CHAPTER I

MARXIAN SOCIALISM IN TAMIL NADU
After the establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia in 1917, Lenin proceeded to hit out at the world capitalism. He explained that imperialism was the highest stage of capitalism and the result of mature capitalism. He unhesitatingly accepted the idea that imperialism was brought into existence by the economic compulsions of one stronger, better organized nation to take the surplus value from a weaker nation. He regarded imperialism as an absolute necessity for the capitalist powers and felt that without their empires, the capitalist states of his day would collapse. As the empires were Achilles heels of the capitalist states, Lenin planned carefully to destroy the colonial system, so that the empires may collapse in revolution. As a first step towards this end he founded the Third International in 1919, to upset the international rhythm and to assist and lead the various national movements existing at that time. The Communist International functioned from 1919 to 1943 and had held seven congresses to review the world situation objectively to chalk out a policy framework for the young nationalist movements of the world.  

1. For an excellent account of the work of the Comintern, see Budhraj, V.S. 'The Communist international and Indian Politics'. In Banda, B.R. (Ed), Socialism in India, (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972), pp.17-41.
Actually the speakers at the First Congress (1919) of the Communist International spoke only about the impending revolution in Europe and advised Asia to wait until the establishment of socialism in Europe. But the explosive situation in East had compelled the Second Congress (1920) to set up a commission to examine the various aspects of the national and colonial questions. But the commission found that two of its leaders, Lenin and Ranabendra Nath Roy, to disagree on their assessment of the nature of liberation movements in Asia, on what should be the attitude of the Comintern towards it, and on the communist tactics in Asia. Though Lenin had made a very close assessment of the existing realities, Roy's thesis was also accepted by the Second Congress, for its theoretical brilliancy. Roy was made the Indian representative at the comintern to bring about communist revolution in India.

While Lenin had advocated alliance with bourgeois democratic liberation movements, M.N.Roy suggested independent action through the setting up of a proletarian party, untrammelled by restrictions as to means. However the Indian Military School which he set up at Tashkent with Russian money and arms to recruit and train an army of Indian expatriates for the liberation of India, was still-born.
It encountered unexpected difficulties. The Afghan Government was reluctant to allow infiltration through its territory. Kremlin itself, anxious to conclude a trade agreement with Britain, could hardly reject British representations for the disbandment of the Tashkent School. The hopes that the Road to Bombay and Calcutta would lie via Kabul were thus dashed. Henceforth Roy operated from European capitals with an unending stream of journals, leaflets and letters aimed at potential and actual sympathizers of the revolution in India. Roy had also sought the help of communist party of Great Britain to send emissaries to organize a communist party in India. However, Roy's propaganda and emissaries did not make much head-way in India and the guiding of the Indian communist movement slowly passed into the hands of CPGS.  

Dr. Adhikari identifies four trends amongst the individuals and groups who looked for new paths for the struggle for independence. He believes that these groups turned to scientific socialism and communism under the impact of great October revolution. Those four trends were the following: (1) Indian

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2. For the activities of Roy as a Communist revolutionary, see, Haithcox, J.P. Nationalism, Communism and twentieth century Jacobinism: Royist tactics in India, 1927-1940. Thesis submitted to the California University, 1965.

national revolutionaries operating from abroad in Germany, USA, etc. amongst whom we have such outstanding names as M. I. Barakatullah, M. K. Roy and Abani Dukherji; (2) National revolutionaries from Pan-Islamic Hilafat movement among whom we have such names as Mohammed Ali Sepassi, Shaukat Usmani and Rahmat Ali Khan; (3) National revolutionaries of the Ghadr Party organised among the Sikh and Punjabi emigrant labour in USA among whom such names as Pattan Singh and Santokh Singh; and, (4) National revolutionaries based in different parts of India itself e.g. Dange in Bombay, Singarevalu in Madras, Muzaffar Ahmed in Calcutta and the Inquilab group in Lahore.

Thus, when Indian national revolutionaries were trying to find out the ways and means of Indian Independence from different parts of the globe, they came across several ideas and help. But the Russian revolution, Comintern and much later CPGB became decisive influences. The Leninist aim of the liquidation of the empires and the nationalists' aim of Indian Independence coincided, with the result that communism began to develop in India not only for political liberation but also towards the ultimate necessity of economic and social freedom. What was striking was that before, during and after the first World War only Indian revolutionaries from abroad dominated the communist movement in India and communist groups within India were slow to come up. Because
of this reason, Dr. Guy Wint concludes that the early history of Indian communism took place not in India but outside. He opines: "It was the contest of small groups of Indian Marxists, in Moscow and Berlin especially, to obtain the patronage of Moscow, in order to become the properly ordained leaders of a revolutionary movement which they believed that India was ready to produce." 4

However, the reality was that communism in India was not a product of either external forces alone or exclusive internal development. It was established and stabilised by the constant reaction between the external stimuli offered by Indian national revolutionaries abroad (Dr. Adhikari's first three trends), the Comintern and the CPGB and the internal response shown by the various groups (Dr. Adhikari's fourth trend).

Now comes the question of development of communism in Tamil Nadu. What were the external stimuli that prompted internal response? What was the attitude of the Tamils to Russian revolution? What supports did they get from Comintern and CPGB? What was the attitude of the Tamil communists towards Independence and social reconstruction? What were

the main reasons for the splits in the communist parties?
In trying to answer these questions, Section I of this
Chapter describes the development of communism in Tamil Nadu
in the pre-Independence period. Section II explains the
problems of communism in Tamil Nadu in the post-Independence
period. Section III, by way of conclusion, notes the
peculiar characteristics of communism in Tamil Nadu.
Section I: Tamil Communism in the pre-Independence period:

(i) P.C. Joshi and K. Damodaran have recorded that revolutionary ideas do not recognize frontiers and socialist ideas have reached India long before October revolution. This must be unquestionably true because the great nationalist poet of Tamil Nadu, C. Subramanya Bharathi had held humanitarian views about the society and radical views about the polity ever since the partition of Bengal. Bharathi despised the alien rule and welcomed a new order of freedom, equality, social justice and republicanism. He hailed the October revolution without any reservation and sang a song in praise of it. In that song he explained the tyrannical attitude of the Czar in a forceful manner and he expressed his delight in the fall of Czardom. The Russian revolution and its essence, as well as the problems of Lenin in post-revolutionary days, caught his imagination in a striking manner. Socialism appealed to him greatly and he sang: "Destroy the world you live in, if food is not available even to one individual". However Bharathi was only a nationalist poet. His interest


was to incorporate the worldly wisdom in his lyrical communication with the people. Bharathi did not go apart from that.

(ii) The next important contribution to the development of communism in Tamil Nadu came from H. Singaravelu Chettiar. Against the odds of placid culture, suppression by the government and unwillingness on the part of the Congress to co-operate, Singaravelu worked tirelessly throughout his life. And therefore he has earned the name of 'Father of the communist movement in the South'. His motto was: "No life without Swaraj and no Swaraj without workers". 7

To propagate Marxism in Tamil Nadu, Singaravelu did five things: (1) He organized a Marxist library in his home as well as a study circle which consisted of M. P. S. Velayudham, Kilakantan Narboodiripad and others. (2) In October 1923 he started a weekly in Tamil by name 'Thozhilalan' (Labourer) as well as a fortnightly in English by name 'Labour Kisan Gazette'. (3) He had intensively participated in all the struggles urged by the labourers in Tamil Nadu. (4) He started the 'Labour and Kisan party of Hindustan' on 1.5.1923 and celebrated the May Day for the first time

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in India and (5) he co-operated with the nationalist minded congressmen as well as the regionalist minded justicites and self-respectors so as to influence them to the path of socialism. 8

(iii) A terrorist way of dislodging the British from the Indian Empire was attempted by K. Basu in the late 1920's. While a student in National College, Trichy in 1926-28, he seriously thought of building an organization which eventually would become a revolutionary vanguard. He founded 'The Gentlemen Farmers' League' in 1927 and it soon spread having 40 branches by mid-1928 in places like Nagapattinam and Nannargudi. The aim of the league was to work for an armed mass upsurge.

Bashyam contributed to the cause of communism in three important ways: (1) He had raised the revolutionary consciousness of the students in Trichy and Tanjore areas;

J.S.S.File No.424, dated July 1, 1923.
(2) He became a member in Amir Hyder Khan's 'Young Workers League' and worked for the growth of a communist organization and (3) while a nationalist in the period 1931-47, he actively participated in the Civil Disobedience movement as well as in the Quit India Movement. During CDK he picketed the foreign cloth shops and destroyed goods to the value of 4 to 5 lakhs. During 1942, he destroyed several railway lines, bridges and carriages in Egmore station. But the most daring act by Lasyam was his success in hoisting the National Flag at 2 AM on the Independence Day in 1932 at Fort St. George. 9

(iv) In his distress towards the existing social cleavages in Tamil society and of Brahmin domination, E.V. Ramasamy started a self-respect League in the hope of ending casteism. Influenced by N. Singaravelu, Ramasamy began his European tour in 1932 and spent a good part of it in the USSR. There he realized that the only country in the whole world which was able to successfully attack religion was Soviet Union. His admiration for the USSR made E.V. Ramasamy to change the objectives of the self-respect movement. In consultation with Singaravelu, a new programme was drawn

up and the 'Self-respect socialist Party' was founded on 28-29, December 1932. The party was also called "Samadharma Party of South India". E.V.R. actively worked for this party, and quite soon the party had 154 branches. 10 In December 1933 E.V.R. was arrested for an editorial in his newspaper Kudi Arasu. The editorial attacked the government vigorously and gave reasons for "why the present government should go". He was sentenced for nine months imprisonment but was released earlier. 11 After his release, E.V.R. resumed the party work. But the banning of the communist party in July 1934 created a great deal of uneasiness in the self-respect party. Fearing that his party might also be banned, E.V.R. heeded to the advice of his Justicite friends, viz., to dissociate himself from the communists in future. 12

(v) Amir Hyder Khan was a Punjabi Muslim of exceptional skill and daring mind. He was a seafarer, mechanic, aviation

10. His speeches were so inflammatory that the government of Madras considered proceeding against him in March 1933 - See Fortnightly reports, I half of March, 1933.
11. Fortnightly reports, II half of July, 1934.
worker and a marine technologist, all rolled into one. He was converted to communism by Walter and Luthenberk and was sent to Moscow for training. On his return to India, he helped the leaders of the Textile strike in Bombay in 1928. He was implicated in the coal conspiracy case by the Government of India. Khan escaped to the Soviet Union immediately. Khan returned to Bombay in February 1931. But his presence in Bombay was a nuisance to other comrades and therefore Khan proceeded to Madras with the plan of organizing a communist party with headquarters in Madras. Khan was ambitious to do three things: (1) He wanted to develop a hardcore of communits; (2) He wanted to set up a journal for propaganda and (3) He wanted to send some able young Indians to Moscow for training in Communist Revolution. Though a new face to the language, culture and customs of the Tamilians, Khan was not deterred by the difficulties. He gathered a band of dozen young men and founded the 'Young Workers League' in 1932. He also brought out a few issues of the propaganda journal 'Munnetram'. And he was successful in sending at least two youngmen to Russia for revolutionary training. The Madras government arrested Khan

for his seditious activities and sentenced him to 18 months imprisonment. After his jail life in Salem, Khan reached Bombay enroute Madras. But he returned to Madras for the second time. The police now arrested and kept him as a state prisoner until 1938.

(vi) After the ban of the Young Workers League under Criminal Law Amendment Act in July 1934, the leaders trained by Amir Hyder Khan were drifting. To give a new shape to the organization, P. Sundarayya took the lead and he founded the Labour Protection League in August 1935. Under his leadership the Labour Protection League had organized the corporation sweepers, press workers and Beedi workers.

(vii) After E.V.Ramasamy's exit from the self-respect Samadharma Party, the followers of this party were wavering. However P. Jeevanandam took the lead in this organization and he had held several district conferences. Singaravelu supported P. Jeevanandam to a great extent. Jeeva brought out a Tamil monthly 'Rudhu Ilagan' (New World) amidst great difficulties under the editorship of K. Murugesan and T.N. Ramachandran.

(viii) Dissatisfaction with Candi's leadership, the failure of the civil disobedience movement, the desire to develop a class approach to Indian politics, utilizing the peasants and workers as a political force - all these prompted a young group of prisoners in Nasik Jail to start the Congress Socialist Party in October 1934. On July 26, 1934 Jaya Prakash Narain arrived at Madras to find out the possibilities of forming CSP. P Ramamurthy helped Jaya Prakash in this endeavour to a great extent.

(ix) About this time S.V. Chate was released from Satara prison, but was externed from Bombay. Therefore he came to Madras with two aims in his mind: (1) to unite the various leftist elements functioning in Madras Presidency and (2) to bring out a journal for the propagation of communism.

By this time the comintern had announced its policy of cooperation with the nationalist movements. Fortunately the CSP was willing at that time to admit the communists in its fold. Therefore, in 1935, P.C. Joshi, Jaya Prakash Narain and Chate had met in Lucknow to arrange for the unity of congress socialists and communist workers.
Next Gchte proceeded to woo the Samadhama party members. These self-respectors were also willing to join the CSP. At a conference in Tiruchy on 1.11.1936, CSP and Samadhama socialist party had merged in the presence of S.A.Dange.

Gchte arranged terms with one H.D.Raja to publish the paper and leaflets of the communist party. But H.D.Raja came forward to entrust the editorship of his own newspaper, 'New Age' to S.V.Gchte, because he could not tolerate the police menace. Gchte also induced S.Srinivasa Rao to bring out a Tamil weekly 'Janasakthi'.

Slowly the communists pervaded the rank and file of the CSP. The communists also planned to capture the CSP organisation. The CSP, which woke up in the last minute, decided to expel all the communists from its ranks, in 1940. But, even before that, the menace had already been done by the communists. They had already taken over the CSP units of Andhra, Madras and Kerala.

Ghate was adept in organizing a few trade unions also. He rearranged several existing labour unions too. Finally he was removed from the Madras Presidency, because of anti-war speeches in 1939.

During the initial periods of the Second World War, the communists criticized it as 'Imperialist War'. They exhorted the congressmen to join their ranks to drive out British Imperialists. But the congressmen were extremely reticent. However when Hitler attacked the borders of Russia, the whole story changed. The communists began to co-operate with British war effort, characterising the war now as 'People's war'.

Meantime in 1941 the Government of Madras had instituted three conspiracy cases, viz., Madras Conspiracy Case, Coimbatore Conspiracy Case and Tirunelveli Conspiracy Case, against several communists.\(^{19}\) All these arrested communists were released and the ban on the party was removed in July 1942, by the Indian Government as a gesture towards the cooperation by the communists in war efforts.\(^{20}\) A real boon to the communists happened when congress was banned in 1942.

\(^{19}\) The Hindu (Madras), November 20, 1941.
\(^{20}\) Fortnightly Reports, I and II half of July, 1942.
The communists tactfully used their new found freedom to strengthen their party and to consolidate their position in mass organizations. By the time the congress and other socialist returned from the prisons in 1945 after the close of the war, they found to their dismay that all mass organizations were already captured by the communists. What was worse was, the CPI had already conceded the request of Muslim League for a separate land of their own. By this the congress was terribly annoyed.

The CPI had participated in 1946 elections. But it had won only two seats in 103 contests in a house of 215 members. To balance the defeat the CPI now began militant mass campaigns. When these communist activities became overwhelming, the Madras Government declared the party illegal in January 1947. The government detained more than 160 leaders under the Madras Act I of 1947. The communists could not reconcile themselves to the idea of Independence by negotiations and therefore they denounced the Mountbatten proposals. They could not believe such an eventuality, because the conventional Marxist literature does not hope such a possibility. The communists alienated themselves from the masses when they celebrated the Independence Day as Black Day.

21. *Fortnightly Reports, 1 half of November, 1946.*
Section II: Tamil Communism in the post-Independence period

From 1946 onwards two trends arose inside the CPI. F.C. Joshi, the spokesman of one point of view, reasoned that the country was not yet ready for a full scale proletarian revolution and that the old policy of restraining mass actions should be continued. He kept in his mind that the right strategy of united front from above was the best alternative to Indian conditions. Hence he advocated a policy of limited and critical co-operation with the Congress and the League. The other trend was represented by B.T. Ranadive, who held that the old policy should be radically changed in view of the changed situation in India and that a militant policy of violent action should be followed. His argument favoured a left strategy of united front from below, thus encouraging the growth of mass organizations.23

In the period between 1942-1945, Soviet leadership was not able to decide its mind and it vacillated with the right strategy. Hence the Joshi leadership went all out to carry the leftist strategy. In 1947 Moscow's assessment

of Mountbatten Award did not tally with the CPI's. In July 1947, Zhukov accused the congress leadership as reactionary. Also Zhdanov's report to the inaugural meeting of the cominform in September 1947, indicated a Soviet Cold War against the Nehru government.  

Emboldened by this new line of the Soviet government and utilizing the growing dissatisfaction with Joshi's policy of limited co-operation, B.T.Ranadive pressed for an immediate programme of violent action. In order to explain the new policy to party members and leaders of front groups the second congress was held at Calcutta from February 28 - March 6, 1948. Ranadive denounced the Joshi group as right opportunism masquerading as left unity. As a result Joshi was removed from the central committee and Ranadive took over as Secretary of the party. Now the party swung into extreme leftist action of urban insurrection. Also, the movement at Telengana in Hyderabad was accompanied by violent peasant uprisings and a state of incipient civil war developed.

Ever since "People's war", Tamil communists adopted a leftist stance and when it continued unabated on the eve of Independence, they were suppressed very much by the passing of Madras Act I of 1947. However the government gave amnesty to all political prisoners on August, 15, 1947, hoping that this act of clemency would bring about a real change in the attitude of the communists towards national and provincial governments. But the communists continued to attack the government, wanted to discredit it so as to obtain power. 26

In the months following the second congress, the Tamil Nadu CPI went on an adventurist spree, launching a wave of strikes and trying to convert every partial strike into a general strike. When it found itself isolated from the people, it switched to terrorism, sabotage and violence inviting crippling attacks from the government leading to the liquidation of the party in most areas by mid - 1949. 27


27. See the District Gazetteers of South Arcot, Salem, Ramnad, Tanjore, Coimbatore and Madurai, (all edited by E.S. Beliga, and published by Government of Madras), for a graphic description of various strikes and sabotages inflicted by the communists.
The Government of India published a booklet describing the communist menace\textsuperscript{28}, wherein Tamil Nadu figured sizably. The Government of Madras also brought out a pamphlet explaining in detail the communist violence against villagers, public men and congressmen, their agitation in jails and attacks on jail officials, their sabotage programme amidst labour, their attacks on the police, their conspiracy amidst the kisans, their looting and arson in villages and in railways and their propaganda methods justifying their actions.\textsuperscript{29} To counteract these measures, Sardar Patel, Home Minister of India convened the first Chief Ministers Conference at Delhi on 8–9, April 1949. In that conference the Madras Premier had stated that the High Court stood in the way of effective measures against communists and that he preferred a ban on communists.\textsuperscript{30}

However Patel held that outlawing of communist party throughout India would have international and national repercussions but he wholeheartedly approved any ban within provincial limits, if exigencies required. Taking this clue, the Government of Madras banned the CPI and its 19 other associated

\textsuperscript{28} Government of India, Communist Violence in India, (New Delhi: Superintendent of Printing, 1949).
\textsuperscript{29} Government of Madras, Charge-sheet against the Communists, (Madras: Director of Information and Publicity, 1949).
\textsuperscript{30} U.S.S. File No. 135, dated 1950.
organizations. Also a ministers conference of southern governments was held at Madras on December 27, 1949 to coordinate the measures aiming at anti-communist work. Further a Governors conference was held at New Delhi on March 18-19, 1950 to chalk out the measures to contain the steel cadres and suicide squads of the communist party. These measures brought the vigour of the communists to half its size.

Meanwhile a new trend was blowing inside the CPI. In June 1948 the Andhra unit of the CPI asserted that Mao's concept of New Democracy should be followed in India. In the absence of any guideline from the Soviet Union Ramadive ridiculed Mao and the Andhra communists. But C.Rajeswara Rao, the leader of the Andhra unit, resisted this opinion. To the support of C.Rajeswara Rao, the Chinese method of struggle found powerful support at a Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australasian countries which met in Peking in November 1949. At this conference Liu-Shao-Chi, declared that Chinese method of four class alliance and armed revolution was the best strategy for the colonial and semi-colonial countries. In January 1950 an article "For a

lasting peace" appeared in cominform which generally approved Chinese form of struggle for Asian countries. With this international support Rajeswara Rao replaced Ranadive in May 1950 as Secretary of the party. Rajeswara Rao asserted that armed struggle was a necessary concomitant of the Chinese path of revolution, that the struggle had to be waged by means of armed guerrilla warfare in the country side by the formation of liberation bases and liberation armies, and that the struggle would culminate with the seizure of power all over the country.

The Madras Communists responded faithfully to this policy change also. They intensified the kisan struggles they were waging in Tanjore ever since 1943. They also actively supported the guerrilla warfare in Telengana. But their efforts were really feeble, because many of their rank and file were serving their terms in various prisons of the state. To put a seal to all communist activities, Sardar Patel convened the second Chief Ministers conference at New Delhi on August 20, 1950. Therein, P.S.Kumarasamy Raja, the Chief Minister of Madras, stated that the situation in Madras was well under control and the menace had been localised only in the two districts of Tanjore and Madras. He disclosed that nearly 200 prisoners had been shot dead in police-communist encounters, and that there had been no trouble
from communist prisoners in jail since Salem Jail firing incident, on 11.2.1950 in which 22 prisoners had died.\textsuperscript{33} Thus the reserve energy of the communists was drained by the government during the leadership of Rao.

Now, once again the cold war foreign policy interests of Soviet Union, compelled it to foster a friendship with Nehru government. Consequently the Nehru government had secured qualified support from Moscow because its foreign policy did not always coincide with the Anglo-American policies. The result of this change was utter confusion and factionalism inside the CPI. Hence a secret four-men delegation (Dange, Rao, Basavapunniah and Ghosh) visited Moscow to settle the differences in the party. Bearing the advice rendered by Moscow, the CPI published a Draft Programme as well as a Statement of policy in June 1951. On July 1, 1951, Rajeswara Rao was replaced by Ajoy Ghosh, a man of the Centre.\textsuperscript{34}

The 1951 documents formalized Moscow's decrees on strategy and tactics in India. A four class alliance and a

\textsuperscript{33} U.S.S. File no.88, dated August 30, 1950.

\textsuperscript{34} Mohan Ram,\textit{op.cit.}, p.50.
two stage revolution was to be the strategy but armed
revolution was not to be part of the immediate programme.
Moscow's intervention ended the five year old Telengana
struggle as well as the dream of peasant partisan warfare
as the tactic of Indian revolution.

The 1964 Communist split: The publication of the Draft
Programme in 1951 marked two trends: it had begun the
process of peaceful transition to communism in India\textsuperscript{35} and
it had opened up a fierce controversy over a correct programme,
which continued till the split came in 1964.\textsuperscript{36}

Nehru's drive for closer relations with socialist
countries, (among its manifestations were his visit to China
in November 1954, the visit of Tito to India in January 1955,
Nehru's visit to USSR in June 1955, and the visit of Bulganin
and Khruschev to India in late 1955), the beginning of
Indo-Soviet economic co-operation in February 1955 at Bhilai
Steel Plant, and Congress' declaration of socialist
pattern of society for India in January 1955 - all these made
Moscow to note the progressive features not only in Nehru's
foreign policy but in domestic policies as well. Further

\textsuperscript{35} Pic, V.M. Peaceful transition to communism in India,
\textsuperscript{36} Mohan Ram, op.cit., p.59.
the Sino-Soviet schism which started at the XX Congress of CPSU held at Moscow in 1956, compelled Moscow to retain India in its camp. Also, the experience of the CPI in achieving power through ballot box in Kerala in 1957, convinced the majority of the communists in peaceful transition to communism, which they adopted as the major tactic in the fifth congress of CPI held at Amritsar in January 1958.

There was unanimity among all sections of the CPI about the peaceful transition, especially after Fanadive’s imitation of Russian revolution and Mao’s imitation of Chinese revolution and their catastrophic effect. An equal and firm determination remained in the minds in the opposite direction with regard to the programme. The nature of India’s independence, the class character of Indian government,

37. P.Ramamurti submitted a thesis on July 18, 1954. It argued that the Nehru’s fight against American imperialism, the leftward trend in India’s foreign policy and above all the popularization of Fanch Sheel, should be utilized as the mobilizing device for the creation of a ‘National Platform for peace and freedom’ of the broadest possible united front, and the call for this should emanate from congress itself. But the thesis was rejected by Central Executive Committee in its September 1954 session, because of opposition from Uttar Pradesh leaders. See Fic., V.M., op.cit., p.100.
the party's attitude to economic development and planning - these had remained as points of dispute among the rightists and the leftists. This controversy continued at the Fourth Congress at Palghat (April 1956) and a temporary settlement was reached in the fifth congress at Amritsar (January 1958).

The conclusion at the fifth congress, (that the CPI should fight simultaneous struggle against the right reaction and government policies), was so pleasant that it prompted the majority to stand behind the resolutions despite their serious reservations. However the formal unity imposed by the Amritsar line did not end the factional deadlock. A bizarre permutation of the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute and the Sino-Indian border conflict interacted on the continuing crisis in the CPI for three years after its Amritsar congress to take it to the verge of a split in 1961. Still, the strong centrist trend which had now emerged held the precarious balance between the right and left groups of nearly equal strength. The result was an opportunist compromise at the sixth congress in Vijayawada in 1961 to avert an open split, thanks also to the efforts of Suslov, the Chief CPSU delegate.38 Even at the meeting of Secretariat

on 17.1.1962, the pro-Russian and the pro-Chinese pressure groups within the CPI had agreed to suspend their dispute for supremacy till the 1962 general elections were over.\textsuperscript{39}

But the differences inside the party again came to the surface when divergent drafts were prepared as to the political implications of the results of the third general elections. The rightists, headed by P.C. Joshi wanted collaboration with congress progressives while the leftists wanted to continue the Amritsar line. In January, 1962, the General Secretary of the party, Ajoy Ghosh died. It threw up leadership problems. To accommodate both the sections, the rightist Dange was elected as Chairman, the leftist Namboodiripad was made General Secretary and a composite Secretariat was set up. Finally the Chinese aggression on Indian borders in October, 1962 brought the party to a head on collision. The majority within the party believed, firstly, that China was the aggressor, secondly that there could be no settlement except on a basis acceptable to India, and, finally, that for defending India military aid could be received even from Western powers on a commercial basis. On all three points the leftist minority view was different.

\textsuperscript{39} The Mail (Madras), dated January 18, 1962, p.1.
The minority could not believe that a socialist country could commit aggression, nor was it prepared to support a policy under which Western arms could be bought. Actually different interpretations were given by Dange and Namboodiripad for the resolutions which were passed at the meeting of the Central Secretariat held in the middle of October, 1962. In November, 1962 the National Council of the party passed a resolution, sponsored by the majority group, condemning Chinese aggression. To this three members of the minority group sharply reacted by resigning from the Secretariat. Soon the Government of India arrested most of the minority group leaders under Defence of India Rules, on the wake of Chinese aggression. This postponed the occurrence of the formal split to 1964.

Finally, "Dange Letters" became the immediate cause for the split in the communist party on April 11, 1964.40

All along 1951 to 1964, the Tamil Communists were diplomatic. They were more convinced by the Soviet line, but they kept their heads cool from third congress through

40. For the description of the split, See - Kaviraj, S., The split in the Communist Movement in India, Unpublished Ph.D., thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1979.
sixth congress of the party. They became staunch supporters of the centrist trend headed by Ajoy Ghosh. The Tamil Nadu Communists, who walked out of the National Council meeting on April 19, 1964 were: P. Ramamurti, K. R. Venkataraman, K. Ramani and N. Sankariah. All of them were close friends in a personal sense and leadership of this group remained in the hands of Ramamurti. But in the past Ramamurti had been ideologically of the centre, or even in the right in the early fifties. As of every centrist, it was the organizational worry which pushed Ramamurti into a common bloc with left, rather than ideological preference, in the scuffles since 1962. Thus leftist trend among Tamil communists emerged only in the post-Vijayawada period.

On the very next day of the split, April 12, 1964, the Madurai district council of the CPI (43 members out of 80) met in Thirupparankundram and condemned the action of the CPI in expelling the 32 leftists. It also suspended the 37 rightists in the district council for anti-party activities in the recent municipal elections. On April 28, 1964, N. R. Venkataraman convened a two day session of Tamil Nadu

41. Ibid., p. 537.
42. The Mail (Madras), dated April 12, 1964, p. 6.
Leftists at Madurai. A presidium consisting of M.R. Venkataraman, Bhupathy and K.S.Parthasarathy was elected. P.Ramamurti spoke on the crisis blowing inside the CPI. At the end of the session the convention called itself CPI(M), and set up a 54 member committee to co-ordinate the activities of the party units in all districts. M.R. Venkataraman was the head of the committee. Also an executive committee of 16 members was formed in which M.R.Venkataraman functioned as the Secretary.43

Toleration was not easy for the Tamil Nadu CPI, when the 'Madurai' group emerged in the early sixties under the leadership of Ramamurti. About the time personal equations were amplified to the point of no return, P.Jeevanandam, the towering force of Tamil communists, died on 18.1.1963. After this, when the Madurai group moved farther and farther to the left, the CPI pushed to the right with equal magnitude and ferocity. After the split, the Tamil Nadu State Council of CPI(rightists) met on 27-29 April 1964, at Coimbatore for a three day session. There the party resolved on several issues. It accepted the political resolution passed by the National Council, ridiculed the Dange letters as fake,

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43. The Mail(Madras), dated April 29, 1964, p.5.
condemned the actions of Ramamurti and the Madurai District Council and suspended from party membership all those members of the state council who participated in 'Madurai Convention'. Thus the split became complete in Tamil Nadu.

The Maoists: The Andhra Provincial committee of the CPI submitted the document "Andhra Letter", to the Central Executive Committee of the Party in June 1948. This document laid down in absolutely unambiguous terms a revolutionary strategy based on Mao's New Democracy in order to translate the second congress programme of the CPI into action. Thus, Andhra extremists were the earliest Maoists in India, seeking the application of Mao's teachings to India even before the Chinese revolution was completed. They had a chance to put their ideas into practice when they made a palace revolution at a meeting of the central committee in May 1950, allowing C. Rajeswara Rao to become the new General Secretary. However the victory of the Maoist line was to be rather ephemeral. Telengana movement and Maoist strategy were shelved in 1951 in pursuance of Moscow's directive.

But Maoism resurrected itself in the interregnum between 1958-51, when Sino-Soviet schism became acute. Yet the split

44. Ibid.,
in 1964 did not represent a clear Sino-Soviet polarization.\textsuperscript{45} The Chinese encouragement to armed revolution in India manifested itself only during Naxalbari agitation.\textsuperscript{46} The revolt of the Maoists to the leadership of CPI(M) was due to (i) reluctance on the part of CPI(M) to discuss ideological issues (ii) publish a programme based on Maoism (iii) the enthusiasm of the CPI(M) to preoccupy itself with parliamentarism and elections (iv) CPI(M)'s refusal to support CPC's views on international issues and (v) CPI(M)'s eschewing of armed revolution in India.\textsuperscript{47} The Maoists were also enthused by the Lin Piao's thesis of Encirclement (1965) and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China in 1966.

However differences of opinion among the Maoists groups had led to two different streams among themselves, although all these groups name themselves as CPI(ML).\textsuperscript{48} The first stream emanates predominantly from the Andhra Maoists who believe in mass organization, in work in urban areas, in the leadership of the working class and in mass armed struggle.

\textsuperscript{45} The CPC's silence over the April 1964 walk out of 32 leftist, the Tenali convention in July 1964 and the formation of CPI(M) in November 1964 cannot be dismissed as insignificant. See Mohan Ram, Indian Communism, (Delhi : Vikas, 1969), p.212.


The other stream swears mechanically by Mao's thought and acts as secret party groups with mobile rural headquarters to give them a touch of Che Guevara-esque romance. They lack faith in mass organizations, support individual annihilation and totally abandon the towns. Maoism in Andhra was the result of the patient work done by T. Magi Reddy, C. Rulla Reddy, D. Venkateswara Rao and K. Venkiah. Maoism in West Bengal and in other places were the result of the temperamental outbursts of Charu Kazumber and Kanu Sanyal and others.

In so far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the birth of Naxalite movement is almost coterminous with the one in West Bengal. It is interesting to note that none of the four Tamil Nadu signatories among the 32 who walked out of the National Council in April 1964 to form the CPI(M), had espoused the philosophy of Naxalism. As a result no viable state level leadership was available to the cadres of CPI(M) to launch the Naxalite movement. The leadership had been provided by those who were commanding at best, district level following.

Taoists of both varieties had been functioning in Tamil Nadu. Their concentration had been found in the districts of Tanjore, North Arcot, Madurai, Coimbatore, Thirunelveli and Madras. Probably those naxalites who believe in individual annihilation had held predominance over the mass theorists.

Communists in the Seventies: The CPI and the CPI(M) had developed in the seventies very different perspectives of the Indian political system and of the ruling party of the national bourgeoisie. The Tamil Nadu branches of both the CPI and CPI(M) had followed the party directives rather faithfully.

Encouraged by an apparently leftward drift of Indira Gandhi by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace and Friendship of August, 1971, by the growing estrangement between India and USA, the CPI became more hopeful of leading the country towards its goal of national democratic state, through the tactics of mobilizing left and democratic elements both within and outside the ruling party. In simpler terms, the CPI's political line made it a partner of the congress political system. CPI maintained, in accordance with the theory of national democracy, that the system could be radically transformed from above through the agency of
parliament in conjunction with the mobilization of mass support for radical policies. It therefore took an incremental view of development, raising the banner of rapid social change—a slogan coined by CPSU leaders to conceptualize the politics of peaceful transition. For them, each socialistic measure taken by the congress government represented a step in the direction of its own goal. For the same reason the CPI supported the emergency imposed by Mrs. Gandhi during June, 1975, thinking that it could help in crushing the forces of right reaction and giving the emergency regime a visible and durable left orientation. But later events proved that Indira Gandhi showed no indication to move in the direction called for by the CPI. And by November 1976, CPI's criticism of the government for its failure to extend and deepen the gains of the Emergency tended to become more frequent and sharper. As a result in the eleventh congress of the CPI at Jhatinda in 1978, three trends emerged; The policy pursued by CPI upto 1974 was right and thereafter was wrong; once the real character of emergency was exposed, it should have been opposed; and, support should have been continued while seeking correction of the aberrations of the emergency and the relationship with Indira Gandhi's leadership should have been allowed to continue. The third trend of support to Mrs. Gandhi was the personal theory of S.I.Dange. For
this theory as well as for his sin of allowing his daughter
to form the All India Communist party in 1980, Dange was
expelled from the CPI on 16.4.1981. Surprisingly, the CPI
did not approve of the Janata experiment, in accordance
with the theory of 'left and democratic fronts only'. At
present the CPI opposes Mrs. Gandhi as well as the right
reactionaries and it strives hard for the left unity.

The CPI(N), on the contrary, rejected the idea that
the congress reflected a leftward shift under Mrs. Gandhi's
leadership. In a resolution adopted by the party's Ninth
Congress, held at Cochin in 1972, the Marxists insisted
that the congress party was still the party of the big
bourgeoisie and big landlords, and that the progressive
measures it had taken since 1969 were deceptive in nature.
It was convinced that India was moving toward 'one-party
dictorship', that the ruling classes were already using
'semifascist' methods to destroy their class enemies, and
that nothing short of the replacement of the present
government by a people's democracy could place the country
firmly on the road to development. The CPI(N)'s perception
of the Indian political condition was confirmed by the
emergency regime of Mrs. Gandhi.
To oppose Mrs. Gandhi, the CPI(M) was compelled to forge an alliance with Janata party in 1977 elections. However the experiment proved its inadequacy within a short span and now the Marxists are working consciously to find out unity among all the leftists.

The Maoists had a different problem altogether. They faced suppression in the hands of the congress, DMK and Marxist governments even before the emergency. During emergency their plight was a woeful tale. Hence they corresponded with the Janata government for their release from the jails, perhaps in a very pitiable manner. Now these Maoist groups remain scattered in different parts of the country, trying to rebuild their strength.

Section III: Conclusion:

Inspite of the fact that there was no interpretation of Marxism to the Tamil World prior to 1910's, Russian revolution kindled the imagination of many people. However the real impact of a revolution was not felt, for varying reasons. The political situation was changed to a great extent by the announcement of constitutionalism by Edwin Montagu.
The real spirit of the revolution was understood only by poet Bharathi. He dreamed for such an egalitarian society in India too. But he did not advocate the philosophy of violence, although he belonged to extremists in national politics. N.Singaravelu was the lone torch-bearer in the complex situation of oppressive colonialism. He believed in Marxist scriptures, even though he may not be aware of theoretical niceties. He was instrumental in building up the labour movement and linking it with national struggle. He began his own party and journals to propagate communism. When the experiment almost failed, he did not hesitate to collaborate with rising forces, which wanted to end injustice. When his association with E.V.Famasamy proved to be abortive, because of excessive government suppression, he waited patiently for the events to turn up. He was aware that he may not be able to usher in an era of socialistic society in Tamil Nadu, but he was not overwhelmed by the odds. Hence he extended a helpful hand to the organizing abilities of Amir Hyder Khan and S.V.Ghate. The uncommon commonsense of Amir Hyder Khan was in full cry when he tried to establish a communist party in Tamil Nadu. He never let his heart to be torn to pieces, by the hurdles he had faced. His Young Workers League showed the immense necessity of an organization, for building up communism.
As such Khan might not have achieved anything in an organizational sense, but his role in Tamil Nadu could be likened to that of a doctor who announces the cause and the cure. At this juncture the role of E.V.Ramasamy and K.Nashyam in trying to build socialism, paved the way for the kindling of mass consciousness. Thus leadership and masses were ready for the acceptance of communism, waiting patiently to be moulded by the crafty hands of S.V.Ghate. Ghate built the beautiful superstructure by uniting the remnants of Labour Protection League, the disenchanted congress socialists and the non-Brahmin Samacharma socialists.

However the efficient functioning of the communist party was hampered by two reasons: first the government did not hesitate to come down heavily on the nascent party, when it got the hunch that communists were growing up. It instituted Madras, Coimbatore and Thirunelveli conspiracy cases in 1941 and rounded up several leaders for propagation of communism and sedition. Secondly, the comintern acted on all occasions with the Soviet interests in its mind and hence it chose right and left strategies for the CPI according to its necessity and convenience. Quite often it drew up policies, which were followed faithfully by the CPI, either
too early or too late. And on most occasions the counsel by the comintern and CPGB were antagonistic to the national sentiments. When the CPI followed the right strategy it was locked down with suspicion by the Indian National congress and other parties, and when it followed the left strategy the Government suppressed the party to pieces.

When the second world war broke out, the CPI saw in it a great opportunity for an imminent revolution. For that reason, it attacked the congress stridently for its lethargic resolutions and impatiently called for an opposition to the 'Imperialist War'. That fervour did not last long because of Hitler's invasion of Soviet borders in 1941, and the imperialist war turned into 'People's War' in February, 1942. The Government of India rewarded the CPI for this policy change more than adequately by legalising the communist party and declaring all other leftist organizations as unlawful after the Quit India Movement.

The CPI, under the shrewd leadership of P.C. Joshi, utilized the new found freedom to grow in the labour, Kisan, Student, and Women organizations. Now it began to vouchsafe the nationality theory, conceding the demand of Pakistan. It also ridiculed the congress for not participating in the people's war. Enraged by these
pronouncements of the CPI, the congress expelled all the communists from its rank and file in 1946, despite P.C. Joshi's correspondence with Gandhi pleading him not to expel the communists.

About the same time the CPI in Tamil Nadu began to follow the leftist strategy. As usual the government began to suppress the communists by arresting the communists under the newly passed 'Madras (Maintenance of Public Order) Act I of 1947', and by instituting the Madurai conspiracy case and the second Thirunelveli conspiracy case.

After the second World War the CPI, which had isolated itself from the mainstream of the 1942 Quit India Movement, found itself overtaken by the dizzy pace of political and constitutional developments. Though the CPI rightly assessed the nature of Mountbatten award, it changed that decision owing to the dictates of Moscow. So much so, the nature of Mountbatten award, the class essence of the new state and the strategy and tactics for the new period became bones of contention among the communists of various hues.

The Independence brought a qualitative change in the task of the CPI. So far it was fighting for freedom through the organization of the exploited classes. Now it became
the cardinal duty of the CPI to seek social and economic justice to the poor millions of India through the organization of the exploited classes.

But then there was no clear cut model of revolution available for the CPI for the Indian Revolution, it envisaged. B.T. Ranadive imitated the Russian model in 1948-1950 and C. Rajeswara Rao imitated the Chinese model in 1950-51, even while P.C. Joshi was advocating a policy of 'United front from above' with the congress. When there was such a consternation amidst the CPI leaders as to the strategy and tactics of Indian revolution, Moscow intervened in the affairs of the CPI, advocating a policy of collaboration with congress, thus ending the hard-won victories in Telengana. The Draft programme published by CPI, in concurrence with Moscow opinion, in 1951 became the basis for future activity of the communists upto 1964.

The Draft Programme of 1951 settled the road for peaceful transition to communism in India. But it opened up a fierce controversy of the adequacy of right and left strategies. Quite soon, the Sino-Soviet schism, the quarrel among Indian communists for a right programme and the Sino-Indian war interacted in a complicated pattern leading to the split in the communist party in 1964.
In between 1948-51, the Tamil communists obeyed to all the dictates of the party centre and in-between 1951-1968 they remained firmly with the centrists of the CPI. There were occasions when they remained in the rightist camp also. However when P. Ramamurti gathered the kadurai group in 1961-64 and began to oppose the rightists, a clear trend of leftist politics emerged inside the Tamil Nadu CPI. When the split came, P. Ramamurti quickly walked over to join the newly formed CPI(M).

The CPI published its second programme in 1964 calling for a national democratic revolution in India first. It wanted to consolidate all left and democratic forces both inside and outside the congress. It supported the emergency of Mrs. Gandhi in the fond hope of establishing a firm foundation for the left forces. But when that hope was belied, it changed its policy at its eleventh conference held at Bhatinda in 1978. Now the CPI looks forward to the consolidation of all left and democratic forces.

The CPI(M) did not discuss the ideological question soon after its formation in November 1964. It faced suppression by the central government up to 1966. Therefore when the Marxists came out of the prisons in 1966, they were more worried about the 1967 general elections. The alliances
they forged and the victories they obtained stunned them considerably and hence they also settled for the parliamentary path supplemented by mass struggles.

Under pressure from the party members, the CPI(M) published a draft on ideological issues at a special plenum of the party at Aurdwan in April, 1968. The draft was wholly dissatisfying to the ultra-leftists of the party, who wanted to see eye to eye with CPC on all international and domestic issues. Hence these Maoists parted company and acquired the name of 'Naxalites'. Though there are two streams among the Maoists, they believe in armed revolution for social emancipation in India.

The Marxists wanted to establish a people's democratic revolution in India and hence they wanted to build up all democratic forces outside the congress. Hence they supported the J.P. movement, and opposed the emergency. It was for the same reason that they joined hands with Janata in 1977. However the failure of the Janata experiment, had left them to search for ways for leftist unity.

The Tamil Nadu Marxists wanted to exploit the regionalist feelings and, in accordance with their policy of building up all democratic forces, they collaborated with the regional
parties like DMK and AIADMK. Some times these alliances were useful with regard to electoral benefits and sometimes they became jittery. As far as the Marxists are concerned, both streams have been found in Tamil Nadu since 1967 and they have undergone harsh treatment under the DMK and AIADMK governments. They have been sizable in number but not adequate in strength.

Soviet guidance to CPI and the Chinese guidance to CPI(ML) have become the focal points of derision among the people. Hence the Marxists have been concerned over the undue dominance of the international policy over the domestic policy. Therefore they want to steer clear of both CPSU and CPC in the international arena, trying their level best to act independently. Thus Tamil Nadu communists have become victims of historical forces. They have been directed and compelled to follow the policy decisions of the party centres, which, in turn, have been directed by international communist authorities or by the anxiety of avoiding them. In the process the interests of Tamil Nadu were and is forgotten by the Tamil Nadu Communists.