CHAPTER IV

ANTI-ZAMINDARI STRUGGLES
This chapter deals with the description of a) peasant movements against Zamindars in the Andhra region during the first Congress Ministry period, b) the rivalry and activities of Communists and N.G.Ranga under the Congress banner among the peasantry, c) the provincial elections and coming of Congress to power in the Madras Presidency and d) the eruption of peasant struggles once again during the Congress rule finally leading to the abolition of the Zamindari system. This description revolves around questions like 1. why were there anti-zamindari struggles only during Congress rule while the peasants remained subdued during the inter-ministry period? 2. how and why did the Communists gain control over peasant associations out-smarting N.G.Ranga during the war period following the resignation of the Congress Ministry in 1939, this logically leading to another interesting question of 3. what was the reason behind Congress success in the 1946 provincial elections despite Communist hold over a vast mass of peasantry and 4. why did Zamindari peasants once again waged struggles, sometimes violent, under the leadership of the Communist party immediately after Congress assuming power? How can this shift in the loyalties by the Zamindari tenants from Congress to Communists and again from Communists to Congress during agitations and electoral process respectively be explained?

The peasants association with the Congress started and got strengthened with the arrival of Gandhi on the Indian political scene from the second decade of the 20th century. Following the success of the Champaran and Kaira satyagrahas under the leadership of Gandhi, a general awakening among the peasants started growing and the Andhra peasant was no exception. Prior to these movements the Congress under moderate leadership did not evince much interest regarding the problems of peasantry. Infact, the nationalists pressed for the establishment of permanent settlement of land revenue in ryotwari areas.¹ Thus these two campaigns not only reflected the growing importance of peasant population in the Congress programme but also established
Gandhi as a magic man of peasant Satyagraha and at least provoked the educated among peasants the potentialities of Satyagraha as a weapon for redressing their grievances. Henceforward the dormant economic discontent of the Andhra peasant was whipped to activity during various stages of freedom struggle. It can be said that the peasant movements in Andhra largely rested upon the political awakening of the peasants and the leaders capitalised on their economic grievances for starting a mass movement. The peasants were made to believe that their redemption could come only when the British rule was eliminated.

The Chirala-Peral movement of 1921, no-tax campaign in Pedanandipadu, the Palnadu pullari Satyagraha during non-cooperation movement of 1920-22 drew thousands of peasants into the whirlpool of politics. The Pedanandipadu campaign for the first time told the Andhra peasants to their wonder and satisfaction, that it was quite legitimate for them to refuse to pay land revenue, the payment of which they had come to look upon almost as a religious duty. They became familiar with this weapon of Satyagraha, an open, non-violent, organised, politically alive revolt against injustice. This strengthened the determination and fighting morale of the peasants. The Gandhian method of protest invested the peasants with the saintly approach of Satyagraha to achieve the protection of their rights for themselves. This confidence and growing stature of the peasant mind helped greatly the communists to organise effective and enthusiastic anti-zamindari struggles in Andhra in late 1930s. During the civil disobedience movement Andhra masses became familiar with sibrams, Gandhian technique of launching active political campaigns. This was perfectly adopted by the peasant leaders in their fight against Zamindars. The mood and base created among the peasantry was positively exploited by the Socialist and Communist peasant leaders as launching pad to direct peasant struggles.

The Congress Socialist Party (C.S.P) which was formed in 1934, framed its agrarian resolutions and demands in clear terms. It demanded the abolition of Zamindari system,
recognition of occupancy rights of tenants in all the landlord-tenant areas, debt freeze and substantial agricultural wages. The Communist Party of India (C.P.I) which became helpless and whose following shrank considerably between 1929 and 1933 on account of mounting repression, formulated a new policy adopted at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern (July-August 1935) according to which the Indian Communists had to give up their radical protestations and to organise an anti-imperialist broad-based mass movement, comprising the working class, peasantry and the middle class through consolidation of all leftists elements whether in or outside the congress. Thus under new dispensation, known as the United Front strategy, they started working under the reformist leadership of the nationalist movement. Now the Congress became a 'revolutionary party of the Indian people' and CSP a 'sister Marxist party'. In response to the CPI's conciliatory gestures both the Congress and the CSP, which actually never left the Congress, opened their doors to the Communists in 1935. This alliance electrified the already existing situation in which Zamindari peasants were active through various peasants associations. The Communists after getting access to the party machinery, preferred to work at the grass-roots level, thus accelerating the process of development of agrarian crises and mobilizing the peasantry.

Even earlier the leftist groups within the Congress began to call for clearer lines of policy regarding agrarian reforms. In the 1920s the party's agrarian policy was to ignore the peasant as a separate entity. But from the early 30s following the pressure from Socialists, Communists and peasant leaders, Congress started to look at the peasant question seriously. This is evident from the resolution passed at Karachi, Lucknow and Faizpur sessions of the party in 1931, March 1936 and December 1936 respectively. Even earlier, Gandhi's famous eleven points, on the basis of which he offered to give up proposed Satyagraha in 1930 included basic demand of reduction of land revenue to atleast fifty percent.
The salt Satyagraha of 1930 galvanised the rural masses particularly. This resulted in the Congress leaders readily responding and making the offer, on behalf of the Congress, that the rents payable by tenants would be reduced, illegal cobwebs abolished and debt burdens and rates of interests reduce. That has proved to be great fillip to the peasant movement, especially after the achievement of parity with the Imperial Government through the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

This period witnessed the rapid growth of organisation of Zamindari peasants, all over India, more particularly in Andhra. In 1933 the first ever peasant marches of India had taken place in Krishna, Guntur, East Godavari and West Godavari districts. At the Karachi session in 1931, the Congress demanded the right of labour to form unions to protect their interests with suitable machinery for settlement of disputes and substantial reduction in agricultural rent or revenue paid by the peasantry and in case of uneconomic holdings exemption from rent for such period as may be necessary. At the Lucknow session in March 1936, the Congress urged the Provincial Congress Committees to frame full agrarian programme to reduce the burden of the peasantry. This Congress session also witnessed a change in the character of the annual swadeshi exhibition. The exhibitions during earlier sessions used to be big shows and were intended to encourage swadeshi products and to contribute towards the expenses of the Congress from the returns of exhibition. But at Lucknow session, on March 28, Gandhi inaugurated an exhibition, which was intended to give the spectator a glimpse of the Indian villager and his craft and everything which had no educative value was excluded from that exhibition. It was decided that all swadeshi exhibitions at subsequent Congress sessions should be rural exhibitions of similar character. In Jawaharlal Nehru's words, 'the whole object of the Lucknow Congress resolution was to increase the influence of the masses in the Congress organisation*.

Infact, it played vital role in securing the mass support of the peasantry to the party, as is evident from the landslide victory of Congress in the 1937 elections.
Then came the Faizpur Congress session of December 1936, which achieved the distinction of being the first Congress which met in a village and Gandhi exhorted the congressmen to take a vow to hold future Congress sessions in villages. The Congress drew up a thirteen point programme for granting immediate relief to the peasantry. At its Haripura session of 1938, the Congress stated quite clearly that peasants could and should certainly be enabled to develop their own class organisation, even though the Congress should be rapidly approximating itself into a peasant Congress, in its policy, programme and even in membership.

These resolutions provided for the CSP, which was dominated by Communists by this period, the basis to work among the peasantry. As a result, the formation of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) took place in 1936, with N.G. Ranga as one of the founders. These resolutions, also prove that the Congress ideology and programme went on becoming more and more radical and socialistic with the passage of time. These in fact, represent the background of deep agrarian crises in the wake of economic depression. It also served as a positive feedback to the already politically awakened peasants to raise their voice much more vehemently. It made the peasant perceive Congress as a vehicle which carries him towards free India, free from problems.

The Congress election manifesto for the 1937 elections added further momentum to strengthen the confidence and consciousness of the peasantry. Though it reiterated the resolutions passed at Karachi, Lucknow and Faizpur, now the peasantry found the way to see that the programme to be implemented. The electioneering proved as a boon to the growth of peasant power. The candidates toured their constituencies and contacted the voters, the majority of them being peasants. Socialists and Communists campaigned vigourously in support of Congress candidates. The electioneering was similar to the elections conducted to the Central Assembly in October, 1934. In 1934, all the eleven of
the Congress candidates romped home with comfortable leads, and especially the election of N.G.Ranga on Congress ticket had brought the anti-zamindari campaign more closer towards Congress. N.G.Ranga who joined Congress in the early 1930s attempted to build up a following in the Congress by recruiting new members from areas where the Congress had previously had little presence. To begin with, he brought many of his contacts from the resettlement and anti-zamindari campaigns into the Congress, and he lobbied for changes in the Congress constitution which would please many of his rural contacts. He demanded that the peasants be given Congress tickets in the 1937 provincial elections. He also demanded that the Congress candidates should take a pledge prepared by the Andhra Provincial Peasant Association to solve the peasant problems. In fact, the Congress election manifesto issued from Madras in connection with the 1920 election promised to reduce tax burden for poor peasant.

In the Madras Presidency agrarian issues offered the most attractive theme for the Congress to fight against the Justice Party in the February 1937 elections. The slump in prices that came with the depression of 1929-34 made congressmen more able to exploit agrarian discontent. Evictions rose as landlords found it difficult to collect rents, substantial tenants producing cash crops for the market saw their incomes dwindle, while on the political side, detainees released from prisons increased the numbers of seasoned volunteers available for work in the countryside.

The Government of India took notice of these developments and cautioned its provincial governments to prevent the Congress leaders from making provocative statements and making 'the present agrarian movement developing on the line which the Congress President has clearly in view, viz., the creation of a semi-revolutionary mentality among the peasants'.
The atmosphere infact was expectant and restive. The Congress was carrying on incessant propaganda among the masses with a view to make them more conscious of their political rights. The provincial leaders also brought down prominent all-India leaders to make tours Rajendra Prasad in November 1935, Jawaharlal Nehru in August 1936 and Vallabhal Patel in December 1936 and they themselves spread around the province in the weeks before the polls giving speeches in every constituency. Nehru, during his election tour declared that the fight for Swaraj was fight for peasants rights. A propaganda film, in support of Congress, the first political film in South India was made but the government did not allow them to show it. In many constituencies Congress volunteers toured the villages, while songs, dramatic performances and processions were used to rouse support.

An impression was left among the peasantry that there will be no more taxes after Congress comes to power, but also that hospitals, wells, roads etc, will be improved and built in every village. According to the Justicite leader A.P.Patro, 'the Congressmen captured the imagination of the ryots, slogans such as ryot versus raja, no rent to be paid, down with landlords and government who were responsible for the crushing poverty of the ryots, the Justice Party is the handmaid of Government for oppression of the poor, Congress only could redeem them from poverty and distress and burdens of taxation' were freely used.

The Congress fielded Zamindars as its own candidates in a number of constituencies. In places like coastal districts of Andhra where it was opposed by Zamindars or Zamindar's agents, the Congress used anti-zamindari slogans and campaigned through Zamindari tenant associations. Thus Congress electoral appeal was tailored to local conditions. This was evident in Nehru's speeches. In Zamindari areas he exhorted the peasants to form associations and to affiliate with the Congress so that they might form the militia of the Congress in the fight with British
imperialism. He pointed out the British imperialism and the
Zamindari system were responsible for the poverty of the masses
in the country. Peasants were advised not to be afraid of the
Zamindars and fall prey to their inducements and threats. Even
the Communists and Socialists urged the peasants to vote for the
Congress in order to find a solution to their long standing
agrarian problems.

The sentiments of nationalism and slogans of anti-feudalism
held sway over peasant population. The Congress emerged as the
leading party in the Madras Assembly elections and Justice Party
and Peoples Party were trounced in the wake of popular resentment
to their policies.

It can be said that these elections turned out to be a great
anti-zamindari and anti-imperialist upsurge in Andhra. Congress
obtained 64.5% of total votes, Justice party got 19% and Peoples
party secured only 4.4% votes. This outcome was not only due
to Congress agrarian programme but also the response to the work
done by peasant associations, which carried on propaganda with
peasant songs. Nearly 55,000 copies of peasant songs were
circulated in Andhra. N.G.Ranga observed that the 1937
elections had tremendously increased the conscious among the
peasantry and their ability to protect their interests. The
tumbling defeat of the Zamindars had shown the increased
possibility of achieving their minimum demands.

Though the voting right was confined only to the middle and
rich peasantry, the election had great impact also on the
millions of rural population who had no vote. It marked a
radical change in the whole gamut of zamindary peasants social
relations and the emergence of new forces in the rural areas,
which led rural protests during late 1930s, which
turned were followed by the spread of Communist base. By this
time (1937) several Communists had joined either Congress or the
CSP and some had even managed to secure key positions in their
provincial and national executive committees.
its conferences peasant association hoisted red flags along with the tricolour national flag.

The defeat of Justice Party which had been the ruling party for years and which was looked upon by the peasants as a symbol of British imperialism and Zamindari oppression not only reflected the peasant resentment towards Zamindars but also increased their resolve to fight to the finish and consolidated the gains so far achieved. The complete rout of Peoples Party of Zamindars led by the Maharaja of Pittapuram was another example of peasants venting their spleen. Victories over these elements worked as a tonic in building confidence among the peasantry.

When there were differences of opinion on the question of acceptance of office in the Madras Presidency, and when Rajaji in fact refused to form Ministry, the average voter in the villages, according to Fortnightly Report of April 1937, 'felt disappointed, ... he would rather be happy of the Congress accept office and fulfil their promises regarding reduction of land-tax etc.

The formation and functioning of interim ministry with K.V.Reddi Nayudu, the leader of the Justice party as the Chief Minister on 1.4.37 and which worked upto 14.7.37 only strengthened the contradictions between the Zamindari peasants and zamindars. During these months the attitude it adopted towards the freedom movement was in no way different from that of the dyarchic governments under the Act of 1919. The proof of such behaviour can be had from the ban which it imposed on the Summer School of Economics and Politics organised at Kothapatnam (Guntur district) by Annapragada Kameshwara Rao on the ground that the object of the school was to instruct young men and women in communistic and revolutionary activities in order to equip them to take part in an attempt to overthrow the government established by law and that its existence was a threat to public peace.
However, the Justice party ministry went out of office when on July 14, 1937, Congress Ministry was formed with C.Rajagopalachari as Chief Minister following the assurance given by the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow that he would not unnecessarily interfere in the administration of the government. Now it became the responsibility of the Ministry to fulfill its promises. After all it was the 'electoral manifesto' of the Congress that linked the Congress politicians and the electorate at the time of the elections. As Nehru maintains, 'the electorate plumped for the Congress candidates, not because of their individual merits, but because they represented the Congress and its programme'.

In accordance with its electoral promise, the Congress Ministry passed the Agriculturists Debt Relief Act in January 1938 to solve the debt problems of the peasants. Peasant associations, since 1931 had been agitating for debt relief. On May 12, 1935 the Andhra Provincial Rural Indebted Relief Conference was held in Vijayawada. It demanded that no person should be sent to Jail for debt arrears, for scrapping of debts due to buying of land from 1931 and reduction of tax burden in the Zamindari areas. The Andhra Provincial Peasant Association observed the first week of November as 'Moratorium Week', and submitted memorandum to ministry. Thus as a result of these pressures the ministry brought out the above Act, which was also in partial fulfillment of its manifesto. But this legislation did not release the tenants from the entire burden of debt as promised during the elections.

The Andhra Provincial Peasants Association (APPA) appealed to the tenants to fight against this Act. Several meetings and marches were organised in Andhra. Along with debt relief they also demanded Zamindari abolition. On 25th January 1938, nearly 3000 peasants participated in a procession in Chintalapudi in West Godavari demanding reduction of interest rates and abolition of Zamindari system. The tahsildar of Chintalapudi expressed surprise over such a huge gathering of peasantry in
Zamindari estate. N.G.Ranga commented that the Congress was not serious about peasant problems and warned that the peasants would be forced to act on their own. Moreover, by the time of passing of the Act nearly three-fourths of the smaller peasants had lost much of their holdings and more than half the land of middleclass peasants had also changed, because of *implaceable* pressure of falling prices and the mounting burden of debts.

Thus on the one hand the Act created faith among the peasantry that Congress was their party and on the other hand the belief that it is only through their own efforts that they can solve their problems when the Congress government was around. Another measure which helped to develop such thinking among peasants was the appointment of Prakasam Committee to study the status and the conditions of the tenants in the Zamindari areas by the ministry in September 1937. This was preceded by zamind-ryot activities from early 1930s which became *more* sustained and intense with the intervention of N.G.Ranga and Communists through peasant associations, marches and peasant schools.

Politicization of peasantry had already begun through these measures. By 1936 N.G.Ranga had come to say openly that the power of politics should be used to strengthen the peasant movement. He warned that, 'those who advise us not to enter politics and not to have our own *line of action* in politics are either eluding *themselves* or trying to mislead us. How can our peasants hope to achieve any of their demands unless they learn to play their part in political life just as expertly as Zamindars and *mahajans*.' He was responsible for the formation of the Peasants' Group of M.L.As in the Central Assembly in September 1935 with the object of creating useful public opinion on peasant problems and to pave the way for the emergence of new policies.

In Andhra this period was marked by the *intensification* of peasant rallies and marches. According to N.G.Ranga, 'they were...
the most powerful instruments in the armoury of the movement to bring home to the public as well as the authorities concerned the strength of peasants organisation, the tempo of the feelings of our masses in support of certain demands, the extent of public support lying behind our movement, and our needs and the true nature of our suffering'.

The biggest of them, the 120 days peasants march covering the whole of Andhra was organised between July, 1937 and March 1938 when the Congress Ministry was in power. About the objectives of the march, N.G.Ranga said, 'it seeks to stir up the whole Andhra coutry-side, whip up the kisan organisers and gather support to the new charter of our minimum demands and to demonstrate to which ever ministry that may be in power and to all anti-imperialistic national organisations the mass basis strength and class consciousness of our movement and the capacity of our comrades for service, suffering endurance. We have to carry on a ceaseless agitation against the Zamindari system'. The March in fact met its object. It proved the excellent mass contact the peasant organisation have had.

Speaking about the success of these kisan marches, in a tribute paid to N.G.Ranga on his fifty fourth birthday, Prof. Kinah Stock who in 1937 followed up and down the country among a mixed train of Congressmen and Socialists and Communists working under the guidance of kisan sabha stated, ‘I learnt something of the work of past seven years. There were the Andhra Peasant Institutes and their summer schools sending back to the villages men trained and capable of holding a watching brief for the people's interests. There was the demand for a moratorium on agricultural debts. There were the great kisan marches that brought men together from hundreds of villages and taught them to write and organise and face the government with reasoned, practical demands’. If such pressure made the Congress Ministry to appoint a Zamindari enquiry committee, the appointment of the Committee in turn acted as a catalyst to further intensify the
anti-zamindari agitation in scale and magnitude. The response to the Committee wherever it toured was tremendous. The peasants participated enthusiastically in giving witness before the Committee, despite the presence of Zamindari representative in the Committee. The Committee stationed at Rajahmundry from January 7th to 13th, 1938 to obtain witnesses from peasantry.

Local leaders, comprising of Socialists, Communists and Congressmen campaigned among the peasantry to face the Committee without fear. They brought peasants in processions to Rajahmundry. This type of campaign provided efficient results. This was repeated in all other areas. The police reports for the year 1938 stands best testimony to study about the impact of the appointment of Committee had on the peasantry. It observes 'with the constitution of Enquiry Committee, vigorous propaganda was commenced by agrarian leaders in several taluks in the Krishna district against Zamindari system. Action under section 107, criminal procedure code, had to be taken to avert serious consequences'.

The Committee completed its Report by March 1938, but there was undue delay in announcing the recommendations of the Report. Sensing trouble to their position, the Zamindars in the meantime resorted in express speed to acquire as many acres of land as possible. They launched collection of rent arrears and enhancement of legal suits, in addition to harassment and arbitrary attachment of lands, depriving thousands of ryots. When the Debt Relief Act was in the offing, the Zamindars collected dues with utmost stringency for which thousands of holdings were sold out at nominal prices. Atrocities were committed on the peasants who gave witness before the Committee. Zamindars of Kalipatnam, Munagala, Muktyala, Challapalli etc., tried to suppress the peasant movement ruthlessly in the wake of softened attitude of Congress Government. But each repressive act of the Zamindars only resulted to push tenants towards the Communist influence.
Thus as Congress policy helped indirectly to turn Zamindars into desots, it also accelerated the process of the peasants' radicalisation. The alliance between the peasantry and the Congress and Congress agrarian programme on one hand strengthened the peasant faith in Congress and confidence of himself, it also tended to be ruptured in violent form when the rural masses started becoming disillusioned.

A number of rallies, demonstrations and meetings were organised for the implementation of the recommendations of the committee. The Andhra Provincial Peasant Association warned the government that if it failed to implement the recommendations, peace would be disturbed in the countryside.\(^91\) The Communist controlled weekly \textit{Navasakti} in its editorial appealed the zamin ryots to organise 'zamin-ryot week' in support of the committee's recommendations. The Andhra Provincial Peasant Association President Kommareddy Sathyanarayana Murthy in December 1938 and January 1939 toured the entire coastal Andhra districts explaining the implications of Committee's recommendations and the need for its implementation.\(^93\)

In West Godavari, the district peasant association under Peteti venkataratnam, Garapatil Sathyanarayana and others and in East Godavari under the leadership of Penmetsa Suryanarayana and Chintam Sathyanarayana carried the campaign in favour of the Committee's recommendations. District wise peasant meetings were held. The peasant associations attempted an organised opposition to Zamindari repression. Pamphlets entitled 'what the commonman should do', \textit{Prakasam Committee Report}' and \textit{Marches-Appeal}' were published by the Andhra Provincial Peasant Association and were distributed extensively.\(^95\)

With such an atmosphere around, the report was represented to Assembly on January 30, 1939 and the debate that followed was closely watched by the entire peasantry of the province with rapt attention. They launched massive demonstrations supporting
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the bill. Rajaji's speech in the Assembly declaring that the Zamindars were only employees of the State and that they have no right over their estates had great impact in peasant thinking. though the Congress ministry resigned without passing the bill, the report and the issues revolving around it reverbrated till the Zamindari system itself was abolished in 1948-49.

The peasant organizations, with their definite structures helped to built-up peasant movements in more concrete terms, during this period. By marches, meetings, conferences, observance of peasants days and leaflets and booklets and songs these associations endeavoured to bring to the active notice of of the peasants the necessity for developing the organised strength of the peasantry. Leaders made regular tour propaganda through the estates and widened the base of the movement. The Andhra Provincial Zamin-Ryot Association which was formed on 14th August 1929 grew steadily over years and possessed an excelled organisational set-up. The main features of the organisations were the conduction of by-annual conference of the delegates, a central executive consisting of 100 members elected for every two years, which would be responsible for laying the strategy and technique of the entire Andhra Zamin-Ryots Association movement and controlling it and a working committee or a sort of presedium numbering 25 elected members, to function during its intervals. From the central executive a president, three honorary' presidents, one working secretary and two Joint secretaries were to be elected.

This organisation carried an intensive propoganda in the Zamindari areas and later on more or less merged with Andhra Provincial Peasant Association, which directed the movement in both the ryotwari and Zamindari areas. The peasant movement till 1938 was limited to campaigns and mass contacts. But events that occured prior to 1938 increased solidarity and confidence among the peasantry and gradually drawn towards agitational approach following the atrocities committed by the Zamindars in the wake of Prakasam Committee Report. The resolution issued by Andhra

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Provincial Peasant Association and published in *Navasakti* reflects this mood of the peasantry. It advocated the peasants to launch united struggles for complete abolition of Zamindari system, among others.  

Infact, the Zamindari peasants had the experience of waging battles against erring Zamindars. As early as 1930, peasants in Mandasa estate protested against the heavy cash rents fixed by the 1922 settlement. They even went to High Court unsuccessfully when the estate staff forced the peasants to pay rent. The first agitational success of the Zamindari peasants was tested in Venkatagiri estate when the peasants launched Satyagraha against the Zamindar regarding grazing rights. This was a case where the traditional rights of peasants for gathering freely fuel, fodder and manure were brushed aside and even the rights to graze cattle in the neighbouring forests was dismissed. The peasants protested and withheld customary fees payable for grazing. When the estate servants attempted to impound the cattle, unlawful assemblies recovered the animals. The forest Satyagraha to secure grazing rights started in 1931 and petered out by 1934 owing to lack of leadership which was by then Jailed. The peasants succeeded only in reducing the fees for grazing. Despite its failure, the brave stand of the zamindar ryots of Venkatagiri remained as a worthy memory regenerating the feelings of peasants in their fight against Zamindars. It was in Nellore district again that the Zamindari candidates faced defeats in local boards election in 1933 hitting hard Zamindari attempt to capture and continue in political power.  

It may be said that wherever the Zamindar was participating in politics, the agitation was intense. This tendency can be witnessed during 1937 elections. The election results injected some confidence to the ryot movement. The non-implementation of electoral promises infuriated peasants and gradually they started opting for agitational approach and in the process came closer to the Communists, as they were the only alternative for Congressmen.
The irony was that Congressmen themselves were dissatisfied with the slow implementation of the Congress policy of land reform in general and Zamindari in particular. The maximum that the Congress could do was to restrict the rights of the Zamindar. But that was not enough for the peasant who demanded more by launching powerful mass movements, aided by revolutionary press. The masses who had faith in Congress expected that it would help them in their struggles. They moved towards Communist leaders who were showing particular boldness in practically defying the Congress Ministry in organising rallies and demonstrations. The Communists, although achieved very little general success through peasant movements in India, by this time they turned their energies towards directing and organizing agrarian unrest at local level. Acting within the leftwing of the Congress they were working towards an independent peasant movement with organisation and political independance, under the cover of collective affiliation with Congress. Waiting for opportunity they developed a strategy to achieve a hold upon any future agrarian movement. The rural situation in Andhra came in handy. Though the Communist dominated AIKS did not formulate any definite scheme, it was keenly alive to the opportunity now afforded for exploiting the conditions in a bid for the abolition of the Zamindari system. It tried to combine anti-Zamindari movement with freedom struggle by proposing an active war resistance programme like wholesale railway travel without tickets, anti-recruitment drive in rural areas etc.

The situation in 1938-39 was very well represented by a Communist document published in Communist. Comparing with 1914 situation, it said, 'then, there was no Communist International, no Soviet Union, no Red Army. Then, the national liberation movements in China, India, and other countries had not grown into mass movements. Today (1938-39) the situation is radically different. There stands the victorious land of socialism, the Soviet Union, exercising profound revolutionary influence on all peoples, today, powerful Communist parties have grown in every
country, parties that under the severest conditions of illegality are carrying on heroic struggle against the war-mongers and uniting larger and larger sections for the onslaught on the citadels of imperialism. Today, national liberation movements have reached unprecedentedly high level, in China the people stand united in their struggle against Japanese imperialism, in India the National Congress has become the organ of a powerful mass movement'. Though this document exaggerates the impact of Communism, yet it observed the radicalisation of politics on Indian soil.

The peasants were unlikely to bear passively much longer the sufferings that have been their lot. In this communism has acted as a catalyst. N.G.Ranga who has been identified as a mass leader in the early stages failed to retain control because of his vacillations and pre-occupations, busy with the factional politics in the Congress he left grass root organisation to the more energetic and committed workers. This was also the period which proved that the Zamindar or the British had no roots in the villages which only hastened the polarisation easier between the Zamindar and anti-zamindar forces. On the other hand the class contradictions within the peasant stratum was effectively bridged with heavy doses of ideology.

Superior organisational techniques, a programme which appealed to all without alienating any section, the prestige and aura of romance brought to the Communist movement by October revolution, the ability of Communists to identify themselves completely with the cultural renaissance in Andhra at that time facilitated the Communists to gain control over peasant movement at the flag end of the Congress ministry period. Moreover many of the Communists of the day were those people who were active during Civil Disobedience movement. The abrupt suspension of that movement disillusioned many of the young Congressites and turned to Communism. Correspondingly the negative factor of Congress leadership which due to the compulsions of its all class strategy and its urban middle class social base, made it unable to
identify either culturally or socially with the peasant masses, their demands and their sub-nationalist aspirations added as a fillip to the growth of Communist cadres finally resulting in the eruption of powerful movements in the Andhra countryside.

Thus the anti-zamindari campaign which appeared very suddenly in the early thirties in the form of marches and petitions turned aggressive so suddenly by late thirties. In the earlier period if the anti-zamindari agitation grew out of tensions within the estates, precipitated by the depression, at the turn of the decade it gained support within provincial politics, while the political status was gradually been ebbing away from the Zamindars. Local bodies were widened in both membership and power in 1930s by various Acts and were soon flooded by anti-zamindari candidates as a result of the widening base of the franchise.

Another significant political development that occurred during Thirties was the gradual withdrawal of British Raj from provincial government following 1935 Act. Politicians were now left to groom their constituencies, who till then were pleasing their masters, which in turn increased the importance of the local peasant, though marginally.

That is why when Congress won elections, the Congress leaders and the successful candidates held triumphat meetings and parades for weeks. These worked in building the confidence of the peasants. Besides, the Congress victory had touched off a wave of euphoria, resulting in a rash of strikes and demonstrations. Nanduri Prasada Rao, a hardcore Communist writing in 1946 observed that the peasants voted for Congress expecting reduction of burdens if Congress comes to power. He opined that they led agitations to force their ministry to rescue them from Zamindars, debt and rent.

The sequence of development of peasant consciousness during Thirties can be seen in the wide-spread awakening caused among
the peasantry by the marches, weeks, rallies, establishment of peasant schools in the wake of depression, formation of AIKS, emergence of socialistic ideology, 1937 elections and the formation of Congress Ministry. And the failure of the Congress Ministry to solve the lasting demands of peasants created material base for the anti-zamindari combined with anti-colonial agitation in Andhra. Gone were the days when peasants would simply bemoan their plight and fall prostate before lords for a few tardy showers of favours. They were never satisfied with paltry reforms introduced by the Congress Ministry. The peasant in 1938 was a well-organised political personality. He revolted when the Zamindar resorted to increased oppression in the wake of debt and Zamindari reform bills. He took political support of both Congress and Communists in his fight against Zamindars. The peasant associations created a sense of class-consciousness, an awareness of unity of peasant interests on a national scale.

Infact, the achievements of Congress Ministry, though not radical, did not come anywhere near the constantly rising expectations of the peasants in the wake of Communist propaganda. However one has to accept the fact that if the peasants waged the most powerful and sustained anti-zamindari campaigns in Kalipatnam, Munagala, Chalapalli and other estates during the Congress regime, apart from other factors discussed above, it was basically because there was Congress at the helm of affairs. Congress in the office was taken advantage of by the peasants and they realised that conditions were favourable for putting forth their demands and consequently organised themselves well.

The Socialists stood behind them and lent them their support. With this new accession of strength the peasants became sufficiently vocal and aggressive in their demands. The growing strength of the peasants and the partiality of the Congress government for them caused panic in the ranks of the Zamindars who resorted to unprecedented repression in their hurry to make hay when the day was hot thus creating a situation where peasants came into direct conflict against their masters.
ANTI-ZAMINDARI STRUGGLES

According to the New Age, 'the most significant development of the last five months of Congress ministries is the rising tempo of the mass struggles demanding fulfilment of Congress programme. The biggest achievement of the left during the two years has been the creation of an independent organisation based upon Zamindari tenants'. Thus it is clear that the anti-zamindari struggles gained momentum during Congress regime because the Congress failed to fulfill its agrarian programme on which they entered the office. It was also a fact that these struggles were launched only during Congress ministry period because the peasants were of the impression that no action will be taken against them by the police when the Congress was in power, in as much as the latter now were the servants of the people. This study explains why peasants resorted to direct action during 1938-39 against century's old Zamindari system.

The anti-zamindari struggles should be viewed within this background to understand why the Zamindari agitation moved rather towards the militant path. The peasants organised themselves efficiently. They started volunteer camps and adopted matchless technique of land Satyagraha where the peasants, their womenfolk supported by Communists and local Congressmen, resisted eviction from their lands by baliffs of civil courts, Zamindars aided by armed police and goondas, and bravely faced the lattis, bullets and imprisonment in their heroic struggle against Zamindari aggression and terrorism.

At Kalipatnam, a Zamindari village of Narsapur taluk in the West Godavari a dispute between a Zamindar and his tenants which had been smouldering for some time, flared up on 7th and 8th March of 1938. It consisted of about 7,500 acres of land, of which about 3,500 acres of land was covered by forest and the rest of 4,000 acres was old waste and sandy tract, surrounded by salt creek. As it lay about 2 k.m. from the sea, during rainy season and for every new moon and full moon, sea water covered the whole area. The villagers numbering 3,500
resorted to catch fish during this period. They belong to Agnikula, Kshatriya, Telaga, and Setti Baliya castes. Every family had its own exclusive plot of land for fishing. The annual value of the fish caught amounted to 30,000 to 40,000 rupees. The fish was ordinarily sold to the local merchants at Narsapur and sometimes exported to Rangoon and other places. This was the chief means of livelihood for all the villagers from times immemorial. In addition to fishing rights, the villagers were also enjoying grazing and forest produce without paying anything to the Zamindar.

The peasants of this village were aware of the peasant movement growing in Andhra. West Godavari district peasant association was formed in 1923 by Dandu Narayana Raju. Peasant institute of this district through its classes also contributed in enhancing the consciousness of this villagers. The famous Andhra peasant march which travelled through this area, and the Prakasam Committee enquiry created a sense of confidence among the peasants to withstand the onslaught of the Zamindari oppression. That is why when the Zamindar attempted to occupy their lands in 1938 these peasants raised the banner of revolt.

This village was an agraharam granted in 1772 by Kalidindi Tirupati Raju, the Zamindar of Mogalturru for the support of a choultry and as such, it was a charitable endowment. The trustee was Kandregula Srinivasa Jagannadha Rao of Rajahmundry, the trusteee property amounting to nearly 900 acres of land in this village. The rest of the land belong to the government. On or about 15.1.1813 the Governor of Madras issued, that if the Zamindar of Kalipatnam failed the charity, the land would be reverted to the East India Company. By manipulations and manouvering, the Zamindar not only continued to enjoy the land as his property, but also acquired 7,500 acres under his control by 1902 which was only 900 in 1772.
ANTI-ZAMINDARI STRUGGLES

The trustee, i.e. the Zamindar of Kalipatnam tried several times to get sanction for construction of an irrigation project in this village. The government refused to grant permission for the same as it would benefit only Zamindar. So the Zamindar, induced the villagers in the year 1925, to make petition to the government for grant of water supply for cultivation in Kalipatnam. The agreement entered into by the Zamindar and the peasants was that the latter should cultivate the land, give up their fishing rights, rights in the village waste and also to clear up the village forest. It was also agreed that the peasants should be granted pattas for the lands in their possession, which was nearly one fifth of total 4,000 acres and that each ryot would pay a stipulated sum of money to the Zamindar as a rent in return for this service.

The government granted the project in 1934, following the peasants' petition and also an appeal by the Zamindar to the labour commission in 1928 stating that if the project was constructed he would hand over the possession of 800 acres to the peasants. The construction of the project was completed by 1938. Meanwhile the Zamindar got the forest area cleared by the peasants according to the terms of agreements. After fulfilling his object, the Zamindar started evicting the peasants from their lands which were in their possession from times immemorial and were used for catching fish. He started selling the lands to the neighbouring villagers. He Justified this act by saying that he spent Rs.1,40,000 for the construction of the project. Infact, he recovered Rs.60,000 by selling the forest and Rs.2,00,000 by selling away 2,000 acres of the dispensable land. Besides he collected Rs.12,000 by rents, while paying a nominal rent of Rs.50 towards peshkush.

The grievance of the tenants was that in consequence of the completion of an irrigation project a lot of waste inam land was being brought under cultivation and sold by the Zamindar to outsiders. Their fear was that they would lose the
livelhood they had been earning from systematic fishing and 134
collection of fuel in these lands. This grievance was taken up by the left oriented Congressmen from outside and under their leadership the villagers started protesting the betraying activities of the Zamindar.

In July 1938, the District Peasant Association and District Congress Socialist Party, the Narsapuram and Bhimavaram Taluk Congress Committee announced their sympathy and support to the Kalipatnam peasants. They Jointly led a procession of 600 peasants of Kalipatnam to the Narsapur sub-collector under the leadership of Gottukukkala Venkanna, M.L.A., Uddaraju Ramam, Uddaraju Suraparaju, President and Secretary of the Taluk Congress Committee respectively and Bhupati raju and Lakshminarayana Raju, both leaders of District Peasant Association with national flags and peasant songs and submitted a memo to the sub-collector. A copy of the memo was also sent to the Congress ministry. Earlier, a fact finding team consisting of Sunku Apparao, Kruttiventi Venkateshwarao and Gottukukkula Venkatarama Raju visited Kalipatnam and prepared a detailed report on tenant grievances and submitted it to the Narsapur Taluk Congress Committee.

Meanwhile, the Zamindar intensified harassment by implicating a number of peasants in false cases, and impounding their cattle. He also filed a petition before the police to the effect that the villagers were forcibly cultivating his lands. The police started proceeding under section 144 and 107 against 37 persons who took active lead in the protest movement. The peasants were banned from entering the lands for fishing. After the termination of the ban period after two months, the Zamindar successfully prevailed upon the Tahsildar of Narsapur, to issue injunction orders against the villagers prohibiting them from entering the area until the civil suit which was instituted against some of them was settled. He also started reporting to Revenue Board and Government through letters and telegrams to take action on peasants.
The ban remained, the Zamindar renewed selling, by ejecting the peasants from the lands. For this police help was sought and as a result a batch of 80 Reserve Police was encamped. Police tried to forcibly take thumb impression on white sheets from illiterate peasants so as to implicate the leaders in court cases. The police issued summons to Alluri Satyanarayana, Jonnalagadda Ramalingayya, executive member of the provincial CSP, who was sent to Kalipatnam by CSP in 1938 and K. Bangaraju, Secretary, Taluk Peasant Association under section 107 for educating the peasants of their rights.

At the same time the urban oriented and pro-zamindari section within the Congress voiced its resentment against the Kalipatnam peasant struggle. The president of Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, Bhogaraju Pattabhi Seetharamayya reported to Gandhi that the movement was launched arbitrarily and was aimed at confiscating private property and that it was against the Congress principle of class-harmony. He refused to visit Kalipatnam for it would boost the morale of the peasantry if he visit that village. Gandhi basing upon Pattabhi's report commented that this movement was unjustified and warned Rajaji ministry to take immediate action on Congress members who were encouraging this struggle, if the Congress Committee failed to take disciplinary action.

But the local Congress Committee and Congress Socialists decried the attempts of Pattabhi to scuttle the movement. The Narsapur Congress Committee met at Palakollu on 12.10.38 and defended its action which it felt was in accordance with Congress principle of peasant welfare and non-violence.

The volunteer camp (sibiram) which was started in Kalipatnam to direct the movement became active by the end of 1938. It toured in various villages surrounding Kalipatnam and explained the exploitation of the Zamindar. Everyday meetings and rallies were conducted in the villages. The Kalipatnam meeting which was held on 12.8.1938 was attended by over 2000
peasants. They pledged to protect their traditional rights and
withstand the Zamindars threat till they achieve their
demands.

But the Zamindar, taking advantage of the stand assumed by
the Congress **highcommand**, continued his plans unabatedly
by-passing the peasant protest movement. He pursuaded the local
administration to impose 144 section once again and it came into
effect on 11.2.39. The Zamindar took the opportunity to put
land for sale and fixed 8th March, 1939 for surveying and
allotment of lands to the purchasers. That was the last straw.
After nine months of petitions and **memos**, the peasant association
decided to resort to direct action started satyagraha from
7.3.39 itself, which continued for days and came to an end on
10.3.39.

On 7th hundreds of peasants entered the lands, which the
Zamindar proposed to sell, under the leadership of Sunku Apparao
and **Bhupatiraju Lakshminarasimharaju**. About 40 peasants were
arrested for tresspassing the Zamindari lands. On 8th, about
1000 **peasantmen** and women again stepped into the field with
**tri-colour** flag and offered Satyagrah. The police resorted to
brutal repression wounding several **persons**. **Even** pregnant women
were beaten. According to a witness submitted in the court
regarding police brutality, 'the conduct of police did not differ
in any manner even in Congress rule. Their treatment of
children, women, and old peasants is gruesome. In order to
satisfy the Zamindar they are behaving like this'.

On 9th 400 peasants, led by **Uddamraju Manikyamba** and **Alluri
Annapurnamma**, both members of CSP offered satyagrah and fifty
of them were arrested. On 10th the same proceedure was **repeated**.
All the arrested were sentenced to six months rigorous
imprisonment after a mockery trial, which lasted for only thirty
minutes.

There was **tremendous** response and support to the **Kalipatnam**
struggle from various parts of Andhra . Peasant associations,
Congress Committees, Congress Socialist Party units expressed their sympathy to the peasants cause. On 25.3.39 ‘Kalipatnam Peasant Day’ was observed throughout Andhra. Kommareddy Sathyanarayana Murthy, who was the President of Andhra Provincial Peasnt Association extended the Association’s full-fledged support to the movement.

Meetings were held in several villages of Andhra supporting the peasants cause and condemning the police atrocities. AIKS President Swamy saha Jananda Saraswati, General Secretary N.G.Ranga, Joint Secretaries Indulal Yagnik, B.P.L.Bedum A.Prasad Sinha Justified the struggle, and sent message from Tripura on 12th March 1939 to this effect. They also warned the Madras government for becoming allies of the Zamindar and trying to suppress the peasant movement. The West Godavari Congress Committee consisting of Dandu Narayanaraju, Muduganti Jaggannasastry, T.Perraju, and K.Suryanarayana prepared a report alleging the Zamindar for betraying the peasants. Congress M.L.As from this district Dandu Narayanaraju and Gottumukkala Venkanna submitted a memorandum seperately to the government stating that the right on lands belong to Kalipatnam peasants.

Thus facing pressures both from within and outside the Congress government decided to take the situation into its hands. The Prime Minister who was at Tripura attending Congress session sent a telegram to the Kalipatnam sibiram requesting to suspend sathyagraha and that the government would solve the problem amicably. Accordingly the sathyagraha was withdrawn on 11th of March. But the attitude of the Government and the Pradesh Congress Committee was lukewarm towards the problems of the peasantry. Neither Patabhi nor Rajaji visited the area.

However, Prakasam visited Kalipatnam on 13.3.1939 and Justified the peasants demands which included the release of all
arrested and convicted, withdrawal of all cases, immediate action against police, withdrawal of section 144 and restoration of the dispossessed and waste lands formerly held by the peasants. Soon all the arrested were released and the cases in connection with the Kalipatnam struggle were withdrawn. However no action was taken against erring police personal. The government also ordered that the Collector, assisted by one representative each of the Zamindar and the villagers to hold an enquiry into the rights of the villagers with respect to the land out of which dispute has risen. Finally, an agreement was reached between the peasant and the Zamindar. Accordingly the Zamindar consented to give 250 acres of land to the peasants, agreed to leave some forest for pasture and firewood and that the Collector would arrange necessary financial assistance to the peasants through their cooperative society. Though the peasants could not get all the 800 acres as promised originally by the Zamindar, yet this achievement was no small victory in the given situation where the zamindar was considered all-mighty.

On the other hand the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee which was bitterly opposing the peasant movement and the participation of local Congressmen in the movement as it assumed that such movement would weaken the Congress Ministry passed a resolution that no Congressman could offer sathyagraha without prior permission of Congress Committee in future.

It also empowered its Secretary, to take disciplinary action against those who participated in the movement and issued notice to 14 West Godavari District Congressmen with socialist leanings like Uddaraju Ramam, A.S.Narasimharaju, Sunkara Apparao etc., for participating without permission. Many Congressmen expressed their strong disapproval of this step. Uddaraju Ramam, reacting sharply to the threat of disciplinary action against him by Congress Committee, Justified his participation in the sathyagraha as a Congressman, for, he argued, 'resolutions setting forth the kisan and labour programme of Congress had been passed both at
Falzpur session of the Congress and at the working committee meeting at Wardha in February 1937 and when a struggle takes place between the peasants... who desire that the programme should be implemented and Zamindars who want to oppose it tooth and nail, it is the duty of the subordinate Congress Committees and individual Congressmen to take active part in such struggles and support the programme of the Congress. It is only by doing so that the peasants and labourers can be induced to come forward to strengthen the cause of Congress. The real fight for independence consists in such struggles between the Zamindars and capitalists on one side and peasants and labourers on the other. Hence, it is that every Congressman treats as precious his right to participate in such struggles'.

Reacting similarly to the Congress Committee's action, Kommareddy Sathyanarayana Murthy and P.Sundarayya, President of Andhra Provincial Peasant Association and Secretary of Andhra Provincial Congress socialist Party respectively, issued a joint statement on 29.3.1939 asserting their right to support peasant struggles and stated, 'we do consult and take the advice of the Provincial Congress Committee but we do not bind ourselves to seek the permission of the Committee to start sathyagraha'.

The Andhra Provincial Peasant Association met at Vijayawada on 5.7.39 and urged the Congress leaders to withdraw the resolution. Processions and meetings were organised to oppose the resolution. Thus the Kalipatnam struggle became a stage for the show down between Congress leadership and Communist peasant leaders. However, these differences did not deter the peasants from launching more powerful struggles in later years. This struggle also broadened the social base of anti-imperial struggle. Though the demand for Zamindari abolition was not raised during this movement, it had all ingredients of posing a threat to the existence of Zamindari system.
Struggles against Munagala Zamindar presents another powerful example to the above pattern. Unlike Kallpatnam peasants' struggle the Munagala struggle posed direct challenge to the very structure of Zamindari system.

Munagala estate comprising 110 sq. miles, had 23 major villages and 19 minor villages with a revenue of Rs. 1,30,000 by 1930. Its population was 20,000 as per 1931 Census. It formed part of Krishna district surrounded by Telengana's Nalgonda district. The Zamindar of this estate from 1900 to 1948, i.e. till its abolition was Nayani Venkatarama Rao. He was a Congress sympathiser throughout and developed intimate relations with many Congress stalwarts of the day. Another positive aspect of this Zamindar was that he was a great patron of literature and Telugu language. He appointed Komaraju Venkatalaxamanarao, an exponent of Telugu literature as his Diwan.

The Zamindar was active in politics and involved in freedom movement since his assumption of the Zamindari. But his love for literature or his urge for freedom did not deter him from fleecing his estate peasants with exhorbitant rents and forced labour. The legal battles in which he was involved for nearly forty years from 1890 to 1931 with his relatives regarding succession issue drained his treasury. The burden of filling his coffers fell upon his tenants. Moreover, as the estate was adjacent to the Nizam territories the novel methods of exploitation, like vetti, were adopted. The acute grievances of the peasantry got accumulated during depression period. It was also a period which witnessed the growth of organised peasant movement in the Andhra area in the wake of non-cooperation movement and following the activities of educated persons, like N.G. Ranga from peasant families.

In this background, Munagala Zamin Ryot Association (MZRA) was formed by leading peasant families of Munagala in 1930 to fight against the atrocities of the Zamindar. Immadi Papaiah,
President of MZRA, Velidanda Rangarao, Kodati Venkatanarasimha Rao, Kollu Achayya, Y. Ranga Reddy, Y. Lakshmareddy, Akkiraju Gopalarao, Kollu Venkayya, Sunkara Pichayya, Golli Konayya, Sunkara Moggayya, Kannebolna Venkayya, etc., took active role in organising this first association. B. Vishwanath Das, M.L.A of Madras Assembly and who was leading anti-zamindar struggle against Kallikota Zamindar in Ganjam district presided the inaugural session of MZRA. T. Prakasam sent his message encouraging the organisation on this occasion.

However, this first ever organised anti-zamindar activity did not question the rationality of the zamindary system but established itself to fight for its rights. The zamaindar was not prepared nor was too meek to submit. During civil-disobedience, taking support from the Madras Government, he crushed the peasant movement on the pretext that the peasants were anti-imperial.

Despite being a Congress sympathiser, he suppressed the infant peasant organisation labelling it as an outfit of Congress, to protect his citadel. The main target of his attack were the organisers of MZRA. many peasants were beaten, many more were evicted from their lands, some were banished from the estate and some others were socially boycotted. One Kollu Ramayya, owner of 30 acres was forced to sign an agreement that he would never Join any peasant organisation in future, failing which his 30 acres would be taken over by the Zamindar. Collective fines were imposed on some other peasants. Exit and entry points of a number of peasant houses were sealed with thrones until the fines were collected. Immadi Papayya, who was the President of this first MZRA was one of the worst victims of Zamindar's fury. His 18 acres of land was appropriated by the Zamindar. Gelli Konayya, the General Secretary of the association too lost his land to Zamindar's aggression. False cases were filed against several people in civil and criminal courts.
This was the fate of the first peasant association and this type of atmosphere prevailed till late Thirties. The experience of N.V. Naidu, the founder of *Zamin Ryot*, during his fact-finding mission in Munagala estate bears testimony to the kind of situation existing in Munagala. He visited Munagala on 22nd, 23rd and 24th of September, 1933 to gain first-hand information of the conditions for the benefit of publishing in his paper. During his stay in the region hotels and lodges were ordered not to provide him food and accommodation. With the severe repression going on peasants were afraid even to talk to Naidu. Immadl Papayya, once President of **MZRA**, refused to provide shelter and even to talk with Naidu, following threatening calls from Zamindar. Finally, Naidu was able to take stock of the situation by talking to peasants only during midnight short briefings. In fact, an attempt was made by Zamindar’s men to manhandle Naidu for talking to the peasants.

However, the peasants did not lose heart over the aborted attempt of having a union. The events occurring around their estate was enthusing the peasants. The peasants marches, rallies, tours of leaders, press publicity, peasant schools and mobilising techniques kept the tempo of the estate’s tenants alive. The elections to Madras Presidency Assembly in 1937 aroused their hopes and aspirations.

Though Congress Provincial leaders did not campaign in Munagala for its candidate, as per the agreement reached between them and the Zamindar, local leaders and Congress volunteers and members of district CSP toured length and breadth of the estate and gave wide publicity of Congress election manifesto which assured the peasants the needed protection from Zamindars. The Congress candidate Katragadda Venkata Narayana’s victory in the elections boosted the morale of the peasantry. Another effect of this elections was that Socialists and other peasant-minded Congress leaders came into direct contact with the peasants of Munagala and they also came to learn the situation prevailing there. By this time local Congress organisations came under the influence of Communists.
Soon after elections, Chandra **Rajeswar** Rao and Vellanki **Vishveswar** Rao toured the estate secretly on behalf of District CSP and collected first hand information about the exploitative machinery and also organised meetings to educate the peasants to fight against **zamindari** oppression. At many meetings, people did not attend fearing reprisal from Zamindar. On 5.4.38, at a meeting held in Siripuram, a village in the estate they persuaded the peasants to pass resolution urging the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee to appoint a committee to go into the wretched conditions of Munagala peasants and postponement of collection of rent arrears for one year. After returning to Vijayawada from their tour, these two leaders requested K. Venkata Narayanarao to tour Munagala personally to create confidence among peasants to fight against forced labour.

On 18.4.38, K. Venkata Narayanarao, M.L.A, along with Kamineni Venkatapapaya and Repala B. Sastry, District Congress Committee Secretary, toured Munagala. Pampllets were distributed informing their visit, ten days before. They visited Munagala, Taduvai, Karivirala, Siripuram, Ramapuram, Nadigudem and other villages extensively and advocated that Zamindar had no right whatsoever to force peasants to work free of cost in his fields and urged peasants the same immediately. The speech from an M.L.A had an electrifying effect upon the peasants and very soon this practice of forced labour was stopped.

The M.L.A submitted his report to West Krishna District Congress Committee and requested it to constitute a special enquiry committee to probe the Munagala estate people's conditions. Subsequently, a Committee was formed on 24.6.38 with Kakani Venkataratnam as Convenor and Peta Bapayya, Anne Anjayya, Venigalla Venkataratnam, Nanduri Prasada Rao and Anumala Rama Govinda sarma as members. Meanwhile, N.G.Ranga and Indulal Yagnik toured Munagala in capacity as members of AIKS and floated
the Zamindari abolition campaign vigorously and waged scathing attacks against Zamindari system. They also propogated the happy life of U.S.S.R peasant, that the peasant in Russia was the ruler and that there was not even a trace of peasant exploitation.

- The Kakani Committee toured Munagala on 23rd, 24th and 25th of July, 1938 and prepared a detailed report supporting the earlier reports exposing Zamindar's atrocities. However, pandemonium prevailed when the report came for voting at the West Krishna District Congress Committee meeting held at Konakanchi on 7.8.38 between pro-zamindari Congress leaders like, Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao Pantulu and Marupilla Chitti and Congress Socialists. Finally the report was accepted by a majority vote.

The appointment of Prakasam Committee at the Presidency level, further enhanced the confidence of the peasants that they can challenge the Zamindar. However, they were not prepared yet, to give witness to the Committee when it visited Munagala following threats from Zamindar, but three of the peasants followed the Committee to Madras secretly and represented Munagala peasantry before the committee.

The West Krishna District Congress Committee and Andhra Provincial Peasant Association decided to re-organise the defunct MZRA, and made necessary arrangements. Peasant leaders Chalasani Vasudevarao, Kamineni Venkatappayya and Joshabhatla Sathyanarayana campaigned for the re-building of MZRA. Nanduri Prasada Rao, Moturi Paranthamayya and Vemulapalli Anjaneyulu were deputed by District CSP to recruit members to the MZRA. Peasants of all most all the villages of estate responded enthusiastically and in 1838 3,000 out of 20,000 population Joined Congress and 4,000 Joined MZRA.

The MZRA was affiliated to Krishna District Peasant Association on 24.12.38. The Congress Sub-Committee's report was published in good number and circulated widely in the estate.
Apart from peasant association, youth committees were also established. Volunteer force was created to notice the activities of Zamindar. In Munagala, MZRA office was started. Peasant-labour friendship and co-operation was prominently preached. By the end of the year, forced labour and paying of fines to Zamindar was stopped. Fear of Zamindar servants was eliminated from peasant heart. The song 'we don't want association with these Zamindars' was on every peasant's lip. They opposed illegal payments, and even started enjoying their traditional rights over trees. They stopped from going to zamidar seeking his help in solving their disputes and also stopped heeding to Zamindar's orders for boycotting socially their fellow-peasants. In every village peasant associations were formed.

The Zamindar also intensified harassing the peasantry by implicating them in false cases and forcibly stopping demonstrations. He rejected all appeals for postponement of rent collections. The estate employees entered peasant houses and forcibly took ornaments against rents. The families of office bearers of MZRA came under special attack. But this did not deter the peasant defiant mood, unlike in early Thirties.

A classical example of this sort of attitude happened in Munagala on Deepavali day in 1938. On every Deepavali the Zamindar used to perform special prayers to his family's deity Laxminarasimhaswamy, whose temple was located in Repalle village of the estate. As usual, the barbers of that village went to the temple on Deepavali day in 1938 to lit torches. But the estate employees refused to accept their services as the barbers were the members of MZRA and chased them out of the temple. Seeing this the dhobis who were the traditional carriers of God's vehicle themselves refused to do their duty and walked out of the temple premises and no barber or dhobi in the entire estate was ready to perform this work and thus the two-day religious procession came to a stand-still in that year.
However, the people of the estate decided to celebrate Deepavali in a variety way. They took Nanduri Prasada Rao, the representative of West Godavari District Congress Committee to Repalle and organised a mammoth procession keeping portraits of Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and N.G.Ranga on bullock carts. From now onwards direct conflict between the Zamindar and the tenants started. Slogans like 'abolition of Zamindari system', 'down with police atrocities' and 'MZRA zindabad' rented the air. Under such conditions, a chance came to MZRA to test its strength for the final showdown and that occurred in kalakova village.

Under every irrigation tank, the Zamindar generally possessed certain amount of acres for his own cultivation, and entire cultivation activities were performed by his tenants free of cost. But this forced labour was stopped by 1938 and now the Zamindar himself was forced to hire labour to do agricultural operations and he did the same to work in his fields situated in Kalakova village. The estate employees hired 72 agricultural labourers to harvest 22 acres of paddy crop promising to pay 40 pots of grain per acre as was paid by estate peasants. The labourers agreed to do the job and completed their task in 14 days and walked down to Nadigudem, the Zamindar's palace for receiving their payment. But the estate employees paid only 30 pots of grain per acre and that too was old and soiled grain. The labourers refused to take the grain and marched towards MZRA and sought help. Learning this, the peasant leaders Nanduri Prasada Rao and Nallapati Venktrama Narasayya led the labourers to Zamindar's palace and demanded in vain to see the Zamindar himself. Consequently, on Prasad Rao's advice, Nallapati organised sathyagraha in front of the palace with 500 peasants and labourers on the first and with 1000 and 3000 people on the following two days.

As usual, the Zamindar tried his methods to suppress this agitation. He paraded his henchmen before sathyagrahals,
threatened to kill Prasada Rao and others. He also spread rumours that Congress government and leaders have compromised with him. But the peasants continued their agitation. They surrounded the palace and resorted to social boycott and left Zamindar and his employees with no daily services. Potters carrying water to the police quarters struck work. Thus Zamindar, being helpless complained to the Government that peasants were looting his palace and immediately, the District Collector, Bhaskar Rao, Congress leaders Bulusu Sambamurthy and Ayyadevara Kaleshwara Rao rushed to the estate with three lorry loads of police force on 24.12.38.

Kaleshwara Rao tried to persuade unsuccessfully peasants and labourers to suspend the agitation as it was not led by Congress Party and to come to terms with the Zamindar. Then Collector enquired and finding no fault with agitating people, he ordered the estate employees to pay 40 pots of good grain per acre as was agreed originally.

This victory over Zamindar gave credibility to MZRA and much needed boost to the estate peasants. The peasants decision to stop payment of rent, until their demand for reduction of rents to one sixth of the net income was implemented. They also demanded for restoration of lands encroached by Zamindar and postponement of rent collection for one year. The no-rent campaign resulted in the non-payment of a single paisa of the total 1,20,000 rupees was collected by the Zamindar.

Realising the intensity of the situation, Zamindar and his friends in the Congress decided to come to terms with the peasants. The General Secretary of Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, Gottipati Brahmayya was appointed as arbitrator by the two parties. After prolonged negotiations, both the groups came to an agreement on 10.1.1939 and signed on the agreement popularly known as 'Brahmayya Award'. On Zamindar's side, his son Kumararaja Ramakrishna Reddy and on behalf of MZRA Velidenda Rangarao, Kodati Venkata Narasimharao, Nanduri Prasada Rao,
Nallapati Venkata Ramanarasayya, Uppala Ramayya and Kandula Ramulu signed. The subsistance of the agreement was that the Zamindar agreed to return all the confiscated lands, to recognise peasants rights over trees, to survey the lands in the estate, not to resort to forced labour and illegal exactions. Peasants too agreed to pay all rent dues and give up social boycott campaign.

The hitch developed regarding the implementation of the peace accord. Both sides started allegations that the other side had not kept to the agreement. Peasants started demanding the implementation of the award. The Zamindar demanded the expulsion of V. Hanumantharao and Maturi Paranthamayya from estate on the pretext that they were sabotaging the accord. He also demanded the peasants to pay rents first before he could implement the accord. Moreover, he reduced the remission amount from 0-4-0 per rupee to 0-2-0, contrary to his promise. To break this stalemate, Brahmayya deputed Yemeni Subramanyam to implement the accord, along with Krishna District Peasant Association President Kamineni Venkatappyya. Again both the parties agreed to this negotiation. But, Y. Subramaniam’s mission failed as both the parties stuck to their guns. Zamindar insisted that he would not give any remission until peasants pay their due rents. Finally the mission declared that ‘it did not mind if the agreement was taken to be at an end’, and Brahmayya himself that his arbitration has failed. This was on 29th May, 1939.

Even earlier, the peasant leaders expecting that nothing substantial would emerge from complacement, started organising the peasants. On 26.2.39, Katragadda Venkatanarayanaraao, Kamineni Venkatappyya, and other leaders visited Nadigudem and toured various villages in the estate urging people to be cautious and awaken till the award was implemented. On 23.4.39, the AIKS Vice-President P. Syamasundara Rao, Peta Bapayya, P. Subba
Rao Reddy, Sunkara Suryanarayana Rao also visited Munagala and kept up the momentum among the peasantry. Nearly 3,000 peasants attended that day's meeting, in which P. Syamasundara Rao spoke that peasants would resort to direct action if the award was not implemented.

The MZRA members divided themselves into batches and campaigned vigourously in the estate for the implementation of the award. They also realised that only direct action would fulfill their object. Excepting that the peace attempts would fall, MZRA passed a resolution on April 30, 1939, putting forth certain demands like immediate withdrawal of criminal cases implicated upon peasants, remission for destroyed crops and warned the Zamindar that if these demands were not implemented they would resort to direct sathyagraha. A sathyagraha committee was formed with Nanduri Prasada Rao as President to organise anti-zamindari struggle. This committee in turn constituted several sub-committees one each for every village and trained the villagers of performing sathyagraha. About 1100 volunteers were trained in these camps.

A side issue that cropped up in these circumstances was the occupation of an elementary school in Ramapuram by the MZRA. This school in fact was illegally occupied by the Zamindar in the early Thirties. Now the MZRA, re-occupied the school to show its assertiveness to the Zamindar. Zamindar who was looking for a pretext to abort the Brahmayya Award, found this issue convenient and walked out of the negotiations that were conducted by Yerneni Subramaniam, thus finally ending the life of the award. So, on May 29th, Brahmayya declared that his arbitration had failed.

The peasants after occupying the school building hoisted Congress flag and red flag atop and started peasant school. The Zamindar once again complained to the police. Already several peasants, who were implicated in false cases were walking up and down to the courts, which were in Jaggyyapet or Nandigama, 24 and 40 miles away respectively from Munagala. Now the Bezwada
sub-Collector imposed 144 section in Ramapuram and cases were
filed on Nandurl Prasada Rao and others.

Under such conditions, MZRA decided to launch sathyagraha
from June 2nd, 1939, which took the form of systematic
trespassing into estate lands. On June 2nd, Uppla Ramayya
led a team of eight people with ploughs and entered Immadi
Papayya's land, which was forcibly taken by Zamindar in 1930. As
soon as they entered, police arrested them. On 3rd, Nandurl
Prasada Rao, Moturi Paranthamayya, Vemulapalli Anjaneyulu,
Joshyabhatulla Sathyarbarayana, Nallapati Venkata Ramanarasayya
and others entered the Zamindar's land only to be arrested by the
police.

On 4th June, a crowd of about 300 persons obstructed the
removal of ploughs and bulls used in the commission of the
trespass, while another crowd of about 500 were present at the
site. The district Superintendent of Police and Joint Magistrate
were present with a section of the armed Reserve Police. When
the police attempted to remove the third day's sathyagrahees and
implements the crowd rushed at the escort and obstructed their
way. Brutal lathi charge was followed resulting severe injuries to
a number of men and women. This type of sathyagraha continued
unabatedly. On the other hand, social boycott was carried by the
estate peasants and other craftsmen against the Zamindar. Dhobis,
barbers, potters, and various other groups stayed away
from the palace. Zamindar tried to put a brave face by
hiring labour from neighbouring Nizam territory. But owing to
local pressure they too stopped coming to the palace.

Rents were not paid and the Zamindar tried to confiscate
peasants lands and property in lieu of rents, but was resisted
effectively by the estate public. Men, women, children
participated enthusiastically and confidently in this struggle.
Singing peasant songs and denouncing Zamindari system, children
maraced up and down in Munagala streets.
Such type of social boycott and sathyagraha on Papayya's land continued and began to grow strong as days passed despite the arrest of important leaders. Moreover, massive demonstrations were led outside Munagala, throughout Andhra in support of these peasants. On 11th June, 'Munagala Day' was observed in the Andhra region. marches, rallies, meetings were organised supporting peasants cause and denouncing police lathicharge. Kalipatnam peasants were in forefront in observing the 'day'. N.G.Ranga and other central leaders too criticised the police atrocities and the Congress' government's attitude towards peasants problems.

Several Congress Committees and Congress M.L.As too urged the government to solve the problem amicably and not to resort to oppressive measures. Navasakti, Vahini and Zamin Ryot papers published a series of articles and gave wide publicity to peasants cause and made a scathing attack on police behaviour, though government reports suggested that these papers were distorting the facts and making wild allegations against police. But police reports themselves pointed out that firm action was taken by them to restore law and order.

Thus in the wake of intensive pressure, Congress Government deputed the Revenue Minister T. Prakasam to sort out the problem. He visited Munagala on 18th, June, 1939 and after preliminary enquiries requested the MZRA to suspend the agitation and promised to solve the problem and subsequently MZRA and Andhra Provincial Peasant Association suspended the movement after 17 days of agitation on 18.6.1939. They now entered into negotiations for a settlement of the disputes through an arbitrator. All the arrested sathyagrahees except Nanduri Prasada Rao, Moturi Paranthamayya, Vemulapalli Anjaneyulu and Joshyabhatla sathyanarayana were released soon after the suspension of the movement. These four were compelled to serve the full term of 11 months in prison as the government felt that they were communists.
The arbitrator was Yemeni subramanyam. After a hard persuasion, he made Zamindar to agree to the implementation of Brahmayya Award and issued a proclamation to this effect, on 6.11.39. But Zamindar did not keep his word, regarding the implementation and the MZRA tried to renew the agitation, but following the resignation of Congress Ministry in October, it did not launch the same, as the British Raj returned to rule directly.

Though on the face of it, peasants were the losers in this round of struggle, on the whole they posed a serious challenge to the Zamindar and Zamindari system. They were able to recover Immadi Papayya’s land by sathyagraha and negotiated the release of the arrested sathyagrahees. The practice of forced labour was put to an end. It also exposed that the sympathies of the Congress Government lay with the Zamindar. Like Kalipatnam, this agitation also witnessed the acute differences that were cropping up between congress leadership and Communists.

Apart from these two explicit outbursts, there were several other movements challenging Zamindars authority in various estates indicating the growing assertiveness among the peasantry.

In Challapalli estate, the Zamindar Sivarama Prasad who succeeded Ankineedu Prasad in 1929 was in no way different from other Zamindars of the period in terms of exploitation of the peasantry. The Divi Taluka Zamindari Peasant Association which was formed in 1930 raised its voice against Zamindari encroachments, evictions, illegal extractions and litigations. Its initial leaders were Gorrepati Venkatasubbayya, Chandra Subbayya, kavuri Kodandaramayya and Kodali Anjaneyulu.

They led a movement against the estate’s Diwan Jampala Venkatesam and succeeded in forcing the Zamindar to remove him from that post. This Jampala was recruited as Diwan in 1930 by the Zamindar. He was famous as the most successful bureaucrat of the times, for ruthlessly suppressing the Pedanandipadu peasant movement in early 1920s. The Zamindar who was active in
politics, entrusted the administration to Jampala, who in turn brought vast tracts of communal land under the estate and resorted to litigation whenever peasants objected his measures. Several newspapers exposed the conditions of the zamindar-ryot. Petitions were submitted to the District administration. Prominent Congress leaders intervened on behalf of the peasants and finally persuaded the Zamindar to remove Jampala from Diwangiri in 1934. By late Thirties, this opposition to Zamindari employees was directed against Zamindar himself. The activities of the peasant association, under the leadership of N.G.Ranga, Gottipati Brahmayya, Baddepudi Venkatanarayana, Kolli Venkatadri gradually radicalised the thinking of the peasant vis-a-vis the Zamindar.

In 1937 the peasants of this estate vehemently opposed the imposition of 'najarana' by the Zamindar. They organised a series of meetings and took rallies and after a non-violent active agitation they succeeded in forcing the Zamindar to withdraw the orders.

In September 1937, the Zamindar sold 1400 acres of banjar lands in Challapalli, Mangalapuram, Nukalavaripalem and other villages. The peasants tried to halt the sales by rallies and marches. They also petitioned to Prakasam Pantulu but could not prevent the Zamindar from selling the lands. But the resolve to fight against the Zamindari exploitation continued. The victory over the najarana issue strengthened the confidence of the peasants.

In Muktyala estate in Krishna district, peasant associations started functioning since 1930. The general political atmosphere existing during that period influenced the peasants of this estate and they started opposing the Zamindar. In March 1938 they decided to encroach the Zamindar forest lands for grazing. The Zamindar had 3,500 acres of forest lands in Paddavaram village in the name of his wife Raja Vasireddy Kanakavallikamba. In July 1938 a meeting was held in Muktyala
and was attended by N.G.Ranga, Indulal Yagnik, Chalasani Vasudevarao and other national leaders. Peasant leaders in the estate, Katragadda Narayanarao, Anumula Govinda Sarma, Bandi Tirupatayya and Repala Buchirama Sresti organised the meeting. Soon after the meeting, inspired by the speeches of the leaders, men and women took their cattle into the forests for grazing. The Zaminder brought police and threatened the peasants with dire consequences. Many people were arrested and many more were implicated in false cases. Though the agitation cooled down in the wake of police brutalities, the peasants of this estate did not stop questioning the authority of the Zaminder.

Gampalagudem estate, in Tiruvur taluk of Krishna district is another example which witnessed the struggle between the Zaminder who wanted to continue his traditional authority and the peasants who started asserting their lost rights very aggressively.

The Zaminder Kotagiri Venkata Krishna Rao was a loyalist of Congress and he was active in the Home Rule Movement, Non-Cooperation Movement and in the civil-disobediance movement of 1930 and he even went to Jail in 1921 for participating in the non-cooperation movement. But as a Zaminder he followed the evil practices along with his fellow zamindars. The peasant leaders who were in the forefront opposing the Zaminder were assaulted. Peasants who gave witness before the Prakasam Committe were made to lead a difficult life. However, peasants started moving in organised manner and fought against the Zaminder either in legal battles or outside courts. When Murukuntla Venkatappayya was beaten by Zaminder men, for reporting to Press the atrocities committed by the Zaminder, the peasants of the estate took out a large procession to the Zaminder’s palace and warned the zamindar.

In 1938, Ponnaluri Radha Krishnamurthy wrote a booklet titled ‘Tiruvuri Talukalo Zamindari Durantalu’ (Zamindari atrocities in Tiruvur Taluk) and distributed its copies in the
estate villages. Many of the peasants of this estate actively participated in anti-zamindar agitation in the Munagala estate. The mood of the peasants in different estates was not different from these estates. The opposition which started in early 1930s against the exploitation of the Zamindars gradually turned against the Zamindari system itself by late thirties. Sudden withdrawal of Congress ministries, outbreak of second world war and imposition of repressive policies in its wake to curb popular movements by the British regime caused an abrupt end to the peasant movements, only to erupt once again after the war was over.

During war period the differences between the Communists and N.G.Ranga (who became the Congress spokesman on peasant problems) became more open and competition began for the control over peasant associations. The conflict was more evident in Andhra. Infact by 1939 peasant movement in Andhra achieved a stature and stability. Peasant associations were formed at district, taluk and village level with Andhra Provincial Peasant Association working as the apex body, and as a matter of fact this body and its affiliated wings were under the control of Communists while N.G.Ranga was busy with his activities at the national level. The Congress as such did not allow itself to deal with peasants seperately. Thus the battle for control over these sections witnessed between the Comunists and N.G.Ranga and his followers, where both these groups were operating within the Congress.

In the initial years of the war, the Government crackdwon on Communists was more sevre, as they opposed the war efforts of the British tooth and nail claiming it as imperial war. Main purpose of their activities was to prevent the people from contributing to war funds, from enlisting in the army, and from serving on war committees which were set up by the government for carrying on pro-war and pro-British propaganda. Their anti-war speeches, posters, leaflets and unauthorised news-sheets provoked the government to take stern measures to curb the Commonust activities.
The axe fell on peasant associations too. Police opened fire killing five persons in Mandasa estate when peasants defied forest rules in April, 1940. Earlier, the AIKS which was held at Palasa in Vishapatnam district on March 26 and 27 passed resolutions to wage anti-zamindari, anti-government, anti-war agitations. The government took serious note of the conference and issued orders forbidding several leaders including N.G.Ranga from attending the meeting. N.G.Ranga refused to obey the order and he was consequently prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment. Several peasant leaders were arrested. Among them the most important were Laxminarayanaraju, Sathyanarayana Dasu, Prasada Rao and suryanarayanaraju. Several others went underground, including Vasudevarao, J. Ramalingayya, and Mukkamala Nagabhushanam. However, during these critical days the United Front strategy witnessed breaches.

The CPI in its October 1939 meeting resolved to capture power and to transform the imperialist war into a war of national liberation. N.G.Ranga sensing the trouble hardened his hold over Andhra Provincial Peasant Association. The Peasant Association became the plaything and war front between the rival groups. By this time CPI permeated the CSP and when in 1940 when Communists were expelled from CSP the whole of CSP of Andhra went under CPI. The struggle between the Communists and Rangaites for control for AIKS was the last straw.

This came at Palasa AIKS Conference where both the groups tried to capture a majority at the annual election of the office-bearers. N.G.Ranga and pro-Congress peasant leaders succeeded in getting the majority. Thus the differences which were in existence since mid-thirties got sharpened.

Infact the United Front strategy itself was an opportunistic strategy of the Communists who were in early Thirties banned by the government. Inorder to continue their work they joined hands with the Congress. The differences in ideology and personality conflicts continued despite the birth of United Front. This was
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evident as both the groups organised rival political schools during 1937-39. The Communists' attitude of splitting up peasantry into rich, middle, poor peasants and agricultural labourers was not to the satisfaction of N.G. Ranga and followers. To put in Ranga's words, 'this too contributed to the eventual break-down of the United Front in the Kisan movement'.

Moreover Ranga's criticism of Marxist dogma of proletarian dictatorship and Communist subscription to the same remained underneath throughout the United Front years. Added to this the change in Communists' attitude towards war ended the United Front on the peasant platform. Germany's attack on Russia brought this change. Now the war ceased to be an imperialist war from their point of view and it became a people's war, 'which must be supported unconditionally'. With CPI being in majority in AIKS by 1942 it passed resolution to this effect. Thus the working committee of Andhra Provincial Peasant Association where pro-Congress and pro-Rangalites were in majority met at Nidubrolu on 7th November 1942 and decided to secede from the 'Communist controlled AIKS'. It condemned the 'anti-national and reactionary and retrograde decisions' of Central Kisan Council that met at Bombay in October, 1942 favouring Pakistan, joining the provincial ministries and pleading for wholehearted co-operation with government. In contrast to CPI's call to peasants not to support Gandhiji's prospective movement (quit India), the meeting welcomed Gandhi's quit India slogan.

Thus the break-away group of AIKS changed its name to 'All India Kisan Congress' in November, 1942 which clearly indicated its close alliance with and affinity to the Congress. Its main objective was achieving first national liberation and then, social revolution led by the peasantry. As opposed to the CPI thesis of a proletarian revolution to be achieved under the proletarian leadership and through proletarian dictatorship, the Kisan Congress advocated in the need for achieving an agrarian revolution under the leadership of the agrarian masses. It also accused the CPI of playing malignant game of keeping the
peasants under check ‘by all means, fair or foul, until the **industrial** proletariat grows in numbers, organisation, consciousness and capacity to sacrifice’. 266

On the other hand, **Rangaites** also tried to restrict **entry** into the Andhra Provincial Peasant Association only to pro-Congress peasants and exclude Communist supporters. Following the removal of ban on CPI in June 1942, i.e. Just before the split of **AIKS**, Communists launched a massive membership drive into Peasant Association, which was not the taste of Rangaites. The Rangaites who were in the saddle of Andhra Provincial Peasant Association, during the **initial years of war**, now refused to **issue** membership forms to the respective district peasant **associations** where Communists were in control.

The communists appealed to the central AIKS office, which in turn granted permission to the district association to publish membership forms on their own, without the interference of Andhra Provincial Peasant Association. Under such circumstances, the Working Committee of the Andhra Provincial Peasant Association not only seceded from AIKS but also abolished Andhra Provincial Peasant **Association** by saying that there was no need for a separate peasant association when the country was facing unprecedented situation in the wake of war and appointed Nellore **Venkataramanalu** as Provincial Agent. 267 It also declared that red flags should not be hoisted during peasant meetings. But these deliberations were not approved by the district peasant **associations** where Communists were in control.

The Andhra Provincial Peasant Association which was claimed to be dissolved by N.G.Ranga and his followers, met at Vijayawada and appointed **AIKS General Secretary Chalasani Vasudeva Rao** as Provincial Peasant **Association** Organiser to re-organise peasant **associations** and by December, 1942 the Peasant Association recruited 1,10,000 members to its organisation and elected Kadiala Gopalarao as President and Nanduri Prasadarao as General **Secretary** for 1943-44.
From now onwards there existed two peasant associations in Andhra as at National level. The Communist controlled AIKS at national level and its provincial wing Andhra Provincial Peasant Association and N.G.Ranga and pro-Congress controlled AIKS and its Provincial wing Andhra Provincial Kisan Congress (APKC). By this time N.G.Ranga was firm in the saddle of Andhra Provincial Congress leadership. The main reason, apart from ideological differences, for Ranga's divisive activities would have been his fear of defeat in the organisational election of APPA. Though N.G.Ranga was responsible for the formation of peasant associations, and raising the consciousness of peasants in Andhra, his interests lay more at the national level. Moreover the Congress was not particular about the peasant segment. Thus the field was left wide-open for the Communists since mid-thirties and in the garb of United-Front they penetrated into the peasant mass and with their mass-activities especially during the Congress ministry period and by directly leading anti-zamindari struggles, in Munagala, Kalipatnam, Challapalli and other estates, they developed intimate relationship with local cadres and strengthened their membership and that explains why when the CSP expelled Communists from its party, entire CSP unit of Andhra became CPI unit in 1940.

At Palasa conference of AIKS also majority of APPA members favoured and voted for Communists members in the organisational elections. Rangaites who were already feeling restless owing to the growing strength of communists in the APPA naturally got upset with the lifting of ban on CPI. N.G.Ranga wanted to curtail the influence of the Communists and continue his hold over peasant association and avoid defeat at the APPA organisational elections. This explains the reasons behind Ranga's attitude towards APPA in 1942. But Rangas's action did not deter Communists hold over peasant associations.

The organisational and mobilising techniques, though initiated and adopted first by N.G.Ranga in the early Thirties, Communists implemented the same in Forties. As the government repression was severe they could not launch any agitations as
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during the Congress regime, but in the circumstances when British government was waging people's war, in Communist perception, the Communist cadres organised several constructive programmes which helped both the peasants and the government.

They took advantage of food crisis during war period and concentrated all their energies in this regard. Due to lack of rainfall in several provinces, and also ineffective and inefficient measures and indifferences of the government, food grains became scarce in the open market. Hoarders and profiteers trading in black market ruled the roost.\textsuperscript{271} The Communists led 'hunger-marchers' to the divisional officers in various districts of Andhra for rice. They also demanded not to stop the import of rice from Burma. Due to war needs rice from Krishna district was exported to Bombay four times the normal in 1940 thus leading to increase of price in local markets.\textsuperscript{273} Taking advantage of this situation the Communists organised several meetings throughout the province with anti-zamindari and anti-government slogans. However the government did not take seriously of this activities and rubbed them as 'annual events without attributing any particular significance'.

But one significant aspect which was taken into consideration by the Communists during the war period was their 'Grow More Food' - campaign under which the APPA brought lakhs of acres of government waste lands for cultivation and handed them over to the agricultural labour.\textsuperscript{275} Irrigation was another major issue taken up by the Communist party's peasant cadres during this period. They undertook the repair of the main canal of the Krishna Delta in Krishna district when the contractor surrendered the contract fearing that he could not finish the work in the stipulated time and for the scheduled rates. This main canal supplied to more than 6 lakhs of irrigated area. Under such circumstances the APPA undertook to complete the repairs in stipulated time and the contract for itself. It gave a call for peasants to come and work on the canal repair and hundreds responded and worked for about a month in hot summer. Communal
kitchens were run, and cultural squads entertained them during work and in the nights. The repair work was completed in record time much to the astonishment of the professional contractors. Many peasants came down to the working spot from various parts of Andhra to work. The work was mainly directed by the Communists.

The CPI controlled APA also took leading role in organising relief camps and also participated in government relief camps during the Bengal, Rayalaseema and northern districts famines during this period. Its members were sent to these regions for undertaking relief work. This not only resulted in spreading the peasant movement to these areas but also converted many of Ranga's followers into Communist camp.

The grow more food campaign also had the blessings of the government, which in fact was the initiator of the campaign to strengthen food supplies for its war needs. It gave several concessions for the cultivation of pormboke and other lands at their disposal. Mukkamala Nagabhushanam, a Communist who was the President of Krishna District Peasant Association in 1942 launched campaign as per the programme of the APPA to bring all waste lands in Zamindari areas under cultivation. The work of the local peasant associations was to prepare a list of all waste lands and sent it to the Collector requesting him to grant such lands to the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. It was also expected to give petitions to the Zamindars and then urge Collectors to bring pressure on the Zamindars. However caution was taken to prevent peasants from forcibly occupying waste lands if either Zamindar or government did not give permission. They also demanded the government for suitable seeds, subsidised fertilisers, loans through co-operative societies and banks, drainage facilities, transport facilities for carrying agricultural produce, remunerative procurement prices etc.
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It also succeeded in many of its efforts. To cite a few examples APPA triumphed in making the government to postpone the collection of nazarana worth 30 lakhs rupees in Krishna district alone for the year 1942. For this it had to send nearly 250 petitions to the government. On the other hand the Communist Party's paper Prajasakti continued its attack bitterly against the Zamindari system and the exploitation being carried on by the Zamindars.

A demand was made by the APPA to amend the Madras Estate Land Act in order to bring the waste lands under cultivation even in Zamindari estates. Zamindars were refusing to hand over the waste lands to the peasants fearing that the latter would get occupancy rights over them once the lands were granted. Neither were they prepared to cultivate waste lands on their own. So APPA met in March, 1943 and urged the government and Zamindars to be patriotic in giving the waste lands to peasants as it would help fight the famine conditions.

Accordingly the government in early 1944 brought a temporary amendment act to Madras Estate Land Act as it was considered at the time of utmost importance to increase the production of food crops in the Presidency in every possible way. Thus it enacted the Madras Estate Land (Temporary Amendment) Act, on 17.1.44.

The Act provided that a land-holder may admit a person to temporary possession of land in his estate which was not already in the possession of a peasant or tenant, at any time during the continuance of the world war and for one year thereafter. It also stated that the persons so admitted would be entitled to be in possession of the land only for such period being less than three or more than five years as may be agreed upon between him and the landholder. The Act however did not bind the Zamindar to give his lands compulsorily. Moreover, the peasant in this case was exempted from paying rent for cultivating such lands while such compulsion and exemption was granted regarding government waste lands. Thus the greatest defect of the Act was its
bargaining nature. It defined a right in favour of peasant and immediately searched for counter-favour to the Zamindar. However, despite defects, several tracts of waste lands were brought under the hold of poor peasants and agricultural labourers thus enhancing the prestige of APPA. These people remained behind Communists in later years to fight for and get permanent occupancy right over these lands.

Apart from these type of agitations, APPA also held its usual peasant day, marches, rallies and meetings regularly. The Andhra Peasant Day of 1943 was observed on 1st September throughout Andhra. On that day all most all the Communist controlled peasants associations celebrated it as a festival. Streets were decorated with mango leaf garlands. Houses were cleaned and white-washed. Processions were taken and bullock carts were drawn exhibiting on them the figures of Japan and Germany and criticising these countries for the imperial war. Sport competitions and science exhibitions were held to celebrate the day.

In Pittapuram estate in East Godavari district the peasant association constructed bridges on two sides of river Godavari to avoid flood water coming into the surrounding villages in 1943. It diverted the money belonging to the estate for this purpose when the Zamindar refused to construct. The peasants also protested the imposition of illegal rents by the Gollaprolu Zamindar in the same district but could not succeed in making the Zamindar to withdraw the same.

In Tiruvur Taluk, the Mailavaram Zamindar sold 100 acres of communal land which was used for grazing by peasants for 2,700 rupees in 1941. The peasants started agitating for grazing right under the direction of Tiruvuru taluk peasant association. When the individual peasants could not bear the cost of litigation, the peasant association launched campaign and collected one thousand rupees for court expenses and appointed a committee to look into the matter. It curtailed the Zamindar’s attempts to divide the peasants and finally by an appeal, it obtained an
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Injunction order which permitted the peasants to graze their cattle in 40 acres. Criminal cases implicated on peasants by the Zamindar were also removed. These victories resulted in strengthening the APPA both quantitatively and qualitatively.

By 1943, primary membership of APPA slightly increased while AIKS membership came down by fifty percent. At Bhanka session APPA members were 55,560 out of total 2,85,000 AIKS members. As a government note put it, 'the Communists' source of strength lies not so much in their inexhaustible energy in churning out propaganda and rank opportunism of their policies but the ability of party workers to identify themselves completely with the classes whose cause they profess to uphold. Their acceptance of a frugal, even squalid, standard of living is the counterpart of the congress approach to the masses based on Gandhi's mysticism and the homely appeal of khaddar and the spinning wheel'.

The APPA also involved itself in several constructive programmes. It was responsible for the opening of 30 co-operative stores in Krishna district. It forced the merchants to sell essential commodities at control rates and kept an eagle eye on hoarders. The peasant volunteers themselves took the charge of distribution of kerosene and other goods at several places. They also fought against the imposition of collective fines on villages by the government for participating in the quit-India movement. In several instances, when peasants and agricultural labourers got involved in wage disputes, APPA intervened and solved these disputes amicably.

The demands raised by APPA at its meeting in Bezwada on 20th March, 1943 covers issues regarding all sections of the peasantry. To solve the food crisis facing the country it advocated for control rates of food grains, stock food grains in government godowns, remunerative prices for agricultural products, opening of more public distributive shops, adequate wages for agricultural labourers, adopt rationing, declare moratorium, rent remission, and provide debt financing, construction of irrigation projects in Rayalaseema, to direct
more quantity of rice being exported from Delta areas to Rayalaseema region and to procure agricultural produce from peasants directly by the government through food committees and send them to needy areas. The meeting also instructed its members to campaign for the implementation of this proposals. It directed its local leaders to open peasant association offices in every taluk of Andhra, to prepare syllabus for the district and taluk association members and open provincial peasant institute. It strongly demanded for more powers to the village Panchayats. To make village Panchayats more efficiently and effectively, it advocated for adult suffrage, compulsory education at government cost, supervision of public accounts, opening of village libraries and purchase of radios. The resolutions passed and compiled in the CPI's Central Plenum Report of February 1943, were no different from these issues raised by the APPA session exhibiting that APPA was nothing but the carbon copy of CPI.

The APPA strongly denounced the quit-India movement on the ground that it would not only weaken the peoples war being waged by the British Government but also would lead Indians into starvation deaths. The Communist peasant leaders bitterly accused the Congress agitational programme as they felt that Andhra during 1942-43 was facing severe famine conditions. They, instead, wanted Congress and peasants to contribute for producing more food for starving masses. They advocated that providing food for famine-stricken people was real patriotism. Ranga's attitude opposing rationing and controlling attracted scathing criticism from the communists. A remark was made against congress leaders, stating that facing bullets bravely in freedom struggle was equal to providing food to one agricultural labourer. However, the Communists and APPA despite criticising Congress, did not really wanted to break away form the Congress fearing loss of faith among the public. In all its meetings during war period it passed resolutions against arrests of national leaders and claimed themselves as sons of Congress.
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A proof of Communists hold over peasant masses can be had from the holding of 8th AIKS general congress at Vijayawada on 14th and 15th March 1944 by APPA. Nearly 4000 volunteers helped in organising the meeting, under the leadership of P.Sundarayya. Nearly one lakh people participated in the congress meetings and procession of which around 25,000 were women. The magnitude of the participation was compared only to Congress processions and Meetings.

Health dispensaries were arranged in which nearly 5000 people were treated. Bengal Provincial Peasant Association exhibited photos featuring famine conditions in that province. Cattle exhibition was organised for the first time by AIKS and awards were given to healthy cattle. Science exhibition was held to educate people regarding health and development of agriculture. Patriotic songs were sung. Traditional types of entertainment like Burrakatha, Bhajana, and street plays were organised. The theme of the speeches made at the meeting contained not only about peasant problems and demands but also for the release of the Congress leaders from jails. The organisers were very eager to show their sympathy for Congress. P.C. Joshi, in his speech went to the extent of saying that Communists were none other than congress people of 1930 and that they following Gandhi’s principle regarding quit-India movement (i.e. of not to indulge in sabotage activities) and if only Communists and Congressites join together no power on earth would face their challenge, and that CPI was like brother to the Congress.

Elaborate arrangements to provide food for the participants were made. Seventy five thousand rupees was given as donations to the AIKS by the peasants from over 2000 villages in two weeks. The resolutions passed at the meeting include condolence messages regarding the death of Kasturi Bai Gandhi, and people who died while working in famine camps. Resolutions praising Soviet people, Red Army and Stalin for resisting German aggression were also passed. The meeting demanded for the release of political
prisoners, to take strict measures over hoarders and 299
black-marketers and appealed peasants to grow more food. It
appealed the peasants to join AIKS for it was working for the welfare of the peasant masses. It claimed to have forced the Madras Government to grant 12,000 acres of waste land in 1943 alone to poor peasants, to issue loans upto Rs. 25 lakhs for fertilisers, and succeeded in avoiding conflicts between peasants and agricultural labourers.

The success of the AIKS meeting was mainly because of massive campaign conducted by APPA. In West Godavari district alone 31 groups of volunteers toured 226 villages and met 3 lakhs people urging them to attend the meeting. Three hundred volunteers and eight hundred rupees were sent by district peasants association. 301

Bitter criticism was inflicted on N.G.Ranga and his colleagues accusing them for causing divisions in the peasant movement. In Ranga's words, 'the Bezwada (1944) session was huge propaganda offensive against us,... all their energies were concentrated to congregate people in those melas and poison their minds against us'. 302 The session was a success despite government's attempts to discourage it. The membership of APPA was further strengthened with 1,68,000 members in 1945 as against 1,01,000 in 1944. 304 According to the Organisational Report of 1944 published by AIKS, 'the result for undertaking irrigation and drainage channels in East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts and for holding AIKS session in Bezwada is that peasants conciousness and their organised strength increased, they developed their initiative, improved organisational sense, increased unity between the party and various section of the people, greatly popularised peasant associations, brought greater respect for peasant associations in official circles and opposition to associations was disarmed apart from the economic benefits accruing from the increased acreage under wet cultivation and increased yield of crops'. 305
N.G.Ranga and his followers, on the other hand were advocating against price controls regarding agricultural produce and accused APPA for demanding price controls as it would help only the interests of urban proletariat. The Peasant Group of M.L.As pressed for State action to fix minimum level of prices as they declined due to the loss of export markets. Soon after his release in March 1942, N.G.Ranga advocated grow more food campaign and the policy of remunerative prices which APPA also adopted. He also advocated not only the fixation and enforcement of minimum wages but also the regulation of wages in relation to prices of agricultural labour. He also tried to persuade both the peasants and workers to pay and accept agricultural wages in kind, so that both may be independent of the rising spiral of prices.

In March, 1945, he found the Federation of Rural Peoples' Organisations in Delhi for rural population (peasants, artisans, tradesmen etc.,) to serve as the forum for all mass organisations of different classes of rural peoples, irrespective of their political allegiance. After his talks with Gandhi on 29th October and 28th November 1944 he associated his faction of peasant association with the name All India Kisan Congress to Indian National Congress, 'so that there can never be any unhealthy rivalry between these two great organisations'.

He challenged the Communists on behalf of Congress against the 'people's war' theory as advocated by the Communists from every political and peasant platform in Andhra and elsewhere. He, along with Congressmen formed the Congress Asemblies, since Congress Committees had been declared illegal and carried anti-communist political propaganda apart from Congress constructive work. He organised Kisan Congress session in Govada to rival the Vijayawada session of 1944 by Communists where he criticised Communist activities as anti-patriotic and demanded for remunerative prices and for the removal of the controls.
The war period also witnessed a literary war-fare between these two peasant groups. Communists produced literature and tried to familiarise the soviet and Communist slogans to Andhra political areana. In a scathing attack, Nanduri Prasada Rao published a book entitled, Rangagari Rajaklyaalu (Ranga's Politics) accusing N.G.Ranga of playing opportunistic politics and betraying peasant movement in Andhra. To counteract their propaganda, Sivayya, follower of N.G.Ranga published a Telugu novel Comrade Mangamma, criticising communism, and the life style of some communist leaders. Ranga wrote Revolutionary Peasants, Kisans and Communists, Colonial and Cloured Peoples and Credo of World Peasantry between 1947 and 57 in which he made a systematic and critical study of Marxism.

From 1945 the rift between Congressmen and Communists grew wider while the peasants led by Ranga came closer to the congress. However Communists tried their best to remain within the Congress and use its prestige for promoting their strength. But by November 1945 the Communists were competely excluded from all congress bodies. Clashes broke out between the Communist controlled APPA and Rangs's APKC and some of them took a violent turn creating problems of law and order. An interesting incident, worth mentioning in this connection was reported from a village where a letter purporting to have been writing by a Congressman for the hand of a Communist girl enraged her father who called for a panchayat at which both parties arrived armed with sticks and spears and the police had to intervene to restore calm. The Fortnightly Reports issued by the Government in 1945 made frequent references of such clashes and also the conferences held by the two groups in several parts of Andhra acusing each other and promoting their respective organisations.

On the whole, during the war period, APPA was active both in preaching and practicing what it preached. Organisationally
it was strong and its membership too increased while Ranga's peasant body remained weak and no special drive was taken to recruit members afresh. Ranga restricted his activities only to speeches and he was more eager to embrace Congress rather than organising the movement. As he completely endorsed Congress quit-India resolution and earlier adopted anti-war policy he was in jail from 1940 March to 1944 November except for a brief period in 1942. This also weakened his position in organisational politics of APPA and after he became President of Andhra Provincial Congress Committee in 1946 he remained aloof from thick and thin of peasant politics and moreover he concentrated rather in 'combating the menace of Communist propaganda' utilising Congress resources in men and influence.

On the other hand APPA with its constructive programme of working on Grow More Campaign, procurement, rationing, reasonable prices, essential commodities, anti-hoarding, relief and rehabilitation and repairing irrigational tanks increased its organisational strength. Adding to this lifting of ban on CPI following its pro-war attitude coinciding with the imposition of ban on Congress gave APPA free-hand in its activities. Though pro-British attitude during quit-India movement alienated mass of peasantry from its hold yet its constructive programme brought a number of peasant youth under its fold. Moreover its vociferous condemnation of the arrest of Gandhi and the Working Committee members and persistent demand of their release and its frequent appeals to congress to work with Communists in relief and rehabilitation works healed the damage to some extent caused by APPA's pro-British attitude. Regarding Grow More Campaign, the methods advocated by APPA were not severe such that they did not cut across or interfere with the government's policy in the matter as a whole which made the government to look sympathetically towards APPA. Thus APPA's pro-war propaganda was almost invariably been interlinked with attack on bureaucratic inefficiency on the other hand condemning N.G.Ranga and other pro-congress leaders. Thus with its two pronged strategy APPA
could muster strength to some extent during war period and by 1946 it came open with its criticism of Congress which was hesitating to do so earlier. The Government of India too felt satisfied with the behaviour of CPI during war period for it justified the policy enunciated by the Government on 8th June, 1942, 'namely of allowing freedom of action to the adherents of any party in India prepared to help the prosecution of war and to form a make weight to the defeatist tactics of the Congress'.

The results of 1946 provincial elections, however, proved otherwise. The general belief that CPI's APPA was at the helm of peasant affairs was shattered in that elections, despite the fact that organisationally it was strong and disciplined following its constructive work done during war period.

On 21st August 1945, the Viceroy announced that the elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures would be held in March, 1946. Though the announcement was quite comprehensive the Congress was not satisfied with it as it contained no mention of independence. The CPI's attitude towards elections too remained uncertain. But both organisations decided on contesting the elections. Even before Congress expelled Communists from its organisation the Communists started preparing their own electoral rolls, without however, giving up their attempts to come to terms with the Congress. Once the general announcement of expulsion of CPI from Congress came out Communists set up their own candidates. Its manifesto declared 'to destroy parasitical Zamindars, usurious money-lenders and crafty banian of the villages and liberate the peasants, abolition of land-lordism, nationalisation of land, redistribution of land to make the uneconomic holdings of the poor peasants into consolidated economic holdings and to make large-scale co-operative farming possible'.
The Congress promised to abolish Zamindari system on payment of compensation. However it made independence the main issue in the election campaign. It promised to provide the people with the five fundamental needs food, clothing, shelter, education and medical help.

Elections to the Central Legislative Assembly were held in December, 1945, and some of the Congress candidates from Andhra namely, N.G.Ranga from Guntur and Nellore rural constituency, Ganga Raju from East Godavari, West Godavari cum Krishna rural constituency and M.Ananthasaynam Aiyangar from madras Ceded Districts and Chittoor rural constituency were elected unopposed. Even in other constituencies Congress won with comfortable majority.

Provincial elections were held in March, 1946. There were several disturbances between CPI and Congress. The Justice Party did not contest the elections. Several Zamindars sought for Congress ticket of whom Maharaja of Pittapuram was prominent. But he was denied the ticket. Some other Zamindars undertook the pledge of obliging the policies of Congress and came forward to support Congress candidates. Vuyuru Zamindar fought the elections on Congress ticket.

The Congress won 165 out of a total 215 seats (elections were held only in 214) in the Madras Legislative Assembly. Muslim League won 29 (out of 29 Muslim seats), Communists won 2 seats (only in labour constituencies), Europeans got 7 Nationalist Party one and Independents secured 11 seats.
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The Congress success in the elections can be attributed to the fact that peasants in general had faith in that Party. Congress was perceived by the peasant as a vehicle to achieve independence and end their miseries, thanks to the effective propaganda carried on by the Congress Party right from its inception, more so during Gandhian era. It should also be remembered that APPA’s influence grew only when Congress leaders were in prison and that APPA was only a Communist controlled body and not a direct wing of CPI till early 1940s. CPI’s pro-war attitude was also largely resented by the Andhra public. Moreover, the Communists right from the beginning of their activities, never considered themselves, at least in public, as rivals to Congress. Till their expulsion from the Congress, Communists were considered by the masses as part of Congress. Only after the expulsion move, the clear division was recognised by the people. Many among the voting population being substantial peasants, they might have opted Congress rather than CPI, which they might have perceived as a threat to their right in private property.

Thus the peasants perception of Congress as the leader of freedom struggle; their belief that Congress alone would solve their problems, and their fear of CPI as a destroyer of rights in private property might have contributed for the success of Congress in the elections. On the other hand, lack of independent stature of CPI in the Thirties and Forties; its subordinate position to Congress till its expulsion; absence of tag as the leader of freedom struggle compounded by its pro-war policy during quit-India movement might have diminished its chances in electoral prospects. Though CPI’s intervention acted as catalyst in the anti-zamindari struggles, during the Congress Ministry period, the struggles were actually not launched against Congress but only against Zamindars. Even in these struggles local Congressmen led and participated on par with the Communists. The Communists during this period were neither
recognised by the peasants as a separate group nor their ideology realised distinctly. Throughout these struggles, as has been noticed, the peasants looked only for Congress help, which was in the seat of power. So there was no reason for the peasant to vote against Congress in 1946 elections which he considered as panacea for his problems.

After the elections a Congress ministry was formed in Madras with T. Prakasam Pantulu as Chief Minister. He was replaced by Omanduri Ramaswamy Reddlar in March 1947. Later on Kumaraswami Swamy Raja took over as Chief Minister due to internal dissensions within the Party. Notwithstanding with the changes in leadership, the policy of Congress towards the peasants remained constant.

Though the Congress came to power promising, apart from other things, Zamindari abolition, it did not take steps in that direction soon after assuming office. However, in the Assembly debates, peasant question emerged as an important agenda. Commenting on 1946 budget several members, including Congressmen, Socialists and Communists urged for abolition of Zamindari system. The most ferocious among these members were A. Kameshwara Rao, Pillalamarrl Venkateswvarlu and Kala Venkata Rao. A. Kameswara Rao pleaded with the government to take over Zamindars' lands without any compensation. P. Venkateswarlu urged the government to act fast as the Zamindars were already transferring their lands to their friends and relatives, fearing that the government might nationalise their lands. He argued that in Andhra 88 lakhs of acres, or about 23% of the farmlands were held by the Zamindars and that they were paying only 47 lakh rupees to the government while collecting nearly Rs. 900 lakhs from the peasants and the government in turn was spending Rs. 42 lakhs on the maintenance of law and civil administration in the Zamindar areas, thus appropriating a gain of only Rs. 5 lakhs.
The stand of the government on this issue was that of sympathy for both the peasants and Zamindars. Neither it favoured nationalisation of lands as it believed that peasant proprietorship would be the best both for peasants and agriculture nor abolition of Zamindar without compensation. However, K.R.Karanth, Revenue Minister in Prakasam Ministry, assured the Assembly that there would be no major problem in abolishing the Zamindaris, because most of the Zamindars whom he had met had themselves asked for the government-take-over of their lands with compensation. The government also pointed out that though it had decided in principle to abolish the Zamindari system, it could not accomplish this reform at that time, because it required the assent of the Secretary of State for India. K.R.Karanth said that his government was fully aware of the 'awful condition of the peasantry' in the Zamindari areas on account of the exhorbitant rate of rent and also testified that 'everywhere in the Zamindari areas there is a war going on between the Zamindars on the one hand and the ryots on the other'.

On the other hand, pro-zamindari members thundered against the contemplated reform as it indicated 'the spirit of the times, a spirit of lawlessness, a spirit of aggrandisement, a spirit of no respect for property'. However, the unrest in the Zamindari estates convinced the Congress Party that abolition of the system had become inevitable, and passed a resolution in both the Houses of the Legislature in January 1947 to that effect.

The happenings in the Legislature had an electrifying impact on both the peasants and Zamindars. Besides, the Congress itself had raised the hopes of the masses by promising abolition of Zamindari system in the election manifesto. The peasants started demanding the implementation of the same, while, the Zamindars started evicting the peasants and transferring their lands to their relatives. Moreover, since 1943, due to famine conditions and lack of food supplies, hoarding of food grains became a rich source of enormous profits. This led to monopolise the
cultivated land, which only resulted in extensive eviction of peasants by the zamindars. The contemplated land reform also made zamindars to speed up evictions and acquisitions of large tracts of land.

In the estates of Challapalli, Pamarru, Mirzapuram, Telaprolu, Vuyyur, Pittapuram, Kalavala Palli, Yeragudem, Peddapuram, Potanur etc., such evictions took place on a vast scale. In the villages of Gazullanka, Amudalanka, Potarlanaka, Kishklnndhapalem, Pippalakatta, Nimmagadda, Nadakuduru, Velivolu, Purltigadda, etc the zamindar of Challapalli began large-scale evictions. Such lands were sold to some rich landlords, or assigned to his relatives on benami pattas.

In West Godavari district, the zamindar of Elamarru, attempted to evict the peasants of Kanuru, Pendyala, etc., villages from their lands to prove that by the time reforms come into operation these lands were his home-farms. The zamindar of Vuyyur, fraudulently transfered banjar lands and a portion of reserve forest to one of his wives. Similarly, the Telaprolu zamindar had granted 'go-bhumi' in Telaprolu village to a relative of his estate manager. The zamindars and mokhasadars of Potunuru, Kalavalapalll, Peddapuram, Gampalagudem etc., started using extreme violence to evict peasants from the cultivating lands. Even forests were destroyed in several estates of Nuzvid, Tuni, Tiruvur etc., and were converted by the zamindars into private lands. In the estates of Muktyala, Pittapuram etc., water was baled out of tanks and tank-beds leased out to new persons, thus causing damage to irrigated lands. Thus a large scale offensive had been launched by the zamindars against the tenants.

The peasants resisted these moves to safe-gaurd their rights. Conflicts erupted in all most all the estates between the peasants and zamindars. Anticipating such developments, the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, the Provincial Kisan Congress, the Zamin Ryot Association etc., demanded immediate
abolition of zamindary system. Pending this, they urged the government to take over the administration of estates through the District Collectors.

The Government did not take any action and the evictions and conflicts continued. In fact, the evictions became more frequent and aggressive on the eve of passing the Peasants’ Protection Act of 1946 and were not stopped even after passing of the Act. The Act was passed by the Prakasam ministry to protect peasants from evictions in the wake of deteriorating law and order situation in Zamindari areas following regular clashes between peasants and Zamindars. But this act failed to protect the peasants as local officials were aiding the Zamindars wherever conflicts arose. As a result, in several places criminal prosecutions were launched against peasants and they were arrested.

Gorrepati Venkatasubbayya, President of Andhra Provincial Kisan Congress (APKC, N.G.Ranga’s peasant association) issued a statement urging government officials to safeguard the rights of the peasants and said, ‘the Zamindars, in order to evict peasants from lands are instituting false criminal cases against them, and are violating the rights of these peasants. Exparte decrees, orders under section 107, 144 etc are daily being issued. This is an intolerable situation. As per the Peasants’ Protection Act the ryots should not leave the land. It is a great injustice to violate law and injure the rights of the peasants. As per government decisions, the official tour should help the peasants and the help they are now doing to Zamindars is illegal. For the peasants to go to law courts it is difficult. What is the use of law and the acts if the atrocities of Zamindars are allowed to continue? I call upon all the Congress and Kisan Congress Committees to intervene and render help to the peasants in these critical times’.

Apart from evictions, taking advantage of the pressure on land and of the absence of any other occupation for the peasants the landlords collected abnormal rents. In some areas in the
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Krishna and Godavari deltas the rents were as high as 24 bags of paddy per acre or Rs. 800 to 1,000 per acre per annum. If the peasants failed to pay the rent, the Zamindars resorted to terrorism and evicted peasants for not paying rents. To cite yet another example, the Zamindar of Kalavalapalle with his employees help assaulted brutally the peasants of Surapuram causing grievous injuries to fifteen of them and evicted them from the lands.

Moreover, the inordinate delay in bringing the abolition bill, coupled with statements issued often about the 'rights' of the Zamindars, 'compensation' to be paid to Zamindars, enabled the zamindars to put up a fight for their rights and prepare for the eventual abolition of the Zamindar system. Infact this delay and appeasement policy pursued by the Ministry and open assistance given by the bureaucracy to the Zamindars encouraged them to continue their atrocities.

As soon as the Congress Ministry came to power, peasants started demanding the abolition of Zamindari system. When they found the increased aggrandisement of the Zamindars, they sent several representations to the government requesting to intervene and stop the Zamindari exploitation. The government tried to stop the exploitation by enacting Peasants' Protection Act of 1946, which infact was half-heartedly implemented and had no impact on Zamindari aggression. And it was under such conditions the peasants resorted to resistance in self-defence against evictions, illegal collections etc. The APPA was in the lead in all these movements. The APPA which came under direct CPI control in 1942 and which was active during world war through its constructive programmes came into prominence during the Congress ministry in directing anti-zamindari struggles. However, all popular organisations like Congress Committees, N.G.Ranga's APKC supported APPA in its fight against Zamindari system. They systematically instigated to occupy Zamindars and waste lands and to resist eviction and police intervention. In Kanur and Pentyala villages of West Godavari district, Athukur of
Krisha District and several estates peasants trespassed into Zamindari lands and prevented the purchases of estate lands.

Though these agitations were generally supported by local Congressmen, the Communists were in the forefront of agitations and almost all the government records accused them of inciting peasants to occupy Zamindari lands forcibly. The Congress Ministry was put into hard times following these anti-zamindari movements and it was to separate the anti-imperialist struggle from the internal struggles of the society. The Communists wanted to bracket the anti-zamindari and the anti-capitalist struggle with the anti-imperialist struggle, whereas the Congress believed that the anti-imperialist struggle should be a national endeavour, while the problems of the small farmers, agricultural labourers, should be left to the government of free India to be solved. Thus the activities of the Communists and its APPA were not to the taste of the Congress government and thus when the Communist influence among the peasant sections generated tensions and conflicts in the estates (it was also the period when industrial strikes were gradually becoming militant and communists were becoming leading unionists), Prakasam's ministry issued an ordinance in January 1947, called Maintenance of Public Order Act, assuming special powers to deal with the situation. Defending this measure, Prakasam said 'We the members of the Government who are responsible for the peace and order and for the security of person and property have been worried about the situation created by the communists'. The Communist propaganda, he said, 'had resulted in a number of cases of mob violence, arson, looting, murder, etc'. He further informed the Assembly that his government would soon come out with a bill to replace the present ordinance, giving 'more extensive powers to the police to deal with public disturbances'.

With the special powers, the police swooped on the Communists offices and arrested several Communists all over the Presidency. The first victims were Nanduri Prasada Rao, General Secretary of APRA and K. Sathyanarayana, the editor and publisher.
Other prominent persons arrested were Innaganti Narayanarao, Mahidara Jagan Mohanrao, Namburi Srinivasarao from East Godavari district, Garapati Satyanarayana, Uddaraju Ratnam and Prerepu Mruthyunjayadu from West Godavari district and P. sundararami reddy, Chandra Rajeshwara Rao, Vellanki Vlsweswararao, Maddukuri Chandrasekhara Rao, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Mukkamala Nagabhusanam, Kadiala Gopalarao, Thammlna Potharaju, Kondepudi Lakshmlnarayana and Thummala Venkayya from Krishna district. All these persons were detained without trial. In fact on the eve of the issuance of the Ordinance, the situation in Zamindari areas of Andhra was boiling as the peasants launched struggle against eviction and for reduction of rent.

In Munagala, under the leadership of the local Peasant Association, the tenants were engaged in mass struggle against their Zamindar who, in violation of a compromise made in 1939, was evicting the tenants from lands and encroaching on the communal lands in contravention of the customary right of the tenants. The tenants of the Utukuru estate, in defence of their rights cut tunga grass to roof their houses and started fishing in the communal tanks which were forcibly taken by the Zamindar earlier. When police raided their houses on complaint and carried away the residents belongings, the villagers stopped the police party on the way and recaptured their articles. At Tippalakatla village which was in the Zamindari of the Challapalli, the Zamindar unable to grab some 100 acres of very fertile lands of the tenants through civil action resorted to section 144 and the police was brought in, to force the peasants into surrender. But the tenants resisted with determination the high-handed action of the Zamindar. When the Zamindar put 25 acres of communal land to auction none came forward to bid for its purchase. Such was the background for the issuance of the Ordinance. However the arrests of police threats did not deter the peasants from continuing their agitations.
The Congress workers in the estates also brought pressure on the government to hasten the abolition. The Andhra Provincial Zamin Ryot Assocalton, the Andhra Provincial Inam Ryots Association, the APKC and Sub-Committee appointed by the APCC (to look into the conditions of the Zamindari peasants) passed a resolution at their Joint meeting in Madras on the 27th and 28th December, 1946, protesting against the failure of the Congress ministry to introduce a bill abolishing the Zamindari system.

On the night of 13th March 1947, about fifty peasants under APPA entered into the maize fields of the Zamindar of Challapalli, threatened the watchman and took the crop and caused damage to the extent of five hundred rupees. Two days later peasants of Peddaprolu entered the local tank of Challapalli in defiance of an order under section of 144 and fished in the tank. On the night of 17th March about fifty villagers of Gazullanka led by APPA drove their cattle into the Zamindari farm lands and destroyed the crop. These conflicts led to police firing in April, 1947, but despite this stringent action, the peasants continued agitating against the Zamindar. In the Challapalli estate, peasants not only resisted evictions but occasionally occupied Zamindari lands and parcelled them out among themselves. However, the government took strong measures to put down such activities. The occupation of Zamindari lands increased in other estates during this period, as it seemed to have been inspired by the impression that in view of the impending abolitions of Zamindari system, whoever occupied that Zamindar lands would become their owner.

The APPA led several hunger marches to revenue authorities demanding abolition of Zamindari system, supply of agricultural implements and other essential articles to the peasants. They also urged the peasants to stop the payment of rents which the peasants obliged immediately. In fact, since the publication of the bill in papers, the peasants stopped paying rents in many estates. Papers sympathetic to Zamindars resented peasant
occupation of Zamindari lands and stated that the peasants were engaging in breaking law and order. The Krishna Pratrika, in its publication informed that peasants were encroaching many of Zamindari lands in Challapalli estate and a number of villages namely, Nidumolu, Palankipadu, Jonnaladoddi, Ayyanki, Maderu, Chinnaparam, Aviripudi, Vakkalagadda were totally in the hands of peasants. It reported that anarchical conditions were prevailing in the estate. 363

The peasants of Challapalli, issued a statement urging the press not to exaggerate the peasant occupation of Zamindari lands. They further stated that the Zamindar himself was evicting peasants and in Padapudi six acres of communal lands and in Champalem 80 acres were sold by the Zamindar. 364 The Enquiry Committee, appointed by the Government to investigate into Gazullanka firing, found in its enquiry and reported that Gazullanka and its surrounding lankas belonged to Zamindar and that when peasants entered into these lands for Rellugrass, police prevented, then protesting this 300 peasants attacked the police party with deadly weapons and then police fired killing two persons (while press reports say 5 were dead). 365 Following this the Government did not take any action against the police or the Zamindar.

However, pending the enactment of Zamindari legislation, to control the peasant-zamindari clashes, the government promulgated an ordinance prohibiting the alienation of Zamindari home farm, private and all communal lands. 366 This too neither soothed the peasants nor prevented the Zamindars from selling the lands. In fact, Zamindars by this time transformed their lands to their near and dear. Challapalli Zamindar sold 75% of waste lands. On the other hand, trespassing of Zamindari lands and non-paying of rents coupled with cutting of trees and grass by the peasants continued. 368

In Munagala too the situation was not different. Since 1939, the peasants of Munagala were agitating for the
implementation of Brahmayya award. Following the resignation of Congress Ministry and situation during second world war, they resorted to sending petitions to the government. On 12.11.40 they submitted a memorandum to the Collector C.J.Pal and on 12.8.41 to the new Collector D.Mahantl requesting them to intervene for the implementation of the award. Despite the administrators efforts the Zamindar did not heed to the peasants demands. They also tried through District Court but the Zamindar succeeded in cancelling the hearing.

So the peasants under MZRA decided to face Zamindar in Panchayat court elections and challenged him the 1942 elections. Till then the courts were under his control. These elections brought forth the much needed enthusiasm and confidence, after 1939 agitation among the peasantry. In all the Panchayats in the estate, namely Nadigudem, Taduvai, Kokkireni and Repala, the MZRA members became Presidents and Vice-Presidents in that elections. Nearly 500 peasants attended the AIKS session of 1944 held at Vijayawada. Peasant institutes were started to educate the peasants. In the provincial elections the peasants of Munagala voted for Communist candidates P.Sundarayya and Katragadda Venkatanarayana though they were defeated as they did not get votes in other segments of Gannavaram constituency.

After Congress formed ministry, T.Prakasam Panthulu, who as Revenue Minister in 1939 assured justice to Munagala peasants, became Chief Minister in 1946. The APPA President Nanduri Prasada Rao, MZRA leaders Uppala Ramayya, C.Raghunatham and fifteen other persons led a delegation to Madras seeking Prakasam's help to solve peasants problems and abolish Zamindari system. Meanwhile Public Safety Ordinance came into effect and Nanduri Prasada Rao and several others were arrested. Taking advantage of this situation the Zamindar sold lands defying Peasant Protection Act. He also started a fictious Dairy Company and sold lands which he evicted from peasants to that Company for Rs.5 lakhs and made his relatives and officials as members of that Company.
Thus peasants started once again encroaching Zamindari lands and on May 7th, 1947 they hoisted red flag on Zamindar's palace in Nadigudem as a signal of launching the agitation. On the same morning they entered the lands occupied by the Zamindar in several villages and hoisted red flags and occupied the lands. The Zamindar responded to this, by requesting Nizam police apart from urging the District Collector complaining that peasants were looting his property. The police let loose their repressive methods. The peasants demonstrated in front of Nadigudem palace against the police atrocities. Irritated by this, the police opened fire in Kalukova on July 17th killing one and injuring three.

On this day, about 600 peasants entered Zamindari lands, defying prohibitory orders and sowed seeds for cultivation. Thus police entered the scene and started chasing the peasants out of the fields. When the peasants questioned the moral authority of the police, they opened fire resulting in one death and three injuries. While APPA and CPI criticised the firing, the Congress accused CPI for instigating the peasants and causing such incidents. Kakani Venkataratnam, the Congress leader issued a statement that 'the Congress accepts police version that people provoked the police'. The Zamindar reported to the government that while he implemented 1939 Brahmayya award, the peasants tried to subvert the agreement as they were influenced by the Communists, and he stated that 'infact we are waiting eagerly for Zamindari abolition Act, we will atleast have peace'.

To take stock of the situation, Kala Venkatarao, who became Revenue Minister replacing in March, 1947 when O.R.Reddiar became Chief Minister, came to Munagala along with Brahmayya and appointed a committee to enquire the police firing under the Chairmanship of Brahmayya with Peta Baapayya, Nukala Veeraraghavayya, Y.V.Krishna Rao and Kunderu sathyanarayana. Kala Venkata Rao advised the peasants not to
resort to violence. The Committee submitted its Report on 10.1.48 to the Government in which it stated that the failure on part of the Zamindar to implement Brahmayya had resulted in violent struggles in 1939 and 1947 and that to prevent further escalations in violent activities, the Report recommended the government to implement the award immediately, to compensate peasants whatever losses because of non-implementation and appoint a special officier to implement the above two recommendations. But the government did not adopt any measure and the report was put into cold storage. In the later period, this estate became as a refugee camp for the Communist cadres who were waging heroic struggle in neighbouring Telangana against the Nizam and his Deshmukhs because of its proximity to Nalgonda district. Thus the later conflicts between Communists and police in this estate formed part of the Telangana armed struggle and they were not concerned with the anti-zamindari struggles regarding Andhra region.

Another example of sustained and organised effort of the tenants defying government and Zamindari power occurred in Nandigudem estate of West Godavari district. There the Koya tribal peasants were cultivating the lands in Buchampeta and Sanjeevaram villages paying exhorbitant rents to the Zamindars. The zamindar anticipating the Zamindar abolition evicted the tenants and started cultivating the lands for himself. But the advent of Congress government and the leadership of Communists provoked them to make a bold attempt and accordingly they entered the lands and forcibly harvested the crop on 18.11.47. On complaint from the Zamindar, the district administration passed an order attaching the crops on the land and restraining both parties from entering the lands.

The administration favouring the Zamindar contention, sold the crop on 23rd November, 1947. The Koyas, feeling betrayed entered into disputed lands and removed a portion of the paddy crop. The police was alerted and when again on 29th November,
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about 500 people entered the lands and started harvesting police opened fire and killed five koyas apart from injuring several others. Infact the Koyas attempted to this extreme measure after failing to awake the police and administration through petitions informing the atrocities being committed by the Zamindar. Four sections of the Reserve Police was stationed and gradually brought the situation under control. 378

Apart from struggles, APPA organised a siege of the Madras Legislature by peasants demanding Zamindari abolition. Despite Rent Reduction Act of 1947 (equalling the rents to be paid by the tenants to the taxes paid the peasants in the ryotwari areas) peasants stopped paying rents to the Zamindars and the government itself had decided to collect rent arrears on behalf of the Zamindars. 380

Thus, under such circumstances around them, and as Zamindari abolition was principally adopted by the Congress, its election manifesto in December 1946 endorsed the policy, the members of Madras Legislative Assembly passed a resolution accepting the general principle of the Zamindari abolition.

Kala Venkata Rao, Minister of Land Revenue introduced the bill namely the Madras Estates (Repeal of the Permanent Settlement and Conversion into Ryotwari) Bill in the Legislative Assembly on 28.11.1947. As a temporary measure till the abolition was made, the Congress ministry introduced Peasants Protection Act of 1946, and Rent Reduction act in 1947 to placate the aggrieved peasants who were hoping immediate abolition as soon as the Congress formed ministry in 1946.

But these temporary measures instead of soothing the situation, created much confidence in the peasants and they resorted to much more violent demonstrations to express their resentment against Zamindari system. Finally after long internal deliberations in the Party which was trying to satisfy all
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sections it was representing, decided to put an end to this system and the result was the introduction of Zamindari abolition bill in the Assembly on 28.11.1947. As many as forty members participated in the discussion. The bill was submitted to a Joint Sub-Committee. This Committee was formed consisting twenty M.L.As and 10 M.L.Cs, presided by Dr.P.Subbarayan, a well-known Zamindar. The Joint Sub-Committee submitted its Report on 13.6.48 which recommended that all those lanka lands registered in the name of Zamindar on or before 1st July, 1939 belonged to him, the compensation to the amount of Rs.18 crores and the pattas issued by the Zamindars on forest lands and occupied lands should be validated. This bill after passing into act in both the Houses received the ascent of the Governor-General on 2.4.1949 and first published in the Fort St.George Gazette on 19.4.1949.

The main features of this Act were the right of tax collection, hitherto rent, was taken by the Government from Zamindars giving huge compensation to the Zamindars and conferring absolute property rights over land to the tenants. However, the same rights were also given to the Zamindars on hundreds and thousands of acres, called sir (private lands). But, for the tenant cultivators on these lands no rights were granted.

The provision that Zamindars could acquire seri lands caused several problems. Large-scale evictions took place in the name of seri lands. Another loophole in this Act was that the buildings other than those useful for administration purposes would be retained by the Zamindars. Godowns, palaces, farm-houses etc., were acquired by the Zamindars. The compensation amount was also regarded as very high.

However, despite these defects the measure provided occupancy tenants permanent property rights on land as under ryotwari settlement. The revenue administration came under the government. The land records were made upto date. The high and
mighty attitude of even the petty Zamindari officials became a thing of the past. The peasants got a measure of relief from the feudal oppression, after several peasants, men and women, became victims of Zamindari zulum and police repression during 1937-39 and 1946-48.
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1. N.G.Ranga and Swami Sahajanda Saraswati, Kisan Hand Book, New Delhi, p.11.


12. This is evident from the sudden birth of peasant associations in various parts of Andhra and starting of peasant institutions in several villages where N.G.Ranga did not go.

13. Young India, 30.1.1930.


16. See the second chapter 'Mobilisation' in this
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work.


19. M.K.Gandhi’s *Economic and Industrial life and relations*, vol.1, pp.LXIV-LXVI.


23. The thirteen demands were as follows:

1. Peasants unions should be recognised,
2. minimum wages should be given,
3. rent arrears should be looked as civil debts and evictions should be avoided,
4. rural debts should be abolished,
5. no encroachment on communal lands,
6. co-operative farming should be introduced,
7. irrigation rates to be lowered,
8. interests on debts to be lowered,
9. fixity of tenure with heritable rights to be provided for all tenants,
10. vetti should be abolished,
11. agriculture income should be assessed to income tax,
12. uneconomic holdings should be exempted from rent or land tax and
13. rent and revenue should be substantially reduced.


26. Ibid., p.201.


29. Elections to Central assembly were held in October, 1934, *Government of India, Reforms, 10/34. r. 1934*, National Archives of India.


34. Mamidipudi Venkata Rangayya, *Op cit.*, vol. IV, p. 82.
37. *Hindu*, 1.2.37.
38. See earlier chapter on Mobilisation.
41. For example, Zamindar of *Jayantipuram*, Dr. Subbarayan, the Zamindar of Kumaramangalam etc.
42. See earlier chapter on Mobilisation.
44. *Under Secretary (Safe) Secret File*, No. 981, dt. 10.1.1937.
46. *Fortnightly Reports*, 4.3.1937.
50. In the rural areas the qualification to vote was lowered from a payment of Rs. 10 in land revenue (or equivalent) to payment of any sum. *Government of India Reforms Franchise, 9/1 F. 1935*, National Archives of India.
52. Out of three Joint Secretaries, two were communists and out of thirteen Working Committee Members eight were communists in the Provincial Congress Socialist Party of Andhra, *Selections from Native News Paper Reports*, Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad.


55. CO. No. 596, Public (Election), dt. 29. 3.1937.

56. Hindu, 10.3.1937.


59. Ibid, p.100.

60. Hindu, 14.7.1939.


64. Zamin Ryot, 3.5.1935.


67. For details see the third chapter on Peasants and the Congress ministry.

68. Y.V.Krishna Rao et.al., Op cit, p.427.

69. Ibid, p.426

70. Navasakti, 2.2.1938.


74. See earlier chapter on Mobilisation.

75. N.G.Ranga, Modern Indian Peasant, Op cit, P.7.


77. N.G.Ranga, Modern Indian Peasant, Op cit, p.151.

78. See earlier Chapters.

80. *Kommareddy Sathyanarayana Murthy’s* 50th *Death* Anniversary Memorial Issue, Vijayawada, 1990, p.120.


86. *Andhra Kesari Prakasam* Centenary *Celebrations* Souvenir, 1974, p.82.


92. Ibid.


94. Ibid, pp.434-35.

95. Ibid, p.436.


99. RMELAC, Memorandum, Supplemental Volume, p.611-12.

101. The other demands include amendments to be made in Madras Estate Land Act, forest rights, construction of minor irrigation projects, end to corruption and easy loan facility.


107. This is evident as many local congress people participated in anti-zamindar agitations in Challapalli, Munagala, Kalipatnam etc.


109. *Home Political/1937*, F 7/7, N.A.I.

110. *Home Political/1939*, F 7/6, N.A.I.

111. *The Communist*, vol.11, No.1, November, Delhi, 1939.


113. See the chapter on Mobilisation.


116. Through the 1930 Acts local bodies were opened up to a wider franchies. Taxes were increased, over all expenditure of local bodies rose in the 1930s to the level of one third of Madras Government's expenditure and more responsibilities were given to local bodies. Any tax-payer in the municipal area and any registered land owner or tenant in the country-side was qualified for the right to vote. V.Venkat Rao, *A Hundred Years of Local Self-Government and administration in Andhra and Madras States*, 1850-1950, Bombay, 1960, pp.39-40, 86-88, 111 and 251. Also see, N.G.Ranga, *Fight for Freedom, Op cit*, p.150.

118. Mamidipudi Venkata Rangayya, the official historian on freedom struggle in Andhra Pradesh mentions that peasant struggles in West Godavari and Krishna districts were noteworthy for their wide-spread, organised and sustained nature.


120. New Age, an English monthly, which started publication in 1934 under the editorship of N.Krishna Ayyar with H.D.Rajan as its Joint editor to propagate communism. Home Political/1940, F 37/2, N.A.I. Also see New Age, December, 1937.

121. Fortnightly Reports, 19.9.1939.

122. Fortnightly Reports, 18.3.1939.

123. Y.V. Krishna Rao, et. al., Op cit, p. 450.


126. Kommareddy Sathyanarayana Murthy, Op cit, p. 34.


128. Y.V. Krishna Rao, (ed), Op cit, p. 34.


130. Zamin Ryot, 15.7.1938.


133. Zamin Ryot, 18.11.1938.

134. Fortnightly Reports, 18.3.1939.

135. Zamin Ryot, 15.7.1938.


142. *Navasakti*, 5.4.1939.
149. *Navasakti*, 23.3.1939.
152. *Zamin Ryot*, 7.4.1939.
154. *Fortnightly Reports*, 4.4.1939.
155. *Fortnightly Reports*, 4.4.1939.
164. The Zamindar Nayani Venkataramarao was adopted by the zamindarini Lachamma as her husband died without heir from...
Nayani Raghavareddy, a resident of Warangal district in the then Nizam Province. This link made the Zamindar in his later years to adopt a number of notorious feudal aspects existing in the neighbouring Nizam State.


167. He even attended the 1906 Congress Session held at Calcutta. He presided the 1907 Krishna District Congress meeting held at Nandigama. Tatavarthy Venkateshwar Rao, Munagala Paragana Praja Udhyama Charitra (History of Peoples' Movement in Munagala Paragana), Munagala, 1981, p.13.


169. Ibid, pp.53-54.


177. Zamin Ryot, 4.4.1954.


179. He was the author of famous poem 'Maakoddee Zamindarla Pondu' (We don't want association with these Zamindars).


183. Tatavarthy, Op cit, p.32.

185. Tatavarthy, Op cit, p.28.
188. Tatavarthy, Op cit, p.29.
192. Nandigama was the village where the Zamindar had his residential palace.
194. Ibid.
201. Ibid, p.51.


215. Ibid, pp.54-55.


221. *Fortnightly Reports*, 20.6.1939.

222. Navasakti, 19.5.1939.


238. *Fortnightly Reports*, 5.7.1939.


240. *Fortnightly Reports*, 17.11.39.


242. Ibid.


244. Ibid, p.206.

245. These marches were led by *Guttikonda* Atchayya couple and their son *Uddanda* Ramayya who went to jail during civil disobedience movement. Y.V.Krishna Rao, (ed), *Op cit.*, p.146.


247. *Fortnightly Reports*, 18.3.1939.


249. *Home/Political/1940, F 37/76, N.A.I.*


252. *Red Flag*, *C.P.I.*'s organ came down heavily on government's repression. It's article read thus, 'why are the peasants and labour movements being gagged on false pleas and pretexts? Because they are fighting against Zamindars, mill-owners exploitation. The British government cannot tolerate this and the mill-owners, Zamindars and mahajans have ranged themselves against us'. *Home/Political/1940, F 37/56, N.A.I.*

253. *Fortnightly Reports*, 4.4.1940.


257. 'By the time of Interminant Order was served on me on 30.4.1940, I liberated from all political contacts with communists. Thus the popular front or the United Front lost all its attraction for me and held over the Andhra Kisan Congressites by April, 1940', N.G.Ranga, Fight for Freedom, Op Cit, p.224.


261. Home/Political/1942, F. 12/12, N.A.I.

262. All India Kisan Sabha's politics Condemned, Guntur, 1942, p.3, G.O.No.393, Pub (Gen), dt.4.2.1944.

263. All India Kisan Sabha's politics Condemned, Op cit, p.17.

264. The All India Kisan Organisation was formed in 1936 and was called as All India Kisan Congress and continued its name in 1937, i.e. at Faizpur Session, which was presided by N.G.Ranga. It changed its name to All India Kisan Sabha in 1938 when the Comilla session of AIKS brought a new constitution in that year. Andhra Patrika, 20.12.1944.

265. As advocated by N.G.Ranga in all his books written 1940s.

266. All India Kisan Sabha Politics Condemned, Op cit, p.17.


269. 'In Andhra Most of the Congress workers were comrades' commented a government report, Home/Political/No.7/2/42, dt.10.1.1942.

270. C.P.I and its committees, sub-committees and branches were declared to be unlawful association. G.O.Ms. No. 7/8/34, Home (Pol), dt.23.7.1934.

271. Fortnightly Reports, 3.4.1941, 18.8.1941, 3.9.1941,
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272. Public (General) D.O.No.p.4-19, dt 18.10.1040, Andhra Pradesh State Archives. (APSA)


274. Fortnightly Reports, 4.11.1940.

275. Home/Political/1945, F 7/4/45, N.A.I.


278. Ibid.


280. Prajasakti, 15.7.1942.

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284. Prajasakti, 8.9.1943.

285. GO. Ms. No.4 (Legal), dt.17.1.1944.


289. M.A.Rasul, History of All India Kisan Sabha, P.98.

290. Home/Political/1943, F 7/11, N.A.I.


293. Ibid, pp.43-44.


295. C.P.I Central Plenam Report, February, 14 S 25, 1943,
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A.P.S.A., pp.30-37.


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298. Eighth All India Kisan Sabha Conference, Bezwada, 1944, p.20.

299. Ibid., p.20.

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303. Fortnightly Report, 2.2.1944.


305. Ibid., for 1946-47.


307. N.G.Ranga, Revolutionary Peasants, Op cit, p85. He was in Jail from 30.3.1940 to November, 1944 except for a brief period in 1942.


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317. Mamidipudi Venkata Rangayya, Op cit, vol. IV, p. 120.


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