CHAPTER ONE

METHOD AND APPROACH
Previous studies

There have been several previous works about the Maoists in India. The pioneering efforts in this field were made by 2 Rohan Ban. His work is limited by the fact that he was writing at a time when the Maoist movement had not as yet fully unfolded itself. Besides his sources were quite scanty. In his first work he traces the emergence of the Maoists and in the second he examines their position on various issues and describes the different shades which were emerging within Maoist thought in India. Due to the limitation of his sources he treats the subject only at the level of ideas. He does not say anything about the actual practice of the Maoists, or their socio-economic roots etc. But in so far as he clarifies the objectives and perspectives of Indian Maoists, he makes a good starting point.

The next work on Maoists (chronologically) was that of 3 J.C. Johari. Though he does examine several documents, he depends essentially on newspaper reports. His chapterisation is mechanical and schematic. The data is neatly but meaninglessly presented under various heads like - movement, party, ideology, split etc. There are no unifying themes and explanatory ideas. Generalisable hypotheses, description of processes and tendencies, orientation towards developing insights or making
predictions etc. are totally absent. Further he is carried away by his value orientation into making gross distortions and illogical statements. For e.g. He attributes to the maoists the burning of 48 agricultural labourers in Kilvelmudi, a Madras village and even quotes a newspaper report which condemns the event in unequivocal terms, while neglecting the fact that all newspapers as well as police and district administration were clearly of the opinion that it was the work of local landlords, and that maoists were not involved in any way.

Biblab Dasgupta's work on the other hand belongs to different genre. It is much more painstaking in effort and sophisticated in analysis. He added much to the existing knowledge on maoists, and made several interesting comments on them. However his work is also plagued by his predispositions. As a result the book is developed in an argumentative stylo, using ridicule and indignation at several places. Emphasis is on scoring a point against the maoists than on any explanation of them. There is selective focussing on facts about the maoists relation with China and CPI(H), so as to lend support to the views of the author. The theory and practice of maoists is uprooted from the context and treated as disembodied objects. It is surprising that in spite of being
a Marxist and an Economist he does not attempt to examine the background and roots of maoists.

5

The book by Sankar Ghosh is lucidly written and rich in detail and insight, but by his own admission it is meant to be a descriptive narrative rather than an analysis. The latest work by Ashish Kumar Roy is the first one with sufficient amount of detachment and academic perspective. Though he promises to bring the perspective and conceptual tools of modern western academics into the analysis of the problem no such attempt is made in actuality. However he does make an attempt to examine the socio-economic structure of one area in which maoist movement broke out.

All the above works seemed to have several common shortfalls. 1. As far as sources are concerned there was an excessive dependence on theoretical documents. There was hardly an attempt to examine maoists in action. 2. The maoist phenomenon was seen only as a Bengali phenomenon, and that too only as the activities of the Charu Majumdar faction. 3. There was no attempt to interpret the maoists' theoretical formulations and relate them to their practice (both as a cause and a consequence). 4. None of the authors paid much attention to the maoists views on nature and type of struggles to be conducted and type of organisational methods to be adopted. In fact these are at the crux of the whole matter while the much examined views and controversies about the
formulations about International situation and characterisation of national power structure are but of subsidiary importance. 5. The most important drawback is that none of the analyses were dynamic. Structural conditions, theory and practice were not presented in interaction and process, but either statically separate units or in a mechanical one following the other manner. The present research was aimed to remove these methodological faults and present a clearer understanding of the Maoist phenomenon.

The Approach

The key to understanding a research work in all its dimensions and in evaluating it objectively depends on getting at its core i.e. at the methodological assumptions which gave it the shape it possesses. To examine these it is necessary to look at the process in which they evolved. The object of the present research was to understand the nature of the Naxalite phenomenon. At first an attempt was made to reach this understanding by examination of its causes. Consequently a draft was written with four chapters. The first examined the various regions of Naxalite activity trying to isolate the economic, social, geographic and other factors common to these areas. The second enunciated the theoretical formulations and resolutions on strategy and tactics. This made for an analytically compact and
internally coherent scheme, but proved unable to capture the vast complexity of the phenomenon.

Concretely, it suffered from four drawbacks. 1) It was simplistic. It overlooked many diversities i.e. the naxalites were treated as a uniform category while in reality there were innumerable groups with great differences in ideas and modes of functioning. It treated them as if they possessed a single agreed upon strategy, tactics and principles of organisation. (2) The element of time was missing from the analysis. The naxalite tactics, strategy and principles of organisation were treated as if they had 'immaculate conception'. They were not examined in the process of their evolution. (3) The implied causation was structural. That is, certain economic and social structures were posited as causing the phenomenon. This was confusing cause with correlation. Empirically it was misleading since it could not be asserted that wherever the phenomenon arose the conditions were present or vice-versa. Even on logical grounds only by establishing the intervening variable which transforms the possibilities of the situation into actuality of events can we talk of causation. This also had implied determinism - a fallacy of over stressing the material causes, asserting inevitability to the events. (4) It committed the mistake of over abstraction i.e. the concrete phenomenon of naxalism was seen through the abstract glasses of a tribal revolt or a peasant
revolt, thus denying and failing to explain the specificity of the naxalite phenomenon.

To correct these mistakes it was necessary to introduce the element of time and make the analysis dynamic, to restore the complexity of the phenomenon, to assert its specificity, not to confuse it with other more general categories of the phenomenon and to reinforce the analysis with instrumental causation. By instrumental causation we refer to the role of accident, coincidences, leadership characteristics, and above all the system of ideas which made the people act the way they did. In the present investigation an effort was made to combine in a proper balance the historical and instrumental aspects with the sociological and structural to present a total picture of the phenomenon in all its complexity. It is with this view that the presentation of the matter was arranged.

The Plan of the Thesis

The start is made with a brief summation of the main facets of the Maoist system of ideas. This is due to two reasons. Firstly, strong allegiance to Maoist thought is one common and unchanging factor among the confusing diversity and flux in the naxalite scene. Secondly, their actions are to be understood in terms of their efforts to transform the concepts of Maoism into concrete events. A reservation has to
be made here and we must caution that this by no means is to be interpreted as holding the maoist system of ideas as sole, or initial or even the primary causatory factor. All that is being done is to use it as a convenient starting point.

A question might arise here throwing doubt on use of any kind of ideas as causatory factor. It might be maintained (as it has been by a Calcutta Doctor's study) that maoist activities are better explained in terms of psychopathy or frustrated ambitions rather than their rationalisation in terms of maoist ideas. Leaving aside the veracity or falsity of such proposition, we must point out its irrelevance, since motivation can only explain an abstract act but not a concrete one in its totality. i.e. the statement 'Vempatayu killed a policeman', might explain 'Vempatayu killed' but not why 'a policeman'. And since we are concerned with explaining a concrete sequence of events in its totality, it becomes extremely necessary to examine the system of ideas which to a great extent shape them.

Another question may arise as to which maoism is being summarised here. Many interpretations of it exist and even maoists themselves differ on its exact content. Our summary avoids all interpretation as to nature and character of maoism and highlights its contents in as objective a manner as possible. Actual differential perceptions of the system of ideas and the resultant differential interpretations among the Indian maoists
are present later at the appropriate place. The summary of
marxism is followed by seven chapters which describe how the
system of ideas entering the channel of organisation emerge as
events in specific areas. The events however depend for their
concrete shape and actual results upon the objective conditions.
The system of ideas can only contribute to causing, but can not
anticipate the exact nature of events and results, which have to
pass through the cauldron of objective conditions. As a conse-
quence the system of ideas itself gets transformed or altered
when its efficacy and veracity are tested by the actual events
and their results. By objective conditions we refer to (1) physi-
ocal - the topography and climate of the area; (2) social - the
social groups, their arrangements, inter-relation, customs and
traditions and particularly the social background of the people
actively involved; (3) economic - system and level of production;
(4) political system and its performance; (5) historical - tra-
ditions and experiences of the area; (6) human - the level of
enlightenment, involvement and awareness of the people in their
socio-political environment.

The seven chapters represent different phases of the movement.
The phases are ideologically, territorially and to a great extent
chronologically separated. The first of these chapters "On the
question of seizing power" examines the roots of emergence of
ncoist groups and their break with old organisational and theore-
tical connections. The chapter on "Two shades in Maoism" examines how differential structural backgrounds and differential assessment of the situation led to the emergence of two distinctly separate shades of Maoism. The next two chapters "Srikakulam I and II" examines how the first of these two shades implemented its policy in a particular concrete situation and with what results. The two following chapters "Theory of protracted struggle I and II" examines the fate of the second shade. The chapter "In search of a line" examines the effect of their experiences on their theory, organisation and practice. Finally there is a short chapter consisting of the comments and observations of the investigator on the trends tendencies and peculiarities of the movement.

The Title

Another facet of the thesis which needs explanation is its title - 'Maoists in Andhra Pradesh'. The approach clarifies why 'Maoists' has been preferred to naxalites (a journalistic term) or extremists or radicals - wherein both are vague. Andhra Pradesh is picked as focus of investigation for two reasons. Firstly the Maoist groups active here themselves claim it as the border for their activities. Secondly it quite comprehensively presents in micro-cosm all trends and diversities in maoist groups of India. However wherever necessary the context of maoist politics in the whole country was brought in.
Sources

A few words need to be added on the sources and references. The problem was not only one of extreme paucity and difficulty of access to material but it was compounded by contradictoriness in many cases. In such cases the investigator used her judgement, to present the facts as objectively as possible. Then there might be the difficulties and probable distortions involved in translations for the investigator herself had to translate most of the material. Another difficulty was in giving clear references. Many documents did not have page numbers, some did not have titles and some did not even have dates on them. The source also includes many interviews with the Government officials, administrators and also some active members of the maoist groups.
NOTES

1. These views are not meant to be exhaustive accounts of the books or even a summarisation of their main themes and conclusion. These will be examined in a different context. Here the focus is only on the methodological aspects.


3. Mohan Ram, Maoism in India, (Vikas, Delhi, 1971).


