CHAPTER V

SRIKAKULAM: THE TRIBAL PROBLEM AND INITIAL MOVEMENT

The CPI(ML)'s tactics based on the assessment of a nationwide upsurge was implemented initially in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. The specific nature of the tribals' life in this area and the problems faced by the communist revolutionaries in organising and sustaining a popular movement, made this area conducive to maoist politics. Section I of this chapter describes the nature of the tribal economy, society and polity. (The theme of this section is that external interference in the form of Government regulations, commercialisation of the economy and immigration of plainsmen led to much dissatisfaction and a feeling of being exploited, among the tribals. They were unable to meet the demands of a competitive economy and pressure group politics. Their normal way of life was disrupted and a crisis arose in their social relations and economic existence. The ameliorative steps and welfare legislation which came after independence did not help them in the least. Unable to find a solution to their problems within the framework of existing competitive economy and electoral polity they were open to any movement promising to solve their problems outside the legal framework of the country.)
The second section traces the growth of communist movement in this area. It shows how the tribals were initially organised by some local radicals who were shocked at the abject poverty and ruthless exploitation which existed in this area, how a mass movement was built up around issues of corruption, fraud by money-lenders and illegal bonded labour; how this movement developed into a confrontation first with the landlords and then with the police when it put forward demands concerning a restructuring of the land ownership patterns; and finally how an organisational crisis due to police suppression combined with a stalemate in the movement caused by limitations placed upon it by the local economic conditions and helped by the romantic temperament of the local leaders led to the decision to take up arms and fight against the State.

I

"The Srikakulam district is shaped like a revolver with the "butt" situated in the south-west and the "muzzle" lying in the north-east direction. The district may be divided into two geographical regions (1) the hilly region called the Agency area in the north-western part of the district, consisting of parts of Parvatipuram, Palankonda and Salur Taluqs. Portions of Pathapatnam, Tekkali and Sompeta taluqs are also hilly but were not
declared as agency tracts. (2) The plains portion which is mostly sandy on account of its proximity to the sea comprising of the taluqs of Ichchapuram, Narasannapet, Srikakulam, Cheepurapalle and portions of Tekkali and Sompeta Taluqs which are on the coast. The Eastern Ghats run roughly parallel to the sea from the north east to the South-west, and therefore this district drains from the Ghats to the sea. (At the time of increased police concentration, most the Maoist cadres who were driven down the hills were caught between this strip of land between the sea and the hills).

The average density of the population in the district is 602 persons per square mile which is well above the State average density of 339 persons per square mile. Among the districts of the State, Srikakulam with an area of 3,889.0 square miles occupied fifteenth rank in regard to area but third rank as regards population. During the decade (1951-1961) while in the whole district there has been an increase in the population of 10.26 per cent in the agency area of Salur taluq, Parvatipuram taluq and Palakonda taluq there has been an increase of 77.81 per cent, 35.81 per cent and 13.24 per cent respectively.

The economy of the district is largely agricultural and according to the Census "there is insignificant industrial growth".
The pressure on land is great. The level of education is very poor. About 42.16 per cent of villages have absolutely no educational institutions of any type. There is not a single college in the rural parts of any of the eleven taluqs in the district. The medical facilities are inadequate for the population in the district. There is only one doctor for every 28,547 persons, and according to the 1971 census on an average there is only one medical institution for every hundred square kms. Only 15.6 per cent of the villages are provided with electricity. More than three-fourths of the inhabited villages do not have post offices. On an average there are only six post offices for every 100 square miles, and only 21.46 per cent villages have postal communications of total 3,080 villages in the district only 18.7 per cent of them are connected with pucca roads, 33.6 per cent by katcha roads and 0.6 per cent by railways. It means that the rest do not have any communication facilities at all.

The forest area of the district is 16 per cent of the total land area. Valuable timber forests are restricted to the Kurupam and Seethampeta agencies. In all other areas the forests are not valuable due to the absence of timber species. The Scheduled tribes in this district live mostly in agency areas of Salur, Parvatipuram and Palakonda Taluqs, and their proportion to the total population of the district works out to 8.21 per cent as against the State
average of 3.68 per cent. According to the census "their educational achievements are hardly worth mentioning", and their "economic and social conditions are no better" when compared to the Scheduled Castes of the district where "the sort of work that is being done by them (the workers) is only of the lowest category."

The Andhra Pradesh Government has always given tribal welfare, a low priority in the State budget. The outlay for the 1969 plan was Rs. 87 crores. Of this the tribal welfare programmes have been allocated only Rs. 19 lakhs. "Even on the basis of a parity of population the allocation should have been about Rs. 3 crores since roughly three per cent of the States' total population consists of tribals". While the Salur and Parvatipuram taluqs have roads connecting the other taluqs and a railway line, the Palakonda taluk is neither connected nor traversed by railways. Srikakulam Road Station which is eighteen miles away from Palakonda is the nearest railway station. The buses are the only possible conveyances in this taluq. Due to the collapse of a bridge over the river, Nagavalli (which divides the taluq into two) the very year it was constructed, for about three to four months in a year, the public have to take up a circuitous route to come on to the other side, or take the risk of crossing the river in small boats.
Isolation subsistence and reciprocity

The tribals' life is characterised by abject poverty and hunger. There are times when they do not eat continuously for four to five days. The average holding of a tribal cultivator is uneconomic which is only 3.50 to 4.50 acres and the per-capita holding works out to only 0.82 acres. The agricultural implements used are very primitive, like the hoe-cum-digging sticks, crop-bars sickles and axes. Those who are slightly well-off use ploughs. This results in very low productivity of food grains. The pressure on land, and land hunger is very high. The land available for agriculture is very limited and the soil is poor, and not at all conducive for agriculture. The irrigation sources are practically non-existent. There is also a scarcity for drinking water. The tribal has to depend on "rivers and streams (which) either have dirty flood waters during rainy season" and if they do not dry up they would have to drink from stagnant pools of water in the hot months of summer. Further "the leaves fall from the nearby forest trees and the soil eroded from hill slopes contaminate the waters of these streams and rivers and make them unhygienic for drinking purposes." The tribals thus become victims of diarrhoea, dysentry, cholera, and typhoid. Most of them also are afflicted with yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis, V.D. and the like resulting in high mortality rate. The medical facilities
are practically nil in the scheduled areas. For the whole district there are three Government hospitals at Taluq headquarters, three Panchayat Samiti hospitals and about fifteen other types of clinics which do not function most of the times. The literacy rate in the Scheduled area is the lowest.

The tribals live at a minimum subsistence level. They do not have one consistent occupation. They keep shifting from hunting, fishing, agriculture (shifting cultivation) collecting minor forest produce according to seasonal variations and also the availability of land, inputs like seed etc. In Bhadragiri tribal block (covering Parvathipuram agency area) 47.16 per cent of the total cultivated area is used for shifting cultivation. Both men, women and the whole family participate in harvesting operations, and not even crow-bars, and ploughs are used on the fields. Invariably the tribal runs into a loss by shifting cultivation. But he still continues as it forms "part of his cultural milieu in which he is brought up". This could also be explainable by the fact the tribals are still an autonomous entity who have not been integrated completely into the outside market economy.

The ownership of land in the tribal areas belonged to the village community as a whole. Though the cultivator enjoyed the produce of the land he had cultivated, he enjoyed no absolute ownership of the land. He ceased to be the owner once he did not
make effective use of it. In these circumstances anybody else belonging to the same community could take up cultivation on the same plot. If the tribal had planted a tree in the same land, however, his right over the tree and its yield continued. The hill slopes whose boundaries were demarcated by ridges or streams in the immediate vicinity of the tribal hamlet belonged to the entire village community, and if any outsider cleared up a patch of this land, it constituted a grave offence and became a source of tension between the two villages. But permanent hereditary ownership of land was enjoyed by those tribals who started settled cultivation, and put in a great amount of labour and effort. In such an activity the other tribals would also give a helping hand, especially because very primitive implements were being used. Thus settled cultivation became a corporate activity.

The social relationships are also based on the principle of reciprocity. Though in some areas the tribals went by rules of consanguinity when it came to festivities, the tribals forgot all their social distinctions and functioned as a single unit. There are festivals almost every month celebrated just before hunting, first ploughing, for general welfare, festivals to mark protection of fertility of seeds and soils, first fruit eating, the Dumoh worship, festival even for new thatch to huts. In these festivals
all the villagers interdine, drink a lot of liquor, dance etc. In the hunting festival especially the man does not return home without a game, for fear of being jeered at, and sometimes he takes a month in search of a game at the cost of his daily livelihood. The tribals also enrich and tighten their bonds of friendship, strengthen their community solidarity by entering into an oath "nestam kattuta" by which one is willing to sacrifice anything for the other.

Invasion from outside

The British had intervened in such an economy, with the primary objective of raising finances and using of forest produce. This introduced the monetary economy in the lives of the tribals who had all the time depended on barter and exchange of goods. In their efforts to raise their revenues, it brought in its wake a disturbance in the tribal life and an increase in exploitation by the Government officials, plainsmen, "mult adhari", landlords etc.

For the purpose of collecting revenue the British had made use of the existing zamindars in the agency area, and the other lands were leased out to the leading ryots on joint rents. Since the British had fixed the rents, which was oppressively high the peasants were in turn being harassed by the zamindars. This system created a class of territorial landlords who had to, many a times fight with the British as they were in turn being victims of over-
assessment. After a survey in Srikakulam and Palakonda taluqs settlement rates were introduced in these areas (by 1890). The district continued to have permanently settled estates until they were abolished by the abolition Act of 1948 by the Indian Government.

The landlords on the other hand resorted to the mustajari system (popular in Parvatipuram, Kurupam and Chinnamerangi agency areas) to avoid the cumbersome process of having to deal with the ryots individually especially when money was scarce. Under such a system, the right to collect rents from the Agency area was being auctioned. The successful bidder known as the mustajar was responsible to the estate holder for the payment of a fixed sum. In the process the mustajar collected more and this led to rack-renting. The collection was more than half a share of the yield of the wet land, and in case of the dry land he collected in cash. Since there was no fixed time or fixed amount which the zamindars had while collecting, the ryots had to bear all the brunt of unscrupulous revenue collection.

The Muttadhar (it was abolished by the Andhra Pradesh Government only as late as 1971) soon became all powerful. He kept for himself the fertile lands, and assigned the remaining lands for the tribals. The tribals could cultivate the lands only at the pleasure of the Muttadhar. Even the eating of the first fruits had to be celebrated and with the permission of the Muttadhar. The Muttadhar
these ryots on all kinds of agricultural operations. Occasionally the tribals were allowed to work on their own land but the product of which was again collected as tax. Since the Muttadhars did not give the tribals any receipts the latter would be gradually evicted from their land alleging that they had not paid the due to amount, and later assign the land to any person of his choice or keep the land for himself. The tribals were too simple to know the intricacies. The merchants popularly known as Sahukars and other non-tribals purchased lands in the agency area from the Muttadhars or directly from the Zamindars and manipulated the records with their connivance, as if they had purchased the lands prior to the "Agency Act of 1917" (which prohibits the non-tribals from buying tribal land after 1917).

The British had also collected the "abkari revenue" i.e. collection of tax on arrack, foreign liquor toddy and hemp drugs. Drinking as already noted was a part of the tribal social and cultural life. Now he had to pay an excess amount of money to the corrupt abkari revenue collectors before he could get his liquor.

While the above was a result of revenue administration, the British had also marked off vast tracts of forest area as reserved in which the tribals were enjoying rights, and brought into its fold many forest officers and forest contractors to organise and employ the tribals to fall wood, togging etc. to timber in
return for wages.

**Commercialisation, increase in needs, greedy helpers and slave labour**

This had disturbed the tribal economy based on cohesiveness. The collection of revenue from the tribals who themselves had no permanent basis of livelihood who lived on hunting, agriculture, fishing did not have any source to pay regular taxes either in cash or in kind.

Just as this juncture it became highly lucrative for the non-tribals to come into the tribal areas. At first they seemed as friends of the tribals (to the latter) who would help them out from the clutches of the Zamindars. There were two types of merchants who came to the agency area in Srikakulam (1) the liquor merchants, (2) the merchants selling daily necessities like salt, kerosene, beedi leaves etc. In return to their products the tribal gave them tamarind, and other minor forest produce (roots, honey, and even food grains). The non-tribals exploited the tribals by making unequal exchanges. This the tribals would not know at all and exchanged the forest products for goods worth much less since they felt that the forest products, so easily available to them, were a good bargain for the scarce goods.

These shopkeepers especially in the Parvatipuram and Palakonda agency areas were immigrants from the Sondi caste "a wily
class who know exactly how to take advantage of the sin which doth so easily beset the hill man and to wheedle from him in exchange for the strong drink which he cannot do without, his ready money, his little possessions, his crops and finally his land itself."

In the process these small merchants were gradually getting much of the best lands to their hands. The rates of interest on loans exhorited by them was 100 per cent and if this was not cleared off in the first year, a compound interest at 100 per cent was charged on the balance. As a result many cultivators would be left unable to pay in cash or kind and become serfs of these merchants for whom they had to work for mere batua - a subsistence allowance while the latter would take care to manipulate their accounts in such a manner that the debt is never paid off.

The tribals were not only being bonded to the money-lenders and liquor merchants but also to the zamindars unable to pay back the taxes, and the impositions were not only in cash but also in kind.

Added to these factors the social customs of the tribals did not change along with the changed situation. The tribal continued with the elaborate festivals, which included drinking, sacrifice of fowl or animals and other big expenses. Their traditional council did not stop its demand of a communal dinner as a punishment, if a tribal was found guilty of crimes like
theft and adultery. Even when a person fell ill the medicine man Eidodu asked for sacrifice of animals to propitiate malevolent spirits. While previously the tribals sacrificed the animals and had frequent feasts with drinking etc. with the things they had conserved for just this purpose with the coming of muttadhars, the tribals had nothing left with them, since everything they had went to the muttadhars in form of taxes. This led them to borrow money and greater indebtedness.

There were thus many forms in which the muttadhar, money-lender and sahukar carried out their exploitations (these are continuing to this day). The Khandagutha was the short-term loan given to the tribals during lean months just before harvests, on the condition that the next crop from a particular plot belonging to the tribal debtor is given to the money-lender in lieu of loan. On the other hand it was obligatory on the part of the tribal debtor to look after the crop as the "sold" plot till the crop is harvested and to handover the entire harvested crop to the money-lender and his godown. The value of loan advanced under this system depended upon the extent and fertility of his field, the value of crops raised in the field and also the crop prospects. The loan thus advanced is a quarter of the total value of the crop at the time of harvest. It meant that three quarters of the crop is collected as interest. In case of a crop failure, the value of total expected crop became the
principal and also the next crop from more extent of land
which was usually double the extent of the previous plot is to
be given to the creditor.

The Seminar on Economic Exploitation of Girijans held in
/Febuary 1975 - noted five other dominant forms of exploitation
by the money-lenders:

"(a) The village Sahukar gives petty advances to the tribal
at the earliest stages of minor forest produce or agricultural
produce on the condition that the tribal returns the money in the
shape of minor forest produce or agricultural produce at a rate
fixed by the Sahukar at the time of advance. For e.g. if the
Sahukar gives an advance of Rs.30/- he demands 30 measures of paddy
after harvest. Usually the duration of the debt is 4 months. Thus
the rate of interest works out about 200 per cent per annum.

In case of pulses the tribal is obliged to handover the
produce worth five times the advance taken by him. As the dura-
tion of the loan is only 4 months the rate of interest works out to 1500% per annum.

(b) The tribal takes the required quantity of seed on the
condition that Double the quantity of seed taken will be paid from
the crop harvested. The duration of the loan transaction is
about 4 months. As such the rate of interest works out to 300% per annum."
(c) In view of the pressing need for money the tribal sells the fruit and flower bearing trees like the tamarind, mango, mohua, jack fruit etc. to the non-tribals.... for a low price.... tamarind trees anticipated to yield about Rs.150/- are sold away for a paltry amount of Rs.10 to Rs.20/-.

(d) The Sahukar uses false weights and measures in order to get high profits.... the girijan cooperative corporation is not above board.

(e) The Sahukar purchases the agricultural produce at the earlier stage of harvest at a low price and sells it back to the tribals during slack periods at higher prices.

Thus, the economic penetration from outside resulted in 80 per cent of the tribal families having a deficit economy. The old resources of their livelihood dried up due to innumerable restrictions on the use of forests and forest produce and also due to the increase in their needs with the entrance of new commodities. As a result they had no other alternative but to depend on the money lender, who charged usurious rates of interest, converting the tribal into a forced labourer and alienating his land.

Corrupt officials and dependent tribals

The tribal life is also intimately connected with the forests and forest department. Innumerable taxes, some having
legal sanction and some collected without proper sanctions from Government were levied on the tribals. Money was collected and bribes "Masuls" taken for cutting "dabba" grass to build roofs for the house, for felling wood for fuel, for having used forest pastures for feeding sheep and cattle, for using tamarind trees or fuel wood, for cutting any small tree to make a plough or any other instrument. If bribes were not given, cases were booked.

The tribals had to give fuel and wood to the forest officials and share with them their produce supply them with chickens, and in many cases work as unpaid labour for laying roads etc. To pay their obligations to the forest officials most of the tribals became indebted and fell into the clutches of money-lenders. The most important issue of contention with forest officials was that of shifting cultivation. This was not legal in the reserved forests. Therefore, no matter how many bribes they had to pay and cases they had to face they could not stop shifting cultivation. The lands of the tribals were also alienated by the fact that "while demarcating the forest boundaries some of the cultivable lands of the tribals are also acquired by the forest Department."

The tribals were also led into working for the forest contractors at very low wages. The forest contractors on the other hand engaged non-tribals. It is alleged that the tribals were not "accustomed for doing hard labour and as such their turn over is
not to the required standard.... They are also not in the
habit of coming regularly for the work. The tribals absent
themselves quite often during the year due to a number of reli-
gious and social obligations. They are also not willing to take
up the works on labour contract basis..." Yet another reason
given was that "the tribals were not physically strong and healthy
to work hard continuously in a day."

It was not only the forest officials but also the revenue
officials or the "Karanams" who were corrupt, which was yet another
perennial problem of the tribals. They would take bribes from
the plains people, money lenders and landlords to manipulate
records. In view of the unsettled and unsurveyed conditions of
land, the tribals right to ownership of land being based on custom,
social sanction and practice rather than Government records and
pattas, he was in a very vulnerable position vis-a-vis the karanams.
Each village had to give one goat per year to the revenue officials
besides supplying him with fuel, a part of his produce etc. and
chicken whenever he came visiting. In some places there was even
a tradition that all male-goats should be presented to the karanams.
Even without the bribes, the payment of ordinary dues was a heavy
burden on the tribals. They would fall into arrears, resultant
fines, and consequently be in a vulnerable position where the
Karanams demanded bribes. Therefore it could be said that with the
penetration of the monetary economy, the tribals, who lived in a more or less corporate society were reduced to bonded labour, which became inevitable. It was felt by the British that "the employment of vetti-labour was still necessary to the limited extent that it was employed and was justified in the absence of other of taxation." Thus a situation had been created by the Government that if the laws were implemented to the word it would become impossible for the tribals to survive and sustain themselves. This situation was taken advantage of by corrupt forest officials and vile and cunning non-tribals who in turn impoverished the tribals, and deprived them of their land. The terms of the contract were so loaded in favour of the employer that the tribal virtually became his serf and the fathers' burden of debt handed down to his children. The tribals too had no idea of the money exchange nor did they visualise any long-term plans. Their problems, and solutions were always in terms of immediate needs. Since they never had a concept of property or accumulation for further gains they became an easy prey for the non-tribal and merchants, and bartered everything for unequal exchange. Since they had no attachment to their land, as they were habituated to shift from one occupation to another they even leased and gave away the land for repayment of loan. Those of the tribals who had some settled cultivation and who were nearer the plains had also become the victims - mainly due to their simplicity
and had to shift into the interior forest areas to take up to shifting cultivation. (Thus there was an increase in shifting cultivation also). It could be even said that there was absolutely no marketing in agriculture by the tribals. "Whatever little quantity they produce with their primitive techniques, the major portion of it is knocked away by the merchants and soucars." The fact that the tribals had very poor marketing knowledge was also not to be overlooked.

Developmental perspective and the Inadaptable tribal

In the post-independence period the Indian Government interfered in the tribal life in a bigger scale. It had two objectives regarding the use of the scheduled areas. Firstly to develop the forests, and thus use the forest wealth for national development and secondly to make the tribals benefit, and also be partners to the developmental activities. For various reasons, as we shall see, the tribals could not utilise the new opportunities and the old forms of exploitations continued, making the problem more acute for the tribal population in the scheduled areas.

The developmental activity opened the scheduled area to many schemes like afforestation, development of irrigation encouraging minor industries, soil preservation, and throwing open the forest area to private industrialists who in turn employed contractors
etc. to use the forest area.

By afforestation i.e. planting of teak, starting coffee plantations and also cashewnut, most of the cultivable fertile land of the tribals were occupied. The tribals on the other hand worked either as labourers in these plantations or went further deep into the interior forests on the hill-tops to carry on with shifting cultivation. Though the Government supplied 25,000 coffee seedlings to the tribals (1966-67) they could make no use of it due to ignorance, and also lack of money, initiative for carrying forward these programmes.

The Government had also taken initiative in development of irrigation. According to an area study "One irrigation dam constructed during Multi-purpose project period fell under disrepair and thus rendered unserviceable. Another anicut was constructed across the hill stream Dongajole during the year 1963-64 under which an area of forty eight acres was brought under irrigation. Out of forty eight acres, thirty acres are owned by the Mittadhar himself. But he is neither cultivating the land nor does he lease it out to anybody". Another study showed that the "percentage of irrigated area to the net sown area in tribal area is still very low". Even if the irrigation facility is extended, it would not accrue any benefit to the tribal considering the fact that most of their lands have been alienated.

The forests also provided a ground for many private industries
as well as minor industries to develop - like the Sheekai Grinding Plants, Small Honey Pasteurisation Unit, Myrobalan crushing unit, non-edible oil soap industry, Starch from Tamarind seed etc. This provided employment for some tribals. The tribals however did not have initiative in making use of these opportunities. And "the lack of raw material, the restrictions of forest laws, the decline in the demand for some of their fine cane and bamboo works in certain nearby urban centres..., lack of patronage and encouragement to market the tribal produce on a commercial basis, resulted in the decline of the tribal arts and crafts."

To foster the growth of agricultural based industries the Government took up soil conservation schemes like bunding, terracing, gully control, afforestation by agriculture and forest sectors. The main reason for soil erosion is the shifting cultivation practised by two lakhs of tribals over one lakh acre of land. But in spite of many curbs put on the tribals to stop the shifting cultivation they continue because "it requires minimum investment of capital and can be undertaken with simple primitive implements which are within his reach.... In the absence of much fertile land in and around his habitat, "podu" patch is the only alternative in which he can grow the much needed food grains".

The primary result of the development activities was the opening up of the tribal areas to the private big and small industrialists, giving scope for making profit, monetisation and commer-
cialisation of the economy. The tribals were unable (though the Government also felt it would be beneficial to the tribals) to adopt to the new system, nor utilise the new opportunities. The reasons being their low education, low economic standard i.e. of not having initial investment to take advantage, backward culture of subsistence economy with no foresight for long term plans and on the other hand spending extravagantly on feasts, without any idea of saving and the general "care not for the morrow" attitude.

On the other hand due to development of transport and communications, the non-tribal plainsmen, found it lucrative to utilise the opportunities created for the tribals. He was more business-minded and knew the tact of trade. He manoeuvred to turn the developmental activities in the tribal area to his advantage. At the same time he found that he could use the land of the tribals which was being cultivated at a subsistence level, to a better purpose by investing in it. He gave loans to the tribals and thus "the extent of indebtedness among the tribals was being unduly increased by the usurious rates of interest charged by the money-lenders". As the influx of money-lenders became more, more loans were given, higher rates of interest charged, as a result more land was alienated and many more became bonded labourers in their own lands now under the money-lenders.
Some escaped into the interior areas and took up to shifting cultivation on the hill-tops. The non-tribal plainsmen also used the tribals for collection of minor forest produce, which were bought from them at ridiculously low prices and thus they had made profits even over this. Thus the infrastructure developed the Government had been exploited by the non-tribal and such a "laisser-faire" only threw "the flood gates open to the rising tides of tribal exploitation and expropriation".

**Failure of Welfare Legislation**

The second object of the Government was to make the tribals benefit from the development activities, make them the partners and participants in their programme and also involve and integrate them with the nation's activities breaking away from the past isolation. It had passed many laws, created many organisations to improve the general standard of living of the tribals. But the same inherent weaknesses in the tribals which had hindered them from taking advantage of the development schemes, came in the way of the tribals' benefiting from the welfare schemes. The advantageous position, and the role of the non-tribal plainsmen vis-a-vis the tribal and the latter's dependence on the former had to be taken note of.

The Government, passed many laws, with the purpose of setting free, the tribals from the clutches of the non-tribals, money-lenders etc. They were (1) The A.P.(S.A.) Land Transfer Regulation I of
The A.P. (Scheduled tribes Debt Relief Regulation, 1970. (4)
The A.P. regulation for the abolition of muttachari and malguzari (of 1971). The laws passed in 1959, were supposed to help the tribals restore their land from the non-tribals, which had been illegally transferred to them. Under the 1970 regulation it was even presumed that until the contrary was proved any immovable property situated in the Agency area and in possession of a non-tribal had been acquired only by a transfer from a Tribal. But this even legally speaking had a loophole. The entire scheduled area of the Srikakulam District except 103 villages of Seethampeta Agency was under erstwhile zamindari tenure, with thousands of non-tribals occupying lands in Scheduled areas. The A.P. (S.A.) Ryotwari Settlement Regulation 1970 allowed grant of Ryotwari patta to both tribals and non-tribals/ were eligible for such a patta under the provisions of the A.P. Estates Abolition (Conversion in Ryotwari) Act, 1948 and who have been in continuous occupation of such lands from the notified date. Therefore many holdings had already been registered in the names of non-tribals, and there was no possibility of these lands going back to the original tribals. In the rest of the area, it was a matter of dispute between the Andhra and Orissa Governments which has to be settled, and in the last type, there was no settlement, which covered the Parvathipuram
agency area where, out of total extent of 17,890 hectares of cultivable land, as much as 11,480 hectares were held by the tribals under law. Only an extent of 2,800 hectares were held by the non-tribals (which meant that legally only 2800 hectares of land was alienated and could go back to the tribals). But according to the officials "most of the land supposed to be under the tribals in law, is in actual practice under the occupation of the non-tribals."

The non-tribals on the other hand, being well off had challenged the regulation in the High Court, regarding their evictions which gave a verdict in December 1971, against the Government. The Government belatedly appealed against the decision and got the verdict in its favour. But with the number of stay orders it might not be able for the tribals to restore the land. The tribals on the other hand cannot go the courts, for they could ill-afford the time or the money, nor do they understand the cumbersome process.

The Government itself admitted that "Though large number of 1172 cases of illegal transfers of land covering an extent of 7434.39 acres were detected in the Scheduled areas of this district, only 215 cases measuring an extent of 895.70 acres could be restored so far. 630 cases covering an area of 4928.85 acres are covered by Stay Orders of High Court. 205 cases covering an area of 1125.25 acres are under enquiry...."
"...The progress is slow because the affected non-tribals are trying to perpetuate the possession of lands by filing innumerable writ petitions from time to time and obtaining stay orders from the high court.... (and) unless they are all won by the Government, it could not be possible to enforce this regulation on effective lines". Even if the stay was vacated and the writ petition was struck in his name, he went to the court in his wife's, sons or any other relatives name, for the same land. This could be done due to the absence of patta rights and settlements.

The non-tribals have also found innumerable methods of circumventing the provisions of the law and in continuing to occupy the tribal lands by other means. (by taking advantage of the tribals perpetual need to depend on them). They take advantage of the tribal custom of Mithama prasadam or Nestam of exchanging gifts and tightening bonds of friendship. The non-tribal enters into this friendship, and as a result purchases land, and registers it in the tribals' name (with whom gifts are exchanged). The tribal on the other hand abides by this and would never reveal secret, thus protecting the interest of the non-Tribal.

The other loop-holes were that, though the land was actually registered in the tribals name it was held by the non-tribal under lease or mortgage. Thus the tribal still remained the owner. Or the non-tribal just encroached the land, due to lack of land records. On the other hand they buy the land in the name of the tribal
servants who work as bonded labour. The non-tribals even marry the tribal women and purchase lands in their names as the land transfer regulation did not prohibit the transfer of land from a tribe to another. While the tribal wife in actuality was reduced to the status of a labourer who works in his fields. The tribal also could not afford to get the land transferred in his name. After the death of the parent, to get land transferred in their name, the local revenue officer demands Rs.300/- or one buffalo. Consequently the revenue records continue to show the deceased parent as the owner of the land. Thus since they do not have a legal ownership, the tribals do not get Government loan. "Inheritance from sire to son is disturbed" for another reason "owing to the absence of easy credit facilities and growing requirements of tribals primarily in regard to food, housing and occasional but necessary functions like marriage funeral etc. which cost the tribals much and who have to borrow." The Andhra Pradesh Government had also passed the Money Lender Regulation Act in 1960, to regulate activities of money-lending in Scheduled areas. According to this act the unauthorised and unlicensed money-lenders operating in the tribal areas were to be punished. However according to the official records there was only one registered money-lender and only sixteen unregistered money-lenders in the whole of Srikanthapuram area. And after a decade the Andhra Pradesh Government had passed the A.P. Scheduled Tribes Debt Relief Regulation of 1979,
which was to seal down the "debts incurred by a member of Scheduled Tribe living in Scheduled Area to the amount of the principal as originally advanced and stipulates that no interest need be paid by the Scheduled Tribe borrower irrespective of the fact whether the debt is incurred inside or outside the Scheduled area. In its place the Government made attempts to provide for alternative credit facilities to the tribals. But still the tribals borrowed from private money-lenders. "Inspite of multiplicity of Government institutions such as the Cooperative Credit Society, Girijan Cooperative Corporation, Tribal Development Block, Taluk Office etc. only 12 per cent of the indebted families borrowed from Government sources indicating the poor performance of the Government agencies in relieving the tribals from the hold of a private money lender." The "usual hurdles in having credit transactions with the Government agencies are a lack of patta rights, official red-tapism, complicated official formalities of filling up a number of forms and general apathy of the tribal to approach the Government officers in view of the prevailing stereotype of any Government functionaries which is based on their bitter experience with the previous revenue, police and forest officials." Inspite of the fact that the rate of interest for institutional credit is only 6\% per cent per annum, the tribals do not go to the Government for two more reasons. The non-tribal plainsmen give the tribal loans not only in cash
but also in kind to be recovered in times of harvest. The institutions on the other hand give only cash credits and insist on repayments only in cash which the tribals cannot assure of. Secondly the governmental institutions gave credit only for agricultural purposes, whereas the tribals more often needed money to meet his social necessities.

The Government efforts to detect the cases of money-lending and, charging of exorbitant rates of interest were also in vain because, of the pressure of the money-lender, and the dependence of the tribal on him. Therefore, the tribal debtor and the non-tribal creditor "do not come forward declaring the debt owing to the fact that the non-tribal may not advance loans at times of need". During 1964-65 the Government detected 380 cases involving a sum of Rs.20,556/-. Of these 341 cases involving a sum of Rs.17,758/- were withdrawn. An interesting phenomena in these cases was that "the suits filed were either dismissed or discharged owing to the fact that there was a collusion between the creditor and the debtor who deposed before the Court that the debt was discharged."

While these were the acts which were supposed to be beneficial to the tribals, the Government even came up with welfare schemes like the establishment of the Girijan Cooperative Corporation, Tribal Development Blocks and the land colonisation schemes to accrue to them concretely certain benefits. The Girijan Coop-
ative Corporation was started to cater to the needs of the tribes. It had three basic functions. (a) purchase of farm and non-farm produce of the tribes at fair prices; (b) supply of domestic requirements to the tribes at fair prices and (c) supply of credit and agricultural development. The Corporation was meant exclusively for the tribals and the non-tribals were not supposed to have any scope for interference, or to influence the Girijan Cooperative Corporation. The Girijan Cooperative Corporation also had the monopoly right on the purchase of minor forest produce collected by the tribals.

The Girijan Cooperative Corporation had turned out to be a failure which did not cater to any of the tribals' needs. In the first place the per acre yields of the tribals is very low. Only 12 per cent of the farm output enters the market, and that too not because it is a surplus, but because he has to sell to meet his other needs. Even this, he is obliged to sell to the merchants who had given him credit when he needed it. He gets paid ridiculously low prices, and is also created by use of false weights and measures. But the Girijan Corporations workers were also not removed from the general rut of corruption. When the tribals had approached them, even they would cheat the tribals similarly. As a result every manager in a depot, had thus made a fortune.
The Corporation depots which were supposed to supply domestic requirements often ran short of supply of essential goods like salt, kerosene oil, foodgrains, beedis etc. Instead it sold hair oils, soaps etc. for which the tribal had no use. Thus, the entrance of the Corporation depots made no difference to the tribals. For essential goods they still had to go to the merchants.

The third function of the Girijan Corporation was to give loans and credit for agricultural purposes to the tribals. We have already seen how the tribals could not avail of this, and had to fall back on the money-lenders. Even when the Girijan Corporation gave loans, the officials "gave only Rs. 50 but gave a receipt for Rs. 200/-". Since the tribal was illiterate, he was again caught in a cycle of having to repay the amount to the Corporation. The Corporation even bought animals which were useless and weak, for a small amount and took more than double the price from the Government. The Corporation, having found by its experience that the loans previously given were not repaid and in some cases they being misused, became tight in giving loans. With regard to the fourth function of the Corporation that the tribals had to sell their minor forest produce like honey, tamarind, "adda leaves" only to the Corporation, even the Corporation officials bought them for low prices. Therefore the tribals were forced to sell it to the traders who would pay higher prices. Or the corporation depots would take 50 kgs. of a product and value it only for
25 kgs. Even cashew nuts the tribals had to sell it for only forty paise per kg. while the market rate was Rs. 1.50. With this they made a profit by selling their products outside at a higher price. On the other hand the Corporation depot officials sold the produce they bought from the tribals to other merchants at a much higher price and thus make a tremendous amount of profit. And even for the payment of money which was the tribals' due the depot managers kept dodging the tribals.

The Corporation was also hand in glove with the corrupt forest officials, with whose connivance the property of the Corporation was smuggled out to be sold at a higher rate to make individual profits outside the Scheduled area.

During the Second Five Year Plans, multi-purpose tribal blocks (later on, renamed as Tribal Development Blocks) were started and special emphasis was laid on the development of communications, agriculture, cooperation and land colonisation and education.

To bring the bulk of the tribal population under intensive development schemes, all the tribal inhabited areas in the Andhra Scheduled area had been grouped under 24 Tribal Development Blocks. The Tribal Development Block had to depend on two types of revenue. Firstly on its independent resources by levy of
surcharge, fees, fines and forfeitures, by taking up the projects for remunerative enterprise like market plantations, and also income from choultrey and endowments. Secondly it had a share of land cess, local cess, duty on transfer of property, ferries rent, fishery rents, lapsed deposits rents from staff quarters. Since there were already vested interests in charge of collection of revenue, the Tribal Development Blocks ran short of finances. On the other hand it was understaffed. A village level worker had to cover thirty to forty sq. miles in a Tribal Development Block which had absolutely no means of transport or communication. Therefore "the persons who are posted in the Tribal Development Block consider their stay as a punishment and always try to get themselves transferred to the plain areas". The posts of the extension staff on the other hand were generally kept vacant for longer periods for want of candidates.

The land colonisation schemes was undertaken by the Government to rehabilitate the tribals, entice them to come down the hills and settle down on the plains. Since the tribals were "by nature a closely-knit entity, where cooperation for common tasks, has been for centuries, a part of their social order" cultivation on cooperative lines was also suggested along with the land colonisation schemes. But "in all the cases of colonisation schemes, land allotments and housing schemes preceded the irrigation schemes."
There were several instances of incomplete irrigation works and the lack of adequate water supply to the residents and their lands, at some of the land colonisation schemes. "The Kambagadda anicut was completed... as late as June 1966, along after the Kuddapalli colonisation scheme was established. At Jatapukottapadu colonies of the Bhadragiri agency in Srikakulam district, the lands have not yet been cultivated although land-allotments have been made nearly five years ago." In many land colonisation schemes, it was found that the cattle distributed by the Agriculture Department have been eaten by the tribals (even milch cows) and because of the lack of irrigation facilities the tribals had to return to the nomadic ways of living. During the lean months, the tribal found it difficult to maintain himself and his family "not to speak of providing adequate fodder for the animals. Due to mal-nutrition, the animals are susceptible to disease and death. In some cases out of sheer frustration the tribal sells away the pair (taken on loan from the Corporation) at a very low price unmindful of his obligation to the loaning agency and with the sale proceeds to maintain his family for some time?" Thus due to the inherent weaknesses in the tribals (as pointed out) he has not been able to utilise the welfare schemes. However it would be impossible for the Government to give alternate lands for all the tribals to engage themselves in settled
cultivation considering the fact that there are in all 42,000 families engaged in shifting cultivation. "At the rate of two and a half acres per family it requires at least one lakh acres of land to settle all the families engaged in shifting cultivation on settled cultivation. But the land available in tribal areas is very limited and it is already overburned with the ever increasing concentration of tribal population. So it is not possible to implement land colonization schemes on a large scale as the available plains land is too meagre to accommodate all the tribals engaged in 'podu' or shifting cultivation".

Another reason for the inability of the tribal population to take advantage of the economic and political changes introduced by the Government was their incapacity to participate and manipulate the new political mechanisms. In a situation where much depended upon one's ability to effectively articulate demands through mobilisation of one's group, to act as a pressure on the system, the tribals without necessary skills and resources for organisation and bargaining became mere pawns in the hands of the richer and more skilled plainmen. The money lenders and landlords could reach as far as the State capital to plead their case but the tribals were unable even to approach even the taluk level administration without the help of some educated outsiders. Their representatives in Legislative Assembly were men like Satrucharla Prataparudra Raju (Naguru, reserved Constituency), Vyricherla
Chandra Chaudamani Deo (Parvatipuram), and Sree Rajah Lakshmi Narasinha Sanyasi Raja (Solur). These scions of princely families had no interest in doing anything for the tribals. The Raja of Karupam a leading Congressmen of the area frankly stated "Who will go into the deep interior? We are not so unselfish". The introduction of Panchayati Raj instead of bringing self-rule to the tribals destroyed their existing self-Government. The tribals were earlier governed by traditional councils which were "extremely democratic". Introduction of a Panchayati system with its three-tier hierarchical arrangement, requiring ability to deal with rules, regulations and records and demanding skills to get ones demands acceded to by the higher organs led to the leadership being taken out of the hands of the illiterate and unsophisticated tribals. Even when the positions of power in the panchayati system were reserved for the tribals only henchmen of the landlords and others could occupy this position. "Introduction of Panchayati Raj has led to the concentration of power in the hands of a few non-tribal people and traditional tribal leaders. Though the offices of the President and Vice-President are reserved for scheduled tribes the non-tribals began to install their own henchmen in these offices and influence the decision-making bodies."

The whole situation was brought to a boiling point by the fact that the economic crisis that gripped the whole country during 1965-67 period reflected even in the Srikakulam district. The price
of rice (cort II) which was Rs.72.07 during 1964-65 fell slightly to Rs.69.06 during 1965-66 but shot up to Rs.85.59 per quintal during 1966-67. It was almost the same trend with regard to other food commodities like jowar, Ragi and horsegram. Even the price index was shot up during 1963-64 while the price index was 634 (with base year 1935-36 = 100) in 1964-65 it rose to 696 and during 1965-66 to 780, 1966-67 to 882 and 1967-68 to 960. Thus there was a steady increase by nearly 100 points at the end of each year after 1965.

The Initial Approach By The Revolutionaries

The political movement in agency area was initiated by Palle Ramulu better known as the Kaddapalli Martyr. He was posted as a teacher in village Honda in Palakonda agency area. Here the revenue officials were collecting taxes in excess of what was legally due. Ramulu mobilized the people and gave petitions to district revenue officers about the corruption of local revenue officials who were collecting many kinds of personal levies. Encouraged by the response of the tribals, he started organising Sangham (Society) for collective struggles against all kinds of oppression. In 1957-58 he agitated on the issues of forest labourers wages and alienation of tribal land. Influential forest contractors whose interests were harmed by his activities had him transferred to Kondemkol area.
Here he met Vempatap Satyanarayana, a local, short statured, baby-faced elementary school teacher of 35 years and started organising the Sanghams in a systematic way and in a widespread area. The Sanghams were meant to unite tribes to conduct struggles on various demands for the improvement of the conditions of life of the tribal and they required voluntary, enthusiastic, enlightened and militant membership. The tribes in general were of (a) low socio-political consciousness; (b) fearful of landlords, contractors and petty-government officials; (c) suspicious of non-tribals and unwilling to join any activities organised and led by plainsmen; (d) economically in a vulnerable and dependent condition. In this situation they realised that their first task would be internal - recruiting and mobilising supporters giving them motivation, enthusiasm and confidence, improving their capabilities to unite and struggle effectively.

Organisation of cultural activities was the effective medium through which the initial break through was achieved. Cultural troops could tour tribal villages giving performances consisting of songs and dramas depicting the woes of the tribals and exposing the people responsible for this and exhorting the tribals to rise and rebel. Through these activities they recruited some young tribals who, later proved to be of immense help. Fyla Bhoemdu, Kurangi Vasunarayana, Arika Somulu were
The fears of tribals were allayed and they were given faith and confidence in the leadership by a series of courageous acts by the leaders. A small incident which assumed the proportion of a local folktale in this area could illustrate this point. Peddala Naidu a landlord of Nilanantapur area was a terror to the tribals and was reputed for his ruthlessness and vast resources to enforce his power. In a dramatic personal confrontation Vempatapu humiliated him in front of the tribals by physically threatening him. This incident had an immense psychological effect on the tribals. It started the incg-building of Vempatapu as an invincible and even immortal leader. Many myths were built around Vempatapu's personality. The current rumours in the tribal areas were that Vempatapu had a helicopter and a white horse on which he would go to attack the policemen. It was also believed that the Peddarguru (the big Teacher) could transform himself into a tiger when he wanted. Vempatapu did not discourage the rumours. In fact he was reported as having told the tribals that "he was shot dead by the police and cremated; but he rose again from his ashes for their sake. This story was
taken for gospel by the tribals. The myths were so strong that for sometime people refused to believe his death in July 1970. Many peasants who attended his funeral held at Parvatipuram on July 12, 1970 looked at the body and declared that it was not Vempatapu's.

The tribals in general were meek, submissive and passive in character. Faced with the power and authority of outsiders they were complacent to all kinds of demands. The Sangham leaders felt that it was essential to instill a sense of self-respect, dignity and self-identity among tribals to make them militant and aggressive in their dealing with money lenders, forest officials etc. So the Sangham workers started touring villages asking tribal women to wear dress covering their whole body and exhorting men to have short and neatly kept hair. At first the women who had for generations not been wearing long clothes would get irritated. Often the news of the arrival of the Sangham worker was treated by women getting themselves fully draped and as soon as the Sangham worker left, they would get back to their original clothes. However slowly the habits of dressing, combing, keeping the house clean were inculcated. Regarding the men, after conducting meetings in every village the Sangham workers would themselves start shaving off the hair of the volunteers, with big scissors that was always kept in their bags. This
ascended the proportion of a big movement and nearly 30,000
hair-cuts were made. In the beginning it was only young men who
came forward but later the old tribals also had their hair cut.
Bathing and washing clothes became a daily event. The Sangham
would stress in its propaganda the equality of tribals with land-
lords and moneylenders who were plainmen and they would use the
issues of dress etc. to symbolize the equality and assert the
self-respect and rights of tribals as equal human beings.

Vigorous efforts were made to teach the tribals the three
R's. Night schools were held in many village centres by Sangham
workers. Besides basic education, they were taught their political
rights and duties, superstition and supernatural beliefs were
debunked. They also conducted propaganda on all and sundry
issues - from the Vietnam War and American imperialism to the
local administration. The effectiveness of their propaganda
could be gauged by the fact that the tribals at this time believed
that the wheat which was being distributed under PL 480 program-
so came from the Sangham workers.

They made a lot of effort to destroy the social barriers
within the tribals. Previously the Jatapus looked down at Savaras
as inferiors and refused to accept cooked food from them. Verpatapus
symbolically married one girl from Savara and one from Catapa tribe
to spread the idea of oneness. Commensuality was promoted and the
tribals were taught to call each other 'courade' as a declaration of affection as well as an assertion of equality and self-respect.

The Sengham workers also acted as 'barefoot doctors' in order to modernise eugenics practices of the tribals as well as to increase Sengham influence. Previously the tribals went to the ejjodu, the local medicine man for treatment of all diseases. His cure consisted in having a chicken foot and then beating the devil out of the patient. The Sengham workers toured around the villages curing small fevers etc. and spreading modern ideas and practices in various spheres.

Almost all poor tribals lived in a permanent indebted state due to their excessive spending on festive occasions and on drinking. Arog was their most important festival. On day a tribal family had to sacrifice a h-s buffalo to the dead ancestors. This always led them into the clutches of money lenders. After intensive propaganda for four years the Sengham workers managed to stop this practice.

A final symbol of Sengham hold on tribal people was their organisation of peoples' court. The Sengham decreed that its members which consisted of the people of Parvathipuram, Pathapatnam and Palakonda agency area should not go to the courts for any
fights between themselves. Village Committees were to solve and enforce local petty problems and big problems were to be looked after by the agency committee members. Between 1962 and 1965 the Sangham reported that only one case (Aridi Pottanna of Vuridi village v/s Nilcolasuri of Gunjavoda village) of a fight between two tribal peasants went into a civil court. All others (excepting those which involved landlords' and governmental machinery) including family problems were referred to the Sangham Courts. Until 1967 the jurisdiction of these courts was limited to members and volunteers. Only in one or two cases was it found that decisions of court were imposed on non-Sangham members. For e.g. when Gopala a worker of the Sangham was beaten by Henaka Subbiah a landlord the agency Committee imposed a fine on the landlord, which was collected from him along with apologies by the tribal Sangham leaders Nokkalingam, Vasumaryana and Mallayya who led 500 people with swords and spears.

Building a Mass Movement

The first popular struggle in agency area was in 1959 against Vetti (a form of bonded labour). It was essentially propagandist in form. A pamphlet was published. It was distributed and explained widely. With its help, contacts were established, and Sanghams built, in all the girljan villages.
between Mondemkhal and Nilakantapuram and Perula within a radius of 30 miles.

Encouraged by the response to the pamphlet on yetti, the Sangham gave a call to forcibly resist forest officials who demanded bribes and usurers who demanded payment of interests. They proposed a simple solution. Whenever the above-mentioned persons came to collect, they were to be physically threatened. Consequently to these directions the Sangham workers thrashed a moneylender in Uridiguda and extracted from him a promise to forego all his credits. This was followed by an incident in Kondabaridi in which a forest guard was beaten up and deprived of his uniform, knife, and hat when he had demanded his mamlulu. This was followed by many incidents of a similar kind in other villages. Particular care was taken to make examples of well-known usurers like Tranatha of Naganguda, Ganta-lingavva of Muleguda. They were made to forego not only the debts but also the lands which they had taken as security on mortgages.

Next they took up the issues connected with forests, forest produce and forest lands. As noted previously the Sangham started its activities with the simple solution of tying up and beating forest officials who came to collect bribes. In 1962 taking advantage of their increased organisational strength, the Sangham
They claimed that this resulted in occupation of 4000 acres by tribals. The forest officials booked many cases on the tribals. Since it was not possible for them to enter the tribal villages, they could utilise the help of some agents to get the names of the culprits (which usually included 90 per cent of the villagers). On *Sangha* call the people refused to attend courts.) Litigation is a lengthy business, time and money consuming proposition for which the tribal in no way capable of going through. Employing a lawyer, leaving their regular work and to walk anywhere from 10-15 miles to reach the court and attend its innumerable postponements is a punishment in itself to the tribal even without his guilt being proved.

When the tribals refused to attend courts the forest officials turned towards the police. The police also had a tough task in front of them. Since they would have to enforce the warrants not on one or two persons but whole villages, that too well-organised militant and intransient villagers. This was not the task for solitary police stations with one S.I. and a handful of constabulary but for special police camps with a minimum of a couple of hundred policemen. This meant that the decision was no longer at the local hands but had to be taken at the higher level—i.e. at least at the level of the collector where the problem could be looked at not as merely one of administering warrants but in a wider perspective.
The forest officials came to a compromise and proposed that the tribals should cultivate in well-demarcated non-reserve lands and should pay a nominal sum of Rs.4/- or Rs.5/- as fines towards the disposal of the cases. On Senghoo direction the tribals not only refused to pay the fines but also refused to leave hill and forest 'podu' until alternate livelihood is provided for them.

The next problem the Senghoo took up was to relieve the tribals of having to pay bribes to the forest officials for taking the liquor from reserved trees. Drinking was not only one of the main forms of recreation for the tribal but for some four months in a year he literally lived on it. The Government system of giving contract, monopolising the right to make liquor and the prohibition regulations, after independence could not stop the tribal from making liquor. It only brought on them more cases, and the need to pay more bribes. The standing rate in early 1960's was Rs.10/- and one foul per tree used in making liquor. Senghoo militancy and physical threats solved this problem of tribals.

The Senghoo mobilised the tribals even against the corrupt Girijan Corporation officials which was established to save the tribals from the hands of moneylenders who were charging exorbitant rates of interests and also buying from the indebted tribals their produce and other forest articles like honey, tamarind etc. at atrociously low rates. Government banned private trading in
the area and gave monopoly to the Corporation. Sangham agitated and pressed the Corporation to issue loans (short and long term Rs.50/-) to more and more tribes.

The Corporation officials cheated the tribal in many ways in weighing and in calculating. The illiterate tribal was an easy prey for this. The Sangham started keeping its workers at the places of buying on the market days and stop this kind of cheating of tribals. Another grievance against the Corporation is that in many cases they were paying less than the market price. Disregarding the Government regulations of Corporation's monopoly of trade, the tribals started selling to traders who would pay higher prices. But the Corporation had many cocoons implicating not the tribals but the traders thus effectively stopping this trade for the time being. There were some cases of threatening and beating of Corporation officials. It resulted in their not only accepting the prices demanded by the Sangham but also agreeing to accept Sangham's recommendation to employ, Sangham's people on the sale depot. The Sangham did not stop with this but started five shandies in the villages of (1) Valasa Ballaram, (2) Janbhiri, (3) Pamasabhadra, (4) Mondenkhal and (5) Kukkidi-chivanda declaring that "in these shandies the produce of tribals can be brought by anybody. We will resist any efforts to stop these and give complete protection to buyers and sellers. The goods can be sold to Corporation or to traders - whoever pays the
higher price". Thus by mid 1960's the Sangham was practically running the Corporation in the area around Mondolkhal.

The Sangham also took representations to district and divisional revenue officials about the corruption among Karanams. They established that the Karanams were collecting five to six times more than what was due, even on the basis of the existing receipts. "The divisional and district officials expressed their inability to take any action, since if they took action against all corrupt 'Karanams' there would not be any Karana left in the whole area (since all of them were corrupt) and this was not a feasible step". In 1964 just after the split in the Communist Party a State vido call was given by the CPI(M) for distribution of banjars against payment of additional 'jintulu' (taxes).

After eliminating the payment of bribes through threats to Karanam the Sangham gave a call to do not pay all taxes, levies and fines. Revenue collection that had stopped in the agency area under the influence of Sangham. When the Government had decided to forcibly collect revenue many tribals were mobilised and a demonstration was led to the collectors office where they had stated that they would not pay taxes until the corrupt officials were suspended. A compromise was worked out by which the tribals were exempted from paying the arrears but were to pay that year's revenue.
The militant activities of Sangham created a situation in which police constables, prohibition officials and other petty-Government functionaries would not dare to go to the villages without the Sangham's permission. An V.K. Nair remarked "the police did little to intercede with the communists, indeed some communist leaders used to be saluted by policemen."

Towards confrontation

Encouraged by their continuous successes they took to more aggressive activities. They conducted intensive propaganda that the lands occupied by landlord-merchants in lieu of non-payment of debts was illegal and in contravention of 1917 regulation. They prepared the tribals at first in two villages - Gujja-vaivada and Peddagothili to occupy and till 'Khandagutta' lands presently under the control of landlords.

In November 1960, the Sangham gave a call to seize harvests. Apprehensive due to these activities the landlords tried to get out of the corner by bribing Vempatapu. It did not work. Then they invited him to the village Jhumabiri for talks and tried to kill him. However he escaped. The very next day people moved on a massive scale and cut the harvests of the landlords in many places. The largest of such cases took place in 200 acres of land between Panasabhadra and Dandacura. In this incident around
300 tribals waited on the road willing to defy police. The local police station was in no position to handle such a big gathering. Soon a big police camp was established, raids were conducted and many cases were booked.

Vasantdada Ramalingochari, the District Communist leader came and started negotiations with the police. He opined and Vempatapu accepted that severe repression at an early stage of movement is harmful to their organisation and movement. A compromise was proposed to the landlords according to which two thirds of the harvest was to be given to the landlord and one third retained by the ryots. However since the harvest was in the final stage and immediate work on it was needed a temporary agreement was made by which the harvest was to be cut but not to be taken home either by the landlord or by the villagers until final settlement was arrived at.

The negotiations broke down when the landlords under the leadership of Gudla Satya rao met and decided to crush rather than compromise with the Sangham. Vempatapu, Adhibhatla Kailasan and twenty-five other big leaders of tribals were arrested on a security case put by the police at landlords complaint. Pallo Ramulu the progenitor of the movement surrendered to the landlords and police and left the movement to escape repression.

The Sangham played its trump card now by calling for a
strike of palam and palihaln (farm servants). Almost all the landlords in this area were usurers first and landlords next. They used to give small loans and convert an independent tribal first into a tenant and then in many cases into a palam doing Vetti service. So many landlords used to keep 10-12 farm servants and some had even 20. If at all paid they would be given from 3-10 'putlu' (1 putlu = 60 kgs.) i.e. around half a kg. per day. They were often beaten and abused and work conditions were severe. The farm-servants Sangham put forward the following demands - 1) 25 'putlu' per year to all, 2) 3 pairs of clothes per year, 3) 2 annas of tobacco per day, 4) Holiday once a week, 5) Medicines and sick leave and 6) Stop collections of interest on old debts.

The landlords did not agree and the strike was called, putting a spoke in their plans to harvest the produce with the farm servants. The landlords were reduced to a condition of drawing water from the wells themselves and cleaning the cattle-sheds. In village Guma Lakshmipuran Vempatapu's sister a rich peasant's wife who had financed his education had to carry cow dung. Not only was there nobody to cut the wood for cooking and take the cattle for grazing, but with the ordinary labour on strike just at a crucial time of harvesting, it put lot of pressure on the landlords. They tried to employ new servants but failed to get any due to the non-co-operation from the Girijen tribal. Not only
that, the tribals in general were also feeding the striking farm servants. The landlords asked for compromises. The farm servants would agree to work only if the Sangham told them to do so. So the landlords had not only to concede to all the demands of the farm servants but also to withdraw the cases, got the police camp removed and start negotiations with the Sangham on the land issue.

In 1960 after the farm servants strike and the occupation of landlords lands, negotiations were held between Sangham and landlords. The Sangham demanded that the wages should be raised from Rs.5/- to Rs.28/- for cutting harvest in one-acre as compensation for their vacating occupied lands. A compromise was made at Rs.18/- and came into force in areas surrounding Mondemkhol where Sangham was strongest at that time. Even here there were many attempts by the landlords to circumvent the agreement. They tried to cheat in weighing the produce. The Sangham started enforcing checking and supervision over the landlords. They would raise wage-rates as penalisation for landlords who would not cooperate.

Between 1960-67 a series of struggles were led in the agency area by the Sangham to raise wage-rates and extend the area of application of these rates.

As noted previously the labour was being paid Rs.5/- for
harvesting one acre. It normally took twenty-five days to harvest one acre. Thus it worked out to twenty paise per head per day. This abnormally low rate was a result of the tribals' indebtedness to his moneylender-cum-landlord, his ignorance, lack of alternatives and administrative negligence and even probably connivance. After repeated struggles by 1967 the rate was raised to at least Rs.30/- in most of the agency area and to Rs.50/- in the area surrounding Mandemkhal and Nilakanthapuram. (This works out to Rs.2/- per day). Similarly the wage rate for seeding, weeding and transplantations were also raised from about 15 'kunchams' (1 kuncham = 3 kgs.) to 3 'putlu' in most the areas.

The landlords allied with rich and middle peasantry who were also to some extent affected by the wage rise and made arrangements for sorts of labour exchange. Sangham countered this by announcing that they would not charge higher rates for middle peasants. With this the middle peasants who were tribals and were benefiting from Sangham activities in many fields like their anti-corruption campaigns and anti-forest department campaigns, deserted their short lived alliance with the landlords.

With most of their produce going of in wagon and taxes and very little left as profits landlords tried another method. While some landlords went to the extent of distributing part of their holdings among a large number of tribals to gather support
for themselves and start intervene quarrels among the tribals, others would give their lands to tribals in return for 50 per cent of the produce. This posed a problem for the Sangham because if they charged high rates of wages for the many tribals cultivating the landlords' land they would have to face a split within their own ranks. They came up with two proposals, 1) wage rate would not be reduced to Girijan peasant shilling landlords' land or but 2) the tiller would get two thirds and not 50 per cent of the produce. Besides the landlord will have to supply cattle and seeds. Under these demands Sangham managed to keep unity of its members. As a result of these decisions the landlords would get no more than previously and the tiller peasant would get just as much as by agricultural labour.

With the continuous rise in wage rates in 1967 many landlords lost their lands follow.

The tribals due to ignorance and illiteracy were not very good tradesmen. They would exchange basketful of forest produce and many days of labour for a couple of kilos of salt and a little tobacco. At harvest time he would sell to the trader-Can landlord at low prices and buy from him at high prices later. The landlords would often sell 2 addan (5 addan = 3/4 kgw.) per rupee. The Sangham started demanding that they sell 6 addan per rupee. With this the landlords started taking their grains to the towns in lorries. The Sangham started stopping lorries.
One lorry was stopped and all the grains in it distributed to the tribals. Police booked a case. Sangham did not move in its demands.

The landlords came to a compromise settlement, by which they agreed to sell thirty bags to Sangham, at the rate of 6 addas per rupee for every 100 bags they sell outside, provided Sangham allowed safe and secure passage to the latter 100 bags.

With grains collected in this way Sangham opened 12 selling depots in the following villages - 1) Honsakhel, 2) Nilakantapuram, 3) Jmnbiri, 4) Bottali, 5) Sivada, 6) Gujuwai, 7) Gumma, 8) Nakkgudem, 9) Kakithada, 10) Pedakharjo, 11) Kodaripuram, 12) Kakkidi Sivada. The members of Sangham were given chito and the grains rationed among them.

The grains collected were not enough and the Sangham went to landlords again who could sell only 2 addas for Re.1. After some deliberations the Sangham decided to take all the grains of the landlords to the depots. The landlords resisted fiercely. There were some clashes. Many cases were booked and many Sangham workers arrested but still it was difficult for the landlords to transport their grains. They started hoarding grains and stopped selling to the tribals at any price.

At this stage the Government interfered and announced that they would procure grains from the landlords and sell them through
to Girijana Corporation. They procured grains from the landlords but when they were arranging grains to be transported from Mondonkhal, Nilakantapuram and other main centres, the Sangham mobilised thousands of tribals and objected to it demanding that the grains produced in the must be sold in the agency. The Girijana must be allowed to enjoy their produce. The Superintendent of Police and the Collector negotiated with them and promised to sell them locally without transporting them outside.

All this while, the police was strengthening itself in order to be able to handle situations requiring big police forces.

There was a sudden spurt of police stations in the early 1960's. Many police outposts were set up in areas like Nilakantapuram and Mondonkhal where the Sangham was strong. Besides the camps of special armed police were opened at harvest.

The Stalemate
looking on by the landlords. Bomalingachari who had come on tour a month later was caught and thrashed by Moditha Satyanarayana, a Congress leader and contractor at Guvvala.

The Zilla Committee with CPI(M)'s Central Committee leader Bandari Prasad Rao as observer, reviewed the agency movement and felt that in spite of local successes the movement as a whole suffered by the stopping of lorries. Prasad Rao felt and the Committee accepted that the agency movement was not organisationally strong enough as yet to face repression. They felt that here after the movement should take one issue after another and make demands which were feasible. Vempatapu who at this time was not even a member of Zilla Committee felt dissatisfied with the Zilla Committee's view of the things and wanted to carry the movement to a higher pitch by calling a social boycott i.e. a general strike against money lenders, traders, landlords etc.

Apart from the struggles that were carried out by the Sangham activists on various issues they had even actively participated in the local Panchayati elections. This enabled them to use the forum for propaganda as well. In 1964 Sangham participated in elections for two Samitis. In one Samiti they bagged 16 Panchayats and in the second they won 40 Panchayats along with the presidency of the samiti. In the first Bhadragiri Samiti Vempatapu contested but lost, in the second Sitampet Samiti, which supported Appala Naidu won. In 1967 general elections they contested...
the Parvatipuram Assembly seat and lost it. In this seat reserved for Girijans they claimed that they received 10,000 votes out of a total 10,350 tribal votes.

As mentioned earlier along with establishing peoples courts, setting depots and regulation at the shandies the Sangham also experimented in running labour-contract societies and even in taking and forest contract. Labour contract societies were aimed at freeing the tribals from the grip of money-lender contractor alliance. In some cases the money-lenders would gather the tribals indebted to them and force them to work for nominal wages. In some cases the contractors would themselves give loans and after sometime use this lover to make the tribals work cheaply. Functioning through the society, Sangham aimed at freeing the labourer and assuming him a fair wage. These societies also started taking contracts from the Government. But it found difficulty in getting contracts and in managing the work and wage distribution. "Due to bureaucratic tendencies" the society had to fold up.

It was not only the organisational difficulties and mismanagement that had led to the failure of the labour-contract societies. "...Prosperous ryots of Gummalamadiparam... even saw to it that the Tribal Labour Cooperative was not awarded any contract by the Block Development Officer, although there was a specific Government directive to encourage such cooperatives."
Similar fate overtook the forest cooperative society started by the Sangham. An added factor for failure, besides inefficiency was inability to function in an extra-legal way as done by contractors - that is, filching labour by paying low wages, and squeezing Government by cutting forest beyond the limits specified in the contracts through private arrangements with the forest officials. A slight amount of corruption also seems to have crept in the Sangham functioning in these areas. Gajapati Yendadora, the Kondemkhal Sarpanch was caught letting the landlords lorries with grains pass through the Sangham "checkpoints" for a consideration. No action was taken against him inspite of it having been known that he was drinking with the money so earned. The agency committee (of which Yendadora was a member) accepted Vempatamp's view that he was a very good militant tribal leader who can be reformed with a bit of persuasion.

But we come up to find that by 1967 the movement was caught in a paradox. Highly organized and with immense capacity to mobilize it still found itself paralysed. Given the productive situation of the area further economic demands like increases in wages, shares of tenants etc. were impractical. As noted earlier high wage rates were forcing agriculturists to leave land fallow and low food grain rates were forcing producers
and merchants to hoard rather than sell. Their electoral activities did not bear any fruit and their voluntary activities like labour contract societies, tribal shandies, fair-price depots also did not have much success.

They were troubled not only by the limitations of economy and failure on electoral and voluntary work fronts but they were also facing an organizational crisis inspite of their apparent strength. Though they were functioning within the broad framework of legality they have always had one foot steeped in illegality. Their agitational politics led them into increasing number of confrontations with law. Even as early as 1964, six hundred of their cadre was involved in cases. This meant enormous problems of finance, retaining morale of their cadre and continuing their struggles. Their top leaders like district party member Panchadri Krishnamurthy and Vempatapu Satyan were more or less functioning underground since 1964 (in the sense that they were dodging warrants). Added to this was the problem of harassment by local landlords. There were several plots to kill Vempatapu and Adhibatla Kailasam, and whenever Vempatapu went into hiding, away from the agency area, the landlords took advantage of the situation to beat and insult his followers. For e.g. the case of Yendudora, the President of Kondemkbal Panchayat who was thrashed in Vempatapu's absence and also the case of Vempatapu's wife being insulted in his absence. In these
circumstances the Srikakulam leaders were obviously receptive to any new ideas which promised to show them a way out of the state of affairs caused by the increasing police repression and the limitations of economy which accompanied the growth of their movement. As such they jumped successively on to the platforms of CPI(M) in 1964, T. Nagi Reddi in 1967 and finally Cham Majundar in 1968.

Beginning of the conflict

The matters came to a head by July 1967 when the season for weeding of crops began. The Sangham presented a charter of demands and decided to start struggles for their fulfilment. The demands consisted of the following - (a) the restoration of alienated girijan lands, (b) distribution of benjar lands, (c) abolition of debts, (d) fair price for marketed produce, (e) lifting of prohibition on the use of forest timber and finally (f) declaring the agency as an autonomous region to be administered by the representatives of the Girijan.

By this time the landlords, money lenders, contractors and others were effectively organised into a Ryot Sangham under the leadership of Modi Satyanarayana, a rich and influential contractor who had many contacts with district and State level congress leaders. They decided to resist even the legitimate and moderate demands of the tribals.
A few attempts were made for a negotiated settlement on the Sangham demands, i.e. the wage issue was referred to a labour inspector. But his award did not satisfy either party. Consequently the Sangham organised cells at village level to carry on the movement. The Sangham organised a meeting of all tribals at Monemkhal on 31 October 1967 to consider the future course of action. Some delegates including women and children were severely beaten up by local landlords when they were on their way to the conference. This enraged the Sangham workers who gathered in more strength and went to the landlords of Lovidi village to demand explanation. When they reached Lovidi they were fired upon by prominent Congress landlords led by Medida Satyan and two active Sangham workers Arika Koranna and Kondagiri Manganna were killed.

This incident led to a lot of consternation among the tribals. Their indignation was increased by their feeling that Government was on the side of Medida Satyan. They alleged that Medida Satyan was not duly punished by the Government. Sangham declared that it was necessary to form squads and defend themselves since Government and landlords were allied. Squads were formed and this was followed by refusal to repay loans, occupation of lands, and attempts to terrorise landlords from leaving the agency area.
The tense situation in Srikakulam was discussed at a high level meeting in Hyderabad attended by Chief Minister, Revenue Minister, the Inspector General of Police and the top officials of Srikakulam district. Government decided to take a hard line. Protection of law and order and maintenance of peace was to be given high priority and also certain ameliorative steps were to be taken. The administrative machinery was geared up to meet the situation. A Special Superintendent of Police, a Special Deputy Collector and a Special Tehsildar with powers of a magistrate were appointed specifically to deal with the situation. Additional battalions of State Armed Police were moved into the area and an announcement was made that after securing peace, land settlement "pattas" would be distributed to the tribals. V.B. Raju, the Revenue Minister toured the area assuring that law and order would be restored at any cost.

The policy decisions were followed with vigorous actions by local officials. Section 144 was promulgated in the Eluripet P.S. covering about 200 villages. This was followed by innumerable arrests of Sangham workers. 516 tribals were arrested and 83 country made guns besides scores of battle axes, spears, bows and arrows were seized. These were followed by several incidents of disturbances at Sitampet, Kurupan and Gummalaxmipuram shandicos. Police claimed that the incidents arose as a result of communist efforts to loot and plunder. The communist sources maintain that
those incidents were deliberately created to malign communist
party and to disrupt the tribal economy and to weaken the capa-
city of the tribals to resist. There seems to be more substance
in the communists claim, considering the facts that 1) the tribals
make their livelihood by selling their products in the shandies
and survive the whole week by buying products like grains,
kerosene etc. from the shandies as they have no other alterna-
tive, 2) they come all the way from the neighbouring villages
just for the above purpose, 3) if the grijan sanghara which is
a very strong organisation really intended to loot the shandies
it would have become impossible for the shandies to function in
the agency area, and the areas bordering the agency area, 4) finally
if there was looting at such a large scale the police would not
have hesitated to open fire.

The police raided many villages in which the tribals had
seized the land of legal landowners and in some of these they
encountered severe resistance. For e.g. in the Peddakharja
village of Parvatipuram police resorted to firing resulting in
death of two people and arrest of 70 persons (which was nearly
50 per cent of the adult population of the village), in their
efforts to retrieve the landlords lands. The communists main-
tain that police in their raids on the villages were moving
hand in glove with the landlord elements and that they had
resorted to looting of grains, utensils and agricultural imple-
ments and even set fire to some small hamlets.
The vigorous Government efforts did have some effect in disorganising the movement. But the Sangham still maintained its political and psychological hold. In these circumstances an emergency meeting of agency area committee meeting was held and under the pressure of district Secretary Banalingachari a proposal to stop the struggle was pushed through with a slight majority.

Decision to take away

For the next ten months (December 1967 to September 1968) there was a general lull in the activity in the agency areas. This period was filled with discussions on theoretical and ideological issues.

The local cadre were disgruntled with the CPI(H) leadership. As noted even earlier Venkatapu Satyan had expressed differences with the advise of Central leaders like Bandari Prasada Rao. After the October 1967 incidents many local cadres started openly propagating that CPI(H) leadership was preaching a defeatist line.

These tendencies were clearly manifested Subba Rao Panigrahi's extremely popular Jamuna Khatru. Subba Rao Panigrahi toured many districts in Andhra Pradesh propagating the anti-leadership line and as a result he was expelled from the CPI(H).

So, when T. Nagi Reddi, C. Pulla Reddi etc. formed a co-ordination committee for Recuits within CPI(H) on March 4th, the
Srikakulam committee of CPI(M) which was entirely under Maoist leadership lost no time in joining it and on the last week of March held a meeting to review the situation. The meeting was attended by D.V. as the representative of the State Co-ordination Committee. The meeting felt that the movement was in a disorganised state. Police raids were intense and all the top Maoist leaders were forced to leave the agency area. The tribals had lost all their stored food, clothing and the minor forest produce that they had collected in the raids of the police and the local ruffian supporters of landlords. So "In these conditions the main problem immediately in front of us was not of organising peoples resistance, but of arranging salt, food, clothing and agricultural implements for the people." On the advice of State Committee representative the district committee decided to arrange for these (salt...etc.), re-establish contacts with people, collect arms and give guerilla training to all important leaders. They felt that once training was given and guerilla squads formed they could be in a position to start armed struggle, as soon as people move forward to resist police and be willing to participate in guerilla struggles. Tentatively they felt that training could be completed in April and May, and in June when the rainy season starts they could start a movement for occupation of landlords lands and the resultant clashes between police and people could be developed into guerilla struggle.
In this meeting some members expressed the opinion that the main problem in front of them was of resisting repression. They felt that if they start guerilla actions, people could be enthused, break out of their present apathy and actively participate in the struggle. For the time being this opinion could not rally the majority behind it.

(In April and May the State leadership of maoists (T.N. etc.) was busy conducting ideological debate with the Central leadership of CPI(M), and trying to win over the majority of Andhra CPI(M) members to their side. Because of this and various other technical problems they did not hold any guerilla training camps as envisaged in the March 29th meeting of Srikakulam district committee. The Srikakulam Committee met again in the first week of June. The situation in Srikakulam had not developed as foreseen in the March meeting, where they had thought that peoples movement on land issue can be started and developed into armed struggle by June. However, the situation reported at this meeting was that people were still apathetic and in no position to agitate on any issue, and that any activity of cadres was being faced immediately with raids by the police. The State Committee representative who attended this meeting made three suggestions - (a) they must wait until people move on issues like land occupation and crop seizure before starting regular guerilla armed struggle. (b) before the stage of regular guerilla armed struggle can be reached, resistance to police raids should be organized by
arcing the local people and local militants with crude bombs, bows and arrows, spear etc. (c) The movement should be spread to areas other than where it was centered now (Sitampot and Pratap-

vatipura agency areas) since the present areas of the movement are surrounded by a network of roads which can easily enable the police to encircle the area and restrict the movement of guerrilla squads.

The more militant sections of the Srikakulam Committee were dissatisfied with the apathetic state of the movement in the agency area and the advice of the State Committee to wait until people move for land occupation. They felt that movement could be taken ahead by immediately launching guerrilla actions. However all of those who subscribed to this view were among the younger men and the lower levels of leadership, i.e. Vempatay Satyanarayana, Adibhatla Kailasa, Tamada Ganapathi etc. They had no support in the State level leadership or even among the older members of Srikakulam Committee like Ranaalingachari etc. Many members of District Committee like Appala Suri, Panchadri Krishnamurthi and Choudhri Tejeshvar Rao were vacillating between the pressures from above and below. So for the time being the district committee approved the suggestions of the State leadership.

What changed the whole situation at this time was the intervention of A.I.C.C.R. We have already noted that the June issue of Liberation published an attack on Andhra leadership's
understanding on many ideological issues. In the same issue they alleged that the Andhra maoists were conducting the Srikakulam movement as a "Democratic struggle" and not as a "Revolutionary struggle". They also accused the Andhra Committee of behaving like the "Neo-revisionists", in trying to prevent armed struggle with the pretext of the movement not having extended to wide areas and the people not being fully prepared. In the second week of June a representative of the AICCR (probably Asit Sen) visited Andhra Pradesh, contacted the leaders of the Ranzalbari Solidarity Committee (NSC) (Dr. Hallikarjunudu, Dr. Chaganti Bhaskar Rao, Dr. Murlapudi Venkataratnam etc.) and explained to them the standpoint of AICCR as different from APCCR on various ideological and tactical issues. Following this visit, the members of N.S.C. and the militant sections in Srikakulam leadership established contacts and started propagating that the APCCR was opposed to armed struggle. In August a meeting was held at Boddapadu by those of the Srikakulam leaders who were favourable to immediately launching armed struggle. It was attended among others by Panachadri Krishnamurthi, Tamada Ganapati and Subbarao Panigrahi. They cited the resistance to police by the villagers in Peddakharji as a sign of peoples preparedness, and expressed the opinion that by immediately starting armed guerilla actions they could develop a revolutionary struggle for seizure of power. The decision was solemnised by a feast consisting of frogs coat, implying their determination to follow the Chinese path.

So, by September third week when the Srikakulam district committee met again it had a clear majority and encouraged by the
AICCCR it proposed immediate armed struggle. This meeting passed two resolutions. One resolution expressed its regret that the APOCCR has not yet joined the AICCCR inspite of invitations, and "agreeing to the May call of AICCCR, we merge ourselves (Sri-kakulam Committee) with the AICCCR". An amendment put forward by the pro APOCCR members to delete from the resolution the part which says "the Zilla Committee decides to merge in AICCCR (since it implies that the district committee is not a part of the State Committee but is an autonomous body with a right to directly join the national organisation) was defeated by four votes to three. The second resolution on armed struggle was unanimously passed.

It said that "Between June and August second week, when the State armed police was withdrawn, our cadre went to people and exposed to them the real nature of Governments promises and actions. People expressed the opinion that the next time they will fight (the police) but the leadership must stay amidst them. The attacks of police have started again (August second week). We had told the people that we are preparing for higher levels of struggle and will soon resist the police attacks. The attacks have started, but as yet we could not start resistance. With this people and cadre are losing their faith in us. If we delay some more there is the danger of our being totally isolated from the people. So the district committee requests that armed struggle be started immediately."
Armed with these resolutions Choudary Tejeshwar Rao, Panchadri Krishnamurthy and Kurlapudi Venkatrama went to Calcutta. They apprised Charu Majumdar of the situation in Srikakulam. He advised them "to start armed action immediately against the landlords as well as the Government which was the defender of the landlords'. On the return of Tejeshwar Rao etc. from Calcutta, a meeting of Srikakulam leaders was held at Boddapadu between 23rd-25th of October 1968 where ranging discussions about the future course of action, were conducted and a twelve member district co-ordination committee elected to give a decisive majority to the pro-AICCRR group.

In the same month the Srikakulam Committee passed a resolution asking the APOCCCR's Rashtra Committee to grant permission for attacks on police stations. The Rashtra Committee refused and said that "As peoples primary problems were not solved, continuing efforts should be made for mobilising the people" and later on in the rainy season when police jeeps cannot move freely and by which time the programmes moving people for seizing lands could be started, only then can the armed resistance be taken up. In the meantime they were to organise village defence squads and make efforts to intensify the movement in the plains area. The Srikakulam Committee rejected the advice and alleged that the Rashtra Committee was trying to postpone the armed movement for a couple of years with the intention of going back to parli-
The Srikakulam Committee followed up this rejection by preparation for armed struggle. The existing propaganda squads were converted into armed guerilla squads and 85 militant were formed into squads. The local people were given training in laying traps, ambushing, using fire arms etc. Efforts were also made to recruit party sympathizers in various other districts and bring them to Srikakulam to help in armed struggle. Many young enthusiasts like Dr. Mallikarjunmada and Dr. Bhoskar Rao from Guntur, Rajagopala Rao and his followers from Godavari, Ramu, Appalascaray from Andaman, Tippam Venkataratnam and his comrades from Krishna, Dr. Sivaram Reddy and his friends from Nellore, Rajaram and his supporters from Anantapur etc. came in this period to Srikakulam to lend a hand to the armed struggle there.

In this context the APCCCR made one last attempt to regain its influence over the Srikakulam movement. It agreed to the decision of starting armed struggle immediately. Even this desperate concession did not help as the Srikakulam Committee refused to work under the APCCCR or even attend a guerilla training camp arranged by them. This was because these camps, D.V. was lecturing on the experiences of Telengana armed struggle, and the lessons he was drawing from those struggle were not palatable to them.
NOTES


5. **District Census Handbook - Srikakulam District, 1971**.


19. *Ibid.*, Table 6.4, p. 50. Shifting cultivation involves felling trees with axes, knives etc. setting fire to it and spreading the ash all over the field. The potash and
phosphate present in the ashes enrich the fertility of the soil which lasts only for two to three years. This takes the whole of the month of April, and just before the onset of rains during the last week of May, seeds are either dibbled or broadcasted which is usually a mixed crop. The crop takes 3-6 months depending upon the seeds to bear fruit.


21. Ibid., p. 16.


23. Ibid.


25. Ibid., p. 87.


27. Among the zamindars those of Vizianagaram, Bobbili, Andhra, Salur, Pachipenta, Chemudu, SangamavalaS, Belagam, Merangi, Kurupam and Palakonda were important. Sriukulan District Gazetteer, (cyclostyled, Government of Andhra Pradesh), Pp.6-7.


29. Ibid., p. 30.

30. Some of them were also known as Kuttadharn who were tribals themselves.


33. Ibid., p. 32.

35. Ibid., p. 189.
36. Ibid., p. 109.
37. Ibid.
38. Notes for Study Team on Tribal Development Programmes Committee on Plan Project.
40. Ibid., p. 11.
45. See Ibid. and also Notes for Study...etc., Op.cit., p. 19.
47. Ibid.

49. Even in the shandies, the private merchants took advantage of the fact that the tribals were very ignorant of the variation of the prices of consumer goods and charged high prices, used incorrect measures and in turn supplied cheap goods. See Ibid, p. 20.

50. Ibid., p. 56. By 1966 there were 1,26,316 labourers employed in coffee plantations.
52. A study of the institutional framework for agricultural development in tribal areas, Agro Economic Research Centre, Calcutta.


55. Shifting Cultivation ... etc., Op.cit., p. 16.


58. It should be noted that during the Census decade of 1961-71, while the tribal population in the scheduled areas of Srikakulam increased by 14.98%, that of non-tribals shot up by 35%. In Palakonda scheduled area of Srikakulam district, the increase of non-tribal population was as high as 13.5% as against the increase of 13.15% of tribal population.

59. Radhakomal Mukherjee in Foreward to I.P. Singh, Tribes in India.


61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.


70. Ibid.


72. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

73. The average yield per hectare throughout the scheduled area is only 247 kg. Statistical Handbook, Op. cit., p. 5.

74. From interviews and observation.

75. In a letter addressed to the President of India, V.V. Giri, from the Sarpanch of Gummalaxmipuram, printed as a pamphlet.

76. Ibid.


79. Ibid.


81. Ibid.

82. Socio-Economic Change...etc., Op. cit., p. 23.

83. Ibid., p. 24.

84. Ibid., p. 26.


88. V.M. Nair, "Girijan Revolt", The Statesman, April 12, 1968.

92. Ibid., Annexure 51.
94. Ibid., p. 16.
95. Ibid.
98. Based on interview.
100. Document u-24 of N.C.C.
101. Ibid.
104. The Jatapas and the Savaras are two important and major tribes in the Srikakulam forest regions.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid., p. 46.
110. Ibid., p. 33.
111. Ibid.

112. The tribals make their liquor from Ippe and Jeeluga leaves.

113. Ibid., p. 35.


115. Ibid., Pp. 36-38.


117. Ibid.


120. V.M. Nair, Girijan Revolt, Op. cit.


124. Ibid., p. 22.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid., p. 23.


136. Ibid.


138. Ibid.

139. V. Ramalingachari, Court Statement, Op.cit., p. 44.


142. Ibid.

143. Ibid.


148. Information from an interview.

149. The Deccan Chronicle, November 6, 1967 reported that while congressmen were running away the tribals shot at them and by mistake killed their own fellows. This version of the incident is fallacious. Even the Charge-sheer of N.C.C. Op.cit. says "a party of tribals was intercepted at Levidi by landlords headed by Medida Satyan who opened fire resulting in the death of two tribals", p. C. Subba Rao further stated that though "practically everyone in the area knew who fired on the procession... because of the culprits money and influence, the police were tardy in arresting them", in "Revolt in Srikakulam", Times of India, January 4, 1970.


152. Crime No. (Cr.No.) 3/70 of P.S. Parvatipura.


154. Ibid, Pp.66-67 and also see statements of Prosecution Witnesses in Naxalite Conspiracy Case.


156. Jamukula Katha is a form of folk art.


158. See Minutes of March and June meetings of Srikakulam Committee in Document, u-62, op.cit.


160. Ibid.

161. Ibid., p. 33.

162. Vide, p.237

163. Information from an interview.

164. For both the resolutions see Vyavasaya Viplavam...etc., Op.cit., Pp.34-37.

165. Charge Sheet of Cr.No.13/74, Hyderabad, p. 2.

166. Ibid., p. 13.


168. Ibid.


171. Ibid., p. 40.

172. For details of the theoretical differences between APCCCR and AICCCR on conducting Srikakulam struggle see Chapter VII.