another strong leader to arrive perhaps for years together.

Section II: Mass Organizations of the Communist Parties

Communists consider that mass organizations are a big school of politics for the masses. Masses come through this school to class politics, to the politics of the party. Therefore they first try to attract people to mass organizations before thinking of drawing them under the political influence of the party. To build effective mass organizations the communists do at least four essential tasks: (1) They try to take the whole of the party to the people - its philosophy, program and organization. It means taking due care for making the people see the party's independent totality of views on life. (2) The party raises the banner of 'with the toiling people and for the toiling people'. (3) Party members put extra effort to increase the mass base of the party. Because,
the party is intimately connected and develops along with
the elevation of the level of consciousness and organization
of the masses. (4) The party continues to develop the tradition
of going into battle on its own, especially to raise the class
consciousness among the working class.

In accordance with the banner of 'with the toiling people
and for the toiling people', the party has identified some
categories of the exploited class among the people and has tried
to organize them around certain slogans, which may be solutions
to their woes. Workers, working women, small and middle peasants,
agricultural labourers, women, youth and students are some
important sections of the exploited population in the communist
eyes. Thus workers are organized around the slogan 'Bonus and
better service conditions'; working women around the slogan
'parity with male workers'; small and middle peasants around
the slogan 'cheap credit, remunerative agricultural prices and
annulment of rural debt'; agricultural labourers around the
slogan 'Land and minimum wages'; youth around the slogan
'emloyment'; and students around the slogan 'cheap, Qualitative
and meaningful education'. For the disillusioned artists and
poets, ventilation is provided through 'creative literature'.
Those who are much bothered about the increasing menace of the
capitalist world system and war, can find solace in the
possibility of 'peace' with socialist countries, and in
organizing 'Indo-soviet' and other Peace and Friendship societies.

However, several of the Maoist groups throughout India do not believe in mass activity. It is solely due to the personal influence of Charu Mazumdar because Mao has never shunned the mass line. But of late even Maoist groups feel the importance of mass activity. They are coming forward to organize some mass forums of their own. Yet, there is no mass organization that belongs to the Maoist groups in Tamil Nadu.

The CPI has mass organizations for all the sections of the exploited classes: All India Trade Union Congress for workers; All India Kisan Sabha for all types of peasants; Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union for agricultural workers; National Federation of Indian Women for Women; All India Youth Federation for the youth; All India Student's Federation for the students; and, All India Progressive Writers' Association for the creative artists and writers.

Similarly CPI(M) has mass organizations in all these fields. The ideological rivalry between CPI(M) and the CPI, prompted the former to organize mass forums in all areas where CPI has been holding sway. Now the CPI(M) has the following

35. The Hindu(Madras), dated May 22, 1981.
The Hindu(Madras), dated May 23, 1981.
mass organizations: 'Centre of Indian Trade Unions' for workers; 'National Convention for Indian working women' for working women; 'All India Kisan Sabha' for peasants; 'Democratic Youth Federation of India' for the youth; 'Student's Federation of India' for the students; and, 'Progressive Writers Association' for the creative writers.

(i) Mass organizations of the CPI:

A. The Tamil Nadu unit of the AITUC functions for the welfare of workers, with the name 'Tamil Nadu Trade Union Congress'. This organization permits any trade union to be its member, if the affiliating trade union considers itself to be an organ of class struggle, and guarantees to pay membership fees and levies. The TNTUC functions with a President, 4 Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, five Secretaries and a Treasurer. The activities of the TNTUC are decided by a 26 member working committee and its policies are decided by a 63 member General Council, whose members are drawn from all districts and sectoral interests.

At present the membership of the TNTUC is 288,179 and its All India membership is 2.58 millions. Its secure financial
status allows this organization to conduct party schools for
the workers once in a while, to publish - Tamil Fortnightly
'Trade Union News' and to conduct its annual conferences
efficiently. 36

In spite of its success, the TNTUC is yet to organize
at least half of the working force in Tamil Nadu. Especially
it could not penetrate into the labour areas of Madras-Chingleput
belt, where Tamil Nadu's biggest labour concentration exists.
Other besetting issues are: Trade Union rivalry with other
central organizations, countering the reformist influence of
the ruling class, and fighting the casteist, communalist and
provincialist sentiments. 37

Further, winning the workers to the political line of
the party has been a thorny issue, because of the slackening
on the part of party leaders and front leaders. Actually the
current maladies of TNTUC are: (i) There is no census and
breakup of party membership available to show the strength of
the party. (ii) The attitude towards recruitment of new members
has been either apathetic or sectarian (iii) There has been no

36. TNTUC, General Secretary's Report to the 9th State
See also Appendices 3.20, 3.21 and 3.22.
37. Roy, B. Some problems before militant trade union
movement in India, The Marxist Review, Vol.VII,
No.3, September 1973, pp.84-94.
appreciable increase in the number of trained cadres. (iv) The movement is drawing more and more white collar employees only and (v) The line of the party on various political issues has not been carried down to the workers. 38

B. The 'All India Kisan Sabha' was organized to look after the problems of the agriculturists on 11.4.1936 at Lucknow. Its echo was seen in the districts of Tanjore, Salem, Ramnad and Madurai in Tamil Nadu. The efforts of N.C.Panga to start a kisan movement added a new impetus. The successful experiences of Thenparai village in Tanjore district, Ramapuram village in Salem district and Kattanoor village in Ramnad district led to the formation of an Organizing Committee on 14.6.1943. The organizing committee met on 18-19 September 1943 and 26-2-1944 to finalise the modalities of forming a Kisan sabha. Finally the kisan sabha held its first conference on 3.5.1944 at Mannargudi. B.Srinivasa Rao became its President and Manali C.Kandasami became its Secretary. 39 To-day this


organization is called as 'Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam'.

The AIKS extends membership to any kisan of 16 years of age, who accepts its aims and objects, and who agrees to pay membership fees and levies. Democratic centralism is invoked here also as the organizing norm. District conferences, District committees, District Presidents and District Secretaries at the District level; State conferences, State Kisan councils, State kisan committee, State Presidents and State Secretaries at the state level; and, conference of the All India Kisan Sabha, All India Kisan Council, Central Kisan Committee, President, Secretary and other office bearers at the national level form the organizational hierarchy.

The current membership of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam is 50000. It is largely localised in the districts of Thanjore, Tirunelveli and Dharapur. As a result its financial condition is poor which leads to absence of party schools among the kisans, inability of the party to do propaganda work, and to conduct

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40. The split in the Communist party in 1964 has caused a split in AIKS in August 1967. At that time the rightists have captured the AIKS organization. Therefore the CPI(I) has started the AIKS anew.
state conferences. 41

C. Around 1968, the CPI has felt that it has not been possible to organize the kisans to its viewpoint, as the reformist influences are ever increasing. Therefore the Patna Congress of the CPI has directed the National council to form an agricultural labourer's union, as this section of the population has been neglected by the Government. Accordingly the First Conference of the Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union (Indian Agricultural Labourer's Union) was held in September 1968, at Moga in Punjab. So far this organization has held four all India conferences. 42

The character of BKMU has been federal and state agricultural worker's organizations are affiliated to it. An All India conference, General council, Executive committee, one President, three Vice-Presidents, one General Secretary, three Secretaries and one Treasurer form the structural core at the

41. Actually AIKs published the 'Kisan Bulletin', and TVS published 'Uzhippayar Ulagam' (Toiler's world) previously, which have now ceased publication. See TVS, General Secretary's Report submitted to the 17th State Conference of TVS, (Pudukkottai: TVS, 1979), pp.14-20.

See also Appendix 3.23.

42. See Appendix 3.24.
national level. In TNKMU membership has been extended to all agricultural labourers of 16 years of age or above. The state conference, General council and the state Executive are the highest organs that decide the policies and activities of TNKMU.

The present membership of TNKMU is 70000. It is largely influential in the two districts of Tanjore and Periyar and in other districts its influence is very negligible. This organization is also financially weak. It is reflected in the absence of a journal, and district units, and in the inactivity of the TNKMU.

D. Traditionally, Hindu society has relegated women to a socially inferior status. To fight for an equal place, the women of Tamil Nadu have been organized by the CPI in the year 1943. Initially this organization was developed in Tanjore district. When the 'National Federation of Indian Women' was born in the year 1954, the Tamil Nadu Women's organization also got affiliated to it.

43. See Article 4 of the Constitution of the BKMU.
The NFIW is a federating type of organization which admits into its fold any organization of women which agrees with its aims and objects and if it has a minimum membership of 100. However the NFIW also permits individual members, showing its extreme flexibility in building the women's organization. The organization has 'All India Conference' as the highest organ. It elects a General Council and the Council elects a working committee besides a President, 4 Vice-Presidents, one General Secretary and other office bearers.

Until 1965 there was no state level women's organization in Tamil Nadu. It was confined to working class women, wives of workers, and a few party sympathizers, at the district and town levels. Even there Tenjore district accounted for 75% of the membership. To-day the organization has progressed considerably. At the state organizational core a honorary President, a President, 3 Vice-Presidents, one Secretary, two Assistant Secretaries and a Treasurer, are functioning. An executive committee of 19 members is responsible for the activities of the organization. 45

However the membership of the organization is very limited. It has only 26 affiliating organizations, with the

result that it has irreparable financial worries. That
leads to inefficiency in the organization as well as its
stunted growth. It is reflected in the predicament that
all leading posts of the organizations are filled up by the
members of CPI. Also the organization has no publications
to its credit. 45

E. Believing that the future belongs to the youth and
that they could be organized quite easily by appealing to
their temperamental nature, the CPI has organized the All
India Youth Federation in 1959. Membership in this organization
is extended to all those non-student youth in the age group of
15-35. The organizational hierarchy of this forum is as
follows: President, Secretary, Executive committee and the
National Council at the national level; President, Secretary,
State Executive Committee and the state council at the state
level; President, Secretary and District council at the district
level.

The TNYF has about 17000 members. This organization
has district councils in Tanjore, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli,
Madurai and Salem. In other districts the organization is very

45. The organization has held only 4 State Conferences while
NFIW has held 10 congresses. See
Janasakthi, dated April 12, 1981.
weak. Also the TNYF has conducted seven state level conferences. The impressive work of this mass organization is contained by paucity of funds. Only a few party schools are held for the youth and no magazine exists for this organization. 47

F. Students are a valuable force in the nationalist movements and in India too the student force has actively worked for Indian freedom. During 1920's student organizations sprang up in several parts of the country. But only in August 1936, an All India Students' Federation was formed at Lucknow under the presidency of Mohamed Ali Jinnah. In Tamil Nadu the student organization was first formed in 1938 at the Annamalai University. Nehru's tour of Madras in 1940 revived the interests of the students and a 'South Indian Student's Conference' was held in July 1942 at Salem. Finally the AISF was inaugurated during August 1942, only to find communist and non-communist rivalry. A little later non-communists seceded


TNYF, Resolutions carried at the 6th State Conference, Kumbakonam, 24-26 April 1976, pp.11-12.

leaving the AISF with the communists. This organization is now called as Tamil Nadu Student's Federation.

TNSF admits students of the age 12 or above into its membership. Invoking the principle of democratic centralism, TNSF conducts itself with a state conference, state council and a state executive committee. The state council elects the President and the Secretary of the organization. Similarly in the districts, it has a district conference, a district council and a district executive council.

The membership of TNSF is estimated at 12000. Such a membership inevitably throws financial problems. However, the CPI has carefully nurtured this mass front by holding several party schools, and organizing periodical conferences. However this front has no journal of its own.\(^\text{48}\)

(ii) Mass organizations of the CPI(M):

A. The splitting of the AIXs organization by the CPI(M) in August 1967, forced the CPI to be on their guard and they had curtly rejected any dialogue between the two parties.\(^\text{49}\)

\(^{48}\) Kalyanasundaram, M. New features of the student movement, Party Life, Vol.6, No.5, June 1970, pp.28-33

\(^{49}\) See CPI(M), On the revisionist disruption of AITUC, (New Delhi : CPI(M), 1970).
The CPI manoeuvred to retain the AITUC organization along with them and consequently CPI(M) was compelled to bring about a central trade union organization of its own. The CITU was born on 9-10 April 1970.

The CITU is a federating type of organization which permits all trade unions to be its member, if they agree to the Marxist-Leninist principles and the policies of CPI(M). At the national level a President, 9 Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, 7 Secretaries, a Treasurer, and 275 Member General Council are functioning. The CITU in Tamil Nadu has a President, 4 Vice-Presidents, one General Secretary, one Assistant General Secretary, 4 Secretaries, one Treasurer and a state council of 41 members.

At present the CITU in Tamil Nadu has 21639 members. Its financial condition is extremely stable and hence the organization conducts party education periodically, and brings out a Tamil monthly 'CITU Seithi (CITU News). The General council also meets regularly and state conferences are held in time.\footnote{\textit{Tamil Nadu CITU, Kavirikkarai Naanadu (A conference on the banks of Cauvery), (Madras : CITU, 1980), pp.60-61. See also Appendix 3.25.}
its District councils are not properly functioning.\(^{51}\)

B. The CPI(M) has organized the AIKs for the welfare of the kisans and agricultural labourers. The AIKs admits any kisan of at least 16 years of age, who is willing to accept the aims and objects of AIKs. The AIKs has the following units of organization arranged hierarchically. (a) Primary Kisan sabha (b) District Kisan sabha (c) State Kisan sabha (d) Conference of AIKs (e) All India Kisan council and (f) Central Kisan committee. The All India Kisan council also elects a President, a General Secretary, 4 Vice-Presidents, 4 Secretaries and one Treasurer.

Although AIKS is a big organization with a large contingent from West Bengal, it remains thoroughly localised to Eastern Tanjore district. The membership of AIKS in Tamil Nadu is 87,500. Yet, the financial troubles of this organization does not allow quick expansion of the movement to Coimbatore, Madurai and other districts.\(^{52}\) Recently the

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51. Recently the CPI(M) has held a convention to fight for the rights of working women on April 9-10, 1979. This movement is providing new enthusiasm to CIU.


CPI(M) has organized a new mass forum in Tamil Nadu for the sake of agricultural labourers. The organization will have the name 'Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers' organization'. This organization claims a membership of 33000.\textsuperscript{53}

Both AIKS and TNALG do not have any bulletin of their own. And they have held only sporadic party schools and conferences.\textsuperscript{54}

C. The other mass organizations of CPI(M) are infant. The general pattern of building mass organization by CPI(M) is this: The mass forums are first organized at the state level and then they are consolidated at the national level. The women's and youth's organizations are just now consolidated at the national level.

The Tamil Nadu Democratic Women's Federation admits any women above the age 12 as its member, if there is regular payment of membership fees and agreement of principles. Regional conferences, district conferences and state conferences are the highest organs in terms of hierarchy. The state

\textsuperscript{53} Theekkathiri(Vadurai), dated June 2, 1981.
\textsuperscript{54} See Appendices 3.26 and 3.27.
conference elects an Executive committee besides, a President and a General Secretary and other office bearers.

The TNDWF has a membership of 61000. Since it is a new organization the funds have not reached a mature stage. Yet the organization has held a few party schools for its members, brought out a few publications and pamphlets and held conferences periodically. The forum has no journal of its own. 55

D. The Tamil Nadu Democratic Youth Federation admits any youth in the age group between 15-35, provided he agrees with the aims and objectives of DYFI and pays regularly the membership fees. Local level, Regional level, District level, State level and National level infrastructure has been stipulated for this organization.

At the state level there is the state conference held once in two years. This conference elects a 51 member Executive committee, a President, a General Secretary and other office bearers.

The TNDYF has 20000 members. This organization also has not come out of its initial financial troubles. So far this

   See also Appendix 3.28.
forum has conducted 16 district level conferences, 2 state level conferences and one All India conference. Absence of party schools and publications pervade this organization to-day.

E. The mass forum of the students constructed by CPI(M) is quite active. The Tamil Nadu Student Federation extends membership to all students of the age of 12 and above, provided the student agrees to the aims and objectives of SFI and concedes to pay regular membership fees.

To-day the membership of TNSF is 12,000. Its progress is quite fast as its membership in 1978 is 2,215, in 1979 is 3,322, and in 1980 is 5,511. The finances of TNSF are sound and hence it has conducted regular state level conferences, and party schools. Although it is not having a journal of its own, SFI has brought out several pamphlets to its credit.

Section III: Conclusion:

The communists in Tamil Nadu have understood the importance of organization in building a mass movement to fight

56. See Appendix 3.29.
58. See Appendix 3.30.
against the injustices in the society. But they have not precisely calculated the nature, extent and intensity of exploitation. Therefore they have not made an ideological exposition adequate to the socio-political circumstances in Tamil Nadu. Even this failure of applying Marxism creatively to Tamil society could be pardoned, if they have taken enough care to adapt the principles of their respective headquarters. As this is not done, communists function blindly as the regional units of CPI, CPI(M) or CPI(ML). Therefore they could not compete against the regional ideologies which place their faith on Tamil Nationalism.

In trying to take the party to the masses, the communists have found out an important clue in mass organizations. But in working out this clue the communists have again failed. They find that injustice deprives workers, agriculturists, agricultural labourers, women, youth and students alike. But they have concentrated more on workers and kisans and neglected the other sections. As a result the mass forums of workers, kisans and agricultural labourers are alone active and that of others are dormant.

The CPI has existed for quite long and its organizational energy is quite spent. Disillusioned leaders and people alike move away from this organization because this organization
do not provide any scope for career advancement or redressal of grievances. Therefore the CPI has to depend on the agencies which provide funds for them and hence they have largely represented the grievances of workers, justifying their action by quoting Marxist scriptures. They are slowly abandoning the interests of kisans also and are switching over to the interests of the agricultural workers, because kisans are now scattered in different organizations of their own. Paucity of funds stunt the growth of other mass organizations of CPI, and the CPI has relegated them to the back door.

The CPI(M) has matured through hard experiences with reality. Their power in West Bengal and Kerala and Tripura propel them to work hard in the fond hope of achieving power in Tamil Nadu also. Since they are new to the field their mass organizations receive greater attention from the respective exploited sections. Financially viable, these organizations are engaging themselves in mass activity quite regularly. However only the mass forums of workers and kisans are long standing and that of others are infant.

The CPI(ML) spurs here and there and is at once removed by the State. They have no contacts with the people. These racist movements become big sensational news when police-naxalite encounter takes place and then there begins a long
lull. These maoist groups are unable to withstand the state suppression and periodical loss of leadership.

Therefore two conclusions become clear: (1) As the ideologies specific to Tamil Nadu are not worked out, or the general principles of various communist parties are not adapted, the communist organizations in Tamil Nadu are struggling hard to take root. (2) The ideological controversies that keep apart one marxist party from another have not reached such a stage as to reflect on their organizational principles. Hence these organizations are identical in nature and are working for goals which they could not specify to the people. Thus the CPI remains as a big monolithic formal organization without activity; the CPI(M) remains as a small creature with effectiveness; and the Maoist movements appear then and there without causing any appreciable change of outlook among the people.