Chapter - V

Women in Leftist Movement

The participation of the leftist women in the freedom movement of India can be traced from the Bolshevik Revolution of Russia, 1917. The ideology based on Marxist socialism was entailed by the founders of the Communist Party of India (17 October 1920) including M.N. Roy, Evelyn Roy, Abani Mukherjee, Thirmul Acharya, Rosa Fingov, Muhammad Ali and Muhammad Shafiq. It was affiliated to Communist International in 1921. They wanted to employ this ideology for both the liberation of India from the colonial yoke and establishment of socialist state. Highlighting the feature of the communist movement in Russia, S.G. Sardesai observes: "

The Russian Revolution, the first successful socialist revolution in history, opened up a new horizon before the toiling people all over the world for the abolition of capitalist and landlord exploitation. By freeing all countries under Czarist rule, it also blazed a new path for subject countries struggling for national independence and self determination."²

Socialism as a system, in fact, vehemently denies the notion of private property and firmly stands against the exploitation of man by man and of women by the society, which came into existence with the birth of property. To add further, it stands for complete equality of men and women in all spheres of life. It is not by talking of equality or merely inserting it in the laws but by giving women the opportunities to develop their capacities fully that real equality comes about³.
The Communists had started championing the cause of workers and peasants before the formation of the C.P.I. In the Ahmedabad session of Indian National Congress, they had made an appeal to the Congress to play the leading role in the national movement while at the same time adopting the programmes of peasantry and working classes. Finally and formally, the Communist Part of India was formed in 1925 after the launching of Kanpur Conspiracy Case (1923-24) in which communist leaders held responsible for hatching conspiracy against the state.

The Communist movement in India drew its inspiration and actual strength from (i) Socialist state in USSR and the Communist International stationed in Moscow. (ii) the radicalisation of Indian National Movement as represented by Indian National Congress; and (iii) the class consciousness and organisations of the labouring masses. Thus, the formation of the Communist Party in India was an attempt in the direction of organising the Indian Working class on the basis of revolutionary class ideology propounded by Marx and Lenin. Its message has always been revolutionary in context, e.g. the abolition of landlordism and distribution of land to the tillers of the soil without compensation, the confiscation and nationalisation of British capital in India.

By 1925, most of the communists implicated in the so called Kanpur Conspiracy Case were set free. After their release Mir Abdul Majid, Gawher Rahman Khan, Firozuddin Mansoor and Habib Ahmad Naseem resumed their activities at Lahore cut short by Ghulam Hussain having severed his connections with the movement.

The communist activities in the Punjab also got impetus from the renowned Ghadr Party leader Santokh Singh who reached India.
via Moscow in 1925. He was a born revolutionary and a tireless organiser. It may be recalled that by 1924, the Ghadr Party in America had come under the influence of the Communist International. It regularly sent delegates to Moscow for being trained in Communism, after which they came to India to organise the national liberation movement. towards the close of 1925 Fazl Ilahi Qurban, a close lieutenant of M.N. Roy, also returned to India. He could only be arrested in April 1927 when he was sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment but meanwhile he remained very active in movement. In the absence of Dange who was not released before 1927, the other Communists in Bombay like S.V. Ghate, K.N. Joglekar and R.S. Nimbkar kept the flag flying.

The year 1928 was important for the leftists in regard to the proposals alongwith the tentative constitution put forward in the report of a committee constituted by Congress and headed by Moti Lal Nehru. As per the report the Dominion Staus was to be demanded from the British Government with negotiation and compromise method but the leftists in the Congress opposed these proposals and demanded that the Congress should make a declaration of complete independence as its goal and should resolve to take recourse to continue Civil disobedience as a method of its achievement. They also demanded that the Congress should lay greater emphasis on the problems of the labour and peasantry.

Another credit earned by the leftists to their achievements was the adoption of a resolution passed by All India Conference of the Workers and Peasants (1928) against having any connection with All India League for Independence. The League was founded in November 1928 by the leftist faction within Congress such as Sri Niwas Iyenger, Shiv Prasad Gupta, Subhash Chander Bose,
Jawaharlal Nehru, etc. It aimed at programme of promotion of political, economic and social democracy. Though in its early stage of formation, a conflict between the League and Congress was expected, however, former remained only a pressure group. Moreover, with the acceptance of the goal of complete independence by the Congress in 1929, which was the main demand of the league, its activities further slackened. Thus its emergence went a long way towards popularising the socialist ideology among the younger section of the Congress, peasant organisations under Communist Party.

To continue the Party’s work, under instruction of M.N. Roy, the leading marxist and founding member of the Communist Party of India, the worker and Peasant’s Party (WPP) was formed. This party stood for complete independence based on social and economic emancipation, demanded nationalisation of industries, services and land. The WPP, however, was more engaged in organising the urban and industrial workers than mobilising the peasantry. The Krishak Praja Party (KPP) formed in 1929 emerged as an important political party in the 1930 to plead for the abolition of the zamindari system and establishment of peasant proprietorship in land.

When the Communist Party was banned in 1934 and many of the Communist workers were arrested, a significant number of them migrated to the remote rural areas to evade their arrests. They started secretly mobilising the rural poor on local issues. Their work received a fillip with the formation of the Bengal Kisan Sabha in 1936, a provincial branch of the All India Kisan Sabha. The main objectives of the Kisan Sabha were to secure complete freedom of the peasantry from economic exploitation and attain complete
economic and political power for the peasants and workers and for all other exploited classes\textsuperscript{10}. Communist students also emerged as a force to reckon with in the third session of the All India Students Conference held at Madras in December 1937\textsuperscript{11}.

**Women Organisations**

Women of all political opinions, including those who had become Communist or had Communist leanings, joined in the release political Prisoners campaign. The movement for release of armed revolutionaries started joining momentum and women too began to be drawn into this movement. As a result of a nation-wide demand, a number of them had been released in 1938 but there were still many in jail. For the release of political prisoners a campaign was started by the women in Calcutta. An office at 98 Premchand Baral street in Calcutta was also set from where the women political activists were organizing their movement\textsuperscript{12}.

Another organisation formed by women with the name Congress Mahila Sangha in which Leela Roy of the Sree Sangha group, Bina Das and Kamala Das Gupta of the Jugantar Party and a member of the underground Communist Party, and many others also joined. This was the first attempt aiming at building a united Women organisation in which political women were in forefront. The All India Women Conference had already been established but in West Bengal, radical political women never looked upon it as their organisation. It was decided to bring out a women's magazine called Mandira to be the mouth piece of the Congress Mahila Sangha and it was published from the Sree Saraswati Press, Calcutta, with Kamal Chatterjee as editor. For a year, she edited
this magazine but as anti-communist feeling began to rise, she left the magazine and Kamala Das Gupta took over its editorship.

The Congress Mahila Sangha joined in the Release Political Prisoner's Movement. Women organising and speaking at a street-corner meeting was a rarity in those days. One of the early street-corner meetings was held in Rashbehari Avenue in Calcutta. Lalika Sen, Kamala Mukherjee, and her followers of Stree Sangh and the Gandhite Labanya Lata Chandra of Congress, all participated in this meeting. Mani Kuntala Sen, who was later to become one of the good Communist orators, spoke in public for the first time.

When the agitation for the release of Andaman prisoners reached its peak in 1938 women student in large numbers participated in the mass meetings and demonstration organised by the students held throughout the country. It was at this stage when the need for organising the girl students was felt. But they had not come in large numbers in the organisation like All India Student's Federation which was the predominantly held by the boy students. It was decided in the meeting of AISF to set up the girl student's.

In 1940, women student from all over India came together at Lucknow. Where Sarojini Naidu the Patron of Youth, inaugurated the conference. Her eloquence poetry and the fiery speech concentrated on telling these young women that the future of India lay in their hands, if they did not allow them to lie idle and waste them in only domestic drudgery. She urged them, "to join with young student and bring fresh blood into the mainstream of the battle for freedom". After the All India Student's Federation, national conference in Delhi and the formation of the Girl student's Association after the *Lucknow Conference*, work began in right earnest to organise girl
student’s not only in Bengal but in Bombay, Punjab and other places as well. Enthusiastic young women students among whom one can recall names like Nargis Batlivala, Perin Bharucha, Santa Gandhi, Kamala Das Gupta, Kalyani Mukherjee, Santi Sarkar, Geeta Roy Choudhari along with a number of others starting touring and organising the women students. In the building of massmilitnat women organisation, the girl student cadres in almost all districts of West Bengal as also in the Punjab and Bombay played an important role.

In Punjab, young women students like Perin Bharucha, Litto Rai, Puran Mehta, Shiela Bhatia came close to the student’s movements. There was no separate organisation for women students but a women’s section of students was formed in 1940 with Litto Rai as its general secretary. Study circles were organised in which Communist leaders like Dr. Z.A. Ahmed, Sajjad Zaheer, Karan Singh Mann used to participate. They started working among the students of Kinnaird, Fatehabad and Lahore Colleges where girls studied. Some of them undertook distribution of literature in the rooms of the girls as in those days many of the books and leaflets were banned by the government. The women student’s organisation came into being in Lyallpur and Rawalpindi also.

In 1941, a big demonstration of 20,000 students was held in Delhi in which them Sarla Gupta, a Communist, was one of them. They came out of the university demanding the release of the leaders in jail and of the Andaman prisoners. In Bengal a conference of girl student was held in district Jessore. It showed the widespread awakeninging that had taken place among girl students. In 1940, Kanak Das Gupta was extemed by the British Government.
Consequently girl students association fell on the shoulders of Kalyani Mukherjee.

In 1941, the Patna Students Federation Conference took place. In which approximately 50,000 girls students came to be associated as members of the association. In Bengal also, strong units of students organisations grew up in Calcutta and other centres of learning. It was, therefore, clear among the youths that the girl students should be caderised in accordance with leftist ideology and came ahead to register their presence in national fight against the colonial farist masters. On the contrary, the British arrested Gandhiji on 9 August 1942 on the eve of the Quit India movement. Further, the arrests of other prominent Congress ladies leaderless turned it into movement. However, the news of these arrests spread, spontaneous hartals took place all over the country. Women joined in taking out processions, holding meetings, demonstrations and organising strikes.

In Assam, Kanak Lata Barua, a young girl in her teens, led a procession of five hundred and was killed in the police firing. In Midnapur district Bengal, women played a notable role for which they became victims of police atrocities.

In Bombay, Usha Mehta operated an underground radio station. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was the leader of this group. The "congress Radio" broad cast news at 7.30 in the evenings from August to 13 November 1942, was made by Usha Mehta till she, along with her colleagues, was arrested. Usha was kept in a solitary cell for two months and interrogated daily for hours together. She was sentenced to four year's rigorous imprisonment and sent to yervada jail where she found herself among 250 women political
prisoners. Aruna Asaf Ali was also remained underground evading arrest. She published bulletins and edited, a magazine the Inquilab with Lohia. A price of five thousand rupees was announced as a reward for her capture. They issued bulletins and leaflets on behalf of the Congress reporting the progress of the movement. The bulletins were issued under the signature of Aruna Asaf Ali and Achyut Patwardhan. However, Sucheta Kriplani notes that she had the Major responsibility of publishing and distributing them.

The Rani Jhansi Brigade was formed by Netaji Subhas Chandar Bose with daring and patriotic Indian women living in South - East Asia. Their participation in the freedom struggle was a great inspiration to the women. Women by the side of men broke their bonds and came out in the streets to defy British bullets. In Bombay a young Communist Kamal Donde was shot dead.

The Communist women took the initiative from the south Calcutta Branch. After becoming its secretary, Aparna Sent made the branch active among the house wives of the middle and lower middle classes of the area. When the Communist women went to work in the devastated riot - torn areas of Noakhali, Chandpur and other places, it was with greatest of difficulty that they could secure the cooperation of the All India Women's Conference leaders of Bengal.

Besides, the Communist women worked hard in providing relief to the flood effected people, the fight against disease, saving women from prostitution and providing women's shelter in the work of economic rehabilitation of the destitute. Many a times, they got all such services accomplished with AIWC as a joint venture in those districts of Bengal where the AIWC branches existed. They
also rendered their services jointly in the Food Coordination Committee, the Joint Committee for setting up the rehabilitation centres of women which brought into existencethe Nari Seva Sangh\textsuperscript{24}.

In some of the districts like Bankura and Chittagong, the communist women worked and built not only the branches of AIWC but also contributed a lot for spreading it even to the villages. They ran schools and milk centres in those centres. At Chittagong in 1946, the AIWC had gained strength only because of communist women who worked as an instrument. They had all done it through a penetration into working class and peasant women\textsuperscript{25}.

A region that formed part of Madras Presidency under the aegis of British rule and was renowned for the participation of women in the movement was the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Duvurisubhamma and Durgabai Deshmukh, who later became a member of the constituent Assembly in 1946 were in the forefront of the movement. Deshmukh in post - independence India strongly supported the Hindu Code Bill and established the Andhra Mahila Sabha in Madras which grew into a complex of institution, hospitals/training schools, working women's hostels. Subbamma who was particularly inspired by Gandhi's speeches participated in the movement despite a socially restricted environment\textsuperscript{26}.

In Punjab, the Women's Self Defence League was established in early 1943 with Baji Rashida Latif as President and Perin Romesh Chandra as the Secretary. In the cities they worked in food depots helping the women to get the food and distributed it properly. Other communist girls like Shakuntala Bibi and the secretary Shakuntala Sharda, Bibi Raghbir Kaur, the President, devoted themselves in the
services of the villagers and side by side the Lok Stri Sabha grew up. Rameshwari Nehru persuaded the two organisations to be unite together in the AIWC. In November 1945, a merger conference was held where Sarojini Naidu spoke at this conference. Rameshwari Nehru was elevated to the Presidentship of the united organisation whereas Perin Romesh Chandra was nominated as the Secretary of the AIWC.

In Bihar, the All India Women's Conference was held at Patna in January 1929. Another conference i.e. Bihar Women's Constituent Conference was also organised wherein resolutions were passed in Sarda Act against the Purdah and dowry system. Besides, a demand was also raised for the development of female education in Bihar.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Communist women worked within Allahabad and Agra branches of the AIWC. They were in the forefront of the struggle for the codification of the civil law in the first instance Hindu law, pertaining to marriage, inheritance etc. It also stood up against the orthodox Hindu viewpoint that opposed to the taking of evidence by the Rao Committee. In this way, the efforts was made by Communist women to bring the AIWC out of its narrow shell of confining itself to educational and social reform and to make it participate on a wider spectrum, gained momentum at the base level in the provinces. This began to have its effect in changing the scope of activity and thinking at the top. As a consequent, the winds of change was noticed in the national atmosphere, the strengthening of the anti-imperialist struggle for wherein freedom, the struggles of workers, peasants, students, women and girls in towns and villages took place. They offered themselves as the front rankers be it picketing, demonstration and
facing lathis or bullets, or even going to prison. Communist and nationalist leaders thus both contributed to bring about some change in the outlook of the AIWC. The period 1926-28 was characterised by certain significant developments. The communists organised a number of workers and peasants organisations in four major provinces of India, Bengal, Bombay, Punjab and United Provinces. A series of Peasants' Conferences were organised by left wing nationalists and communists in Bengal. In these conferences, the demand for the abolition of land lordism as well as the distribution of land to the tillers was raised. This culminated to a provincial peasants conference at Bogra in north Bengal in 1925. After much deliberation, a consensus emerged on the formation of a political party called "Bharatiya Jatiya Mahasamitir Sramik-Praja-Swaraj-Samprady" (The worker-Peasant Independence Wing of the Indian National Congress). It also brought out a weekly journal in Bengali, the Langal (plough) with the famous poet Nazrul Islam at the helm. Early 1926, Langal reprinted in full a manifesto of the new party. In Feb 1926, another conference was held at krishananagar where the name of the party was changed to Peasants and Workers Party. (Krishak-o-Sramik Dal) The new party was organised on the base of the former Labour Swaraj Party, which had been working with the National Congress since its inception in November 1925. The World economic crises led the bottom out of the already exhausted agrarian economy of India.

The resulting process of rack-renting, debt enslavement and expropriation found its reflection in rising movements of the peasants in all parts of India. The peasants spontaneously formed village committees to resist evictions, boycott, purchases of land
Women have been most active in political struggle during periods of crises, frequent in Bengal. Women, Particularly in Midnapur, played an active role in the most militant phases of the nationalist movement, i.e the Civil Disobedience movement and the Quit India movement. Matungini Hazra who was killed during the nationalist women in Midnapur is still revered as a martyred symbol of women's courage.

The Communist Party worked through the All-India Women's Conference during the first phase of the nationalist movement. After World War II, although congress and the Communist Party i.e. continued to cooperate on certain issues, they differed on questions ranging from the membership for the AIWC, to organizing of the communist party the Mahila Atma Raksha Samiti (MARS) or Women's Self-Defense League was formed as a mass front of the communist Party. It is estimated that-about 43,000 women were associated to it over half of whom were party members.

Significantly, MARS was quite active during the famine period in organizing large scale hunger strike for food, movements against black marketeers and hoarders, demanding proper supplies and controlled prices and the opening of ration shops in the slum areas.

BENGAL

The Tebhaga movement 1946-50 led by the Kisan Sabha of the Communist Party was perhaps the only movement in West Bengal in which Women's participation surpassed that of men after they were sold in default and to unite against the moneylenders. In 1936, the first All-India Peasant organisation was formed- The All-India Kisan Sabha.
arrested on its intensification. Adhi nai, Tebhaga Chahi 'We want two-thirds not one-half of the crop' was main demand of sharecroppers. This movement was the most active in the area of Twenty-Four Pargana and northern Bengal. Interestingly the women participated at all levels in the struggle; whether it was the forcible harvesting of crops or in organising meetings demonstrations and delegations, etc. They were also trained as guerilla warfare in Twenty-Four Pargana when the movement got changed into armed struggle.

The women even did not sit silent in their homes and families when government took tough action to suppress their movement. Another notable aspect of their awareness was their struggle for modesty as they had to attract the attention of party leaders towards the sexual oppression and wife-beating. Once the initial demands of the movement were met the scheduled caste and tribal women could become if equal treatment was given to them. The Muslim Women also did not lag behind in the movement that is why there was women unusual unity between Hindus and Muslims even during a period of communal strife was noticed.

Their main claims in the movement are testified with three slogans roused to action, (1) gather your entire crop in your own burn. (2) Not half but two-third share in yours; (3) no interest to be paid on loaned paddy. The fighters of the district of Dinajpur were in the front rank. Besides, Thakurgaon being famine prone was a stronghold of the kisan sabha. One may cite the action taken by the women of the Kisan Sabha of the same village who faced the police with lathis. In paddy harvesting season when one lot of volunteers had started harvesting, red flag where there in hands. Another group of volunteers stood sentinel over them. After reaping...
the crop, they shifted it to their own granaries. Police did not object. Next day, the police came and arrested 32 kisan workers, including the secretary and sent them to Thakurgao. But the volunteers did not stop the harvesting of paddy. This time, the police tried to stop the kisans. A kisan woman, comrade Deepeshwari, having lathi in hand came and stood in the field. Raising the lathi she ran towards the police and other volunteers followed her as a result the Police retreated and left the field41.

What is significant to note in this regard is the Tebhaga movement which successfully brought women in the liberation movement on equal footing with men. As they saw their golden paddy brought in to their yards, the women who had not only themselves suffered such pangs of hunger but also had seen their children famished during famine. These women became the first supporters of Tebhaga. Another example of similar nature may be cited to testify their approach of dealing with the owners of fields in the reaping season. A kisan widow of Purushottampur who was 35 years old and mother of five children having no grain for her children as her husband was a share-cropper of Nagen Jotedar she begged the Jotedar to engage her for husking paddy, but he cheated her giving her only one seer husking instead of the normal 2 seers42.

When the kisan women of Purushottampur came with their men to defend their paddy, she was also present in the field with her broomstick. She stood at the head of the every kisan action. So far as the plan of action was concerned the farmers had developed their own methods. When the police entered the village, bells and conchshells were blown and the echo could be heard from one to the other. Besides, they shouted Inquilab Zindabad. It was the peasant women folk who performed such uncommon duty in form of
warning. Almost immediately on hearing this, all the women folk would take hold of broomsticks, *lathis* sand their husking pestles (gayon) and immediately formed a bari cade on the village road so that the police could not enter the village\textsuperscript{43}.

There occurred an historical event wherein the farmers had to meet with killings of their compatriots. The event which was started on the grazing bullock of a sharecropper that had entered the countryard of the *zamindar* who also happened to be a powerful man of the village. The Zamindar ordered by *Barkanday* (arm-man) to impound the bullock at the police station, but the kisans snatched away the bullock\textsuperscript{44}.

Infuriated, jotedar called the police, which announced Seventeen adhiar names were for arrests. Faced with this huge concours, the police fired 131 rounds and killed 22 kishans. *kaushaya*, *Kamarani* and *Jasoda Barman*, three brave women, were among those killed in police firing\textsuperscript{45}.

In the district of Mymensingh, the activists of the Tebhaga movement decisively contributed as an instrument in Tanka movement among the Hajang tribal of Mymensingh in 1937-38. The *Tanka* was an exorbitant levy which was charged from the tribals on their produce. *Hajang* women had been first roused to action by the *Tanka* movement. Not only did they participate in the movement in large numbers, but were also outstanding in bravery. As a consequent, the Tanka movement which was started in 1937 ended with Agrarian Reform Act of 1950. In the struggle, sixty men and women belonging to *Hajang* and *Balu* tribes sacrificed their lives\textsuperscript{46}.

Amidst the repressive measures let loose by the landowners and the police, the communication linkages among the leaders,
activists and the followers broke down totally. In the absence of proper linkage and guidance on the one hand and the increasing torture of the police on the other, a slough of despond descended on the peasantry. Sharecroppers were arrested indiscriminately. The landowner with the help of the police took possession of all paddy stuck in the courtyard of the share croppers denying them any share in the produce for that year and filed criminal cases against many of them. The menfolk left the villages. Many of them settling in other districts. A veteran Kisan Sabha leader was jailed from 1948 to 1950\textsuperscript{47}.

The Tebhaga struggle came to an end at khanpur without any immediate result. The bloodshed, death and torture, the share croppers and poor peasant and their families under went seemed to have been in vain. Many village-level activists surrendered to the landowners to avoid police tortures and to protect their family and property\textsuperscript{48}.

**ANDHRA PRADESH**

*Women in Telengana Movement* Junagadh was incorparated in November 1947, and Praja Mandal struggles reached their height in Mysore and Gwalior and Kashmir, Travancore soon followed the same year them. But the struggle against the *Nizam* of Hyderabad was waged with death-defying courage and it was not only the State's Peoples Conference but the Communist Party, men and women worked through the Andhara Mahasabha organized in 1928\textsuperscript{49}.

By 1940-42, the Andhra Mahasabha changed from a liberal organization to a united militant mass organization against the Nizam, and began to demand abolition of Vetti, of illegal exactions,
reduced taxes, confirmation of title deeds for the peasants, reduction of usurious rates of interest and so on. In 1944, there was a split between the right and left wings of the Sabha\textsuperscript{50}.

Hyderabad, with a population of 17 million, was the biggest princely state in India with seventeen districts. Forty percent of the area was under big feudal estates. Some of them operated with functioning courts and jails of their own along with civil and criminal powers. What was significant to note was that of oppression and exploitation practised in a feudal system of administration\textsuperscript{51}.

The basic feature of the life of people in Hyderabad state under the \textit{Nizam} was feudal exploitation that persisted till the uprising of the Telangana peasants. The peasants on the Nizam's personal estate were practically bound to the ruler. Under the \textit{jagirdari} (tenurial) system in which lands and/or revenues were granted by the state either for services rendered or in lieu of debts and advances) levied various illegal taxes and forced labour was exacted from peasants by the landlords. A part from this, there were the Deshmukhs and Deshpandes (principal revenue officers of a district who became landowners over a period of time), who collected taxes the \textit{Nizam} those revenue officers grabbed thousands of acres of land and made it their own property. Peasants thus became tenants at will\textsuperscript{52}.

One common social phenomenon was the \textit{vetti} system of forced labour and exactions imposed on all peasant sections in varying degrees. Each family had to send one person to collect wood for fuel, carry post to other villages, carry supplies, etc. Besides, they also required to supply agricultural implements, pots or clothes etc. free to their landlords. Another system that prevailed was
keeping of peasant girls as slaves in the landlord's house. When the landlord's daughters were married these girls were often sent with them to serve as concubines.

People in general hated the Nizam's rule and wanted to put an end to it. They organised Satyagraha movement with the help of the States People's Conference in 1938. This was the beginning of the people's struggle. Workers went on strike at some places. The peasants of Jangaon taluk took back the land that had been forcibly seized from them by the goondas of the notorious landlords like Vishnur Ramachandra Reddy. People's courts were set up to try the culprits. The guerilla warfare waged by the peasants of Telangana forced the landlords and Razakars to retreat. The struggle spread over the areas of Nalgonda, Warangal, Khammam, Adilabad and Medak.

A memorable fight took place at Akunuru in Jangaon taluka. Which marked a turning point in the struggle of the Telegana people. In 1945 the people had revolted against forced levy. Police and officers had beaten to retreat. There after, the government sent a big force of armed police to take revenge on the people. The worst sufferers were the women.

At Palakurti village in Jangaon taluk, Chakali Ailamma was the first to fight bitterly to save her land and crop from being seized by Visnur Deshmukh, a hated man in Jangaon. He sent one hundred goondas and a hundred farm hands together in Ailamma's harvest. The Sangham leaders and 28 volunteers staked their lives with shouting slogans and with lathis in hand attacked the goondas. Seeing the fierce determination on their faces, the goondas ran for safety of their lives. The same night police arrived but dared
not touch the grain stored in Ailamma's house. People were enthused. The peasant’s grain was saved.

The next morning six leaders were arrested and taken to the Kacheri (the land lord’s office) house. They were severely beaten there. Their heads were thrust into ovens, chilli powder was thrust in their anus, urine was poured in their mouths and brutal activities like these could match fascist brutality. But in spite of all this, Ailamma's harvest and land could not be seized. The victory over the notorious Deshmukh couraged the whole of Telengana region.

The other instance occured in the Godavart forest belt where the women workers engaged in plucking of beedi leaves fought at the forefront for higher wages. Thousands of woman employees joined in the struggle Similarly at two centres of Pindiprolu and Lileendu, women participated in agricultural labour strike which spread in 90 villages. Out of these, 20 villages women fought at the forefront. In these strikes, women joined in overwhelming numbers and held leading positions.

The Communist party in Andhra served as a rear base for the Telangana struggle, arranging for relief and supplies and keeping in touch with the struggle areas. The entry of the Indian army into Hyderabad in September 1948, compelled Nizam to surrender and disband Razakars. The Army was now turned towards the peasants. The Communist Party was banned and repression increased. The rich peasanty withdrew its support once the Nizam was gone and the squads had to retreat into the forests. Finally, the struggle was withdrawn in 1951.
PUNJAB

In Punjab the *Kirti Kisan Party* was formed for the commonweal of workers and peasants. It came into prominence in 1927 Amritsar. It was organised on the lines of worker's and peasant's parties in Bengal and Bombay. It aimed at complete Independence from the British imperialism by every possible means and to liberate workers and peasants from every sort of political, economic and social discrimination. They also wanted to establish their united socialist republic\(^6\).

Though it was an independent organisation, yet the members of the *Naujawan Bharat Sabha* too played an important part in the conferences and meetings of the Kirti Kisan Party. Lahore, Amritsar and Lyallpur were the main centres of the party. The issues of the struggle were abolition of unjust taxes and undue restriction on them\(^6\).

Women did not lag behind and join the party. They helped in the expansion of the cadre of the party in rural areas. Among the activist women of the party were Smt. Shakuntala Rishi, Smt. Raghbir Kaur, Smt. Sant Kaur, Smt. Gurdeep Kaur, Smt. Surjit Kaur, Smt. Shakuntal Sukhan, Sushila Devi of Pathonkot and Sarla Sharma of Kangra. Bir Kalsi was another help-mate of the party. She belonged to Amritsar. Bachan Kaur, Surjeet Kaur and Ajaib Kaur were the helping hands of Smt. Shakuntala Rishi who was a prominent women in the party\(^6\).

The women activist in the party also rendered their services in collecting funds to help the famine-stricken people. This party was
also an underground organisation. Women worked as post box messangers and several times as contact builders. In early 1943, the food situation was becoming grave. Prices were shooting up. There were long queues before the shops. There was jostling and pushing in these queue, as the women kept on waiting for long hours. They tried to get to the head of the line for their food grain. The shopkeepers too were corrupt. Black-marketing was rife. Their behaviour with the women was rough. In that situation the Women's Self-Defence League was formed in Punjab in early 1943. The women students had already been very active in the movement.

Students and teachers, after college hours participated in the work of distribution foodgrains in the food queues, checking the measures for correct weight being given to the purchaser, stopping rough handling of women in the queues by the police, distributing the supplies by numbering the cards. The food depots had become centres of corruption. It was only when the volunteers of Women's self Defence League made these depots the centres of their activity only then the corruption could be checked. Government handed over several depots to be managed by the League.

This work brought the volunteer into close contact with the uneducated poor women from the city's mohallas. They were also able to penetrate among the lower middle-class women, who till then had been under the influence of the Hindu San atanists (orthodox Hindu) and the Arya Samajis. They also came into contact with the Muslim women. As a result for the first time Hindu and Muslim women were mobilised on a common platform in the women's Self-Defence League.
When the session of the All-India Kisan Sabha Conference was held at Bhakna in March 1943, a separate conference of Kisan women was held with the activists of Women's Self Defence League. Women worker like Shakuntala Bibi, Shakuntala sharda and Raghbir Kaur had started work in the villages. Around 2000 women old and young gatherd together on April 2, 1943 at the Kisan Women's conference at Bhakna and among them 200 were Muslim women and the rest were Sikhs67.

By the end of July 1944, the Women's Self-Defence League and All-India Women Conference worked together in unison. A broad committee was formed in order to coordinate the work of women for self-sufficiency by setting up home industries, campaigning for rationing and working at food depots, milk depots and for literacy programme also. The members who joined the committe as representatives of the organisations such as All-India Women's Conference, the women's Self-Defence League, the women's sections of the Lahore students union and of the Muslim Students Federation, the Women Teacher's Union and the Istri Sahayak Sangathan. By the end of 1944, the Women's Self-Defence League was merged into the All-India Women's conference. Punjab was the merger only province where this became possible, because of the vision and efforts of Rameshwari Nehru68.

Rameshwari Nehru opened the cultural performance by saying that she had never seen such a large gathering of women in Lahore before. The squad sang songs dipicting our national movement, the coming of imperialists, the rise of Congress, the Muslim League and the coming of the war. The message was an appeal to all to throw out the imperialists. There was another song on the sufferings caused by the imposition of taxes. Swatantra Bhagat's songs on
Bengal famine brought tears to the eyes of the audience. There was one-act play pleading for the acceptance of the new provisions of the Hindu code Bill by illustrating the plight of windows, discarded wives, propertyless girls. A scene pilloried the ridiculous arguements which vested interests were bringing up against the bill.69

The mass media of songs and dramas enacted by the cultural troupes in Punjab, especially the Lahore squad, had a tremendous impact on the Kisan women in the villages who were taught the meaning of important happenings in the country through these attractive forms70.

Maharastra

One of the well-known struggle led by Godavari Parulekar a communists leader in Maharastra, who eradicated the slavery from the primitive adivasis living in Umbergaon, Dhanu and Palghar Talukas of Thana district. Hardly sixty miles away from the modern city of Bombay, these tribes eked out a starving existence in jungles and valley areas71. Their liberation movement was organised and lauched by the All-India Kisan Sabha of the Communist Party of India which was founded in 1936. In 1943, the membership of the Sabha was 9,996 in Maharastra72.

The main demands around which the movement was developed comprised of the abolition of forced labour, veth begar, the palemor system of money lending, the implementation of minimum wages, and the distrubution of land to the tiller through granting ownership rights to
tenants and fallow forest land for cultivation. Significantly, this struggle was developed through non-party village level organisations, most of which included such as the Bhumi Sena and Kashtakari Sangathana in Thana district and the Shramik Sangathana in Dhulia district. Each of these movements had a loose organizational structure in which there was no hierarchical chain of command but each of the activists lived and worked among the tribals rather than directing them as alien leaders.

The credit for commencement of that movement goes to first Kisan Conference held at Titwalla in Thana district in 1945. For the first time, the Worlis i.e. Adivasis heard the slogan "Down with forced labour". They were elated by it and they returned home taking with them the red flag. While charged with the ideas of liberation when the Worlis refused to do forced labour, the landlords made a daring to take the command and went to Adivasis rousing them to fight for their rights as human beings. As a result, a meeting of 7,000 woman was held a Kosbad on 8 October, 1945 wherein the practice of "Marriage servants" while dividing themselves in to four sections, each one took out a procession in a different direction, visiting all the landlords houses. The procession would stop in front of each house shouting the slogan, "Pick up your scrap of cloth and your earthen pot, get free and join us." "Get free from slavery" was the call to marriage servants.

The result of three days processions was fruitful as hundreds of marriage-slaves were freed. It was all made
possible by the collective effort with the Red Flag as their sole support. On the other hand the landlords who had so long looked down upon these marriage-serfs, both men and women, hastily shut themselves up in their houses without daring and facing the protest.

On October 10, 1945, a mischievous rumour spread that Bai’s life was in danger and 7,000 Worlis came to save her from 20 villages around to Talwada with whatever weapons they had. The Police came and saw the Worlis all armed, and opened fire. The next day i.e. on 11 October 1945, they heard the ‘Flag’ had called a meeting and in spite of the earlier firing, 4000 Worlis came to the same spot. A Kisan Sabha worker somehow came there and announced the Flag had not called any meeting, it was a trick, and they should go home. But the police and arrived, started firing. Two worlis lay wounded. A bullet struck and took the life of Jethya Gangad.

The next struggle was launched under the banner the Kisan Sabha aimed at to increase the wages and lifestyle of timber labourers. The worli timber cutters who were paid a paltry sum of about four annas a day by the contractors. Now a demand of a uniform and daily wage of Rs. 1.25 was made but the saukars and contractor refused to accept their demand, as a consequence, about 15000 Worlis went on strike under the red flag. The forest for miles around fell silent. The adivasis had a fascinating way of relaying their messages. They would tie a few toddy leaves to a stick along with a note bearing the message.
The strike of the timber-cutters continued unabated, inspite of their leader's externment and arrests of many Worlis. The government honouring the agreement reached between the Timber merchants Association and the workers took the side of merchants. The Kisan Sabha had to face a terrible repression. Numerous Worlis were arrested and cases were lodged against them. On February 6, 1947, their leader Godavari Parulekar was arrested on the false charge of making incendiary speeches. Further, the army was also sent to the area to bring the situation under control. However, the strong determination and unbreakable unity of the Worlis finally won and the government had to retreat. The army was called back.

On April 5, 1947, the release of the adivasi Worlis was announced, The struggle was successful resulting in such evils as serfdom, marriage servants, vethbegar, grass and forest work at four annas a day, huge arrears in rents and many other form of exploitation were swept away by the tornado of struggles the Worlis had waged since 1945.

Kerala

The Kerala people including women had registered first time their remarkable participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-32). It not only made them to understand the significance of independence but also helped them to bring a change in their mode of thinking, their activities and in their social life. Unfortunately, the
women who came to the political arena into a band of political workers could not be separately organised and lost to the movement and generally left the scene. It was during the first phase of the Quit India movement that the communist Party got opportunity to play a decisive role in bringing both the Hindus and Muslims close together. Actually, the ongoing deep divisions had become sharper than ever before, between the congress and the Muslim League. But there were some progressive women who were working for the liberation of the country.

The Communists while making a call of unity among leaders of both communities at such a juncture was to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity, and to resolve the crisis. Thus the unity week and signature campaign in support of this demand were undertaken.

At Calicut (Kozhikode), a conference of women delegates from Malabar, Cochin and Travancore was held during this unity week in December 1942. The women from all walks such as peasant women, working-class women, school teachers, ordinary housewives not only attended the conference but also made a declaration from their platform emphasising a special role for the women to play in wiping out imperialism. While recounting the struggle waged by women in Russian and Chinese movement, they pledged to emulate themselves in the same way. Thus, the women of Kerala were encouraged to participate in every way so that the unity campaign might be successful for the sake of freedom.
But side by side, there were other movements of social reform the most noteworthy being among the Ezhavas (a 'depressed' class) who fought against untouchability, and the Namboodiri youth's struggle against out worn family relations which hindered progress. The old feudal society of Kerala was being shattered bit by bit these two movements, which had an impact upon the lives of women too.

The women of this caste were deprived of the right of divorce, they had to suffer from the polygamy, compulsary purdah, no economic rights; Besides, they also did not have educational right and lived in lower cultural standard, unlike the women of other castes in Kerala.

A struggle was launched on the aspects such as on polygamy by legislation, securing equal economic rights for the women in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. As a result in 1931, seven women openly discarded the purdah. followed by scores of others in the next few months. In 1934, widow remarriage had started to taking place and Namboodiri girls began marrying with non-Namboodiri boys and sending the Namboodiri girls to school. Thus some sort of progress in women emancipation took momentum.

A new awakened womanhood stood side by side with men in the factories and fields. The greatest accretion of strenght took place in 1940-42 when the communists had to work underground. No less 1,000 families with 3,000 to 6,000 women came into contact with the Communist Party
and its programme. As the women by now have become well prepared, and were ready for any sacrifice against fascism, imperialism and the vested interests. At Tellicherry in Malabar, in November 1942, the traditional Poorhali song and dance were taken. Besides rally of more than 300 kids in front, 350 women and girls in the rear started from the town firka office and marched to Jawaharghat in the evening under the leadership of comrade Lakshmikutty. In the rally they were raising the slogans like "Hindu Muslim Unity Zindabad".

The beginning of 1943 and after the formation of the All-Kerala Mahila Sangham, a special conference of Vallukanad taluq was presided over by Thankmma Krishna Pillai, Secretary of the All-Kerala Mahila Sangham. Interesting by more than 200 women including Namboodiri and Muslim women, attended the conference from all parts of the taluq. In this conference, Thankamma described the unbearable condition of women due to food shortage.

The taluq Mahila Sangham held eleven functions in which seven mahila squads regularly did propagate to educate women regarding the food shortage. In another struggle in women not only participated but also shed their blood was of Punnapra-Vayalar. It was led against Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer's autocracy. The women also participated in a strike organised on October 17, 1946 on Travancor's Coastal strip in order to end princely autocracy. Fifty thousand coir workers joined in this strike and procession from every coastal town among whom a large percentage were women workers. Sir C.P.
Ramaswamy Aiyer, the Diwan of Travancor, sent his police to stop them, but they failed to do so. The most important strike was organised on October 21, 1946, and it was joined by one Lakh workers who were demanding an end to Sir. C.P. Ramasway's of repression and asking for the establishment of responsible government. The same strike became more strong on the nextday i.e October 22, 1946 as the boat workers, rubber oil, textiles all workers joined the struggle.

Above all the heroic incidents the workers fought the most daring battle in the Alleppey where police firing had killed one worker. The workers demolished the police station and waged apitched battle. After declaring the Martial law, the soldiers raided their houses and raped every woman on whom they could lay their hands. People bravely faced them and fought against the army equipped with modern arms. The Vayalar heroes hit back with bows and arrows and spears of arecanut and also a few rifles. For five hours continuously, they resisted the mighty of a modern army whose soldiers fired to the last of their 1,700 bullets with machine guns. At Punnapra, three miles south of Alleppey is a place hollowed by the blood of martyrs where the battle of freedom was fought and won by the Vayalar heroes and herous.

Worker's Women in Action

It is an established fact that no sooner did an industry was established (as first time established in India) by the 1870, the workers strike was inevitable who would
demand for higher wages be it in a elementary or unorganised form. such a record dealing with a strike in 1877 at the empress mills at Nagpur gleaned that labourers went on no work for revision of wage rates. It may further be cited that between 1882 and 1890, twenty five workers' strikes took place in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

Once the awareness and small organisations emerged among workers Their self-assertion for better wages and service conditions could not be stopped as happened during 1905-09. There was a notable advance, parrallel to militant national wave. A trend of strikes witnessed in the Bombay mills against an extension of hours, serious strikes on the railway specially the Eastern Bengal State Railway in the railway shops, and in the government press at Calcutta charactrised this period. The highest point reached when six days mass strike in Bombay took place against the sentence of six years imprisonment of Tilak in 1908.

The strikes during the first two decades of 20th centruy not only raised the issues of workers but their awakening also channelized as the harbinger towards national cause. It also helped to bring the Congress into the Non-Cooperation campaign of 1920-22. There were no trade unions then and all these strikes whether in Bengal or Bombay were spontaneous. The biggest of these struggles was that the workers became conscious and courageous. The early trade union movement particularly in Bengal and Bombay started in the beginning of 20th Century. The All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was born in Bombay in october 1920. In its first
session, a unanimous resolution was passed that in very factory whereever there are women workers, arrangements must be made so that during work time, women can keep their children in safety. What is significant to be noted was that the great strike of 1928, led by the militant class-conscious section of the proletariat, carried with it the awakening of the youth and of the petty bourgeoisie, which led to the new wave of national struggle.

After the first struggle of the textile workers in 1928, the trade union movement drew women workers whenever direct action was taking place in factories where the unions gave call for struggle. The women were in the forefront of these struggles fighting with great courage and sacrifice. But the trade unions unlike those in Italy, France and Australia never built up such mechanism as the auxiliaries of women workers side by side with the unions. These auxiliaries in the above-mentioned countries have sought to keep the women workers and the wives of workers active day today and to give them experience so that they may develop into leading cadres in the trade unions themselves. Although these were never formed in India, from the 1920's and even after independence, we get the names of some trailblazing Indian women trade unionists. Among them were Sontosh Kumari Gupta, Prabhabati Das Gupta, Sakina Begum, Sudha Roy, Dr. Mairayee Bose, Bimal Pratiba Devi, Dukhmat didi, Sukumari Chowdhury and others in Bengal.

In Bombay women leaders such as Ushabai Dange, Meenakshi Sane, Maniben Kara, Parbatibai Bhore, Ahilya Rangekar and other were important leaders of the working class struggle in textile mills. All of them were important leaders but they hardly received their due even from labour historians for a long time.
In 1928-29, more than two lakh textile workers of Bombay under the leadership of communists and their sympathisers went on strike, Parbati bai came to work with Patkar, Tambitkar and others at this time. Communist trade union leader K.N. Joglekar writes "Through the experience of this struggle the workers built up the powerful Crirni Kamgar union."

Ushatai Dange's activities of 1928-29 marks an important landmark, although it may not strictly fall within period under review. It was Usha Bai Dange who from 1928-29 came in close touch with the working class struggles and threw herself wholeheartedly into them. The credit for her elevation to such a prominent level of Communist activist goes to comrade S.A. dange (a well known Communist leader) who not only educated her to become a Nurse in KEM Hospital Bombay but also married with her when she was merely a child widow. She had become so committed to the cause of working class that just after eleven days of her delivery, she joined at mill-gate the picketing with her child of twelve days as the mounted police attached the workers.

At first, the women were afraid to be members of activist communist group but when some of the demands raised by the strike of 1928 were fulfilled, many began to come to the union. They demanded the got creches for their children and the sanction of maternity leave. Their hours of work were shortened. Ushatai gives a stirring account of some of the struggles in which she participated. "During the strike of 1929, once the police put a ban on holding meetings and arrested their leaders, but the workers continued with their meeting. The police came with the lathis to break-up the meeting. The police came with in minutes, the whole
scene changed. The police ran away and the women also chase them to create fear psychosis.

The exploited workers who were now united under the red flag grew in strength during this period. On 11th April, 1939, the Bitia Mill owners decided to retrench one woman worker (Two women used to work on spinning machine) from each spinning machine. As a result, many women workers lost their jobs. The workers immediately went on strike which continued for two days. Two hundred women came to the mill area and surrounded manager's Modi and Gokhale. For two days, this gherao continued, then at the intervention of the home minister K.M. Munshi, Modi and Gokhale were able to come out. Usha tai Dange and Purbhati Bai and other trade unionists also stood by their side.

Another Communist among the early women who worked among the working class women was Minakshi Sane. Her initial was to work among workers in sholapur, a district town of Maharashtra with five textile mills besides being a big centre of handloom and bidi industry.

The working class of 1930 had absolutely no legal protection of any kind. The textile mills worked for 10 hours a day. There was no provision for casual and sick leave. During the Civil Disobedience movement, she participated in picketing of foreign cloth shops, etc. Being influenced by her brother Sadasiv Sardesai who had already joined the Communists, she realised that it was the communists who had started work among these workers and as a result, she also joined there to work with them.

The bidi workers of the city mostly were women and they numbered one thousand. Their conditions were worse than those of
the textile women. There was no limit to their working hours, the payment was a pittance; a mere six annas for a thousand bidis. That is why they stopped the working and went on strike in 1936. During this strike, they also founded their union entitled Red Flag Bidi Workers’ Union. The strike was settled after a month with a paltry pay rise. During the strike, a few women even faced arrest. What was new among the women after strike was that they had emerged from the struggle with a new consciousness.\textsuperscript{101} After the experience of this strike, Minakshibai felt that some ways and means would have to be devised to keep in constant touch with these women.

At first, she started a literacy class but could not succeed in this mission. She decided to form a ajan troupe, as there were very good bhajans in Marathi with educative content and the music with its rhythm attracted all. She started a Bhajan Mandal with the Jhoparpatt (slum dweller) women in Bombay. Thereafter she taught them revolutionary songs in form of bhajans by which their political consciousness brought them closer to understanding what was going on around them in society and in the world. Even an untouchable Harijan, a Muslim and a Christian attended the signing and learnt of events taking place\textsuperscript{102}.

In this way, the Communist women not only attracted women of working class and peasantry to the struggle of their own interests by organised efforts in the trade unionism but also realised their own problems all these created political consciousness so as to find out ways to solve them\textsuperscript{103}.

The period 1942-45 was a period of great trial for the working class and the country as a whole. The government’s resort to
unrestricted inflationary measures to pay for the war, the hoarding and place marketing of vital necessaries, the rise in the cost of living by 200 per cent, the arrest of the national leaders and the intense brutal country wide repression that followed. The national anger roused by the government policy were such that anyone of them taken single would have sufficed to goad the working class to go on strike. The only two strikes of real magnitude were those at Ahmedabad, the strong held of Gandian union lasting for three months, and at Jamshedpur, Iron and Steel works which were at least as much due to the owners as to the 104

During this period, the working class led by the Communist Party came forward resolutely against imperialist repression. The Trade Union Congress gave a call to observe September 25, 1942 as Anti-Repression Day. It popularised the ideas of national defence and launched a vigorous campaign for the daily needs of the people such as price control and rationing, the fight against black-marketing and hoarding, and warned the people against falling a prey to imperialist provocation. This led to the growth of the trade union movement and to the influence of the Communist party in the trade union movement105.

In 1945-46, the entire political movement in the country had reached at a climax and the war against fascism had been won. There were some significant strike, and massive demonstrations of worker in which women worker played a significant role.

In 1946, one of the biggest strikes began in the South Indian Railway from August 24, to protest against the dismissal of several workers. On August 26, 1946, at Trichynopoly Railway Junction, Kripapuri and Kamala Ramaswamy alongwith 15 other women were
put under arrest for shouting slogans in support of the railway workers strike. In November 1946, Coimbatore Textile workers struck work. At early in the morning of November 11, 1946, two hundred workers including many women were picketing at the mill gates. The police let loose a violent lathi charge rible butts and bayonets were freely used. A reserved policeforce threw a women worker Ammu, in the kaleswar mill and beat her with the rifle butt on her chest. She snatched the rifle from his hand. Another constable shot Ammu dead at point blank range. The police retreated into the mill and started bringing on the unarmed mass of women worker.

A women worker, Subbotha, was shot dead when she was helping the men workers, As soon as the firing stopped the workers, two thousand five hundred of them with two women workers marching at the head, reached the union office. The police tried to bar their entry. On August 7, 1946, a huge demonstration of jute workers came from Budge in the suburbs of calcutta to the Legislative Assembly. There was a large number of women workers in the demonstation. It was the first time when a large number of women workers of the jute mills had marched to the Assembly.

Another courageous fight was waged put up by the women workers of Dhanraj Textile mills in Bombay. In March, 1947, the managment had served discharge notices on 150 women workers of the winding department. The Girmi Kamgar Union backed the women's demand for withdrawal of the department went to the manager with this demand. They went on a strike for three days and remained firm on their demands "withdraw the notices or talk it over with us". On March, 1947, G.L. Nanda the then labour Minister of the Bombay refused to talk to the workers on the plea that the
strike was illegal.\textsuperscript{109} Though they faced police force but not surrendered themselves. In this Narsubai Bhimayya, a pregnant women was beaten at the chest and abdomen and had to be hospitalised.

Another lady Chandra Bai Rama, was thrown out of a police van. She fell unconscious, Gangu Bai, their leader, had both her hands twisted behind her back. Some of them marched to the police station demanding the release of Gangu bai. They did not leave till the Girni Kamgar union leader had got her out on bail.\textsuperscript{110} The crucial day of 1945-46 show how courageously women fought in the struggles of the workers. Despite, the back-breaking burden of work in the factory as also at home, they had to face feudal oppression in the family also. Barely any of these militants, except in very few cases, got the opportunity to prolong the work that had enabled them to become leading organisers or come into leadership of their organisation.\textsuperscript{111}

The study conducted in the present chapter leads to sum up that the leftist women subscribed to the nationwide awakening programme significantly in many ways. Contrary to the Gandhian movement they not only took the struggle to the masses at villages level but also to the industrial workers. Their struggle which was based on working class politics aimed at the preparation of common masses for the formation of a socialist state wherein there would be no place for any type of exploitation. In pursuasion of their organisation based politics be it land reforms movements like the Tebhaga and Telengana movements or was it the aspects of wage and service condition of industrial workers, they, themselves got involved at grass root level. It was for the first time that these
activists penetrated into peasants, workers, the down-trodden sections in the villages and bustis of urban areas.

The left activist women attracted agricultural labouring women, Industrial labouring women, students and other lower middle class women to their movement through dramas, songs and dances, etc. staged by themselves. They did not merely spoke in favour of their issues but fought also for the redressel of their socio-economic problems which were directly attached to their livelihood and dignity. They successfully provided a plateform in the form of various *Kisan Sabhas* alongwith red flag to the dependent peasants/serfs to fight for their economic liberation from feudal lords. Similarly, bringing the labourers including women in the struggle through trade unionism, succeeded in raising they got raised their wages and service conditions through strikes and demonstrations inspite of severe government repression. Side by side, they established firm links of solidarity with the international women movement. On the whole, it may be added that they were indirectly preparing the working class women for the national cause.
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