# Left and National Movements in the Madras Presidency, 1930-47: A Study in Politics of Hegemony

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**In**
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by

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis entitled '***Left and National Movements in the Madras Presidency, 1930-47: A Study in Politics of Hegemony*'** has been carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Atlury Murali, Department of History, University of Hyderabad. The thesis or a part thereof has not been submitted for any other degree at this university or any other University.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled '***Left and National Movements in the Madras Presidency, 1930-47: A Study in Politics of Hegemony'*** submitted by Mr. I.Narasaiah for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, is a record of bona fide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

This dissertation has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other university or institution of learning for the award of any other degree.

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AICC | All India Congress Committee |
| AICSP | All India Congress Socialist Party |
| AIDWA | All India Democratic Women's Association |
| AIFB | All India Forward Bloc |
| AIFSU | All India Friends of Soviet Union |
| AIKS | All India Kisan Sabha |
| AIPWA | All India Progressive Writers' Association |
| AISF | All India Students Federation |
| AIWC | All India Women's Conference |
| AITUC | All India Trade Union Congress |
| AMS | Andhra Maha Sabha |
| APCC | Andhra Provincial Congress Committee |
| APCSP | Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party |
| APNM | Andhra Praja Natya Mandali |
| APSF | Andhra Provincial Students Federation |
| AU | Andhra University |
| APSF | Andhra Provincial Students Federation |
| BPCC | Bihar Provincial Congress Committee |
| BPKS | Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha |
| BHU | Benares Hindu University |
| CC | Central Committee |
| CDM | Civil Disobedience Movement |
| CID | Criminal Investigation Department |
| CLA | Central Legislative Assembly |
| Comintern | Communist International |
| CPGB | Communist Party of Great Britain |
| CPI | Communist Party of India |
| CPSU | Communist Party of Soviet Union |
| CSP | Congress Socialist Party |
| CWC | Congress Working Committee |

| | |
|---|---|
| DCC | District Congress Committee |
| DIR | Defense of India Rules |
| ECCI | Executive Committee of Communist International |
| FR | Fortnightly Report |
| GO | Government Order |
| HFSAP | History of Freedom Struggle Files, Andhra Pradesh |
| HSRA | Hindustan Socialist Republican Army |
| ILTDC | Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company |
| Imprecorr | International Press Correspondence |
| INA | Indian National Army |
| INC | Indian National Congress |
| IPTA | Indian People's Theatre Association |
| KDCC | Krishna District Congress Committee |
| KGF | Kolar Gold Fields |
| LPL | Labour Protection League |
| MCC | Meerut Conspiracy Case |
| MLA | Madras of Legislative Assembly |
| MSO | Madras Students Organization |
| NCO | Non-Cooperation Movement |
| NPR | Native Newspaper Reports |
| NSO | National Students Organization |
| NWFP | North West Frontier Province |
| PB | Polit Bureau |
| PC | Provincial Committee |
| PCC | Provincial Congress Committee |
| PCO | Provincial Committee Organizer |
| RIN | Royal Indian Navy |
| RSS | Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh |
| SCF | Scheduled Castes Federation |
| UNF | United National Front |

# Chapter 1
# Introduction

**Introduction:**

The study of Indian National Movement is one of the important themes for research in Modern Indian history. The period from 1930 to 1947 was very important in the history of Indian National Movement, because during this period several political parties and groups came into existence with far reaching impact on the political developments in the post-independence period. Apart from Congress, Congress Socialists, Communists, Forward Blocists and Royists worked within and outside the Congress for the advancement of the freedom struggle and simultaneously challenged the ideology and strategy of the Indian National Congress. Each group had their own ideology and strategy to carry on struggle for Independence and the nature of state in independent India.

The study of Communist movement in South India is a fascinating subject of enquiry. The study uses the theory of hegemony proposed by Antonio Gramsci and discusses how the left wing in the Indian National Congress struggles with the right wing Congress leadership and British Imperialism to achieve its hegemony over the Indian national movement and civil society. The study discusses the rise of leftist ideology, the formation of Socialist and Communist parties, the influence of national and international politics on the left movement, the united front strategy, the efforts of the communists to transform the Indian National Congress into a radical left wing political party, the failure of the left to transform the Congress and attempts of the left to build a radical alternative to the Congress party. The study also discusses how the left succeeded to spread its ideology in Andhra. The use of literature and theatre for the spread of leftist ideology to establish its cultural and ideological hegemony are also discussed in the study.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Madras Presidency was one of the most extensive of all the British territories in India except Burma. The Madras Presidency was surrounded on the West coast by the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and the State of Travencore and on the East Coast by the Bay of Bengal, Orissa, the Central Provinces, and the State of Hyderabad while the northern boundary is surrounded by the southernmost districts of the State of Bombay. The area of the

Madras Presidency was 141,705 square miles or 20,000 square miles larger than the United Kingdom.

Madras Presidency was divided into 26 districts. They were Ganjam, Vizagapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Nellore, Cuddapah, Kurnool, Bellary, Anantapur, Madras City, Chingleput, Chittoor, North Arcot, Selam, Coimbatore, South Arcot, Tanjore, Trichinopolly, Madhurai, Ramnad, Tinnevelly, the Nilagiris, Malabar and South Canara.[1] The present study focuses on the Andhra region of the Madras Presidency, for it is here that we see intense struggle for ideological hegemony among various political groups within the national movement.

The Telugu speaking districts of the former Madras Presidency that is the coastal districts of Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore, and the Rayalaseema districts of Anantapur, Kurnool, Cuddapah and Chittoor, have been taken as the Andhra region for the purpose of this study. The city of Madras, which was the head quarters of Madras Presidency, in which the above said districts were a part as well as the districts of Bellary and Ganjam, which are now outside Andhra Pradesh are also included as part of Andhra region, for the purpose of this work. The Telangana region of Hyderabad state, which is a part in present Andhra Pradesh and where the communists had put their ideology into practice, during 1946-51, has been omitted form the present study for practical reasons. Moreover, the history of left movement in Telangana had originated from a different political and economic situation, distinctly different from the British ruled Andhra region.[2] Since we have included Madras in our study, the history of these movements can broadly be related to the Madras Presidency, as Madras city was also the center of Left activities.

Like the other regions in India, Andhra too played an important role in India's struggle for independence. In Andhra, along with the Congress, the Communist Party played an important role in creating political and social consciousness among the people and making them ready to fight against the British imperialism on the one side

[1] G.T. Boag, *The Madras Presidency, 1881-1931,* Government of Madras, Madras, 1933, p.2.

[2] Barry Pavier (1981), Rajeswararao, C. (1972), Venkateswarao, D. (1988), Sundarayya, P. (1972), Pulla Reddy, C. (1968), Basavapunnaiah, M. (1972), Narayana Reddy, Ravi (1990), Mohan Ram (1973), Javeed Alam (1991), Rangarao, K. (1979), Dhanagare (1983), Thirumali, I (1996 and 2003), Thirumala Rao, J. (1988) and Varavararao, P. (1988) have described the various dimensions of Communist Movement in Telangana.

and against the landlords, moneylenders and industrialists on the other. In other words, while the Indian National Congress was invoking what Bipan Chandra calls the "primary contradiction" between the Indian people vs colonial state, the left articulated anti-colonial struggles, as a struggle against both the "primary contradiction" and the "secondary contradiction" reflected in the Indian society.[3]

A great deal has been written about the freedom struggle in Andhra. In all those works, the fight for independence has been conceptualized as a 'dual contest' between the Congress Party on the one hand and the 'Raj' on the other without taking other 'players' (Communists and other left groups) into account.[4] Separate studies are to be made to understand the role of peasantry, working class and agricultural labourers led by the Communist Party in the national movement in Andhra from 1920s to 1947. A careful study of the activities of Communist Party during the national movement reveals reasons for the electoral victories of communists and development of Communist Party as an alternative to the Congress Party in Andhra in the 1950s.

While the base for the communist strength in Andhra in the 1950s lay in their activities during the independence struggle, the existing works did not focus on this aspect of the communists. Most of the works on Communist movement in Andhra concentrated on the description of electoral performance of Communists[5], ideological debates and splits and the Maoist movements[6] in the post independence period and they did not discuss the factors that helped Communists gain strength in Andhra, in particular the character of hegemony that they sought to build in civil society.

In this study, an attempt has been made to discuss the activities of the Communist Party, which emerged in the early 1930s with the spread of socialist

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[3] Bipan Chandra, "Nationalist Historians' Interpretations of Indian National Movement", in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, & Romila Thapar (eds.), *Situating Indian History: For Sarvepalli Gopal*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, p.218. Also see Kapil Kumar (Ed), *Congress and Classes: Nationalism, Workers and Peasants*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1988, pp.xi-xii.

[4] M.Venkatarangayya, *Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol. IV, Hyderabad, 1974; Regani Sarojini, *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh*, Hyderabad, 1972; B.Kesava Narayana, *Political and Social Factors in Andhra,1900-1956*, Vijayawada, 1976; B.Seshagiri Rao, *Freedom Movement in Guntur District, 1920-1947*, Prasanna Publications, Ongole. No date.

[5] Selig S. Harrison, "Caste and the Andhra Communists", *American Political Science Review*, 1956; *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*, OUP, Madras, 1965, Mohan Ram, *Indian Communism: Split within a Split*, Vikas, Delhi, 1969; and "The Communist Movement in Andhra Pradesh" in Paul R. Brass & Marcus F. Franda (ed), *Radical Politics in South Asia*, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1973, pp. 281-321.

ideology under the impact of the socialist experience in Soviet Russia and the effect of economic depression in the early 1930s. Our study covers the history of the movement in Andhra from the 1920s to 1947. Concentrating on Andhra region we have studied the rise of leftist ideology, formation of Communist Party, the impact of the decisions of Communist International on the Communist movement, the United Front strategy of Communists, the role in workers' and peasants' movements as well as youth and agricultural labourers' movements, activities during the Second World War and the response to Quit India movement. The study also brings out the role of Communists in the literary and cultural fields in Andhra, for the study of politics of hegemony invariably brings into focus the culture and consciousness.

The study covers the period from 1930-1947 and discusses the role of Communists in the national movement in Andhra. The branch of Communist party was formed in Andhra in 1934. However, the study discusses the factors that helped for the growth of leftist ideology in Andhra since 1930. The study also discusses the political developments that took place in the 1920s, for they helped the origin and growth of leftist ideas in Andhra. The study ends with the attainment of independence in 1947. The period also signifies the end of a stage in the communist party's strategy. The strategy of CPI under the period of study was called as a strategy of united front with Congress. However, after 1947, the CPI changed its strategy and began armed revolution to overthrow the existing government and to establish the dictatorship of proletariat. The present study covers the activities of CPI in Andhra until 1947, with special reference to their role in the struggle for independence.

Madras was one of the biggest Indian provinces consisting of people from five major linguistic regions. As per 1921 Census, the Madras Province consisted of 17.5 million Tamil and 16 million Telugu speaking people. Approximately 3.5 million Malayalam speakers, 1.5 million each from Oriya and Kenerese speaking areas were also included in the Madras Presidency.[7]

The establishment of modern educational institutions and growth of modern western education in India contributed for the growth of political movements in India. The ideas of liberalism, nationalism and democracy left their impact on the political development of the country. Madras was also among the leading Indian provinces in

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[6] Shanta Sinha, *Maoists in Andhra Pradesh,* Gain Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989.
[7] D.A.Washbrooke, The *Emergence of Provincial Politics, The Madras Presidency, 1870-1920,* Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1977, p.12.

the development of western education, which helped for the development of national movement in India. The educated youth of the Madras Presidency played an active role in the national movement for independence. P. Anandacharlu, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, S. Radhakrishnan, M. Ananthasayanam Iyengar, S. Satyamurthy, T. Prakasam, Prattabhi Sitaramaiah, K. Nageswararao, K. Venkatappaiah and others played an important role in the activities of Indian National Congress in Madras Presidency.

The period following the First World War was crucial in the history of Indian national movement. It was in this period that the political character of the Indian National Congress shifted from that of a small liberal constitutional body to that of a movement with a 'mass' character rooted more firmly in an active petty bourgeois cadre that was capable of sporadic mobilisation of sections of the peasantry. At another level, long before the victory of the October Revolution in Russia, the leaders of the Indian National Congress had begun to establish contacts with the socialist international and the groups working in different countries. Some of the Indian leaders had contacts with Socialists in Britain: Dadabhai Nouroji was friendly with Hyndman, Gokhale with Webbs, Tilak with Lansbury, and Lajapathi Roy with Colonel Wedgwood.[8] It would seem however that the British socialists and the Labour party were viewed by Indian leaders not so much as champions of British working class but as possible inspiration or support for extracting constitutional reforms from the British Government.

The October Revolution of 1917 changed the whole international situation and created new and more favourable conditions for the formation of the third international. The first meeting of the Comintern was organised at Petrograd in 1918, at the initiative taken by V.I. Lenin. The first Congress of the Comintern declared its support to the struggles of the proletariat in the imperialist countries and the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples in the colonies and semi-colonies to facilitate the final break down of the imperialist world system.[9]

The story of the birth of leftist ideology and left movement in India was intrinsically linked to the life of M.N. Roy. Born in 1889 in a village in 24-paraganas

[8] B.R.Nanda, "Socialism in India: A Retrospect", in B.R.Nanda (ed), *Socialism in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, first pub.1972, reprint, 1991, p.1 also see Madhu Limaye, *Socialist Communist Interaction in India, Ajanta* Publications, Delhi, 1991, p.5.

district of Bengal, Narendranadh Bhattacharya (M.N.Roy) actively participated in the national movement during the Swadeshi movement. Later he was arrested in Howrah gang case in 1910. Wandering in search of arms, he reached San Francisco, from where he went to Mexico and made friends with a Russian Communist, Borodin. He formed the Communist Party of Mexico and was invited by Lenin to visit Soviet Russia to participate in the Second Congress of Comintern in July 1920. M.N.Roy, Evelyn Roy, Abani Mukherjee and M.P.B.T. Acharya attended this second Congress of the Comintern.

It was at the second congress of the Comintern, in 1920, that Lenin's theses on the national and colonial question was adopted, that laid down that the communist international should collaborate with the revolutionary movements in the colonies and backward countries, and even form an alliance with them.

M.N.Roy disagreed with Lenin's theses on colonies and said that the existing bourgeois democratic movement was middle class and did not represent the interests of the masses. Therefore, the Comintern should not lend support to the bourgeois democratic movement. In his opinion, instead, the newly formed communist parties should be supported as they would not only liberate the country but also gradually lead it to the next stage of social revolution.

Guided by the Comintern, M.N.Roy had started publishing a paper *The vanguard of Indian independence*. M.N. Roy and others formed the Communist Party of India in Tashkent on 17 October 1920.[10] M.N.Roy dispatched Nalini Gupta to India with a view to establish contacts with Indian leaders and form the Communist Party in India.

In 1921, when non-cooperation was still at its height, a young man from Bombay named Sripada Amrita Dange wrote a pamphlet called *Gandhi Vs Lenin* in which he expressed approval for the ideas of Lenin in preference to those of Gandhi.[11] Dange had initially joined in the non-cooperation movement but later, disagreeing

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[9] Sashi Bhairathi, *Communism and Nationalism: A Study in Interrelationship, 1920-1947,* Anamika Prakashan, Delhi, 1987, p.23.

[10] John Patrick Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M.N.Roy and Comintern Policy 1920-1939,* Princeton University press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1971, pp.20-24.

[11] Mohitsen (Ed), *Indian Communism: Life and Work of S.A.Dange,* Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1992, p.10.

with the Gandhian ideas, left the movement. At about the same time, in 1921, the Communist Manifesto was translated and published in Bengali and Marathi.

Dange started a weekly in English called *Socialist* from Bombay in 1922. It was the first regular publication in the country that devoted itself exclusively to the dissemination of Marxist ideas as well as news about Marxist activities in India. Slowly the activities of Dange spread in Bombay, joined by the other activists like S.V.Ghate,[12] R.S.Nimbkar, K.N.Joglekar, and S.S.Mirajkar.

A review of Dange's *Gandhi Vs Lenin* was published in *Bombay Chronicle* in June 1922. It was this review, which prompted Colonel Cicil Keye to write down the name of Dange in his notebook. Probably M.N.Roy also learned about Dange from this review. In September 1922, Dange and M.N.Roy came into contact with each other. Dange requested Roy to send propaganda material.

During this time, in South India, especially in Madras, Singaravelu was moving towards communism. In his speech in the Gaya session of the Indian National congress in 1922 Singaravelu declared himself as a communist. Singaravelu also established contacts with S.A. Dange of Bombay. Though Singaravelu, an associate of Dange had also established contacts with Roy, both Dange and Singaravelu rejected Roy's invitation to them to participate in Comintern conferences. Singaravelu was critical of communists abroad as foreign agents.

In Bengal, Muzaffar Ahmed was the moving spirit behind the formation of Communist nucleus in the province. In 1921, when Nalini Gupta came to India, he met Muzaffar Ahmed. Unlike Dange and Singaravelu, Muzaffar Ahmed was an ardent champion of Internationalism from the very beginning.

In September 1922, Dange announced the formation of Indian Socialist Labour Party of the Indian National Congress in the *Socialist* of 16 September 1922. Roy welcomed Dange's effort to form a party and considered it a 'timely one step'. In his letter to Dange, Roy suggested that the party must have an inoffensive name i.e.,

[12] S.V.Ghate (1896-1970) was first General Secretary of Communist Party of India formed in Kanpur in 1925; active in the organization of Bombay working class during 1924-28; one of the principal accused in Meerut Conspiracy Case; guiding light of communist movement in South India from 1936. See, *S.V.Ghate: Our First General Secretary: A Memorial Volume*, Communist Party of India, New Delhi, 1971.

People's party, so that communists may not remain isolated from the mass movement. This was to provide legal cover to the communist party.

In September 1922, M.N.Roy proposed a preliminary conference in Europe with important communists, desirous of forming a mass party. In his letters to Singaravelu and Dange, Roy requested them to come to Europe for the proposed conference. However, both Dange and Singaravelu did not approve Roy's idea of holding a conference in Europe at that time. Singaravelu in a letter to Dange, dated 3 February 1923 wrote that there was a good deal of work to be done in India and that it was impossible to cross Indian frontiers. In his letter to Singaravelu, Dange criticised the conference as a 'mad venture'.

While M.N.Roy was making efforts to hold a conference in Europe, Singaravelu was trying to hold a conference in India for forming a mass party. He also invited Dange to come over to Madras on 30 March 1923 to inaugurate the party. The conference was held at the end of 1923. However, the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan was inaugurated on the first of 1 May 1923 itself.[13] Dange of course, did not attend the conference.

Meanwhile the activities of the communists attracted the attention of the government. The Kanpur conspiracy case was launched on 27 Feb 1924, which continued till April 1924. S.A.Dange, Shoukat Osmani, Muzaffar Ahmed, Nalini Gupta, Ghulam Hussain, Singaravelu, R.L.Sharma and M.N.Roy were charged in the court of the district magistrate, Kanpur under the section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code. They were accused of having entered into a conspiracy to establish in British India, a branch of Communist International with the aim of depriving the king of his sovereignty of India. Out of the eight accused, S.A. Dange, Shoukat Osmani, Muzaffar Ahmed and Nalini Gupta were convicted to four years imprisonment each; Singaravelu was left out because of old age and ill health; Ghulam Hussain had confessed guilt and asked for mercy, and R.L.Sharma had gone over to the French territory Pondichery while M.N.Roy was in Europe. The Kanpoor conspiracy case was considered to be a serious blow to the young communist movement in India.

[13] K. Murugesan, & C.S.Subramanyam, *Singaravelu- First Communist in South India,* People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1975, pp.40-42.

During the Kanpoor conspiracy case, the idea for founding a 'legal' communist party came from the left oriented congressmen like Satyabhaktha and Hasrat Mohani. The first Indian conference for organising the communist party was held in Kanpur on 26 December 1925, concurrently with the annual session of the Indian National Congress. The conference was held under the initiative of Satyabhaktha, a former revolutionary and a journalist. Satyabhaktha came to Kanpur and conducted a vigorous campaign in newspapers for the release of the accused in the Kanpur conspiracy case. From the proceedings of the trail he concluded that to advocate communism was not in itself illegal and that a communist party could exist without engaging in activities, which the government could regard as treasonable. Satyabhaktha's idea was to form a legally acceptable Indian Communist Party. He convened the conference on 26 December 1925. The conference was presided over by Singaravelu Chettiyar. Due to differences with other communist leaders over the name of the party and affiliation of the party to the Comintern Satyabhaktha left the conference in the middle. However, Satyabhaktha must be given due credit for his success in collecting for the first time all the important communist leaders at Kanpur. The conference officially declared the formation of Communist Party of India and elected J.P.Bagerhatta and S.V.Ghate as Joint Secretaries.[14] Though the communist party was formed in 1925, the full pledged activities of the party in all over India were started only after the release of prisoners in the Meerut Conspiracy Case, in the early 1930s.

The History of the Communist movement in the Madras Presidency was somewhat distinct from the Communist movement in other parts of India. Unlike Bombay, Kanpur and other north Indian towns, where the Communist Party was formed in 1925,[15] in Madras the Communist Party was formed only in 1934. There were several contributing factors for the emergence of CPI in the Madras Presidency. The October Revolution of 1917 exerted a great influence on the youth. The failure of Non-cooperation movement, Economic Depression of 1929-30 and the consequent fall in prices of agricultural goods, the spread of socialist ideas through literature and the influence of revolutionary terrorists of northern India had their influence on the formation of a branch of Communist Party of India in the Madras Presidency.

[14] Harikishan Singh Surjeet, *An Outline History of the Communist Movement in India,* National Book Center, New Delhi, 1993, p.14.

However, it was with the failure of the Civil Disobedience movement that the youth dissatisfied with the Congress politics turned towards Communism. Thus the Communist Party was formed in 1934.

Before 1934, the Communist Party of India made several attempts to spread its influence and form its branch in the Madras Presidency. In 1931, the Central Committee of Communist Party of India sent Amir Hyder Khan, a Moscow trained Communist and an absconder in the Meerut Conspiracy Case (MCC) to Madras to form its branch.[16] Amir Hyder Khan came to Madras and changed his name as Shankar and started his activities among the workers. He started a workers union, called *Young Workers League* in Madras, in 1932. However, the government acted swiftly and arrested him in May 1932 and with that the activities of *Young Workers League* came to a premature end.[17] Before his arrest, Amir Hyder Khan established contacts with Putchalapalli Sundarayya, (P.Sundara Rami Reddy) a student, studying Intermediate in Madras Loyola College. Kambhampati Satyanarayana and V.K.Narasimhan were also studying at the Loyola College. It was these students and others like Bhashyam, Manikyam and Rajavadivelu, who after the arrest of Amir Hyder Khan, revived and carried out the activities of the *Young workers League***.** When Amir Hyder Khan was in jail, P.Sundarayya travelled in several places in Madras Presidency and encouraged the young *satyagrahis* who were dissatisfied with the suspension of Civil Disobedience movement, to join in the Communist Party of India After his release from jail in July 1934,[18] Amir Hyder Khan made several attempts to form a branch of Communist Party of India in Madras Presidency. However, he was again arrested in September 1934.[19] After the arrest of Amir Hyder Khan, it was P.Sundarayya who took initiative in forming the Provincial Committee of Communist Party of India in Madras and acted as its Secretary.[20]

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[15] Bibekbrata Sarkar, *Nationalism and Marxism in India: Quest for People or Power (1920-1940),* Kalinga Publications, Delhi, 1990, p.54.

[16] Amir Hyder Khan, *Ãthma Katha (Autobiography),* Translated into Telugu by V.Srihari as *Dakshina Bhãrata Dêsamlô Communist Pãrty Prãrambhamu* (Beginning of Communist Party of India in South India), Prajasakthi Book House, First edition 1983, Second edition 1997, Vijayawada, p.13.

[17] *Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency,* Report of the Superintendent of Police, S.B.C.I.D., Govt of Madras to Home Department, Govt. of Madras, dated 20-5-1935, *Selected Extracts From the Secret Files,* in *History of Freedom Struggle Files Andhra Pradesh,* Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad, p.4535.

[18] *Ibid.* Also see, P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Nã Payanam* (Autobiography), (Telugu) Part 1, Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, First edition, 1986, Third edition, 1994, p.69.

[19] *Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, Op.Cit,* p.4535. Also see P.Sundarayya, *Op.Cit*., p.72.

[20] *Ibid.*

P.Sundarayya took active part in the formation of Communist Party of India in the Madras Presidency. He met several Congress leaders and Youth Congress Socialists and convinced them to join the C.P.I. He travelled in the districts of Andhra and met several people, who were dissatisfied with the Gandhian methods of struggle and convinced them to join the C.P.I. In the late 1930s, with the initiative taken by Sundarayya, the Congress Socialists from Kerala like E.M.S.Namboodiripad., A.K.Gopalan, P.Krishna Pillai and others joined the ranks of CPI. Putchalapalli Sundarayya, Chandra Rajeswara Rao, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Tanikella Venkata Chalapathi, Alluri Satyanarayana, Polepeddi Narasimha Murthi, Pulupula Venkata Sivaiah, Tummala Venkatramaiah, Nanduri Prasadarao, Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, Katragadda Balakrishna, Uddaraju Ramaraju (Ramam), Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, Pendyala Lokanadham, Inturi Venkateswararao, Tarimela Nagi Reddy, Vidwan Viswam, Idukallu Sadasivan, and Chundi Jagannadham from Andhra region; P.Ramamurthi, B.Srinivasarao, P.Jeevanandam, K.Murugeshan and A.S.K.Iyyengar from Tamilnadu region and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A.K.Gopalan, P.Krishna Pillai, K.Damodaran and N.C.Sekhar from Kerala region were the early activists that have contributed to the development of Communist Party of India in the Madras Presidency.

In this study the activities of CPI are analysed using the Gramscian theory of hegemony. Gramsci put forward his theory of hegemony in the wake of rise of Nazism and Fascism in Europe and the retreat of revolutionary movements in Italy and other European countries at a time when people expected a series of revolutions in Europe after the Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917. The fall of Communism in Western Europe and rise of Fascism and Nazism in Italy and Germany forced him to think for alternative theories to be followed by the Communist parties in Western Europe. After studying the rise of Fascism, he prepared a new theory i.e., theory of hegemony, which consists not only the economic sphere but also other spheres of influence (cultural and ideological) in which the hegemony of the proletariat has to be established for the success of revolution.

According to Gramsci hegemony is the `spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group [i.e. class]; this consent is `historically' caused by the

prestige (and consequently confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.[21]

Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony in the Prison Notebooks as part of his elaboration of a strategy for revolution in situations where the state holds power in reserve, through the institutions of civil society, rather than through force alone. This strategy he calls `war of position', by contrast with the `war of movement' or direct assault on the state. The war of position entails a process of the establishment of hegemony during what might be a long period before the seizure of state power by the revolutionaries.

The activities of CPI, and the formation of peasants and workers unions, youth and women's organizations, literary and theatre associations, ideological and political training through training camps and summer schools, publication of books and newspapers, and the spread of new social ideas and new political consciousness through songs, dramas, folk arts, and literature were discussed using the theoretical tool spelled out above. In particular, the Gramscian theory of hegemony is crucial for our study of the politics of hegemony. The activities of Communists were located within the framework of an attempt to establish their hegemony over the civil society and national movement.

**Review of Literature**

A number of works have been published giving an account of the freedom struggle and Communist movement in India, both at the regional and all India levels. However, those studies generally deal with the prominent events and personalities of the movements. In particular, strategic considerations have generally been at the centre of most of the studies of South Asian Communism. The earliest publications dating from the cold war era retained the former imperial government's fixation with the 'Bolshevik conspiracy'. Set within the context of post-second world war globalisation of American foreign policy they were concerned mainly with the 'Communist threat' to the newly emerged independent countries. The degree of dependence and responsiveness of South Asian Communism, in particular the Communist Party of India, to directions from Moscow received special attention.

[21] Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (Ed), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci,* Orient Longman, Chennai, 1996, Reprint 1998, p.12.

*The Communist Party of India: A Short History*[22] by M.R.Masani is one of the earliest works on the Communist movement in India. Masani, an admirer of Liberal Socialism and a prominent member of Congress Socialist Party, criticized the Communists as *Trozen Horses* and followers of Russia. Masani describes, "The activities and fortunes of the Indian Communist Party are not directly inspired or affected by the condition of the Indian people, their poverty or their prosperity, but by the fortunes of the Soviet dictatorship of which they are an appendage". The Soviet help to CPI was described as intervention of USSR in the internal affairs of India. Describing USSR as the fatherland of Communism, Masani criticized the shift in the strategy of communists during the Second World War from imperialist war to people's war as a strategy to save the fatherland of socialism, USSR.

Some of the writers on Indian communist movement treated it as a foreign conspiracy or a ramification of the International Communist movement. Overstreet and Windmiller speak of the 'dual environment of the communist party of India. According to the authors the CPI represented an element of a national political community and also of the international communist community, and functioned in two environments. They conclude that the guidance from Comintern prevented the growth of CPI as a strong opposition to the Congress in India.[23] Victor, M.Fic[24] describes the Communist Party of India as an instrument to implement the strategy of Russia by violence. David N. Druhe also describes the influence of Soviet Union on the policies of CPI prior to 1947. In the pattern of other studies he has made no attempt to evaluate the impact of internal political dimensions on the policies of CPI.[25]

Similarly, John H. Kautsky in his book *Moscow and the Communist Party of India*[26] attempts to trace the Indian Communist Party's strategy and its relation with Moscow and Peking. Kautsky amply demonstrates that for all its local deviationism, the CPI has depended on the Cominform and ultimately Soviet Union for directions particularly in settling its internal dislocations. Although this book is not intended to

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[22] M.R.Masani, *The Communist Party of India: A Short History*, Derek Versceh, London, 1954.
[23] Gene D. Overstreet and Marshal Windmiller, *Communism in India*, The Perennial Press, Bombay, 1959
[24] Victor M. Fic, *Peaceful Transition to Communism in Kerala*, Nachiketa Publications, Bombay, 1969.
[25] David N. Druhe, *Soviet Russia and Indian Communism*, Bookman Associates, New York, 1959.
[26] John H. Kautsky, *Moscow and the Communist Party of India: A Study in the Postwar Evolution of International Communist Strategy*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1956.

be a history of CPI, perhaps greater attention to the context of important events in India would have provided a different perspective. The cabinet mission of 1946 and the Mountbatten Plan of 1947 are mentioned, only as having activated responses in the Communist Press and alterations in the CPI tactics. Their importance to India's future has not been brought out. Kautsky isolates CPI from Indian History and thus makes his book understandable only to those with intimate knowledge of Indian events. Because of this kind of a political motivation, the author was interested on the external influences rather than internal influences in the shaping of polices of the CPI. Mohan Ram[27] takes a similar view of the communist movement. He writes, "Distinctively western in origin, the communist movement in pre-independence India was a colonial adjunct of the Communist Party of Great Britain which in turn was suborned to Moscow"[28]. Mohan Ram assumed that splits in the Communist Party of India were because of the betrayal of the CPI to the revolutionary traditions of the Telangana movement of 1940s by United CPI and by CPI (M) in 1967. He identifies the Andhra Communists led by T.Nagireddy as the most revolutionary.[29] Bhabani sen Gupata[30] in his *Communism in Indian Politics,* attempts to place Indian Communism in the wider context of India's political culture, as it emerged and evolved after independence, and traces the international and national factors and constraints affecting its growth and spread.

Another group of historians, sympathetic to the left politics studied the Communist movement in India, mainly concentrating on the strategic failures or tactical mistakes done by the communists. For them the notion of united front has been the point of departure in their historiographical perspective. They sought to explain the failure of Indian communists to hegemonize the national movement or at least to become a significant force during the period 1925-1947, from the point of view of communists' failure in implementing or developing the united front strategy.

Contrary to the above-mentioned studies, Javeed Alam argues that the activities of CPI in India were determined by the internal political situation and

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[27] Mohan Ram, *Indian Communism: Split Within a Split,* Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1969.
[28] *Ibid,* p.1.
[29] Mohan Ram, *Maoism in India,* Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1971.
[30] Bhabani Sen Gupta, *Communism in Indian Politics,* Young Asia Publications, New Delhi, 1978.

policies of State towards CPI. The author argues that the State had weakened the CPI by repression and appropriation of some of its policies.[31]

Sashi Joshi and Bhagvan Josh[32] in their three volume book, Struggle for Hegemony in India, traces the history of left movements and its relation with the freedom struggle in India and the struggles of the left to establish its hegemony over the national movement. The authors view the Congress Party and the left movement as two components of same the totality, each moving to occupy the space left vacant by the other. In their analysis of the structure and character of the movements, the authors try to locate the historical processes of colonial India in the light of Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony', though the concept of hegemony used in their analysis is in much variance with the original idea of Antonio Gramsci. The authors in their voluminous work failed to discuss the role played by the left to overthrow the ideological hegemony of the bourgeois society. Without considering struggles for ideological hegemony and the propagation of leftist ideas, the authors discussed the political events and wrongly concluded that the left in India has failed to establish its hegemony over the national movement.

Sanjay Seth discusses the history of Marxism in India starting with the Marxist theorists such as M.N. Roy and S. A. Dange in the 1920's and tries to link class struggle with the nationalist struggle. Seth concludes that the differences of CPI with nationalist forces and its non-participation in the major political movements launched by bourgeois nationalist forces were the reasons for the marginalization of CPI in the nationalist politics.[33]

Sankar Ghose[34] deals with the history of socialist and communist groups and trends of thought in India till 1970. He traces the ideas and programmes of early nationalist economists, Gandhi, M.N. Roy, Nehru, subsequent congress party tendencies represented by Indira Gandhi, various non-communist socialist parties and the Indian communists. The author, who was a practitioner of law in the Supreme

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[31] Javeed Alam, "State and the Making of Communist Politics in India, 1947-57", *Economic and Political Weekly,* 9th November 1991, pp.2573-2583.

[32] Sashi Joshi, *Struggle for Hegemony in India, 1920-1947, The Colonial State, The Left and The National Movement*, Vol.I-III, *1920-47,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992.

[33] Sanjay Seth, *Marxist Theory and Nationalist Politics: A Case Study of Colonial India,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1995.

[34] Sankar Ghose, *Socialism and Communism in India,* Allied Publishers, Calcutta, 1971.

Court of India, presents the arguments of each group in their own terms and left most of the questions unanswered.

K.Damodaran in his *Documented History of Communist Party of India*, views the period from 1929-1934 as the period of unbridled sectarianism, which completely isolated the CPI from the mainstream of the anti-imperialist movement and reduced it to a few mutually quarrelling groups. Sobanlal Datta Gupta[35] and Sudipta Kaviraj also follow a similar approach and criticises the politics of CPI. They argue that instead of following Lenin, the Indian Communists could have followed M.N.Roy. An ideological controversy within CPI was also discussed in this study.

Selig S. Harrison[36] in his study discussed about the early victories of the CPI in electoral politics in Andhra and the nature of the participation in the CPI activities as well as the Caste domination in Communist Parties. Due to his political motivation, Harrison tried to underestimate the influence of communism in Andhra by attributing its growth to the 'successful mobilization of caste and regional patriotism'.

T. J. Nossiter discussed experience of Indian communist parties in elections and coalition governments in the states of Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal. Nossiter, in his study, argues that the regional communist leaders have pursued a generally moderate and parliamentary path and have owed part of their success to their identification with regional aspirations and antipathy to the central government. Sympathetic to the situation of Kerala's communists, Nossiter sees them as making a 'creative contribution to the pool of applied communism'.[37]

Ross Mallick provides a comprehensive and a critical evaluation of the rise of the communist movement in India and the subsequent establishment of an elected communist government in the state of West Bengal. He provides quite a scorching critique of the Communist Party politics in India and argues that the orientation of communist politics has undergone a series of transformations, from a revolutionary

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[35] Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, *Comintern, India and the Colonial Question 1920-37,* K.P. Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, 1980.
[36] Selig S. Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1965.
[37] T. J. Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation,* Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982,

movement, to a reformist parliamentary party, to a party government edifice in West Bengal.[38]

Irfan Habib[39] comparing the Communist movements in China and India says that unlike the Chinese Left, the Indian communists had to face a centralised colonial state. They had to grapple with an extremely complex and heterogeneous society, fragmented by caste, language and religious differences; and they had to contend with a bourgeoise that was for more developed and sophisticated than in any other Asian country. However, not withstanding all this, he argues that the Indian communists achieved less than their historical potential and they did so because of serious strategic and tactical mistakes.

Shashi Bhairathi[40] argues that the communist movement in India did not arise as a foreign conspiracy or a ramification of Internationalism. Rather it grew as a result of the efforts of those Indian revolutionaries, who started groping in search of an alternative ideology and a new form of struggle following their disillusionment with the leadership of nationalist movement in the wake of sudden withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement.

Literary and theatre movements organized under the auspices of CPI also attracted the attention of scholars. Hafeez Malik in his brilliant essay on the Marxist Literary Movement traces the history of cultural movements organized by the Communists in India and Pakistan. A special focus was made, in this study, on the contribution of Urdu writers for the growth of leftist ideology in India and Pakistan and the disintegration of cultural movement after the partition of India.[41]

Amit Kumar Gupta provided a brilliant analysis of agrarian revolts in India organized by communists and Kisan activists.[42] Gupta organized the issues and events

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[38] Ross Mallick, *Indian Communism: Opposition, Collaboration and Institutionalization,* Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994; *Development Policy of a Communist Government: West Bengal Since 1977*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

[39] Irfan Habib, "The Left and the Indian National Movement", *Social Scientist,* Vol.27, Nos.5-6, May-June 1998, pp.3-33.

[40] Sashi Bairathi, *Communism and Nationalism in India: A Study of Inter Relationship, 1919-1947,* Anamika Prakashan, Delhi, 1987.

[41] Hafeez Malik, "The Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, August 1967, pp.649-664.

[42] Amit Kumar Gupta, *The Agrarian Drama: The Leftists and the Rural Poor in India, 1934-1951,* Manohar, New Delhi, 1996.

thematically within a chronological framework. Gupta's use of theatrical metaphor to organize the facts is a valuable element of this book.

Dilip M.Menon[43] traces the social history of communism in Malabar and looks at how the ideology was transformed into a doctrine of caste equality, as national policies were reshaped by local circumstances and tinged by pragmatism. This book focuses on the erstwhile region of Malabar, the northern part of Kerala, which was the bastion of Communist movement.

Madhu Limaye[44] in his *Socialist Communist Interaction in India* describes the interaction between two highly significant political movements in the country – Socialism and Communism. He warns that unless both come together and take drastic steps towards the creation of a new movement and a broad based party of socialist democracy or democratic socialism, Socialism would be wholly marginalised.

Maoist movements have also attracted much attention, generating their own specialist publications. The works of Sumanta Banerjee,[45] Manoranjan Mohanty,[46] Mohan Ram,[47] Asish Kumar Roy,[48] Biplab Dasgupta,[49] and Shantha Sinha[50] are leading examples of this perspective.

The works of J.P.Haithcox,[51] V.B.Sinha,[52] Chandrika Singh,[53] Pankaj Kumar,[54] Bibekbrata Sarkar,[55] K.N.Panikkar[56] and Jairus Banaji[57] also focus on the

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[43] Dilip M. Menon, *Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India, Malabar, 1900-1948*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994.
[44] Madhu Limaye, *Socialist Communist Interaction in India,* Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1991.
[45] Sumanta Benerjee, *India's Simmering Revolution: The Naxalite Uprising,* Select Book Service Syndicate, New Delhi, 1984.
[46] Manoranjan Mohanty, *Revolutionary Terrorism: A Study of Maoist Movement in India,* Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1977.
[47] Mohan Ram, *Maoism in India,* Vikas Publications, Publications, Delhi, 1971.
[48] Asish Kumar Roy, *The Spring Thunder and After: A Survey of the Maoist and Ultra-Leftist Movements in India, 1962-75,* South Asia Books, Columbia, 1975.
[49] Biplab Das Gupta, *The Naxalite Movement,* Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1974.
[50] Shanta Sinha, *Maoists in Andhra Pradesh,* (With a forward by Bipan Chandra), Gain Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989.
[51] J.P.Haith Cox, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M.N.Roy and Comintern Policy, 1920-1939,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1971.
[52] V.B.Sinha, *The Red Rebel in India: A Study of Communist Strategy and Tactics,* Associated Publishing House, New Delhi, 1968.
[53] Chandrika Singh, *Communist and Socialist Movement in India,* Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1987.
[54] Pankaj Kumar, *Communist Movement in India,* Criterion Publications, New Delhi, 1989.
[55] Bibekbrata Sarkar, *Nationalism and Marxism in India: Quest for People and Power, 1920-1940,* Kalinga Publications, Delhi, 1990.
[56] K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *National and Left Movements in India,* Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980.

history of Communist movement in India and its relation to the anti-colonial struggle. However, those works mainly deals with Communist movement in the all India level. They did not give much information about the Communist movement in South India.

As per South India, the works dealing with the nationalist movement and other works by the participants in the Communist Movement offer general information about the Communist movement in Madras Presidency, but without any detailed exposition of the history of Communist Movement in Madras Presidency. E.M.S.Namboodiripad's ***How I Became A Communist***[58] gives a vivid account of the nationalist movement and the activities of Congress Socialists in South India. In this book the author described his disagreement with the Congress and Congress Socialists and also describes how finally he transformed to a Communist. A.K.Gopalan in his ***In the Cause of the People Reminiscences***[59] described the transformation of Congress Socialist Party into Communist Party in Kerala. However, these two works naturally deals with the emergence of Communist Party in Kerala region. They did not cover the activities of Communist Party in the entire Madras Presidency. M.Venkatarangaiya's ***Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh ((Andhra) Vol.'s IV,***[60] is an extensive work on the course of events during the national movement pertaining to the Andhra region and contained several documents on the subject. However, this study is also not a comprehensive and analytical to the present topic. Sarojini Regani's ***Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh***[61] is also confined to the important events in the national movement. Kambhampati Satyanarayana's ***Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra***[62] gives a detailed account of the activities of Communists in Andhra. It deals only the beginning of the Communist Party in Andhra and its activities up to 1936. Another work ***Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra*** written by Y.V.Krishna Rao and others[63] gives a

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[57] Jairus Banaji, "The Comintern and Indian Nationalism", in K.N.Panikkar (ed.), *National and Left Movements in India*, pp.213-265.

[58] E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *How I Became A Communist,* Translated from Malayalam by P.K.Nayar, Chinta Publications, Trivandrum, 1976.

[59] A.K.Gopalan, *In the Cause of The People (Reminiscences),* Orient Longman Ltd, Madras, 1973.

[60] M.Venkatarangiya, *Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)* Vol.IV, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1974.

[61] Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh,* Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1972.

[62] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra,* (Telugu) Part-1, Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, first edition 1983, Second edition 1984.

[63] Y.V.Krishnarao, Tummala Venkatramaiah, Parakala Pattabhi Ramarao and Yetukuri Balarama Murthi, *Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra,* (Telugu) Part-2, 1936-42, Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1988.

descriptive account of the activities of the Communist Party. But it was also limited to Andhra area. Others like ***Fight For Freedom*** by N.G.Ranga,[64] ***Nenu Na Desam*** by Darisi Chenchaiah,[65] ***Gadachina Rojulu*** by P.Thirumala Rao,[66] ***Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*** by P.Sundarayya,[67] and ***Porata Pathamlo Nenu*** by Pratapa Ramasubbaiah[68] also gives a few references on the activities of Communist movement in Andhra. Except these fragmentary references so far no comprehensive work has been carried out on the history of Communist movement in Madras Presidency. Separate studies are essential to fill the gap that exists in understanding the Communist Movement in Madras Presidency.

**Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of our study is to analyse the major national and international forces that influenced the growth of Communist ideology in Madras Presidency and the efforts of the Left wing in India to establish its hegemony over the national movement and civil society. At the national level, we examine how far the failure of Civil Disobedience movement and the growing unrest among the peasantry due to the effects of Economic Depression of 1929-30, contributed for the spread of Communism in the Madras Presidency, To what extent did the Russian Revolution inspire the people to move towards Communism? What is the impact of the October Revolution on the literary production and how the creative literature shaped the consciousness of the people and made them sympathetic towards Communism? What were the relations between CPI and other nationalist forces during the early years of its formation in Andhra and how the communists differed with the Congress and Congress Socialists? What were the factors responsible for the adaptation of united front tactics by the CPI and its effects on the political developments in India? Did the United front policy contribute to the transformation of Indian National Congress? What was the attitude of CPI towards the provincial governments formed in 1937? How the CPI tried to establish its hegemony over the national movement? What was the attitude of INC towards CPI? What was the stand of communists during the beginning of Second World War? What were the factors responsible for the shift of CPI's policy towards the War? What were the activities taken up by the CPI to mobilize people on class lines against the colonial government, to expose bourgeois leadership and to establish Left ideological hegemony over the national movement

[64] N.G.Ranga, *Fight For Freedom*, S. Chand and Company, Delhi, 1968.
[65] Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, (Telugu) Andhra Grandha Mandali, Vijayawada, 1967.
[66] P.Thirumala Rao, *Gadachina Rojulu*, (Telugu) Cultural Renaissance Society of India, Hyderabad, 1966.
[67] P.Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, Part 1.

and civil society? What were the major changes in the policies and programmes of CPI during 1934-47? Were they really influenced by International factors or national political conditions? What were the major factors that contributed to the growth of CPI in Andhra during 1934-47?

**Chapterisation**

The present study is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter deals with the review of literature on the history of Communist Party of India, various approaches to the study of communist movement in India, description of the region (Madras and Andhra), the objectives of study, chapterisation and the description of sources which are used in the study. A brief history of Communist movement in India is also discussed in this chapter by way of foregrounding the history of left movement in the Madras presidency. This chapter also elaborates the theoretical framework of the study, Gramscian theory of hegemony and the applicability of his idea of the strategy 'war of position' to the Indian conditions instead of 'war of manoeuvre'.

The second chapter covers the history of cultural and national liberation struggles in the Madras Presidency during the years 1920 and 1934. The period from 1920 to 1934 witnessed numerous changes in social, economic and political life of the country. Several political and social movements, organised in this period changed the outlook of the people towards the social and political issues in the country. It was in this period that the Indian National Congress launched two most important struggles: Non-cooperation and Civil disobedience movements against the colonial rule. It was the failure of these movements that created dissatisfaction among the youth, peasantry and middle class, prompting them to search for alternative methods of struggle. It was this environment that made various sections move towards the radical ideas of Socialism and Communism. Two contending ideologies emerged within the national movement and began the struggle for hegemony over the national movement. This chapter tried to analyse the above aspects, using booth primary and secondary sources.

The second chapter starts with the analysis of the emergence of Communist Party of India and the political conditions in the Madras Presidency. We mainly deal with the factors that contributed to the growth of Communist ideas in Madras Presidency, i.e., the impact of October Revolution, the impact of Economic Depression of 1929-30 on Andhra society and the disappointment of youth with the

[68] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Porata Pathamlo Nenu,* (Telugu) Marxist Study Center, Hyderabad, 1987.

Civil Disobedience movement. The changing trends in the Telugu literary production and the spread of socialist ideology through literature are discussed in this chapter. The activities of N. G. Ranga, influence of Jawahar Lal Nehru and his writings on Andhra youth, the failure of civil disobedience movements of 1930-34 and the consequent dissatisfaction of youth with the Gandhian methods of struggle and their search for alternatives methods of struggle for Independence are discussed in detail.

Another aspect that is dealt with in this chapter is the story of the revolutionaries of North India who were arrested during 1920s and 1930s and sent to jails in different places in South India where they became strong believers of Communism. They taught the ideals of communism to the youth who came to jails during the Civil disobedience movements of 1930-34. Several young men of Andhra who were influenced by the revolutionaries became socialists and communists and took part in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party and later Communist Party in Andhra in 1934.

The policy of repression followed by the government during the Civil Disobedience movement also helped the growth of militant politics within the national movement. The ruthless State repression further fuelled the dissatisfaction of the youth on the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence. Apart from this aspect, the chapter also brings out in detail the influence of radical elements within the ranks of nationalist leadership on the consciousness of youth. Several individuals like Jawahar Lal Nehru and N. G. Ranga, through their speeches and writings influenced the youth move towards Socialism. Nehru's articles on socialism, after his visit to Soviet Union and its impact on Andhra youth, the activities of N. G. Ranga, the formation of peasants' organisations, and training of peasant youth through ryot schools are also discussed in this chapter.

This chapter also discusses the efforts of Communist Party of India to form its branches in Madras, activities of Singaravelu Chetti, Amir Hyder Khan and P. Sundarayya, Telugu students of Benares Hindu University, and the formation of Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party in Andhra and Madras.

In the third chapter we mainly looked at the struggle for the left wing to establish its hegemony over the national movement and the differences between the dominant right wing leadership of the Indian National Congress and Left wing, on the strategies to be followed in the national movement. The internal differences with in the left wing, in terms of the ideology as well as the strategies that should be followed from within the anti-colonial struggles and outside and also the impact of national and

international factors on the policies and programmes of left movement in Andhra are discussed in this chapter.

The differences between the left wing and right wing leadership on the constitutional reforms introduced by the Government (Government of India Act of 1935), the council entry and office acceptance are discussed in this chapter. The left wing criticized the constitution as a slave constitution and argued that it should be wrecked. The left wing naturally opposed the idea of right wing to participate in the elections to the Legislative Assemblies. They argued that the Congress was trying to implement the constitution instead of smashing it. On the other hand Congress argued that they would fight the government from within and for that they need to be part of the assemblies.

Other important aspects that are discussed in this chapter are the differences on the question of organizing peasants, workers, agricultural labourers, women, youth and students into associations as part of the national movement. The left wing argued that the organisation of these groups into separate class organisations would not only help them on class issues but also help integrating them with the national movement to draw them into the movement and broaden its social base. But the Congress leadership argued that the formation of class associations like workers and peasants unions would create class hatred in the society and further widen division among the forces of national movement. The right wing leadership also thought that the left wing would dominate the national movement if these forces are organized simultaneously on class issues. Therefore the right wing did not encourage the formation of class associations and even tried to suppress the movements organized by these associations, led by the Left wing Congressmen. This led to a bitter ideological struggle between the Right wing and Left wing within the national movement and the analysis of this struggle forms a dominant part of this chapter.

The fourth chapter of the present study discusses the role of Communists in the ideological struggle in the Congress between the Right wing and the Left wing forces, efforts for a left wing, for the radicalisation of the national movement and also for the unity of the left wing forces, formation of left consolidation committee, the expulsion of communists from Congress socialist party and the disruption of left wing unity.

This chapter also discusses the activities of communists during the Second World War period. The anti-war campaign by Communists, pressure on Congress to start mass movement against the decision of the government to pull India into

*Imperialist war*, secret propaganda by the communists against war efforts, publication of books and newsletters on with anti-war propaganda and arrests of communists during the war, is also discussed in this chapter.

The Fifth chapter starts with the discussion on People's War strategy of CPI. During this period the communist party underwent several changes in its policy. The communists, who had opposed the war efforts of the British since 1937, suddenly changed their policy and extended support to the war efforts of the British government. The impact of the people's war policy of the communists and their relationship with the mainstream national movement is discussed at length.

The activities of the communists in the national movement from the time of the quit Indian call given by the Congress, campaigns for the release of national leaders from jails, demand for the formation of national government, and signature campaigns for the unity of Congress and Muslim League, and the removal of communists from the All India Congress Committee after 1945, are discussed in this chapter.

During the period from 1942 to 1948, the Communists adopted an active strategy of taking up day-to-day problems of the people and mediated with the government for their successful redressal. The activities of communist volunteers in the towns and villages during the war period, the Grow More Food campaign, repair of Bandar canal, attacks on black marketers and formation of night schools are explained in this chapter by way of showing the process of establishing the hegemony of communists over the civil society.

The Telangana armed struggle and the role of Andhra Communists in the struggle are important aspects of any study that deals with the history of left movement in India. The Telangana armed struggle, though it was started by the local people against the feudal exploitation, inspired the left leadership of Andhra who organised the movement from 1940s. The activities of Andhra Mahasabha in Hyderabad state prior to 1940, the attempts of Andhra Communist Party to form a branch of Communist Party in Hyderabad, activities of Chandra Rajeswararao and S. V. K. Prasad in Hyderabad, formation of CPI in Hyderabad, the role of Andhra Communist leaders in the Telangana armed struggle are therefore discussed in this chapter.

The chapter also discuses on the peasants' and working class struggles organised by the communists against the exploitation of zamindar, landlords,

industrialists and policies of the government. The demand for the distribution of fallow lands to the landless poor, struggles against the exploitation of peasants in Munagala, Challapalli, and Venkatagiri estates, petitions to the government demanding more irrigation facilities, the struggles of working class for increase in salaries and the reduction of working hours, and the struggles and strikes of the Visakhapatnam harbour workers, jute mill workers, municipal workers are discussed in detail. The impact of the I. N. A. trails and R. I. N. revolt on Andhra and rise of working class consciousness are also discussed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter also discusses the social and cultural movements launched by the Left wing in Andhra during 1940s. Special emphasis is made on the Literary and theatre movements and social reform movements. The formation of All India Progressive Writers Association in 1936, its impact on Andhra, formation of communist sponsored progressive writers association and the formation of *Abhyudaya Rachayitala Sangham* (Progressive Writers Association) in Andhra in 1943 have brought the involvement of various creative writers who in turn inaugurated a new literary movement. The production of progressive literature and organization of training schools by the PWA for the young writers along with the internal bickering in the progressive literary movement are discussed in this chapter. In this chapter an attempt was made to discuss the activities of the Communists to revive the cultural and historical legacy of Telugus by propagation of the history and culture of Telugus through literature. The activities of the Communists for the cultural renaissance in Andhra, formation of libraries in various places in Andhra, translation of several Marxist classics into Telugu, the spread of anti-feudal and anti-bourgeois ideologies through literature, exposure of social evils, social exploitation and economic exploitation of the people by the landlords will be discussed in this chapter.

The role of Communists in the social reform movement is also discussed in this chapter. The struggle of communists in the arena of social reform helped the removal social of evils and superstitions in the society. The Communists fought against the existing bourgeois social practices and propagated equality of all men and women. The formations of women's organisations, propagation and practice of the ideas of widow remarriages, inter-caste marriages and fight against untouchability and superstitions in the society, the methods followed by communists to spread the social reform ideas, birth day celebrations of social reformers, publications of books on social reform ideas, the role of women in the social reform movement and formation of cultural troupes to spread social reform ideas, obstacles faced by Communists in

the social reform movement and the influence of communist sponsored social reform activities on Andhra society are also discussed in this chapter.

This chapter also discusses about the cultural movements led by communists in Andhra region of the erstwhile Madras presidency, during the colonial rule, and its contribution to the political mobilization. The use of traditional folk art forms like Harikatha, Burrakatha, Veedhi natakam, kolatam, Golla suddulu, bhajanalu, Chenchu veshalu etc, to attract the people into the fold of communist movement will be discussed. The chapter also discusses how the themes/stories in the traditional performances were replaced with social themes reflecting day-to-day problems of the people, the factors that contributed to the rise of this new cultural movement, role of communist party in the cultural movement, formation of a cultural organization, Andhra Prajanatyamandali, various art form and the issues depicted in the performances. The reaction of the opposition groups (Congress and landlords), role of women in the performances, the reaction of government to the cultural movement, the impact of the movement on Andhra society and politics are discussed in this Chapter.

The impact of the communist movement on the Andhra society, reasons for the success and failures of the communists; how far the communists succeeded in establishing their political and ideological hegemony over the national movement and civil society, are discussed in the concluding chapter.

**Sources used for the study:**

A variety of sources have been used for the study. The sources used for this can be divided into five categories. They are a) Government Records b) Newspapers and periodicals c) Documents of Communist Party of India d) Interviews with the contemporaries and e) Books and Articles. Each one of the sources gives a clear picture of the history of the Left movement in the Madras Presidency. Information collected from each category of the above sources was cross- checked with the other source to establish the authenticity of the source.

**Government records: T**he Government records give first hand information about the activities of communist party during the period of study and also the details about the attitude of the government towards the communist movement. The government records provides information about the official correspondence, letters to the superiors, C. I. D. reports, detention orders, arrest warrants, jail records, correspondence between local police/C. I. D. and the government, letters seized by the government, books and other publications banned by the government and official discussion on the activities of the freedom fighters/ communists. Among the

government records category, the G. O.s of Home, Law, Political, Judicial and Public Departments of government of Madras, the annual administrative reports of Police and Jail departments, fortnightly reports of the District officials to the Chief secretary of the Government of Madras, History of Freedom struggle files (*HFSAP*) were some of the important sources referred for the purpose of this study.

G. O.s of Home, Public, Law, Judicial Departments of Madras Government provide information on the political activities in Andhra. The details of communist activities in Andhra and restrictions imposed on individual communists, arrest and detention of communists, reports of the local officials on the activities of communists in Andhra were available in the G.O.s. Fortnightly Reports of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Annual administration reports of various departments, Report of Madras Estates Land Act Committee, Proceedings of Madras Legislative Assembly were also referred for the purpose of this study.

**Newspapers and periodicals:** Newspapers and periodicals published during 1930s and 1940s were used for this study. *Andhra Patrika* (1920-47), *Krishna Patrika* (1933-43), *Navasakthi* (1937-39) *and Prajasakthi* (1942-1948) were some of the important newspapers and journals referred for this study. *Andhra Patrika* is the longest survived Telugu daily and was the only source available for the study day-to-day developments of Andhra society during the colonial period. The news published in Andhra Patrika helps us to understand the factors that helped the rise of leftist ideas in Andhra. It also gives information on the emergence of left wing political parties in Andhra and their activities during the colonial period. Another important newspaper *Krishna Patrika* is one of the oldest journals of Andhra. It published several articles and news items on communism in Andhra. Articles published in *Krishna Patrika* influenced people to become communists. The news published in *Krishna Patrika* after 1940 a gives clear picture about the struggles between communists and congress in Andhra in 1940s. Another newspaper *Navasakthi*, was a weekly journal of Congress Socialist Party in Andhra, gives information about the activities of communists during the united front period. Navasakthi gives clear information about the struggle between the right wing left wing in the Congress and the radical peasant and workers movements launched by Communists during 1937-1939. Navasakthi was stopped in 1939 on the eve of the Second World War.

*Prajasakthi*, started as a Telugu weekly in 1942 by Andhra Committee of CPI, and published news on day-to-day activities of CPI in Andhra. Later in 1945 it became a daily. The news published in Prajasakthi gives first hand information on the

activities of Communist Party in Andhra from 1942-1948. The paper was stopped in 1948 when the CPI and its frontal organisations were banned by the government in 1948.

Apart from the above-mentioned newspapers and journals, The Hindu, Kagada, Prajavani, Nagara, Visalandhra, *Andhra Jyothi*, *Telugu Swatantra*, were also referred for this study.

**Documents** related to the Communist Party of India, Andhra provincial committee of CPI and the documents related to the frontal organisations like Peasants organizations, workers union, Students, women and youth associations are another important source used in this study. Pamphlets, press notes, memorandums, resolutions, circulars to party members, monographs and several others documents were used for this study.

**Interviews** of the participants are the important sources used for this study. The participants were the eye - witness for the historical incidents. The interviews with the participants give us first hand information about the political developments prior to 1947. The subjective elements in the interviews can be testified with the evidence available in the other sources, government records, newspapers of that period and secondary sources.

**Books and articles:** Apart from the above said primary sources, several secondary sources available in the form of books, essays and articles published in journals are also used in this study. Books published in English and Telugu, articles published in Telugu and English journals and other periodicals, souvenirs, biographies, autobiographies, special issues, unpublished dissertations, mimeographs and private collections comes under this category.

# Chapter 2
# Articulation of Left Ideological hegemony and the Formation of Communist Party of India in the Madras Presidency

The years between the Non-Cooperation movement (1922) and Civil Disobedience movement (1930-34) were a period of transition for the national movement in Andhra. Several changes at the national and international level influenced the course of national movement in Andhra. During this period the influence of Russian Revolution, spread of Socialist and Communist ideas, failure of non-co-operation movement, Simon Boycott agitation, activities of revolutionary terrorists, trail of Communists in Meerut Conspiracy Case, death sentence to Bhagat Singh and his friends and finally the suspension of Civil Disobedience movement, created great impact on the minds of the youth in Andhra that made them turn towards communism.

A striking feature of this period was the spread of new social and political ideas rooted in the Communist ideology. At one level, these new ideas evolved on man–woman relationship, problems of women, peasantry, working class and untouchables had galvanized reform of social and cultural space. At another level, different ideological positions in relation to the national liberation struggle were discussed and propagated. It is argued by Atlury Murali that during this period "two contradictory visions of the future transformation of society – one rooted in the bourgeois ideology and the other in the left ideology – started competing for both ideological and political hegemony over the national movement".[1] This ideological struggle within the framework of the national movement led to the emergence of several Leftist organisations and parties Andhra in the 1930s.

The focus of this chapter is the analysis of the emergence of Communist Party of India and the political conditions in Madras Presidency during 1920s and 1930s. We mainly deal with the factors that contributed to the growth of Communist ideas in Madras Presidency, i.e., the impact of October Revolution and the economic depression of 1929-30 in an environment of political disappointment of youth with the

earlier Gandhian movements. The changing trend in the Telugu literature helped the spread of socialist ideology through literature, which in turn shaped the consciousness of the youth. The activities of the peasant leader N. G. Ranga, ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru had an impact on Andhra youth. At political level, the failure of civil disobedience movements of 1930-34 had disappointed the youth with the Gandhian methods of struggle. This appears to have created space for alternatives methods of struggle for independence.

Another important aspect that is discussed in this chapter is the contribution of revolutionary terrorists of northern India for the growth of Socialist ideology in Andhra. The Revolutionaries of north India who were arrested during the 1920s and 1930s were sent to jails in different places in South India. They became strong believers of Communism. The youth who came to jails during the Civil disobedience movements of 1930-34 came into contact with the revolutionaries. These youth influenced by the revolutionaries became socialists and communists and took part in the formation of Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party in Andhra in 1934-35.

The economic depression of 1930s and its impact on peasantry, fall of prices of agricultural commodities and dissatisfaction among the peasantry, the appointment of land revenue re-settlement committee and consequence increase in land revenue demand and the agitation against re-settlement of land revenue are also discussed in this chapter.

The withdrawal of non-cooperation movement in February 1922 witnessed all round disappointment among the nationalist forces, which came together during 1920-22. Two main currents of an opposite nature emerged from the Non-cooperation movement. The first current is representative of the upper middle class Liberals of the Congress who have not been in sympathy with Gandhi's methods, turned towards Constitutional approach. The second group is the Radical nationalists who later turned towards Socialism and Communism. Some of the Terrorist revolutionaries, who

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[1] Atlury Murali, "Changing Perceptions and Radicalisation of the National Movement in Andhra, 1922-34", *Social Scientist,* Vol.16, No.8, August 1988, p.3.

discontinued their activities during the Non-cooperation movement on Gandhi's appeal, reverted to their old ways. All these groups worked within the womb of the Indian national movement. S.A.Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad and others were attracted towards Communism. Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad and other revolutionaries influenced by October Revolution, became Socialists and formed the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.[2]

The common feature of all these groups was to give the national movement a left orientation by mobilising and organising the workers and peasants. The workers and peasant's parties also came into existence. For instance, N.G. Ranga organised the Guntur District Agricultural Labour's Conference at Nidubrolu in 1923. This was the first agricultural labour conference held in India.[3] S.A.Dange started a weekly, *The Socialist* from Bombay to popularise the leftist ideas. This was the serious beginning of the spread of Socialist ideas in India. Since neither the Socialist Party nor the Communist Party were in a position to stand on their own, all these groups submerged their distinctive individuality under the umbrella of Congress led national movement and fought for the independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

After the suspension of the Non-cooperation movement, the young and educated people were dissatisfied with the Gandhian methods in Andhra, resorted to individual terrorist activities. Prativada Venkatachari known as Bhayankarachari of Kakinada, who started revolutionary activities in Kakinada felt that 'Gandhism is a failure. Gandhi's non-violence is not possible. Surely, the nation must try the alternative method of breaking up the fetters. If Gandhi's non-violent movement is a failure, there must be a mass revolution in India. To affect this mass revolution, masses must be awakened, inspired and encouraged. To furnish which and to check the atrocities of their administration, which will be on their swing, political murders be committed. When youths are hanged and deported, a nation's eye cannot be blind. To furnish finance to the operations, banks must be looted, if necessary and places of

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[2] Bipan Chandra, "The Ideological Transformation of Revolutionary Terrorists of Northern India in the 1920s", in B.R.Nanda (ed.), *Socialism in India,* Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992, pp.163-189.

[3] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th September 1923, p.10; Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh*, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1972, p.106.

accumulation of wealth dealt with".[4] Bhayankarachari gathered several youth around his revolutionary activities. The members of his group planned to kill the notorious Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mustafa Ali Khan, by hurling bombs.[5] However, they failed in their attempts and Mustafa Ali Khan arrested them. The government launched Kakinada Conspiracy Case and convicted them.[6] Again in 1933, in Tiruchirapalli some of the youth who were influenced by the revolutionary terrorists of northern India, formed a branch of Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association.[7] The organisers of this association planned to carryout revolutionary activities after their release from the jail.[8] They made unsuccessful attempts to loot the Mylapore Imperial Bank in Madras and government revenue collections near Kovur in Nellore district.[9] Later, 23 members of this association were arrested and government launched their prosecution under the Madras Conspiracy Case. Twenty of them were convicted to various terms of imprisonment.[10] After their release, P. Sundarayya, the organisor of Communist Party in South India met the revolutionaries and convinced them to join communist party.[11]

Another group of youth who participated in the Non-cooperation movement, dissatisfied with the suspension of the movement joined the Communist and Socialist

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[4] Statement of Bhayankarachari in the court of sessions, East Godavari division, Cocanada, Sessions Case No. 8 of 1934.

[5] Inguva Mallikarjuna Sarma, *Role of Revolutionaries in the Freedom Struggle*, Marxist Study Forum, Hyderabad, 1987, p.249.

[6] Kakarala Kameswara Sastri of Samalkot, Chilakamarthi Narasimhachari of Cocanada, A. Sundaram of Samalkot, Challa Apparao of Peddapuram, Vadlamani Sriramamurthy of Indupalli, Chilakamrthi Satyanarayanachari of Kota, Madduri Narasimhachari of Kota, Prativadi Bhayankarachari of Kakinada and Oruganti Ramachandraiah of Nellore were the accused in Kakinada conspiracy case. See, G.O.No. 2558, dated 6th June 1934, G.O. No. 3225, dated 15th November 1934, G.O. No. 3307, dated 21st November 1934, Law (General) Department, Government of Madras. Also See, Bhayankaracharya, *Andamanu Jivitamu*, (Life in Andamans), (Telugu) New Political Publishing House, Rajahmundry, 1938.

[7] G.O. No. 1399 (S-51), dated 15 August 1936, Home (confidential) Department, Government of Madras.

[8] The Andhra members of this organization were M. Sabhapathi, B.Joseph, K. Arunachalam, K. Gopalasastri, G.Balakrishna Reddy, B.Balaramireddy, R.Audiseshaiah, B.Bapiraju, and G.Dasaratharamireddy, Kanuri Ramananda Chowdary of Gudiwada was the organisor of this group. Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh*, p.139.

[9] Tirumala Ramachandra, *Hampi Nunchi Harappa Daka* (From Hampi to Harappa) (Autobiography), (Telugu) Ajo-Vibho Publications, Hyderabad, 2000, pp.205-206.

[10] P. Siva Sankara Reddy, "Revolutionary activities during the period from 1930-34", *Itihas*, Vol. XXVI, Nos. 1&2, January – December 2000, p.86.

[11] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, (Telugu) Part 1, Prajasakthi Press, Vijayawada, 1994, pp.57, 61-62.

Parties. Dr.Chelikani Ramarao, Pandiri Mallikarjunrao, Damisetty Parthasarathy, Darisi Chenchaiah and Pratapa Ramasubbaiah were some of the Non-cooperationists who turned towards leftist ideas after 1922.[12]

**Impact of Russian Revolution on Andhra and Telugu Literature**

The spread of Marxist and Socialist ideas in Andhra, after the 1917 October Revolution in Russia had created a nucleus of dedicated young revolutionaries within the womb of the nationalist movement in Andhra. The growth of left ideas among the youth in Andhra was through the spread of Marxist literature in the form of books, novels, poems and articles. In fact, the Andhra nationalists have keenly followed the Russian Revolution and the political, economic and cultural changes that followed revolution. In the early twenties, the nationalist press and several national leaders hailed the Russian Revolution as a great historical event and rightly thought that it would be an inspiration for the colonial liberation movements. The Newspapers like *Lahore Tribune* and *The Modern Review* published articles on Socialism and the Russian Revolution. Famous Tamil poet Subramanya Bharathi wrote an article on Russia in *Swadeshi Mitran*. In that essay, he called Lenin as the leader of the exploited people in Russia.

In Andhra the earliest reference to the October Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent changes in Russia was perhaps made by Dr.Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, an ardent admirer of Gandhiji, who was later on, became the official historian of Congress and president of Indian National Congress. Pattabhi wrote a lengthy article, *Soviattulu*, in the Ugadi special number of *Andhra Patrika* for the year 1920-21, which was read by thousands of Telugu readers. In his article, the author described the evils of Capitalism and praised the Socialist economy. Describing the Soviet revolution, he denounced the propaganda done by imperialists on the Soviet Union. In his words: “Revolution is not an Act it is a change. Anti revolutionaries are

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[12] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra*, (History of Communist Movement in Andhra Pradesh) Part-I, [Telugu], Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1984, pp.40-45; Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Poratapathamlo Nenu*, (Telugu) Marxist Adhyayana Vedika, Hyderabad, 1987, pp.37-39.

trying to destroy it. But their efforts served as strength to the revolution".[13] Describing the new system emerged in Russia, he wrote, "in Russia a labourer is paid enough wages. One need not pay money for their charges. No postage charges for letters. To drink there is no toddy and arrack. Whenever selling and buying is done through cooperatives then the seller is becoming a buyer and the buyer a seller. The middle traders, who only worshipped money and through money earned profits, were eliminated. To teach the philosophy of the system to the people special training extending from six weeks to six months was given. There is no person without food, nobody without education, no rich person and no poor person. No seller, no buyer, no lazy person. No protecting soldier. The new system is having the similar characteristics of *krita yugam* and there is no doubt in it".[14]

Gurajada Raghava Sarma's book, *Lenin Jivitha Charitramu* (Life history of Lenin) was perhaps the first detailed work on Soviet Russia in Telugu published in 1921,[15] while Govindarajula Venkata Krishnarao's *Nikoloy Lenin,* published in 1921 was in English. In that book, he wrote that the Russian revolution was "a clear milestone in the history of human progress. It would create great impact on the coming generation".[16] This book goes into a detailed narrative on ideologies of Gandhi and Lenin and the difference between them. A complete text of Lenin's thesis in the Second congress of the Communist International in 1920 entitled 'Bourgeois Democracy and Dictatorship of Proletariat' was given in the end of the book.[17]

G.V.Krishnarao, in writing forward to the book, *New Russia* written by British Communists T.A.Johnson and R.W.Postgate, made an appeal to people to contribute to the Russian famine relief fund. This book, published by Arka publishing house,

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[13] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Ardha Satabdi Kalamlo Andhrula Paini October Viplava Prabhavamu*, [Telugu], Vikasa Sahiti, Madras, 1973, pp.6-7. Also see, D.Anjaneyulu, "Impact of Socialist Ideology on Telugu Literature between the Wars, 1919-1939", in B.R.Nanda (ed.), *Socialism in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991, p.245.

[14] Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, "Soviattulu", *Andhra Patrika,* Annual Number, (Telugu) April 1921, pp.63-64. The English translation of this paragraph was taken from Atlury Murali, "Changing Perceptions and the Radicalization of the National Movement in Andhra, 1922-34", p.22.

[15] *Ibid.,* p.21. Also seethe review of the book published in *Krishna Patrika* on 11 June 1923.

[16] G.V.Krishnarao worked as a sub-editor in the English daily, *Swarajya*. See, Thammareddi Nirmala, "Telugu Sahityam – October Viplava Prabhavam", in C. Narasimharao (ed), *Telugu Samskriti – Marxism Prabhavam,* (Telugu) Jayanthi Publications, Vijayawada, 1992, p18.

Madras was said to have been sold more than 10,000 copies in India and abroad.[18] He made a moving appeal to the workers to unite to overthrow the capitalist Imperialism at the global level.

In literature, one of the earliest exposition of the Socialist ideas in general and the Bolshevik experiment in particular could be found in the Telugu novel, *Malapalli*, first published in 1922 but was banned for some time by the British government.[19] It was written by Unnava Lakshminarayana, who had studied Bar-at-Law in Ireland and was influenced by the *Sin feen* movement. He was a keen observer of international developments, particularly the Russian Revolution.[20] Lakshminarayana was closely influenced by the philosophy of truth and non-violence as propounded by Mahatma Gandhi. He wrote this novel when he was put in Vellore jail for his participation in Palnad forest satyagraha. The scene of the story of this novel laid in the countryside of Guntur district in coastal Andhra. The theme could roughly be described as the relation between the cast Hindus and the Harijans and of the landlords and the tenants of the village and the use of methods inspired by the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and the teachings of *Bhagavad Gita*. The author denounced the French and American experiments, for they resulted in the establishment of a government dominated by capitalist interests, which further oppressed the interests of the lower classes. He takes up the example of Russia where according to him the people's Soviet government was established. He discussed how the Bolsheviks smashed the feudalism of Tsarist regime, how the majority of the people were given over the land under collectivized forming and so on. He sums up the main ideological principles of Lenin and Trotsky and the spirit of soviet experiment as "all have got equal right to enjoy the material resources of the nature, all should work and enjoy the fruits of their labour; when some were starving and suffering from food and others were living in pomp and show with all the vices - this was not justified".[21]

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[17] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Ardha Satabdi Kalamlo Andhrula Paini October Viplava Prabhavam*, p.17.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp.17-18.
[19] Kothapalli Ravibabu (Ed), *Ankshalu – Nishedhalu*, (Telugu) Janasahiti Publications, Nagaram, 1998, p.20.
[20] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra*, pp.19-20.
[21] Atlury Murali, "Changing Perceptions and the Radicalization of the National Movement in Andhra", pp.5-6.

The government considered the speeches of Takkella Jaggadu, a character in the novel as most objectionable and seditious. A report of the government said that the speeches of Takkella Jaggadu were preaching communism directly.[22] The government also asked the officials of Andhra University to remove the text *Malapalli* from the list of prescribed textbooks for the students. The Chief Secretary of Madras in his letter to the Vice-Chancellor wrote that "the book fall within the scope of section 4 (1) of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act …. The cumulative effect of the lengthy speeches put in the mouth of the characters is to create an impression that capitalists and bureaucrats are trampling under foot the toiling masses that the various limbs of the government, such as the police, the magistracy, the judicial and jail department are teeming with corrupt dishonest and cruel officials. As the tenor of the book on the whole is to bring the government and the administration of justice into contempt to stir up communist activities and to overthrow the present order of society, the government views with considerable surprise the fact that it has been considered fit to be prescribed as a text book for university students".[23]

*Malapalli* gave a new perspective to the Indian national movement on the question of integration of harijans into the anti-colonial struggles. Through this novel, the author exposed the need to emancipate coolies, labourers and untouchables so that the national movement will have a wider social base. The ideas in this novel had a visible impact on nationalists and youth and consequently after 1930s many youth had joined either the Indian national movement or the Communist movement.[24]

The news about the activities of Communists in India and outside, the transformation that the USSR was going through, the working class strikes in Madras mills, and other provinces in India, and the struggles of the working class all over the world have attracted the attention of the Telugu Press in the Madras Presidency. The

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[22] G. O. No. 396, dated: 14th May 1923 and G. O. No. 620, dated: 8th August 1923, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, and G. O. No. 1203, dated: 3rd July 1936, Home (Confidential), Government of Madras.

[23] G. O. No. 1203, Home (Confidential), Government of Madras, dated: 3 July 1936.

nationalist press in Andhra in particular highlighted the activities of the All India Trade Union Congress. The death of Lenin in 1924 was specially covered by the newspapers in Telugu.

The press, by covering the Socialist transformation in USSR, influenced the consciousness of the youth and attracted them towards Marxism. For instance, the *Andhra Patrika*, on 20 June 1928, published a news item "Russia *Stri Swatantryamu*" (Women's Freedom in Russia) written by Oleti Venkatasubbaiah. In that article, the author praised the revolutionary government and said that 'In Russia the government recognized the equality of men and women. The women have made considerable progress after the October Revolution'.[25] Again, on 17 Feb 1928, *Andhra Patrika* published another article on 'Education system in Russia' written by Jarugumalli Sambasivarao.

It was in the early thirties that the Socialist thought began to take roots in Andhra. The creative literature played a lasting mediation in shaping the consciousness of the youth. Maxim Gorky's novel, *Mother* had created a powerful influence on the youthful writers of the day and changed their outlook towards the society. Krovvidi Lingaraju, a Congress leader from Rajahmundry translated this work into Telugu, in 1932, under the title *Amma,* when he was in jail. Gadde Lingaiah Chowdary published it in 1934.[26] The novel, *Amma* turned many young minds towards Socialism and Marxism. The Madras Government banned the book.[27]

In this book the editor, Gadde Lingaiah Chowdary strongly urged the workers thus: "sacred brother workers - your - who were the foundation of this world are sacred. I pity on your lives, which suffer with work from morning until evening and yet go with burning stomachs (hunger). Cursed by those of your masters who enjoy the fruits of your labour and lavishly spend for their pleasures. But what is the use? You must get bold try to conserve strength to resist the tide. Realize your true

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[24] Kolla Venkaiah, "Kolla Venkaiah Swiya Jivitha Charitra", in *Comrade Kolla Venkaiah Rachanalu* – (Telugu) Part – I, Comrade Kolla Venkaiah Samsmarana Committee, Guntur, 2002, p.13.
[25] *Andhra Patrika*, 20 June 1928.
[26] See G.O.No.1180 Public (General) (Confidential), dated 18-7- 1935. Also see D.Anjaneyulu, "Impact of Socialist Ideology on Telugu Literature between the Wars, 1919-1939", pp.249-51.

strength. Truth will always succeed. Use this instrument (the book *Mother*). Know your duty and fulfill it. If that is the case the trouble and expense for publishing this will be fruitful".[28]

In the same book, in his appeal to the youth: "hot blood is running in your veins. Do not become selfish and waste your time in luxuries. Consider the state of workers and peasants and begin to do your duty. Destroy injustice. Bury the word autocracy, what you have to do is seen in *Amma* as a mirror".[29] Thus, *Amma* influenced and shaped the youth and workers in the contemporary society and created the social space for the hegemony of Socialist and Communist ideas. It became a guiding force for the Socialists and Communists of that time.

The literature in Hindi and other languages also started having their impact through the articulation of radical ideas on various issues. In the early thirties Hindi novels had a deep impact on Telugu literature. Premchand's *Godan* found its way into Telugu, which had a wide circle of admiring readers. Novels were also written in Telugu on the model of *Godan* and *Mother*.[30] The novels of Dr.Mulkaraj Anand, particularly *Cooly* and *Untouchable* were read with keen interest and were translated into Telugu.[31]

The end of Civil Disobedience movement 1934 created a much wider social space for the increased flow of Socialist ideas in Andhra. The newspapers like *Andhra Patrika* and *Krishna Patrika* began to publish articles on Socialism. Several books on Socialism and Marxism were translated into Telugu. The periodicals like *Vaahini, Chitragupta* and *Praja Bhandu,* edited by S.G.Acharya, used to provide the forum for discussion of Socialist ideas. This intellectual environment and circulation of socialist ideas strengthened the leftist forces, particularly attracting the young people within

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[27] G.O. No.1180, dated 29-1-1936, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[28] G.O. No.1180, dated 29-1-1936, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[29] G.O. No .1180, Public General (Confidential) dated 18-7-1935.
[30] For example Tummala Venkatramaiah wrote a Telugu book, *Matri Hridayam*, a summary of Gorky's *Mother*. Durbha Krishnamurthi wrote another novel *Bali* (Sacrifice) based on the story in Gorkey's novel, *Mother*. See Yetukuri Prasad, *Tummala Sahityam*, (Telugu) Andhra Pradesh Abhyudaya Rachayitala Sangham, Hyderabad, 1990, p.196; Durbha Krishnamurthi, *Smrithulu*, (Telugu) Marxist Adhyayana Vedika, Hyderabad, 1985, pp.57-58.

the national movement. Gadde Lingaiah Chowdary, founder of Adarsha Grandha Mandali, started the Red Flag Publications under whose imprint were brought out the most popular work, *Viplava Veerulu* which narrated the lives of terrorists. This book was banned by the British government for its 'seditious' content.[32]

In the field of poetry, a new epoch was started in the early thirties, by a band of younger poets like Sistla Uma Maheswarrao, Narayanababu, Pattabhi, Muddukrishna, Srirangam Srinivasarao (popularly known as Sri Sri) and Puripanda Appala Swamy. They moved away from the romantic poets' obsession with love and man-woman erotic relationship and under the influence of the leftist ideology, started writing about wider social, political and ideological questions.[33] They also rejected the conventional poetry and created a new genre, called Free Verse. They had little respect for traditional literary forms and wanted to shock the complacent bourgeois, questioning their values and sentiments. Realising the importance of spoken Telugu in taking ideas to common people, they freed the poetry from metre and *Chandassu* (prosody). This period was regarded as the beginning of progressive poetry in Telugu literature. The 19th century social reform movements in Andhra, Success of Russian Revolution, devastating effects economic depression during 1928-1930, struggles against Fascism all over the world and the failure of Congress led Civil disobedience movements acted as a stimulating background for the emergence of new trends in Telugu literature.[34] The post war literary trends in Europe (1920-39) Imagism, Impressionism, Futurism, Dadaism, Cubism, Symbolism, Realism and Sur-realism also had their influence on the young generation of Telugu poetry writers.[35]

Sishtla Umamaheswararao (1909-1953) was the first to understand and appreciate the latest trends in the Western poetry. His two books, *Vishnu Dhanuvu*

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[31] See D.Anjaneyulu, "Impact of Socialist Ideology on Telugu Literature between the Wars, 1919-1939", pp.249-50.

[32] *Ibid.*, p.251.

[33] See C.Narayana Reddy, *Adhunika Andhra Kavitvamu Sampradayamulu-Prayogamulu*, (Telugu) A.P.Book Distributors, Secunderabad, 1987, pp.487-488.

[34] K. K. Ranganadhacharyulu, *Telugu Sahityam – Charitrika Bhumika*, (Telugu) Andhra Saraswata Parishat, Hyderabad, 1990, pp.172-175; M. Gangadhar, *Adhunika Telugu Kavitvamlo Viplava Dhoranulu: Oka Vishleshana* (An Analysis of Revolutionary Trends in Modern Telugu Poetry), (Telugu), Pranahita Publications, Warangal, 1994, p.122.

and *Navami Chiluka,* have espoused the themes completely from a new perspective. His expression was considered to be a unique effort at recreating his own poetic diction. His book, *Navami Chiluka* was concerned with the life of common people.[36] Though some scholars felt that it was written under the influence of proletarian revolution, it did not really rise to the level of progressive and revolutionary poetry.[37] In his poetry, Sishtla experimented with the metre.[38] A few words from the traditional verse, a broken line from a folk song and a prose piece were joined together shocking the elite sentiments concerned with grammar, balance and order. One of his songs '*Maro Maro Maro'*[39] written upon the police lathi charges on satyagrahis in 1930-31, was sung by Tallavajjula Sivasankara Sastri in a conference of poets at Barampuram in 1933. Srirangam Srinivasarao, who attended the conference was very much influenced by this song, that he wrote his most celebrated song '*Maro prapancham*' in 1934.[40]

Like Sishtla, another poet Pattabhi (Tikkavarapu Pattabhiremi Reddy) also revolted against the use of traditional grammar in poetry. In his book, *Fidel Ragalu Dazan,* Pattabhi introduced his own syntax and grammar in poetry. The spellings used in his poetry surprised the readers. It was regarded as a counter blast to romanticist poetry for it made fun of the existing romantic poetry's diction, lyrics and love sickness.[41] He has discovered a new dimension basically experimenting with his experiments with versification and rhyme scheme.[42]

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[35] G. V. Sitapati, *History of Telugu Literature,* p.194; Sri Sri, *Anantam,* pp.158-160; C. Narayana Reddy, *Adhunika Andhra Kavitvamu: Sampradayamulu – Prayogalu,* pp.496-497.

[36] Yetukuri Prasad (Ed), *Sishtla Umamaheswararao Kavitvam – Samalochanam: Navami Chiluka – Vishnu Dhanuvu,* (Telugu), Sri Sri Smaraka Samithi, Hyderabad, 1998, pp.42-62.

[37] Tripuraneni Gopichand, "Navami Chiluka Vimarsha", *Ibid.,* p.79.

[38] Kuruganti Sitaramaiah, *Navyandhra Sahitya Vidhulu, (1827-1942)* (A History of Modern Telugu Literature), (Telugu), Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1994, pp.629-632.

[39] This song was reproduced in Yetukuri Prasad (Ed), *Sishtla Umamaheswararao Kavitvam – Samalochanam,* p.54.

[40] Sri Sri, *Anantam,* p.182; Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam, Vol. XIII, Adhunika Yugam,* p.228.

[41] Undela Malakonda Reddy (ed), *Pattabhi Pelchina Phirangulu,* (Telugu), Pattabhi Amrutotsava Samithi, Hyderabad, 1994, p.15.

[42] Sripada Gopalakrishnamurthi, *Ardha Satabdapu Andhra Kavitvam,* (Collected Essays), (Telugu), Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1994, pp.182-188.

Samineni Muddukrishna[43] was another prominent poet of this generation. In his writings, Muddukrishna revolted against the traditional values and superstitions. In 1932, a Telugu journal known as *Jwala* (Flame) with Muddukrishna as editor came into existence. The name is symbolic and it signifies the symbol of revolution. In the editorial, he announced that "we have become effeminate in life, thought, expression and deeds; we are like frogs in the well and like owls that close their eyes against the sunlight. Change is invetable, in our dharma, our society, our concepts, and our language. We encourage revolt in all spheres of activity. We shall publish, in this journal, writings that contain fresh and inspiring thoughts…"[44]

Among the poets of this generation, Srirangam Srinivasarao (popularly known as Sri Sri) deserves the most prominent mention. In the beginning, he was very much influenced by D. V. Krishna Sastri and Vishwanadha Satyanarayana and wrote poems following their romantic style.[45] But later his friendship with Kompella Janardhana Rao[46] changed his understanding on poetry and he differed with romantic style. During this period, he read several books on the new literary trends in Europe, including the theories of Freud and Dialectical Materialism[47] and started new literary trend in the Telugu literature. His famous song '*Maroprapacham Maropracham Maroprapancham Pilichindi*[48] (another world another world another world calls you),

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[43] Born on 6 February 1899 in Rajahmundry in a rich and highly educated family, Muddukrishna was famous for his book *Vaitalikulu* published in 1935. He died on 6 February 1972. For a brief Biographical Sketch, See Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam, Vol. XIII, Adhunika Yugam,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1991, pp.139-152.

[44] Quoted in G. V. Sitapati, *History of Telugu Literature,* Sahitya Academy, Madras, 1968, p.194.

[45] C. Narayana Reddy, *Adhunika Andhra Kavitvamu: Sampradayamulu – Prayogamulu,* p.510. Sri Sri, *Anantam,* p.150.

[46] Kompella Janardhana Rao was born in Konasima in East Godavari district in 1906 and studied in Kakinada. He became a member of *Kavita Samithi* founded by Sri Sri, Puripanda and others, worked as sub-editor in *Bharathi*, a famous literary journal during the 1930s. He started *Udayini,* a literary journal in 1933 that was famous for the spread of radical ideas. He died at an early age of 31 in 1937. He was very much famous as literary critique. He wrote several poems, plays and one-act plays. *Mallika Pelli, Swarna Yogi* and *Velugu* are some of them. See Etukuri Prasad (Ed.), *Kompella Janardhana Rao Jivitamu – Sahityamu,* (Telugu) Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1987; Sri Sri, *Anantam,* p.133 and Namala Vishveswararao, *Telugu Journalism Charitra,* Part – I, (Telugu) Progressive Communications, Hyderabad, 2003, p.133-136.

[47] Sri Sri, *Anantam,* p.158. C. Narayana Reddy, *Adhunika Andhra Kavitvamu: Sampradayamulu – Prayogamulu,* p.516.

[48] He is known to have been influenced in composing this song by a brother poet, Sistla Umamaheswararao, who wrote a poem with same rhyme. See Sri Sri, *Anantam* (autobiography) (Telugu), Sri Sri Prachuranalu, Chennai, 2000, p. 182: Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam,* Vol.

with the caption *Mahaprasthanam* (The Great Journey) which was written on 12th April 1934[49] was read by him in a youth conference at Kakinada[50] creating tremendous impact on Andhra youth.[51] In this song, he appealed the youth to go forward to establish another world. The 'another world' in his song was the 'world ushered in Russia by the October Revolution'. *Mahaprasthanam* is one of the best poems of Sri Sri. Gudipati Venkatachalam, a scholar, freethinker and author, wrote a fine introduction to this poem in which he said that Sri Sri endeavoured to destroy the old order of life with all its out-of-date conventions, customs and traditions.[52]

The songs written by Sri Sri during the 1930s revolutionised both form and content in Telugu poetry. Sri Sri was the first poet who transformed Marxist ideas into a simple and yet powerful poem, *Mahaprasthanam* and influenced the minds of thousands of young nationalists. He convinced the common people of the necessity of a revolutionary transformation of the existing society.

Another poet Srirangam Narayanababu (1906-1965), a native of Vijayanagaram wrote several poems in early thirties with the influence of Marxist philosophy. In the beginning, he was influenced by the romantic poetry and wrote poems on love[53] and nature.[54] Later, influenced by the writings of Kazi Nazrul Islam and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya he changed his ideas. He was very much upset by the death sentences imposed to Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries. He wrote a poem depicting the death sentences and the failure of Congress to save the lives of the revolutionaries. In the poem *Kapala Moksham* he criticised the Gandhi – Irwin agreement and said that the policies of Congress leaders was the main reason for the death of Bhagat Singh.[55] Later he wrote several poems on the social and economic

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XIII, p.228; D.Anjaneyulu, "Impact of Socialist Ideology on Telugu Literature between the Wars, 1919-1939", p.252.

[49] Sri Sri, *Anantam*, p.181. C.Narayana Reddy, *Adhunika Andhra Kavitvamu Sampradayamulu-Prayogamulu*, p.516.

[50] Budaraju Radhakrishna, *Mahakavi Sri Sri*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1996, p. 49.

[51] D.Anjaneyulu, "Impact of Socialist Ideology on Telugu Literature between the Wars, 1919-1939", pp.251-2.

[52] G. V. Sitapati, *History of Telugu Literature*, p.195.

[53] Srirangam Narayanababu, "*Valapu Chelamalu*", *Andhra Patrika*, Ugadi Sanchika, (Telugu), 1928.

[54] Srirangam Narayanababu, "*Sandhya Vegamu*", *Samadarshini*, Ugadi Sanchika, (Telugu), 1929-30.

[55] Kakarla Venkata Rama Narasimham, *Adhunikandhra Kavita Samiksha*, (Telugu), Gangadhara Publications, Vijayawada, 1982, p.646; Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam*, Vol. XIII, pp.167-168;

problems of the country and advocated socialism as the solution.[56] All his poems were published under the title *Rudhira Jyothi*, several years after his death in 1972.[57]

Puripanda Appalaswamy[58] was another poet of this generation. In the early days he was influenced by Krishna Sastri and other romantic poets. But he soon discovered that his heart was elsewhere. In one of the poems, *Pulipanja* (the Tiger's paw) he wrote that in the kingdom of vultures he can not live as a blood sucker, rather he would carry the torch of revolt for the impatient and revolutionary generation of the youth.[59] His poem *Gadaba Kanya* written in 1926, which is about an aboriginal girl, is the first free verse in Telugu.[60] He also wrote poems castigating the feudal exploitation of landlords and Zamindars. In 1925, he wrote a poem *Panchama Vilapam* in which he criticised the practice of untouchability and denial of entry to the harijans into temples.[61] Puripanda Appalaswamy was very much influenced by rationalistic thinking, Historical Materialism and Surrealism.

This new trend was not only limited to the field of poetry but also expressed through short story, novel, songs and drama. A new literary journal *Prabhava* took its birth in this period.[62] During 1933-34 Kompella Janardhana Rao, the most affectionate friend of Sri Sri, to whom Sri Sri dedicated his book *Mahaprastanam*,

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Avantsa Somasundar, *Rudhira Jyothirdarshanam: Srirangam Narayanababu Kavita Jivitam*, (Telugu), Kalakeli Prachuranalu, Pithapuram, 1981, pp.83-93.

[56] Srirangam Narayanababu, "*Nisha Mantritvam*", *Navasakthi*, 30-11- 1938, p.18; Kakarla Venkata Rama Narasimham, *Adhunikandhra Kavita Samiksha*, p.646;

[57] Srirangam Narayanababu, *Rudhira Jyothi*, Navodaya Publishers, Vijayawada, 1972.

[58] Puripanda Appalaswamy (1902-1982), a native of Salur in Srikakulam district, was a great Telugu scholar though his mother tongue was Oriya. He was active participant in the national movement in Visakhapatnam district during the 1920s. He was the founder of *Kavita Samithi*, a literary organisation with progressive ideas, in 1926. He has rendered greater service to the Telugu literature by translating into Telugu some of the best works in modern Oriya literature, especially the works of Sakara Mohana Senapathy, Gopinadh Mohanty and Kalichanran Panigrahi. After the death of Gidugu Ramamurthy, he has taken up the cause of successfully projecting the use of spoken Telugu at the university level. He was president of 7th and 8th sessions of the Progressive Writers Association held at Hyderabad (1976) and Kakinada (1978). His famous book *Pulipanja* (Tiger's Jaw) was published from London in 1976. See G. V. Sitapati, *History of Telugu Literature*, pp.162, 199; Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam*, Vol. XIII, pp.107-119.

[59] Avantsa Somasundar, *Puripanda Ethina Pulipanja*, (Telugu), Kalakeli Prachuranalu, Pithapuram, 1983, p.10.

[60] Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam*, Vol. XIII, p.113; Avantsa Somasundar, *Puripanda Ethina Pulipanja*, pp.32-34.

[61] Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam*, Vol. XIII, p.115.

[62] Atlury Murali, "Changing Perceptions and Radicalisation of the National Movement in Andhra, 1922-34", p.20.

started a literary journal *Udayini*[63] which popularised the leftist ideas. Muddukrishna started another journal *Jwala*[64] in 1934. Though *Jwala* survived only for few years, it helped for the spread of the Socialist ideas in Andhra.

Apart from these poets, there were several writers, who, though not been directly influenced by Marxism, propagated the vision of Socialist experiment in the Soviet Russia, through books and articles. The book *Neti Russia* (Russia Today) written by Narla Venkateswararao[65] was famous during that time. In this book, Narla described the amenities enjoyed by the workers, the condition of religion, the disruption of feudal family system, and the abolition of capital punishment in Russia.[66] The *Krishna Patrika* wrote that *Neti Russia* "gives a fair idea of communism that was prevailing in Russia. A perusal of this book will not only stimulate interest to read more literature on Russia but also creates desire to visit that country".[67] *Neti Russia* influenced several people particularly youth and made them supporters of Communism and Socialism.[68] But the Madras government banned the book.[69]

Thus during the 1928 and 1935, the younger elements of nationalist intelligentsia have vigorously popularized new social and political perceptions among the people. They created a strong social base for the left and radical ideas, especially among the youth. By popularising universal, rational and progressive ideas they laid the foundation for the hegemony of left ideology in Andhra. This led to the formation of several left wing groups and parties within and outside the Indian National Congress in the 1930s and thus emerged a bitter battle between the left and bourgeois

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[63] See Yetukuri Prasad (ed.), *Kompella Janardhana Rao Jeevitam-Sahityamu,* (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1987, p.9.

[64] M.Ravindra Reddy, *Telugu Kavitvampai Marxism Prabhavam*, (Telugu), Friends Publications, Hyderabad, 1988, p.111; C.Narayana Reddy, *Adhunika Andhra Kavitvamu Sampradayamulu-Prayogamulu***,** p.506.

[65] Narla Venkateswararao, *Neti Russia*, (Telugu), Andhra Vani Mudraksharasala, Bezawada, 1934.

[66] G.O.No.1059, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated: 16 October 1934.

67 *Krishna Patrika*, 18 August 1934.

[68] Narla Venkateswararao in his interview with N.Innaiah said that Alluri Satyanarayana Raju was influenced towards Communism with the influence of *Neti Russia*. See N.Innaiah, *V.R.Narla Jeevitamu-Sahityamu*, (Telugu), Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1987, p.90.

[69] G.O.No.1059, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated, 16 October 1934.

ideologies for cultural-ideological and political hegemony over the national movement.

## Social Reform Movements

Another factor which contributed for the growth of communist ideology in Andhra was the social reform movements of 19th century and early twentieth century. There was widespread social reform activity in the coastal parts of Andhra during the 19th and early 20th century. Kandukuri Viresalingam was the first and foremost among the reformers in Andhra. The social reform activity reached its peak during his lifetime.[70] After his death in 1919 the social reform activity was continued by Unnava Lakshminarayana,[71] Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu,[72] Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham[73] and Darisi Chenchaiah[74] in the 1920s. The social reform movements created background for the emergence of socialist ideas in Andhra. Most of the first

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[70] V. Ramakrishna, *Social Reform in Andhra: 1848-1919*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, Chapters 3 and 4.

[71] Unnava Lakshminarayana (1873-1958) was a freedom fighter and social reformer in Guntur district. He studied Bar-at-Law in Ireland. He underwent imprisonment for three years in between 1921 to 1943. He encouraged widow remarriages and established widow home at Guntur. He started *Sarada Niketan* at Guntur in 1922 to promote women's education. He also played active role in the movement for Separate Andhra State. He wrote the novel *Malapalli* in 1922 when he was in jail. It was published in two parts in 1923. The government banned the novel but later in 1925, the government allowed publication of the novel with certain modifications. Again the novel was banned in 1936. See for further details, V. V. B. Ramarao, *Unnava Lakshmi Narayana*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2002.

[72] Raghupathi Venkataratnam Naidu (1862-1939) is regarded as second great social reformer in Andhra, after Viresalingam. He dedicated his life for the upliftment of harijans and *devadasis*. He became vice-chancellor of Madras University in 1924. See for details, K. Suryanarayana, *Sir R. Venkataratnam*, (Telugu), Rajahmundry, 1952.

[73] Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham Pantulu (1867-1946), a prolific author in Telugu wrote several plays, poems, Novels, and biographies despite handicap of blindness. He also worked for the upliftment of harijan community. He started a separate school *Ramamohana Pathasala* in Rajahmundry for the education of downtrodden people. Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimha Kavi, *Swiya Charitramu*, (Telugu), M. S. Murthy & Co, Visakhapatnam, 1957; V. V. L. Narasimharao, *Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1993.

[74] Born in 1890 in Kanigiri in Nellore district (now in Prakasam district), Chenchaiah went to America in 1912 for higher education. He became a member in Gadar party of Lala Haradayal and was arrested along with other members of the party in 1915 in Bangkok. He has taken up social reform activity after his release from jail in 1919. Initially he started social reform activity among his own Vaisya caste and later extended his activities to other caste groups like Kammas and Vishwa Brahmins. The main emphasis in his activities was on marriage after puberty, widow marriage and women's education. Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, (Telugu), Andhra Grandha Mandali, Vijayawada, Fourth Edition 2004 (first Published in 1952) and *Na Divya Smrithulu*, (Telugu), Adarsha Grandha Mandali, Vijayawada, 1961. Also see Atlury Murali, "Perspectives on Women's Liberation: Andhra in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", *Studies in History*, Vol.3, No.1, 1987, pp.98-120.

generation communist leaders were inspired by these reform movements and worked in those movements.[75]

The youth who were working in the social reform movement especially for the upliftment of women found that the economic dependence of women was one of the major reasons for the problems of women in society. They observed that the problems of women could not be solved in the bourgeois social structure in which women were made inferior to men.[76] They thought that most of the problems were arising out of their economic dependence[77] and therefore the solution is the socialist system in which women were free and do not depend on men for their livelihood.[78] Thus their search for alternative social structure led them towards Socialism. The communists intensified the social reform movements in Andhra after the formation of the communist party in 1934.

The atheist movement of Gora[79] also influenced several people towards rationalism and communism. Through Atheist movement Gora attracted the youth of Andhra who opposed the religious beliefs and superstitions. Reputed leaders of the Communist movement in the 1940s and 1950s from the districts of Krishna and Guntur were students of Gora in his school of Atheist thought. In fact, they provided both moral and material support to Gora's movement in spreading atheist ideology. The communist leaders like Tammareddi Satyanarayana,[80] Sanaka Butchi Kotaiah,[81]

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[75] For example, see P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, pp. 67-68.
[76] Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, p.187.
[77] *Ibid*., p.188.
[78] *Ibid*., p.277
[79] Goparaju Ramachandrarao (1902-1975), a Brahmin by birth, was an atheist, social reformer and freedom fighter. He was the leader of social reform movement in Andhra in Post-Viresalingam era. He fought against the orthodox beliefs, superstitions and caste distinctions. He also encouraged intercaste marriages and widow remarriages. Sunanda Shet, *Gora, his life and work*, Podanur (Tamilnadu), 2000.
[80] Thammareddi Satyanarayana (1919-1991) was a prominent leader of the Communist movement in Andhra. He began his political career as a student in the 1930s and participated in the Telangana Armed Struggle. He was the secretary of Andhra Pradesh Committee of CPI from 1971 to 1978. For further details see, S.V. Satyanarayana, *Avishrantha Porata Yodhudu Thammareddi*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1998.
[81] He was one of the prominent leaders of CPI in Krishna district during the 1940s. He was elected as M. P. from Machilipatnam Lok Sabha Constituency in 1952. Later he left the CPI and joined CPI (ML) in 1967.

Katragadda Rajagopalarao,[82] Gunturu Bapanaiah,[83] and Ganji Ramarao[84] were students of Gora at Machilipatnam.[85] All these leaders later became communists and rose to the high positions in the CPI. More than Viresalingam, Gora's social reform activities added strength to the leftist ideology in Andhra.

There were several other factors that contributed to the spread of radical ideas and the most important one was the rise of non-Brahmin movement in Andhra. The non-brahmin movement revolted against Hindu religiosity, the traditional caste system and Brahmin ideological domination in the society. The youth who were influenced by the ideology of the non-brahmin movement later joined the communist movement, particularly from 1930, when the non-brahmin movement merged with the national movement in Andhra. This movement was also called the self-respect movement.

The self-respect movement in Andhra was started in 1916 by Suryadevara Raghavaiah Chowdary of Kollur, in Guntur district (in Kollur village), with the help of some prominent non-Brahmin middle class intellectuals. The leaders of this movement propagated against the caste system, Brahminical ritual domination and attacked the sanctity of Puranas. The non-Brahmin leaders argued that the Puranas were created by Brahmins for the purpose of vesting themselves with ritual exclusiveness and to keep non-Brahmins in perpetual servility. They reinterpreted the sacred literary works, which were the basis of the Brahminical cultural-ideological

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[82] He had immensely contributed for the growth of communist party in Vijayawada and was active in the student movement in the 1930s. He was the editor and publisher of *Prajasakthi* daily in 1947. Later he was elected as M. L. A. from Gudiwada (General) constituency for Madras Assembly in 1952. He left the party in 1968 and worked as editor for *Andhra Janata* daily of Congress party.

[83] Gunturu Bapanaiah (1919-1978) was an activist of CPI from the 1930s. He was the in-charge of agricultural labourers associations for a long period. He was one of the organizers of the peasant struggles in Challapalli Estate during 1938 and 1950. He was elected as M. L. A. to the Madras Legislative Assembly from Divi constituency in 1952. Later he was elected as M.L.A. from Nidumolu assembly constituency for Andhra Pradesh Assembly in 1962 and 1978. For further details see Moturu Hanumantharao, *Na Parichayalu*, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1998, pp.96-98.

[84] Ganji Ramarao (1913-2004), who was born in an agricultural labourer's family, became an activist of communist party and elected as M.L.A. from Gudiwada (Reserved) constituency to Madras Legislative Assembly in 1952. Later he left CPI and joined in CPI (ML) in 1967. He became president of Naxalite controlled Andhra Pradesh Rytu Cooly Sangham (Andhra Pradesh Agricultural labourers Association) in 1981.

domination and tried to put forward an opposite world view by using the same literary source material. In other words, the intellectual leaders of this movement in rural Andhra, who were mostly rooted in the preceding cultural renaissance, embarked upon the reinterpretation of the sacred texts, in which they changed names, wore sacred thread, pursued both English and Sanskrit learning and started *Swasangha Pourohityam*.[86] Leaders like Suryadevara Raghavaiah Chowdary (? -1937), Tripuraneni Ramaswami Chowdary (1887-1943), Kosaraju Raghavaiah Chowdary (1905-1986), Etukuri Venkata Narasaiah (1911-1949), Avula Gopalakrishnamurthi (1917-1966), Tapi Dharmarao (1887-1973), Duggirala Balaramakrishnaiah, G. S. B. Saraswati,[87] played an important role in the self-respect movement in Andhra. [88] It was the self-respect movement that opened up social and cultural space for non-Brahmins, who later turned to nationalist and left political movements in Andhra.

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[85] Saraswati Gora, *Gorato Na Jivitam* (My life with Gora), (Telugu), Nasthika Kendram, Vijayawada, 1992, p.125; S. V. Satyanarayana, *Avishranta Porata Yodhudu Thammareddi*, pp.3, 54.

[86] As a protest against the ritual exclusiveness of the Brahmins, the non-Brahmins began to learn mantras that were recited during rituals. They decided to create priests from their own castes to perform rituals. At the instance of non-brahmin leaders, a training school called *Veda pathasala* was started in Patchala Tadiparru to train the non-Brahmins especially, Kammas in Vedas. The school was inaugurated by the then premier of Madras, Bollini Muniswamy Naidu. Very soon a large number of people were trained in the art of performing rituals and they began to perform rituals to their own caste people which was came to known as *Swasangha Pourohityam.* See Pedavalli Sriramulu, *Mavuri Katha – Vinadaggadi: Patchala Tadiparru,* (Telugu), Vijayawada, 1992, pp-2-6 and Uma Ramaswamy, "The Belief System of the Non-Brahmin Movement in India: The Andhra Case", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 18, No.3, March 1978, pp.290-300, pp.295-296.

[87] Swami Gopala Satchidananda Brahmananda Sarswathi, though a brahmin, supported the non-brahmin movement, visited several places in Andhra to propagate the ideas of non-brahmin movement He wrote several books in support of the arguments put forward by non-brahmin movement and its leaders. For further details on his activities, see Ravipudi Venkatadri, *Andhra Pradeshlo Hetuvada, Manavavada Udyamala Charitra,* (Telugu), Telugu Academy, Hyderabad, 2003, pp.68-69.

[88] For Further details on the activities of non-brahmin movement and its leaders in Andhra, see - Suryadevara Raghavaiah Choudary, *Brahmanetara Vijayamu,* (Telugu), Kolluru, 1925; Gorrepati Venkata Subbaiah, *Kaviraju Jivitamu – Sahityamu,* (Telugu), Desi Kavitamandali, Vijayawada, 1970; *Kaviraju Sanmana Sanchika,* Gudiwada, 1942; Tripuraneni Subbarao, *Kaviraju Jivitamu – Sahityamu,* (Telugu), Kaviraju Sahiti Sadanam, Hyderabad, 1964; Avula Sambasivarao, *Tripuraneni Ramaswamy: A Herald of Philosophical Renaissance,* Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1988; Kilari Surendra, *Kaviraju Tripuraneni Ramaswami Rachanalu – Bhava Viplavam,* (Telugu), Navodaya Publishers, Vijayawada, 1987; Tripuraneni Subbarao, *Navyandhra Kavibrahma Etukuri Venkata Narasaiah Jivitham – Sahityam,* (Telugu), Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1987; Nalluri Ramarao, *Janapada Kavisarvabhouma Kosaraju Kavita Vaibhavam*, (Telugu), Sneha Prachuranalu, Narasaraopeta, 1997; Yetukuri Prasad, *Tapi Dharmarao Jivitam – Rachanalu*, (Telugu), Vishalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1989; Tapi Mohanarao, *Tapi Dharmarao Jivitha Sangraham,* (Telugu), Vishalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1987.

The rise of peasant movement in Zamindari areas helped for the emergence of communist Ideology in Andhra in 1930s. Leaders like Gudavalli Ramabrahmam, N.G. Ranga, Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary, who were intellectually moulded by the self-respect movement, now moved towards supporting of peasant movements, particularly in Zamindari areas. Pedavalli Sriramulu, a communist leader from Guntur district, who witnessed the rise of non-Brahmin movement and Communist movement in his native village, described how the energies of non-Brahmin movement have transformed into Communist movement in coastal Andhra.[89] Sri Tripuraneni Gopichand also said that the non-Brahmin movement in Andhra created background for the emergence of Communist Movement in Andhra in the 1930s. He compared the non-Brahmin movement in Andhra with the Nihilist Movement in Russia, which attacked the religion and God and created background for the emergence of rationalism and Communism in Russia.[90]

## Rise of Peasant Movements

The emergence of peasant politics between 1922 and 1930 as part of anti-colonial struggle also created political environment conducive for radical politics. The middle class educated youth emerging from the peasant social background and their earlier involvement Congress party and politics is also a crucial factor for the rise of left in Andhra after 1930.

The context in which the peasant movement expanded was the world economic depression and its aftermath. When the depression set in, prices of agricultural commodities slumped between 1929 and 1930; a fall in the 50 - 60 percent was a common phenomenon in Andhra. Between 1930 and 1935, the slump in prices continued to hunt agrarian economy. The increase of production of agriculture products like Rice and Cotton in Burma, Uganda, Egypt and U. S. A. reduced the prices those products in India. The fall in the prices was disastrous for the peasantry because it reduced their cash incomes. Peasant's inability to pay revenue and rent regularly resulted in the large-scale accumulation of arrears. Peasants' indebtedness

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[89] Pedavalli Sriramulu, *Mavuri Katha – Vinadaggadi: Patchala Tadiparru,* pp.10-11.
[90] Gopichand, "Varga Chaitanyam", *Kaviraju Sanmana Sanchika,* (Telugu), Gudiwada, 1943, pp.76-77.

also grew. Local credit was not freely available to the peasants. The cultivators, who had lent their money to the neighbours lost hopes of getting back the money. The moneylenders' money also started shrinking from lending market. Due to the difficulty in the maintenance of land, several peasants sold their lands and became agricultural labourers or left to the towns. The depression also affected the income of Zamindars. They failed to pay their annual rent to the government. At several places Zamindars adopted illegal methods to collect taxes from the peasants. The resentment of peasants against the atrocities of the Zamindars led to the formation of peasant associations. The peasant leaders who were influenced by the Civil Disobedience movements of Congress disappointed by the suspension of the movement and turned towards Socialism after 1934.[91] At the same time the socialist Revolution in Russia and the gigantic strides it made under the Soviet five-year plan, at the time when the capitalist world was reeling under an unprecedented economic crisis had impressed the youth and peasantry.

Between 1925 and 1930, the Congress activities which were at a low key in India were quite intense in coastal Andhra. The local Congress leaders organised the peasantry on class lines to achieve their demands. This helped the Congress in Andhra to achieve a considerable success during the first phase of the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32. In Andhra the peasant leaders formed peasant associations and used press and publications extensively to mobilise the peasantry.

In Andhra the first serious effort at peasant mobilization was made by Dandu Narayana Raju and N.G.Ranga as early as 1923. They made serious effort to organize peasantry in Krishna, Godavari and Guntur districts.[92] In the 1920s the organizational structure was created for the peasantry in various districts of Andhra. For instance, in 1923, N.G.Ranga formed Guntur District Agricultural labourers association at

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[91] For a detailed discussion on Economic Depression and its impact on Madras, See, C. J. Baker, *The Politics of South India, 1920 - 1937,* Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976, pp.170-192; *An Indian Rural Economy, 1880-1955: The Tamilnad Countryside,* Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1984; "Debt and the Depression in Madras, 1929-1936", in Clive Dewey and A. G. Hopkins (ed), *The Imperial Impact: Studies in the Economic History of Africa and India,* The Anthlone Press, London, 1978, pp.233-242.

[92] Atlury Murali, "Changing Perceptions and Radicalisation of the National Movement in Andhra, 1922-34", p.22.

Nidubrolu.[93] In the same year in 1923, a ryot conference was arranged in Appikatla village of Guntur district, presided over by Paturi Venkatappaiah. N.G.Ranga was also participated in that conference.[94] Dandu Narayana Raju formed West Godavari Ryots Association in 1923.[95] He acted as the secretary to the association form 1923 to 1929. The association organized a ryot school to give training in various aspects and help solve their problems. Dandu Narayana Raju, Maganti Bapineedu and Rebbapragada Mandeswara Sarma were the leaders in West Godavari peasant movement. In Nellore district also the ryot associations emerged in the late 1920s. In Mallam, a village in the Nellore district, a ryot conference was organized in March 1929, presided over by Tikkavarapu Rami Reddy. The local peasant leaders like Baddepudi Venugopala Reddy, Nelluri Venkata Ramanaidu and Vennelakanti Raghavaiah had also participated in that conference. Inspired by the Russian revolution and the national movement in India the peasant leaders decided to develop the political and organizational structure to the peasantry, artisans and rural masses in Andhra. N.G.Ranga seems to have stated that he was inspired by the October revolution and the national movement and began work to organise the peasant unions from 1923 and weavers unions from 1925.[96]

In July 1928, the first conference of Andhra Ryots Association was held at Guntur, with Bikkina Venkataratnam as president and Maganti Bapineedu as the secretary.[97] The second conference was held at Vijayawada under the presidentship of N.G.Ranga. Through these meetings they began to educate the peasantry and brought them under into the fold of the Indian national movement.[98] N.G.Ranga as a student in England wrote articles, which were published in the prominent newspapers of that time.[99] A number of journals and newspapers were also started to educate the

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[93] Krishna Zilla Swatantra Samara Yodhula Sangham, *Swatantra Sangrama Charitra*, (Telugu), Krishna District Congress Committee, Vijayawada, 1984, p.74.
[94] K. Chinnayasuri, *Andhralo Rytu Udyamamu*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Rytu Sangham, Vijayawada, 1986, p.45.
[95] Y.V.Krishnarao, *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu-Poratalu*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1987, p.97.
[96] Atlury Murali, "Changing Perceptions and Radicalisation of the National Movement in Andhra, 1922-34", pp.23-5.
[97] K.Chinnayasuri, *Andhralo Rytu Udyamamu*, p.46.
[98] *Ibid***.**
[99] See *Andhra Patrika***,** 4 January 1924.

peasants. These papers highlighted the problems of peasants. As early as 1920, N.G.Ranga and his associates started *The Ryot* weekly, though it was stopped due to the internal bickering.[100] The *Zamin Ryot*, a full pledged peasant newspaper was started in 1928 by Nelluri Venkata Ramanaidu in Nellore.[101] The newspaper played a pioneering role in publishing extensively reports on agrarian economy, peasantry and the issues that were adversely affecting them.

It was the practice of the Madras government to re assess the land revenue for every thirty years so that the land revenue rates might reflect the prevailing economic conditions. A joint reassessment of the Kistna and Godavari districts was begun in 1924 and a revised schedule of land revenue rates were to be implemented from 1930. The government appointed B.G.Holdsworth as special settlement officer for the Kistna-Godavari operation.[102]

Holdsworth in submitting his report stated that agriculture was extremely profitable in Kistna and Godavari districts. He recommended that the land revenue rates be increased by the permitted maximum of 18.75 in most of the areas covered under the re-settlement areas.[103]

The ryots began to oppose the method of resettlement followed by the government and the consequent increase in the land revenue demand. The news about Bardoli Satyagraha in Gujarat inspired the ryots. They sent Dandu Narayana Raju and Venneti Satyanarayana to Bardoli to observe the methods of Satyagraha.[104] At the meeting of the A.P.C.C., held on 7 July 1928, a resolution was passed declaring that the government order of enhancing the land tax by three annas in the rupee was "unjust, unconstitutional and unbearable".[105] In the meeting Prakasam Panthulu condemned the report of the special officer as a "perversion of truth". In this agitation

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[100] B. Reddy Prasad Reddy, *Anti Zamindari Struggles in Andhra*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, 1993, p.88.
[101] *Ibid*.
[102] See Brian Stoddart, "The Structure of Congress Politics in Coastal Andhra, 1925-1937", in D.A. Low (ed.), *The Congress and the Raj: Facets of the Indian Freedom Struggle, 1919-1947*, Arnold Heinemann Educational books, New Delhi, 1977, pp.112-3.
[103] K. Chinnayasuri, *Andhralo Rytu Udyamamu*, pp.12-13.
[104] *Krishna Patrika*, 9 January 1929.

Dandu Narayana Raju, who actively participated in the Non-cooperation movement and elected to the Madras legislative council in 1924, took an active part. Narayana Raju attacked the land revenue proposals when they were discussed in the Madras legislative council. Dandu Narayana Raju and others started an organisation in Bhimavaram taluk of West Godavari district which piloted agitations mostly in the deltaic taluks of Bhimavaram, Tanuku, Narsapuram and Tadepalligudem of West Godavari; Rajolu, Ramachandrapuram and Amalapuram taluks of East Godavari and Bandar, Divi and Gudivada taluks of Kistna district. Venneti Satyanarayana led the movement in East Godavari district. Satyanarayana made an extensive tour of Ramachandrapuram, Rajahmundry, Rajolu and Amalapuram taluks of East Godavari district. Meetings were held at village, taluk and firka levels. By the beginning of 1930 Satyanarayana controlled an organised, established and widely publicized agitational force in East Godavari district.

Naturally in 1930-31, the Civil Disobedience movement in Andhra was most intense where the resettlement agitation had been most successful. The Civil Disobedience movement got its support amongst locally predominant landed groups, which sympathised with the land revenue agitation. The Collector of Kistna reported that "the Civil Disobedience movement was most active in the delta portions of the district where the Kamma population dominates and where the people were most prosperous. The people who were arrested during the movement were mainly agriculturists and aged between 17 and 28".[106]

The Collector of West Godavari reported that the "sons of educated members of economically advanced communities such as the Kammas and Kshatriyas were actively participated in the movement".[107] The Government of Madras had initiated a most-repressive policy and arrested all the leaders and participants in the Civil Disobedience movement. Mudiganti Jaggannasastry of Tanuku, Rebbapragada Mandeswara Sarma of Kavuru, Arekapudi Ramakotaiah and Arekapudi Ramaswamy

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[105] *The Hindu***,** 9 July 1928. Also M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra),* Vol. III (1921-1931), Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1965, pp.125, 441-51.
[106] Brian Stoddart, "The Structure of Congress Politics in Coastal Andhra, 1925-1937", pp.120-1.
[107] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra),* Vol.IV, pp.72, 586-9.

of Angaluru in Kistna district were arrested.[108] Venneti Satyanarayana and Dandu Narayana Raju and several other taluk organisers were also arrested.[109] Duggirala Balaramakrishnaiah, a strong Kamma from Gudiwada taluk, who organised the land revenue agitation in Angalur, a village in Krishna district, during the Non-cooperation movement, was sent to jail. Kalidindi Bangarraju of Tadepalligudem taluk, Kollipara Suraiah and Arumilli Venkataratnam of Rajolu were the other popular leaders who participated in the re- settlement agitation and got arrested during the Civil Disobedience movement.

The suspension of Civil Disobedience movement and Gandhi-Irwin pact dissatisfied the peasantry. They were in a mood to continue the struggle. But the terms of Gandhi-Irwin pact prevented the agitational politics. Gandhi and Patel informed the provincial leaders that the Congress should not encourage the land revenue agitation while the Gandhi-Irwin pact was in force.[110] The organised peasantry who was dismayed by the Gandhian directive looked towards communism and Socialism as a solution to their problems. From 1934 onwards the leadership of the peasant associations was passed on into the hands of Communists and the left wing Congress leaders, i.e., the Congress Socialists and N.G.Ranga and thus started the struggle for the Left domination over the national movement and peasant politics.

**Impact of Meerut Conspiracy Case**

The Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929) and the subsequent trial of Indian Communists also inspired the youth. The news about the arrest of Communist leaders and the speeches made by them in the Court encouraged the youth to join the Communist Movement.[111] The Communists in the Meerut Conspiracy Case in fact, set an example for the revolutionary fighters against British Imperialism on how to conduct in a bourgeois court. They ignored the threats of the session's judges from time to

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[108] *Ibid.*, pp.24-5.
[109] Brian Stoddart, "The Structure of Congress Politics in Coastal Andhra, 1925-1937", pp.120-2.
[110] *Ibid.*, pp.122-3.
[111] Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Swatantrya Samaramlo Communist Desabhaktulu*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 2000, p.20; P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, p.24.

time to punish them for contempt of court and carried on communist propaganda utilizing the court as a platform.[112]

**Influence of Revolutionaries in Northern India**

Another important factor, which had contributed for the rise of Socialist ideology in Andhra, was the impact of the revolutionaries of Northern India on the youth. After the suspension of non-cooperation movement, two powerful revolutionary organisations came into existence in North India. They were the Hindustan Republican Association in U.P., Punjab and Yugantar and Anusheelan Samithi in Bengal.[113]

In the early years the aim of the revolutionaries was the physical liquidation of the British officers and their Indian stooges. The political and ideological maturity made them realize the need to achieve radical transformation and political freedom by the way of organizing workers and peasants. Reading on Socialist experiment in Soviet Union and Marxism made them arrive at a socialist understanding of the state, nationalism and revolution.[114] In other words, the impact of the Russian Revolution and Marxism made the revolutionaries of U.P. and Punjab change the name of their organisation into Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Ajay Kumar Ghosh, a member of the newly formed organization, who later became the General Secretary of CPI in 1952, declared that the objective of HSRA was to wage struggle for freedom and socialism in India.[115]

After the assassination of Sounders (a British Official in Punjab) in December 1929 the revolutionaries declared that they are working for a revolution which would

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[112] Sohan Singh Josh, *Meerut Conspiracy Case: The Great Attack*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979, pp.75-110.

[113] Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1989, p.247.

[114] For further details on the process of ideological transformation of revolutionary terrorists, see Satyendra Narain Majumdar, *In Search of a Revolutionary Ideology and a Revolutionary Programme: A Study in the Transition from National Revolutionary Terrorism to Communism*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979; Kalpana Dutt, *Chittagong Viplava Virulu* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1945; Bejoy Kumar Sinha, *In Andamans, The Indian Bastile*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1988 (reprint); Sekhar Ganguly, *A Satyagrahi, A Revolutionary, A Communist*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995; and Sudhansu Das Gupta, *How We Became Communist in Jails*, Nishan Prakashani, Calcutta, 1985.

[115] Ajay Ghosh, "Bhagat Singh and his Comrades", *Articles and Speeches, Ajay Ghosh*, Publishing House for Oriental Literature, Moscow, 1962, pp.16-17.

end exploitation of man by man.[116] Another revolutionary, Bhagat Singh in a letter sent from prison before his martyrdom said, "The real fight for freedom can only be fought by mobilizing *Kisans and Mazdurs* and the common people. It is my considered opinion that bombs can not serve our purpose. This is proved by the history of Hindustan Socialist republican association. Our chief aim should be to mobilize the toiling mosses".[117] Though Bhagat Singh and his comrades were influenced by Socialism and recognized the need of mobilization of masses against imperialism, they did not stop the preparations for violent activities and armed actions. They thought that violent actions were necessary to rouse the masses from slumber.

During this period, 1922 to 1933, the revolutionaries of North India exerted a considerable influence on Andhra youth and students. And this brought them into freedom movement.[118] The political and ideological radicalization of the youth and students expressed itself in anti-colonial struggles as well as in building working class and peasant movements. The youth wore Bhagat Singh caps instead of Gandhi Caps. The youthful deeds and slogans of the revolutionaries inspired the Left wing within the congress. During the time of the death sentence of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukudev, all sections of the people demanded that they should be saved from the gallows. The people were uneasy when Gandhi entered into a pact with Irwin who refused to commute the death sentence of the three revolutionaries.[119] In several places people observed hartals and protest meetings against the death sentence of these revolutionary heroes.[120]

During the Civil Disobedience movements of 1930-34, the entire generation of the Indian youth suffered from imprisonment. Most of the revolutionaries were

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[116] Bipan Chandra, "The Ideological Transformation of Revolutionary Terrorists in Northern India in the 1920s", p.177.

[117] Cited in E.M.S Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, Social Scientist Press, Trivandrum, 1987, p.372.

[118] A.K.Gopalan wrote that the activities of the revolutionary terrorists like Bhagat Singh evoked sympathetic reverberation in his heart towards the freedom movement. See A.K.Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People: Reminiscences*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p.13.

[119] See P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, p.44.

[120] See E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *How I Became a Communist*, Chinta Publications, Trivandrum, 1976, p.133; Indukuri Subbaraju, *Na Gnapakalu*, (Telugu), Hyderabad, 2004, p.1.

arrested and the police killed some of them. The Government declared the Lahore Conspiracy Case detenus as 'dangerous prisoners', divided them into several groups and sent them to jails in different places in the country. Seven of them were sent to Madras Presidency and they were kept in Vellore, Cannanore, Tirachirapalli and Rajahmundry jails.[121] During that time some of the political prisoners from Bengal were sent to Rajahmundry central jail. The Congress youth that were arrested during the civil disobedience movement were also sent to these jails. It was in these jails that the revolutionaries and the Congress young Satyagrahis established contacts with each other and the revolutionaries exerted considerable ideological influence on these young Satyagrahis.[122] The revolutionaries having access to the socialist literature from outside,[123] brought some of the young satyagrahis of Andhra into their circle and taught them the ideas behind socialism and encouraged them to work for the spread of socialist ideology in Andhra.

E.M.S.Namboodiripad wrote "the seeds of the left wing Congress that was later formed in Kerala and the Congress Socialist movement were laid in the Cannanore jail. And the one individual responsible for it was Tiwari. It was he who consolidated and gave a new shape to the leftist tendencies of the Satyagrahis in jail".[124] The revolutionaries like Kiran Chandradas, brother of Jathindas, one of the co-accused with Bhagat Singh in Lahore conspiracy case, Kamalnadh Tiwari one of the youngest in the Lahore conspiracy case, Baba Kher Sing and Jayadev Kapoor and Acharya of Anusheelan Samithi of Bengal were sent to Cannanor jail. E.M.S.Namboodiripad wrote that "it was Tiwari who instilled in me the emotional instincts of the revolutionary movement. It was Sri Acharya of Anusheelan group

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[121] Batukeswara Dutt, Mahabir Prasad, Kundan Lal, Dr. Gayaprasad, Shiva Varma, Kamal Nadh Tiwari and Bejoy Kumar Sinha were sent to Madras Presidency. See, Bejoy Kumar Sinha, *In Andamans, The Indian Bastile*, pp.3, 17.

[122] See K.Chinnayasuri, *Andhralo Rytu Udyamamu*, p.60; K.Gopalan Kutty, "The Task of Transforming the Congress, Malabar, 1934-40", in *Studies in History*, Vol.5, No.2, 1989, p.178.

[123] Ramalingaiah wrote that Bengali detenus have acquired several books on the history of Russian Revolution and other writings of Lenin. See Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, "Jatiya Swatantryodyamam – Ma Purva Smrithulu", in *Andhra Kesari Prakasam Satajayantyutsava Sanchika*, (Telugu), Hyderabad, 1972, p.295.

[124] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *How I Became a Communist*, p.133; also see K.Gopalan Kutty, "The Task of Transforming the Congress, Malabar, 1934-40", p.179.

from Bengal helped for its ideological growth".[125] It was in Cannanore jail later the veterans like P. Krishnapillai, A.K.Gopalan, K.P.R.Gopalan, K.A.Keraleeyan, K.Damodaran, P.Narayanan Nair, N.C.Sekhar and E.M.S.Namboodiripad were exposed to the Marxist literature[126] and became communists after their release from the jail.

The Civil Disobedience Movement that was launched by Gandhi with Salt Satyagraha on 6 April 1930, brought several youth into the Movement. The young people who were studying in colleges and schools were also entered in arena of freedom movement. Putchalapalli Sundarayya, student of intermediate in Loyola College Madras, left his studies and joined in Chagallu Satyagraha sibhiram in West Godavari District.[127] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, a student of MA in Loyola College Madras left studies and joined in the Civil Disobedience movement.[128] The others like Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Tanikella Venkatachalapathi, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Dr.Chelikani Ramarao, Anne Anjaiah, Anne Venkateswararao, Pandiri Mallikarjunarao, Chadalavada Pitchaiah, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, Madabhashi Venkatachari, Pratapa Ramasubbaiah and B.V.Rangasayi were also participated in the movement.[129]

While the movement was at its zenith, Gandhi entered into a pact with Viceroy Irwin and suspended the movement. It created much disillusionment among younger nationalists. Even though the movement was resumed after the failure of second round table conference, people did not show interest in the programme. The youth disappointed by Gandhian methods and searched for alternatives. The police atrocities during the movement made the young people ready to take revenge. They younger nationalists tried to murder the notorious police officials Mustafa Alikhan and

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[125] *Ibid*., p.134.
[126] Robin Jeffrey, "Matriliny. Marxism, and the Birth of the Communist Party in Kerala, 1930-1940", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXVIII, No.1, November 1978, p.86.
[127] See P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, Part–I, pp.26-27.
[128] See Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra***,** p.51.
[129] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, Part–I, pp.37-43; Durbha Krishnamurthi, *Smrithulu*, pp.9-15; Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Poratapathamlo Nenu*, pp.74, 82; Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, "Jatiya Swatantryodyamam: Ma Purva Smrithulu", pp.293-295.

Dappula Subbarayudu.[130] The police excesses on satyagrahis[131] and police firings at the Vadapalli Radhotsavam[132] created much angry among the youth. The young people felt that the Gandhian programme was failed and they searched for a new strategy. They began to closer towards Socialism.[133]

In Andhra the youth who went to jails during the Civil Disobedience movement came under the influence of the ideology of revolutionaries. Putchalapalli Sundarayya of Alaganipadu, who was arrested in west Godavari, was sent to Rajahmundry central jail. In jail he met Bejoy Kumar Sinha and Shiva Varma, co-workers of Bhagat Singh. Before that Sundarayya, when he was a student in Layola College, read in the newspapers the heroic deeds of Bhagat Singh and his comrades.

Sundarayya was very much influenced by Shiva Varma. It was in jail that Sundarayya learnt the techniques of Guerrilla war from Shiva Varma. Shiva Varma also gave some suggestions, which a revolutionary should follow in his underground life.[134] Already disillusioned with the Gandhi-Irwin pact which did not achieve any of the 11-point programmes of Gandhi, Sundarayya moved towards Left ideology and revolutionary movements. He discarded Gandhism and began to work the Communist Party in Andhra.

The entire generation of youth in Andhra, who went to jails during the civil disobedience movement came under the ideological influence of revolutionaries and started to form the left wing political parties like Communist Party and Congress Socialist Party mixing nationalism with revolutionary ideas and politics. For instance, Dr.Chelikani Ramarao, arrested during the civil disobedience movement was sent to

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[130] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)* Vol. IV, p.90; Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh*, pp.137-138.

[131] C.V. Rajagopalarao, *Gautami Satyagraha Ashramam Sitanagaram*, Gautami Satyagraha Ashramam (Telugu), Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Committee, Hyderabad, 2000, pp.22-24; K.S. Sastry, *Na Adarshalu, Anubhavalu* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Smt. K. Ramanamma, Visakhapatnam, 2004, pp.60-61; Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh*, pp.134-5.

[132] Police opened firing on the car festival in Vadapalli village in East Godavari district on 30 March 1931, and removed the photographs of Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sarojini Naidu from the Car. M. Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)* Vol. III, pp.155-6;

[133] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Swiya Charitra* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 2000, pp.6-7. P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, pp.43-44. Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Porata Pathamlo Nenu*, pp.83-84.

[134] *Ibid*.

Rajahmundry central jail. It was in jail that he learned the basic principles of the Socialism and joined the Socialist Party.[135] Durbha Krishnamurthy wrote in his autobiography that that a Bengali detenu, Pratul Chandra Bhattacharya explained them about the weaknesses of the individual terrorist activities and advised them to work for the formation of political party with socialist ideas.[136] Extensive reading of books in jail turned him towards Socialism. Kothamanu Satyanarayana, Garapati Satyanarayana, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao and Tanikella Venkatachalapathi, who played an important role in the formation of Communist Party in Andhra, were also influenced by these revolutionaries in jails. Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah[137] who was arrested during the Civil Disobedience Movement was sent to Tiruchirapalli jail, where he met the prisoners of Lahore conspiracy case. He was already dissatisfied with the Gandhi-Irwin pact, which did not, included the release of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. Similarly in Tiruchinapali jail the Bengali detenus transformed several young men as supporters of Socialism. In that jail, the Bengali detenus Pratul Chandra Ganguly, Jivanlal Chatterji Surendra Mohan Ghosh and Kundanlal Gupta of Meerut Conspiracy Case and the Lahore Conspiracy case prisoner Batukeswar Dutt played an active part in influencing the minds of the youth.[138] For several youth the martyrdom

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[135] Chelikani Ramarao born in 1901, participated in Non-cooperation movement, got arrested and was sent to Rajahmundry Central Jail. In jail he established relations with Neelakantha Brahmachari, who murdered the Collector of Selam. He also had relations with several other revolutionaries from North India. Ramarao learned Communism and Socialism in jail and joined in Congress Socialist Party in 1935. He played active part in the communist movement in East Godavari district. He was arrested and kept as detenu in various jails in South India during 1949-1952. He was elected to Lok Sabha from Kakinada parliamentary constituency in 1952. See G.O.No.3374, dated 5 October 1949, G.O.No.2097, dated 10 August 1951, Public (General) (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras; B.V.V.Balakrishna, *Dr.Chelikani Ramarao Jivithamu: Oka Rajakiya Parishilana*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1992.

[136] Durbha Krishnamurthi, S*mrithulu*), p.29. Krishnamurthi was one of the organisers of the Communist Movement in Guntur district during 1930s.

[137] Born in Jonnalagadda Village in Guntur district, Ramalingaiah actively participated in the Civil disobedience Movement and he turned towards Socialism after his release from jail in 1932. He was elected as the secretary of Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party in 1934. Later he played an important role in the formation of Labour Protection Leagues and Agricultural Labourers Unions in Andhra region. He was the founder of Youth and Student movements in Andhra during 1930s and 1940s. Later he joined CPI and became organisor of Communist Movement in Visakhapatnam district. He was arrested during Quit India Movement. He left CPI after his release from jail in 1952. Later he joined in Andhra Socialist Party. See G. O. No. 178, dated 22nd Jan 1937, G. O. No.1879, dated 1st November 1939, G.O.No.1122, dated 7th June 1940, G.O.No.3996, dated 18th November 1949, G.O.No.566, dated 15th March 1951, Public (General) (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras; *Andhra Patrika*, 25-06-1934, 15-01-1938, 03-09-1939, and 12-05-1942; Jonnalagadda, Ramalingaiah, "Jatiya Swatantryodyamam: Ma Purva Smrithulu", pp.289-295.

[138] Tirumala Ramachandra, *Hampi nunchi Harappa daka*, pp.180-183.

of Bhagat Singh was the most inspiring event in the contemporary history. The detenus and the youth celebrated Bhagat Singh day on 24 March 1932; sang songs on Bhagat Singh and regularly echoed the jails with slogans like *Inquilab Zindabad*. Regular speeches on the life and ideas of Bhagat Singh moulded the consciousness of youth and made them the future leaders of Socialist movement in India.

The revolutionaries in jails regularly held classes to introduce the revolutionary literature to the young nationalist satyagrahis. The most active were Surendra Mohan Ghosh, Jivanlal Chatterjee, Pratul Chandra Ganguly and Batukeswara Dutt, who not only introduced the books in classes, but also advocated violence as a means to achieve independence. In June 1932, Madduri Annapurnaiah,[139] who was arrested on 15 July 1929, gave lecturers on life of Jansi Lakshmibhai and Alluri Sitaramaraju. Annapurnaiah, who was otherwise a Gandhian and nationalist also moved towards advocating the violence as a means to achieve independence.[140] The youth, trained by the revolutionaries in jails, after their release took active part in organising the left wing political parties, i.e., the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party.

Among the Bengali detenus, who were sent to Rajahmundry central jail, Pratul Chandra Bhattacharya and Binoy Roy chowdary played an important role in the spread of Socialist ideology in Andhra. One important change; however is that the Bengali detenus changed their views and moved closer to the method of mass

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[139] Madduri Annapurnaiah (1899-1954) was born in Komaragiri village near Peddapuram. He is known for his sacrifices during the time of freedom movement. He was a friend and classmate of Alluri Sitaramaraju during his school days at Kakinada. He participated in the Home Rule Movement of 1916 and NCO movement of 1922, Civil disobedience Movement of 1930 and Quit India Movement of 1942, started *Congress*, a nationalist Telugu weekly, He was imprisoned thrice for his participation in the national movement and writing objectionable article in his weekly *The Congress.* He worked as the Secretary of Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party. He started a Weekly *Navasakthi* for Congress Socialist Party. Later he resigned from Congress Socialist Party due to his differences with the Communists in the CSP. He joined in Forward Bloc of Subhash Chandra Bose and invited Bose for a tour in Andhra in 1940. He left the Congress in 1946 when he was rejected a ticket to contest Assembly elections from Rajahmundry. Later he joined in Socialist Party and became the Secretary of Andhra Committee of Socialist party in 1948. See. Ravinutala Sriramulu, *Mahatyagi Madduri Annapurnaiah Jivitha Charitra*, (Telugu), Vishalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 2000. Also see, G.O. No. 2363, Law (General) (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras, and dated 15 August 1934.

struggles in place of the revolutionary terrorism.[141] Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, who was arrested for the second time after the failure of the second round table conference, was sent to Rajahmundry central jail where he met the Bengali prisoners like Pratul Chandra Bhattacharya and Binoy Roy Chowdary and became a supporter of Socialism.[142] Much before Ramalingaiah, Anne Anjaiah, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Kosaraju Seshaiah, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju,[143] Nirukonda Ramarao and Nanduri Krishnamachari have become their followers.[144] Apart from introducing the youngsters the ideas of through the book *Basic principles of Socialism,* they also trained them in the art of organizing the secret associations. The Bengali detenus continued to maintain their contacts with the young Congress political prisoners even after they were released. In a letter, Bhattacharjee wrote some instructions to the youth on what they have to do after their release from jails, to quote: "those who have revolutionary tendencies asked them to bottle up their energies. Just now and devote for organisation and to build a disciplined and a conscious Party. To kill one or two individuals is not a revolution but a perversity of revolutionary ideas. Revolution means mass, etc. Always keep the discipline in your mind. Do not hesitate to amputate the gangrenous part however big that limb be".[145] This move on the part of the revolutionaries of Bengal like Pratul and Binoy Roy to leave the idea of individual terrorism and expose the need for a strong organisation with mass base had its positive impact on the young nationalists.

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[140] See G.O.No.1399 (S-51), 15 August 1936, Home (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras, Enclosure V, Statement given by Nayidi Pattabhi Rami Reddy of Rebala village, Nellore district, an approver in the Madras Conspiracy Case.

[141] Durbha Krishnamurthi, S*mrithulu*, p.29.

[142] See Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, "*Jatiya Swatantryodyamam – Ma Purva Smrithulu*", p.295.

[143] A native of Jinnuru in West Godavari was an influential leader of the Communist Party upto 1941. He was arrested during Second World War and became anti-communist in jail. He was released from jail in 1945. He was elected to Madras Legislative Assembly in 1946 and 1952 and 1955. He played important role in the Congress after independence and became the president of APCC in 1956.

[144] All these people after their release took active part in Congress Socialist Party. See Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Communistu Udyama Charitra*, Part 1, p.65.

[145] See the report on the letter of the special branch C.I.D., in G.O.No.1399, Home Confidential, dated 15 August 1936.

The above quoted letter that was seized from the house of Basavaraju Rangasayi of which though in the name of one Krishnamurthy, but was actually written by Pratul Chandra Bhattacharya,[146] suggests that:

1. The ideology chalked out by Jawaharlal should be the basis of work. The nature of work and the programme to be under taken by the youth league should be the following (a) work amongst the youths and themselves, form youth leagues, wherever possible gymnasiums, small libraries and volunteer corps. (B) Work amongst the workers, form labour unions in various factories and through those unions ventilates their grievances, low wages etc., and to organise strikes formation of night schools and gradually to make them militant. (c)Work amongst the peasants, form peasant unions in the villages and to agitate with their grievances, high taxation, and tyranny of the government officials, etc. Formation of night schools and gradually to make them conscious.
2. A firm alliance amongst the workers, youths and peasants is to be established.
3. The main aim of all your activities will be to form a solid disciplined Party with the best elements of the above. This Party is to lead the country in struggle.
4. Relations with Congress must not be hostile, but the Congress should be captured and through it also the socialistic ideas propagated till they accept the ideology.[147]

The youth who were trained by these revolutionaries in jails after their release took active part in the formation of the left wing political parties with Communist and Socialist ideas. Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah and Basavaraju Rangasayi who have established close relations with Pratul Chandra Bhattacharya took initiative in organising a conference with the 'Congress men of Socialist views' in Vijayawada. It shows that the suggestions given by Pratul Bhattacharya began to take real shape. After the formation of the Socialist group within the Congress in Andhra, the

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[146] Report of the Special Branch C.I.D., to the Inspector General of Police, Madras, dated 18th May 1934, in G.O. No. 1399 (S-51), 15th August, 1936, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[147] Report of the special Branch C.I.D., on the second letter seized from Rangasayi on 18 May 1934; See G.O.No.1399, Home confidential, dated 15 August 1936.

Socialists adopted all the suggestions of Bhattacharya into their agenda. The aims and objectives as declared by the Socialists reflect the suggestions given by Pratul Chandra Bhattacharya.

**Activities of N.G.Ranga**

Some of the individuals also worked for the rise of socialistic ideas in Andhra. Prof.N.G.Ranga was one of such individuals. Ranga has his own image as a peasant organiser, Congress leader and the left-wing politician within the national movement. Born on 7 November 1900 in Nidubrolu village of Guntur district, Ranga deeply influenced by the Non-Brahmin movement and its ideology, and became a nationalist social reformer and champion of peasants cause. In 1920, Ranga left to England for higher education. As a student of Oxford University, he wrote articles to *Andhra Patrika* on the problems of peasants and youth.[148] During that time he read the Novel *Malapalli,* written by Unnava Lakshminarayana and wrote several articles on that novel popularizing the Socialist ideas in that novel. The study in London also made Ranga exposed to the ideas of socialism. While in Britain, he read books on Socialism, particularly the publications of left book club of London, Soviet literature and the writings of John Strachy, Edgar Snow, G.D.H.Cole and Pearl Buck.[149] During that time, the Fabian society and its leaders, Sydney Webb and Bactrice Webb were influential in the Oxford university circles. He read H.G.Wells book *The Salvaging of the World,* Russell's *Road to Freedom*, Hyndman's *The Awakening of Asia* and Burke's *Present Discontent.*[150] Coming from the peasant family, Ranga could easily grasp the problems of peasants as articulated in various historical contexts and decided to work for peasants' emancipation. Apart from literature, Ranga's friends circle also had an impact on his thinking. His discussions with friends like Sri V.Ramakrishna and Vellodi on the changes in the Soviet Russia where the working class and peasants gained supremacy impressed him. Ranga records in his autobiography that he wanted to establish a Soviet type of government in India.[151]

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[148] *Andhra Patrika*, 6 March 1924, pp.2-3; Daruvuri Veeraiah (ed.), *Acharya Ranga Rachanalu*, (Telugu), Kisan Publications, Guntur, 1986, pp.VIII-IX.
[149] N.G.Ranga, *Fight for Freedom*, S Chand & Company, Delhi, 1968, p.238.
[150] *Ibid*., p.88.
[151] *Ibid*., pp.82-83.

After coming from London, N.G.Ranga joined the Pachhayyappa College in Madras as a professor. From 1928 onwards Ranga, in association with Maganti Bapineedu and Dandu Narayanaraju began to organise the peasants against the Zamindars and landlords.[152] Ranga also recognized the need for a moratorium for all agricultural debts. Ranga and other kisan minded Congressmen organised many district conferences to make the peasants politically conscious. An Economic Inquiry Committee was appointed by the Madras government to look into the issue of resettlement and the enhancement of land revenue in two Godavari and Krishna districts. This committee, headed by Ranga unanimously recommended against the increase of land revenue.[153] But the government did not accept the recommendations. So Ranga launched intensive tours in Godavari and Krishna districts campaigning against the resettlement of land revenue.

Throughout 1930s and 1940s Ranga took active part in anti Zamindari struggles in Andhra particularly in the Nellore district against Venkatagiri Zamindari. The Nellore District Ryot Conference which met at Alluru in Kovur taluk in the summer of 1931 appointed a Zamindari Ryots Inquiry Committee to study the problems of Ryots, with N.G.Ranga as the President and Sri Nelluri Venkataramanaidu, the editor *Zamin Ryot*, a Telugu weekly, as the Secretary. The committee held meetings in several places in Nellore district.[154] On the issue of peasants in Zamindari areas, a conference was held in Venkatagiri. Satyamurthy, Kasinadhuni Nageswararao and Sri Biswanadha Das had attended it[155] wherein a resolution was moved by N.G.Ranga, demanding Madras government for the abolition of Zamindari system. N.V.Naidu sang a song "We do not want the Zamindari system", which influenced the kisans and became a clarion call to all the kisans in the anti Zamindari struggle. In Venkatagiri anti-Zamindari struggle, it was Petluri Govinda Reddy, Ponaka Kanakamma, Vennelakanti Raghavaiah, N.V.Naidu and Katikaneni Brothers assisted Ranga. In fact, N.G.Ranga toured several places in

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[152] K.Chinnayasuri, *Andhralo Rytu Udyamamu*, p.45. Also see Y.V.Krishnarao, *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu-Poratalu*, p.79.
[153] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)* Vol. III, pp.125-6.
[154] N.G.Ranga, *Fight for Freedom*, p.138. Also see Y.V.Krishnarao (ed.), *Andhra Pradesh lo Rytu Udyamalu - Poratalu*, p.51.

Andhra and formed peasant associations,[156] which shaped peasant consciousness on class lines.

N.G.Ranga established All India Peasant Institute in Nidubrolu in April 1934[157] with an aim to train the peasant youth in social, economic and political problems of the country and prepare them to fight for resolving the problems of peasants.[158] K.Santanam of *Indian Express* opened the first session.[159] Several Congress stalwarts like Konda Venkatappaiah and Unnava Lakshminarayana attended the session. Seventy-five students came to attend the first session from all parts of Andhra. Sri Kandula Obula Reddy, Dukka Suryanarayana Reddy and Pragada Kotaiah were among the students who attended the first session. In this school the students were taught the history of capitalist societies from the primitive stages, Fascism, industrialism, industrial policies, labour movements, emergence of third communist international, agriculture, land revenue systems, Zamindari system, peasant movements in zamindaris, political systems, world constitutions, local self governments, fiscal policies, co-operative movement, issues of unemployment, famine relief policies, civil liberties, press and propaganda.[160] In the institute N.G.Ranga, introduced inter-dining among the students to break the barriers of caste and religion. Several Communist leaders including P.Sundarayya, C.Vasudevarao, Durba Krishnamurthi and Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah gave lectures in this school.[161] After 1934, the Congress Socialists following Ranga organised a number of summer schools in Andhra and trained the youth in economics and politics. In fact, they worked as recruiting centers of Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party.

In April 1934 N.G.Ranga published an anthology of poems, *Ryotu Bhajanaval*i. This anthology consists of songs by several peasant activists who were

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[155] N.G.Ranga, *Fight for Freedom*, p.139. Also Y.V.Krishnarao, *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu-Poratalu*, p.51.
[156] *Andhra Patrika*, 26 September 1923, p.4; 6th, 13th, 16th, 20th, 21st June 1934, and 3 December 1934.
[157] N.G.Ranga, *Fight For Freedom*, pp.102-5, 109-111.
[158] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th and 26 March 1935.
[159] Fortnightly report for the second half of April 1934, dated 3 May 1934; also see N.G.Ranga, *Fight for Freedom*, p.193.
[160] N.G. Ranga, *Indian Adult Education Movement*, The Hindustan Publishing Company Limited, Rajahmundry, 1938, pp.144-160.

involved in struggles against landlords, Zamindars and the government.[162] N.V.Naidu's song "We do not want this association with Zamindars, lying in ambush for our lives, it was destroyed our honour", attracted the attention of government. Ryotu Bhajanavali popularised the Socialist ideas in Andhra.

The impact of activities of N.G. Ranga on peasants and youth is enormous. As a student in London, Ranga wrote articles and influenced the peasantry and youth to think about rural economic problems. After arrival to India, he toured several places in Andhra and created awareness among the peasants. He formed peasant associations in Zamindaris and encouraged peasants to fight against the atrocities and exploitation. The youth who took active part in his activities later became the organisers of the peasant and communist movements in Andhra.[163]

**Influence of Left Literature**

The study of the Socialist movement is both political and ideological. It was the left literature that moulded people ideologically in their struggles against imperialism, feudalism and other forms of exploitation. From the early 1930s the Socialist ideas penetrated the nationalist movement drawing the youth away from Gandhian struggles. Three events influenced this shift: disappointment with the Gandhian principles and methods of struggle, influence of Socialist experiment in the Soviet Union and economic depression of 1929-30. The creative literature produced during this period under the influence of left ideology in turn shaped influenced the left lead movements such as Kisan Sabhas, agricultural labour unions, and youth and student movements. It was left literature that ideologically moulded the individuals who took active part in organising the left wing political parties and Kisan sabhas within the framework of anti-colonial struggle. Socialist ideas through the theoretical works of Marx, Engels and Lenin were being secretly smuggled into Andhra, which intern were

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[161] Durbha Krishnamurthi, *Smrithulu*, p.52. Also see Andhra Patrika, 3 May 1935, p.3; Andhra Patrika, 1 June 1935, p.4 and 14 June 1935, p.2.

[162] M.Ravindra Reddy, *Telugu Kavitvampai Marxism Prabhavam*, pp.106-109.

[163] Makineni Basavapunnaiah, Moturi Hanumantharao, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Idukallu Sadasivan and several others were drawn into the peasant movements with the influence of N.G.Ranga. See, Mukkamala Nagabhushanam (Ed), *Nenu Communistunu Ela Ayyanu*, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, 1946, p.6; Moturu Hanumantharao, *Na Parichayalu*, pp.104-105; P. Dastagiri, *Comrade Idukallu*

translated and published in Telugu. Sri Kundurthi Narasimharao of Tenali translated the biography of Karl Marx which was published by Kommuri Kasivishwanadham of Tenali in 1933.[164] In 1934, Adarsha Grandhamandali published Telugu translation of Lenin's *Imperialism.*[165] An anonymous author 'a Socialist' translated this book. In the same year Adarsha Grandhamandali published the translation of *Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx and Engels, and a small booklet on in the question-answer form on socialist theories.[166] In the year 1935 the Government of Madras felt that the Telugu translations of the two books *Communist Manifesto* and *Imperialism* were directly preaching communism and therefore banned them.[167]

Adarsha Grandhamandali, established by Gadde Lingaiah Chowdary had published several works in Telugu. In 1935, he published a book on the biography of George Dimitrov, the Bulgarian communist, who was one of the accused in the Reichstag burning case.[168] Gadde Lingaiah felt that the life of Dimitrov would inspire the working class and prepare them for class war against their enemies.[169]

Maxim Gorky's novel, *Mother* had a very great impact on the youth. This novel turned many youth towards Socialism and Marxism. For instance, Surendranadh Dwivedy, a famous Socialist leader from Orissa after reading *Mother,* when he was in jail turned towards Socialism. He wrote "Maxim Gorky's novel, *Mother* sowed the seeds of Socialism in me".[170] In 1934, Krovvidi Lingaraju translated *Mother* into Telugu, when he was in jail. Fearing its mesmerizing influence, the colonial state banned its circulation.[171] The *Amma* (name of the novel in Telugu

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*Sadasivan Jivitha Viseshalu*, (Telugu), Idukallu Sadasivan Memorial Society, Anantapuram, 1997, pp.23-34.

[164] Kundurthi Narasimharao, *Adhunika Maharshi Karl Marx* (The Modern Sage: Karl Marx), Tenali, 1933. (The book was a Telugu translation for the biography of Karl Marx written by Haradayal in English).

[165] A Communist, *Imperialism*, Adarsha Grandhamandali, Elamarru, 1934.

[166] *Andhra Patrika*, 12 January 1935.

[167] G.O.No.823, dated 23 May 1935, G.O.No.221, dated 29 January 1936, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

[168] *Comrade Dimitrof*, Adarsha Grandhamandali, Machilipatnam, 1935.

[169] *Ibid.*, p.20.

[170] Surendranadh Dwivedy, *Quest for Socialism: Fifty Years of Struggle in India*, Radiant publishers, New Delhi, 1984, p.23.

[171] Government of Madras, G.O.No.1180, Public (General) Confidential 18 July 1935, also See G.o.No.221, Public (General) dated 29 Jan 1936.

translation) became a household novel for the youth in Andhra and a symbol of creative literature that created ideological space for left hegemony in Andhra.

A number of individuals, groups and associations worked hard to spread the Socialist ideas in Andhra. Narla Venkateswararao, a famous journalist of the later period, influenced by the novel Amma, wrote *Neti Russia,* in 1934. Tummala Venkatramaiah wrote *Matru-hridayam,* summary of Gorky's novel *Mother*. Dr.Chelikani Ramarao, Putchalapalli Sundarayya and Uddaraju Ramam, while they were in jail, read left literature and turned into a young and energetic left leadership in the Madras Presidency. Outside the jails, they continued to read so many books like *The Ten days that shook the world* by John Read, *Communist Manifesto*, *Basic principles of Socialism* and *Imperialism* etc.[172] In a way it was the creative literature that grounded ideological hegemony for the left politics in Madras Presidency.

**Students of Andhra in Benaras**

The Students of Andhra in Banaras Hindu University were another important group who played an important role in the spread of Socialist ideology in Andhra.[173] During early years of 20th century, when the Non-Brahmin movement was at its peak, some students of Andhra who belong to Non-brahmin communities were sent to Kasi to get training in Sanskrit and Vedas.[174] Then Kasi became a familiar town to Andhras and people continued to go to Kasi for education. After 1920s the students of Andhra who were studying in Benares were attracted towards Socialist ideas, which was prevalent in the university campus.

After the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement some of the youth of Andhra went to Benaras Hindu University for studies. Katragadda Venkata Narayana Rao, Yallabandi Polisetti, Katragadda Srinivasarao, Chilakapati Lakshma Rayudu (Dr.C.L.Rayudu of Gannavaram), Polepeddi Narasimhamurthy, Pulupula Venkata Sivaiah, Nanduri Prasadarao, Ponnam Veeraraghavaiah, Munipalle Ramarao,

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[172] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, chapters 2 and 3.

[173] Ponnam Viraraghavaiah, "Andhralo Communist Party Nirmanamlo Benares Viswavidyalaya Vidhyardhula Patra", *Communism*, (Telugu), Vol. 1, No.8, December 1975, pp.51-54.

[174] Carol Upadhya, "Social and Cultural Strategies of Class Formation in Coastal Andhra Pradesh", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol. 31, No.2, 1997, pp.177.

Chandra Ramalingaiah and Chandra Rajeswararao[175] joined in the Benaras Hindu University.[176] The Court statements of Communists in Meerut Conspiracy Case influenced some of them and they have established contacts with the north Indian communists. They founded 'Young Communist League' in Benares Hindu University with Rajeswararao as secretary.[177] They read the writings of Karl Marx, Engels and Lenin. They also formed 'Socialist Study Circle' with Ponnam Veeraraghavaiah as its secretary, to study the Socialist literature. Chandra Ramalingaiah, D.K.Baruva, S.V.Ghate, Vithal Chowdary and several others were its members.[178] The members of the Socialist study circle used to get important books on Marxism, including banned literature from university library. Sri Subramanyam, the librarian of the university, who was also a Telugu man, helped them to get those books.[179] S.V.Ghate, who came to Madras to organize Communist Party in 1935 used to explain Marxist literature to members of Study circle.[180] The members of Socialist Study Circle invited Communist leaders S.A.Dange, K.N.Joglekar, and P.C.Joshi to the university to give lectures on Marxism. Slowly the Andhra students of Banaras University smuggled

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[175] Known as C. R. in CPI, Chandra Rajeswararao was born on 6 June 1914 in Mangalapuram village in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. He was one among the Andhra students at Benares Hindu University who have come in touch with the leftist ideas and smuggled the Left literature to Andhra. Later, after his suspension from the Benares University for his communist activities, he joined in Andhra University and worked for the spread of Leftist ideas among students, workers and other educated people in Visakhapatnam. After 1934 he joined in CPI and became secretary of the Krishna district committee of CPI. He led agrarian struggles in Challapalli and due to his untiring efforts Krishna District Committee became one of the strongest units in CPI in Andhra. He was elected as the secretary of the Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI in 1943. He took active part in the formation of CPI in Telangana region of Hyderabad State. He was elected as a member to the Central Committee of CPI in 1948. He was closely associated with the Armed Struggle in Hyderabad State. He opposed the Russian path of revolution proposed by the P. B. of CPI in 1949. He was the principal author of the *Andhra Document* of 1949 on alternative path of revolution, which advocated what is known as Chinese path. He was elected as the General Secretary of CPI in 1950 when the Central Committee accepted his thesis. Later he retreated from his position and opposed what he said in his Andhra document. Finally he became the General Secretary of CPI after the Great Split in the CPI in 1964. Comrade Rajeswararao held the position till 1990. He died on 9 April 1994 at the age of 81 years.

[176] See Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.77; Telakapalli Ravi (ed), *Marxist Medhavi, Shramikavarga Yodhudu, Nanduri Prasadarao,* (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Committee of CPI (M), Hyderabad, 2002. p.51.

[177] Y.V.Krishnarao (Ed), *Maha Manishi Comrade Chandra Rajeswararao,* (Telugu), N.R.R. Parishodhana Kendram & C.R. Foundation, Hyderabad, 2002. p.5.

[178] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.78.

[179] *Somuri Darshanam*, (Telugu), Somuri Venkatramaiah 80th Birth Anniversary Felicitation Committee, Vijayawada, 1993, p.40.

[180] Gajjela Mallareddy, Paruchuri Rajaram & Kondepudi Srinivasarao (Ed), *Palanadu Velaleni Maganira*, (Pulupula Venkata Sivaiah Smaraka Sanchika), (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Abhyudaya Rachayitala Sangham, Vijayawada, 1978. p.48.

Marxist literature to Andhra. Tummala Venkatramaiah, a native of Kolluru village in Tenali taluk received Gorky's novel *Mother* from Benares through Katragadda Venkata Narayanarao. He wrote *Matri Hridayam* a summary of Gorky's novel Mother.[181] After some time Tummala Venkatramaiah, Somuri Venkatramaiah (a native of Pasumarru in Kistna district) and Gullapalli Purushottam (from Kurumaddali village in Kistna district), joined in Kasi Vidyapeeth and he became members in the 'Communist Cell'.[182] All these students worked for the spread of Communist ideas in Andhra.

When they were coming to home the B.H.U. students brought the left literature to Andhra and distributed to the other Comrades. Katragadda Narayanarao visited Bhatlapenumarru village and distributed the literature he brought from Benares to Chalasani Jagannadharao and other young men of the village. Polepeddi Narasimha Murthi reached Tenali and established contacts with Muktevi Madhavacharya, Kothamanu Satyanarayana and Panditaradyula Mallikarjunasarma and distributed the literature to them. P. V. Sivaiah and Nanduri Prasadarao reached Guntur and supplied Marxist literature to Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, Durbha Krishnamurthi, Kambhampati Satyanarayana (Junior),[183] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah and Madabhashi Venkatachari.[184] Later Sivaiah established contacts with Makineni Basavapunnaiah and influenced him to join in Communist Party.

The youth who were dissatisfied with the Gandhian methods of struggle and searching for alternative ideologies were attracted by the leftist literature supplied by Benares students and they turned towards communism.[185] At this juncture, P.

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[181] *Tummala Sahityam*, p.131.
[182] *Ibid*., p.48. Also *Somuri Darshanam*, p.97.
[183] Kambhampati Satyanarayana (Junior) was active member of CPI in Guntur district and worked as organizer of CPI in several districts in the early years, left CPI in 1948. He has published a book entitled *Soviet Videsanga niti – Bharatadesam (Soviet Foreign Policy and India)* in 1944. For further details on his life and activities, see *Tenali Taluka Swatantrya Samara Yodhula Sanmana Sanchika*, (Telugu), Tenali, 1972.
[184] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Poratapathamlo Nenu*, pp.85-86; A.V.Ramanaiah, *Bharata Jatiya Vimukthi Poratamlo Vamapakshala Patra*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Book House, Hyderabad, 1992, pp.519-520. Gajjela Mallareddy, Paruchuri Rajaram & Kondepudi Srinivasarao (Ed), *Palanadu Velaleni Maganira*, p.48. Y.V.K. and others (ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra, Part – II*, Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1988, p.121; Telakapalli Ravi (ed), *Marxist Medhavi, Shramikavarga Yodhudu, Nanduri Prasadarao*, p.52.
[185] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Poratapathamlo Nenu*, pp.84-85.

Sundarayya, who joined in Communist Party with the influence of Amir Hyder Khan, contacted the youth who were already influenced by communism and formed communist cells in all the important places in Andhra region.

In Andhra University also the left literature began to spread among the students. Prof.Hiren Mukherjee, who worked as professor in Andhra University during 1930s, brought so many books on Marxism from England and kept them in the Andhra University library.[186] Abburi Ramakrishnarao,[187] the librarian, Acharya Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiah, the Principal of arts collage and some of the students Oruganti Venkatasubbaiah and Kambhampati Satyanarayana (junior) formed *Anamika* an association to discuss about Socialism.[188] The Communist Party workers Attaluri Narasimharao and Narasimhamurthy of Guntur were sent to Visakhapatnam to organise the Harbor worker union. They held night schools for workers and taught world history and Socialism to the workers. Abburi Ramakrishnarao and Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiah worked as teachers in these schools.[189] During these days Chandra Rajeswararao, left Benares Hindu University and joined in Andhra University as medical student. Nidamarthi Aswani Kumara Dutt, who established Pragati Prachuranalayam (Progressive Publishing company) in his native place Nidamarru and published several translations of Marxist literature, was also in A.U. as a student of B.Com, studied the left literature.[190] He actively participated in the student's protest against the decisions of Sir C. R. Reddy, the then Vice-Chancellors of the

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[186] M.Ravindra Reddy, *Telugu Kavitvampai Marxism Prabhavamu*, p.105.

[187] Abburi Ramakrishnarao (1986-1979), a pioneer in modern Telugu literature, was a multifaceted personality who had left his strong imprint on a generation of creative writers, actors, and political and trade union leaders. Born in Ananthavaram village in Tenali Taluk of Guntur district, Abburi had his education in Tenali, Secunderabad and Machilipatnam. He worked as the Librarian for Andhra University for three decades till his retirement in 1959. He established contacts with the Bombay Communists and became a founding member of the Communist Party in Visakhapatnam. Abburi acquired a good deal of Marxist literature for the library. He encouraged students to read those books. But after 1936 Abburi left CPI and became a follower M.N.Roy. Abburi was also active in various literary and theatre movements in Andhra Pradesh. See, E. Nageswararao, *Abburi Ramakrishna Rau*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2002; Abburi Gopalakrishna (ed), *Abburi Samsmarana*, (Telugu), Natyagosthi, Hyderabad, 1988; Abburi Chayadevi and others (ed), *Varada Smrithi*, (Telugu), Abburi Trust, Hyderabad, 1994; Abburi Varada Rajeswara Rao, *Varada Kalam*, (Telugu), Visala Grandhasala, Vijayawada, 1990.

[188] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.83.

[189] See Memoirs of Attaluri Narasimharao, in Abburi Gopalakrishna (Ed), *Abburi Samsmarana*, pp.20-22.

[190] Nidamarti Uma Rajeswararao (Ed), *Tolivekuvalo Ashwani Darshanam (Memories of Ashwani Kumara Dutt)*, (Telugu), Pragati Prachuranalayam, Bangalore, 1999, pp.6-7.

university to remove the Marxist literature from the Library and suspended from the university in 1937.[191] Chandra Rajeswararao who was a student of medicine in Andhra University organised students union in the university.[192] Sri Sri (Srirangam Srinivasarao), who was studying in the Andhra University, under the influence of Abburi Ramakrishnarao read the book *the Ten days that shook the world*.[193] The activities of Rajeswararao and Abburi Ramakrishnarao helped to attract the youth and students towards communism and in 1935 they formed a branch of Communist Party in Visakhapatnam with Abburi Ramakrishnarao, Attaluri Narasimharao, Nidamarthi Aswani Kumara Dutt and Kothamanu Satyanarayana. Later several students of Visakhapatnam, J.V.K. Vallabharao, Dr. D. Lakshmi, and B. Achyutam joined in CPI and became the organizers of the CPI in Visakhapatnam.[194]

The Students of Kamma hostel and Harijan hostel in Guntur were another group of students who have contributed for the growth of Communist Party in Andhra. Pulupula Venkata Sivaiah who returned to Guntur from B.H.U., established contacts with M.Basavapunnaiah, a student of A.C. College, staying in Kamma hostel. Slowly along with Basavapunnaiah, other students of the hostel were also attracted by towards Leftist ideas. Tummala Venkatramaiah, who returned from Kashi Vidyapith, supplied left literature to Y.V. Krishnarao and Tummala Venkata Subbaiah and other students Kamma hostel. With all these efforts the students of Kamma hostel Madala Narayanaswami, Y.V.Krishnarao, Makineni Basavapunnaiah, Moturu Hanumantharao, Vemulapalli Srikrishna, C.L.Narayana, Lavu Balagangadhararao, Prabhala Krishnamurthi, Tummala Venkata Subbaiah, T. Venkateswararao and Kolla Venkaiah became members of CPI and worked for the spread of Communist ideas in Guntur district in the early period.[195] Kamma hostel worked as the recruiting center of communists in Guntur district.

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[191] *Ibid*, p.7

[192] Chandra Rajeswararao left his studies in Benares Hindu University and joined in Medicine in Andhra University. See Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, p. 278; Abburi Gopalakrishna (ed.), *Abburi Samsmarana*, p.26.

[193] *Ibid.*, p.63.

[194] Y.V.Krishnarao and others (Ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part – II, pp.94-95.

[195] Kolla Venkaiah, "Swiya Jivitha Charitra", in *Comrade Kolla Venkaiah Rachanalu*, Part – I, p.13-14; Moturu Hanumantharao, *Destination Communism: Memories of Veteran Communist*, Prajasakthi Prachuranalayam, Hyderabad, 2000, pp.4-5; Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithi Pathamlo*

Sri Yetukuri Balaramamurthi of Yetukuru village, who has become Communist with the influence of left literature, established contacts with students of Harijan hostel in Guntur and taught them Marxism. The students of Harijan hostel Lankapalli Bullaiah, Govada Nirikshanarao, Kathi Chandraiah, Bussa Bikshalu and several others were inspired by his teachings and became members of the Communist party.[196]

During the early thirties some of the Andhra students who were studying in the Layola College Madras established contacts with communist leaders like Amir Hyder Khan. They formed *Sodara Samithi* and started to study the Socialist literature. Putchalapalli Sundarayya, Kambhampati Satyanarayana and V.K. Narasimhan were the members of Sodara Samithi.[197] Putchalapalli Sundarayya[198] who joined Loyola College as a student of Intermediate in 1929 played an important role in the spread of leftist ideology in Andhra and formed a branch of Communist Party of India in Madras Presidency. Sundarayya and Satyanarayana established contacts with H.D. Raja of Bombay and received Left literature secretly. They became subscribers to the paper *Young liberator* led by H.D.Raja. Sundarayya wrote that when was in Loyola; he was influenced by *Communist Manifesto.*[199] Sundarayya and his friends thought

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(Autobiography), (Telugu), Rytumitra Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 2005, pp.40-47. Yetukuri Krishnamurthi (Ed), *Gunturu Zilla Communist Udyama Vaitalikulu,* (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Swatantrya Samarayodhula Samstha, Hyderabad, 2004, pp.5-7.

[196] *Ibid.,* p.8. Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithi Pathamlo* (Autobiography), pp.47-48.

[197] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, "Viplavodyama Karyakartaga Na Toli Anubhavalu", p.8; *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* p.56.

[198] The founder of Communist Movement in South India, known as 'communist Gandhi' for his simple lifestyle and high moral values, was born in Alaganipadu village in Nellore district in 1913, studied in Rajahmundry, Madras and Bangalore, became founder of communist party in Madras presidency and organized branches of communist party in other regions of Madras presidency. He was arrested and kept in jails for several times by the colonial government. Participated in Telangana armed struggle of 1946-51. He was elected to Rajyasabha in 1952 and worked as the leader of CPI group in parliament. He was elected as an M.L.A. from Gannavaram constituency in 1955 and worked as the leader of opposition in Andhra State assembly from 1955 to 56 and in Andhra Pradesh Assembly from 1956-1962. He revolted against the revisionist policies of CPI leadership and played active role in the formation of CPI (M) in 1964. He worked as the general secretary of CPI (M) from 1964 to 1977. Again he was elected as M.L.A. from Gannavaram constituency in 1978. Sundarayya also showed interest in Visalandhra movement and his book *Vishalandhralo Prajarajyam* outlining the features Andhra Pradesh laid foundations for the Visalandhra Movement. He was a keen observer of literary activities of the party and wrote several articles on literature with progressive outlook. He died on 19 May 1985. The Andhra Pradesh Committee of CPI (M) started a library *Sundarayya Vignana Kendram* in memory of Sundarayya in Hyderabad.

[199] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam,* p.24.

that independence could not be achieved through Gandhian programme of non-violence. They believed that revolution was necessary for the achievement of independence. They were thinking to work among poor peasants, agricultural labourers, and workers to mobilize them in the fight against British imperialism.

In April 1930, Sundarayya visited Chagallu village in West Godavari and participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was arrested by the government and spent two years in Tanjore, Tiruchinapalli and Rajamandry jails. In jail, he established contacts with Durbha Krishnamurthi and Madabhashi Venkatachari. In Rajahmundry jail, Sundarayya came into contact with revolutionaries of north India and influenced by their heroic deeds. After his release from jail, Sundarayya decided to work for communist Party.

Sundarayya started Alaganipadu agricultural labourers association in 1932 and started work against untouchability and exploitation of labourers.[200] He started a primary health center and a co-operative store in the village. He also established a library and night school in the village. He visited villages around Alaganipadu and explained people that the Gandhian programme was failed. He advised them to start constructive programme for the upliftment of poor peasants and agricultural labourers.[201] During this period, Sundarayya translated *Communist Manifesto*, *State and Revolution* and *Left wing Communism An infantile Disorder* and distributed them to the youth.[202] Thus, by the year 1933, the activities of Sundarayya popularized Communist ideas in Nellore district and several young men were ready to join in the Communist Party.

Several individuals were also influenced by Left literature. Uppala Lakshmanarao, who visited Soviet Union, wrote *Soviet Union-Bhutala Swargam* (Soviet Russia-A heaven on the earth). Pandiri Mallikarjunrao read articles on Socialism in Hindi newspapers *Pratap* and *Auz*. He also read pamphlets of Fabian

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[200] "Constitution of the Alaganipadu Agricultural Workers Union", Report of the Inspector General of Police, Government of Madras to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Secret File No.931 dated, 1st September 1935, in History of Freedom Struggle Files, 1935, pp.2584-2588.

[201] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, p.61; Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad, *Putchalapalli Sundarayya*, (Telugu), Vignan Publishers, Guntur, 2003, pp.33–34.

society of London on Socialism. Uddaraju Ramam when he was in jail studied *Ten Days That Shook The World*.[203] Chalasani Vasudevarao was influenced towards Marxism by reading Dange's *Gandhi vs Lenin*. Vasudevarao also translated Hilpher Ding's *Imperialism* into Telugu.[204] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah read Left literature brought by P.V.Sivaiah from B.H.U. He read the writings of Karl Marx: *Das Capital, Communist Manifesto* and *Eighteenth Brumeir of Louis Bonaparte, Class struggle in China, Civil war in France* and some text books of Marxism.[205]

Darisi Chenchaiah, who joined *Gadar* Party, was engaged in understanding Russia and he initially read two books *The Challenge of Russia* and *Russia Today* written by Dr. Sher Wood Eddy on the changes that took place in Russia after the revolution.[206] Eddy as a Christian priest praised the changes in Russia. In his book he wrote "in Russia all the principles that laid down by Jesus have happened. Poverty removed. All people have work, have education. Women have equal right with men. The parda system was removed. There was no prostitution. Widows can get remarriage. No individual property. Workers and labourers were became the kings. There is land to the tiller. No place to lazy people. Adult franchise was implemented".[207] Darisi Chenchaiah and his wife Subhadramma read these books and they were fascinated by the Russian system and they joined in the Socialist Party. Chenchaiah in his book further mentions that Chandra Rajeswararao was influenced by Frederick Engels book *Anti-During*.[208] Chenchaiah met Chandra Rajeswararao in Visakhapatnam while he was engaged in organising the workers and students unions. Influenced by the ideas of Chandra Rajeswararao, Chenchaiah and his wife turned towards Marxism.

During the period from 1930 to 1934, the newspapers in Andhra, *Krishna Patrika* and *Andhra Patrika* published several essays on Socialism. On 18 March

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[202] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, p.63
[203] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, pp.41-43.
[204] *Ibid*., p.75.
[205] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Porata Pathamlo Nenu*, pp.85-6.
[206] Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, p.276-277; B.Kesavanarayana, *Political and Social Factors in Andhra, 1900-1956*, Navodaya Publishers, Vijayawada, 1976, p.173.
[207] Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, p.277.
[208] *Ibid*., p.279.

1933 Chaparala Satyanarayana wrote an essay in *Krishna Patrika* on Russian Labour unions.[209] On 7 July 1934 Darbha Krishnamurthy wrote *Workers or peasants*. He discussed about the importance of workers in the establishment of Socialism in Russia. *Krishna Patrika* published another article entitled *Life of Lenin and Evolution of Russia,* written by Yarlagadda Chilakamma.[210] In that article the author compared the rich people with young snakes and urged workers and peasants to fight against the atrocities. The government banned the issue of Krishna Patrika, which published this article on 14 July 1934.[211] Chelasani Vasudevarao and Katragadda Narayanarao also wrote several essays on Socialism. Dr.Shivarao also wrote essays in *Andhra Patrika* on Socialism. He wrote *New Russia, Old Russia, Socialism, Some doubts on Soviet Russia, New Russian constitution.* Shivarao basically a Congressman, but also got inspiration from soviet Russia. His essays created great impact on the minds of the people.[212]

During the early thirties several poems and books were published by the people who were influenced by the left literature. Adarsha Grandha Mandali of Elamarru published the Telugu translation of *Communist Manifesto,* which was banned by the Madras government.[213] Balantrapu Nalinikantharao translated Eugene Pottier's international anthem of the working class into Telugu as “All the orphans who are suffering from the pangs of hunger, arise”.[214] Another young poet, Pendyala Lokanadham, who was drawn towards Socialist ideas, wrote a poem about the collective power of the working class as "If all the workers will unite, will there be dearth of bread?” Tummala Venkatramaiah wrote a poem in *Prabha* about the red flag, the symbol of toiling masses as “Should fly, should fly our red flag, till there is last breath in the throat of workers and warm blood flowing in the veins of poor peasant”.[215]

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[209] *Krishna Patrika*, 18 March 1933.
[210] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, pp.118-9.
[211] G.O.No. 1183, dated 26-11-1934, Public (General) (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras.
[212] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Ardha Satabdi Kalamlo Andhrula Paini October Viplava Prabhavamu*, pp.49-55.
[213] Government of Madras G.O.No.657, Public (general) Confidential dated 26 April 1935.
[214] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Appendix-12.
[215] G.O.No.2833, dated 22 October 1936, Home Department, Government of Madras.

With the influence of Left literature, the generation of youth and students that was, B.H.U. students and Kashi Vidyapeeth students from Andhra, the Andhra students in Madras, Andhra University students, the youth who were in jails during 1930-31 took active part in organising the left wing political parties in Andhra.

**Formation of Congress Socialist Party**

The formation of Congress Socialist Party in June 1934 also helped to the spread of Communist ideology and consolidation of Left wing politics in Andhra. The youth who were influenced by socialism and communism joined in Congress Socialist Party and later they became communists. A brief description of the circumstances led to the formation of Congress socialist party and its activities are given here.

After the withdrawal of Civil Disobedience movement several Congress leaders expressed their dissatisfaction on the Gandhian methods of struggle. They declared that "Mr.Gandhi as a political leader has failed. The time has therefore come for a radical reorganization of the Congress on a new principle with a new method for which a new leadership is essential, as it is unfair to expect Mr.Gandhi, to work the programme not consistent with his life long principles".[216] They further pointed out that it would be welcome if the Congress as a whole ready for such a change: otherwise a new Party of radicals would have to be formed within the Congress.

The youth who were already influenced by socialism and Communism realized the need to organize the workers and peasants and to integrate them into the vortex of the anti - imperialist movement to broaden the social base of the Indian national Movement. They felt that one of the reasons for the failure of the Civil disobedience movement was that the movement did not enjoy the organized backing of a large section of peasants and workers. They felt that the peasants and workers were not in such circumstances, which necessitates their participation in the national

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[216] Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, *The History of the Indian National Congress (1885-1935)*, Published by the Working Committee of the Congress on the occasion of 50th anniversary, Madras, 1935, p.942. Also see, E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, p.500.

movement along with the landlords and capitalists.[217] A.K.Gopalan pointed out "Unless peasants and workers fight in the forefront, freedom can not be achieved. And they cannot be mobilized by appeals for Swaraj. They have some urgent problems and needs. If the Congress failed to organize the workers and peasants separately, fight for their immediate necessities and win their confidence, they would not enter into the freedom struggle. They must be convinced that freedom means 'freedom for poor' to grow and develop".[218]

When the Civil Disobedience movement was suspended in 1934 the young people who had courted imprisonment and participated actively in the national movement lost faith in the policies and programmes of the Gandhian leadership, that followed the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement. The youth felt that common masses could be liberated from the economic exploitation through the achievement of Socialism. They also thought that the Indian National Congress was the only suitable organization able to achieve independence to India. So they decided to convert the Congress to Socialism. It was these views and opinions that led after 1934 to the formation of a group known as the Congress Socialist Party within the Indian National Congress.

The founders of the Congress Socialist Party were influenced by Marxism. But they did not like the attitude of the Communist Party of India, which was already functioning in India. During that time the Communist Party of India was working according to the principles laid down by the Communist International. The Communist International, with the experience of China where the Nationalist Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-Shek betrayed the Communist Party, treated the Indian national movement under Congress leadership as the movement of Bourgeoisie and counter revolutionaries. The Comintern under the leadership of Stalin reversed Lenin's sympathetic attitude towards the liberation movements in the colonies and the united front tactics. The Communists in India as the adherents of the principles of the

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[217] Speech by Dinkar Mehta at conference of Socialists organized at Bezawada on 14 December 1935. *Andhra Patrika*, 26 December 1935, p.6.
[218] A.K.Gopalan, *In the cause of the People*, p.51.

Communist International greeted the formation of Congress Socialist Party with hostility.

The Communist journals criticized the emergence of another working class Party. They thought that only one working class Party would lead the revolution successfully. They thought that the emergence of Congress Socialist Party would be an obstacle for the Communists to achieve Independence and Socialism. In the Communist journals, R.P.Dutt, the ideologue of the CPGB criticized the Congress Socialist Party as `a maneuver of bankrupt leaders to deceive the masses'.[219]

The Indian Communists criticized that the CSP was a tail of the bourgeois and it was setup not to intensify the mass struggle but to strengthen the bourgeois ideological hold over the toiling masses. And it was working to subordinate the interests of the working class to bourgeois instead of preparing for a working class revolution. They also criticized the CSP for its connection with the Congress, which consists of all sections of the people. They said that the working class Party based on Socialism should be independent in its work to achieve the demands of workers and peasants.[220]

After the decision of the All India Socialist conference to organize branches of Congress socialist party in provinces, the socialist minded youth in Andhra organized Andhra Congress Socialist Party in June 1934. On 23 June Basavaraju Rangasayi of Ellore and Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah of Guntur organized the inaugural conference of the Andhra Congress Socialist Party with `Congress men of Socialist views', at Bezawada in Durga Vilas, the house of Kasinadhuni Nageswararao. About 300 Congressmen from all over Andhra attended the conference.[221] N.G.Ranga presided over the conference. According to N.G.Ranga, the main object of the CSP was ‘to convert the Congress to Socialism’ and to encourage the peasants against Zamindars.[222] The conference elected N.G.Ranga as the president of the Socialist

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[219] Madhu Limaye, *Socialist Communist Interaction in India*, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1991, p.15.
[220] *Ibid.*, p.18.
[221] Suramouli, *Socialist Udyamam*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Socialist Front, Hyderabad, 2002, p.35.
[222] Fortnightly Report dated 4 July 1934 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department.

group within the Congress. Unnava Lakshminarayana, Nyapathi Narayana Murthi, Kalluru Subbarao, Vadrevu Jaggaraju and Shaik Galib were elected as vice-presidents, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah and Basavaraju Rangasayi were elected as joint secretaries. Anney Anjaiah of Mudunuru village was elected as treasurer.[223] The conference also decided to conduct tours in other regions of Andhra to spread Socialist ideology and attract youth into the fold of Socialism and organize the branches of the CSP in all districts in Andhra. The joint secretary of the All India Congress Socialist Party, M.R.Masani attended this conference.[224] The conference prepared rules and regulations to the Party. Like the All India Congress Socialist Party the Andhra unit also permitted only the Congress members to become its members. The members of the Party should not belong to any other organizations, which is opposed to the interests of the Party.[225]

After the formation of CSP in Andhra, Mr.Jayaprakash Narayan, the Organizing Secretary of AICSP toured Madras Presidency. On 24 July 1934 Jayaprakash addressed a gathering of 300 socialists in Bezawada. In the public meeting, Katragadda Venkata Narayanarao of Bezawada urged the youth to work hard for the establishment of 'Peasants' and Workers' Raj' in independent India.[226] Krishna district Congress Socialist Party was formed on 10 July 1934 with Gadde Lingaiah Chowdary as president and Vallabhaneni Ramabrahmam and Vellanki Purnachandraiah as secretaries. Pochiraju Krishnarao, Chalasani Jagannadharao, Anne Anjaiah, Vallabhaneni Venkatarao, Pidikiti Ramakotaiah and Kosaraju Seshaiah have also joined in Krishna District Congress Socialist Party.[227] The socialists of Krishna district decided to organize workers and peasants organization all over the state. The conference resented the resolution passed by All India Congress Committee on the formation of Socialist Party within the Congress and they decided to occupy all the

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[223] *Andhra Patrika*, 25 June 1934, p.7.
[224] Suramouli, *Socialist Udyamam*, p.35.
[225] For complete text of the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of Andhra Congress Socialist Party, see Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, dated 20th May 1936, Submitted by Superintendent of Police, Special Branch C.I.D. to the Home Department, Government of Madras, in *History of Freedom Struggle Files, 1936*, pp.4556-4557. Also see M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol. IV, pp.663-5.
[226] *Andhra Patrika*, 27 July 1934, p.3.
[227] Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, dated 20 May 1936, p.4565.

committees within the Congress organization.[228] Krishna district Congress Socialist Party expressed its solidarity for the strike organized by agricultural labourers in Gannavaram and jute mill workers in Elore.[229] The Krishna District Congress Socialist Party as a part of propagation of Socialism, published a Telugu book entitled *Life of Lenin* which was subsequently proscribed by the Government.[230]

A branch of Socialist Party was formed in Guntur at a conference held in the town on 3 September 1934 with Tallavajjula Sivasankara Sastri as the president. The conference elected A. Gopalarao as president and Sheik Galib as the secretary to the Guntur district Congress Socialist Party. Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, who played active part in the formation of Andhra Congress Socialist Party was elected as the secretary of Guntur district Congress socialist Party.[231] The branches of the Congress Socialist Party were established in Ellore, Bezawada, Guntur, Ongole and Nellore towns.[232]

The period between 1934 and 1935 the Socialists in Andhra engaged in organizing the meetings and conferences to propagate the ideology of socialism and to inspire the people against British Imperialism. The socialists also decided to gain control over the Congress Committees at all levels.

First of all they decided to win the right wing Congress leaders towards Socialism and to get their approval of Socialist plan. To start with, they raised their voice first in the Visakha conference of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee held on 1 January 1935. In that conference the Socialists moved a resolution requesting the Indian National Congress to adopt Socialist programme. The conference passed the resolution with 58 votes against 46.[233] This shows the strength of the Socialists in the Congress in Andhra.

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[228] *Andhra Patrika*, 13 July 1934, p.3; 14 July 1934, p.5.
[229] *Andhra Patrika*, 21 September 1934, p.2.
[230] Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, dated 20 May 1936, p.4565.
[231] *Andhra Patrika*, 19th September 1934, p.2; Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, dated 20th May 1936, p.4567;
[232] *Ibid*., p.4558.
[233] *The Hindu*, 2 January 1935; *Andhra Patrika*, 4 January 1935, p.7.

In another conference of the Andhra provincial Congress committee held at Bezawada the Socialists opposed a resolution moved by Ayyadevara Kaleswararao. The meeting was held in Durga Vilas with Kashinadhuni Nageswararao in the chair. Sri Kaleswararao proposed that the creed of the Congress should be changed so that the words *truthful* and *non- violence* were to be substituted in the place of *legitimate* and *peaceful*. Sri Bulusu Sambhamurthy seconded the resolution. The Socialists and Communists who attended the conference opposed the resolution. Alluri Satyanarayanaraju opposing the resolution stated that the committee should not blindly follow Mahatmaji. Among the 80 members attended to this conference 28 favoured the resolution, 30 members opposed the resolution and 22 remained neutral.[234] In this conference Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, a Communist, joined with Socialists and opposed the moderate Congress leaders. But in 1935, as per the directions from the central committee of the CPI, the Communists resigned from the Congress Socialist Party.

The Andhra Congress Socialist Party organised its first annual conference in Guntur on 19 February 1935. Mr.Tenneti Viswanadham presided over the conference.[235] Mr.M.R.Masani, one of the joint secretaries of the All India Congress Socialist Party opened the conference. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, who was elected as one of the joint secretaries of the All India Congress Socialist Party in its Bombay conference of 1934, was also attended the conference.[236] Tenneti Viswanadham in his presidential speech said that Indian Socialism was not an imitation of European or Russian Marxism and it was a movement towards a better and economic, social and cultural happiness of the people. He also said that the Socialist system of society was better than the existing system.[237] Makineni Basavapunnaiah and some other communists of Guntur town also attended the conference and argued with Masani on the policy of Congress Socialist Party and affiliation with the Indian National Congress. The replies given by Masani did not convince the communists.[238]

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[234] *The Hindu*, 12 January 1935.
[235] Suramouli, *Socialist Udyamam*, p.36.
[236] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *How I Became a Communist*, pp.184-185.
[237] *The Hindu*, 21 February 1935, in History of Freedom Struggle Files Andhra Pradesh, 1934-36, p.4056.
[238] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *How I Became A Communist*, p.184.

The conference adopted several resolutions for the future work of the Party. The conference defined complete independence as the establishment of an independent state in which power is transferred to producing masses; implying a refusal to compromise at any state with imperialism.[239]

The conference passed another resolution declaring its opposition to the participation by India in any war in which the British government might be involved. It called the entire Indian Nation to resist actively the utilisation of Indian men, money and resources for the purpose of such a war by British and to prepare to utilise such a crisis for securing *Swaraj*. The conference also gave a call to the people of Indian states to join with Indian National Congress in the struggle against British imperialism and native feudalism.[240]

With the above programme and plan of action the Socialists carried their activities in Andhra. The activities of Socialists increased their strength in Andhra Congress. They gained considerable representation in All India Congress Committee and provincial Congress committee. In 1935, in the organisational elections the Socialists got three seats out of 24 allotted to Andhra in All India Congress committee and 23 out of 100 in the Andhra provincial Congress committee.[241]

With the exit of Ranga and with the decision of the Communists to work separately the strength of Socialists got weakened. The activities of Socialists were confined only to convene meetings and arrange conferences to propagate Socialist ideas. It was only after the formation of the united front between the congress, Congress Socialists and Communists, the activities of the Congress Socialist Party gained strength. In fact, after 1936, the Communists used Congress Socialist Party as a cover to carry out their activities and to escape from government repression.

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[239] *Ibid*., p.4057.
[240] *Andhra Patrika*, 23 February 1935, p.7.
[241] See Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, dated 20th May 1936, Submitted by Superintendent of Police, Special Branch C.I.D. to the Home Department, Government of Madras, in *History of Freedom Struggle Files, 1936*, p.4558. Also See M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra),* Vol. IV, p.666.

The activities of the Congress socialist Party were seen by the government as a threat to peaceful atmosphere in the Madras Presidency. The officials reported to the government 'the programme of the congress socialist Party embodies almost the complete programme of the communist International but in respect of methods, does not explicitly advocate violence'. [242] The resolutions passed in the socialist conferences demanding the release of political prisoners and for lifting of ban of Communist party of India were seen by the government as a sympathetic attitude of Socialist party towards Communist Party of India. The Madras government which considered Madras Presidency as an unaffected zone (from Communism) decided to curb the rising communist tendencies in the Presidency. The officials carried out searches in the houses and offices of the socialists and seized several propaganda materials by declaring them as illegal.[243]

Before the formation of united front, the youth who were influenced by Communism but were afraid of repressive measures of government joined in Congress Socialist Party. Unofficially the Communists used CSP as a cover to carry out their activities secretly. The report of Inspector General of Police also said that 'though the Congress Socialist Party declared its strong belief in non-violence, and its opposition to the methods of the communist international, yet many communistically inclined in this presidency have joined it with a view to use this organization as a cover for their secret and sinister activities' [244]

After the formation of Congress Socialist Party, Communists worked for the formation branches of CSP at various places in Andhra. Another reason for the entry of Communists in CSP in the beginning was the lack of ideological clarity. In the early thirties most of the youth in Andhra were not clear about the differences between socialism and communism. Socialism and Soviet Russia became a fashion to them. During this period the influence of socialism on Andhra youth resulted in the

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[242] Report from the Inspector General of Police, Madras to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated 24th May 1935, in Secret File No. 931 dated 1st September 1935, *History of Freedom Struggle Files, Andhra Pradesh, 1935*, p.2578.

[243] *Andhra Patrika*, 24 September 1934, p.7; 27 November 1934, p.2; 21 August 1935, p.10.

[244] Report of the Inspector General of police, Madras to the chief secretary to the government of Madras dated 24th may 1935 in Secret file no 931 dated 1st September 1935, HFAAP, 1935, p.2578

emergence of two left wing parties, Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party. The youth who participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement and searched for alternatives after their dissatisfaction with the movement joined in Congress Socialist Party. The other section mostly consisted of students who were drawn towards communism with the influence of left literature joined in Communist Party. The ban on the Communist Party, and the subsequent delay in the formation of branches of CPI, and the secret functioning of CPI after its formation, were the other reasons for the joining of youth in Congress Socialist Party. But most of the Socialists joined in CPI when they came to know about the functioning of a branch of CPI in Andhra. For a period of two years from 1934 to 1936 the Socialist and communists in Andhra functioned separately.

The formation of Congress Socialist Party and its activities in 1934 and 1935 helped to the spread of Socialist ideology in Andhra. Many youth who were already influenced by the Socialist ideas and searching for alternative strategies for the struggle against imperialism readily joined in Congress Socialist Party. Later, after the formation of Communist Party in Andhra in September 1934, most of them joined in Communist Party.

**Formation of Communist Party**

The formation of Communist Party in Andhra was not a sudden step. It was during 1930s the Communist Party of India made several attempts to form its branches in Madras Presidency. In the early days Singaravelu Chetti of Madras and Amir Hyder Khan made serious attempts to form a branch of CPI in Madras. Finally a branch of CPI for Madras Presidency was in 1934 with P. Sundarayya as secretary.

During 1920s Singaravelu Chetti (1860-1946) of Madras played an active role to the spread of Communist ideology in Madras Presidency. Singaravelu, who was a lawyer by profession, became a prominent leader of Indian National Congress during Non-Cooperation Movement. Singaravelu was influenced by the Revolution in Russia and wrote several articles in journals propagating Socialist ideas. Slowly the activities of Singaravelu attracted the attention prominent communists of India and so he came

into contact with S.A.Dange in the Gaya session of the Indian National Congress in 1922. He has also established contacts with M.N.Roy and Abani Mukherjee has come to Madras to establish contacts with him on behalf of the Communist International.[245] Singaravelu formed 'The Hindustan Labour Kisan Party in 1923 and held first May Day meeting in Madras city. He also published 'Labour Kisan Gazette', a fortnightly in English. The activities of Singaravelu attracted the attention of government and he was arrested in Kanpur Conspiracy Case in 1924.[246] But the government withdrew the case against him because of his ill health. Later Singaravelu presided over the first Communist Conference in India organized by Satyabhakta in Meerut in 1925.

Singaravelu organized several struggles of working class. He was active in the Karagpur, Bengal, Nagpur Railway Strike in 1927 and the Loco Workshop Strike in East India Railway. He organized the Southern Railway Workers and led their historic strike in 1928. After 1930 Singaravelu wrote several articles on topics ranging from materialist philosophy to social reform and politics. His articles in *Kudiyarasu* (Republic) and *Puratchi* (Revolution) – weekly papers of the self-respect movement were read with great interest. Singaravelu was responsible for starting a Tamil Monthly *Pudu Ulagam* (New World) in 1935 and was the guiding spirit in the propagation of Marxist-Leninist ideas in that monthly. Ultimately, his writings and leadership inspired the most progressive section of the self-respect movement and helped them to move towards the Communist Movement. Influenced by the ideas of Communism propagated by Singaravelu, a section of Self-respect movement led by P. Jivanandam,[247] established Tamilnad Self-respect Samadharma Party. Finally the severed their links with the Self – Respect movement of E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker and joined in Tamilnad Congress Socialist Party which was dominated by Communists.[248] Apart from this, the activities of Singaravelu in the trade union movement inspired the workers to join in communist party. Thus, the activities

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[245] K.Murugesan and C.S.Subramanyam, *Singaravelu: First Communist in South India,* People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1975, p.4.

[246] *Andhra Patrika*, 8 March 1924, p.4.

[247] P.Jivanandam (1906-1963) was editor of *Janasakthi*, Tamil Weekly of Communist Party of India Tamilnad Committee, from its inception in 1937. He was also an outstanding Tamil Scholar, poet, orator and labour leader.

[248] Eamon Murphy, *Unions in Conflict: A Comparative Study of Four South Indian Textile Centers, 1918-1939*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1981, p.135.

Singaravelu prepared ground for the formation Communist Party in Madras Presidency and also provided the hardcore of seasoned workers who formed part on organized and disciplined Communist Party in Madras Presidency.

The activities of Amir Hyder Khan helped the formation of Communist Party in Madras Presidency.[249] Amir Hyder Khan's activities in 1931-32 had resulted in the formation of some groups who did some active communist propaganda. He established contacts with Tramway workers, and student groups. He used to hold study classes regularly to discuss Communism. He explained them the programme of Communist Party and motivated them to join in the fight against Imperialism. Amir Hyder Khan explained them that Indian National Congress and its leaders were representatives of bourgeois and they did not want to disturb the existing social and economic structure. They want to mobilize masses to show their strength to imperialism and to get benefits to the bourgeois from imperialism.[250] Later Amir Hyder Khan and his associates formed 'Young Workers League' in Madras in 1932.[251] He also established contacts with Manickam and Rajavadivelu and published several leaflets on Marxism. They started a Tamil journal *Munnetram* (progressive) to publish news about communism. Munnetram published several essays on the role of bourgeois, middle class and working class in the Indian freedom movement.[252] Amir Hyder Khan also sends some young people to U.S.S.R. to get training in 'University of Toilers of the East'.[253] During this period, Amir Hyder Khan trained V.K.Narasimhan, Bhashyam, Manickam, Venkatraman, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, A.S.K.Iyengar, B.Srinivasarao, Manickam, Rajavadivelu and several

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[249] Amir Hyder Khan was born in 1900 in a peasant family in Punjab State. Later at the age of fifteen he reached Bombay to find out his brother who left home. From Bombay, he reached U.S.A. and joined as a worker in automobile industry. In U.S.A. he established contacts with the Gadar party and became a member of American Workers' party. Within a few years he became a member of Comintern and joined in 'University of Toilers of East' of Moscow in 1926 and was trained in Marxism and national liberation movements. He reached Bombay in 1928 and started working for the Communist Party of India. He reached Madras to escape arrest in the Meerut Conspiracy Case and started work to form a branch of Communist Party of India in Madras Presidency. See, Amir Hyder Khan, *Dakshina Bharatadesamlo Communist Party Prarambham*, also see A.V.Ramanaiah, *Bharata Jatiya Vimukti Poratamlo Vamapakshala Patra*, pp.426-445.

[250] Amir Hyder Khan, *Dakshina Bharatadesamlo Communist Party Prarambham,* pp.23-24.

[251] Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, p.4535.

[252] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, "Viplavodyama Karyakartaga Na Toli Anubhavalu", p.11.

[253] Amir Hyder Khan, *Dakshina Bharatadesamlo Communist Party Prarambham,* pp.33 & 36.

others to become communists.[254] The activities of Amir Hyder Khan among the workers and students attracted the attention of government and he was arrested in May 1932.[255] The Young Workers League became inactive with the arrest of Amir Hyder Khan.

After his release in July 1934 Amir Hyder Khan revived Young Workers League and started work among workers.[256] He established contacts with P. Sundarayya and convinced him to work for Communist Party in Madras Presidency.[257] He also attempted to start a provincial branch of Communist Party of India in Madras Presidency, to coordinate the growing movement in Andhra and to work for the spread of Communist Movement in Tamilnad and Kerala. But in September 1934, the Government of Madras declared Young Workers League as an illegal organization and Amir Hyder Khan was arrested and kept as a state prisoner in before he could achieve his purpose. [258] The arrest of Amir Hyder Khan did not prevent the growth communist ideology in Madras. Some of his followers under the leadership of P. Sundarayya received instructions from the Central Committee of Communist Party of India and formed a provincial committee of Communist Party of India in Madras Presidency in 1934 with local branches in Madras, Guntur, Nellore, Krishna and West Godavari districts.[259] But the arrest and detention of Amir Hyder Khan was a set back to the efforts to function as a co-ordinated group in the manner he planned. Although P. Sundarayya continued this work, with the growing movement in Andhra to which he had to pay much attention the organization of a leading center at Madras, could be accomplished only after the arrival of S.V.Ghate in 1936.

After the formation of Provincial Committee of CPI at Madras, Sundarayya several places and met people who were influenced by Marxism and dissatisfied with

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[254] Memoirs of A.S.K. Iyengar, in *S.V. Ghate: Our First General Secretary*, Communist Party of India Publication, New Delhi, 1971, p.55; K.Murugesan and C.S.Subramanyam, *Singaravelu: First Communist in South India,* p.128.
[255] Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, p.4535.
[256] Amir Hyder Khan, *Dakshina Bharatadesamlo Communist Party Prarambham,* p61.
[257] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam,* pp.69-70.
[258] Report on the socialist organizations in Madras Presidency, p.4535.
[259] *Ibid*. P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam,* p.71.

the Gandhian methods of struggle and formed the branches of Communist Party with them. First, he visited Nellore district and met several of his colleagues who participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement and stayed in jails along with him. He has also met some of the youth who were working in the revolutionary organizations affiliated to *Hindustan Socialist Republican Army* and convinced them to join Communist Party.[260] With efforts of Sundarayya, in Nellore district, Chundi Jagannadham, Basavareddi Sankara Reddy, Alluru Ranga Reddy, Ravi Adiseshaiah, Duvvuri Balarami Reddy and several others joined CPI and a branch of CPI was formed in Nellore in 1934.

Then Sundarayya visited Guntur district and met several people who participated and dissatisfied with the Civil disobedience and who were already influenced by the left literature brought supplied to them by the students of Andhra in Banares. Sundarayya also met some of the students of Benares who returned to Andhra. Sundarayya met Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, Durbha Krishnamurthi, Polepeddi Narasimhamurthi, Madabhashi Venkatachari, and Pulupula Venkata Sivaiah in Guntur and formed a branch of CPI in Guntur. Later Sundarayya visited Krishna district and formed a branch of CPI.[261]

In Krishna district, he visited Ventrapragada village and met Kosaraju Seshaiah and Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao. Both of them agreed to join the Communist Party. Then Sundarayya and Chandrasekhararao visited Bhatlapenumarru and met Chalasani Vasudevarao and Jagannadharao. They also agreed to join in CPI. Sundarayya appointed Chandrasekhararao, Seshaiah and Vasudevarao to meet other like minded people in Krishna district and convince them to join in CPI.[262]

Sundarayya met Garapati Satyanarayana, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, Uddaraju Ramam and Tanikella Venkatachalapathi in West Godavari district and organized a branch of CPI.[263] In Visakhapatnam Sundarayya established contacts with Abburi Ramakrishnarao, Chandra Rajeswararao and Nidamarthi Aswani Kumara Dutt who

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[260] *Ibid.,* pp.60-61.
[261] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Porata Pathamlo Nenu*, p.90-91.
[262] P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, p.71.
[263] *Ibid.,* p.70.

were working in CPI under the direct guidance of Central Committee of CPI and sent A.L. Narasimharao, a communist from Guntur district to form a branch a CPI in Visakhapatnam.[264]

In September 1934 Sundarayya formed an organizing committee with Polepeddi Narasimhamurthy, Kosaraju Seshaiah, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Tanikella Venkata Chalapathi, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju and Sundarayya as members to organize the branches of CPI.[265] Sundarayya established contacts with the Central Committee of the CPI. He formed a provincial Committee of Communist Party in Madras. Sundarayya was the secretary of the Committee. In 1934 he attended to the meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India held in Bombay and became a member of the Central Committee of the Party. According to the directions from the central committee of the Communist Party of India, which directed its members to come out from the Congress Socialist Party, Sundarayya met several people who were already joined in the Congress Socialist Party and convinced them to join in the Communist Party.[266] With the efforts of Sundarayya so many Communists resigned from the Congress Socialist Party and joined in the Communist Party.[267]

During this period, the CPI was following the left sectarian policy advocated by the sixth Congress of Comintern. With the experience of China where the nationalist Kuomintang betrayed the Communists in 1927, the Comintern condemned any connection between Indian National Congress and communists. It informed them to build an independent mass party to lead the masses against imperialism. This left sectarian policy alienated communists from the national movement led by Congress during 1929-34.

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[264] A.L.Narasimharao, "Aptudu Abburi", in Abburi Gopalakrishna (Ed) *Abburi Samsmarana*, pp.19-26.
[265] Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Rashtra Communist Mahasabhala Samkshipta Charitra (1936-1998),* (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Communist Committee, Hyderabad, 1998, p.6; P.Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I., p.71 and Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part – I, pp.60, 126.
[266] *Ibid*; P.Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam, Part – I.*, p.71.
[267] *Ibid.*, p.77.

During the time of the formation of the Communist Party in Madras presidency that was in 1934 the government banned the Communist Party.[268] Because of the ban on the Party the Communists formed labour protection leagues, press workers unions and agricultural workers unions. They continued their activities through these unions. In the Andhra districts of the Madras presidency P. Sundarayya, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, Durbha Krishnamurthy, Tanikella Venkata Chalapathi, Pulupula Venkata Sivaiah, Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu and Alluri Satyanarayanaraju played an important role in the formation of these unions.

Sundarayya visited several places in Andhra and encouraged the members of CPI to start Labour Protection Leagues all over the province. Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, Durbha Krishnamurthi, and Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, Pendyala Lokanadham, Amaravadi Krishnamurthi formed Guntur District Labour Protection League.[269] Later in 1935, Students of Guntur, Makineni Basavapunnaiah and Moturu Hanumantharao also joined in this league.[270] Guntur district Labour Protection League actively worked among the jute mill workers, bullock cart workers, and workers in slums. They used to teach communism to the workers. Pendyala Lokanadham, a member of this league wrote a poem 'If all the workers unite, there is no dearth for food'. They have also published several pamphlets and distributed them among the workers. In 1935 Darba Krishnamurthi, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah and Pratapa Ramasubbaiah prominent members of the Guntur District Labour Protection League were arrested for publishing a pamphlet 'workers – class struggle' and some other plays depicting the exploitation of workers by industrialists with the support of imperialist British Government. They were imprisoned for six months.[271]

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[268] On 23 July 1934 the Government of India declared the Communist party of India, its committees, subcommittees and branches to be unlawful associations under the Criminal Law amendment Act of 1908 on the ground that the aims, objectives and activities of the party were dangerous to the public peace and Law and Order. See Government of Madras, G.O. No. 621, Public (General) dated 17 April 1935; *Andhra Patrika*, 15 August 1934, p.7.

[269] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Porata Pathamlo Nenu*, p.91, Durba Krishnamurthi, *Smrithulu*, p.47.

[270] *Ibid.*, p.51.

[271] *Ibid.*, p.53; Government of Madras, G.O.No.3218, Law (General) Department, dated: 11-10-1935: *The Hindu*, 1-8-1935. *Andhra Patrika*, 9 Aug 1935, p.3.

The members of CPI in Andhra received several books from the Central Committee of CPI on Marxism including the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin's standard works and some other books on Soviet Union. They published several articles in Telugu and Tamil on Russia and Lenin in various journals. They also published and distributed *Communist Manifesto* and *Principles of Communism* in Telugu and Tamil.[272] The spread of Marxist literature at various places attracted the attention of police. In February 1935 the police raided the house of P.Sundarayya in Alaganipadu and seized two Telugu books *Amma* (Telugu translation of Maxim Gorkey's Mother) and *Communist Manifesto*.[273]

In Nellore Ravi Adiseshaiah and Chundi Jagannadham formed Nellore district Labour Protection League on 1 July 1935. In August 1935 the C.I.D. of Police conducted raid on the offices of Youth League and Labour Protection Leagues in Nellore and seized some printed Telugu books and handwriting notes Chundi Jagannadham and P. Sundarayya along with 359 pamphlets[274] Later Chundi Jagannadham and Ravi Audiseshaiah were arrested in 1935 and sentenced for 6 months imprisonment.

Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu, Kosaraju Seshaiah, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Chelasani Vasudevarao, Katragadda Srinivasarao, and Alluri Satyanarayanaraju formed Bezawada Labour Protection League. The Krishna district Labour protection secretly supported the workers strike Vuyyuru Sugar factory.[275]

Tadi Appalaswami and Garapati Satyanarayana formed West Godavari Labour Protection League, and Tummala Venkatramaiah and Polepeddi Narasimhamurthi formed another Labour Protection League in Tenali.[276]

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[272] "Report from the Secretary of Madras Provincial committee of Communist Party of India to the Central Committee of Communist Party of India", Secret File No. 931, dated 1st September 1935, Public Department, Government of Madras, in *History of Freedom Struggles, Andhra Pradesh, 1935*, p.2596.
[273] *Andhra Patrika*, 11 February 1935, p.4., *Andhra Patrika*, 25 October, 1935, p.2.
[274] *Andhra Patrika*, 3rd August 1935, p.14
[275] Andhra Patrika, 6th August 1935, p.2.
[276] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.135.

Press Workers unions were also formed in Madras, Guntur, Nellore, Tenali, Ellore and Masulipatnam.[277] Madras Press Workers Union passed a resolution demanding the release of Amir Hyder Khan who was kept as state prisoner in Presidency jails. The conference was presided over by A.S.K. Iyengar, the President of Madras Presidency Press workers Union. Messers D.V.Nadham, P.Rajavadivelu, P.Manickam, also spoke in the conference.[278]

During this period the communists in Guntur district Nanduri Prasadarao, Polepeddi Narasimhamurthy Kambhampati Satyanarayana (Junior), Pendyala Lokanadham, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah and P.V.Sivaiah formed *Friends Home* in Guntur to run the Party activities.[279] All the communists used to meet there every day evening to hold discussions. It was maintained as a hotel. Makineni Basavapunnaiah, Parvathaneni Venkateswararao[280] and Kolla Venkaiah also joined in this home.[281] By the end of 1936 the members trained several youth to become Communists. After 1937, the Guntur district committee of CPI was able to send some of its efficient members as the organizers of communist movement in other districts in Andhra.

Apart from publication of several books and pamphlets, the Andhra Committee of CPI also started a Telugu fortnightly *Prabha* in April 1935. Gadde Lingaiah, a native of Yelamarru village was the editor of this journal. The government demanded the publisher to deposit Rs.8000 as security deposit and created several obstacles. In spite opposition from the government, the communists were able to run the journal for three months and it was stopped in June 1935. P.Sundarayya, Muddukuri Chandrasekhararao, N.G.Ranga, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, Ponnam Viraraghavaiah, Garapati Satyanarayana, Ravi Ammaiah, and Krovvidi Lingaraju wrote several essays in this journal.[282] Prabha published several essays on the exploitation of Zamindars in Krishna district and also criticized the preparations of

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[277] *Ibid.*, p.140.
[278] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th November 1935, p.10
[279] Yetukuri Krishnamurthi (Ed), *Gunturu Zilla Communistu Udyama Vaitalikulu*, pp.4-5.
[280] Son of Parvathaneni Viraiah Chaudhary, the organisor of Pedanandipadu No-tax campaign during Non-Cooperation Movement, Venkateswararao died in 1942 by falling in a well while escaping from the police during Quit India Movement.
[281] Telakapalli Ravi (Ed), *Marxist Medhavi, Shramikavarga Yodhudu, Nanduri Prasadarao*, p.52.

Congress leaders to enter into assemblies under Government of India Act of 1935. It also published essays on international politics, rise of fascism. In June 1935 Prabha published several essays on the life Karl of Marx and several essays on the theories of Karl Marx. Muddukuri Chandrasekhararao in his essay criticized the Gandhi-Irwin agreement and depicted it as a compromise between bourgeois and imperialism. The journal also published the biographies of Dimitrov, Lenin and Gorky some of he essays published in this journal on Indian National Movement describing the role of various sections of people in the struggle.[283]

In spite of tireless work rendered by the communists for the growth of CPI through labour protection leagues, press workers leagues and other associations, the left sectarian policy of CPI prevented its spread. The real growth of Communist Party in Andhra started after the formation of United Front with the Congress Socialist Party and penetration of Communists into CSP. The Communists occupied all most all the important positions in Congress Socialist Party. The communists used the banner of CSP to propagate their ideas among the people. The entry of Communists into CSP also helped them to use it as a cover to escape government repression. During this period, the socialists conducted rigorous propaganda work among the people and thousands of young people who were influenced by Socialist ideology have joined in Congress socialist Party. Inside the party also the Communists conducted ideological discussion and majority of Socialists were transformed into communists. By the end of 1939, the communists dominated all most all the Committees of CSP and they have joined in CPI after the expulsion of communists from CSP.

In conclusion it can be said that the beginning of the Communist movement in Andhra was an ideal beginning with middle class intellectuals and educated children of rich peasants. The educated youth and middle class intellectuals, who disappointed by the Gandhian methods of struggle and searching for alternative methods of

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[282] Yetukuri Prasad (Ed), *Tummala Sahityam,* pp.280-281 and P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, p.76.
[283] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, pp.150-156.

struggle, were influenced by Marxism. The Marxist literature played an important role in attracting the youth towards Marxism.

Most of the educated middle class who founded communist party in Andhra belonged to dominant communities in fertile coastal Andhra districts. Most of them come from Brahmin, Kamma, Reddy and Raju (or Kshatriya) communities. Their simple lifestyle, Spartan discipline, personal integrity and supreme sacrifice helped them to integrate themselves with the peasant masses.

The people who were influenced by Marxism and became socialists and communists after 1930 can be divided into two groups i.e., the students and Satyagrahis. Most of the participants of the Civil Disobedience Movements of 1930-32 joined in Congress Socialist Party after withdrawal of CDM. The students who studied Marxism and who have not participated in CDM have joined in CPI. Later these students distributed Marxist literature and transformed several satyagrahis and Congress socialists into communism.

The members of these educated middle class who have come from peasant families spread the Marxist ideas among peasants and attracted several peasant youth into CPI. With formation of Labour protection Leagues and Press Workers unions communists maintained considerable hold among the working class. Thus, by 1934 the Communist Party in Andhra became a strong force with middle class educated intellectuals as leaders and with a base among the peasant communities in rural areas and workers in urban areas.

The Formation of Communist Party in Andhra sharpened the differences between the nationalist forces in Andhra. Most of the youth who were dissatisfied with the Gandhian methods of struggle, joined in the Communist Movement. The rigorous campaign made by the Communists among workers and peasants made them conscious about their problems and influenced them to come forward to participate in the movements against exploitation. The formation of Communist Party in Andhra also marked a change in the nature of social participation in the national movement. The participation of workers and peasants in the national movement increased after formation of united front between Congress, Communists and Congress Socialist Party in 1936. The entire new generation mobilised under the banner of Communist

Party confronted with the congress right wing on many issues and supported the left wing congress leadership under the Congress Socialist Party. Thus with the formation of Communist Party in Andhra, began struggle for hegemony within the Indian National Movement between the right wing and left wing in Andhra.

# Chapter 3
# ‘United Front’ and the Politics of Transformation of National Movement

## Introduction

The years from 1936 to 1940 saw a phenomenal rise in the Left movement in India. During this period, both the nationalist and Left movements have entered into a new phase in their militancy. The Indian National Congress recovered from the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience movement by accepting to participate in the elections to the Provincial Legislatures under the Government of India Act of 1935. With its striking victory in the elections, the Congress established itself as the pre-eminent political organisation fighting for freedom of India. In this period, the Indian National Congress came to perform the most interesting and apparently a contradictory role: both as party of Government and as movement against the government.

During the period from 1936 to 1940, the Left movement in India entered into a new phase of *Socialist unity*. The scattered leftist forces, the Congress Socialist Party, the CPI, Royists, AIKS and other trade unions, formed *United National Front* within the Indian National Congress to pose an organised and effective opposition to the British imperialism and push the Congress towards Socialism. The left wing leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose were even elected as presidents of the Indian National Congress. This ascendancy of radical leadership helped the growth and crystallization of the Left wing within the Indian National Congress. This phase saw left wing’s struggle to establish its hegemony over the Indian National Congress and the anti-Imperialist struggle as well.

During the 1930s, the left wing confronted the right wing leadership within the Congress on several issues. The leftists felt that the Congress led Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements have failed due to lack of support from the peasants and workers. The Socialists during this period worked to broaden the scope of the Indian national movement by drawing the workers and peasants into the vortex of anti-colonial struggle. They actively participated in several peasants and workers movements and organised demonstrations and strikes. The right wing Congress leaders thought that the Indian National Congress was an organisation representing all sections of Indian society, i.e., the capitalists, zamindars, workers and peasants

irrespective of internal class contradictions among them. In fighting for Indian independence, it did not encourage the primacy of any particular class interests and declared that the Congress stands for class harmony and not for class struggle. These ideological differences within the INC reached its height in 1939.

It was during the Tripuri session of the Indian national Congress, in spite of opposition from Gandhiji and right wing, Subhash Chandra Bose was elected as its president with the support from the left wing. By this time, the left wing established its hold over the Congress. This led to serious ideological differences within the INC between the right wing and the left wing. The situation reached such a high point that the popular expectation was that the INC might split into two groups.

In the Tripuri session, G.B.Pant introduced a resolution to the effect that Subhash Chandra Bose should select the members of his working committee by consulting Mahatma Gandhi. However, this time the Socialists disagreed with the other left wing forces and abstained from the voting on Pant's resolution. The absence of Socialists gave majority to the right wing and Pant's resolution was passed in the special session of the AICC. Due to non-cooperation from the right wing leaders in the formation of working committee, Subhash Bose resigned as the president of the INC and Rajendra Prasad was elected in his place.

Meanwhile, the Communists working under the banner of Congress Socialist Party started making efforts for the transformation of Indian National Congress as a left wing organisation, and simultaneously strengthen the CPI as an independent working class party. After the Tripuri Congress, the internal differences within the Congress Socialist Party reached to a point of split and the Communists were expelled from CSP. At ground level by 1939, the Communists have established their control and leadership over important mass organisations of CSP. With the expulsion of Communists from CSP, most of the leaders and activists in various provinces joined the CPI. In 1940s, the India's struggle for independence came under the influence of internal ideological struggle for hegemony between Congress and Communists. The political space that was created by the Congress Socialist Party was by 1940s occupied by the communists.

In this chapter, we mainly look at the struggles of the left wing to establish its hegemony over the national movement and the differences between the dominant Right wing leadership of the Indian National Congress and the Left wing on the strategies to be followed in the national movement. The internal differences in the left wing on ideology and strategies, the impact of national and international factors on the policies and programmes of left movement in Andhra have also been discussed in this chapter.

The policies and programmes of the Communist Party, the differences between the Communist Party and other political parties and groups, the relations between the Congress Socialists and Communists, and the attitude of the government towards communists, the ban on the activities of the CPI in 1934, the relations of CPI with Comintern, CPSU and CPGB, the impact of the decisions of the Comintern and CPGB on the policies of CPI and on the Indian national movement, the formation of united national front and the entry of Communists into Congress Socialist Party were discussed in details in this chapter.

This chapter also focuses on the differences in the Congress between the right wing leadership and the left wing on the organisation and integration of peasants, workers, agricultural labourers, women, youth and students into anti-colonial struggle leading to India's independence. The left wing argued that the organisation of these groups into separate class organisations would not go against the interests of national movement rather these activities would further broaden and strengthen the social base of India's struggle for independence. The motive of the left wing behind the organisation of these groups as a part of the national movement was to establish the hegemony of peasants and workers, integrate the internal (secondary) contradictions and transform the nature of national movement. However, the Congress leadership opposed this move with the argument that the formation of class associations like workers and peasants unions would create class divide in the society and bring division among the forces of national movement. The right wing leadership also thought that the left ideology and class agenda would dominate the national movement. Therefore, the right wing did not encourage the formation of class associations and even tried to suppress the movements of class associations led by the

Left wing Congressmen. This led to a bitter ideological struggle between the Right wing and Left wing in the national movement.

The present chapter also discusses the activities of leftists in the literary front during 1936-39. The major change that took place in Telugu literature was the emergence of new ideas and the influence of socialist ideology that brought new era in Telugu literature. In other words, the shaping up of new consciousness under the influence of new radical ideas spread through the Telugu literature is analyzed.

**United front Strategy**

The Communist party, formed in Andhra during the early thirties had followed a left sectarian policy. The CPI leadership kept itself away from the Civil Disobedience movement launched by Gandhi. Two factors played important role in the formulation of this strategy of CPI. First is, most of the experienced leadership of CPI was kept in jail through the Meerut Conspiracy Case. Second, the directions received by CPI from the Comintern prevented them from having any connection with the existing mass movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.[1] The Comintern treated imperialism and national bourgeois as equal enemies to the revolution and gave a call to the Communists in the colonial countries to fight against the reformism of the national bourgeois.

Thus after receiving directions from Comintern, the CPI gave a call to the genuine anti-imperialists in the Indian National Congress to fight for the exposure and elimination of those elements who endeavour consistently to impede the action of the Indian masses by compromising with British imperialism.[2] The CPI also started attack on the newly formed Congress Socialist Party. R.P.Dutt, the ideologue of the CPGB, who was directing the Communist movement in India, criticised the formation of CSP as ‘a manoeuvre of bankrupt Congress leadership to deceive the masses’.[3] The Indian Communists criticised the Socialists as `Social Fascists' and said that Socialism

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[1] The sixth Congress of Comintern authoritatively informed the Indian Communists that, ‘a single, illegal, independent and centralized party is the first task of the Indian communists ... to lead the masses in armed insurrection against the feudal imperialist bloc and to establish hegemony of the proletariat over the Indian National Movement’. See, Sashi Joshi, *Struggle for Hegemony in India, 1920-47: The Colonial State, the Left and the National Movement,* Vol. I, 1920-34, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p.299.

[2] *Ibid.,* p.14.

[3] R. P. Dutt, “Congress Socialism: A Contradiction in Terms”, first published by ‘*Indian Forum*’, October 1934 from London, reproduced in Jyothi Basu & Others (eds.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India,* Vol.III, 1929-1938, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997, p.166.

and Congress were contradictory terms and the real Socialist Party should not be with the Congress.[4]

Thus, the Communists slowly separated from the mainstream Indian national movement working under Comintern directives. During that period, the government also began to suppress the emerging Communist movement. In July 1934, the CPI was banned[5] and its members were driven to underground. The Communists tried to form non-communist organisations to carry on their secret activities. However, the Government identified their activities and arrested several Communists.

Under these circumstances, the Seventh Congress of the Third Communist International and the subsequent Dutt-Bradley thesis suggested to the Indian Communists to change their policy towards national bourgeois, follow the united front strategy and work together in co-operation with the INC and CSP.[6] By this time, the Indian Communists also recognized the need for an open organisation to work effectively among the people. The Communists therefore readily agreed to adopt the united front strategy advocated by Comintern, and the slogan of Socialist unity advocated by the Congress Socialist Party.

Even though the Communists criticised them, the Socialists in India worked to unite all the Socialist forces into a united front of anti-Imperialist block. Jayaprakash Narain, the General Secretary of the CSP defined the aims of CSP as follows: "the Congress Socialist Party is not a party of any one class. It is not the party of working class alone. It is a political party uniting on its platform all anti-Imperialist forces and its task is to lead such elements to the overthrow of the British Imperialism and the

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[4] See Bimal Prasad (ed.), *A Revolutionary's Quest: Selected Writings of Jayayaprakash Narayan*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980, p.56; Madhu Limaye, *Socialist Communist Interaction in India*, Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1991, p.15; Bhagwan Josh, *Struggle for Hegemony in India, 1920-47: The Colonial State, the Left and the National Movement*, Vol. II, 1934-40, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p.102; Minoo Masani, *Bliss was it in That Dawn: A Political Memoir up to Independence*, Arnold-Heinemann, New Delhi, 1977, p.53 Also see P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1986, third edition 1994, p.72.

[5] On 23rd July 1934, the Government of India declared the Communist Party of India, its committees, Sub-committees and branches as unlawful associations under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 on the ground that they had for their object interference with the administration of the law and the maintenance of law and order and constituted a danger to the public peace. See Legislative Assembly Question, dated, 14 Aug 1934 in G.O. No.621, dated, 17 April 1935, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras; *Andhra Patrika*, 15th August 1934, p.7.

[6] Rajni Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley, "Anti-Imperialist People's Front in India", also known as 'Dutt-Bradley Thesis', Published in *Imprecorr*, 29th February 1936, also published in *The Labour Monthly*,

establishment in India of real Swaraj for the masses".[7] During the Lucknow session of INC, the Communists held discussions with the Socialists. P.C.Joshi, the then General Secretary of the CPI and Jayaprakash Narain, the General Secretary of the CSP took active part in these discussions. P.C.Joshi, S.V.Ghate and Jayaprakash Narain met in Lucknow and agreed to work together in a united front for the furtherance of their common objectives.[8] This agreement has come to known as the *Lucknow pact* in the history of the left movement in India.

After the Lucknow pact between the CPI and CSP, the Communists gained new respectability and acquired the capacity to influence the nationalist movement. The Communist party in association with the CSP attracted a number of Socialists into its fold. The founders of the Kerala Congress Socialist Party, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A.K.Gopalan and P.Krishna Pillai, who were socialists in the beginning, attracted by the ideas of the CPI and joined in it.[9] The Communists were given important and high positions both in CSP and INC. Sajjad Zahir was made one of the joint secretaries of All India Congress Socialist Party and a member in the AICC, while Dr.Z.A.Ahmed and Dr.K.M.Ashraf were appointed to important positions in the AICC. EMS Namboodiripad was made as the joint secretary of the AICSP. P.Sundarayya was put in-charge of the Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party while P.Jivanandam was put in-charge of the Tamilnad Congress Socialist Party.[10] The membership in the CSP gave the Communists a cover to operate from within the INC. Since the CPI was illegal, this cover was very much valuable for them in building up their organisation.

**United Front in Andhra**

In Andhra, in tune with the thinking at all India level the Communists began to change their attitude towards the Congress and CSP. In Andhra all most all the

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March 1936, London, reproduced in Jyothi Basu & Others (ed), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Vol. III, 1929-1938, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997, pp.219-234.

[7] Quoted in Minoo Masani, *Bliss Was it in That Dawn*, p.53.

[8] K.Murugeshan, "Comrade Ghate's four fruitful years in Madras", in *S.V.Ghate: Our First General Secretary*, Communist Party of India, New Delhi, 1971, p.59.

[9] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *How I Became a Communist*, Translated from Malayalam by P.K.Nair, Chinta Publications, Trivandrum, 1976, p.211; A.K. Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People: Reminiscences*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p.134; Robin Jeffrey, "Matriliny, Marxism, and the Birth of Communist Party in Kerala, 1930-1940", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXVIII, No.1, November 1978, p.92.

Communists were once the members of the Congress and actively participated in the Congress led Non-cooperation movement and the Civil Disobedience movements. After the formation of CPI in Andhra, a section of youth who were strongly influenced by the ideology of CPI came out from CSP and Congress began to work independently with a view to expose the compromise politics of the national bourgeois. They made efforts to organise the workers, peasants, youth and students against the British imperialism. However, since the CPI and its branches were declared unlawful associations,[11] the Communists formed several front organisations like press workers unions, and labour protection leagues to work openly through these organisations. They have urged workers not to join in the organisations formed by Congress leaders,[12] but come into their front unions and leagues.

With the formation of united front at the all India level, the communists in Andhra changed their earlier position towards nationalist forces and joined Congress Socialist Party. P. Sundarayya, the organizer of Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI secretly organized the first conference of Andhra Communist Committee in Kakinada on 29 January 1936. S.V. Ghate, a member of the central committee of CPI also attended the conference. Sundarayya and Ghate explained other members about the change in CPI's policy and convinced them to join the Congress Socialist Party to build up anti-imperialist united national front.[13] The conference elected P. Sundarayya, P. Narasimhamurthy, C. Vasudevarao, A. Satyanarayanaraju, M. Chandrasekhararao, T.V. Chalapathi and K. Seshaiah as members of the Secretariat of Andhra Communist Committee with P. Sundarayya as the Secretary to Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI.[14] Most of the members of Andhra PC appreciated the united front strategy advocated by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and the Dutt-Bradley thesis. After the Lucknow pact and the formation of the united front

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[10] M.R.Masani, *The Communist Party of India*: *A Short History*, Derec Verse Hoyle, London, 1954, p.68; M.R.Masani, *Bliss Was it in That Dawn***,** pp.123-124; E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *How I Became a Communist*, pp.210-211.

[11] Along with the CPI and its branches, the *government in 1934 also banned the Young Workers League, formed by Amir Hyder Khan in Madras in 1932*. See, *Andhra Patrika*, 27th September 1934, p.8.

[12] A Pamphlet issued by P. Rajavadivelu on behalf of the Madras Press Workers Union being formed by the Madras Provincial Committee of CPI, in Secret File No. 931 dated 1st September 1935, *History of Freedom Struggle Files, Andhra Pradesh* (hereafter referred as *HFSAP*), 1935, p.2592.

[13] Parakala Pattabhi Ramarao, *Rashtra Communistu Mahasabhala Sankshipta Charitra, 1936-1998*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Committee of CPI, Hyderabad, 1998, pp.5-6.

[14] Interview with P. Sundarayya, 20th November 1983, Preserved in Sundarayya Vignana Kendram, Hyderabad.

between the CSP and CPI at the all India level that made the Communists in Andhra to join in Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party.[15] The Communists in Andhra also changed their attitude towards the CSP and INC. According to Chandra Rajeswararao, a prominent member of Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI, who took active part in the Congress Socialist Party during the time of united front, the Communist assessment of the CSP and INC was as fallows:

> Now the Congress was a revolutionary organisation. Its aims were attainment of freedom and development of industries and the installment of capitalism. Congress consists of various classes that were millionaires, capitalists, landlords and the middle class educated people. These classes do not like the over throw of British imperialism in the revolutionary methods. The support of ryots and labour was necessary to wage armed struggle for freedom. Some people in the Congress are encouraging the labourers and ryots. They will be very happy if the Socialist pattern of society came in to existence in India. The Congress Socialist Party was trying to unite all the leftist forces. Therefore, we all should have to work in the Congress Socialist party. We should have to work to unite the working class. We would have to work with educated and middle class patriots and we would have to change them as Socialists.[16]

With the above ideas and assessment about the Congress and the CSP, the Communists in Andhra not only joined the APCSP, but also actively participated in the Civil Disobedience movement, 1930-34.

The entry of the Communists gave new strength to the CSP. From 1936 onwards, the Socialists not only worked to create class-consciousness among workers and peasants but also prepared them to fight against the British Imperialism. The summer schools and training camps on economics and politics have helped the transformation of peasant consciousness on radical lines. Simultaneously they had also organized working class strikes and peasant movements.

In Andhra, after the formation of united front and the entry of CPI into CSP, the Communists began to dominate the party meetings. They owned several Socialists to their side and maintained a majority in the CSP. The Communists even formed branches of CSP in several districts where the party did not exist earlier. The

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[15] See Report on the Socialist Organisations in the Madras Presidency, *HFSAP*, 1936, p.4537.

[16] Darisi Chencha, *Nenu Naadesam* (Autobiography) (Telugu) Jayanthi Publications, Vijayawada, 2004, pp.279-282. Darisi Chenchayya, Congress Socialist Party after prolonged discussions with Chandra Rajeswararao.

Communists reorganised the district branches of CSP in East Godavari, [17] Guntur[18] and Nellore districts[19] and became a dominant force in the CSP conferences held in Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts.

For instance, the Communists took active part in the revival of dormant Krishna District Congress Socialist Party. Gadde Lingaiah Chowdary, Kosaraju Seshaiah, Chalasani Vasudevarao, and Inturi Venkateswararao arranged a conference of Krishna District Congress Socialist Party at Gudiwada on 7 Sep 1936. Inturi Venkateswararao presided over the Conference. The conference passed resolutions condemning the ban on the CPI, and called on the youth and Socialist organisations to agitate for the release of Amir Hyderkhan and other political prisoners and recommending the formation of action committees to propagate anti imperialist ideology.[20]

With the adaptation of the united front strategy, the Communists got high and important positions in the APCSP and in APCC. Several communists became the heads of District and taluk level Congress Committees.[21]

With the formation of united front and the infiltration of Communists into the CSP, the strength of the Socialists had increased many folds. During 1936, they organised several meetings and conferences condemning the ban on the CPI, condemning the fascist atrocities in Spain, criticising the Indian Government act of 1935, demanding the release of political prisoners, and recommending to the Indian National Congress to adopt Socialist methods to achieve independence. A notable feature of these conferences was that the Communists dominated in both the district and provincial level meetings of the CSP.[22] In these conferences, the socialists declared that their aim was to convert the Congress to socialism and thus establish socialists system in India.[23]

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[17] See Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras presidency, *HFSAP,* 1936, p.4559.
[18] *Ibid*., pp.4567-68.
[19] *Ibid*., p.4559.
[20] *Ibid*., pp.4565-66.
[21] Muddukuri Chandrasekhararao became the president of the Krishna District Congress Committee. Uddaraju Ramam was served as the president of Narsapuram Taluk Congress committee and several Communists like P.Sundarayya, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju and Chundi Jagannadham were elected as the members of AICC.
[22] See Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras presidency, *HFSAP,* 1936, pp.4565-68.
[23] Report of the Telugu translators to the Government of Madras, report on *Andhra Patrika,* in Native Newspaper Reports, 1936, *HFSAP, 1936*, p.477.

After the formation of united front, the socialists and communists in Andhra jointly organized the tours of all India Socialist leaders such as Yusuf Mehrally, M.R.Masani, S.A.Dange and Jawaharlal Nehru. The Socialists organised the second annual conference of the APCSP at Rajahmundry on 26 September 1936, under the president ship of Yusuf Mehrally, a famous Congress Socialist from Bombay, who was joint secretary of the AICSP.[24] Yusuf Mehrally came to Rajahmundry on 26 September 1936 and Madduri Annapurnaiah, Krovvidi Lingaraju, the reception committee chair, Vadrevu Jaggaraju, the secretary of the reception committee, B.Rangasayi, the general secretary of the APCSP, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah and others, received him.[25] Sixty members attended as delegates to the conference from all over Andhra.[26] Yusuf Mehrally in his presidential address first spoke about the new constitution. He urged the people to boycott new ministerial offices and carry on propaganda in every corner to see in the forth-coming elections Congressmen are prevented from taking office.[27]

Mehrally had also demanded the abolition of Zamindari system in India. In his speech, he said that the Zamindars played an important part in bringing the deterioration in India's agricultural economy. He said that almost half of the cultivated land in India was under the control of Zamindars. He said, “the Zamindars as a body were created to build up a class of loyalists who would stand between the Government and the people”.[28] Speaking about the rural debt and serfdom, another aspect of Zamindari system, he said that the evils of Zamindari system and poverty of the people ultimately push people towards Socialist revolution. In his own words *"Socialism does not grew in Moscow. It grows where there is hunger, poverty and*

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[24] G.O.No.178, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 22nd January 1937, in *HFSAP*, 1937, p.995; Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, *HFSAP*, 1936, p.4559. *The Hindu*, 26th September 1936; *Krishna Patrika***,** 26th September 1936; Y.V.Krishnarao, Tummala Venkata Ramaiah, Parakala Pattabhi Ramarao and Yetukuri Balaramamurthi (hereafter referred as Y.V.Krishnarao and others), *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part-II, 1936-42, (Telugu) Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1988, p.73; M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol. IV, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1974, p.104; Suramouli, *Socialist Udyamam*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Socialist Front, Hyderabad, 2002, p.36.

[25] *The Hindu*, 26th September 1936.

[26] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part 1, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1983, pp.164-165.

[27] The presidential speech delivered by Yusuf Mehrally at the Second Annual Conference of APCSP held at Rajahmundry on 26th and 27th Sept 1936, in G.O.No.178, dated 22nd January 1937, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, in *HFSAP 1936*, p.996.

*exploitation*. I will say that, of all the countries in the world it is much worse in India than any where else".[29] The conference passed 11 resolutions demanding the release of political prisoners, to solve the unemployment problem, urging the boycott of coronation of King Edward and condemning the fascist atrocities all over the world.[30]

In another meeting arranged in Rajahmundry on the occasion of second Annual conference of APCSP, P.Sundarayya of Alaganipadu, who was the secretary of the Madras Provincial Labour Protection League, and the Provincial Trade Union Congress and one of the joint secretaries of APCSP, gave a speech on Socialism.[31] In his speech, Sundarayya concentrated on the evils of capitalist system and urged the people to destroy that system. He said:

> "Unless the capitalists and their ways were destroyed there would be no happiness for the labourers. Unless the capitalists, the zamindars are destroyed there is no possibility to establish the kingdom of ryots. Without considering good or evil of our British government, the zamindars, the capitalists are helping this `Burjuva' Government and impose on the labourers several restrictions, ordinances, beating them with lathies, putting them to shame with several cruel deeds. Therefore, Brethern, you consider this injustice. Unless these zamindars, capitalists and the Bourgeois government pass away, there is no salvation for us. So long, this British Government, which is helping to the Zamindars and the Capitalists, is in India, there is no possibility to establish our labour government. Therefore, we must all try to see that the zamindars and capitalists are deprived of their management. And to establish our labour Government, we must all work with a united front and even try to establish it by force".[32]

He also mentioned about several revolutionary movements in the world. Finally describing the differences between Socialism and Communism he said that "Socialism is only the first stage of Communism, while Socialism insists that every person should be paid the same wage, men are expected to work to the best of their ability, and are provided in the Communist system with the necessaries of life in

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[28] *Ibid.*, p.1000.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*, pp.1017-20.
[31] G.O. No. 1187, Home Department, Government of Madras, dated 22nd March 1937; G.O.No.178, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 22nd January 1937, p.1010; G.O.No. 2618-19, Home Department, Government of Madras, dated 7th Oct. 1936; Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, *HFSAP*, 1936, p.4560; Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part 1, p.169; P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, Part I, (Telugu) Prajasakthi Publishers, Vijayawada, 1994, p.87.
[32] G.O.No.178, Public (General) Department, dated 22nd Jan 1937; G.O. No. 1187, Home Department, Government of Madras, dated 23rd March 1937.

proportion to the work done by them".[33] The Government officials, who attended the meeting, sent their reports to the Government on the speech of Sundarayya. B.Subbarayudu, Inspector of Police, SBCID, filed a case on Sundarayya in the District Magistrate Court, Kakinada on the charges of bringing or attempting to bring hatred towards the Government established by the law in British India and promoting the hatred between different classes i.e., zamindars and ryots and capitalists and labourers. P.Sundarayya was arrested in Tenali by B.Subbarayudu on 10 October 1936 and was sent to Kakinada. The arrest of Sundarayya stirred the youth in Andhra. The Socialists organized demonstrations at several places in Andhra to protest against the arrest of Sundarayya. [34]

In October 1936, Jawaharlal Nehru as the President of Indian National Congress toured the Andhra districts and campaigned for the assembly elections of 1937. Nehru was very much impressed by the activities of the Socialists in Andhra. In an interview to the press on 20 October 1936, at Vijayawada, Nehru said: "It was also glad to notice peasant organisations in Andhradesa, which appear to be doing good work to the peasants. Such peasant organisations are helpful, not only to agitate for the removal of the peasant grievances but to the larger cause of Swaraj".[35]

In the same month of October 1936, the Andhra Socialists organised an extensive tour of S.A.Dange, a well-known Communist and a convict in the Meerut conspiracy case. The Guntur district CSP organised a conference under the presidentship of Mr.Dange on 17th and 18 October 1936.[36] Dange, in his speech advocated the adoption of socialistic methods to achieve the independence. At the private conferences of Socialists, he was reported to have said that the Socialist organisations should be used as a platform for Communist activities.[37] Soon after these conferences, the Socialists also organised in Andhra a tour of M.R.Masani, the joint secretary of the Congress Socialist Party. In Vijayawada, the town units of Congress Socialist Party and Youth League organised a conference on 5th and 6th

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[33] G.O.No.2618-19, Home (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras, dated 7th October 1936.
[34] *The Hindu*, 13th October 1936; Selected extracts from the Confidential Native Newspaper Reports, in HFSAP, 1936, for the month of Oct 1936, p.7684.
[35] S.Gopal (ed), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.VIII, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1975, p.532; Also see M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Vol. IV, p.668; A.Satyanarayana, "Rise and Growth of Left Movement in Andhra, 1934-39", *Social Scientist*, Vol.XIV, No.1, January 1986, p.35.
[36] *Krishna Patrika*, 17th October 1936.

December 1936. N.G.Ranga presided over the conference. M.R.Masani, the chief guest of the conference spoke on Indian independence and Socialism. Masani also tried in vain to bring about reconciliation between the right and the left wings of APCSP.[38]

By the end of 1936, the Communists attained complete control over the Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party. The domination of communists led to serious differences between Communists and Socialists within the CSP. During the second conference of Andhra Congress Socialist Party at Rajahmundry, the party was divided into two groups. B.V.Rangasayi, Vanka Suri Sastri, Madduri Annapurnaiah, Dr. K. L. Narasimharao and Krovvidi Lingaraju became the leaders of non-communist group, while P. Sundarayya and others led the communist group.[39] However, due to the conciliatory efforts of all India leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, the two groups worked together and prevented a split in the Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party. But soon after the second annual conference of the APCSP the differences that arose between the two groups, finally led to the resignation of B.V. Rangasayi, who was the secretary of APCSP since its inception, and elected as joint secretary of APCSP at second annual conference at Rajahmundry in 1936. He resigned for his post because of the attitude of the newly formed provincial committee, which decided to hold Guntur district conference of APCSP under the presidentship of S.A. Dange. Rangasayi's argument was that the rules laid down by the Congress Socialist Party did not allow non-party members to preside over the CSP conferences.[40]

In spite of these differences, the socialists and communists in Andhra jointly worked for the transformation of Indian National Congress. They participated in the conferences of APCC and passed several resolutions demanding the Congress to adopt socialist methods to achieve independence. [41]

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[37] Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, *HFSAP*, 1936, p.4560.

[38] *Ibid***;** *Krishna Patrika*, 12th December 1936. After the infiltration of the communists into CSP, Rangasayi and Jaggaraju divided the Andhra CSP into two groups: one led by P.Sundarayya and the other.

[39] Durbha Krishnamurthi, *Smrithulu,* (Telugu), Marxist Adhyayana Vedika, Hyderabad, 1985, p.61.

[40] Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, *HFSAP* 1936, p.4560.

[41] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th February 1936, in *Native Newspaper Reports*, February 1936, *HFSAP* 1936.

The strength of the Socialists increased in the Congress. In 1936, forty-seven Socialists were elected to the Andhra provincial Congress Committee and eight members of Congress Socialist Party Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, N.G.Ranga, Chundi Jagannadham, Karunakaram Subbarao, Kalluri Subbarao, Dr.K.L. Narasimharao, Annapragada Kameswararao and Madduri Annapurnaiah were elected to the All India Congress Committee.[42] Though unsuccessful, the Socialists did try to get N.G.Ranga elected for the presidentship of APCC.[43]

Thus by the year 1936, the communists entered into the Congress Socialist Party and started working from within the Congress. During this period the communists performed three functions: worked as congressmen, as a leftist organisation within the Congress Party (as Congress Socialist Party) and in reality as communists.[44] This helped the communists to escape the government repression and carryout their activities without much difficulty and to attract people towards socialism under the banner of Congress Socialist Party. During this period all, the activities of the Communists were carried out through Congress Socialist Party. During the time of united front, the communists organised peasants, workers, youth, students and women and expanded the social base of the national movement in Andhra. The communists also worked for the unity of Left wing forces within the Congress and successfully countered the reformist polices of the Right wing Congress leadership. By the end of 1940, the communists emerged as an alternative to the Congress and started their independent struggle against imperialism.

**Council Entry and Office Acceptance**

The Council entry and office acceptance were the issues over which the Left wing and Right wing confronted each other immediately after the adaptation of united front tactics. The period between 1933 and 1937 was a period of intense debate and discussion on council entry and office acceptance within the ranks of the Indian National Congress. After suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement, two different and contending ideologies were put forwarded by the Congressmen on the

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[42] Report on the Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency, *HFSAP*, 1936, p.4561. Also, See *Krishna Patrika***,** 12th December 1936.

[43] In the congress organizational elections, N.G.Ranga contested against T. Prakasam for the President of APCC. In the elections, while Ranga got 87 votes, Prakasam got 117 votes and won the election. *Ibid*.

[44] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *The Communist Party in Kerala: Six Decades of Struggle and Advance*, National Book Center, New Delhi, 1994, p.45.

future course of struggle against British imperialism. The Right wing leaders turned towards the parliamentary politics where as the Left wing argued for the continuance of the struggle by organising the workers and peasants. Finally, the Congress decided to participate in the elections and form ministries in the provinces. During the elections to provincial legislatures, though the communists were against to the new constitution, they worked as loyal Congressmen for the victory of Congress. During the election campaign, the communists mobilized the workers and peasantry in support of the Congress and broadened the social base of the Congress. The election campaign was also used by the Communists to consolidate their base among the workers, peasants, and students.

By the mid 1933, most of the Congress leaders outside the jail were convinced that the Civil Disobedience movement could no longer go on. Many Congress nationalist leaders, though not all the Right-wingers advocated the change of Congress programme from mass action to council entry. For them the need for suspension of Civil Disobedience movement and adaptation of a new programme of council entry was dictated by the changed circumstances. Some of the enthusiastic Congress leaders like M.A. Ansari, Satyamurthi, B.C.Roy and Rangaswami Iyengar revived the old Swaraj Party and they decided to contest in the coming elections to central legislative assembly in 1934.[45] Gandhi also supported the efforts of Right wing Congress on the participation in the elections.[46]

The decision to abandon the Civil Disobedience movement and return to parliamentary politics created dismay among the Left wing. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was in jail and not being consulted about this, reacted with such anger that he even said to have contemplated to break with Gandhi and the Congress. So angrily, Nehru confessed that, “there was hardly any common ground between me and Bapu and the others who lead the Congress today”. Gandhi's willingness to listen to Swarajists like Ansari, who had not been loyal to the Congress, also irked Nehru. Nehru protested

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[45] Visalakshi Menon, *From Movement to Government: The Congress in the United Provinces, 1937-42,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2003, p.37; Reba Som, *Differences within Consensus: The Left and Right in the Congress, 1929-1939,* Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1995, pp.153-4.

[46] In a statement on 17 September 1934, he said: “I am convinced that in the present circumstances of the country and in the absence of any general scheme of civil resistance, a parliamentary party within the Congress is a necessary part of any programme that may be framed by the Congress”. Quoted in Bhagwan Josh, *Struggle for Hegemony in India, 1920-47: The Colonial State, The Left and the National Movement, 1934-41***,** p.168.

that "those who were now running the Congress were the very `people who had obstructed us, held us back, kept aloof from the struggle and even cooperated with the opposite Party in time of our direct need". [47] It was pointed by Bipan Chandra that the Jawaharlal Nehru grew more and more radical during the period 1933 and 1936,[48] and it was during this period that he acted as the leader of the Left wing and attacked the right wing idea of council entry and office acceptance. However, Namboodiripad pointed out that during this period despite protestations, in practice Nehru served as tool in the hands of the Right wing. They neutralized the Left wing by making Nehru as the President who acted according to the decisions of the majority in the working committee.[49]

It was precisely during this period that some of the radical Congress leaders openly expressed their disillusionment with the Gandhian programme and formed a Socialist group within the Congress in May 1934, with a programme based on economic and not on spiritual conditions of the Indian people. They declared that their immediate goal was 'to rescue the Congress from the hands of the right wing by educating and organising the rank and file on the basis of a clear cut programme of the national revolution and also to carry on a constant propaganda for the exposure of the reactionary aims, policies and programmes of the right wing group'.[50] It was only after the formation of CSP, that the differences between the Socialists and Nehru with the Right wing came into open. The Socialists argued that the Congress policy of council entry and office acceptance would lead to gradual surrender of the Congress to the British or make them compromise with the colonial state. The leftists gave two slogans. *Wreck the constitution* and *the British have no right to frame a constitution for India; it is the right of the Indian people.*[51]

In 1935, the long awaited government of India act became a law, but it did not satisfy most of the demands of the Congress. The claim for immediate dominion

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[47] R.Suntharalingam, *Indian Nationalism: An Historical Analysis,* Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, p.332.

[48] Bipan Chandra, "Jawaharlal Nehru and the Capitalist Class, 1936," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.X, Nos.33-35, Special Number, 1975.

[49] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, Social Scientist Press, Trivandrum, 1986, pp.594-5.

[50] R.Suntharalingam, *Indian Nationalism:* p.333; B.R.Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj 1929-1942: The Penultimate Phase***,** The Macmillan Press, Madras, 1976, p.51; J.P.Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M.N.Roy and Comintern Policy 1920-1939,* Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1971, p.226.

status, which the Congress had voiced since 1920s, had been refused. The act proposed for a federation at the center consisting of British Indian provinces and the Native Indian States with autonomy to the center. Dyarchy was to be established in the center. Vast powers were entrusted to the Viceroy including the right to impose his power in times of emergency. In the provinces, also the Governors were given unlimited powers. The Governor had the power, in times of emergency or breakdown of the constitutional machinery, to dismiss the elected ministry and impose his direct rule under section 93 of the constitution.[52]

The left wing and the right wing took different positions towards the act of 1935. The left wing forces in the country including Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jayaprakash Narain and Swami Sahajananda called for the outright rejection of new constitution. They called for the boycot of the legislatures including the provincial elections scheduled for 1937. Jawaharlal Nehru criticised the Government of India act of 1935 `as a new character of slavery'. He said, "It was a sort of machine with strong breaks and no engine".[53] Nehru asserted that "the acceptance of new constitution would inevitably mean our cooperation in some measure with the repressive apparatus of imperialism and we would become partners in this repression and in exploitation of our people".[54] The CSP also expressed similar opinion. The second annual conference of the CSP held at Meerut on 19th and 20th January 1936 adopted a resolution rejecting the Government of India act of 1935 and urged the Congress to wreck the new constitution.[55]

The Right wing on the other hand, while acknowledging the inadequacies of the new constitution, contended that enough power had been conceded by the Raj as to enable the Congress to carry out its economic and social programmes being part of the government. Although the old Swarajists like Satyamurthi had always favoured the parliamentary politics, what was significant was the change in the attitude of the loyal Gandhians like Patel, Prasad and Rajagopalachari. These Gandhians opposed the Swarajists and their *pro-change* towards parliamentary politics, and acted as *no-*

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[51] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle,* p.568.
[52] R.C.Agarwal, *Constitutional Development and the National Movement in India,* S Chand & Company, New Delhi, 1994, pp.277-87 and 293-5.
[53] *Ibid*., p.270.
[54] R.Suntharalingam, *Indian Nationalism,* p.338. Also see Bipan Chandra, "Jawaharlal Nehru and the Capitalist Class, 1936," p.1311.

*changers* group in the 1920s. Surprisingly however, for 1937 elections the loyal Gandhians and advocates of council entry came together and acted as a strong rightist group to counter the growing challenge from the left wing. Perhaps the infiltration of Communists into CSP and INC by adopting the united front strategy and the emergence of all India Kisan Sabha created a fear psychosis among the loyal Gandhians. Besides the rise of the left wing, the business advice and pressures also said to have played an important part in the process of consolidation of a definite Congress right wing.

The rise of left wing within the Congress created unease among the capitalist class.[56] The business circles argued for co-operation between the Congress and Government. After the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience movement, the business groups worked for a positive change in the Congress policy towards council entry and office acceptance. Birla advised Thakurdas on 12th April 1934: "I should like to keep your self in touch with Bhulabhai Desai. If the Swaraj Party is to be successful, they will have to collect some fund for fighting the new election and I would suggest that fund should not be supplied from Bombay without being satisfied that the right types of men are being sent".[57] Again, on 9 August 1934 Birla wrote to Thakurdas "Vallabh Bhai Patel, Rajaji and Rajendrababu are all fighting Communism and Socialism. It is therefore necessary that some of us who represent the healthy capitalism should help Gandhiji as for as possible and work with a common object".[58] Birla contributed five lakhs rupees to the Congress Central Parliamentary board headed by Sardar Patel. Before the elections, he wrote to Thakurdas, that "the elections which will take place will be controlled by the Vallabhai group and if Lord Linlithgow handles the situation properly there is every likely hood of the Congress coming into office".[59] These conversations reveal the role of business circles in the formation of the Congress right wing.

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[55] M.R.Masani, *Bliss Was it in That Dawn*, p.89.

[56] Aditya Mukherjee, *Imperialism, Nationalism and the Making of the Indian Capitalist Class, 1920-1947*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2002, p.423.

[57] Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885 - 1947*, Macmillan, Madras, 1983, reprint 1992, p.331.

[58] Shibani Kinkar Chaube, *Colonialism, Freedom Struggle and Nationalism in India*, Book land Publishing Company, Delhi, 1996, p.171; Reba Som, *Differences within Consensus*, p.155.

[59] Alan Ross, *The Emissary: G.D.Birla, Gandhi and Independence*, Indus (Harper Collins), Delhi, 1993, p.118.

Ultimately, it was the Right wing Congress leaders led by Patel and Prasad who favoured council entry and office acceptance, who gained upper hand in the Lucknow session of the INC. Their argument that if the Congress did not take the full opportunity offered by the provincial legislative assembly elections, `it would only benefit the other political parties who would than use their political power of office to the detriment of the Congress and the country,[60] was endorsed by the Lucknow session. Consequently, the Lucknow session of the Congress passed a resolution that the Congress would contest the elections in accordance with the mandate of the Congress and its pursuance of its declared policy. The working committee was empowered to appoint a new parliamentary board to conduct the council entry programme. In April 1936, a parliamentary board comprising Patel, Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Azad, Bhulabhai Desai, Govind Ballav Pant, and Narendra Dev, and Presidents of PCCs and Abdul Ghaffar Khan of the Frontier Province was formed to organise the Congress election programme. The conference also resolved that the decision on the question of office acceptance should be decided after the elections by consultation between the AICC and PCC's. These resolutions were passed by the AICC despite the opposition from the Socialists.[61] Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, the official historian of the history of Indian National Congress characterized this shift in the Congress policy from Civil disobedience movements to the Council Entry, as "It was as if the belt in a workshop turning round the shaft was simply slipped off the fast on to the loose pulley. In the twinkling of an eye, faster than the fall of an object whose position is dislocated, quicker than the alteration of darkness with light when the current is off, more expeditiously than the stopping of a moving piece of machinery brought about by the pushing of a bar did the Civil Disobedience Movement yield peace to Council Entry".[62]

During the period from 1933 to 1937 in Andhra, the twin issues of council entry and office acceptance attracted the attention of several Congressmen and led to a great debate and discussion. In Andhra, the majority in the Congress looked towards the parliamentary politics. The revival of old Swaraj Party gave a fresh strength to the advocates of parliamentary politics in Andhra. On 11th February 1934, political

[60] B.R.Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj 1929-1942: The Penultimate Phase***,** p.59.
[61] Reba Som, *Differences within Consensus: The Left and Right in the Congress, 1929-1939*, p.186.

workers from different parts of Andhra met in a conference in Bezawada under the presidentship of Gadicherla Harisarvothamarao and formed the Andhra Swaraj Party.[63] The conference laid down that the Party should make use of the legislatures for attaining swaraj.[64] On the other hand, the Socialists in Andhra opposed the council entry and office acceptance with the agreement that it leads to a compromise with the British imperialism.[65]

Like politics at the all India level, in Andhra also the Swarajists and the loyal Gandhians united to counter the left wing. The Gandhians like Tanguturi Prakasam, Konda Venkatappaiah, Kasinadhuni Nageswararao Panthulu, Ayyadevara Kaleswararao and Bulusu Sambhamurthy, who opposed the council entry in 1922, and acted as the no-changers, have now turned towards the parliamentary politics. They joined hands with the Swarajists to neutralize the rising left wing tendency in Andhra. The right wing favoured the council entry and said that the councils should be used to strengthen the national movement. On behalf of APCC, they demanded at the Lucknow session of the Congress to lift the ban on office acceptance and exhorted the Congressmen to capture all provincial councils and form their own ministries.[66]

After the Lucknow session, the leftists according to the decision of the majority decided to participate in the elections. They thought that the elections and battle in the legislature had an important place in organising the people against imperialism. At practical level, the Communist Party considered the boycotting of elections by them alone would amount to sectarianism, which would lead them into isolation from the masses. The CPI, while rejecting the slogan of boycotting the election argued that the "Boycotting of election or the parliament is permissible,

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[62] B.Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, *The History of the Indian National Congress (1885-1935)*, Published by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary, Madras, 1935, p.961.

[63] M.Venkatarangaiya, *Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Vol. IV, pp.75, 613: N.Innaiah, *Parteelenni Marina Paina Khaddare Gada: Hundred Years of Andhra Politics (1881-1982)*, (Telugu) Author, Hyderabad, 1982, p.55; Sarojini Regani, *Highlights of Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1972, p.140; B.Kesavanarayana, *Political and Social Factors in Andhra, 1900-1956*, Navodaya Publishers, Vijayawada, 1976, p.143.

[64] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol. IV, p.75.

[65] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd February 1935, p.7.

[66] *Native Newspaper Reports*, 1936, *HFSAP*, 1936, p.7636. Also see, *The Hindu*, 12th April 1936 and G. Rudraiah Chowdari, *Prakasam: A Political Study*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p.73

chiefly when there is a possibility for an immediate transition to an armed fight for power.[67]

Unlike the Right wing Congress leadership, the CPI did not consider the parliamentary politics as a substitute for mass activity. For CPI the mass activity remained primary and the parliamentary activity was its auxiliary activity. The CPI framed a policy for all the anti-imperialist forces to be followed in the elections. It called upon its cadre to extend their support to the Congress candidates. The CPI's draft election platform called upon the communist candidates contesting in the elections to work for the establishment of workers and peasants soviet republic; to repeal all anti-national, anti-peasant and anti-working class laws; for the unconditional release of all political prisoners, state prisoners, internees and detenus; freedom of speech, press and association; withdrawal of army of occupation from India and replacement of the existing army and police with the arming workers, peasants and all toilers; abolition of native states and confiscation of property of the princes; repudiation of working class and peasant indebtedness; confiscation of large estates and distribute the lands to the tillers; confiscation of British capital in India and confiscation and nationalization of all key and large industries, plantations and banks.[68]

While the right wing Congress leadership was engaged in the selection of candidates, and other activities for winning the elections, the leftists were utilizing the election campaign politically and organisationally to strengthen the anti-imperialist mass movement. In the election campaign, the Congress declared that `it rejected the entirety of the constitution imposed upon India by the British rulers' and asserted that it was contesting the elections `not to cooperate in any way with the constitution but to combat it and seek to end it'.[69] The election manifesto of the Congress, most of it written by Jawaharlal Nehru, embodied the hopes and aspirations of the people. The manifesto emphasised that the aim of the Congress was the establishment of complete independence. It condemned the constitution enacted by the British parliament on the ground that it was only intended to perpetuate imperialism. It advocated the framing

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[67] "Communist Party and the Coming Election", in Jyothi Basu & Others (ed), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India,* Vol. III, 1929-1938, p.257.
[68] "Draft Election Platform" published in *The Communist,* central organ of the Communist Party of India in July 1936, pp.15-16. *Ibid.*, pp.253-254.
[69] R.Suntharalingam, *Indian Nationalism: An Historical Analysis*, p.343.

of a new constitution by a constituent assembly representative of the people of the country.[70] It clearly laid down that the purpose of contesting the elections and sending the people's representatives to legislatives was not to cooperate in any way with the new act but to combat it and to end it. It promised the restoration of civil liberties, the release of political prisoners, the removal disabilities on grounds of sex and untouchability, the radical transformation of the agrarian system, substantial reduction in rent and revenue, scaling down of the rural debts, provision of chief credit, the right to form trade unions and the right to strike.[71] However, during the campaign itself, the right wing attempted to tone down the overtly Socialist features of the Congress manifesto by claiming that the organisation stood for `class unity', and only seek changes through orderly and peaceful means.

In the elections, the main opponents to the Congress were Justice Party, People's Party and Muslim League. Opposition to Zamindars and determination to oust the British from India were the two main issues in the election campaign in Andhra region. Through out the election campaign the communists highlighted the problems of peasants, atrocities of zamindars and the collaboration of Zamindars with the British.

During the 1936, besides organising the tours of all India leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and S.A. Dange, the Socialists and youth leagues actively participated in the election campaign. The slogans given by the Socialists have attracted the attention of youth and masses. The Socialists asked voters, as whom they want, `ryot or king'. To make election campaign more effective, Rebbapragada Mandeswara Sarma started training classes for youth at Kovvur. He educated them about the evils of Zamindari system and the inadequacy of the new constitutional act.[72] While Pendyala Lokanadham came up with a new song 'Should fly, should fly our red flag', another Socialist N.V.Naidu articulated the anti-zamindari sentiments in his song "We don't want this association with zamindars".[73] The Socialists conducted an intensive campaign in the zamindari areas and attracted several ryots and agricultural labourers towards Socialism.

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[70] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Vol. IV, p.93.
[71] Bipan Chandra, et.al., *India's Struggle for Independence*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1989, p.322.
[72] *Krishna Patrika*, 12-12-1936.
[73] Durbha Krishnamurthi, *Smrithulu*, p.71.

The Zamindars in Andhra committed several atrocities on the volunteers campaigning on behalf of the Congress. In Kakinada constituency, the hired men of Pithapuram Zamindar for example, attacked Kambhampati Satyanarayana and other socialists who were involved in election campaign in support of the Congress candidate.[74] Communists used this election campaign to spread their ideology among the peasantry. The imagery of the revolutionary ideas represented by the Red flag was sought to be linked to the traditional nationalist flag by constantly hoisting Red flag along with the Congress flag in the meetings.

The elections to the Madras Provincial Legislature were held between 15th and 20th February 1937. The Congress got a thumping majority in the elections to the provincial legislature by winning 74% of seats with 64.5% of votes. In the assembly, the Congress won 159 seats out of 215, while the Justice Party got 17 seats with 19% of votes.[75]

As soon as the elections were over, the question of office acceptance again became a controversial issue in the Congress circles. In the internal debates, the Socialists and some other Congressmen opposed the office acceptance, where as the Right wing was strongly in favour of the office acceptance. Finally, the right wing was able to form the ministry. Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Congress Socialists, Communists and some other Congressmen opposed the office acceptance within the inner debates of the Congress.

Jawaharlal Nehru and the CSP argued that the office acceptance could diffuse the Congress objective of independence. In the Lucknow session, Jawaharlal Nehru took a firm stand on office acceptance and said that "office acceptance would inevitably mean our cooperation in some measure with the repressive apparatus of imperialism and we would become partners in this repression and in the exploitation of our own people".[76]

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[74] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th February 1937, p.16.
[75] *Andhra Patrika*, 7th April 1937, p.10; Christopher Baker, "The Congress at the 1937 Elections in Madras", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 10, No.4, 1976, p.582; *The Politics of South India: 1920-1937*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976, p.312.
[76] Bipan Chandra, "Jawaharlal Nehru and the Capitalist Class, 1936", p.1311.

During this time, the socialists in Andhra organised several meetings and passed resolutions demanding the Congress not to accept the offices under the new constitution. They carried out rigorous propaganda among the people against the office acceptance. The executive Committee of Andhra Congress Socialist Party met under the presidentship of Chundi Jagannadham on 1st March 1937 resolved that the Congress should not accept the ministries under the slave constitution. The Congress Socialist Party urged the people to participate in the Anti-Constitution Day to be organised by the Congress Socialists on 1st April 1937.[77]

The anti-ministry group received much support from the Congress leaders. At the time of voting on several resolutions proposed against office acceptance, they got considerable support from the delegates. However, this support was not good enough to neutralize pro-office acceptance group within the Congress. In the Delhi AICC session of the Congress of March 1937, the resolution proposed by Jayaprakash Narayan got 78 votes against 135 and Gandhi's resolution on conditional acceptance of offices got 127 votes against 70.[78] Though the opponents of office acceptance were defeated, still their criticism could maintain considerable moral pressure on the functioning of the Congress ministries in the subsequent years.

For the pro-office group it was not an office acceptance but a strategy to achieve independence. Tenneti Viswanadham said that “Don’t look upon ministries as offices, but as centers of fortresses from which British Imperialism is radiated, councils cannot lead to constitutionalism, for we are not babies, we will lead the council and use them for revolution”.[79] The right wing declared that it was not a compromise with imperialism but a strategy. They compared the Congress struggle with ebb and flow of a sea. Vallabh bhai Patel said, “War was only closed for the purpose of taking rest and that the fight once began would never end”.[80] The advocates of office declared that they are accepting it to wreck the constitution from within.[81]

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[77] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th March 1937, p.19.
[78] Ravishankar Vasudevan, “Why The Congress Accepted Office in 1937”, *Studies in History*, Vol.IV, Nos.1-2, 1988, p.51.
[79] Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence*, p.321.
[80] Bhagwan Josh, *Struggle for Hegemony in India, 1920-47: The Colonial State, the Left and the National Movement, 1934-40*, p.174.
[81] *Ibid*., p.175.

Finally, the decision in favour of office acceptance was taken in the Congress working committee meeting held in Delhi on 15th March 1937. In the meeting, Gandhi formally introduced his plan of conditional acceptance of office. Majority members of the working committee supported that plan. In the AICC meeting held at Delhi on 17th and 18th March 1937, the resolution proposed by Socialists against office acceptance was defeated and the working committee's resolution on conditional acceptance was passed with 127 votes against 70.[82] The resolution stated that "permission should be given where the Congress commanded a majority in the legislature and could publicly state that the Governor would not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advise of ministers in regard to the their constitutional authorities".[83] In the absence of such an assurance from the rulers, the Congress would not accept office. At about the same time in Madras, the members elected to the legislature, choose C.Rajagopalachari as their leader in the assembly. On 27th March 1937, the Governor of Madras invited Rajagopalachari to form the ministry. Rajagopalachari demanded the Governor to give the assurances as demanded by the AICC resolution. The Governor declined to do so on the ground that it would be contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Government of India act, which deliberately conferred certain special powers on him. Rajagopalachari there upon refused to form the ministry.[84] Then the Governor invited Sri K.V.Reddi Naidu[85] of Justice Party to form the ministry. Reddi Naidu formed his ministry on 1st April 1937. The interim ministry of K.V.Reddi Naidu, which lasted for a period of 100 days included A.T.Pannir Selvam, A.Muthayya Chetti, R.M.Palete, M.C.Raja and Kalifulla as members in his cabinet.[86] The interim ministry's attitude towards the national movement was in no way different from that of the dyarchic governments of 1919 act. The interim ministry issued fresh instructions prohibiting the hoisting of the national flag on the buildings of municipal

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[82] *Ibid*., p.184; B.R.Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj 1929-1942*, p.63.

[83] B.Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol.II (1935-47), S Chand & Company, New Delhi, first edition 1947, reprint 1969, p.51; E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, p.628.

[84] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, Vol. IV, p.98.

[85] An influential political leader from South India, K.V.Reddi Naidu was a native of Ellore. In beginning of his career, he practiced Law in Rajahmundry until 1900, became a prominent leader of non-brahmin movement and disavowed use of Brahmin priests in 1917. He played an active role in the Justice Party and was a minister in Madras government during 1920-23. He formed Justice Democratic Party in 1926 and worked as Agent General in South Africa, Law member in Governor's executive Council during 1934-37, and Acting Governor during Erskine's leave in 1936. For further details see, C.J.Baker, *The Politics of South India: 1920-1937*, p.333, G.T.Boag, *The Madras Presidency, 1881-1931*, Government of Madras, Madras, 1933, p.137, and G.V.Subbarao, *Life and Times of K.V.Reddi Naidu*, Addepally, Rajahmundry, 1957.

councils and local boards. It also imposed ban on the Kothapatnam Summer School organised by the Socialists.[87] The interim ministry's actions were criticised by several Congress leaders. Jawaharlal Nehru criticising the ban on the Kothapatnam School said that "the puppet ministries, with the Governor at their back and the high officials of the Civil service to courage in them, are carrying on the old tradition of repression and suppressing the Civil liberties".[88]

During the first three months of the interim ministry, the popular feelings rose high against government and its British supporters. The Socialists and other leftists tried to give these feelings an organised form of anti imperialist struggle. Finally, on 21st June 1937, the Viceroy made a statement in which he promised "the utmost degree practicable of harmonious cooperation between the government and the people. The governors will not unnecessarily interfere in the day to day functioning of the ministries".[89] Treating this as an assurance the Congress working committee met at Wardha on 7th July 1937 and resolved that the "Congressmen be permitted to accept office where they may be invited there to. But it desires to make it clear that offices is to be accepted and utilised for the purpose of working in accordance with the lines laid down in the Congress election manifesto and further in every possible way, the Congress policy of combating the new act on the one hand and of prosecuting the constructive programme on the other".[90] The Congress government was formed in Madras on 14th July 1937, with Rajagopalachari as the Premier and T.Prakasam, V.V.Giri, B.Gopal Reddy from Andhra region, Yakub Hasan and K.Raman Menon from Malabar, Dr. Subbaroyan, Dr.T.S.S.Rajan, S.Ramanathan, and Muniswami Pillai from Tamil region as the ministers.[91]

**The Socialists and the Popular Government in Madras**

The period between July 1937 and October 1939 was that of the Congress rule in Madras Presidency. It was the period of intense and bitter ideological struggle between left and the right wing groups within the Congress. The Congress victory in

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[86] *Krishna Patrika*, 3rd April 1937.
[87] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol. IV, p.100.
[88] S.Gopal (Ed), *Selected Works Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.VIII, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1976, p.251.
[89] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, p.632.
[90] B.Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol.II (1935-47), p.51.

1937 elections reasserted its claim as the most powerful political movement in India, moving towards institutionalization of its politics, in the election campaign, the Congress said it was contesting the elections not to cooperate in any way with the British imperialism, but to combat and create deadlock of the constitution. Once the elections were over, the Congress accepted office and even they thought that they would firmly remain in rule up to 5 years.[92] After the formation of ministries in the provinces, the left and the right wing confronted with each other on many issues: issues like civil liberties, law and order, working class movements and peasant movements and release of political prisoners. The Right wing within the Congress pushed the ministries to crack down on the Socialists at the provincial level and by doing so hoped to reassert their own leadership at the all India level. On the other side, the Socialists, by supporting those excluded from the ministries hoped to regain the initiative that had been so nearly in their grasp in 1936.[93] While the Right wing Congress assumed the role of governance, it was only the left wing that provided leadership and sustenance to the national movement during this period. The differences between the right wing and left wing reached its height during the Tripuri session of the Congress.

At popular level, the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces, gave rise to optimism among the people, throughout the country. People believed that the new governments would bring measures as envisaged in Congress election manifesto. However, the ministries and Congress leaders did not act in accordance with the aspirations of the people and even went against them. Most of the ministries functioned in a manner in which the interim ministries were functioned. The left and the CSP tried to give an organised form to these expectations of the people. They demanded the release of political prisoners, improvement of the conditions of peasants, abolition of zamindari system and the improvement of conditions of working class.[94] The Socialists encouraged in the provinces to set up kisan sabhas,

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[91] A.R.H.Copley, *The Political Career of C. Rajagopalachari: 1937-1954,* Macmillan, Madras, 1978, pp.78-82; S.Krishnaswami, *The Role of Madras Legislature in the Freedom Struggle,* ICHR, New Delhi, 1989, p.262; *The Hindu*, 14th July 1937; *Krishna Patrika*, 17th July 1937.

[92] Yakub Hasan, a minister in the cabinet declared that the Congress ministers would continue in office for full term of five years. See, Secret File No.1040, 18th August 1937, *HFSAP*, 1937.

[93] B.R.Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj 1929-1942***,** p.114.

[94] Address given by Yusuf Mehrally in a conference in Madras on 23rd July 1937, in selected extracts taken from Secret files, File No.1040, dated 18 August 1937.

distinct from Congress so that they could launch agitations against the ministries. The Socialists led several kisan and labour movements against the ministries.

In Andhra, also the Left and the Right wing in the Congress confronted with each other on several issues. The participation of left wing leaders in peasant and working class movements created tensions among the Congress leaders. The Congress Right Wing in Andhra, under the leadership of Pattabhi Sitaramaiah and Tanguturi Prakasam maintained hostile attitude towards the Socialists. The right wing leadership warned the Left and issued show-cause notices, and even expelled some of them for their participation in people's movements.[95] Often the Right wing leaders boycotted meetings organised by the leftists for their use of Red flag along with national flag. Fight over symbols and flags were intense, as it represented ideological hegemonic struggle within the national liberation struggle. The Congress often issued notices to the Socialists not to use red flag in the Congress meetings. Interestingly, the right wing did not take any objection on the use of Red Flag along with Congress flag in the meetings during the election campaign.

The Socialists confronted with the Madras government on several issues. After the formation of the ministry in Madras, the people expected that it would enact legislations for the abolition of zamindari system for the improvement of working class and peasantry and release all the political prisoners and provide civil liberty to the propagation of their ideas. However, the government, on the contrary to the public expectation, took a number of actions against ordinary Congressman and other political activities and struggles. The ministry functioned in the same way as that of the Justice ministry and the British rule in previous times. The left confronted the Madras government on issues such as the release of political prisoners, maintenance of law and order, civil liberties, peasants and working class movements and organisation of summer schools. Ironically, the Madras government appointed CID's to shadow the Socialist leaders and their activities in the presidency, and imposed ban on tours of the several Socialist leaders in the province. In some places, the government arrested Socialist leaders who came to tour the presidency. It created tensions among the Congress circles. For instance, the Madras government arrested the Socialist leaders, Yusuf Mehrally and S.S.Batliwala for their speeches in the

[95] *Andhra Patrika*, 21st May 1938, p.7; 27th May 1938, p.9; 17th September 1938, p.18.

meetings in Madras Presidency and prevented Jayaprakash Narayan, the general secretary of AICSP from visiting Malabar. The government imposed a pre publication security on a Socialist weakly, *The Socialist.*[96] The Socialists also criticised the Madras government for the retention of criminal law amendment act, which was used by the British government to curb the national movement. The Madras Government strictly confined to the maintenance of law and order within the framework of the colonial state.

The socialists demanded the Congress government to release all political prisoners and lift the ban on Communist party of India. They argued that the ban on the Communist party is against the principles of civil liberties. The socialist conferences passed resolutions demanding the Madras government to lift the ban of CPI.[97] Their main argument was that the British government imposed the ban on CPI and it is the duty of the Congress ministry to lift the ban on fellow nationalists.[98] However, the Congress ministry in Madras maintained a hostile attitude towards communists and even issued a statement warning people not to fall in communist trap.[99] The Congress ministry also continued the ban imposed by the interim ministry of Justice party on the Kothapatnam summer school organized by socialists and arrested the socialist leader, S.S. Batliwala for his speeches in various places in Madras province. Taking a leaf out of colonial State's repressive laws, Rajaji government continued the ban on some books imposed by the earlier governments. For instance, the ban imposed on two books *Russia Viplavam* (Russian Revolution) and *Alluri Sitaramaraju* was continued. At another level, the government also continued the C.I.D. vigilance on the socialist leaders.

During the period of Congress government in Madras, despite ban the Socialists organised a number of summer schools and training camps on political and economic issues. The main aim of the Socialists in organising these schools was to make the people aware of the character of imperialism and create radical political consciousness. A serious effort has been made in these schools to teach the basic principles of Socialism to the youth and students. The philosophy of Karl Marx,

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[96] S.Krishnaswami, *The Role of Madras Legislature in the Freedom Struggle*, pp.298-9.
[97] *Navasakthi*, 29th December 1937, p.10.
[98] *Navasakthi*, 16th March 1938, p.3.
[99] *Navasakthi*, 17th August 1938, p.17.

materialistic interpretation of history, the Marxism theory of Value, Marxian cum Leninist interpretation of imperialism and capitalism are expounded in local language with special reference to the local conditions. The nature and effects of colonialism, the history of imperialist domination over India, the history of Indian National Congress and various ideological tendencies in the freedom struggle were taught in the schools. A detailed study of the Russian revolution, five-year plans in USSR, the positive results of Soviet Communism on the economic values, wages and other conditions of work, standard of living, and the cultural environment of workers were also studied in these schools.[100]

The key aspect of these summer schools was its emphasis on understanding of contemporary political developments in the world. The lectures/discourses exposed reasons for the rise of Fascism, the growing conflict between capitalism and socialism, and fascists and working class, the Spanish civil war, the Sino-Japanese war, German annexation of Austria, and the debacle of British statesmanship.

The students were taught in detail how to understand the political conditions in India within the overall global context. History of trade union movement in India, working class struggles, Meerut Conspiracy case, Labour Laws, history of Indian national movement, role of bourgeois in the national movement, formation of Congress Socialist Party and the United Front Strategy, the system of Indian states and its evil effects on the masses, the need for absorbing the states into the rest of India, and the urgency of the need for solving the problems of peoples of the states are discussed. The communal problem, its history, the history of the Congress attitude towards this problem and the untenable politico-communal outlook of the Muslim League were also discussed.[101]

The first well-attended summer school was started in Kothapatnam near Ongole in Guntur district (now in Prakasam district) in May 1937 when Sri K.V.Reddi Naidu of Justice Party was the premier of Madras Presidency.[102] The Kothapatnam Summer School was inaugurated on 1st May 1937 by P.Krishna Pillai, who was known as *the First Communist* and the founder of Congress Socialist Party

[100] N.G.Ranga, *Indian Adult Education Movement,* The Hindustan Publishing Co. Ltd, Rajahmundry, 1940, p.56.
[101] Putchalapalli Sundarayya, *Nirmana Samasyalu*, (Telugu), Navasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1938, p.34.

in Kerala.[103] In his inaugural speech, Krishna Pillai spoke about the importance of Red Flag. Several leaders from all over India came to this school and gave lectures. S.S.Batliwala, Sajjad Zahir, S.A.Dange, Datta Majundar, Dinkar Mehta, Indulal Yagnik, B.Srinivasarao, Achyut Patwardhan, and Jayaprakash Narayan visited this school.[104]

The training school organized by communists and socialists created panic in the minds of officials. The government considered the school as a threat to public peace and on 18th May 1937, the government declared the school as unlawful association.[105] The local police conducted a raid on the school and resorted to severe lathi charge on the students and organizers.[106] The police arrested sixty persons including Annapragada Kameswararao and Alluri Satyanarayanaraju under section 17 of the criminal law amendment act, 1908, and sent them to Ongole Sub-jail.[107]

The ban orders and lathi charge on Kothapatnam School led to wide spread demonstrations and protest meetings throughout the Andhra. It was condemned as an unwarranted attack on civil liberties.[108] Annapragada Kameswararao declared that the interim ministry was responsible for the lathi charge and as such, its order also was illegal and therefore should be disobeyed. He called on people defy the order by way of asserting their civil liberties.[109] In a meeting organized by the Tenali Taluk Ryots Association in Amrutaluru on 9th June 1937, Gauthu Latchanna severely criticised the Interim Government's ban order on Kothapatnam School. He described the ministers as *biscuit dogs.*[110] The Andhra Provincial Congress committee considered this issue seriously, condemned the ban on the school and lathi charge, and demanded immediate release of accused in the case.[111]

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[102] *Andhra Patrika*, 3rd May 1937, p.6; *Krishna Patrika***,** 29th May 1937.
[103] *Andhra Patrika*, 3rd May 1937, p.6.
[104] *Ibid;* Moturu Hanumantharao, *Destination Communism: Memories of Veteran Communist,* Prajasakthi Press, Hyderabad, 2000, p.4.
[105] GO.No.955-8-51, Public Department, Government of Madras, dated 18th May 1937.
[106] N.G.Ranga, *Indian Adult Education Movement*, p.54
[107] *Andhra Patrika*, 21st May 1937, p.5; *The Hindu*, 21st May 1937.
[108] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th May 1937, p.7; 25th May 1937, pp.3 and 8; 26th May 1937, pp.2-3 and 8; 29th May 1937, p.4; *Krishna Patrika*, 12th June 1937 and *The Hindu*, 25th May 1937 and 26th May 1937.
[109] *Andhra Patrika*, 22nd May 1937, p.7; *The Hindu*, 21st May 937.
[110] G.O.No.1903, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 7th October 1937.
[111] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th May 1937, p.8; *The Hindu*, 25th May 1937.

The action of Madras government on the political school was criticised by the newly formed Indian Civil Liberties Union. The secretary of the union, I.B. Menon, in his letter to the premier of Madras, K.V.Reddi Naidu, expressed his dissatisfaction over the action taken by the government on the students. He demanded the Madras government to lift the ban on the school.[112] The newspapers were very vocal in condemning the lathi charge on the school. The *Andhrabhumi*, *Zamin ryot* and *the Communist* condemned the government's action on Kothapatnam School as an attack on civil liberties.[113] Jawaharlal Nehru issued a statement to the press in Allahabad on 17th June 1937, condemning the ban on the Kothapatnam School. In his statement, Nehru said, "This incident has illuminated, as by a flash of lighting, the real nature of the new constitution and the way the Madras ministry is functioning, for it is this ministry that is obviously responsible for the steps taken. We see that this ministry is as much a `police ministry' suppressing elementary rights of free speech and association as the previous government was".[114]

Meanwhile, the Congress government was established in Madras on 14th July 1937. Due to the increasing pressures from the leftist organisations and to fulfill the election manifesto of the Congress, the Government released the 16 prisoners connected with the Kothapatnam Summer School case and withdrawn the prosecution against Annapragada Kameswararao.[115]

The rivalry between the left and the conservative right has increased during the Kothapatnam case. In the APCC meeting held at Ongole on 3rd June 1937, the right wing strongly opposed the proposal that Congress should defend the accused and resolved to disapprove the action of the school in disobeying the ban.[116] While releasing the socialists and other prisoners who were arrested in connection with Kothapatnam case, the Congress government warned the Socialists that they would not tolerate any violence or class hatred. The government declared that

> the Government decision in the cases should, however not to be interpreted as a license for any form of subversive activity and they

[112] *Andhra Patrika*, 1st June 1937, p.3.
[113] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part-II, 1936-42, pp.199-208.
[114] S.Gopal (Ed), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.VIII, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1976, p.249.
[115] *Andhra Patrika*, 29th July 1937, p.8; *The Hindu***,** 28th July 1937.
[116] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th June 1937, p.10.

> desire to make it clear that while government will not interfere with the lawful preaching of any political, social or economic doctrines, they cannot tolerate and will take all steps necessary to prevent the dissemination of class hatred and ideas involving the use of organised or unorganised violence in furtherance of any object.[117]

The government released the prisoners but continued the ban on the school. The statement issued by the Congress government, while releasing the prisoners hurt the sentiments of the people. The socialists felt that the warning issued by the Congress government was more painful than the lathi charge on them by the interim government. They felt that it was an insult to them to be warned by the government run by the Congress party to which they belonged and for whose victory they worked in the elections against several hardships.[118]

During this time, the Madras Government and the Socialists confronted each other on the issue of civil liberties. The Madras Government was disturbed by the growing Socialist propaganda and activities of the extreme left wing i.e., the communists. In an attempt to curb the left activity, the government began to arrest individuals and instructed C.I.Ds to keep an eye on the activities of the Socialists and Communists.[119]

A serious clash took place between the Socialist and the Madras government when the police arrested S.S.Batliwala, a Bombay Congress Socialist, and a member of the national executive of the Congress Socialist Party, for his speeches in Socialist conferences. Batliwala toured in Andhra districts and gave speeches in several meetings in which he criticised the Madras government for its warning to the socialists while releasing the prisoners of Kothapatnam School,[120] demanded the government to release all the political prisoners,[121] and urged the workers and peasants to join in Congress and strengthen the Congress organization.[122]

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[117] *The Hindu*, 28th July 1937; *Krishna Patrika*, 31st July 1937. Yetukuri Krishnamurthi (Ed), *Swatantrya Samaramlo Gunturu Zilla Rajakiya Pathasalala Ujwala Patra,* (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Swatantrya Samara Yodhula Samstha, Guntur, 1999, p.10.

[118] Ramachandruni Venkatappa, "Ongolu Talukalo Bahumukha Rajakiya Chaitanyam", *Gullapalli Adinarayana Sasthipurthi Sanchika*, (Telugu), Ongole, 1972, p.139.

[119] G.O. No.S/209-1/37, dated 22nd July 1937, G.O. No. S/299-1/37, dated 17th November 1937, G.O.No. S/82-1/38, dated 6th May 1938, G.O.No.S/110-1/38, dated 9th July 1938, G.O. No. S/173-1/38, dated 7th November 1938, G.O.No.S/2-1/39 dated 10th January 1939, G.O. No. S/61-1/39, dated 5th May 1939, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[120] *Andhra Patrika*, 16th August 1937, p.2.

[121] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th August 1937, p.12.

[122] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th August 1937, p.13; 2nd September 1937, p.3 and 7th September 1937, p.3.

In his speech in Venkatagiri on 3rd September 1937, Batliwala severely criticised the capitalists, Zamindars and British imperialism. He also talked about the rebellion of Alluri Sitaramaraju against the state during 1922-24 and told the audience to emulate him and wage a revolution against the British imperialism. Batliwala was arrested on 26th September 1937, by the orders of Nellore District Magistrate, under section 124(a) while he was addressing a student's conference in Tellicherry in Malabar.[123] This was the first instance where the Congress ministry had sanctioned a prosecution of a leader under section 124(a). Sri Raman Menon, Minister of Courts and Jails in the Madras cabinet supported the government's action on the ground that Batliwala was trying to overthrow the Government by inciting the people to adopt revolutionary methods.[124]

The arrest of Batliwala led to innumerable protest meetings, wherein resolutions were passed condemning the action of Madras ministry. The arrest of Batliwala and others infuriated the Socialists and this had further antagonised them from the Congress. Even the local Congress committees expressed their strong discontent and disapproval of the action of the Government. Protest meetings were held in Venkatagiri, Nellore, Machilipatnam, Bezawada, Ellore, Rajahmundry, Ramachandrapuram, and Kakinada, demanding the withdrawal of case against Batliwala. Andhra Communist leader Putchalapalli Sundarayya issued statement calling the students, youth and socialist organisations to start agitations for the release of Batliwala.[125]

In November 1937, the Socialists in Andhra organized a tour of Jayaprakash Narayan, General Secretary of All India Congress Socialist Party. Jayaprakash Narayan, accompanied by P. Sundarayya, Joint Secretary of APSCP made an extensive tour in Andhra districts and visited Bezawada, Gudiwada, Dokiparru, Jonnalapadu, Tenali, Ongole, Guntur, Kothapatnam, Chirala, Bapatla, Pamarru, Pithapuram, Samalkot, Elamarru and Rajahmundry[126] and made speeches on labour movement, socialism and national movement. In his speeches, he forcefully argued

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[123] E.M.S.Namboodiripad, *The Communist Party in Kerala: Six Decades of Struggles and Advance*, National Book Center, New Delhi, 1994, p.41.
[124] *Krishna Patrika*, 23rd October 1937.
[125] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th October 1937, p.8; 7th October 1937, p.7; 12th October 1937, p.3 and 13th October 1937, p.12.

that the activities of the Madras government were against to the election manifesto of the Congress, which promised civil liberties, and freedom of speech.[127] In a conference organised at Kuppam in Chittoor district, Jayaprakash demanded the abolition of Zamindari system.[128] Speaking in a conference of socialists in Guntur on 13th November 1937, Jayaprakash said that the establishment of Socialist Society is the solution for the problems of youth, peasants and workers. He articulated the idea that the aim of the Socialist Party was to work for the establishment of socialist Society and to turn the Congress into a Socialist organisation.[129] In another conference organised in Madras, Jayaprakash Narain said that the aim of the Socialists was not to obstruct the work of the Congress ministries but to show the failures of the ministries and help them to perform their duties in the right manner.[130]

During Jayaprakash Narain's tour in Andhra, the Socialists organised the third annual conference of the APCSP on 20th, 21st and 22nd November 1937 at Palakollu, in West Godavari district.[131] Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, the chairman of the reception committee spoke on international politics and the attitude of the socialists towards the World War.[132] Jayaprakash Narayan, who opened the conference, spoke on the policy of Congress Socialist Party and differences between them and other parties. P. Sundarayya, who presided over the conference, spoke on the attitude of the Madras government towards the Socialists.[133] Prathivada Bhayankarachari and S.S.Batliwala also attended the conference.[134] Alluri Satyanarayana Raju introduced P.Bhayankarachari to the audience. The conference passed resolution praising the achievements in Soviet Union. It also passed resolutions condemning the attitude of the fascist governments towards Soviet Union; the fascist atrocities in Spain, and the Madras government's negative attitude towards the Socialists.[135] The conference also passed resolution demanding to lift ban on the publication and circulation of Socialist

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[126] *Krishna Patrika*, 6th November 1937.
[127] *Andhra Patrika*, 26th October 1937, p.4.
[128] *Andhra Patrika*, 13th November 1937, p.8.
[129] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th November 1937, p.22.
[130] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th November 1937, p.5.
[131] *Krishna Patrika*, 13th November 1937; *The Hindu*, 22nd November 1937.
[132] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th November 1937, p.9.
[133] *Andhra Patrika*, 27th November 1937, p.5.
[134] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th November 1937, p.9; Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Bharata Swatantrya Samaramlo Paschima Godavari zilla: Kavitam – Poduru Gramalu*, (Telugu), Sanghamitra Publications, Vijayawada, 2003, p.26; Durbha Krishnamurthi, *Smrithulu*, p.78.
[135] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part-II, 1936-42, pp.732-5.

literature, followed by resolutions on the problems of workers, peasants and the agricultural labourers. The conference decided to start agitation against the new constitution of 1935 and the system of Federation.[136] The conference concluded by expressing its gratitude to the out going Secretary, Madduri Annapurnaiah, for his work in the development of CSP in Andhra. The conference elected a new executive: P.Sundarayya as General Secretary, Madduri Annapurnaiah and J.Ramalingaiah as joint secretaries, and Annapragada Kameswararao, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, Muddukuri Chandrasekhararao, P.Narasimhamurthi, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Chandra Rajeswararao, P.V.Sivaiah, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, Vallabhaneni Sitamahalakshamma, Kodi Narasimham and Pydimarri Satyanarayana as members of the executive committee of APCSP.[137] This conference witnessed a serious struggle for ideological hegemony between the Congress and Left Groups. Both the groups, Communists and non-Communists mobilized forces to dominate the conference. Majority of the delegates attended to the conference were communists. The Communists thought that it was unwise to separate themselves from the socialist Party. To avert the split in the Congress Socialist Party, the Communists agreed to accommodate some of the non-Communists in the executive committee of APCSP.[138]

During the period from 1937 and 1939, the Socialists organized several summer schools to educate cadre on politics and economics and to train the youth in Socialism. The Congress government rejected the request of the Socialists to allow them to organise the summer school in Kothapatnam in 1938. The demands of the Socialists to lift ban on CPI, and the release of political prisoners were not considered by the government. In spite of opposition from the Right wing Congress leaders and the Congress government, the Socialists organised a number of summer of schools and training camps all over Andhra. The youth showed keen interest to attend the schools and to understand the ideology of socialism. The youth who were already working in the Socialist and Communist parties without having much knowledge on the ideological aspects of Socialism and Communism received training in these schools. These summer schools produced hundreds of activists with a strong

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[136] *Ibid*., pp.738-9, 744-50; *Andhra Patrika*, 27th November 1937, p.5.
[137] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* Part-II, 1936-42, p.751.
[138] P. Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam,* Part 1, p.91.

theoretical background on socialism who were determined to work for the spread Socialist ideas in Andhra.

The summer school and training camp organised by the Socialists at Manthenavaripalem in Guntur district was an important event in the history of Communist Movement in Andhra. Almost all the leaders who played an active role in the CPI after 1940, received training in this school organized in 1938. Most of the leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties were mobilized to Manthenavaripalem to give lecture in the school. The school that was started on 4th May 1938 continued for one month and was attended by 250 students from all over Andhra.[139]

K.N.Joglekar, who was a convict in the Meerut conspiracy case, opened Manthenavaripalem School on 4th May 1938. In the school, the students were taught world politics, Marxism, philosophy, economics and Indian liberation and labour movements, individual terrorism, revolutionary movement, youth movement, peasant movements, Russian revolution and M.N.Roy and his theories. P.V.Sivaiah was the Principal of the school. Kambhampati Satyanarayana (junior), C.V.K.Rao, Chandra Rajeswararao and Madabhashi Venkatachari were the teachers from Andhra. Ajay Kumar Ghosh instructed the students in the use of general strike as a weapon to seize power.[140] A fortnightly report mentioned that "the lectures dealt with the evils of imperialism, and capitalism and were intended to divert the energies of the students towards active participation in movement aiming at the abolition of these forms of domination".[141] The Manthenavaripalem School was closed in the first week of June.[142] The socialists also organized summer schools and training camps in Rajahmundry,[143] Ichhapuram,[144] Thalluru in Guntur district,[145] Pamarru in Krishna district,[146] and Rajolu in East Godavari district.[147]

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[139] Fortnightly Report for the first half of May 1938, dated 23rd May 1938; Kalapala Suryaprakasarao, *Anubhavalu-Gnapakalu*, (Telugu), Neelima Publications, Vijayawada, 1985, p.46.
[140] Fortnightly Report for the first half of June 1938, dated 24th June 1938.
[141] Fortnightly Report for the first half of May 1938, dated 23rd May 1938.
[142] Fortnightly Report for the first half of June 1938, dated 24th June 1938.
[143] *Navasakthi*, 20th July 1937, p.7; P.S.Sharma, *Bharata Swatantra Samaranganamlo Godavari Theeram*, (Telugu), Swatantra Samara Charitra Parisodhana Samstha, Kakinada, 1987, p.425.
[144] *Navasakthi*, 10th May 1939, p.11.
[145] Fortnightly Report for the first half of February 1939, dated 16th February 1939.
[146] *Navasakthi*, 10th May 1939, p.11; *Andhra Patrika*, 8th May 1939, p.4.
[147] *Ibid;* P.S.Sharma, *Bharata Swatantra Samaranganamlo Godavari Theeram*, p.426.

During May – June 1939, the Socialists organized *Nizam-Andhra Rytanga Vidyalayam* and a training camp at Tunikipadu, a village in Tiruvuru taluk of Krishna district, located on the boarders of Nizam's dominions to provide training to the political organizers in Hyderabad state.[148] Around two hundred students attended it. Sunkara Virabhadrarao acted as the organizer of the school and Peta Bapaiah inaugurated it. N.G.Ranga acted as the Principal of the school. Several youth from Nalgonda and Warangal districts of Hyderabad State received training in this school.

The summer schools strengthened the emerging socialist movement in Andhra. Many of the youth and students, who were attracted towards socialism out of their dissatisfaction with Gandhian politics, do not have any theoretical knowledge about socialism. At this stage the Communist Party, recognizing the need to strengthen theoretical grounding initiated training camps for the youth and students. The students who were trained in these schools played an active role in the formation of several youth, student, women, worker and peasant associations and organized class movements with a view to broaden the social base of the Indian national movement and establish the hegemony of the left wing over India's struggle for independence and the Congress that leading it.

The summer schools functioned as the recruiting centers for radical politics. Many students and youth who were influenced by the speeches in these schools became members of the Congress Socialist Party and by the end of 1940, they were transformed as Communists. Most of the leaders of the Communist movement in Andhra came out of the schools especially the schools organized at Kothapatnam and Manthenavaripalem played an important role.[149]

**Congress Socialists and the youth movement**

During 1930 and 1940, the Socialists organized a powerful youth movement in Andhra Through the youth leagues, they have exercised pressure on the Congress to accept Socialism as its goal. Through the youth leagues, the Communists tried to

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[148] *Navasakthi*, 21st June 1939, p.19; Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part-II, 1936-42, p.220., Sunkara Virabhadrarao, "Tiruvuru Talukalo Rytula Poratam", in Y.V.Krishnarao(ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu-Poratalu*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1986, p.192.

[149] Makineni Basavapunnaiah, Lavu Balagangadhararao, Kolla Venkayya, Maddukuri Chandrasekharao, Vemulapalli Srikrishna, Moturu Hanumantharao and several others who have become important leader's Communist movement after 1940s were trained in these schools.

transform the consciousness of the youth on radical lines. The organisation of night schools for adults, gymnasiums and military training for youth, sports festivals and cultural activities and study circles and libraries were the arenas where the youth were moulded into radical force. Through these activities, the socialists and communists educated the youth on day-to-day problems and prepared them to fight against imperialism.

Youth leagues were first constituted in 1920s at the behest of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose to induct younger and more radical elements into the freedom struggle. The inspiration may have come from the Soviet Union, where Young Communist Leagues were organized after the October Revolution to educate young people in the spirit of Communism by combining theoretical education with active participation in the mass movements and building of new economy. The youth movement in Andhra had started in the late 1920s that is during the Simon boycott agitation. Madduri Annapurnaiah led the youth movement in Andhra. In 1927, he published the programme spelling out the ideas and philosophy of the youth leagues through his weekly *the Congress*.[150] The programme of the Andhra Socialists made it clear that "to propagate socialistic views, and to win national freedom, Socialists should establish workers and peasant unions, youth leagues and volunteer corps".[151] After 1936, the communists also took active part in the youth movements. Moreover, the ban on the Communist Party, made them to look for non-party open organisation to carry out their activities. On the other hand by participating in the youth movement, the communists kept "contacts with radical elements" and tried to influence them towards communism".[152]

The Andhra Socialists organized the first Andhra Youth League Conference at Visakhapatnam on 1st January 1935.[153] The conference declared that it would serve as a platform of discussion and exchange of ideas. Its main programme consisted of regular weekly discussions and study circles. By the year 1936, the youth leagues

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[150] M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)***,** Vol.III, (1921-1931), Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1965, p.131.

[151] The programme of the Andhra Congress Socialist Party, in Government of Madras, Public department, Report of the Inspector General of Police, Madras to the Chief Secretary of Government of Madras dated 24th May 1936, in Secret File No. 931, dated 1st September 1935, in *HFSAP* 1935, (hereafter referred as Secret File No. 931), p.2606.

[152] Report of the Secretary of the Madras Provincial Committee of the CPI to the Central Committee of CPI, in Secret File No. 931, *HFSAP 1935*, p.2595.

effectively came under the control of Communists. The second conference of the Andhra Youth league was held at Kakinada on 26th and 27th January 1936, where in several communists were elected as office bearers. J.Ramalingaiah was elected as the president of Andhra Provincial Youth League and Alluri Satyanarayanaraju as the Secretary.[154]

The adaptation of Dutt-Bradley thesis in 1936 brought marked change in the organisation of youth leagues because they have become accommodative of plural ideologies. In 1938, a thesis prepared by Kusenin (of CPSU) on the functions of youth Leagues helped the communists to expand the functions of youth Leagues. According to the thesis prepared by Kusenin, the day-to-day activities of the youth leagues included – conducting Games, study classes, night schools, youth festivals and formation of volunteer corps. For the CPI the youth leagues therefore become centres of training the youth who can later become their organisation members.[155] The CPI decided to establish offices of the youth leagues in districts and provincial centers. The aims of the youth league were declared as "Freedom – Peace – Progress".[156]

On 13th and 14th March 1937, the communists organized the Third Conference of the Andhra Provincial Youth League in Machilipatnam.[157] Chundi Jagannadham. Jonnalagadda Ramalinga Reddy, K.V.Narayanarao, Pulupula Venkatasivaiah, Garapati Satyanarayana, and Nanduri Prasadarao attended to the conference. Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah spoke on the history of youth movement in India. Replying to a question on the need of youth leagues Ramalingaiah said that the youth leagues were necessary to carryout the programmes of the Indian National Congress. He, however, demanded that the Congress follow more a more radical policy in its struggle for freedom. He also suggested the conference to organise a training camp to give military training to the youth and urged the people to donate funds for the youth leagues to carryout its programme.[158]

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[153] *Ibid*, p.2577.
[154] Report on Socialist Organisations, p.4570**,** M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol. IV, pp.674-675.
[155] Putchalapalli Sundarayya, *Nirmana Samasyalu*, p.22.
[156] Y.V.Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*,pp.642-3.
[157] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th March 1937, p.12.
[158] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th March 1937, p.9.

K.V.Narayanarao, who presided over the conference, said that the youth were real strength for the national movement. He proposed a programmed to be carried out by the youth leagues. According to him the activities of the youth leagues should be: (1) To conduct study classes to the youth and teach them national and international politics; (2) to propagate the effects of imperialism on the living conditions of people; (3) to expose the problems of the people through newspapers; (4) to conduct games and sports competitions to attract people towards Youth Leagues; (5) to provide training to the youth who were willing to participate in the freedom struggle; (6) to organise training camps to provide military training to the youth, and (7) to conduct night schools to teach politics to the youth.[159] The conference appointed A. Kameswararao to organise a training school for the youth at Kothapatnam in Guntur district.

The conference passed resolutions condemning the acceptance of ministries by Congress, expressing solidarity to the people of Spain for their struggle against fascism, and urging the people to boycott the visit of King George VI to India.[160] The conference elected a new executive committee with K.V.Narayanarao as the president, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju as the secretary, and Chandra Rajeswararao and Vasireddi Sivalinga Prasad as the members of the executive committee.[161]

The socialists advocated a clear-cut programme of activities for youth leagues: indigenous physical training camps in every village, town, and training the youth in fencing with sticks, etc. The aim was to produce a race of strong and well-built youths. They also organized training camps at least once in a year to teach military drill, shooting, horse riding, motor driving, swimming and arts of self-defence.[162] They also proposed a permanent volunteer corpse by the name *Youth guards*, a well-trained volunteer corpse composed of heroic soldiers, to organise strikes and demonstrations, that may took place in the course of the fight against imperialism.[163] They condemned the imperialist wars and urged the youth to organise strong anti-imperialist movement. The youth were aroused to work for a revolution in the country. They were urged to carryon propaganda among the military ranks fighting on

[159] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd March 1937, p.9.
[160] *Andhra Patrika*, 17th March 1937, p.9.
[161] *Krishna Patrika*, 20th March 1937.
[162] GO.No.1916, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras**,** dated 8th October 1937.
[163] *Ibid*. Also *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd September 1937, p.3.

behalf of the imperialists that, instead of killing one another in the battle field of capitalists, they should form the government and employ all their energies for the establishment of 'workers and peasants rule' and the inauguration of a vast Communist society all over the world.[164] In the conferences of youth leagues the communists suggested that the youth leagues should organise schools in villages and towns for the benefit of the children of working class; to form study centers in every village and teach them the contemporary politics and explain problems in civil society; to organise political schools to train the youth and students in politics; and to visit villages in the holidays and start workers and peasant unions. They also urged the youth to carry out social reform activity and suggested them to work for the widow re-marriages and abolition of child marriages.[165]

There was an interesting synchronization approach to various issues between the Left oriented nationalists and the Youth Leagues. The youth leagues opposed the formation of ministries in the provinces. They said that the formation of ministries by the Congress did not mean achievement of independence and urged the people to work for the attainment of complete independence.[166] In the conferences of youth leagues, the communists spoke about the rural poverty, unemployment, capitalism, workers, and peasant's government in Russia and its achievements. They said that the exploitation of workers and peasants by the Zamindars and capitalists was the reason for the problems that the people are facing in the country. Criticising the trusteeship theory of Gandhi, they argued, "Khaddar and cottage industries could not solve these problems. Mahatma Gandhi is a sage. He is an innocent. He is expecting that the rich will change their heart on their own. However, it is not possible. They will not give their money if we pray them to give their wealth to the people". The youth leagues urged the people to form into unions to fight against the exploitation and in some places they appealed people to form 'youth guards' in every village.[167]

The youth leagues were also critical of the Boy Scout movement of Baden Powel and warned the youth to be aware of such Imperialist designs. Their argument was that "the imperialists and their agents are trying to start in India, movements like

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[164] GO.No.1916, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras**,** dated 8th October 1937.
[165] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd September 1937, p.3.
[166] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd September 1937, p.3.
[167] *Ibid.*

Boy Scout movement and through them, to turn the people into loyalists and submerge them in perpetual slavery".[168]

The Youth Leagues organized National Youth Olympic competitions to create interest in the youth on bodybuilding and sports, give training in self-defence and thus divert the attention of the youth from gambling and other unproductive activities.[169] They organized night schools, study centers and libraries in the villages for the education of youth.[170]

The activities of these youth leagues included military training, summer schools, night schools, ideological discussions, sports and games competitions, distribution and reading of newspapers in the villages and social reform activities. The Youth Leagues also involved in organizing protests against the economic exploitation of labourers by the landlords. Youth Leagues organized *palegarlu* (farm servants) against the exploitation and demanded increase in salaries.[171] However, mostly the programmes of the youth leagues were confined to reform in the society. The youth leagues declared that socialism is the only solution for the achievement of independence and simultaneously tackle problems like poverty and unemployment. From the beginning of youth movement, the youth leagues constantly opposed the imperialist wars. They have urged the people not to cooperate to the war preparations by the government.[172] They advised people to use the opportunity of War to start struggle against imperialism.[173]

During 1937-39, the youth movement spread all over Andhra with the formation of youth leagues in all the districts of Andhra. These leagues invited several national leaders like Batliwala and Joglekar and organized training centers to the youth on political affairs. During this period, the youth leagues carried out vigorous propaganda against Fascism and imperialism. The youth leagues passed several resolutions on national and international problems, suppression of civil liberties, ban on Kothapatnam summer school, release of political prisoners, CID's vigilance on

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[168] *The Hindu*, 30th March 1936.
[169] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd November 1937, p.4.
[170] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th November 1939, p.9.
[171] J.S.R.Anjaneya Sastri, *Swiya Charitra*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Karmika Sangham, Hyderabad, 1995, pp.13-14.
[172] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.657.
[173] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd April 1937, p.4.

leftist leaders, imposition of punitive deposits on newspapers, and ban on the Socialist literature. The youth movement also tried to create political consciousness among the lower castes. The leaders of the youth movement started a Harijana Hostel in Rajahmundry. The youth leagues also demanded the formation of Andhra state. They led a demonstration in Guntur, when Rajagopalachari, who was considered obstacle in the formation of Andhra State, visited Andhra.[174] During the Second World War, the youth leagues started vigorous propaganda against the war and urged the people not to cooperate in any way with the British war efforts.

Riding on the popularity acquired through the youth league activities several radical left wing youth were elected to various organizational positions in the Congress. For instance, in 1936, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju and Rebbapragada Mandeswarasarma were elected to the West Godavari District Congress Committee[175] and in 1937, several Socialists were elected as members in various district Congress committees. While Muddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Krutiventi Kutumbarao and Pidikiti Madhavarao were elected to the East Krishna Congress Committee, Katragadda Madhusudanarao, Vellanki Visweswararao and Anne Anjaiah were elected to the West Krishna Congress Committee. Similarly, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju and T.V. Chalapathi were elected to the West Godavari Congress Committee, while Mallipudi Pallamraju and Dr.K.L.Narasimharao were elected to the East Godavari District Congress Committee.[176]

The Government made several attempts to suppress the youth movement. For instance, the Government warned *Andhra Patrika* for publishing a speech delivered by A.P.Vajravelu Chetti, at Kuppam Taluk youth conference.[177] The government also tried to prosecute T.Narayanarao of Nellore youth league for his speech in Dharmavaram on 22nd June 1937.[178] The government imprisoned Pillalamarri

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[174] *The Hindu*, 18th July 1938. Also see Rajmohan Gandhi, *The Rajaji Story, 1937-1972*, Bharatiya Vidyabhavan, Bombay, 1984, p.18.
[175] *Krishna Patrika*, 29th August 1936.
[176] *Krishna Patrika*, 22nd May 1937.
[177] G.O. No. 1886, Home Department, Government of Madras**,** dated 20th August 1936. Also, see Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.162.
[178] G.O. No. 1356, Public Department, Government of Madras, dated 21st July 1937.

Venkateswarlu, Secretary of Krishna district Congress Socialist Party and the President of Krishna district youth league for his speech in the Bezawada.[179]

In another case, the government imposed ban on the Andhra, youth league conference that was to be held in the Gandhi National School, Ellore, under the presidentship of Madduri Annapurnaiah, to celebrate Alluri Sitaramaraju Day. The District magistrate of West Godavari issued orders prohibiting Madduri Annapurnaiah, the president of Andhra youth league, B.V.Rangasayi, the general secretary of the APCSP and Garapati Satyanarayana, not to enter in Ellore.[180]

In organising the youth movement, the idea of socialists was to save the youth from bad habits like drinking, smoking, gambling and other unproductive activities and make them soldiers in the struggle against imperialism. At the same time by organising libraries, summer schools and night schools, they trained the youth as socialists. To establish the hegemony of socialist ideas in the society, which was a pre-condition to the success of socialist revolution the transformation of the consciousness of youth, was a necessary condition. To attract youth into the fold of youth leagues, the socialists designed programmes with several cultural activities like sports competition, drama competitions, and also organized study centers, libraries, summer schools, night schools and conducted tours to the places of historical importance. India's civilization, past ad its cultural creativity had a deep impact on the youth. Thus, the socialists were successful in transforming a large number of youth into socialists and by the end of 1940; most of these socialists were transformed as communists.

**Socialists and the working class movements**

During the period from 1930 to 1940, the Socialists and Communists formed several workers unions in Andhra region. They fought for the upliftment of the working class and worked to increase class-consciousness among them. With the formation of United National Front, the Communists were provided with an open organization to carry out their activities within the national movement and Congress. The activities of

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[179] *The Hindu*, 15th December 1936; Also See G.O. Letter from the Secretary to the Home Department, Government of Madras to the Secretary to the Home department, Government of India, dated, 21-9-1936; G.O. No. 1645, Home (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras, 4th August 1936.

[180] *The Hindu*, 24th June 1936; Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.644; Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.162.

the workers unions increased during the time of the Congress government in Madras, despite hostile attitude of the Congress. In general, the attitude of the Congress government towards the working class movements was a mixture of conciliation and repression. The Congress leadership no doubt declared that the Congress organisation represents all sections of the people and it did not create class differences by supporting one class against another. In the name of all class unity, the Congress leadership warned its members against participation in the movements organized by class organisations. The Congress governments also passed several laws with an intention of banning strikes. At the ground level, the communists and socialists took active part in forming workers unions and leading several strikes. The participation of socialists in the working class movement has naturally antagonised the Congress leadership and the Madras government. This led to the direct confrontation between the left wing and the right wing within the Congress. The right wing leadership viewed the mass struggles organized by Communists as a threat to the law and order problem. In spite of the opposition from the right wing Congress leadership and the Congress government, the socialists successfully led several strikes of working class and strengthened their hold over the working class consciousness. The Socialists linked the political freedom with economic freedom and they thought that the political freedom without economic freedom was no meaning. They urged the people to fight simultaneously against the capitalist class and the colonial government that was protecting them. They declared that complete independence by India means the establishment of workers and peasants' government in independent India. The struggles organized by socialists and Communists around working class issues in a way broadened the social base of the national movement and brought the workers into the womb of anti-imperialist struggle. This enables the Left wing to establish their hegemony over the nationalist movement.[181]

The organized trade union movement in Madras Presidency began in 1918 with the formation Madras Labour Union by B.P. Wadia, a follower of Mrs. Anne

[181] In 1939, the Communists declared that they were working for the establishment of the hegemony of the proletariat over the Indian national movement. Hegemony, according to them did not correspond to the term used by Lenin (*dictatorship of the proletariat*) to describe the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the domination of working class over the Indian national movement. See, statement issued by G.Adhikari in *Navasakthi*, 19th July 1939, p.17.

Besant.[182] Later, All India Trade Union Congress was formed in 1920 with Lala Lajapathirai and Diwan Chamanlal as its President and Secretary respectively.[183] The AITUC recognised the importance of economic issues of working class and the need to bring them into national movement. In the early 1920s, the communists also gained strength within the Indian National Congress. They formed workers and peasants parties. The government passed several ordinances like the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill with a view to curb the rising influence of the communists among the working class.

The history of trade union movement in Andhra is rather tardy. In the year 1926, a branch of the M.S.M Railway workers union was formed at Vijayawada. Uppala Lakshmana Rao, who was the secretary of this union, participated in the Bengal-Nagpur railway workers strike in 1927. During 1929-30, Pemmaraju Venkatarao organized a labour union in the Nellimarla Jute Mill. Karunakaram Subbarao organized another union in Chittivalasa jute mill in 1932.[184] It was only after the failure of the civil disobedience Movement that the socialists and the communists gave a new fillip to the working class movements in Andhra.

The period during 1934 and 1940 was an active phase of working class organisation and politics. After the formation of Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party in June 1934,[185] the Socialists Kalluri Subbarao and Rebbapragada Mandeswarasarma started Andhra Provincial Workers Union.[186] The Andhra Congress Socialist Party demanded the government to provide right to form workers unions, to form labour employment boards, and labour exchanges; living wages, forty hours week, and healthy quarters; insurance against unemployment, sickness and

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[182] Eamon Murphy, *Unions in Conflict: A Comparative Study of Four South Indian Textile Centers, 1918-1939*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1981, p.61.

[183] Sukomal Sen, *Working Class of India: History of Emergence and Movement, 1830-1970*, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta, 1979, p.169; Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence*, p.215.

[184] K.L.Mahendra and Josyabhatla Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradesh Karmikodyama Charitra* (History of Working Class Movement in Andhra Pradesh)**,** (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1986, p.5. In addition, see, G.O. No. 1341, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 10th August 1936.

[185] Fortnightly Report dated 4th July 1934 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department; M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra*), Vol. IV, p.88; Suramouli, *Socialist Udyamam*, p.35.

[186] *Krishna Patrika*, 15-12-1934.

prohibition of children of school going age in factories, and of women and children in underground mining.[187]

Though the Communists joined the CSP in 1934, they had to come out of it due to the sectarian line adopted by the central committee of the CPI. They worked through separate workers unions and this policy of the communists continued until 1935. It was only in 1936 the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and the anti-imperialist united front strategy that enabled the CPI once again to join the Congress and the CSP and work from within the broad stream of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The leftists built-up a well-knit organizational structure for the working class in Andhra. The left appealed the working class to fight for the establishment of *Workers Raj* on the model of Russia. The communists urged the workers to fight against both the British government and capitalists in India. They said, "so long as the government by the rich continues and so long as the means of production are in the hands of the rich, the workers have to starve. Our first duty is to drive out the British government. When the British government is driven out and India gets complete independence then on that day, imperialism all over the world will vanish. The world will form a 'World Soviet'. As in Russia, people of our country will be happy and there will no longer be unemployment".[188] In a meeting organized on 1st May 1936 at Bezawada, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, Secretary of the Andhra Youth League urged the workers to follow the methods advocated by of Third International (Comintern). He has attacked the government for imposing ban on the Communist Party of India and urged workers to form into unions and start the struggle against capitalists and imperialism.[189]

The spread of the working class organisations under Leftist leadership created apprehension in the Government and it resorted to repressive measures. Important Labour leaders and communists were arrested and prosecuted. P.Ramasubbaiah, Durbha Krishnamurthi and J.Ramalingaiah, organisors of Labour movement in

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[187] Programme of the Andhra Congress Socialist Party, in Secret File No. 931, dated 1st September 1935, in HFSAF 1935, pp.2604-5.

[188] Speech delivered by Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu, Secretary of Bezawada Labour Protection League at Bezawada on 1st May 1936; G.O. No.1645, Home (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras, dated 4th August 1936.

Guntur district were prosecuted by the Guntur District Magistrate and sentenced to six months imprisonment for publishing leaflets to bring hatred among the people against the British Government and Capitalists.[190]

In spite of these repressive measures by the government, the left continued to organise Workers. The Left demanded the government to fix a minimum salary of Rs. 30 for industrial workers and Rs. 15 for agricultural labourers, to make lawas to give salaries to workers every week, to fix the working hours for 48 hours per week, to pay Rs. 10 as employment pension to every person in towns and Rs. 8 in villages, leave with full salary to pregnant women one month before and after the delivery, one fourth of the mother's salary to be given every week for the feeding of the children, residential facilities to workers with low rates, one month leave with full salary, one month casual leave, right to strike, recognition to workers unions, to recognize all industries in which more than four people work as factories, to abolish reduction of salaries and fines and to repeal Criminal Tribes Act, Trades Disputes Act and several other anti-workers laws. A conference, which was organized in Nellore under presidentship of Ravi Adiseshaiah, passed a resolution demanding the Congress ministries to fulfill these within six months or to give resignations to their positions if they fail to fulfil the demands.[191]

Raising the level of consciousness through education and left literature was seen as an essential aspect of building of working class politics. The socialists therefore concentrated on the education of workers. The Congress Socialist Party urged its members, mainly the youth and students to visit the localities of workers and establish night schools. The socialists also conducted training classes to the workers on ideological issues. They believed that unless the workers take active part, India could not achieve its independence. In this struggle for ideological hegemony, the folk and other forms of theatre were used to reach the workers and raise their consciousness. The folk performances and plays performed in the meetings and

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[189] *Ibid*.

[190] Go.No.3218, Law (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 11th Oct 1935; Also Go.No.1291, Home Department Government of Madras, dated, 10th July 1936; *Andhra Patrika*, 9th August 1935, p.3, 25th October 1935, p.22; Durbha Krishna Murthi, *Smrithulu*, pp.53-54.

[191] *Andhra Patrika*, 9th March 1937, p.2.

during the strikes vividly depicted the problems of the workers and their struggle against exploitation.[192]

After the formation of Congress Government in Madras, the working class like other social groups expected that the government would implement measures for the improvement of their working and living conditions. The government, however, failed to fulfill the promises made in the Congress election manifesto. This led to several organized strikes of working class by the left wing. The participation of socialist in the working class movements antogonised the Congress leadership and the government. The government tried to suppress the working class movement by arresting individuals and the socialist leaders. The Congress leadership also tried to curb the growing left wing hegemony over the working class. In spite of the opposition from the Congress leadership and the Congress government, the socialists led a number of working class strikes during 1937 and 1939. It was this active trade unionism and politicization that made the working class actively participate in the anti war campaign during 1939-41.

The Left wing organized several strikes of working class during 1937-39 at places like Tenali, Bezawada, Vijayanagaram, Ellore, Madras, Bandar and Nellore. The strikes were organized demanding the reduction of working hours, increase of wages, and compensation for the injuries occurred during work and removal of child labour from the work.[193] The prominent strikes organized by the socialists during 1939 were at Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Company in Chirala[194] and Jute mill workers strike in Chittivalasa.[195] In all the strikes, the Congress government supported the management and refused to help the workers. At some places, the police resorted to firings on the workers who were on strike. The police firings in Chirala and Chittivalasa revealed the true nature of the Congress policy towards the working Class. At this juncture, the dissatisfied youth and workers who did not like

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[192] C.V.K. Rao, *Atmakatha,* (Telugu), Part – I, People's Vanguard Movement Publications, Kakinada, 1988, p.226.

[193] Y.V.Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* Part-II, 1936-42, pp.314-315.

[194] Fortnightly Report for the first half of Feb 1938, Public Department, Letter from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to R.M. Maxwell, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated 23rd February 1938; M.Venkatarangaiya, *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra),* Vol. IV, p.746.

[195] G.O. No. 1493, Public (General) (Confidl.), Department, Government of Madras, dated 31st August 1938.

the attitude of the Congress leaders and Congress government towards working class, slowly turned towards Left wing and became a strong support base for the CPI after 1940.[196]

**The Left wing and the Peasant Movements in Andhra**

The period between 1937 and 1939 was a period of intense struggle between the right wing and the left wing in the Congress for hegemony over the Indian national movement. Both the groups confronted on many issues. The peasant movements and the kisan sabha activities were key elements in this struggle. The Congress ministries and the Congress high command maintained hostile attitude towards the idea of independent peasant movements led by the Left wing. The Kisan leadership on the other hand believed that by drawing the peasants into the freedom struggle they were only strengthening the Congress organisation and its struggle for independence. The Left wing showed political maturity in not doing any thing that would result in weakening of the Congress and the Indian national movement. At the same time, the kisan leaders did not completely forgot the needs for a separate organisation for articulating class demands of the peasants. Without coming in the way of the functioning of the Indian National Congress, they formed several peasant unions at the taluk, district and village levels. During the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Kisan leaders brought the peasants into the Congress by calling off an independent movement of the kisans out of a fear that the former may suffer. The situation has reversed with their bitter experience with the Congress ministry in the Madras Presidency.

The study of peasant movements in Andhra, in particular in zamindari areas under the leadership of Left wing Congress illustrates the ideological and political dielama that confronted the Indian national movement during 1930s. The problem of integrating peasant class demands was viewed from two contradictory perspectives. While the Left wing strongly urged the Congress to work for the mitigation of peasant problems, the Right wing saw this demand as anti-gandhian and detrimental to the national liberation struggle. The intensity of struggle between these two perspectives ultimately transformed not only the national movement but also the Left lead radical

[196] For example see, Mukkamala Nagabhushanam (Ed), *Nenu Communistunu Ela Ayyanu?* (How I became A Communist), (Telugu), Prajasakthi, Bezawada, 1946. The book gives a detailed analysis

peasant movements, particularly in the zamindari areas. The foregoing section narrates this story.

Efforts to create economic and political consciousness among peasants in Andhra began during the early 20th century. In 1905, Gudiwada taluk Ryots organized a conference in Nuzella and discussed the problems related to irrigation and drainage.[197] In 1906, an agricultural association was formed in Nellore district, while the first serious Ryot sabha was held in the Krishna district in 1914. The 29th Krishna district political conference, which was held in 1920 at Kallepalli in Divi taluk, passed several resolutions on peasants' problems. In 1920, Tripuraneni Ramaswami Chowdari, a prominent leader of Non-Brahmin movement and founder of *Sutashramam* in Tenali, started a Newspaper *Rytu* (from Tenali) to ventilate the peasant grievances.[198] Even during the non-cooperation movement, the Congress leaders were very active participants in the peasants' movements and even formed unions in firka and taluk levels.

For the first time it was during the non-cooperation movement that the peasants had actively participated in the Congress led national movements. The local grievances forced the peasantry to enter into the struggle against colonial government. The peasants in Palnad and Pedanandipadu in Guntur district stopped the payment of taxes to the government. During this time, to mobilise the people in support of Gandhi's political action, the Congress used interesting methods of mass politicization and mobilisation. They used popular folk traditions like *harikatha*, stage plays, *bhajan* marches, *radhotshawas* and speeches at mass meetings, etc., to mobilize the peasants.[199] The peasantry saw the Gandhian non-cooperation movement as a panacea to their problems. At a conference of the peasants held at Vijayawada on 7th January 1922, Pattabhi Sitaramaiah advocated non-payment of taxes to the government.[200] The movement created an atmosphere conducive for the growth of an Independent

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of activities of nine communists from different walks of life who became communists during Second World War.

[197] Kondaviti Chinnayasuri, *Andhra lo Rytu Udyamam,* (Telugu), Part-I, Andhra Pradesh Rytu Sangham, Vijayawada, 1986, p.29.

[198] *Ibid.,* pp.29-30.

[199] For a detailed analysis on the peasant participation in the Non-Cooperation movement and the Congress method of mass mobilization, see Atlury Murali, "Non-Cooperation in Andhra in 1920-22: Nationalist Intelligentsia and the Mobilisation of Peasantry", *Indian Historical Review,* Vol.XII, Nos.1-2, July 1985 – January 1986, pp.188-217.

[200] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th January 1922, p.8.

peasant movement. When the no-tax movement was at a higher form of protest, the Congress high command and APCC advised the peasants to withdraw the fight and advised them to pay taxes to the government. This was in tune with the Gandhi's call for suspension of non-cooperation movement following the Chowri-chowra incident. However, with the calling off movement the main impulse behind the peasants' agitation quickly disappeared.

After the suspension of the non-cooperation movement, some of the Congress leaders who were sympathetic to the peasantry and their issues began efforts to form separate kisan sabhas independent from the Congress. From 1923 onwards, N.G.Ranga,[201] Dandu Narayanaraju, Kanuri Venkatachalapati, Durggirala Suryaprakasarao, Maganti Sitaiah and Maganti Bapineedu formed several peasant associations in Andhra.[202] On 1st August 1928, N.G.Ranga and Maganti Bapineedu organized the Andhra Provincial Ryots association in Guntur. Bikkina Venkataratnam and Maganti Bapineedu were elected as the president and secretary of the association.[203] On 3rd November 1929, the Visakhapatnam District Zamin Ryot Conference was organized by Rebbapragada Mandeswarasarma, Biswanadhadas and Vemulakonda Ramdasu.[204] In 1931, Gudavalli Ramabrahmam organized Andhra Peasants Protection Conference in Tenali and N.G.Ranga presided over the conference.[205] The Ryot associations and the zamindari peasants association held several meetings in various district in Andhra and encouraged the peasants to fight against the increase of taxes. The Congress leaders who formed the Independent kisan unions tried to integrate the peasants in the broader nationalist struggle.

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[201] Prof.N.G.Ranga, born on 7th November 1900 at Nidubrolu had his education in Oxford. He worked as a professor of Economics in Madras, found several kisan sabhas in various parts of country and played an important role in the formation of All India Kisan Sabha. Though his speeches and activities, Ranga attracted several young people of Andhra towards Left Wing politics but did not encourage Communist Party. He remained as anti-Communist throughout his life. He also formed rival peasant organizations in Andhra and worked against the Communist dominated peasant organizations. He worked as an M.P. for a long period from 1930 to 1990 and died on 8th June 1995. For further details see, N.G.Ranga, *Fight For Freedom* (Autobiography), S Chand & Company, New Delhi, 1968.

[202] *Andhra Patrika*, 26th September 1923, p.4.

[203] Kondaviti Chinnayasuri, *Andhra lo Rytu Udyamam, Part-I*, p.46; Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.418. Also in Daruvrui Viraiah (Ed), *Acharya Ranga Rachanalu*, (Telugu), Kisan Publication, Guntur, 1987, p.103.

[204] *Andhra Patrika*, 19th December 1929, p.17.

[205] N.G. Ranga, *Fight for Freedom*, p.135; Patibandla Dakshinamurti, *Sri Gudavalli Ramabrahmam: Jivitam – Sandesam*, (Telugu), P.Ranganadha Gupta, Tenali, 2004, p.16.

The peasant movements in Andhra took a new turn with the formation of Congress Socialist Party in 1934. N.G.Ranga intensified his activities and organized tours all over Andhra.[206] In his speeches in the meetings, he advised the peasants to form into unions. The peasant youths that actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement were disillusioned with suspension of it and so with the Gandhi-Irwin pact. The experiences in jail transformed the outlook of the youth. While in jails, they learned about socialism and experiments in Russia after the 1917 revolution. Under the influence of radical ideas, they have decided to give a new orientation to the Congress. They decided to organise the peasantry, work to raise their political and economic consciousness and launch simultaneous struggles against the zamindars on one side and British Imperialism on the other.

The programme of the Congress Socialist Party included several peasant problems. The agrarian programme of the CSP included the elimination of landlordism in Zamindaris and talukdari areas, encouragement of cooperative forming, liquidation of arrears of rent, complete exemption from rents and taxes of all peasants, abolition and penalization of all feudal and feudal levies on the peasantry and redistribution of land to the peasants.[207] The first annual conference of Andhra Congress Socialist Party held at Guntur on 19th February 1935 demanded abolition of Inamdari and zamindari systems. It also demanded Congressmen to take part in the peasant struggles and to work for the integration of peasantry into the national movement.[208] The socialists organized several conferences of peasants all over Andhra. In most of the conferences the speakers demanded the government to take necessary steps for the protection of rural industries, removal of rural indebtedness, to provide loans to the peasants with low interest rates, supply of seeds and fertilizers through cooperative unions, reduction in land tax, to fix minimum price for the agricultural products, to establish research centers to find out new methods and

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[206] *Andhra Patrika*, 13th January 1934, p.6; 16th January 1934, p.2; 25th July 1935, p.4; 1st August 1935, p.4; 2nd August 1935, p.2; 3rd August 1935, p.12.

[207] See Government of Madras, Home department, Secret file No.931, 1st September 1935, *HFSAP 1935*, pp.2602-2606. Also see Bimal Prasad (ed), *A Revolutionary's Quest: Selected Writings of Jayaprakash Narayan*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1980, p.18; Bhagwan Josh, *Struggle for Hegemony in India, 1920-47: The Colonial State, the Left and the National Movement, 1934-40*, p.118; D.N.Dhanagare, "The Politics of Survival: Peasant Organisations and the Left Wing in India, 1925-46", in K.N.Panikkar (ed), *National and Left Movements in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980, p.91; D.N.Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India, 1920-50*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983, p.139.

[208] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd February 1935, p.7.

instruments for agriculture, to introduce agricultural education along with primary education to the children of peasants and to establish veterinary hospitals in the villages.[209]

The united front strategy of the CPI and the formation of All India Kisan Sabha further strengthened the kisan movement in India. After the formation of the united front, the communists and the Socialists made several efforts to organise a countrywide kisan union to coordinate the activities of peasant unions in the all India level. In The Meerut, session of the CSP held on 15th January 1936, the conference appointed Jayaprakash Narayan and Prof. N.G.Ranga to convene an all India kisan Congress.[210] Again on 11th April 1936 at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress, the kisan representatives from various parts of India organized a meeting and formally announced the formation all India Kisan Sangh, which later transformed its name as All India Kisan Sabha.[211] Diverse political forces converged and led to the setting up of AIKS, the first kisan organisation in all India scale. In the Lucknow, session of the AIKS passed a resolution that "The object of the AIKS is to secure complete independence from economic exploitation of the peasantry and achievement of the full economic and political power for the peasants and workers and all other exploited class. The AIKS stands for the achievement of ultimate economic and political power for the producing masses through its active participation in the National struggle for winning complete independence of India".[212]

Andhra Provincial peasant association was formed on 11 June 1936 with its head quarters at Nidubrolu. Prof.N.G.Ranga was elected as the president and Kommareddi Satyanarayanamurthi and Pidikiti Ramakotaiah as the secretaries, Chalasani Vasudevarao, and Gandavarapu Hanuma Reddy were elected as additional secretaries.[213]

After the formation all India Kisan sabha and Andhra provincial peasants association the socialists organized several peasant unions in district and taluk levels.

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[209] *Andhra Patrika*, 9th March 1935, p.4.
[210] M.A.Rasul, *A History of Kisan Sabha*, p.3. Also, see N.G.Ranga, *Fight for Freedom* (Autobiography), p.201.
[211] Harikishan Singh Surjeet, *The History of the Kisan Sabha*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1995, p.26; M.A.Rasul, *A History of Kisan Sabha*, p.3.
[212] *Ibid*; B.B.Chaudhuri, "Agrarian Movements in Bengal and Bihar, 1919-1939", p.205.

They adopted several methods to mobilize the peasantry in to an organized force. First, they propagated the peasant problems through the newspapers. Swarajya of Tanguturi Prakasam Panthulu admirably served the peasant cause. It published in detail the problems of the peasantry. *Andhravani* another newspaper also raised the problems of the peasantry and in one of its issues; it tried to stir the mind of the peasant. The socialist paper *Prabha* and *Navasakthi* played a dominant role in moulding the mood of the peasantry in the anti colonial and anti zamindari agitations.[214] *Andhra Patrika, Zamin Ryot* and *Vauhini* also published several articles condemning the zamindari system.[215]

Several songs and books on the problems of the peasant were also published during this period. N.G. Ranga published *Rytubhajanavali*,[216] an anthology of poems on the problems of peasants. The songs in this book became very famous and were sung by the ryots in the meetings.[217] Several dramas and films were also produced depicting the problems of ryots. The film *Rytubidda*, directed by Gudavalli Ramabrahmam depicted the atrocities of Zamindars on ryots and the revolt of ryots against the Zamindar.[218]

The socialists organized a number of meetings, gave inspiring speeches, and passed resolutions dealing with peasant problems. In their speeches in the meetings, the socialists explained that the British government and the Zamindars were the main cause for all the problems of the peasantry. The Socialists said that establishment of workers' and peasants government in the model of Russia was the only solution for the problems of peasantry.[219] In their speeches the socialists linked the peasant problem with imperialism and advocated the overthrown of imperialism.[220]

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[213] Y.V.Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.420; Kondaviti Chinnayasuri, *Andhra lo Rytu Udyamam, Part-I*, p.52.

[214] B.Reddy Prasada Reddy, *Anti Zamindari Struggles in Andhra: Rural Politics during the 1930s and 1940s*, Un-published Ph.D dissertation, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, 1988, p.95.

[215] Confidential report on Vauhini, in G.O. No. 1810, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 22nd September 1937.

[216] N.G.Ranga, *Rytu Bhajanavali*, (Telugu), Andhra Rashtra Ryot Congress, Vijayawada, 1949 (12th print), First Published in 1934.

[217] *Ibid*; *Andhra Patrika*, 30th May 1935, p.10.

[218] Patibandla Dakshinamurti, *Sri Gudavalli Ramabrahmam: Jivitam – Sandesam*, pp.32-35.

[219] G.O. No.1645, Home Department (Confidential), Government of Madras, dated 4th August 1936; G.O. No. 178, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 22nd January 1937. *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd February 1935, p.7; 15th March 1937, p.9; 23rd March 1937, p.9.

[220] G.O. No. 1576, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 20th August 1937.

In 1938, the Congress Socialist Party in its guidelines to the cadre asked them to form peasant unions at every village and to enroll the poor and middle peasants as members of peasants unions. It asked the cadre working in the peasants' unions to concentrate on the corruption of government officials, irrigation facilities, atrocities of village officials, forced labour, education facilities to the children of peasants, scientific knowledge to the peasants on cultivation, medical facilities to the peasants, formation of cooperative unions, agricultural loans to the peasants, marketing to facilities to the goods produced in the villages and several other problems.[221] It also advised peasant leaders to organise meetings and processions in the villages and explain the peasants about the national movement and to bring them into the vortex of national movement.[222]

Apart from these meetings and conferences, Socialists organized a number of Ryot schools in all over the Andhra to train the peasants in economics and politics.[223] These schools created political and economic consciousness among the peasants and youth and made encouraged them to form unions and participate actively in the anti imperialist and anti feudal agitations.

The Andhra Provincial peasant association organized peasant protection march from Ichhapuram to Madras.[224] The peasant protection march was started on 3 July 1937 and led Kommareddi Satyanarayanamurthi, Pullela Syamasundararao; Chalasani Vasudevarao led the march to Madras. The marches walked about 1512 miles and visited 525 villages in between their march.[225] They collected 800 petitions on peasant problems. Finally, the marchers reached Madras on 27th March 1938[226] and submitted their petitions to Bulusu Sambamurthy, the Speaker of Madras Legislative Assembly.[227] In their memorandum, the leaders urged the government to reduce land tax, rent remissions, abolition of illegal collections in the zamindari areas, repairs for tanks and canals, abolition of forest tax, permission to collect grass and sticks from forest, to handover the forest management to the villagers; rights to peasants on

[221] P. Sundarayya, *Nirmana Samasyalu,* pp.19-20.
[222] *Ibid.,* p.20.
[223] The details of the summer schools organized by Socialists and Communists in 1937 and 1938 at Kothapatnam and Manthenavaripalem were discussed previous sections in this chapter.
[224] *Andhra Patrika*, 5th July 1937, p.4.
[225] *Andhra Patrika*, 29th March 1938, p.4.
[226] *Andhra Patrika*, 28th March 1938, p.5.

communal lands, establishment of land courts to solve the disputes between zamindars and ryots; abolition of fines on ryots; formation of irrigation boards to regulate water supply; to control corruption in administration; to carry out repairs to the water resources; to provide electricity for irrigation; to provide agricultural loans to peasants and several other welfare measures for the development of peasantry.[228] This Ryot protection march has immensely contributed for the creation of political and economic consciousness among the peasantry in Andhra.

During the elections to Madras Legislature in 1937, the Congress made several promises to the peasantry. However, the ministry failed to implement the election manifesto of the 1937. The ministries and Congress leaders did not act in accordance with the aspirations of the people and even went against them. They, in fact took number of actions against ordinary Congressmen. The Socialists and communists tried to give an organized form to these expectations that arose among the peasants. They consciously utilised the freedom of activities, which became available with the formation of the Congress ministries to organise the peasant agitations. The Madras government took some actions to satisfy the peasantry. It passed the Agriculturists debt relief act and appointed Madras Estates land act committee to enquire the conditions of ryots in zamindari areas and to make recommendations for the improvement of peasantry. The Madras government passed Agriculturists debt relief bill on 27th January 1938. However, the bill did not satisfy the peasants. Their demand for the complete liquidation of debts was not considered in this bill. The bill cancelled only the interest on the debts and that too only in case of debts that were contracted prior to 1 Oct 1932.[229] The ryot unions proposed several amendments to this act. The peasant unions also observed the debt cancellation days in all over the province. The Madras government did not pay any attention to the public voice. It revealed the Madras government's attitude towards the peasantry.

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[227] *Krishna Patrika*, dated 3 July 1937, Y.V.Krishnarao (Ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu Poratalu*, pp.239-256.

[228] *Andhra Patrika*, 29th March 1938, p.4. Also, see, V.Ramakrishna (ed), *Charitratmaka Andhra Rytu Rakshana Yatra (July 1937-March 1938)*, (Telugu), Kommareddi Satyanarayanamurthi, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Yetukuri Balaramamurthi Memorial Trust, Vijayawada, 2001, pp.65-73.

[229] S.Krishnaswami, *The Role of Madras Legislature in the Freedom Struggle*, pp.284-286. Also, see Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra, Part-II, 1936-42*, pp.424-425.

The Madras government appointed a committee in September 1937, with some members of the Madras legislature under the presidentship of T.Prakasam, the revenue minister, to enquire about the agrarian conditions in the zamindari and other proprietary areas in the presidency.[230] The committee was known as the Zamindari enquiry committee was constituted with Mohd Ali Beig, the Zamindar of Mirzapuram, Rangaswami Iyengar, M.Pallamraju, P.S.Kumaraswami Raja, V.V.Jogayya Panthulu, B.Venkatachalam Chetty, B.Narayanaswami Naidu as its members and Tenneti Viswanadham as secretary.[231] The committee was entrusted to enquire about - the juridical interests of the ryots in relation to the land holders; collection and remission of rent; survey records of rights (including water rights) and settlement of fair rent; levies from ryots in addition to rent; utilization of local natural facilities by tenants for their domestic and agricultural purposes; and maintenance of irrigation works.[232] The committee was also required to recommend legislative measures to solve the problems of ryots. Several zamindars, landlords, inamdars and several peasant unions presented their demands to the committee.[233] The committee toured in several places in Andhra and several ryots gave their witness to the committee.[234] In most of the places, the peasants urged the committee to recommend the abolition of the zamindari system.[235] The committee took about 15 months to complete this study. Finally, the committee submitted its report to the speaker of Assembly, Bulusu Sambamurthi, on 6th Nov 1938 and 29th January 1939 was fixed for the consideration of the bill by the assembly.[236] The majority members in the committee made three important suggestions for legislation. First the ryots should recognized as owners of the lands they cultivated; Secondly, the rent due to the zamindars from the ryots should be fixed at the rate that prevailed in 1802; Thirdly, the zamindari forests, which were mismanaged, should be taken over by the state for

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[230] Tanguturi Prakasam, *Na Jivitha Yatra* (Autobiography), (Telugu), M.Seshachalam and Co, Vijayawada, 1994, pp.574-580.

[231] S.Krishnaswami, *The Role of Madras Legislature in the Freedom Struggle,* p.291; B.Seshagirirao, *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu,* Telugu Academy, Hyderabad, 1990, p.22.

[232] *The Hindu*, 10-9-1937; S.Krishnaswami, *The Role of Madras Legislature in the Freedom Struggle*, pp.289-290. Also see G.Rudrayya Chowdari, *Prakasam: A Political Study*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1971, pp.143-144.

[233] Report of the Madras Estates Land Act Committee, Madras, 1938, Part II, Memoranda Submitted to the Committee, pp.119-145.

[234] Report of the Madras Estates Land Act Committee, Madras, 1938, Oral Evidence, Part IV, pp. 101-118, 147-153.

[235] *The Hindu*, 27th November 1937 and 20th January 1938.

[236] *The Hindu*, 28th November 1938.

better management.[237] The committee ultimately said that the ryot was the owner of the land and the zamindar was only an agent of the government to collect the rent. The recommendations of the committee also have several defects. The committee did not recommend for the abolition of the Zamindari system. After a prolonged debate on the issue, both the council and assembly decided by a majority to ask the government to bring in legislation at an early date on the basis of the recommendations of the committee. Several ryot associations held meetings and demonstrations and passed resolutions demanding an immediate legislation on zamindari system. The socialists proposed several amendments to the recommendations of the committee.[238] Though the government accepted, the resolution passed by the legislature it did not bring any legislation during its tenure. Without passing any legislation on the recommendations of the committee, the Rajagopalachari government resigned form office on 29 Oct 1939, on the eve of the Second World War.

Until 1937, the activities of peasant associations were limited only to the exposition of peasant problems. However, from 1937 onwards with the failure of the Madras government to solve the problems of peasantry, the Kisan sabhas under the leadership of Left wing organized several struggles in the zamindari areas. During the period from 1937-39, the Left wing organized struggles against the atrocities of zamindars in Munagala, Challapalli, Kalipatnam, Venkatagiri and several other estates. In Kalipatnam, the Socialists and communists opposed the attempts of the Zamindar to sell the communal lands to private persons.[239] The Congress government supported the Zamindar and arrested a large number of communists in connection with Kalipatnam Satyagraha.[240] However, the peasant associations, local Congress committee's expressed sympathy to peasant's cause, the APCC bitterly opposed the Kalipatnam peasants struggle and the participation of Congressmen in it. The APCC issued warning to 14 West Godavari Congress Socialists including Uddaraju Ramam, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju and Sunku Apparao, asking them to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against them.[241] The Left wing opposed the action of the APCC and argued that the Congressmen should be allowed to mobilize

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[237] S.Krishnaswami, *The Role of Madras Legislature in the Freedom Struggle*, p.292.
[238] *Andhra Patrika*, 4th February 1939, pp.3, 7
[239] G. O. No. 396, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras, dated 3rd March 1939.
[240] *Andhra Patrika*, September 1938, p.9 and 15th March 1939, p.7

peasants because it would help the Congress to bring the peasantry in the fold of anti imperialist struggle.[242] Thus, by 1939 the Congress attitude towards the peasantry made them to turn towards the CSP, which was dominated by communists. By organising the peasantry during this time under the cover of Congress Socialist Party, the communists got a strong hold among the peasantry in Andhra region.

Another significant struggle organized by the Left wing during this period was Munagala anti-zamindari struggle. Munagala Zamindari was located in Krishna District on the boarders of Hyderabad State. The East India Company gave Munagala Estate to Kesara Venkata Narasimharao. By 1900, Sri Nayani Venkata Rangarao became the Zamindar of Munagala.[243] The Zamindar used to collect land revenue of Rs. 130000 per year where as he has to pay only Rs.4008 as peshcush to the government. He occupied several *poramboku* (waste) lands, imposed taxes on all ocupationists, and occupied the lands of several ryots. The zamindar continued *Vetti* (free labour) and other exploitation methods.[244]

After the elections of 1937, Communists from Krishna district visited the estate and encouraged the labourers in villages to *Satyagraha* for the increase of wages, formed Munagala zamindari Peasants association and encouraged peasants and labourers to revolt against the Zamindar. The government officials and Right wing Congress leadership understood that the people were ready to wage a violent struggle against the zamindar. To avert such a struggle, The APCC appointed Gottipati Brahmaiah to prepare a compromise formula to solve the problem.[245] The zamindar and the peasant association agreed to this proposal. The Brahmaiah award demanded the zamindar to conduct land survey and give exact land to the ryots for rent, to return the lands occupied by the zamindar from the peasants, to disband Vetti, to return the promissory notes, which the zamindar got written from the peasants, not to occupy the government lands, not to file cases on the ryots.[246] However, the

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[241] *The Hindu*, 17th June 1939.
[242] *Ibid.*
[243] Thatavarthy Venkateswararao, *Munagala Paragana Praja Udyama Charitra*, (Telugu), Vuppala Kantha Reddy - Chillamcharla Raghunadham, Munagala, 1981, pp.9-10.
[244] Kondaviti Chinnayasuri, *Andhra lo Rytu Udyamam, Part-I*, pp.69-70.
[245] Gottipati Brahmayya, *Na Jivana Nauka* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Telugu Vidyardhi Prachuranalu, Machilipatnam, 1976, p.234.
[246] *Ibid.*, pp.237-237; Navasakthi, 18th January 1939, p.13; Thatavarthy Venkateswararao, *Munagala Paragana Praja Udyama Charitra*, Vuppala Kantha Reddy – Chillamcharla Raghunadham,

zamindar, who received support from the Government officials and Right wing Congress leaders, neglected it and agreement was not implemented. The Left organized a Satyagraha under the leadership of Nanduri Prasadarao, and tried to reoccupy the lands from which the tenants were forcefully evicted by the Zamindar. This led to the arrest of 350 members of APCSP and Peasants associations.[247]

Challapalli, also known as Devarakota in Divi Taluk of Krishna District in Madras Presidency was another zamindari estate where the Communists organized a powerful anti-zamindari struggle. In Challapalli Estate, the Zamindar occupied common lands and forests at several villages and created *Pattas* on his name.[248] The Zamindar also occupied the lands of peasants in several places on the pretext of non-payment of taxes.[249] By the year 1930, the ryots in the villages lost their lands and became tenants in the zamindari lands. He has also collected taxes for irrigation facilities though the Zamindar never undertook the repairs for tanks and canals in the villages. The Kamatam (own cultivation) lands of the Zamindar have increased.

The increased atrocities on the peasantry led to the revolt of the peasants against the zamindar. At several places, ryots filed cases on the zamindar against the occupation of communal lands.[250] The peasant movements in the region took a new turn after the formation of Communist Party in Andhra. In Challapalli estate, the ryots had begun a Satyagraha in 1938 in protest against the zamindar's attempt to convert the communal lands into *seri* or home form. In Peddakallepalli, Mangalapuram and Lakshmipuram villages, the Zamindar tried to occupy 1500 acres of common land belonging to the village. The peasants prevented the attempts of the Zamindar.[251] Chandra Rajeswararao and Gunturu Bapanaiah organized peasantry against the Zamindar. Finally, the Zamindar occupied the lands with the help of the police.[252] The government suppressed the peasant movement by arresting all the important leaders on the eve of Second World War. However, these peasant struggles in

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Munagala, 1981, pp.55-58; Y.V.Krishnarao (ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu Poratalu,* pp.82-85.

[247] Thatavarthy Venkateswararao, *Munagala Paragana Praja Udyama Charitra,* pp.62-63.

[248] *Navasakthi*, dated 18th January 1939, p.12.

[249] Kondaviti Chinnayasuri, *Andhralo Rytu Udyamam,* p.88.

[250] Gottipati Brahmayya, *Na Jivana Nauka* (Autobiography), pp.21-26 and 74-75.

[251] Navasakthi, 14th September 1938, p.20; *Andhra Patrika,* 30th November 1937, p.4.

[252] A.Satyanarayana, "Rise and Growth of Left Movement in Andhra, 1934-1939", p.39.

Challapalli took militant shape in the 1940s. The Madras government under Prakasam had to introduce a new act to suppress the movement.

The anti zamindari struggles and peasant struggles were organized in Venkatagiri,[253] Mandasa[254] and Mukthyala[255] estates. These anti zamindari struggles created political and economic consciousness among the peasants they were mobilized in the struggles for political and economic freedom.

The Congress leaders opposed the peasant's movements under the leadership of the socialists on the ground that they were based on violence. The APCC instructed the Congressmen not to participate in the *satyagrahas* without prior permission from the APCC. The APCC issued show cause notices to Madduri Annapurnaiah, P.Sundarayya, Mukthevi Madhavacharya, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, Sunku Apparao and Uddaraju Ramam for their encouragement and participation in the peasant movements.[256] Though the Congress leadership opposed the activities of socialists, they worked to broaden the base of the Congress. Thousands of peasants became members in the Congress and took active part in struggle against the colonial government.

The peasant movements organized by the socialists during 1937-39 did not achieve much benefit to the peasantry. The government increased repression on the peasant leaders after the resignation of the Congress ministries. Almost all the leaders of the peasant movements were driven to underground and some of them were arrested and detained. In spite of this, the peasants' movements organized by Left wing created political and economic consciousness among the peasantry. These movements were later re-started by the Communists after 1940. By that time, majority of the socialists who played active role in the peasant movements were also transformed as communists.

**Agricultural Labourers Movement**

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[253] P.Balakrishna, "Zamindarula Anthaniki Nandi Palkina Venkatagiri Rytu Udyamam", in Y.V.Krishnarao (Ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu – Poratalu*, pp.47-56.

[254] K.Govindarao, "Visakha-Srikakulam Jillalalo Rytu Udyamam", in *Ibid.,* pp.62-78; K.Muthyam, *Sunamudi Jivadhara: Mandasa Rytula Pratighatana,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Hyderabad. 2003.

[255] *Andhra Patrika*, 22nd August 1938, p.9.

[256] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.470.

Andhra communists were in forefront to organise agricultural labourers on the class lines. In fact, the Andhra communists were the first to organise agricultural labourers in India. The Communist cadre in Andhra worked hard to educate the agricultural labourers about their exploitation in the hands of feudal landlords and to mould them as a strong political force in the fight against imperialism. The communists thought that the Congress led national movement was failed due to lack of support from down trodden sections of the society. They felt that the Congress had limited mass base and the communists wanted to bring the hitherto neglected sections into the freedom movement. They thought that agricultural labourers and industrial workers should play major role in the independence struggle. At the same time, they realized that these sections were not ready to fight along the other sections of the society who were exploiting them. Until then the agricultural labourers who were mostly uneducated and suffering with social evils were also exploited by the feudal landlords. In the process of organizing the agricultural labourers, the communist activists faced several problems. They had to face the attacks of landlords and police. In spite of several difficulties, the communists carried out their task of organizing the agricultural labourers on class lines.

Before going into the details of the communist activity among the agricultural labourers, it is worthwhile to discuss here the conditions of agricultural labourers in Andhra during 1930s. During 1930s all most half of the rural population were working as agricultural labourers. A majority of them come from Scheduled Castes like Mala and Madiga. They form 20 percent of the total population of the whole Andhra. The upper caste people treated them as untouchables. Apart from economic exploitation, and social inequalities, the agricultural labourers were not able to feed themselves daily. Due to their backwardness, the landlords and zamindars were carrying different kinds of exploitation.

There were no fixed wages for the work in the fields. The wages were not common in all the villages. They used to get Rs. 0.10, 0.50. 0.80 as wages per day. At some places, the owners used to give grain in place of cash. Bonded labour was also in force in some places. Shop owners in the villages were also exploiting the agricultural labourers.

Apart from the economic exploitation, they were also suffering from social inequalities. They were treated as untouchables in the villages. They were not allowed to sit along with others in the public places in the village. They were not entitled to wear new clothes while coming into the village. Their children were not allowed to sit along with other students in the schools. While agricultural labourers were subjected to these types of exploitation, the condition of *paleru's* (farm servants appointed based on annual contract) was worse. Generally, they were employed for one year and they have to work in all days in the year for day and night.

At some places the agricultural labourers revolted against the exploitation. However, they were not organized revolts. In the early 1920s Adi Andhra Association, Depressed Castes association, and some other organizations emerged on the scene and started working for the upliftment of the agricultural labourers. However, these movements were based on caste and did not include the entire class of agricultural labourers in their fold. These associations worked only for the development of education and condemned social evils. They did not concentrate on the economic problem, which was most important in the life of agricultural labourers. Strikes of agricultural labourers were organized in 1927 in Mypadu and in Potlapadu in 1930.[257] However, these strikes were limited to particular villages and organized as a protest against the local problems. They were not organized on the broader perspective and they did not have ideological base. Until the formation of CPI in Andhra, there was no effort to start agricultural labourers association on class lines.

The failure of CDM and the emergence of left wing political groups within and outside the INC laid the foundations for the beginning of agricultural labourer's movement. The educated youth who participated in CDM felt that the Congress struggle did not include the lower strata of the society. The younger people thought that the lower strata of the society could be enlisted in the struggle if they work for the day-to-day problems of the agricultural labourers. In the meetings the Congress, Socialists urged the youth to visit the houses of agricultural labourers and organise them against the exploitation.

[257] *Ibid.,* p.684.

The Communist Party felt that due to lack of political awareness, the agricultural labourers were not able to recognize the need to fight against imperialism. The CPI felt that both peasants and labourers were sufferers in the hands of Zamindars, moneylenders and British imperialism. The peasants, who were exploited by the zamindars and moneylenders, were in turn resorting to exploitation of the laborers working for them. Due to the policies of the government, the poor peasants were slowly becoming labourers. The understanding of CPI in 1937 was that both peasants and labourers should fight unitedly against the British imperialism, which was protecting the exploitative system.[258] The CPI also decided to fight for imposing a ban on *paleru* (farm servants) system, proper wages for agricultural labourers and the suspension of all the debts of agricultural labourers.[259] With above ideas and understanding on the agricultural labourers, the communists started work among the agricultural labourers from 1930s.

As early as 1932, P. Sundarayya started agricultural labourers association in Alaganipadu village of Nellore district. He has also started co-operative stores to help the poorer sections and to prevent exploitation from shop-owners. He realized that the problem of illiteracy was one of factors for the exploitation of labourers by the landlords and shop owners. Then he started a school for adults and another school for the children of agricultural labourers. In the night schools, he explained the labourers about the need of class organizations.[260]

During 1932-33, Sundarayya and his friends organized strikes of agricultural labourers in several villages in Kovur and Alluru taluks in Nellore district and associations of agricultural labourers were formed in several villages in Nellore district.[261] Some of the youth you worked along with Sundarayya in Agricultural labourers movement, became members of CPI after 1934.

At the same time, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, a teacher in *Vinayashrama* of Kavur in Guntur district during the Civil Disobedience movement, who worked in the labour protection leagues in Guntur along with Pratapa Ramasubbaiah in 1935-36,

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[258] Navasakthi, 2nd February 1938, p.9.
[259] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th July 1937, p.3.
[260] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, p.57. Also see, "Alaganipadu Agricultural Workers Union" in Selections from Secret Files, Secret file No. 931, dated 1st September 1935, HFSAP 1935, pp.2584-2588.

shifted his base to Virulapadu village in Krishna district and started work among the agricultural labourers.[262] In Guntur district, Kabotu Ramaswami, Chintala Suryanarayana and others started activities among the agricultural labourers. By the end of 1936, they were able to form agricultural labourers association in Davuluru and Pallekona village in Guntur district.[263]

The formation of Agricultural Labourers associations in several villages prepared ground for the formation of Andhra Provincial Agricultural Labourers Association. The youth who were influenced by the Communist ideas started efforts to create class-consciousness among the labourers. They established night schools for labourers and explained them about the need for class organizations. After the formation of labourers unions in Davuluru and Pallekona villages, the labourers in neighbouring villages also took interest in the formation of these organizations and the labourers of 14 villages around Tenali began a strike demanding increase in their daily wages. The strike was continued for 4 days and the landlords accepted the demand of agricultural labourers. The strike organized by the agricultural labourers in Tenali region created new consciousness among the agricultural labourers in Guntur district. During this time, Agricultural Labourers associations were formed in Pedanandipadu and Narasayapalem villages in the Bapatla region. Kolla Venkaiah,[264] who has just returned from attending the Kothapatnam summer school, worked hard to give an organized shape to these associations in Bapatla region. To integrate all these associations and to bring them under one umbrella, the communists Kolla

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[261] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, *Part – I*, pp.66-67.

[262] Patibandla Venkatapathirayalu, *Charitragatilo Chaitanyavahini Virulapadu Grama Charitra Vishleshana*, (Telugu), Patibandla Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 1992, p.91.

[263] Y.V.Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.685.

[264] Kolla Venkaiah (1910-1997) was born in Pedanandipadu village in Guntur district. He was attracted towards Communism when he was a student in A.C. College, Guntur. He became a member of CPI in 1936 and attended Kothapatnam Summer School in 1937. He was one among the organizers of the Peasant Protection March from Ichhapuram to Madras in 1937-38. In 1940, he was elected as a member of Guntur District Committee of CPI and secretary of Guntur District Agricultural Labourers Association. As a member of District Committee of CPI, he has organized training programmes in several villages in Bapatla taluk and attracted several youth to become members of the CPI. In 1943, he was arrested and kept in jail. After his release from jail, he has sold out all his property and donated it to the party. In 1946, he contested against Manthena Venkata Raju in the assembly elections from Ongole – Bapatla Constituency. He organized underground movement during 1948-52. He was elected as an M.L.A. from Ponnur constituency in 1952 and M.P. from Tenali constituency in 1962. He was arrested in 1962 during Indo – China war and joined in CPI (M) after the split in the party in 1964. Again, in 1967, along with his colleagues in Marxist party D.V.Rao, T. N., and C.P., Kolla Venkaiah revolted against CPI (M) leadership, supported the Chinese Path and came out from CPI (M) to form CPI (M-L). For further details see,

Venkaiah and Pendyala Lokanadham organized the Guntur district Agricultural Labourers Association in April 1938. A conference of the association was held at Pallekona village in April 1938 in which Kabotu Ramaswami and Nutalapati Joseph were elected as president and secretary of the organization.[265]

From 1937 onwards, the movement slowly spread to East Godavari and West Godavari districts.[266] The First East Godavari District Agricultural Labourers Conference was organized at Mori village in Rajolu Taluk on 2nd January 1938 with Pamula Narasimharao as president. Members of Agricultural labourers from all the taluks in East Godavari district attended the conference. Communists Korapati Pattabhiramaiah, Namburu Srinivasarao, Datla Suryanarayanaraju, Mahidhara Ramamohanarao and P. Anantam spoke in the conference about the need to mobilize agricultural labourers in the struggle against imperialism.[267] The conference also elected a committee to organise agricultural labourers in East Godavari district. Undru Subbarao, Korapati Pattabhiramaiah, Namburu Srinivasarao, Gaddam Mahalakshmi were elected as the members in this committee.[268] The East Godavari district Agricultural Labourers Association organized strikes of agricultural workers demanding increase of daily wages of labourers and other benefits for labourers. Strikes were organized in Sivakodu, Sompalli, Edarada, Antarvedi and several other villages in August 1938. By the end of 1938, Rajolu Taluk in East Godavari district became a strong center of agricultural labourer's movement in Andhra.

The movement slowly spread to West Godavari district and agricultural labourers associations were formed in several villages in Bhimavaram and Narsapur taluks. Dasari Venkatrao, Daniel Smith, Nekkanti Narasimharao and several others took active part in these associations. In Bhimavaram taluk, a committee headed by Bhupatiraju Venkatramaraju toured several villages and organized agricultural labourers associations.[269] In November 1937, the labourers of Mukkamala village in Tanuku taluk organized a strike demanding the increase of daily wages. Congress Socialist party extended support to the labourers. Strikes of agricultural labourers

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Kolla Venkaiah, *Comrade Kolla Venkaiah Rachanalu* – Part – I, (Telugu), Kolla Venkaiah Samsmarana Committee, Guntur, 2002.

[265] *Ibid*, p.15. *Andhra Patrika*, 28th April 1935, p.3.

[266] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th July 1937, p.3.

[267] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th January 1938, p.4.

[268] Y.V.Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.687.

were also organized agricultural labourers associations in Polamuru, Achanta and several other villages in West Godavari district.[270]

In 1937, the Communists formed Andhra provincial Agricultural labourers association and the inaugural conference of the association was held in Nellore on 1st August 1937. M.N. Roy who has come to Nellore as part of his tour in South India presided over the conference. The conference elected new executive committee to the Andhra provincial agricultural laboruers association with Vennelakanti Raghavaiah as its secretary and P. Sundarayya, D. Balaramireddi, J.Ramalingaiah and Kambhampati Satyanarayana as members.

The conference prepared rules and regulations for the formation of agricultural labourers unions and their activity. The conference said that (1) at least half of the members of the associations and executive of the associations should be agricultural labourers; (2) the organizers should see that the unions will not work under the influence of the exploitative landlords; and the conferences of agricultural labourers should pass resolutions for the cancellation of debts of the agricultural labourers, to repeal the criminal tribes act, to regularize the services of scavengers, for the increase of the salaries of the municipal workers, for the reduction of interest rates on the loans taken by agricultural labourers from the peasants, for the recognition of agricultural labourers unions by the government and to demand the government to distribute the *banjar* land to the landless agricultural labourers.[271] The Andhra Agricultural Labourers Association worked for the all round development of labourers. It fought against the Criminal Tribes Act and demanded the government to withdraw the act. It also worked for the establishment of night schools for the benefit of labourers and organized the strikes of agricultural labourers at several places.[272]

The second conference of Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI was held in Vijayawada in July 1938. The conference clearly defined the agricultural labourers and said that all the people who work in the fields for daily wages are considered as agricultural labourers. It also recognized the cultural and economic differences between peasantry and labourers and stressed on the need for separate organizations

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[269] Navasakthi, 9th February 1938, p.2.
[270] Y.V.Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.688
[271] *Andhra Patrika*, 4th April 1938, p.11.

for labourers and peasants. It also urged the members to work for co-operation between agricultural labourers and peasants and to encourage both of them against landlords and imperialism. The conference felt that the economic policies of the government were responsible for all the problems of the peasants and agricultural labourers. The members of the CPI were asked to explain the agricultural labourers that the ultimate aim of the associations was to overthrow the colonial government and establishment Soviet type of government in India.[273] Directions were given to the cadre to carry out the activities of the peasants associations and labourers associations simultaneously and solve the differences between the two sections in peaceful manner.[274]

After the second Congress of Andhra Committee of CPI, the communists intensified their activity among the agricultural labourers. The movement was more active in Nellore district. Alluru Ranga Reddy and Basavareddi Sankara Reddy mobilized agricultural labourers in several villages and organized strikes in Nellore and Kovur taluks. The strike organized by communists in Vidavaluru village was more important among them. The agricultural labourers of Vidavaluru village started strike on 22 July 1938 demanding increase of daily wages, permission to acquire firewood from forests, and grazing rights in the common lands of the village. The strike was continued for 14 days. Around 1000 people participated in the strike. The youth and socialist minded people of the village also supported the strike. The communists spoiled the attempts of the landlords to disturb the strike. Finally, the landlords accepted the demands of the agricultural labourers. The strike of Vidavaluru created great impact on the minds of labourers in Kovur and Nellore taluks. Similar strikes were organized in Mamidipudi, Indukurupeta, Gudur and several other villages. The communists formed co-ordination committees with the representatives from Peasant associations and labourers associations. At several places, the differences between the labourers and peasants solved through discussions between these organizations.

The agricultural labourers associations demanded the government to introduce Debt relief act to relieve them from their increasing debts. The leaders of the peasant

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[272] *Navasakthi*, 13th July 1938, p.10.
[273] Resolution on Agricultural Labourers Movement, *Navasakthi*, 13-07-1938, pp.10-11.
[274] Navasakthi, 27th July 1938, p.5. Also see P. Sundarayya, *Nirmana Samasyalu*, pp.20-21.

associations also supported this demand. In the APCC meeting held in Kakinada in January 1939, Kommareddi Satyanarayanamurthi introduced a resolution recommending the government to introduce Agricultural Debt Relief Act and to cancel all the debts of agricultural labourers. He also demanded the government to appoint a committee to enquire into the conditions of agricultural labourers.

During the period from 1938-39, the communists spread the activities of agricultural labourers into Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari and East Godavari districts. In East Godavari district agricultural labourers associations were formed in several villages in Ramachandrapuram taluk. The first agricultural labourer's conference of Ramachandrapuram taluk was held in Kapileswarapuram on 4 October 1938 with Gaddam Mahalakshmi as president. In Guntur district, the movement was spread to Guntur, Sattenapalli, Ongole, Tenali and Bapatla taluks. The labourers demanded the government to introduce debt relief act and to distribute 2000 acres of fallow land located between Nizampatnam and Ganapavaram villages to the agricultural labourers. [275]

The movement was more active in Krishna district. During 1937-38, the communists in Gudiwada, Gannavaram and Divi taluks of Krishna district were successful to form agricultural labourers associations in several villages. Especially in Gudiwada, the movement was very strong. The Gudiwada taluk agricultural labourers association organized its second conference at Balliparrulaku on 19th November 1938.[276] Vemulapalli Anjaneyulu of Pedamaddali village presided over the conference. The conference passed resolutions condemning the police firings on the workers in Bombay; demanding to handover the uncultivated lands in the villages to the agricultural labourers; to provide houses and drinking water and primary education to agricultural labourers, to give local contract works to agricultural labourers associations; to bring a law to cancel the debts of agricultural labourers; to provide loans without interest; to fix minimum wages for agricultural labourers; and urging the agricultural labourers not to participate in the imperialist war and to fight for the independence of the country.[277] In another conference organized by

[275] Y.V. Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p. 694.
[276] *Andhra Patrika*, 22nd November 1938, p.9.
[277] Navasakthi, 30th November 1938, p.7.

Kondapalli Sitaramaiah[278] in Moparru village in Gudiwada taluk on 18th April 1939, resolutions were passed demanding the government to cancel the debts of agricultural labourers, to establish separate banks to give loans to agricultural labourers, to abolish *namu* and other illegal practices in the villages, to fix minimum wages to the labourers and to distribute *banjar* (fallow) lands to agricultural labourers.[279]

Challapalli Narayanarao[280] started agricultural labourers association in Divi Taluk in Krishna district. Gunturu Bapanaiah,[281] a native of Nagayatippa also joined in Agricultural labourer's movement in 1938. Ayyanki David of Elamarru village organized the labourers in surrounding villages and formed agricultural labourers association. A conference of agricultural labourers was organized in Matlamalapalli on 16th April 1939 with Katragadda Rajagopalarao as the president. In his speech, Rajagopalarao advocated the labourers and peasants to start united fight against the British imperialism, which was the main cause for the problems of labourers. He

[278] Known as K. S. among CPI circles, Sitaramaiah (1919-2002) was born in Lingavaram village in Krishna district. He joined CPI in 1936. He attended the summer school of politics and economics organized by APCSP at Manthenavaripalem in 1938. He was influenced by *Communist Manifesto* and *Why Socialism,* presented to him by the then rising star in the Andhra Communist Movement, Chandra Rajeswararao. He married Kotiswaramma, a widow on the advice of C. Rajeswararao. He was the in-charge of Krishna district Prajanatyamandali during early 1940s. He became member of Secretariat of Andhra Communist Committee and in-charge of Krishna district committee of CPI. He played an active role in the Telangana Armed Struggle. He was very much disappointed with the withdrawal of Telangana armed struggle by the CPI and left the party in 1956. Later he joined the Naxalite movement in 1970s and formed People's War Group in 1980. He left PWG in 1990 due to ideological differences within CPI (ML) People's War Group. For further information on his life and activities, see, Stanley Theodore, "Close Encounter with the Most Wanted Naxalite Kondapalli Seetharamaiah", *The Week,* 15 November 1992, pp.4-10 and Krishna [K.Sitaramaiah], *Praja Natyamandali Gnapakalu,* (Telugu), Srujana Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 2002.

[279] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th April 1939, p.9.

[280] Challapalli Narayanarao (1912-1950) was born in a traditional Brahmin family in Challapalli Agraharam of Challapalli Estate in Krishna district. He studied primary education in Challapalli and intermediate in A.C.College, Guntur. As a student of A.C. College, he participated in CDM and imprisoned for one year. After his release from jail, he was attracted towards communism and played active role in organizing peasantry against Challapalli Zamindar. He was caught and shot dead by the police in 1950. For further details see, *Viplava Virudu Challapalli Narayanarao Smaraka Souvenir,* (Telugu), 2003 and G. O. No. 2619, dated 21st August 1947, Public (General) (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras.

[281] Gunturu Bapanaiah (1919-1978) was born in a Harijan family in Nagayatippa village in Krishna district. He was very active in the agricultural labourer's movement. He became a member of CPI in 1939 and led the peasant movement in Challapalli Zamindari along with C. Rajeswararao, Challapalli Narayanarao and others. He was a member in State committee of CPI and National Council of CPI. Later he joined in CPI (M) after the split in 1964 and became a member of CPI (M) State Secretariat. He contested against Vemula Kurmayya in 1946 elections. He was elected as an M.L.A. from Divi and Nidumolu constituencies in 1952, 1962 and 1978. For further details, see, Moturu Hanumantharao, *Na Parichayalu,* Prajasakthi Book House, Hyderabad, 1998, pp.96-98. Also, see G.O.No. 3075, dated 08-09-1949 and G.O.No.1911, dated 14-07-1951, Government of Madras, Public (General) Department.

advised the labourers not to help the war efforts of the imperialists, and to work for the establishment of Socialist government in India.[282]

To co-ordinate the activities of Agricultural labourers association in Krishna district, the communists formed Krishna District Agricultural Labourers Association in 1940. The first conference of district organization was held at Ventrapragada village in June 1940. The conference elected Ayyanki David as the president and Gunturu Bapanayya as secretary.[283]

In West Godavari district, the communists organized agricultural labourers associations in Narsapur, Bhimavaram, Tanuku and Eluru taluks. Nekkanti Narasimharao played active role in Narsapur taluk and the first Narsapur Taluk Agricultural Labourers conference was held in Narsapur on 27th January 1939. The conference demanded the government to bring a law to fix minimum time for work and minimum wages for agricultural labourers; to provide representation to agricultural labourers in local boards; and to allot the local board contract works to the agricultural labourers. The conference elected Dasari Venkatrao as president and Daniel Smith as secretary to Narsapur Taluk Agricultural Labourers Association. During this time, Garapati Satyanarayana, a communist from Pedapadu village in Eluru taluk organized Eluru taluk Agricultural labourers association. To co-ordinate the activities of the agricultural labourers associations in West Godavari district, the communists organized district association and the first conference of the district association was held in Kaikaram village on 28th March 1939 under the presidentship of Kusuma Dharmanna.[284] In the conference Madduri Annapurnaiah, the Joint Secretary of Andhra Congress Socialist Party, spoke about the vulnerable conditions of agricultural labourers in Andhra region. He urged the peasants not to harass the labourers and suggested them to fight against the landlords and moneylenders in association with agricultural labourers. Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, who hoisted National Flag and Red Flag in the conference, asked the labourers to join in Congress and occupy the Congress organization and to lead the struggle against imperialism to establish soviet type of government in India.[285]

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[282] *Andhra Patrika*, 22nd April 1939, p.4.
[283] Y.V.Krishnarao and Others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p. 696.
[284] Navasakthi, 5th April 1939, p.9.
[285] *Andhra Patrika*, 3rd April 1939, p.3.

Despite government onslaught and opposition from landed gentry, the communists were able to expand unionism amongst the labour poor. The communist movement in Andhra played a crucial role in increasing the wages of Dalit labourers and organizing them from scattered unorganized labourers into an organized force of labour unions and introducing them to Socialism and Marxism. Active participation of Dalits in the Communist movement created a consciousness of unity and the need to fight for their rights. At the political level, Congress claimed that it was responsible for bringing about the minimum wages act. However, the communist mobilization of dalits was responsible for a constant upgrading of minimum wages.

Communist leaders outside Andhra who granted that the organized strength of agricultural workers in Andhra is by far the biggest in any province have conceded their success. Alongside the irrigation channels of delta, where exists high percentage of Dalit migrant labourers, communists gained strength and support extensively in Repalle, Tenali, Bapatla taluks of Guntur district, Gudiwada, Gannavaram, Divi and Bandar taluks of Krishna district, Palakollu, Narsapur, and Bhimavaram taluks of West Godavari district and Razolu taluk of East Godavari district. At all these places, Communists organized agricultural labour organizations and made them conscious of their rights. These agricultural labourers were the rock-like base of the Communist movement in Andhra. Thus, by the end of 1940 the communists established a strong base among the agricultural labourers. Several leaders of agricultural labourer's movement like Gunturu Bapanaiah, Namburu Srinivasarao, Kandikatla Nagabhushanam,[286] Swarna Vemaiah, Ganji Nageswararao and Ganji Ramarao rose to the district level leadership positions in the Communist Party.

**Students' Movements**

Another important section of the society whom the communists and socialists mobilized during the united front period was the students. In fact, most of the first generation leaders of CPI in Andhra were students pursuing studies at various colleges and universities when they started communist movement in Andhra. During

[286] An active communist organizer of CPI in the Rajolu taluk of East Godavari district, Nagabhushanam was born in an agricultural labourer family, participated in the anti-war campaign and arrested in 1942. He has intensified his activities among the agricultural labourers after his release and again he was arrested in Vijayawada in connection with the rioting after the assassination of Gandhi in January 1948. He has escaped from jail and went to underground. He was caught by the police in Yanam and was shot dead on 24th August 1950.

the period from 1930-1940, the communists in Andhra organized a powerful students movement. The aim of this movement was to organize the students on their day-to-day problems and train them as socialists and communists. By encouraging the students to participate in the struggle for independence, the communists attempted to draw them into the fold of national movement and national Congress with a view to establish the hegemony of the leftwing over the Indian National Movement.

While the youth leagues largely comprised uneducated or semi-educated, rural based young men, college and high school students in major towns and cities had their own separate forums. Apart from the students in the colleges of the towns like Madras, Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Machilipatnam, Vijayawada, and Guntur, several students in the high-school level studying in the semi-urban and rural areas were also mobilized in the students unions. Finally, these students became members of the Communist party and some of them became the leaders of the communist movement in Andhra.

In Andhra, students' participation in the political movements began with the Vandemataram movement. Again, the students actively participated in the politics during the non-cooperation movement. However, the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement by the Congress disappointed the students. The nationalist feelings of students and their enthusiasm to participate in the struggle against imperialism were revealed in the First Students conference of Andhra held in 1924.[287] This conference gave a concrete shape to the students' movement in Andhra. However, the students' movement in Andhra in 1920s functioned under the guidance of Congress leadership. The activities of the student's organization were limited to conduct meetings and provide dinners to the participants as well as passing resolutions. Upto 1936, the students' organization in Andhra have conducted 13 annual conferences but not carried out any serious work among the students.[288] Nevertheless, it succeeded in spreading the nationalist feelings among the students and reminded them about their duty to the nation. This can be called as the first stage in the student movement in Andhra.

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[287] Y.V.Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Rytumitra Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 2005, p.40.

[288] Resolution of Congress socialist Party on the Student Movement, *Navasakthi*, 10th August 1938, p.15.

The second stage in the students' movement began after the formation of the Communist party. After the formation of the branches of CPI in Andhra, the communists tried to form the branches of the student's organizations in Andhra region. The students actively participated in the election campaign during 1937 elections to the Madras Legislative assembly. Majority of the students who has participated in the election campaign also attended the Kothapatnam Summer School of Politics and Economics organized by Andhra Congress Socialist Party in May 1937. The Socialists and Communists who were students in colleges and universities before they join in the Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party used their old contacts and influenced several students to join in Communist Party and Congress Socialist Party. At the same time, the tours of M.N.Roy and S.S. Batliwala in Andhra districts inspired the students to actively participate in the national movement. Hundreds of students from schools and colleges became members of Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party. Thus from 1937 onwards the student movements in Andhra were organized actively by the Socialists and Communists. With their efforts, 14th conference of Andhra Students Federation was held at Guntur on 28-29 August 1937.[289] The conference was held in Kamma hostel in Guntur. Around 80 delegates from different districts attended the conference.[290] They decided to affiliate the Students Federation of Andhra to the All India Students Federation, which was formed in Lucknow in 1936.[291] The conference was presided over by S.S. Batliwala, a Congress Socialist from Bombay, who had come for a tour in Madras Presidency. During his tour, Batliwala visited several places in Andhra and encouraged the students to actively participate in the struggle for freedom. Batliwala's speeches inspired several students to join in national movement. The resolutions passed in the 14th annual conference of Andhra Students Federation demanded the government to end government control over universities and democratize the appointment of University Senate, Vice-chancellor and appoint them on the basis of elections in the universities and colleges; introduce free and compulsory education at

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[289] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd August 1937, p.4; 7th August 1937, p.17.

[290] *A.I.S.F. Charitra, Ujwala Ghattalu,* All India Students Federation, Andhra Pradesh Committee, Vijayawada, 1985, p.49.

[291] V. Sankaran Nair, *The Role of Students in Freedom Movement: With a Special Reference to Madras Presidency,* Konark Publishers, Delhi, 1990, pp. 120-121; Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India,* The Perennial Press, Bombay, 1960, p.395; *A.I.S.F. Charitra: Ujwala Ghattalu,* p.9.

the primary level; reduce college fees; and introduce technical courses in schools and colleges. The conference made it clear that the aim of the student conference was to end the imperialist ideas in education and mould students as a strong nationalist force. Resolutions passed in the conference-expressed solidarity to the strikes organized by students at several places, condemned the attitude of government officials towards students; and expressed solidarity to the students of Japan who were fighting against the fascist tendencies in Japan. The conference gave clear-cut ideas to the students about the national and international situation and the role to be played by the students in the national movement. The conference elected Makineni Basavapunnaiah as the secretary and Katragadda Rajagopalarao and Y.V.Krishnarao as the joint secretaries of the Andhra Provincial Students Federation.[292]

With the inspiration given by the 14th annual conference, the students all over Andhra organized strikes demanding the government to solve their problems. The strike organized by the students of A.C. College in Guntur was historic. It was the first strike against the detention system[293] in Andhra. The principle of the College tried to suppress the strike. However, the students continued the strike with the help of local leaders.[294] The students of other colleges and high schools in Guntur also started strikes in support of A.C. College students. Finally, the officials agreed to accept the demands of the students. Makineni Basavapunnaiah, Y.V. Krishnarao, D.V.Apparao, Nalam Narasimharao and others organized the students' strike in A.C. College.[295] Thousands of students participated in the strike. The A.C. College strike produced around 250 to 300 dedicated communists who have devoted their life to the growth of Communist Movement.

A special mention should be made here on the role played by the Students of Kamma hostel of Guntur in the student's movement. A number of students of this hostel were already come into touch with the communist leaders during 1934-35.

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[292] Y. V. Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communistu Udyama Charitra, 1936-42,* Part-II, Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1988, pp.492-493, 500-512.

[293] The schools and colleges used to have a detention system in which only a few students who get good marks in the filtering exam were allowed to appear final examinations. Under this system, large numbers of students who get fewer marks in the filtering exam were not allowed to appear the final examinations of the course. They were detained/retained in the same course until they get good marks in the filtering examinations.

[294] *A.I.S.F. Charitra, Ujwala Ghattalu,* pp.50-51.

[295] M. Basavapunnayya, "Tolinati Vidyarthi Udyama Smrithulu', in *Comrade Basavapunnaiah Rachanalu, Vol. III,* Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1994, p.157.

Makineni Basavapunnaiah, Y.V.Krishnarao, Vemulapalli Srikrishna, Moturi Hanumantharao, Kolla Venkaiah, Tummala Venkatasubbaiah, Moturu Hanumantharao, Lavu Balagangadhararao and several other students of this hostel played active role in the student movement and with their initiative the 14th annual conference of Andhra Students Federation was held in Kamma hostel.[296] The hostel became a center for left wing activists and it provided accommodation to several socialist and Communist leaders like Jayaprakash Narain, P. Sundaraayya and others when they visit Guntur. Later most of the students of Kamma hostel became members of the Communist Party.

The success of students strike in A.C. College inspired the students of other colleges to start strikes to fulfill their demands. On 7th February 1938, the students of Hindu College in Bandar organized a strike demanding the government to solve their problems. Moturu Kattaiah, Makineni Basavapunnaiah and Nalam Narasimharao led the students in this strike. Finally, the officials agreed the student's demands.

During 1930s, the students were facing several problems in schools and colleges. Some of the demands of the students included the building of cycle sheds, dining rooms, reduction in school fees, representation to students in games committee and other committees, suspension of corporal punishment, hostel facilities to the students, to use the library fee for the development of library, to provide nationalist and progressive journals and books to the students in the library, to suspend fine system, to recognize student unions and several others. Struggle against Detention System was one of the major demands. In most of the cases the local socialists, communists and Congress leaders also supported the students' strikes and helped the students to solve their problems. Jayaprakash Narain, General Secretary of AICSP, S.S.Batliwala, N.G.Ranga, Madduri Annapurnaiah, P. Sundarayya, Chandra Rajeswararao, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaa, Munipalle Ramarao, Dr. K.B.Krishna, Gora, Kalipatnam Kondaiah, Kambhampati Satyanarayana (Senior), Devulapalli Krishnasastri, Adavi Bapiraju and several other political leaders, writers and social workers participated in the students conferences held all over Andhra during 1937-40. The resolutions passed in the students conferences, the speeches in the conferences made it clear that the students were also a part in the ongoing national movement. The

[296] Moturu Hanumantharao, *Destination Communism: Memories of Veteran Communist,* Prajasakthi

student's conferences demanded the formation of separate Andhra State, to release prisoners of Andaman jail and passed resolutions on several national problems.

The rise of student's movements and spread of leftist ideas among the students frightened the Congress government in Madras. Madras government issued disciplinary regulations with a view to stop the spread of student movement. The aim of the regulations was to prevent the students from participating in national movement. The government said that the student is not a person, who is fit to decide, whether he should attend that class or not. The regulations issued by the government instructed the students to take prior permission of the authorities if they want to participate in the strikes and demonstrations. The students unions severely condemned the regulations of Madras government on students. The executive committee of Andhra Students Federation, which met at Manthenavaripalem summer school in June 1938, gave a call to the students of Andhra to protest against the decisions of the Madras government on Students.[297] The Students Federation asked the students to meet the Premier of Madras C. Rajagopalachari during his tour in Andhra, and to submit memorandums on their grievances. M. Basavapunnaiah, the secretary of Andhra Students Federation issued a statement urging the students to present memorandums to the Premier C. Rajagopalachari, demanding government to conduct the annual examinations after summer; to conduct one examination for one day; to set the question papers of the annual examinations based on the standards of the students; to withdraw detention system, to end the corruption in the collages and other government departments and to introduce military training to the students.[298] The Visakhapatnam District Students conference also demanded the government to reduce the school fees, to withdraw the disciplinary regulations on students, to allow students to participate in the politics, to withdraw detention system, to allow the students to watch the proceedings in University Senate meetings.[299] The Madras Students Organization (MSO) also passed a resolution condemning the regulations of Madras government. It appealed the students of Madras presidency to start protest agitations against the regulations and advised the students to form Madras Presidency Students Federation. At the same time, like the Madras governments' ordinances, the Andhra

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Prachuranalayam, Hyderabad, 2000, pp.4-5; Y.V.Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo*, pp.43-47.

[297] Y. V. Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p. 497.

[298] Navasakthi, 24th August 1938, p.8.

[299] Navasakthi, 17th August 1938, p.21.

University also issued a notification prohibiting the participation of students in the student's movements without prior permission from the authorities. The aim of the orders was to prevent students' participation in the political movement. Students all over Andhra opposed the rules of Andhra University and agitations were organized demanding the university to withdraw the new rules.[300] The students of Andhra University boycotted the convocation ceremony opposing the decision of university to invite Sir Akbar Haidari, the prime minister of Hyderabad State, who has suppressed the student movement in Hyderabad, as the chief Guest.[301] The student's representatives also presented memorandums and petitions to the government and Congress leaders to solve their problems and to withdraw the new regulations on the student's movement. During this time sir C.R. Reddy, the Vice-chancellor of Andhra University, also ordered the removal of leftist literature from the University library. All the leftists condemned the actions of Vice-chancellor. The students of A.C. College in Guntur who met the Vice-chancellor in Guntur in 1938 demanded him to restore the leftist literature in the library.[302] The students also countered the statements made in the meeting by Dr. C.R. Reddy against Soviet Union.[303]

The student's federation also carried out adult education programmes and conducted night schools at several places. The socialist leaders in their speeches at several students meetings asked them to go to villages and to work for the removal of illiteracy. Apart from literacy campaign, the students trained the workers and villagers in primary health care, hygiene and cleanliness. As part of adult education programme, the students taught politics to the people and encouraged them to participate in the freedom struggle. The activities of students among the workers in Visakhapatnam and other places attracted the attention of the government and the government banned the adult education programme conducted by the students in 1941.[304]

The socialists and Communists declared that the aim of the student movement was the all round development of students and to equip them lead a better life in future. They felt that the education system introduced in India by the British rulers

[300] Y. V. Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* p. 497.
[301] *A.I.S.F. Charitra: Ujwala Ghattalu,* p.53.
[302] *Andhra Patrika*, 26th July 1937, p.5.
[303] Y.V.Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo*, p.52.
[304] Y. V. Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* p. 500

was preventing the students from acquiring knowledge and making them slaves to the government. They demanded the government to introduce professional and technical courses in the colleges. The Communists also criticized the Vardha education system introduced by Gandhiji. According them the Gandhian principles would lead the students into backwardness. They criticized the reduction of school fees for non-brahmin communities by the Madras government, as step to divide the students and demanded rationalization of school fees. According to them, the British rule was the main cause for the unemployment problem in the country so they advised the students to actively participate in the anti-imperialist struggle to liberate the country from the foreign yoke.[305]

The 15th annual conference of Andhra Students Federation was held on 28-29 January 1939 at Bezawada under the presidentship of N.G.Ranga. Makineni Basavapunnaiah, the secretary of Andhra Students Federation presented annual report to the conference. Around 1000 delegates from several schools and colleges attended the conference. S.V.L. Narasimham, who opened the conference, said that the education system introduced in India by the British government denied the minimum civil liberties to the students.[306] He asked the students to fight for the ending of the British rule. In his speech in the conference, N.G. Ranga said that the main cause for the non-participation of students in the national movement was the neglect of the students and their problems by the Congress. He urged the Congress leaders to concentrate on the students problems and to bring them into the fold of national movement. He condemned the education system introduced by the British and said that the changes in the education system was not possible under colonial regime. He said that the British rule was main cause for all the problems of students and the nation. He, further, said that the ending of the British in India is the only solution for the problems of the students. Ranga also criticized the attitude of the Congress government towards student's movement.[307]

The Conference discussed about the strikes organized by the students at various places, memorandums presented to the Congress leaders and government and

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[305] Press statement issued by Katragadda Rajagopalarao in the aims and objectives of Andhra Students Federation. See, Navasakthi, 27th July 1938, p.7.
[306] *A.I.S.F. Charitra: Ujwala Ghattalu*, p.52.
[307] Navasakthi, 1st February 1939, p.15.

the role of students in Manthenavaripalem summer School. The conference also discussed about the relation between students' movement and anti-imperialist movements and role of students' in the anti-imperialist movements. The conference passed resolutions demanding the withdrawal of detention system in schools and colleges, demanding the government to recognize the students unions; and advocating the students to start strikes to solve their problems. The conference also passed a resolution condemning the 1935 India Act and appealing the Indian National Congress to elect the Congress President from those who were working against the imposition Federation.[308] In the conference, the communist members of the student union made it clear that the students union was not affiliated to any political party and urged all the students to actively participate in the student movement and to strengthen the national struggle for independence. The conference elected Gadde Ramakoteswararao as the Secretary of Andhra Students Federation.[309]

The 16th annual conference of Andhra Students' Federation was held at Kakinada on 1-3 September 1939 on the eve of Second World War.[310] During the beginning of the Second World War, the Socialists and communists were demanding the Congress to start mass struggle and to utilize the opportunity provided by the war. The 16th annual conference was organized to give clear-cut directions to the students on the role of students in the national movement on the eve of Second World War. Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah presided over the conference and Subhash Chandra Bose, who was on a tour in Madras Presidency, opened the conference. The conference gave a call to the students to oppose imperialist war and start struggle for independence. Subhash Chandra Bose, in his speech in the conference, asked the students to fight for the independence of the nation. He said that British rule was the main cause for all problems of the students. He demanded the Congress leadership to start mass Satyagraha immediately. Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah to work for the 'Freedom, Peace and Progress' of all human beings. He appealed the students to start struggle for the building up of new society in which there should be no war, no slavery and no exploitation.[311] He asked the students to be ready to participate in the struggle to save

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[308] Y. V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithi Pathamlo,* p. 501
[309] Y. V. Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* p. 571
[310] *A.I.S.F. Charitra: Ujwala Ghattalu,* p.53; Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Bharata Svatantrya Samaramlo Paschima Godavari Jilla: Kavitam – Poduru Gramalu,* (Telugu), Sanghamitra Prachuranalu, Vijayawada, 2003, p.31
[311] Andhrapatrika, 3 September 1939, p.6.

the nation from the imperialists. He advised them to hold discussions on the political theories and international and national politics; to mobilize funds for the political movements; to bring pressure on the officials of the universities and colleges to provide all types theoretical books to the students in the libraries; to fight for the freedom of speech and freedom of press to the students; to fight against the ordinances and regulations introduced by the government against the freedom of the students; and to conduct adult education programmes in the holidays.[312]

Thus, the communists and socialists successfully organized the students all over Andhra and made them ready to fight in the struggle for independence. The Socialists and Communists thought that the Congress led national movement has a limited mass base. They wanted to mobilize the hitherto neglected sections of the society into the national movement. They thought that the students were one of the most important sections of the society who should play active role in the national movement. Therefore, the Communists and Socialists organized the students on their day-to-day problems and injected them the ideas of nationalism and socialism. Though Congressmen also participated in student movements, most of the students unions were functioned under the Congress Socialist Party. Though the communists dominated the student's movement, students with other ideologies were also actively participated in the student movement. The communist organizers were instructed to work along with others and to successfully implement United National Front strategy in the Student movement.

The communists organized students unions in almost all the high schools and colleges in all the districts. In Krishna, Godavari and Guntur districts, the Communists mobilized students in large number. The impact of the communist propaganda on the students in the high schools and colleges at Repalle, Tenali, Guntur, Bapatla, Gudiwada, Gannavaram, Vijayawada, Machilipatnam, Eluru, Bhimavaram, Palakollu, Razolu, Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Amalapuram, and Visakhapatnam was noteworthy. Several students who studied in the high schools and colleges in those towns during 1937-1940, became the communists.

The entire generation of students pursuing studies in high schools and colleges became members of the student unions and majority of them became communists

[312] Andhrapatrika, 23rd September 1939, p.6.

after 1940. The work done by the communists in the student movement helped them to spread their organizational base in Andhra. Majority of the students who worked under communist sponsored student movement during 1930s became active organizers of the CPI in Andhra after 1940. Even some of these students played active role in the Telangana peasant armed struggle during 1948-51. A number of students who were active in the student movement in the 1930s became the members of CPI in the 1940s and some of them reached to top most positions in the Communist Party of India.

**Women's Movements**

Another important mass organization the communists organized during the united front period was Women's organization. The communists realized that the economic dependence of women is the main cause for all the problems of women. The communists believed that the problems of women would be solved in Communist society in which women will become a part in the production process. So the communists advocated women to form into unions and fight for the independence of the country and establishment of Socialist government in India. The Communists realized the fact that the women constitute half of the population in Indian society and the vital role they should play in a proletarian revolution. E.M.S. Namboodiripad has said: "a contemptuous attitude towards the women's movement by the working class … in effect means renunciation of the struggle for proletarian hegemony in one of the most vital spheres".[313] Therefore, the communists began to organize women into associations with a view to reform and educate them and to make them ready to fight against imperialism.[314]

The youth who were working in the social reform movement especially for the upliftment of women found that the unemployment of women and economic dependence of women was one of the major reasons for the problems of women in society. They were aware of the developments that have taken place in Russia after the October Revolution. Newspapers published several articles[315] on the condition of

[313] E.M.S. Namboodiripad, "Women's Movement for Democracy", *New Age*, No. 5, February 1956, p.30.

[314] Navasakthi, 20th July 1938, p.12.

[315] For example *Andhra Patrika* published an article "Russia Stri Swatantryamu" (Women's Freedom in Russia) written by Oleti Venkatasubbaiah. In that, article the author discussed about the equality of men and women in Russia and the role of women in the production process. *Andhra Patrika*, 20th June 1928.

women in Russia. The youth who read about the condition of women in Soviet Union, felt that the problems of women could not be solved in the bourgeois social structure in which women were made inferior to men.[316] They thought that most of the problems of women were arising out of their economic problems.[317] At this stage they found that the problems of women could be solved under the socialist system in which women were free from their economic problems and do not depend on men for their livelihood.[318] Thus, their search for alternative social structure led them towards Socialism. The communists intensified the social reform movements in Andhra after the formation of the Communist party in 1934.

The socialists and communists felt that both women and men were treated equally in the ancient societies. However, the condition was changed slowly and in the later years women was confined to household work. Chandra Rajeswararao, who was an active communist organizer from Krishna district during 1930s, felt that the economic dependence of women on men was the main cause for the domination men on women. He said that both men and women get equal rights in Socialist society.[319]

The communists felt that the existing women's organizations were ineffective and their activity was limited to rich and aristocrat women living in towns. The communists wanted to build new associations with poor and middle class women of rural and urban areas. The major demands of the communist-sponsored women's associations were – hereditary property rights to women, right to divorce from cruel and sick husbands, abolition of polyandry, campaign against purdah system, equal wages to men and women, maternity facilities to women, 4 months leave with pay for working women during delivery, equal opportunities to men and women in appointments, and to start women's associations and publish literature to create consciousness among women.[320]

The communists increased their activity among women after the formation of united national front with Congress and Congress Socialists. The Communists, who were working as Congress Socialist Party, mobilized the left wing women in the

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[316] Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, p.187.
[317] *Ibid*., p.188.
[318] *Ibid*., p.277
[319] Navasakthi, 31st August 1938, p.7.
[320] Navasakthi, 20th July 1938, p.12.

Congress and organized women's associations in Krishna, Guntur and West Godavari districts. The women who attended the Kothapatnam and Manthenavaripalem summer Schools organized by Congress Socialist Party, actively participated in the women' movement. The members of the Congress Socialist Party were asked to visit the villages and conduct campaign against the child marriages, to conduct widow remarriages, and to work for upliftment of women and to make them ready to participate in the anti-imperialist movement.[321] In the early years, the women members of the Communist party, Dr. K. Atchamamba,[322] Darisi Subhadramma, Chandra Savitridevi, Kambhampati Manikyamba, Uddaraju Manikyamba, Alluru Annapurnamma, Durbha Hanumayamma and several others who were already active in the youth movement, played active role in the women's movement. Kondapalli Koteswaramma, Moturi Udayam, Manikonda Suryavathi, Kondepudi Radha, Viramachaneni Sarojini and several others came into the women's movement during the Second World War.

With the efforts of the communists, the dormant East Krishna District Women's Association was revived and its first annual conference was held in January 1938 at Dokiparru village. Srimathi Vallabhaneni Sitamahakshmamma, a well-known Congress leader, who was working in Congress Socialist Party, was elected as the president of East Krishna women's Association. The members of the association visited several villages and formed women's associations in Dokiparru, Bhatlapenumarru, Pedanagallu, Narsampalem, Movva, Pedamuthevi, and Pamarru villages in Krishna district. The executive committee of the East Krishna Women's Association, which met in Pamarru village on 25th January 1938, passed several resolutions on the political movements in the country. The conference condemned the disciplinary action taken on Swami Sahajananda Saraswati by the Bihar Provincial Congress committee. The conference in another resolution criticized the Bihar

[321] P. Sundara, *Nirmana Samasyalu*, pp.21-22. Also, see, Andhrapatrika, 2nd September 1937, p.3.

[322] Dr.Komarraju Atchamamba (1906-1964) was born in Guntur in a noble family. Her father Komarraju Lakshmanarao was a notable literary figure. In 1935, she went to London for further studies and studied Medicine. She joined in the CPI in 1940 and later she became the president of communist-sponsored Andhra Mahila Sangham. She wrote several books and pamphlets regarding women's problems. Among them 'Maternity and Child Care", and "Lessons on Self- Defense from Goondas and Reactionaries", are most popular. She was arrested in 1948 for her association with communists and underground activities. After 1949, she was free from party politics and in 1957; she was elected to Lok Sabha on Congress Ticket. For further details, see, Mallampalli Somasekharasarma, *Doctor Komarraju Atchamamba Jivitham*, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1946.

Congress committee for its whip to the members not to participate in the peasant struggles. The conference felt that the decision of the Bihar Congress Committee was against to resolution of the Congress on 'Mass Contacts'. It also condemned the corrupt and illegal methods adopted by the right wing Congress in the Congress organizational elections in Krishna district. It demanded the Congress to nominate a women representative to the Haripura Congress session from Krishna district. In another resolution, the conference demanded the Madras government to bring law to provide hereditary property rights to women.[323]

The Second annual conference of the East Krishna district women's conference was held at Komaravolu village on 20-21 April 1938. Vallabhaneni Sitamahalakshmamma was elected as the president of the association for the second term. Smt. Darisi Subhadramma, Chandra Savitridevi and others participated in the conference. Darisi Subhadramma, who opened the conference, said that the conditions of women in India were very tragic (*durbharam*). She said, "The country is undergoing slavery and poverty. Both men and women are suffering from these ailments. Women are facing more problems than men. There is no freedom to women. Women are backward then men in social, economic and political fields". Subhadramma also attacked the puranas and religion. She said that the puranas and religion were used to suppress women and to keep them under the control of men. According her, "Women have become puppets in the hands of men. They did not get equal rights along with men". Speaking about the methods to be followed by Women to get rid of their problems, she said that establishment of the people's government is the only solution to the problems of women.[324] While speaking about the Congress led national movement, Subhadramma said that the Congress leaders are fighting against the colonial government with an aim to establish bourgeois government in Independent India. She urged the women to join in the Congress, to transform the direction of Congress towards the Socialism, and to work for the establishment of Soviet type of government in independent India. The conference passed several resolutions on the equal rights to the women in relation with marriage, divorce, and hereditary (*varasatva*) rights. The Conference demanded the government to introduce

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[323] Malladi Subbamma, *Andhra Pradeshlo Mahilodyamam: Mahila Sanghalu, 1860-1983*, (Telugu), Prajaswamya Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 1985, p.96 and Y. V. Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.710.

[324] Andhrapatrika, 26th April 1938, p.12.

free education to women, to release Kalpana Dutt and other women prisoners from jail, and to lift the ban on Communist Party of India.[325] The conference advised women to get training in military drill and other martial arts to protect themselves from enemies.[326]

Women's associations were also formed in Guntur, Nellore, West Godavari and East Godavari districts. In January 1938, the East Godavari district women's Association passed resolutions condemning the fascist atrocities in Spain and China. The conference passed resolutions condemning child marriages, and advocating women's education. The conference urged women not to co-operate with the war efforts of the imperialist government, and to carry out anti-war propaganda. It also decided to establish a study centers to study and discuss about the social reform movement and several political and economic problems of the country.[327] Smt. Mahidhara Sitadevi, a member East Godavari district Women's association in an article in *Navasakthi* wrote that socialism is the only solution for all the problems of women. She wrote that the women in India are not free from their economic problems. They are depended on their family. She said that the bourgeois society did not allow women to participate in the production process. She urged women to work for the ending of the bourgeois system and to establish Socialist system in Independent India.[328]

Apart from organizing conferences of women's associations, the communists also published considerable amount of literature on the problems of women and on the condition of women in soviet Russia. Viswasahityamala, a publishing company started by Mahidhara Ramamohanarao and his brothers published several books related to Socialism, Soviet Union and the condition of women in Soviet Union.[329]

The members of the West Godavari district women's association actively participated in several political struggles. Uddaraju Manikyamba, Alluru

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[325] *Ibid.*
[326] Navasakthi, 27th July 1938, p.16.
[327] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* p.713.
[328] Navasakthi, 5th January 1938, p.4.
[329] *Soviet Strilu* (Women in Soviet Union) by Mahidhara Ramamohanarao and *Fascism, Communism – Strilu* (Fascism, Communism and Women) by Mahidhara Jaganmohanarao are some of the examples.

Annapurnamma and others participated in Kalipatnam peasant struggle and faced lathi charges and some of them were sent to jails.[330]

The communists also carried out vigorous propaganda against child marriages, dowry system, ill-treatment to women in the families, and arranged marriages for widows in the villages. Several communist leaders stood as role models for widow marriages and they themselves married widows.[331] The marriage ceremonies were also simplified and social marriages were introduced.

Thus, by the end of 1939 the communists were able to organize considerable number of women in Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur and Nellore districts. The women who were organized into these associations took active part in the mass movements organized by Congress Socialist Party.

**Press and Publications**

The Socialists and Communists effectively used the press and publications for the spread of Socialist Ideology in Andhra. During the period between 1930-40, the Socialists produced considerable amount of literature to create consciousness among different sections of the people and bring to them into the fold national movement, to give Socialist orientation to the national movement and finally to establish the hegemony of left wing over the national movement. In the modern

During the period of our study, the Socialists and Communists published several newspapers, journals, leaflets and books and established several publishing houses to publish Socialist literature. The Left literature published in this period ventilated the problems of workers and peasants and helped them to organise in unions such as youth leagues, peasant unions, and workers unions. The Socialists through their literature popularised the Socialist ideology and tried to bring the youth, peasants and workers in to the anti imperialist struggle. Books on Indian national movement, internal differences in the Congress, and translations of several theoretical works on Fascism, Socialism, Communism, history of Communist International, Developments in Soviet Russia after the Revolution and on the lives of Karl Marx,

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[330] Goparaju Sitadevi, *Janani Janmabhumischa…50 Samvatsarala Mahila Udyama Anubhavalu - Gnapakalu,* (Telugu), Sanghamitra Prachuranalu, Vijayawada, 1998, p.50.

[331] The marriages of Kondapalli Sitarama – Koteswaramma, Josyabhatla Satyanarayana – Subbamma are some of the examples.

Lenin and Dimitrov, and on the lives of Indian revolutionaries were published during this period. The Socialists in their literature also gave importance to anti fascist propaganda and popularised the aims of united national front.

The Socialists wrote several songs and popularized them among the people. These songs have created considerable influence on the workers, peasants and the youth. Balantrapu Nalinikantarao translated Eugene Pottier's international anthem of working class at the instance of P.Sundarayya. It was published in *Prabha* on 20th April 1935.[332] The poem urged the labourers to unite and to fight against the exploitation.[333] It was the first poem in Telugu, which advocated the strength of the workers and the need for their unification. Nelluri Venkatramanaidu, the stalwart of the anti zamindari struggle in Venkatagiri zamindari, wrote another song criticising the zamindari system under the caption, *we do not want this association with zamindars, lying ambush for our lives, it has destroyed our honour*.[334] This song got very much popularity among the peasants and government officials sent reports to the Madras government recommending to impose ban on this song for that it was having scathing terms against land lords and on the land revenue system of Government.[335] The proposal for its ban was dropped later. Pendyala Lokanadham, who was working among the labourers in Tenali region, wrote another song urging the unity among the working class. Lokanadham in his poem wrote, "If all the workers unite how can there be dearth for food for them. There is strength in the workers alone in the present age. Brother let us, workers line unitedly. Brother workers should unite".[336] Tummala Venkatramaiah, in another song on red flag, wrote:

May our Red flag fly and fly,
May it fly without tremor or fear?
Without any hindrance whatever.
In order that imperialism may die,
And capitalism may burn down.

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[332] V.Ramakrishna, "Literary and Theatre Movements in Colonial Andhra: Struggle for Left Ideological Legitimacy", *Social Scientist*, Vol. XXI, Nos.1-2, Jan-Feb 1993, p.74; M.Ravindra Reddy, *Adhunika Telugu Kavitvam pai Marxism Prabhavam*, (Telugu), Friends Publications, Hyderabad, 1988, pp.102-103.

[333] G.O. No. 2833 dated 22-10-1936, Home Department, Government of Madras. Also see, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, pp.244-245.

[334] V.Ramakrishna, "Literary and Theatre Movements in Colonial Andhra", p.74; M.Ravindra Reddy, Adhunika *Telugu Kavitvam pai Marxism Prabhavam*, p.108.

[335] G.O. No. 1269 dated 12th July 1936, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[336] G.O. No. 2833 dated 22-10-1936, Home Department, Government of Madras. Also see, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, pp.217-219.

This song was published in Prabha on 20th June 1935.[337]

During this time, the government banned several songs by the Socialists. The government felt that "words and signs (in these songs) are visible representations which tend directly or indirectly to bring in to hatred or contempt, his majesty of the Government established by the law in British India or any class, or section of his majesty's subjects in British India".[338] The government banned the book *Karmika Bhajanavali*, an anthology of songs published by Swami Narayananda.[339] The government also banned several other pamphlets and books published by communists on workers problems. Chundi Jagannadham and Ravi Adiseshaiah published a pamphlet *How will the Difficulties of the Labourers go* and Kambhampati Satyanarayana distributed a pamphlet, *Power of Gold*, in Madras.[340] J.Ramalingaiah, P.Ramasubbaiah and Darbha Krishnamurthi published similar pamphlets in Guntur.[341]

The Socialists led several newspapers and journals to popularise Socialist ideas among the people. Gadde Lingaiah Chowdari, the author of the book *Viplava Virulu* on the lives of Indian Revolutionaries, started *Prabha*, a fortnightly, on 5th April 1935 to popularise the Socialist ideas. It was stopped in July 1935 when the Madras government demanded a pre-publication security of Rs.8000 from the editor.[342] *Prabha* in its editorials criticised the Zamindari system. It also published several articles on international developments. It severely criticised the Congress policy towards Socialists and the British Government.[343]

On the 15th December 1937, the Communists started a weekly *Navasakthi* from Rajahmundry. Madduri Annapurnaiah was editor of this weekly.[344] Madduri Annapurnaiah, in the first editorial declared that the aims of the paper were "to create new consciousness among the people; support the national movement under the Indian National Congress; fight against imperialism and o strengthen the Congress led

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[337] G.O. No. 2833, Home Department, Government of Madras, dated 22-10-1936.
[338] G.O.No.3218 dated 11th October 1935, Law (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[339] G.O. No. 2833 dated 22-10-1936, Home Department, Government of Madras
[340] G.O. No.1291 dated 10th July 1936, Home Department (Confidential), Government of Madras.
[341] G.O.No.529 dated 11th May 1936, Home Department, Government of Madras.
[342] V.R. Bomma Reddy, *Communist Patrikalu: Charitra – Vikasam*, (Telugu), Vishweswararao, Vijayawada, 2002, p.12.
[343] Namala Vishweswararao, *Telugu Journalism Charitra –2*, (Telugu), Progressive Communications, Hyderabad, 2003, pp.50-52
[344] P.Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, p.100.

national movement; radicalise the Congress by including workers and peasants and other toiling masses of the society in the vortex of the national movement by creating consciousness among them".[345] *Navasakthi* helped to attract youth, students, peasants and workers towards socialism. *Navasakthi* also published news on national and international developments.

Apart from *Navasakthi*, there were several other newspapers and journals, which helped to the spread of communism in Andhra. H.D.Raja started *New Age* in Madras. Later this was taken over by Communists and S.V.Ghate led this paper.[346] Apart from these papers, several other papers like *Vauhini*, *Prajabandu* and *Chitragupta* also helped to the spread of Socialist ideas. *Vauhini* published several articles and speeches of Socialists.[347] Pullela Syamasundararao's *Prajavani*, *Prajamitra* of Gudavalli Ramabrahmam, Tapi Dharmarao's *Kagada* from Madras, *Andhra Labour* by P.Varahal, *Radical Student* by C.Achyutaram and P.Krishna Chowdary and *Radical* By Koganti Radhakrishnamurthi, also published news and other literature on socialism and Communism and helped to the spread of Socialist ideas in Andhra.[348]

During this time, the Socialists in Andhra organized a number of publishing houses, with a view to publish Socialist literature to inspire the people towards the Socialist ideology. Gadde Lingaiah Chowdari of Elamarru, the founder of CSP in Krishna District, founded *Adarsha Grandha Mandali* at Elamarru.[349] Adarsha Grandha Mandali published Krovvidi Lingaraju's Telugu translation for Maxim Gorky's novel *Mother* as *Amma* and the Telugu Translations of *Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx and Engels and *Imperialism* of Lenin.[350] In 1935, Mahidhara Brothers (Ramamohanarao, Jaganmohanrao and Krishnamohanarao) started *Viswa Sahitya*

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[345] *Navasakthi*, 15th December 1937.
[346] P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na Payanam*, p.100.
[347] See G. O. No.1810 dated 22-9-1937, and G. O. No. 1903, dated 7-10-1937, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[348] Namala Vishweswararao, *Telugu Journalism Charitra – 1 & 2*, (Telugu), Progress Communications, Hyderabad, 2003; V.Lakshmana Reddy, *Origin, Growth and Development of Telugu Journalism (Pre-independence)*, (Telugu), Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Nagarjuna University, 1980, p.337; Rebbapragada Mandeswara Sarma, *Akhilandhra Veera Samsmarana Kusumanjali*, (Telugu), Akhilandhra Vira Samsmarana Mandiram, Kovvuru, West Godavari Dot, 1953, p.20.
[349] D.Anjaneyulu, "Impact of Socialist Ideology on Telugu Literature Between the Wars 1919-1939", in B.R.Nanda (ed.), *Socialism in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991, p.251; Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, *Chandram Vyasavali*, Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1974, p.46.
[350] *Andhra Patrika*, 12th January 1935, p.21.

*Mala,* a Socialist publishing company, at Munganda village in East Godavari district.[351] Viswa Sahitya Mala published Telugu translations *Soviet Communism* by Sidney Webb,[352] *Russian Revolution*[353] and *Paris Commune*[354] by Lenin and several others on Soviet Union and International Communist Movement.

Vidwan Viswam and Tarimela Nagi Reddy started *Navya Sahityamala* in 1937, at Anantapur and popularised the Socialist ideas in Rayalaseema.[355] Navya Sahityamala published several writings on socialism and fascism and an essay *Austria* by Tarimela Nagi Reddy.[356] Nidamarthi Aswani Kumara Dutt started *Pragathi Publications* at Nidamarru in West Godavari district. Pragathi Publications published *China Red Army* and a book in Telugu *Anna* and some other literary works.[357] Annapragada Kameswararao started *Athiwada Grandha Mandali* in Guntur. Athivada Grandha Mandali published works like *Mascow-1937, Value-Cost-Profit, Stalin's speeches* and *New Russian Constitution*.[358]

The Socialists and communists also published several books with Socialist ideas. During this time, the communist literature was secretly smuggled into Andhra and they were translated and published in Telugu. P.Sundarayya translated *Communist Manifesto,* and *Principles of Socialism* by Marx and Engels, *Imperialism* of Lenin, but the government banned them.[359] Tummala Venkatramayya published *Life of Dimitrov,*[360] while the Andhra Congress Socialist Party published a book on *Life of Lenin.*[361]

Apart from this, the Socialists also published several books describing the lives of revolutionaries and revolutions all over the world. *Sardar Bhagat Singh Jivita*

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[351] P.S.Sharma, *Bharata Swatantra Samaranganamlo Godavari Theeram,* p.413 and Parakala Pattabhiramarao, "*Andhra Pradesh Communist Udyamaniki Mahidhara Akunthita Seva*", *Communism,* (Telugu), October 2000, pp.18-20.

[352] Mahidhara Krishnamohanarao, *Soviet Communism,* Viswasahityamala, Munganda, 1938

[353] Mahidhara Jaganmohanarao, *Russia Viplavamu,* Viswasahityamala, Munganda, 1938.

[354] Mahidhara Jaganmohanarao, *Paris Commune,* Viswasahityamala, Munganda, 1938.

[355] Vidwan Viswam, "Smrithulu", *Andhraprabha Sachitra Varapatrika,* 18th August 1976.

[356] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* p.291.

[357] Nidamarthi Umarajeswararao (ed), *Tolivekuvalo Aswani Darshanam: Nidamarthi Aswani Kumara Dutt Jivitha Smrithulu,* (Telugu), Pragathi Prachuranalayam, Bangalore, 1999, pp.21-22

[358] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra,* pp.291-292.

[359] P.Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam,* p.73. Also see, Report from the Secretary of Madras Provincial Committee of CPI to the Central Committee of CPI, in *Government of Madras, Public Department, Secret File no.931,* dated 1st September 1935.

[360] Tummala Venkataramaiah, *Comrade Dimitrov,* (Telugu), Adarsha Grandha Mandali, Elamarru, 1935.

*Charitra*[362] *Trotskey Jivitamu*[363] *Russia Viplavamu-1905*[364] and *The 1922 Ryot Revolt in Manyam (Alluri Sitaramaraju)*[365] were published by the Socialists and subsequently banned by the government. The Socialists published another book, *Anna*, a Telugu translation of *Barricades in Berlin*, a German work depicting riots in Berlin in 1929 when the communists celebrated May Day in Contravention of the police orders.[366] The rise of Fascism and Nazism also attracted the attention of Leftists. They published several books in Telugu condemning the atrocities of Fascists in Europe.[367] The Leftists also used the literature to expose the politics of right wing Congress leadership and explained the need to mobilize all sections of people into the national movement.[368]

The socialists faced several difficulties while publishing and distributing the left literature. The Madras government banned almost all the books published by Socialists and the writers and publishers were arrested and kept in jail. The restrictions on the socialist literature continued even after the formation of Congress Government in Madras in 1937. The Congress government in Madras did not tolerate the spread of left ideas through literature. The government banned *1905 – Russia Viplavamu*, *Anna*, *Manyam Rytula Tirugubatu* written by Ponnaluri Radhakrishnamurthi, which was published by Ativada Grandha Mandali. In a discussion in the Madras Legislative Assembly, the Premier of Madras C. Rajagopalachari said that these books were preaching armed resistance to the government.[369] The government arrested Vidwan Vishwam and Tarimela Nagi Reddy of Navyasahityamala, Tummala Venkatramayya, editorial board member of *Navasakthi*, and Mahidhara Krishnamohanarao and Jaganmohanarao of Vishwa Sahityamala for publishing Socialist literature.[370] Though the government imposed

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[361] Vidwan Vishwam, *Lenin*, *Navya Sahityamala*, Anantapuram, 1938.
[362] *G.O. No. 1882*, dated 11-11-1935, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[363] G.O. No. 901, dated 9-6-1936, Home Department, Government of Madras.
[364] G.O. No. 668, dated 11-4-1938, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[365] G.O. No. 1451, dated 24-8-1938, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[366] G.O. No. 1834, dated 5-11-1938, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[367] Vidwan Vishwam, *Fascism*, (Telugu), Navya Sahityamala, Anantapuram, 1937; Mahidhara Jaganmohanarao, *Fascism, Communism, Strilu*, (Telugu), Viswasahityamala, Munganda, 1938 and Pratapa Ramasubbayya, *Hitler Durantalu*, (Telugu), Ativada Grandha Mandali, Guntur, 1939 are some of the examples.
[368] Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, *Bharata Swatantrya Poratam*, (Telugu), Adarsha Grandha Mandali, Elamarru, 1938 and Settipalli Venkataratnam, *Telusukodagina Pattabhi*, Gudiwada, 1938.
[369] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th January 1939, p.14.
[370] G. O. No. 2354 dated 23rd November 1940, Public Department; G.O. No. 1100 dated 2nd April 1942, Public (General) (Confidential) Department, Government of Madras; Kottapalli Ravibabu (ed),

strict ban on the Socialist literature, the Socialists published considerable amount of literature during 1930-40. The Socialist literature helped the people to understand Marxism and brought several progressive minded people into the communist movement.

Apart from the socialist literature, another development of this period was the influence of Socialism on Telugu literature. Though the modern trends in Telugu literature began in early 1930s, the formation of socialist and communist parties, rise of people's movements and the spread of left literature had created a tremendous impact on the literary production in Telugu. Several writers, who were influenced by this literature, started writing poetry, stories, novels, and dramas with socialist orientation. The emergence of new literary trends like Surrealism and Revolutionary Humanism in West also influenced the Telugu literary production during the period from 1930-40.

In the field of poetry Srirangam Srinivasarao (popularly known as Sri Sri) and Srirangam Narayanababu who has come out of the influence of Romantic poetry in the early 1930s, published several poems with socialist orientation and created great impact on the minds of youth. *Mahaprasthanam,* a collection of poems, which was a masterpiece among all the writings of Sri Sri, was written during this period. Though most of the poems in this collection were written before 1940, it was published in 1950. A highlight of this book was the introduction of Chalam (Gudipati Venkatachalam, 1894-1979). In his songs, *Mahaprasthanam* (Great March), *Pratijna* (Oath) and *Desacharitralu* (Histories of nations), Sri Sri visualized the problems of peasants, workers and toiling masses and urged the youth to work for the building of New World.[371] Sri Sri wrote the poem *Mahaprasthanam* after being influenced by Edgar Allan Poe's *The Bells.* It implores the youth to march forward overcoming all physical barriers to create a new world under the Red Flag. The song was first published in *Jwala. Pratijna* is another poem in the collection, which was written in 1937 after he carefully read the manifesto of the progressive writers of London, which

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*Ankshalu – Nishedhalu,* (Telugu), Janasahiti, Vijayawada, 1998, p.59; Namala Vishweswararao, *Telugu Journalism Charitra –2,* p.53.

[371] Kakarla Venkata Ramanarasimham, *Adhunikandhra Kavita Samiksha,* (Telugu), Gangadhara Publications, Vijayawada, 1982, pp.454-456.

was made secretly available to him by Abburi Ramakrishnarao.[372] In the song Sri Sri had taken a vow, that he would dedicate his poetic talent to the 'welfare of working class'.[373] *Desa Charitralu* is another important poem in the collection written by Sri Sri under the influence of Marxism and interprets the history of humankind in the perspective of Karl Marx. In this poem, Sri Sri clearly supported the theory of Class Struggle and advocated the unity of working class.[374] Among the other Telugu poets who attained intellectual maturity and the political identification in the Marxian thought and inspired the people by their writings during this period were Tripuraneni Gopichand (1910-1962), G.V.Krishnarao (1914-1979), Mahidhara Ramamohanarao (1909-2000), Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao (1907-1974) Chaganti Somayajulu, and Kodavatiganti Kutumbharao.

One of the notable features of this new trend in the Telugu literature was a growing rejection of the theory 'Art for Art's sake'. Literature was brought back closer to the people and the poet was forced to come down from ivory tower in the clouds, of his own making, to the fields and factories. There was, in fact, more of this in Telugu literature during the years after 1939 than before it. However, the beginnings for the progressive literature and progressive literary movement in Andhra were made before 1940.

**Conclusion**

Thus, during the period of United National Front 1936-39, the Communists spread their influence among all sections of the people. They mobilized working class, peasantry, agricultural labourers, youth, students and women and emerged as a strong force within the national movement. By the year 1939, the left wing all most dominated the right wing in the national Movement. Nevertheless, it was short lived. The internal divisions in the left wing prevented it to maintain its hegemony over national movement. The internal divisions in the left wing led to the disintegration of united national front and expulsion of communists from the Congress Socialist Party. However, before their expulsion from the CSP, the communists got control over all

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[372] Sri Sri, *Anantam*, (Telugu), Sri Sri Prachuranalu, Chennai, 2000, p.122; K.V. Ramana Reddy, "Abburi Chalivendiralo Sri Sri", Abburi Gopalakrishna (ed), *Abburi Samsmarana*, (Telugu), Natyagosthi, Hyderabad, 1988, pp.103-104.

[373] Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam*, Vol.XIII, *Adhunika Yugam*, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1991, p.247.

[374] C. Narayana Reddy, *Adhunikandhra Kavitvamu, Sampradayamulu: Prayogamulu*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1999, pp.524-532.

the mass organizations of Congress Socialist Party. With the expulsion of communists from the CSP, majority of the members of the CSP and its frontal organizations went to CPI. The Communists with their active propaganda among all these sections, all the mass organizations of Congress Socialist Party came under the control of Communists after the expulsion of Communist party from the Congress Socialist Party.

The United Front strategy advocated by Comintern yielded good results for the communists in Andhra. The communists, who were continuing their activities under severe repression of the government up to 1935, used the cover of Congress Socialist Party to escape from repression. Several communists were appointed as in-charge of Congress committees at taluk and district levels. Because of their ideological clarity, compared to other left wing groups, the communists were able to win over the cadre of the CSP into CPI.

With their active propaganda among workers, peasants and other sections of the society, the communists were able to broaden the social base of the national movement. The communists thought that bourgeois leadership dominated the Indian National Congress. With a view to bring pressure on the leadership to adopt more radical programmes and finally to replace the bourgeois leadership of the Congress with proletariat leadership, the communists mobilized workers, peasants, students and other sections of masses under Congress banner.

In the early years of the united front, several progressive minded congressional representatives also supported the communists. They used to preside over the socialist conferences and some of them provided financial and other material support for the socialists to carry out their activities. The Congress leaders supported and admired the Soviet Union and the Russian revolution was given warm welcome. Congressional representatives translated Maxim Gorkey’s Mother and several other books on Marxism into Telugu. Marxism found a ready welcome and no strong Marxist intellectual current developed in the nationalist ranks until 1937. However, after 1937, the rise communist influence in the Congress alarmed the Congressmen and they maintained hostility towards communists. Nevertheless, the communists on the other hand wanted to maintain Unity of nationalist forces and compromised with the Congress leadership on several occasions when the Congress took a number of decisions against the wishes of the left wing.

It was during the period of united front the real foundations of Communist Party was made in Andhra. The communists remained as a small force until the formation of United National Front. The activities of the communists were limited to Industrial working class and the agricultural labourers. However, with the entry of the rich and middle class peasant background youth into the communist movement, the CPI started looking into the problems of rich and middle peasants. The activities of the CPI among the peasants were intensified after the formation of United National Front. With this, the CPI got complete hold over the peasant movements and most of the peasant nationalists joined CPI after 1940. It is argued that the rich peasant background of the CPI leadership and its attachment to the peasants cause finally forced them to adopt the New Democracy Theory proposed by Mao, even before its success in China.

It was during the period of united front for the first time the communists were able to organise the peasantry, working class, students, youth, women and other sections of the people on class lines against British imperialism and bourgeois and capitalists. They organized several struggles of working class, peasantry and students and attracted those sections into the fold of CPI. The revolutionary party can say this period as a period of accumulation forces. James Petras in his articles 'Socialist Revolutions and their Class components'[375] said that the primary task of the revolutionary party was accumulation of forces. For that, it has to attract different sections of people into its fold. It has to organise struggles to solve the demands of those sections. During the period of united front, the CPI followed the same and became a strong force in the political scene of Andhra by the end of 1940. Several important leaders of the Communist Party in Andhra who played active role in CPI after 1940 joined the CPI during the period of United Front.

Some of the Communists treated the united front strategy of CPI as betrayal to the proletariat interests. Forty years after the united front, a section of the communists who broke away from the CPI (M) in 1967 felt that the foreign mentors misguided the CPI.[376]

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[375] James Petras, "Socialist Revolutions and their Class Components", *New Left Review*, No. 111, September – October 1978, p.37.

[376] Suniti Kumar Ghosh, *India and the Raj, 1919-1947: Glory, Shame and Bondage, Vol. Two*, Research Unit of Political Economy, Bombay, 1995, p.170.

# Chapter 4

## Disintegration of the United Front and the Emergence of CPI

The year 1939 has great significance in the history of Indian national movement. The developments that took place in the year 1939 had far-reaching impact on the political developments in the country in pre and post independence periods of Indian history. Until 1939, all the nationalist forces including the communists and socialists worked under one banner, i.e. the Indian National Congress. The years between 1936 and 1939 witnessed the rapid growth in the Left and nationalist movements in India. During this period, the Socialists and Communists mobilized the hitherto neglected sections of the society on their day–to-day problems and created political consciousness among those sections and brought them into the mainstream of national movement. The efforts of the Left wing helped the Congress to increase its membership from 600000 in 1936 to 5,000,000 in 1939.[1] At the same time, the communists strengthened their position among workers and peasants and other sections of the society. With the active work of communists, in 1939 the Left wing was in a position to establish its hegemony over the Indian National Congress. However, the ideological struggle between the Left wing and Right within the Congress, and among various Left wings to establish their hegemony over the national movement on civil society, finally, led to the disintegration of the united national front and the emergence of various independent left wing political parties. The differences that arose among the nationalist forces in the 1930s continued even after India attained independence in 1947.

The present chapter deals with some key aspects in this period, i.e., the ideological struggle within the Congress between the Right wing and the Left wing forces, the role of Communists in this ideological struggle, the efforts of the Right wing to contain the growth of the Left wing in the national movement, the disintegration of 'United Front' and the expulsion of communists from Congress Socialist Party and finally the disruption of left wing unity.

This chapter also discusses the activities of communists during the Second World War period. The attitude of various political parties and groups towards the

[1] John Patrick Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M.N.Roy and Comintern Policy 1920-1939,* Princeton University press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1971, p.275.

war, anti-war campaign by the Communists, pressure on Congress to start a mass movement against the decision of the government to pull India into *Imperialist war*, secret propaganda by communists against war efforts, publication of books and newsletters with anti-war propaganda, arrests of communists during the war and the other related political aspects are also discussed in this chapter.

Since the adaptation of the united front policy, the Left wing strongly advocated for the establishment of a Socialist system in Independent India and demanded the Congress leadership to take up the issues of workers and peasants to draw them into the vertex of the national movement. The left wing argued that the Congress led national Movements had failed due to lack of support from the workers and peasants. The socialists drew comparisons between India and pre revolutionary Russia and praised the changes that took place in Russia after the revolution. They urged the Congress to work for the establishment of a Soviet type of government in India. On the other hand, the Right wing Congress leadership, which had maintained close relationship with the Indian capitalist class, opposed the Soviet type of alternative. According to them Socialism was an alien theory and does not suit to the conditions of India. They have pointed out that Socialism leads to dictatorship.[2]

The struggle between the right wing and left wing within the Congress was not confined to the realm of ideology. Since the formation of united front in 1936, there was intense struggle in Andhra between the Right wing and Left wing to gain control over the Congress organization at the provincial level. The leftists tried to gain control over the Congress organization by mobilizing the workers and peasants and other neglected sections into Congress and the right wing tried to prevent the growth of left wing domination in the Congress. Thus, the Right wing and Congress ministry opposed the active participation of Congressmen in the people's movements. Several left wing Congressmen were arrested for their participation in the peasant movements.

[2] Speech by Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramaiah at Eluru on 7th April 1939. *Andhra Patrika*, 10th April 1939, p.8. Also see his book, *Socialism and Gandhism*, The Hindustan Publishing Company, Rajahmundry, 1938.

The Congress leadership also issued warnings to some of the organizers of the peasant movements.[3]

The right wing used every opportunity to contain the rising socialist ideology in the Congress. It took every step to defeat the left wing candidates in the Congress organizational elections. With the formation of Congress ministries at the provincial level, some of the Congress leaders felt that the Congressmen who dominate the local Congress committees would get more benefits and power in future. Corruption and careerism became prevalent in Congress. The right Wing Congress leaders who were enjoining power in the Congress at the provincial level wanted to keep their positions safe. In their attempt to protect their place in the Congress organization, they tried to enroll anti-congress elements into Congress organization and made every effort to prevent the domination of left wing in the local Congress committees. The developments at the national level also added fuel to this type of mentality. At the national level, the Right Wing was trying to strike a compromise with imperialism and form a government at the center. They thought that the domination of left wing in the local Congress committees would result in the election of left wing candidate as the president of Indian National Congress, who would obstruct the compromise between Congress and imperialism. Therefore, in their effort to prevent the election of leftwing as Congress president in the Congress organizational elections, they began to suppress the left wing from the local level. At some places, the nominations filed by the left wing leaders were rejected on the plea that they do not have believe in non-violence.[4] The most horrible thing the Right wing leadership did was that they have cancelled the membership of 35000 members who were enrolled into Congress by left wing leaders and admitted their own supporters into the Congress.[5] At some places,

[3] Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, Uddaraju Ramaraju and several others in West Godavari and Krishna districts were suspended from the Congress for their active participation in the peasant movements. *Andhra Patrika*, 17th September 1938, 18.

[4] The nomination filed by Sundarayya was rejected on the ground that Sundarayya had no faith in non-violence. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, the president of APCC in 1938 said 'Sundarayya was a communist and he was not eligible to hold official positions in the Congress'. The attitude of Pattabhi was condemned by several newspapers and political parties and finally Pattabhi had to accept the candidature of Sundarayya. *Andhra Patrika*, 3rd January 1939, p.13; *Navasakthi*, 4th January 1939, p.4 and 18th January 1939, p.6.

[5] *Navasakthi*, 21st December 1938, p.3 and 28th December 1938, p.5.

supporters of the left wing were not allowed to participate in the organizational elections.[6]

In spite of all these difficulties, the socialists and communists continued to work as loyal congressmen. The unity of nationalist forces was the main task of the left wing during this period. However, the right wing wanted to send the left wing out from the Congress. The active propaganda done by the socialists and the harassment caused to them by the right wing led to the strengthening of the left wing in Andhra.[7]

Though the right wing made several illicit methods to prevent the domination of left wing within the Indian National Congress, the leftists were successful in electing Subhash Chandra Bose as the president of Indian National Congress for the second term. However, the left wing failed to protect its position in the Indian National Congress for a long time. The right wing leadership which was not able to digest its defeat in the presidential election rejected to cooperate with newly elected president. Finally, Subhash Chandra Bose resigned as the President of Indian National Congress and formed his own group 'Forward Bloc' within the Congress. The communists tried to prevent this split but the right wing rejected to come to any agreement with Bose. The right wing, after regaining power in the Congress organization made several attempts to crush the left wing in the Congress. The Bombay session of AICC held in June 1939, passed resolutions barring Congressmen organize any Satyagraha without prior permission from the provincial Congress Committees.[8] In fact, these resolutions were passed to contain the activity of the Left wing congressmen against the provincial governments, and to send the Left wing out from the Congress. Faced with such a provocation, the Left wing called for a nation wide 'day of protest' against the decisions of the AICC and then observed a 'national struggle week' from 31 August to 6 September 1939. The Congress high command responded to it by removing Bose from his position as President of Bengal PCC, and

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[6] *Navasakthi*, 19th January 1938, p.2.

[7] Some of the Right wing leaders who played an active role in suppressing the left wing in 1930s later admitted that the harassment meted to the leftists helped the communists to strengthen their position among the youth who were dissatisfied with the corrupt practices of the Right wing leadership. See, Ayyadevara Kaleswararao, *Na Jivitha Katha – Navyandhramu,* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Adarsha Grandha Mandali, Vijayawada, 1959, pp.469-471 and Kalapala Suryaprakasharao, *Kakani Venkataratnam Jivitha Charitra,* (Telugu), Kakani Smaraka Committee, Vijayawada, 1977, pp.65-67.

[8] E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle,* Social Scientist Press, Trivandrum, 1986, p.677.

debarring him from Congress elective office for three years. The CWC action against Bose for his participation in organizing the 'day of protest' was strongly condemned in a statement issued by communist leaders P.C. Joshi, G. Adhikari, R.D. Bharadwaj and A.K.Ghosh.[9] The editorial of the *National Front* criticized the activities of the Congress high command describing it as its desire for 'appeasing imperialism'.

The outbreak of the Second World War brought radical changes in the programme of Left wing political parties in India and led to the disintegration of United National Front. In the early years of the War the CPI which stood for the unity of nationalist forces, demanded Congress to utilize the opportunity provided by the war and to start mass Satyagraha. Though the INC declared non-cooperation to war efforts, it did not call for any resistance to war efforts and even offered its willingness to enter into a compromise with the British. The CPI strongly criticized the inaction of Congress and began independent efforts to organize workers, peasants and other sections of the society in the anti-war activities. This independent action of CPI detached it from the bourgeois dominated Indian National Congress.

Apart from the differences between Right wing and Left Wing in the Congress, the differences among various left wing groups within the Congress Socialist Party also led to the disintegration of the United National front. Though the left wing worked as a united front during 1936 and 1939 and worked for the *transformation* of Indian National Congress opposing the Right Wing, the differences between the Socialists, Communists and Royists continued and these differences ultimately led to the disintegration of the Untied National front and the division of national and left movements in the country.

In the 1930s, the left wing Congress consisted of four groups i.e., Congress Socialists, Communists, Royists, and Subhashites (the followers of Bose later came to known as the Forward Blocists). These four groups differed with each other on the question of how to conduct the struggle for Independence. In spite of these differences, these groups worked as a united left wing to counter the right wing in the Congress and to give a radical orientation to the national movement. But during the

[9] Jyothi Basu and Others (ed.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India, Vol. IV, (1939-1943),* National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997, pp.82-85.

period of united front from 1936-40, the Communists and Royists who were working under the cover of Congress Socialist Party, also made several attempts to strengthen their own position in the Congress Socialist Party and to prove themselves as the real Marxist Party. These efforts ultimately led to the disintegration of united front and Congress Socialist Party.

The first blow to the Socialist unity came from the Royists. During the time of the formation of the CSP, M.N.Roy was in jail. However, Roy maintained his own group in several provinces. The Royist group greeted the formation of CSP with enthusiasm. Very soon, after the formation of CSP the Roy group joined the CSP. However, after Roy's release from jail the relations between the CSP and Roy group worsened. Roy, after his release from jail, changed his earlier characterization of the Congress. M.N.Roy opposed the existence of a separate group in the Congress on the ground that it would cause the weakening of the Congress in its fight against imperialism. In March 1937, Roy convened a meeting of his followers in the CSP, at Delhi, and instructed them to resign from the CSP, in-group wise at intervals, rather than enbloc, in order to create an impression of a collapse of the CSP.[10]

The breakup of Royists from CSP also had its impact on Andhra. In spite of opposition from communists and socialists, Roy maintained his own group in Andhra. The followers of M.N. Roy convened a conference in Tenali in 1940 and formed a branch of Radical Democratic Party in Andhra.[11] Tripuraneni Gopichand, Koganti Radhakrishnamurthi, Koganti Subramanyam, P.V.Subbarao, G.V.Krishnarao and Avula Gopalakrishnamuthi at Tenali; G.Narahari, M.V.Ramamuthi, Puvvada Nageswararao and Lavu Ankamma at Guntur; Ravipudi Venkatadri, Kolla Subbarao, Gorantla Raghavaiah and Guntupalli Gopalakrishnaiah at Chirala; M.V.Sastri and Palagummi Padmaraju in East Godavari District and Abburi Ramakrishnarao and Varada Rajeswararao in Visakhapatnam worked actively for the growth of Radical Democratic Party in Andhra.

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[10] Krishna Patrika, 31 July 1937.

[11] K.Radhakrishnamurthy, "Radical Democratic Party", in *Prasarita*, No.20, April-June 1975, p.75. A. L. Narasimharao, "Aptudu Abburi", in Abburi Gopalakrishna (Ed), *Abburi Samsmarana*, (Telugu), Natyagosthi, Hyderabad, 1988, pp.26-31.

Another blow to the disruption of the CSP in Andhra came with the emergence of All India Forward Bloc formed by Subhash Chandra Bose. With the formation of Forward Bloc several Andhra Socialist leaders joined the Forward Bloc in Andhra. Madduri Annapurnaiah, the founder and an important organizer of CSP in Andhra, joined the Forward Bloc and became a member in the working committee of the All India Forward Bloc. A conference organized by the supporters of Bose at Vijayawada on 3rd January 1940 elected M. Annapurnaiah as the president of Andhra committee of Forward Bloc.[12] Peta Bapaiah, Pullela Syamasundara Rao, Yerramilli Narasimharao, Kakarala Kameswararao, Gowthu Latchanna, Anne Anjaiah, Kosaraju Ammaiah, Kandula Obul Reddy and Kakani Venkataratnam joined in the Forward Bloc.[13]

The actual division between the Communists and other left wing elements took place with the expulsion of communists from the CSP in 1940. Since the beginning of United Front, a section of the CSP leadership, M.R. Masani, the joint secretary of the CSP, Asoka Mehta, the editor of party journal *Congress Socialist* and Ram Manohar Lohia, maintained a hostile attitude towards communists and carried out anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda within the Congress Socialist Party.

The differences between communists and socialists reached its height during the 4th annual conference of the CSP held in Lahore in 1940. The CPI proposed a list of candidates to the CSP executive Committee against the official list proposed by the CSP leadership. The panel proposed by CPI was defeated in Lahore. The differences between the two groups worsened during the Tripuri crisis and broke out with the beginning of Second World War. Finally, in March 1940, which was during the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress, the CSP passed a resolution expelling the Communists from CSP. By this time, the Communists had become so well entrenched in the CSP, that they were able to take with them from one third to one-half of CSP membership in Bengal and Punjab, as well as the entire Kerala unit of CSP[14] and greater part of the CSP organization in Andhra and Tamilnadu.[15] More

[12] *Andhra Patrika*, 5th January 1940, p.6.
[13] P.L.Sundararao, "Andhra lo Forwardu Blacu", *Prasarita,* No.20, April-June 1975, pp.48-49.
[14] N.E.Balaram, "Early Beginnings of Communist Movement in Kerala" in Jagannath Sarkar, A.B.Bardhan and N.E.Balaram (ed), *India's Struggle for Freedom: Several Streams,* People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1986, p.250.

over, as a result of this, the CSP eventually lost control over the All India Students' Federation, the All India Kisan Sabha and the All India trade union Congress.

The United front strategy of working with and in the CSP, to extend the influence of the left within the nationalist movement as well as the influence of communists within the CSP, proved remarkably successful to the CPI. The relatively greater political clarity of the communists, as well as their undoubted commitment and organizational skills won those many converts from the CSP-including such later communist leaders as E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A. K. Gopalan, and P. Krishna Pillai in Kerala.

In association with the CSP and independent mass leaders such as Swami Sahajanand, the CPI also partially realized its goal of building a nationwide peasant movement. As seen above, the BPKS and AIKS grew in number and militancy, with AIKS even adopting, the Red Flag as its emblem in 1937. As far as the working class was concerned labour militancy grew in this period. In the early months of the Congress ministries, labour agitation resulted in some pro-labour legislation by the government. In the student and the cultural front, CPI efforts to promote UNF tactics met with great success. The All India Students Federation and All India Progressive Writers Association were to prove important vehicles for disseminating communist-influenced 'left nationalist' ideology amongst large sections of the intelligentsia in India. During this period the communists also influenced the Congress through their work. The resolutions passed in the Lucknow and Faizpur sessions of the Indian National Congress and some of the progressive measures of the Congress ministries were a reflection of the communist influence on the Congress. The mass struggles conducted by the communists during the united front strengthened the organizational base of the Congress.

Bipan Chandra, the eminent historian on modern India also criticized the strategy and tactics followed during the 1930s. He felt that Indian National Congress was the product of 'Primary Contradiction' between imperialism and Indian people and it represented the Indian people as a whole. He also felt that the internal

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[15] M.R.Masani, *Bliss was it in that Dawn: A Political Memoir up to Independence*, Arnold Heinemann, New Delhi, 1977, p.124.

differences within the national movement are secondary (non-antagonistic) and subordinated to the primary contradiction. He criticized that the left wing failed to understand the Primary and secondary contradictions and failed to transform the Indian National Congress. He says that the Congress in the 1930s were a pro-working class, pro-kisan and even some times pro-left.[16]

However, a careful analysis of the events that took place in the national movement during this period reveals that the CPI and the left never failed to understand the Primary and Secondary contradictions. It is very difficult to agree with Bipan Chandra's argument that the Congress was pro-left and pro-working class. In fact, during this period the Congress ministries sided with the Zamindars and opposed the peasant movements and the Congress high command also supported the ministries.

However, the rapid spread of left ideology during the united front period and the influence of communists among workers, peasants, agricultural labourers, students, youth and women, established during the united front period, helped them to attract a large number of these sections into Communist party after 1940. With their radical policy towards the Second World War, the communists emerged as a strong alternative force to the Congress after 1940 and gained control over all the mass organizations in which they worked during the united front period. Thus, with the separation of communists from the Congress and other left wing forces, and the pursuance of a more radical line by the communists during the early years of the War, struggle started between communists and Congress for hegemony over the Indian National Movement.

**Communists and the Second World War**

While Gandhi and his Right wing associates were engaged in ousting the left from the INC, the world was heading towards another great war. And when Britain declared India as a belligerent country, a state of confusion prevailed among the political parties of India. Gandhi's initial response was that Britain should be helped unconditionally. He argued that it was not right to harass the enemy when they were

[16] Bipan Chandra, "Struggle for Ideological Transformation of the Indian National Congress in the 1930s", *Social Scientist*, Vol. XIV, Nos.8-9, Aug – Sep 1986, pp.18-39.

in difficulty and that it was unfair to use that opportunity to bargain with them.[17] But the Right Wing Congress leadership, who wanted to get more concessions from the British in return to their support of the War, rejected Gandhi's proposal of unconditional support.[18] The INC demanded that Britain should declare its war aims clearly before it sought India's participation and as she never declared her war aims and the future status of India the INC refused to participate in the war and declared that only an independent India could participate in any such war.

The attitude of CPI was different from that of the Congress towards the War. Long before the beginning of the War, G. Adhikari declared, "in case imperialist war breaks out, the communists would undoubtedly stand to convert that war into a civil war-so that the warring capitalist governments are overthrown and we in the colonies strike for freedom".[19] The CPI declared that it would not wait sine die for an opportunity when Britain would be involved in the war, rather it would mobilize the forces of the national struggle against Britain's war preparations. The CPI clearly stated that Congress should not enter the War unless the government concedes 'complete control' over army and foreign policy to the Indian Political parties. In an article entitled 'A peace policy for India' in *National Front,* P. Sundarayya maintained "… imperialism whether administered by a British Labour government or a British Conservative Government retains all the salient features of imperialism and India could never be a part to an alliance formed by the British Government for the purpose of its defence against its fascist rivals unless the absolute right of Indian people to freedom of choice in its support is first conceded".[20]

Not only that, the editorial of the *National Front* (22 October 1939) also mentioned that in case Britain join with USSR, France, Czechoslovakia India would not participate in such a war; it could participate in the war only as a free nation. 'Nothing but freedom can deviate us', it argued, 'from the path of opposition to every war in which Britain is a party'. The CPI expected that the gravity of the situation would force the Congress to adopt a policy of struggle on the model of old

[17] A.K. Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People Reminiscences*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, pp.132-133.
[18] G. Adhikari, "Gandhivadam", in P. C. Joshi (ed), *Yuddamu – Vividha Partila Nijaswarupamu* (Telugu), Desoddaraka Mudraksharasala, Tenali, 1941, pp.60.
[19] G. Adhikari, "Honesty in Controversy", *National Front*, Vol. 1, No. 24, July 1938, p.24.
[20] P. Sundarayya, "A Peace Policy for India", *National Front*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 3rd April 1938, pp.13-14.

Satyagraha. And once, Satyagraha was declared, the CPI considered that mass repression would follow and by utilizing that opportunity it would continue a widespread guerilla struggle and by drawing the bulk of the masses they would in course of time, reach their final victory.

With the beginning of the War, the Congress ministries in the provinces resigned from the offices as a mark of protest against the declaration of India as a belligerent country. In the Ramgarh session (March 1940) of the Congress a resolution entitled “India and the War Crisis” was adopted wherein the INC disapproved the declaration of India as a belligerent country and exploitation of its resources and described it as an affront to Indians. It noted that Britain was carrying on the War for imperial purpose and exploiting India and other Afro-Asian countries and for which India could not be a party to this war and the Congressmen could not help the war in any way. Earlier the Viceroy, Linlithgow, rejected the Congress offer of full-cooperation in the war if the government agrees to constitute a constituent assembly to determine India’s future after the War, form a genuine and responsible Central government, and to declare the War aims of the government. The Viceroy declared that the government would consider the proposals of the Congress after the completion of War. In the Ramgarh session, the Congress gave powers to Gandhi to determine the future course of the Congress.

In July 1940 following Hitler’s advance in Europe, the fall of France and deepening war-crisis, the Congress made a new offer of co-operation and demanded the government to form a provisional national government. But the Viceroy did not agree for this proposal and proposed a new offer which came to known as ‘August offer’ which did not fulfil the Congress demand. At this stage, Gandhi and Congress were hesitant to start a Satyagraha. They feared that they might not be able to control the masses if they start any Satyagraha and it would finally lead to disaster. Finally, Gandhi decided to start an individual Satyagraha with selective persons like Vinoba Bhave and others. Even this highly limited and ineffective Satyagraha made the Indian national bourgeois panicky. Birla strongly detested the idea of civil disobedience in 1940, because, he thought, this kind of movement would bring about

new dangers not only to the colonial government but also to the government in Independent India. [21]

Clearly, the Congress attitude to war during 1939-42 was strongly anti-fascist and anti-imperialist. It had no illusion about the true nature of British Imperialism. It was opposed to the British policy of divide and rule and sought solution to the communal problem through the establishment of a constituent assembly elected by adult suffrage. But its method of struggle was compromising in nature.

Subhash Chandra Bose and his Forward Bloc proposed a more militant line. Denouncing the Gandhian policy Bose saw the hesitant and anti-struggle strategy of the Congress as signs of compromise and negotiation with the British. He wanted the left to split from the Congress and to organize a parallel Congress with all the left wing forces to start a struggle of its won.[22] On the other hand the CSP wanted to remain with the Congress. The socialists thought that the struggle was not possible without Gandhi and Congress so they decided to work for the unity in the Congress. They opposed Bose's idea of immediate struggle by the left wing and shared M.N.Roy's views of transforming the INC until it achieved the qualities of a revolutionary platform. Unlike the Forward Bloc, the CPI wanted to preserve the unity of Congress. While criticizing the Congress for its inaction, the CPI advised Forward Bloc not to alienate the Gandhian leadership.

For the CPI, War was an opportunity to further the cause of Indian revolution. It dubbed the War as imperialist in nature having no connection with democracy. The CPI criticized that the appeasement policy of Britain and France strengthened the position of Germany and Italy. In a reply written to the Congress working committee on their role during the War period, the communists said that Britain followed the policy of appeasement because she was afraid of Soviet Russia. CPI felt that British imperialism allowed the fascists to destroy the popular government in Spain because it wanted to solve the inter-imperialist contradiction at the cost of destruction of the small nations. According to CPI, though Britain declared that their War aim was to

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[21] Alan Ross, *The Emissary: G.D. Birla, Gandhi and Independence,* Harper Collins Publishers India, New Delhi, 1993, pp.135-139.

[22] Bipan Chandra and Others, *India's Struggle for Independence,* Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1989, p.452. Also see, P. C. Joshi, "Bosu Rajakiyalu", in P. C. Joshi (Ed), *Yuddamu – Vividha Partila Nijasvarupam* (Telugu), p.43.

save democracy from the onslaught of fascists, all their efforts upto the last moment of the outbreak of the war were to achieve a settlement with Hitler and divert the fascist attacks on Soviet Union.[23]

The CPI was against the Gandhian policy of vacillation and welcomed the resignation of the Congress ministries but rued over the fact that the Congress only withdrew support and did not resist imperialist war. The CPI appealed Congress to appoint broad council of action to take necessary steps for the production of anti-war materials and enrollment of volunteers. The CPI also demanded the Congress to organise anti-war conferences and demonstrations in co-ordination with the kisan sabhas and trade unions and to start mass campaign to stop transfer of men, material and money in support of the imperialist war.[24] It thought that by organizing mass demonstrations and intense campaign against war such a situation must be created as would compel the Congress leadership to initiate struggle. It visualized that political and economic effects of the war would result in mass starvation and suppression of civil rights and would thus bring the common people in direct conflict with the government. The CPI planned to take advantage of this turbulent situation.

Through anti-war activities, the CPI wanted to create an anti-war sentiment among the people in general and the masses of 'congressmen in particular' and thus orient the Congress towards struggle. It thought that the stalemate can not be broken by giving a call for nationwide 'action' or by organizing 'revolt' against the Congress' but by patient and systematic anti-war propaganda, strikes, demonstrations etc. and by sharp but convincing criticism of the present policy of wait and see pursued by Congress leadership. For the CPI it was the only way towards the struggle. Hence it spoke for the movement through Congress organizations and through closest alliance of working class and peasant organizations with them.

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[23] P.C. Joshi (Ed), *Congress Karyavarganiki Communistula Javabu, Part – I,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1946, pp.10-11. Also see Jyothi Basu & Others (Eds), *Documents of the History of the Communist Movement in India*, Vols.I-VIII, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997, pp.129-130.

[24] Draft resolution entitled 'India and War' proposed by R.D. Bharadwaj, Somnath Lahiri, Bankim Mukherjee and S.G. Sardesai in the AICC session held at Wardha on 9th October 1939. Reproduced in Jyothi Basu & Others (Eds), *Documents of the History of the Communist Movement in India, Vols. I-VIII,* pp.114-116.

Thus in close co-operation with the Congress and by organizing mass anti-war strikes, rallies and demonstrations, the CPI tried to give proletarian colour to the national struggle. In a document entitled *Proletarian Path,* the central committee of CPI had called for a political general strike in the major industries.[25] Not only that, the CPI also noted that 'confining proletarian action only to struggle for economic demands, higher wages in view of rising prices, etc., would mean renouncing the task of making a bold bid for proletarian leadership of the political struggle ahead. Accordingly it was stated that the chief task of the CPI would be to give mass movements a revolutionary form and when no-tax, no-rent campaign would gain momentum, when this movement breaks through all restrictions imposed by the Gandhian technique of non-violence and develops into mass insurrection against imperialist rule, then and only then shall capture of power become the immediate perspective. Again and again it emphasized the importance of co-operation with the Congress, taking advantage of the Congress led movements, and convincing the Congress cadres of the effectiveness of the technique of the agitation and action. That is, in short, the CPI favoured close co-operation with the Congress, but was vehemently opposed to the Gandhian technique of the movement.

The revolutionary policy of CPI at a time when the Congress was trying to strike a compromise with imperialism helped CPI to attract the patriotic youth into its fold. Though most of them did not agree with the political line of CPI and its adherence to the Comintern, they supported and participated in the mass demonstrations and other anti-war activities organized by the CPI. At several places the Congress leaders provided all the facilities to the Communists to launch underground activities.

After the declaration of the War, P. Sundarayya, who was the Secretary of APSCP, convened a meeting in Bezawada to discuss about the programme to be carried out in Andhra during war. Most of the members of the CPI attended the conference. In the conference the members rejected the programme outlined by Congress Socialist Party and decided to carry out the programme of CPI as envisaged

[25] Gene D. Overstreet & Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India,* The Perennial Press, Bombay, 1960, pp.182-183.

by the Central Committee of CPI in its secret manifesto entitled *Proletarian Path.*[26] The conference passed a resolution criticizing the programme of Congress Socialist Party and recommended the CSP to follow the line proposed by CPI. This led to the expulsion of Communists from CSP. [27]

While criticizing the Congress leadership for its inaction at a critical juncture, the communists carried out rigorous anti-war propaganda and encouraged peasants and workers not to pay tax and resort to strikes. Secret anti-war propaganda was the main activity of the communists during the War. They established secret publishing houses with printing facilities and published several books, pamphlets and newspapers to carry out anti-war activity and to encourage people to revolt against the government. They also organized several processions and public meetings and exhorted people not to help the British either by donating money, or by enlisting as volunteers in the army. Through their anti-war activity, the communists felt that they could encourage all sections of the people including military to start strikes against the government, which would finally lead to a proletarian revolution in the country. While continuing anti-war propaganda, the communists also concentrated on planning of mass movements and organsied peasants, workers, agricultural labourers, students and women on their own problems.

Immediately after the beginning of the war, the journal of Congress Socialist Party, *Navasakthi* which was run by communists, published an article entitled 'World War: Our Tasks".[28] The article advocated the youth to carry out both open and underground activity to prevent the war efforts of the government. It urged the people not to enlist as soldiers in the military, to withdraw the money deposits from the Banks, and to boycott British Insurance companies. It urged the workers not to assist the government war activity and to resist overtime duties in factories and to demand more wages in the War period to meet the rise of prices of goods. It also appealed the government servants not to cooperate with the war efforts and called for a general

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[26] Josyabhatla Satyanarayana, *Jeevitamu-Atu Potlu: Oka Swatantra Samara Yodhuni Athma Parisheelana,* (Telugu), Author, Vijayawada, 1988, pp.59-60; Y. Vijaya Kumar, *Jivitha Saramsam,* (Telugu), Pragathi Printers, Hyderabad, 2002, p. 16 and Moturu Hanumantharao, *Destination Communism: Memories of a Veteran Communist,* Prajasakthi Book House, Hyderabad, 2000, p.6.

[27] The National Executive of CSP decided to carryout peaceful protest against the war. But the Communists wanted more radical programme, which included strikes of working class, no-rent campaigns and to obstruct the War efforts of the British through open and underground activity.

[28] *Navasakthi*, 6th September 1939.

strike by the railway workers and factory workers. The article predicted that the Indian soldiers would also support the strike and then the revolutionary forces would be able to drive away the British from India. The article attracted the attention of the government and the government tried to take action on the paper. The Madras government issued a notification proscribing the journal[29] but even before that the communists, sensing the danger, stopped the publication of the paper and shifted the press to underground [30] and started an underground paper *Swatantra Bharat* to carry out the anti-war campaign. For the whole period from 1939 to 1941, *Swatantra Bharat* was published secretly and distributed all over Andhra.[31]

Swatantra Bharat carried out rigorous anti-war campaign. It said that the unconditional participation of India in the prosecution of War was nothing but the continuous destruction of life and blood of Indians. It appealed to the people to withdraw their money deposits from the banks and not to donate funds for the war. It also exhorted people to prevent the efforts of government to raise funds for the prosecution of war and recruitment of volunteers to take part in the war and appealed people to realize that the opportunity provided by the War was a fair opportunity to fight for national independence.[32]

The communists also published several pamphlets and books urging people to revolt against the British government and to resist the war efforts of the government. In a pamphlet entitled *Samrajyavada Yuddanni Bahishkarinchandi*, published in Kakinada immediately after the outbreak of the war, the communists condemned the use of India's resources for the War purposes and criticized the government for the promulgation of ordinances to prevent public opposition to war. Discussing about the rise of fascism the pamphlet said, "Britain alone is the root cause for the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis and Fascists". The pamphlet urged the Congress ministries to challenge the governor's rule in the provinces and to oppose the transfer of India's

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[29] G. O. No. 1606, dated 26th September 1939, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[30] P. Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1994, p.102 and Namala Vishweswararao, *Telugu Journalism Charitra- Part 2*, (Telugu), Progressive Communications, Hyderabad, 2003, pp.52-53.
[31] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, "Andhradesamlo Ativada Udyamalu", *Andhrakesari Prakasam Satajayantyutsava Sanchika*, (Telugu), Hyderabad, 1974, p.266.
[32] G.O. No. 1846 dated 14th September 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

resources for the War.[33] Vidwan Vishwam and Tarimela Nagi Reddy published the Telugu translation of an article entitled 'Economic Effects of War – Our Tasks' written by R.D. Bharadwaj. The pamphlet said that the War was the result of the attempts of the rich to increase their benefits. It said that the policy of Imperialism was to use Indian resources for the prosecution of war and to hinder the industrialization of India. It mentioned about the increase of taxes, prices of goods and railway fares. The pamphlet vividly described the economic effects of the War on the life of the people. It urged the people to resist the efforts of the British to use India's resources for the War.[34]

The communists in Bezawada and Visakhapatnam distributed several anti-war pamphlets entitled *War* and *Revolt*. Some of the pamphlets published and distributed by the communists encouraged the soldiers not to fight for the cause of the British.[35] The communists also distributed the booklets entitled (1) *How Shall We Change the Society* (2) *Communists and Congress* (3) *Wage, Labour and Capital* (4) *Trotskism or Leninism* (5) *The Features of Capitalism* (6) *The Communist Manifesto* (7) *State and Revolution* and (8) *Forward Bloc.*[36] Several documents of central Committee of CPI were translated into Telugu and distributed in Andhra. It is said that a document of the CPI entitled *Proletarian Path* was translated into Telugu and 24000 copies of the document were distributed in Andhra region.[37] In East Godavari district the communists Mahidhara Ramamohanarao and Sarasvatula Someswararao secretly published several communist pamphlets along with the party's secret journal *Swatantra Bharat.*

In Anantapur the communists Sadasivan and others started a secret paper *Akashavani* and carried out anti-war propaganda. The government found that six issues of *Akashavani* were published by the middle of June 1941. *Akashavani*

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[33] East Godavari District Congress Socialist Party, "Samrajyavada yuddanni Bahiskarinchandi – Swatantrya Sampadanakide Samayam" (Boycott Imperialist War – This is the time to achieve freedom), (Telugu), Sri Venkateswara Press, Kakinada, 1939.
[34] G.O. No. 2283, dated 11th May 1941, Home Department and G.O. No. 2354 dated 28th November 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[35] Fortnightly report for the Second half of May 1940 dated 3rd June 1940.
[36] *History of Freedom Struggle Files, Andhra Pradesh (HFSAP)*, 1940, pp.9602-9603.
[37] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, 1936-42, Part –II, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1988, p.82.

condemned the formation of War committees and exhorted the public and the students to undertake Satyagraha and to work against the government.[38]

Moturi Hanumantharao, a communist from Guntur district started a stationary shop 'Students Emporium' and distributed anti-war literature through the shop. Hanumantharao acquired copies of the secret journal *Swatantra Bharat* and several other books on communism and anti-war propaganda and circulated them in the Guntur district. The police raided the shop on 10th March 1940 and Hanumantharao escaped from the Police.[39]

The Communists also used the art forms to carryout the anti-war campaign effectively. They have staged *Burrakatha* and *Harikatha* performances with themes of anti-war propaganda. Through these performances they have urged the people not to help the British in the prosecution of war and to revolt against the government to establish the Soviet type of Government in India.[40]

The communists continued their anti-war propaganda in jails also. The communist detenus in the Vellore jail conducted political classes and debates regularly. They invited N.G.Ranga to conduct political classes but Ranga rejected to talk any thing in jail. Later Dr. K.B.Krishna took initiative and he taught Marxism, History and philosophy to the detenus in jail. Discussions were held on the liberation movements all over the world and the strategies to be followed in the struggle for India's independence. They also discussed about the class struggle and the role of workers and peasants in the freedom struggle. The Congress leaders A.Kaleswararao and Kala Venkatarao who were also detained in Vellore prevented the congressmen from attending the debates. But slowly the communists attracted a large number of congressmen to their debates and transformed them to communists.[41]

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[38] Letter from the District Magistrate, Anantapur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated 9th June 1941 in G. O. No. 1726 dated 13th August 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras. Also see P. Dastagiri, *Comrade Idukallu Sadasivan Jivitha Visheshalu,* (Telugu), Idukallu Sadasivan Memorial Society, Anantapuram, 1997, pp.44-45.

[39] Moturu Hanumantharao, *Destination Communism*, Memories of Veteran Communist, Prajasakthi Prachuranalayam, Hyderabad, 2000, p.6. Also see G.O. No. 2371, dated 27th October 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[40] G.O. No. 651 dated 31st March 1941, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

[41] A.K. Gopalan, *In the Cause of the People, Reminiscences*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1973, p.146 and Darisi Chenchaiah, *Nenu Na Desam*, (Telugu), Jayanthi Publications, Vijayawada, 2004, pp.295-301.

Apart from the publication and distribution of anti-war propaganda material, the members of CPI organized conferences at several places in which anti-war speeches were made. In their speeches the leaders criticized the war as imperialist. They said that the War was a conflict between two imperialist factions which wanted to extend their territories in to other areas to carryout exploitation. In a conference organized at Bezawada on 24th October 1939, Madabhashi Venkatachari of Guntur and K.L. Narasimham of Bezawada exhorted the audience not to assist the government in the prosecution of War either by enlisting in the army or by rendering monetary assistance. In his speech in the conference Venkatachari explained to the audience as to how the British robbed India. He said, "Our British government are taking away raw material from our country at cheap rates, manufacturing them into finished goods in their factories and thrusting them on our heads for high prices". He urged the audience to organize meetings in villages and towns and carry out anti-war propaganda among workers and peasants and prepare them to fight against the British and to establish a Soviet type of government in India. In another meeting organized in Bezawada on 26th October 1939 Venkatachari exhorted the youth to make use of the opportunity provided by War to knock down the British Government in India. [42]

In Visakhapatnam, Kothamanu Satyanarayana, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, Mullapudi Virabhadram, Yalamanchili Vijayakumar, J.V.K. Vallabharao, Dr. D. V. Lakshmi and several others played an active role in anti-war propaganda. They urged the students and workers to oppose the War and to use the opportunity provided by War to achieve independence to India.[43]

In the agency area of Paderu in Visakhapatnam district, Ubbeti Rangarao and Marri Kamaiah established contacts with the *muttadars* (Tribal Village heads) and encouraged them not to pay tax to the government. They established contacts with Bodapati Achyutaramasarma, a communist of Narsipatnam and imbibed communist ideas. They conducted rigorous anti-war propaganda in the tribal areas and advised tribal people not to assist the war efforts of the government.[44]

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[42] G.O. No. 2081, dated 29th November 1939, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[43] G.O. No. 1879, dated 1st November 1939, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[44] G.O. No. 564, dated 18th March 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras. Also see M.S.R. Anjaneyulu, *Nationalist Movement in South India: A Study of the Role of Vizagapatam District*, Visakhapatnam, 2004, p.220.

Dr. D.V. Lakshmi, who was active in the student movement in Visakhapatnam, organized anti-war demonstration in Andhra University when the Governor of Madras visited the university on 7th December 1940. After the arrest of her husband, J.V.K. Vallabharao in January 1941, she worked as courier to the underground communists. She organized several adult literacy schools in West Godavari and Krishna districts and carried out anti-war propaganda.[45]

In East Godavari district the communists C.V. Krishnarao, M.V.Viraiah and Palepu Satyanarayana Sarma issued a pamphlet in which they called upon the peasants not to pay tax to the government. They urged the peasants to hold meetings in every village and resist the war efforts of the government.[46] Kambhampati Satyanarayana, who was placed under internment in Tuni, secretly carried out anti-war propaganda in Tuni and surrounding areas.[47] Kambhampati Satyanarayana and Inuganti Narayanarao received copies of the proscribed journal *National Front* and a small booklet *World War – Our Programme*, published by the Andhra Committee of CPI and distributed them in Tuni and the surrounding villages.[48]

In West Godavari district, Tanikella Venkata Chalapathi, Garapati Satyanarayana, Alluri Satyanarayanaraju, Uddaraju Ramaraju and other prominent communists took active part in the anti-war propaganda. The Communists organized a 'National Struggle Week' from 31-08-1939 to 6-09-1939 in the district and in the meetings they appealed audience not to assist the war efforts. Tanikella Venkatachapalathi and others published and distributed several anti-war pamphlets in Eluru.[49] The Communists in West Godavari also organized *Prabhatabheri* (morning processions with national songs and music) and hold public meetings in which rigorous anti-war speeches were made by the speakers. They also encouraged the students in Eluru to go on strike in December 1939. Tanikella Venkata Chalapathi worked as messenger between the top communist leaders in the district Garapati

[45] G.O. No. 1740, dated 14th August 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[46] G.O. No. 2128, dated 4th December 1939, Public (General) (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.
[47] Parakala Pattabhiramarao (Ed), *Kambhampati Satyanarayana Swiya Charitra, Rachanalu,* (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 2000, p.14.
[48] G.O. No. 2141 dated 31st October 1940, Public (General) (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.
[49] G.O. No. 995 (S-9) dated 15th May 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

Satyanarayana and Alluri Satyanarayanaraju after their internment in Pedapadu and Jinnuru villages respectively. Sathiraju Ramamurthy, Garapati Jogaiah Sarma and Vadlamani Narasimharao organized a public meeting in Eluru on 10th September 1939 in which they made anti-war and anti-recruitment speeches. They carried out rigorous propaganda in Eluru from 28th November 1939 to 6th December 1939, appealing to the people not to help the British in the War.[50]

In Krishna district, the communists organized processions and public meetings on the occasion of Independence Day on 26th January 1940. In Challapalli village they organized a public meeting with 1000 members. Similar processions and public meetings were held in Gudiwada in which people from surrounding villages attended in large numbers. The members of youth and students organizations marched in the streets with anti-war slogans.[51] The Communists in Krishna district planned to organize a demonstration on Bezawada–Machilipatnam road during the visit of Governor of Madras to the Krishna district. But the police raided the shelter of communists in Elamarru village and foiled the attempt.[52]

In Munagala Zamindari area, the communists Nanduri Prasadarao, Joshyabhatla Satyanarayana and Moturi Parandhamaiah organized anti-war meetings and appealed to the peasants not to pay taxes to the Zamindar and also exhorted the peasants not to support the War efforts of the government and distributed *Swatantra Bharat* and several other secret communist literatures to the peasants.[53] A government report mentioned that the documents seized from Nanduri Prasadarao exhorted the people to adopt revolutionary methods for the attainment of complete independence and to establish a Socialist Government in India.[54]

In Guntur district, the Communists issued a pamphlet exhorting the public not to take part in the war committees and not to subscribe money to the war fund.[55] The students of A.C. College, Guntur actively participated in the anti-war campaign

[50] G.O. No. 1060 dated 25th May 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[51] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.126.
[52] G.O.No. 2098, dated 24th October 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[53] G.O. No. 1388 dated 19th March 1940, Home Department, Government of Madras.
[54] Letter from the District Magistrate, Krishna to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated 15th January 1941 in G.O. No. 802 dated 22nd April 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[55] G.O. No. 2253, dated 29th July 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.

launched by CPI. They organized public meetings and processions urging the public not to help the British in the war and not to join in the military. They also visited the recruitment centers and explained to the people about the nature of the imperialist war and urged them not to join the war. Y.V.Krishnarao, Prabhala Krishnamurthi, C.P. Sarathi and Pendyala Lokanatham actively participated in this campaign.[56]

In the villages of Guntur taluk, Nelakuditi Nageswararao, Chirra Ramakoti Reddy and others organized anti-war campaign and distributed *Swatantra Bharat.* They organized the people in Guntur taluk against the collection of war fund. The people of Dondapadu and other villages rejected to purchase war bonds when the collector visited the villages to sell war bonds.[57]

In Guntur the Communist Kambhampati Sriramamurthy (younger brother of Kambhampati Satyanarayana Junior), secretary of Andhra Students Federation, organized a conference on 20th September 1940 in which the speakers condemned the action of the government for suppression of civil liberty and detention of communists. The conference demanded the government to release all the detenus immediately.[58]

Panjam Narasimha Reddy, a student of V.R. College in Nellore left his studies and reached Cuddapah to organize anti-war campaign. He distributed *Swatantra Bharat* in several villages in the district and influenced Ponnathota Venkata Reddy, Gajjela Malla Reddy and others to join the movement.[59]

While organizing rigorous anti-war propaganda, the communists also concentrated on the building of mass organizations and strengthened their position among the peasants, workers, students and agricultural laboures. The problems of peasants, workers, students and other sections were linked with independence. While the underground activists carried out the anti-war propaganda, legal members concentrated their energies on the building of mass movements. With their active propaganda and constructive work among the mass organizations, the Communists

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[56] Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo,* Rytumitra Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 2005, p.61.
[57] *Comrade Nelakuditi Jivitam,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Prachuranalayam, Bezawada, 1945, pp.29-39.
[58] G.O. No. 2145 dated 1st November 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[59] N. Sivarami Reddy (Ed), *Arunodayam: Cuddapah Zilla Communist Udyama Smrithulu,* (Telugu), Cuddapah District Committee of CPI, Cuddapah, 1998, p.xx.

were able to get control over all the mass organizations in which they had functioned during the united front period.

During the war, the communists increased their activity among the workers and organized several strikes by the working class. Rigorous propaganda was made among the workers asking them not to support the War. With the beginning of War, the prices of food products and other essential commodities increased to an unprecedented level. The workers unions organized strikes demanding the increase of wages to meet the rise of prices of goods. The workers unions also condemned the repression of civil liberties and detention of their leaders.

Immediately after the beginning of the war, the communists organized a meeting of the Executive committee of Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party in Eluru under the presidentship of Alluri Satyanarayanaraju and decided to depute efficient party members to organize workers in all the districts during the War.[60]

In Visakhapatnam Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, K.Venkataramasastri and others organized harbour workers and appealed them not to help with the British War efforts. The Communists encouraged railway and harbour workers to resort to strike for increase of wages. With their instance, the Visakhapatnam Harbour Workers union published a pamphlet entitled *Terrible War* depicting the loss of men and material in the War and the effects of War on the living conditions of the working class.[61]

The workers of Kakinada played an active role in the anti-war campaign. They distributed anti-war pamphlets in factories and participated in the anti-war and anti-recruitment protests along with communists. Dr. M.V.Viraiah, C.V.K.Rao and P.S.Sarma organized sugar factory workers and municipal workers in Kakinada. Chitturi Prabhakara Chowdari and Padala Ramarao organized municipal workers and press workers unions in Rajahmundry. Under their guidance the municipal workers of Rajahmundry organized a strike in 1941.[62]

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[60] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th February 1940, p.2.
[61] G. O. No. 1879, dated 1st November 1939, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[62] Padala Ramarao, *Antarvani*, (Telugu), Andhra Sri Publications, Rajahmundry, 2004, pp.18-23.

In Chittoor district, the communists from Kuppam, A. P. Vajravelu Chetty, L. Soundararaja Iyengar and others established contacts with the Mine workers of Kolar Gold Fields and attracted a large number of workers into their fold. With their active work, the headquarters of the KGF workers union was established in Kuppam. They contested in the elections to the workers union in 1940 and encouraged mine workers to resort to strike in 1941.[63]

The peasants' movements reached height by the end of 1939. The communists continued their activities among the peasants under severe repression. They mobilized peasants against the atrocities of zamindars and also condemned the government for neglecting irrigation and concentrating the funds to war activity. Apart from anti-war and anti-recruitment propaganda, the communists organized no-rent campaign and asked peasants not to pay tax to the government. Peasants' conferences were held at several places demanding the government to fix minimum rates for the crops, to arrange market facilities to sell the crop, to stop auctioning of the grains by the officials when the ryots fail to pay the tax, to undertake repairs to irrigation canals, to reduce the taxes, to stop the atrocities of Zamindars, to allow peasants to get firewood from forests, to allow the cattle into the forests, not to give *pattas* to individuals on the communal lands, to construct roads, schools, hospitals and banks and to provide employment to peasants when there is no work in the fields.[64] During this period, the communists successfully countered the attempts of 'Ranga Group', which tried to drive away communists from the organization, and consolidated their position among the peasantry.

The communists intensified their activity among the agricultural labourers during the Second World War. During this period the rural poor were affected considerably when the prices of food grains and other consumer goods rose. In order to increase their profits, the merchants, middlemen and the rural rich took to hoarding. When the government's attempts to control the prices of essential commodities failed, the poor could not afford to pay prices. At this juncture, the communists mobilized

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[63] Letter from the British Resident of Mysore to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated 19th January 1942, in G.O. No. 1516 dated, 27th May 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[64] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th March 1940, p.9; 26th March 1940, p.3; 29th March 1940, p.3 and 28th December 1940, p.5.

agricultural labourers into unions and demanded the government to provide work to the labourers. They also encouraged agricultural labourers to occupy wastelands and common lands in the villages and organized *Akali Yatralu* (Hunger marches) of the agricultural labourers on the fields of rich peasants and godowns of black marketers. Lootings of rice mills and cloth shops also took place in Guntur, Nellore and many other places.[65] Mostly cases of looting by crowds of poor people were reported. Lootings were said to be instigated by local communists. Therefore a number of communist and labour leaders were arrested and agricultural labour unions were banned.

During the Second World War extensive hunger marches were organized by communists throughout Andhra. Thousands of agricultural labourers participated in them and demanded food and work from the landlords. To begin with, the first hunger strike march was organized in Razolu taluk, East Godavari district, in May 1940.[66] It was estimated that nearly five thousand labourers took part in it.

In West Godavari, district Indukuri Subbaraju, Nidamarthi Asvani Kumaradutt and Sunku Apparao established contacts with agricultural labourers in the villages of Alampuram firka and organized unions in villages. They organized a hunger march with 4000 agricultural labourers. The marchers presented a memorandum to the local tahsildar and demanded the government to provide work to the labourers. In the same year they organized a conference of West Godavari district agricultural labourers association in Karugorumilli village in Narsapur taluk.[67] In Bhimavaram another ten thousand labourers marched to the government offices with a similar demand.

In Krishna district too, two to six thousand labourers from six taluks demonstrated before the taluk offices. They demanded employment, house-sites and wastelands for cultivation. In Krishna district, 'Labour had become restive under Communist inspiration'. From Repalle and Tenali taluks of Guntur district two to three thousand labourers staged a demonstration in front of the revenue divisional

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[65] Aluri Bhujangarao, *Gamana Gamanam*, (Telugu), Rahul Sahitya Sadanam, Shahabad, 1999, pp.24-27.

[66] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra*, p.700.

[67] Nidamarthi Umarajeswararao (Ed), *Tolivekuvalo Asvani Darsanam*, (Telugu), Pragathi Prachuranalayam, Bangalore, 1999, pp.86-87 and Indukuri Subbaraju, *Na Gnapakalu*, (Telugu), Hyderabad, 2004, pp.12-13.

officers. Commenting on the agricultural labour movement, the government noted that there had been hunger marches and demands on various reforms and amenities, and that the Communists instigated this movement.

The Communists organized Bezawada Taluk Agricultural Labourers conference in Kolavennu village on 29th September 1941. Challapalli Narayanarao of Divi Taluk hoisted the Red Flag in the conference. The secretary of Krishna district Agricultural Labourers association, Gunturu Bapanaiah spoke on the need of co-operation between peasants and labourers. The conference passed resolutions condemning Hitler's attack on Russia, demanding the government to release political prisoners in India and to lift the ban on adult education programme and summer schools, and urging the government to solve the problems of agricultural laboures.

The government of Madras considered the agricultural labourers' demands impracticable and warned them of being misled by 'Communist agitators'. As the movement grew, it resorted to repression. However, despite government onslaught and opposition from landed gentry, the communists were able to expand unionism amongst the labour poor. The agricultural labourer's movement was more active in the delta region of Godavari, Krishna and Guntur district. These agricultural labourers emerged as the rock-like base of the Communist movement in Andhra after 1940.

Youth and students were also organized during this period. The conferences of youth leagues and Students' organization were held under severe repression. The youth leagues and students organizations played an important role in anti-war propaganda. The youth leagues organized several cultural programmes and adult education programmes and attracted a large number of people into the anti-war struggle.[68]

Krishna district youth league carried out adult education programme in Golvepalli, Elamarru, Nandiwada, Indupalli, Chennuru, Madduru and several other villages in April-May 1941. Separate books were prepared and teaching materials were supplied to all the villages and around 1000 volunteers worked in this programme. Separate class rooms were arranged for men and women. Cultural

[68] *Andhra Patrika*, 4th January 1941, p.8; 14th March 1941, p.3 and 20th March 1941, p.8.

programmes and political debates were also conducted at the study centers. With their activities among the rural youth the communists established a strong base for the CPI Party in Krishna district.[69] The adult education programme and the spread of communists influence in Krishna district attracted the attention of Government officials. They felt that the communists were spreading their ideas among the illiterate in the name of Adult education programme. The government issued a notification banning the summer schools.[70]

The students played an important role in the distribution of *Swatantra Bharat* and other communist literature during the war. The members of the student's federation organized processions and public meetings and exhorted public not to assist the government in the War. The student conferences were held regularly despite severe repression. S.V.K. Prasad, who was active in the Madras Students Organization was brought to Andhra and made in-charge of the student movement. S.V.K. Prasad guided the student movement effectively and acted as contact between students' organizations and CPI.

As part of Anti-war and anti-recruitment propaganda, the students' organizations organized public meetings in all the districts to encourage students to play an active role in the struggle against imperialism. The problems of the students were also taken up and resolutions were passed demanding the government to solve the problems of the students.[71] During this period the communists successfully conducted the 17th annual conference of Andhra Provincial Students Federation at Guntur on 9th to 11th November 1940. The conference was presided over by Dr. K.B. Krishna while it was opened by Jyothi Basu of Bengal.[72]

Thus, the communists, while criticizing the Congress leadership for its inaction, mobilized all section of the society in their anti-war campaign. At the same time they made constant efforts to pull the Congress into the anti-war activity. At some places where the communists were in majority, they involved the Congress committees into action. But on the whole the Congress did not work against the

[69] *Andhra Patrika*, 5th June 1941, p.3.
[70] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th June 1941, p.2.
[71] *Andhra Patrika*, 8th February 1940, p.7 and 6th September 1940, p.9.
[72] *Andhra Patrika*, 9th November 1940, p.2 and 14th November 1940, p.2. Also see G.O. No. 393, dated 25th February 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras

British in this period. The Congress activity did not create any trouble to the Government in this period. The radical line of communists and their criticism of the Congress leaders for its inaction increased the differences between the Congress and Communists. The differences between the two parties further widened after the change in the policy of Communist Party towards the War.

The radical line of the CPI invited the attention of the government and it took drastic measures to suppress the communist movement in India. The CPI paid dearly for its radical policy. After the beginning of the War, the government clearly identified the Communists who were so far working under the cover of Congress Socialist Party and concentrated its attack on the members of CPI and its sympathizers. As early as 1940 the government arrested the leading communists S. A. Dange, B. T. Ranadive, S.S. Mirajkar, S.V. Deshpande, S.V.Perulekar and R.S. Nimbkar in Bombay. Within a few days arrests started in other parts of the country, and Sajjad Zahir and S.V. Ghate were imprisoned. Later Ajay Ghosh and 16 other Communists were arrested in Lucknow.[73] Within a short time all most all of the leaders of the All India Trade Union Congress, All India Kisan Sabha and several other leftist leaders were also arrested. The government declared that there were 480 communists among the total detenus arrested in 1940.[74]

After the beginning of the Second World War, the Madras government started repression on communists to prevent anti-war propaganda. The police conducted a simultaneous raid in the residences of A.S.K. Iyengar and P.V. Ramachandra Reddy and offices of Communists in Madras on 11th November 1939. In their search police found several leaflets and manuscripts regarding anti-war propaganda.[75] In Andhra and Kerala almost all the key figures were arrested except P. Sundarayya and E.M.S. Namboodiripad. Most of the communist detenus were sent to Deoli camp jail. The government planned to launch conspiracy cases against the communists.

In Guntur district, the police arrested Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah, the organizer of the Congress Socialist Party on 28th November 1939 at Sattenapalli under Defence

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[73] Bhagwan Josh, *Struggle for Hegemony in India 1920-47: The Colonial State, The Left and The National Movement,* Vol.II, *1934-41,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp.304-305.
[74] Gene D. Overstreet & Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India,* p.183.
[75] Fortnight Report for the Second Half of November 1939, dated 2nd December 1939. Also see G.O. No. 2298 dated 21st December 1939, Public (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.

of India Rules. The local Communists, Madala Virabhadrarao and others organized a public meeting in Sattenapalli in front of the police station and condemned the arrest.[76] In another incident, C.P.Saradhi, Prabhala Krishnamurthi and Pendyala Lokanadham were arrested under defence of India Rules for carrying out anti-recruitment propaganda in Guntur on 14th November 1939[77] and they were sentenced for 8 months imprisonment.[78] In Krishna district the district magistrate issued warning to Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu for his speeches in the Workers conferences.[79]

In West Godavari, the district magistrate called Alluri Satyanarayanaraju to his office and informed him that the anti-war activities would fall under the Defence of India Rules, and warned him that he would be arrested if he continued his activities.[80] Later Satyanarayana was interned in Jinnuru village under the Defence of India Rules.[81]

In the month of October 1939 the Socialists Dr. M.V.Viraiah and K. Lakshmipathi were arrested in Kakinada under the Defence of India Rules for anti-recruitment speeches.[82] Later they were released by the district magistrate after administering a personal warning to them.[83] A Telugu translation of the pamphlet entitled 'Imperialist War should be Boycotted" published by East Godavari district Congress Socialist Party was also banned by the government.[84] In December 1939 the police arrested C.V.K.Rao, M.V.Viraiah, P.S.Sarma and S.V. Ratnam under the Defence of India Rules and detained them in Rajahmundry and Vellore jails.[85] Later C.V.K. Rao escaped from Vellore jail along with A.K. Gopalan and 3 others.[86] The police also arrested Parvathaneni Venkateswararao in connection the Fibre Workers Strike in Kakinada.[87] The district magistrate issued an internment order on

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[76] *Andhra Patrika*, 30th November 1939, p.3.
[77] *Andhra Patrika*, 8th December 1939, p.3.
[78] *Andhra Patrika*, 16th January 1940, p.3.
[79] *Andhra Patrika*, 16th February 1940, p.12.
[80] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th November 1939, p.9.
[81] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd March 1940, p.8.
[82] *Andhra Patrika*, 9th October 1939, p.2.
[83] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th October 1939, p.6.
[84] G.O. no. 1702, dated 11th October 1939, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[85] C.V.K.Rao, *Athmakatha*, Part I, (Telugu), People's Vanguard Movement Publications, Kakinada, 1988, p.244.
[86] C.V.K.Rao, *Athmakatha*, Part II, (Telugu), People's Vanguard Movement Publications, Kakinada, 1992, p.11.
[87] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th January 1940, p.6.

Kambhampati Satyanarayana under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules and he was ordered not to leave Allipudi village in East Godavari district.[88]

In March 1940 the Central Government issued directions to the Provincial government giving a list of persons to be detained in the province. The government declaration felt that, to discharge its responsibility for the defence of India and for the effective prosecution of the War, it was necessary for the government to pass orders for the detention of the main communist leaders under Defence of India Rules.[89] The government also accused the communists for working as agents of foreign countries.[90] Along with its directives to the provinces on the need of detention of main communist leaders, the central government in another order asked the Madras government to detain A.S.K.Iyengar, S.V.Ghate, P. Sundarayya and C. Rajeswararao immediately.[91] Though the police arrested Ghate and Iyengar, they failed to trace the whereabouts of P. Sundarayya and C. Rajeswararao until the lifting of the ban on CPI in 1942.[92]

Immediately after receiving orders from the central government for the detention of communist leaders, the Madras government issued orders restricting movements of P. Ramamurthi of Tanjore, Alluru Ranga Reddy of Allur, R.Adiseshaiah of Nellore and B.Sankara Reddy of Indupur in Nellore district, J.Ramalingaiah of Guntur, P.V.Sivaiah of Vinukonda, Durbha Krishnamurthi of Balemarru in Guntur district, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao of Ventrapgarada, Vellanki Vishweswararao of Kaluvapamula in Krishna district and Garapati Satyanarayana of Pedapadu village in West Godavari district to their native places. They were asked not leave their place of residence until the government issued further orders.[93] Later most of them absconded from their places and started underground activity but finally got arrested by the police. J.Ramalingaiah, who was interned in Jonnalagadda village,[94] appealed to the government to allow him to reside in Chicacole to enable him to attend the court where a case was pending on him, and

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[88] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd January 1940, p.3; 27th February 1940, p.3.
[89] *Indian Express*, 15th March 1940, in History of Freedom Struggle Files, 1940, pp.9588-89.
[90] *Andhra Patrika*, 17th March 1940, p.2.
[91] G.O. No. S/32-4/40 dated 12th March 1940, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[92] G.O. No. 1394 dated 18th July 1940, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[93] *Andhra Patrika*, 9th April 1940, p.6, 28th September 1940, p.5. G.O. No. 704 dated 4th April 1940, Public (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.
[94] G.O. No. 705 dated 4th April 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

later he absconded from Chicacole on 7th September 1940 and again he was arrested by the police in February 1942.[95] Similarly Durbha Krishnamurthy, who was interned in Balemarru in Guntur district, was imprisoned for six months for violation of internment of orders.[96]

At several places, the police conducted raids on the houses of communist leaders and offices of its frontal organizations. The police raided the house of Darisi Chenchaiah in Madras on 16th March 1940 but they could not trace any of the underground leaders or proscribed literature.[97] Later Darisi Chenchaiah was arrested on 27th July 1940 under the Defence of India Rules.[98]

In another raid on the underground communist den in Madras, the police arrested P. Ramamurthy, Mohan Kumara Mangalam, K.Venkataramasastri, Vemulapalli Hanumantharao and others and launched the Madras Conspiracy Case in 1941.[99] They were charged for encouraging public not to co-operate with the government in the prosecution of War, as well as creating hatred against the government. They were also charged for preaching the public to work for the establishment of a Soviet type of government in India.[100] But the police withdrew the case and all the accused were released in 1942 after the lifting of the ban on CPI.

In Visakhapatnam district, the communist leaders J.V.K. Vallabharao, Y. Vijayakumar, Bodapati Achyutam, Dr. K. Venkataramasastri, Dr. D.V. Lakshmi and several others were arrested and interned in Visakhapatnam.[101] In East Godavari district Kambhampati Satyanarayana (Senior), who was interned in Tuni, was arrested for his anti-war activities and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment under Defence of India rules.[102] Chintam Satyanarayanadas was also imprisoned for three

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[95] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th February 1942, p.2 and G.O. No. 1122 dated 7th June 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

[96] *Andhra Patrika*, 13th April 1940, p.5, 13th September 1940, p.9 and G.O. No. 2415 dated 8th December 1940, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[97] *Andhra Patrika*, 17th March 1940, p.6.

[98] *Andhra Patrika*, 29th July 1940, p.3.

[99] P. Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, pp.108-109. Also see G.O. No. 581, dated 20th March 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[100] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th March 1941, p.8 and 16th March 1941, p.5.

[101] G.O. No. 1740 dated 14th August 1941, Public Department, government of Madras.

[102] G.O. No. 4056, dated 3rd October 1940, Home Department, Government of Madras and G.O. No. 2141 dated 31st October 1940, Public (General) (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras. Also see *Andhra Patrika*, 11 April 1940, p.4.

months and after the expiry of the sentence the government ordered his detention without trial.[103]

In West Godavari district internment orders were issued on Tanikella Venkatachalapathi, Garapati Satyanarayana and Alluri Satyanarayanaraju[104] and later they were arrested for defying the orders.[105] In spite of internment orders, Venkatachalapathi carried out anti-war propaganda in Bhimavaram and surrounding villages and distributed anti-war literature supplied to him from Bombay. He was also active in collecting funds to carry out anti-war activity. Later the police identified his underground activity and he was arrested and detained in Vellore jail.[106]

In September 1940, a government fortnightly report mentioned that detention orders were issued against the Communists Kosuri Subbaraju, Nekkalapudi Ramarao, Kuppa Venkataramasastri, Vellanki Vishweswararao, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, K. L. Narasimham, Tanikella Venkatachalapathi, Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu, Kosaraju Seshaiah, Joshyabhatla Satyanarayana, Tammareddi Satyanarayana, D.S. Vallabharao, C.V.K. Rao, B.Lakshminarasimharaju, Uddaraju Ramaraju, Sunku Apparao, P. Anandarao, Prerepu Mrityumjayudu, Vankineni Satyanarayana and most of them were arrested under Defence of India Rules for making anti-war speeches and distribution of proscribed literature.[107] Another report of the government in November 1940 declared that Korapati Pattabhiramaiah, Mahidhara Ramamohanarao, Datla Suryanarayanaraju, Prerepu Mrityumjayudu, Uddaraju Ramaraju, Sunku Apparao, Moturi Kattaiah, Chandra Rajeswararao, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Golla Radhakrishnamurthi, Kosaraju Seshaiah and P.Sundarayya evaded arrest and went underground.[108] Later Mahidhara Ramamohanarao was arrested in Kapileswarapuram village in East Godavari district on 30th April 1941.[109]

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[103] G.O. no. 1239 (S-85), dated 13th June 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[104] G.O. No. 995 (S-9) dated 15th May 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[105] *Andhra Patrika*, 17th July 1940, p.3.
[106] G.O. No. 1950 dated 27th September 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[107] Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of September 1940 dated 4th October 1940. Also see G.O. No. 2266 dated 15th November 1940, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[108] Notification no. 580-OR/40, dated 25th October 1940, Defence Coordination Department, Government of India.
[109] *Andhra Patrika*, 5th May 1941, p.3.

In Machilipatnam, the communists Kondepudi Lakshminarayana and Lanka Jogarao were arrested under the defence of India Rules for publication and distribution of *Swatantra Bharat* and other proscribed literature.[110] Similarly Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu of Tenali was sentenced to two years imprisonment for his anti-war activities among workers in Bezawada and Visakhapatnam.[111]

In another incident, the police arrested Nanduri Prasadarao, Joshyabhatla Satyanarayana and Moturi Parandhamaiah in connection with their speeches in the anti-war conferences organized in Munagala Zamindari area in Krishna district.[112] The police arrested Namburi Srinivasarao on 11th February 1941 and he was sentenced to one year imprisonment for his anti-war propaganda through Harikatha and Burrakatha performances.[113]

Police raids were also conducted on the villages and secret offices of the communists and several communists were arrested and communist literature was seized.

In Krishna district, the police conducted raid on Elamarru village and arrested Katragadda Rajagopalarao, Kondapalli Sitarama Reddy and 8 others when they were making elaborate preparations to stage a public demonstration of their anti-war propaganda on the Bezawada-Masulipatnam road.[114] In another incident, the police raided the house of Guntaka Pulla Reddy and seized several records and proscribed literature from him.[115]

In another case the police arrested Dr. K.B. Krishna,[116] who had just returned from United States, after obtaining a Ph.D. degree from Harward University, for his

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[110] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th October 1941, p.8, 20th December 1941, p.3 and G.O. No. 64, dated 6th January 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[111] G.O. No. 1931 dated 26th September 1940, G.O. No. 3960, dated, 4th September 1941, Home Department, and G.O. No. 489 dated 5th March 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[112] G.O. No. 1388 dated 19th March 1940, Home Department, and G.O. No. 802, dated 22nd April 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[113] G.O. No. 651 dated 31st March 1941, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras. Also see *Andhra Patrika*, 26th February 1941, p.6.

[114] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th October 1940, p.2. G.O.No. 2098, dated 24th October 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

[115] G.O. No. 876, dated 18th March 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[116] D.R. K.B.Krishna (1898-1948), an unknown Marxist scholar and philosopher, was born in Inturu in Guntur district. He went to England in 1921 and studied politics and economics in England till 1929. In 1929 He went to Unites States and completed his Ph.D. on 'The problem of Minorities in

speeches in the All Kerala Students Conference held at Palghat on 18th and 19th January 1941.[117] Krishna was arrested at Bezawada railway station on 2nd March 1941 and sent to Vellore jail.[118] The government felt that the speeches made by him in the students conferences at several places in the province incited the students to organize strikes and to carryout anti-war propaganda. The government also felt that he was unfit to hold any position in the educational institutions and spoiled his attempts to become a faculty member in Andhra and Baneres Universities and other colleges in Andhra.

Madabhashi Venkatachari who made rigorous anti-war speeches in the Communist conferences was ordered not to make any speeches in the meetings and interned in Guntur.[119] Later Venkatachari absconded from Guntur and was arrested in Dondapadu village on 5th September 1940.[120] He was sentenced to one-year imprisonment.[121] Nelakuditi Nageswararao of Dondapadu village, an activist of the Kisan Movement was also arrested and imprisoned for providing shelter to Venkatachari.[122] Similarly P. V. Sivaiah, a communist from Vinukonda in Guntur district and founder of CPI in Guntur district was ordered to stay in Vinukonda. But Sivaiah left Vinukonda without informing officials and he was arrested on 21st December 1940 and sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment.[123] In Kurnool district B.Sowri Reddy and Kodi Narasimaham were arrested under the Defence of

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India" which was published by Allen and Unwin ltd, London in 1939. As a student in England and USA, he wrote several books (more than 50) on nationalism, religion, philosophy, history, Economics and politics with Marxist perspectives. Most of his works remained unpublished due to his death at an early age. He returned to India in 1939 married Indiradevi, daughter Gaddipati Ranganayakulu of Krishna district. After his arrival he actively participated in the students conferences at several places in Madras Presidency and got arrested in March 1941. As a detenu in jail, he conducted study classes on Marxism and explained several Marxist classics to the communist detenus. Krishna was the first Marxist who identified the danger of Fascism and advocated for a change in the Communist strategy during Second World War. Even before the Deoli thesis, Krishna prepared a 300 pages document and argued that the *imperialist war* was changed into an *anti-fascist war*. For further details on his life and works, see G.O.No.830, dated 12th March 1942 and G.O.No.1164, dated 10th April 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras, and Kambhampati Satyanarayana, "A Forgotten Intellectual of the South", *Mainstream*, Vol.XIX, No.16, 20 December 1980, pp.24-26.

[117] G.O. No. 393, dated 25th February 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras.

[118] The Hindu, 5th March 1941.

[119] G.O. No. 2081, dated 29th November 1939, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

[120] *Andhra Patrika*, 8th September 1940, p.2.

[121] G.O. No. 4205, dated 17th October 1940, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[122] G. O. No. 258 dated 6th February 1941, Public Department, Government of Madras. Also see *Comrade Nelakuditi Jivitam*, pp.38-39.

[123] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd December 1940, p.3, 25th December 1940, p.6 and G.O. No. 702, dated 11th January 1941, Home Department, Government of Madras.

India Rules for anti-war activities.[124]

Severe action was taken on publication and distribution of communist literature. The government launched a criminal case on the editorial board of *Navasakthi* and issued arrest warrants on the members of its editorial board, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, P. Sundarayya and Tummala Venkatramaiah.[125]

Tarimela Nagi Reddy and Vidwan Vishwam, communists from Anantapur were arrested and sentenced for one year imprisonment in November 1940 for publishing and distributing pamphlets which advocated people not to assist the war efforts of the British government and thereby strike a blow against the government's plan to use India's resources in the War.[126] Later Nagi Reddy was re-arrested after completion of one-year term in jail and detained in Vellore jail with a view to prevent him from participating in the anti-war activity.[127] In another case in Anantapur, the sub-divisional magistrate sentenced I. Sadasivan, G. Ramakrishna and R.V. Naidu to one year rigorous imprisonment for publishing a secret newspaper *Akashavani*. The accused did not defend themselves against the charges made on them.[128]

In East Godavari district, the police conducted raid on the houses of socialists and arrested Sarasvatula Someswararao for publishing the secret journal of CPI, *Swatantra Bharat* at a secret press in Razolu.[129] Mahidhara Krishnamohanrao and Jaganmohanrao were also arrested for translation and publication of *Wage-Labour–Capital* of Karl Marx and *Anti-Duhring* of Frederic Engels.[130] The government also confiscated the *Avanti Press* owned by Mahidhara Jaganmohanarao.

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[124] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd September 1941, p.3 and 30th September 1941, p.2.
[125] *Andhra Patrika*, 4th November 1940, p.2.
[126] *Andhra Patrika*, 11th November 1940, p.2. G.O. No. 2354 dated 28th November 1940, Public (General) Department, and G.O. No. 5296, dated 24th December 1940, Home Department, Government of Madras. Also see *Indian Express*, 10.12.1940.
[127] The Hindu, 24th October 1941.
[128] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th May 1941, p.3, 9th August 1941, p.3 and The Hindu, 6th August 1941.
[129] *Andhra Patrika*, 17th July 1940, p.3 and G.O. No. 1846 dated 14th September 1940, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras. Also see, Mullapudi Suryanarayana, *Vaikunthapali: Communist Udyamamlo Na Anubhavalu, Anubhutulu, Alochanalu,* (Telugu), Author, Rajahmundry, 2004, p.25.
[130] G.O. No. 1100 dated 2nd April 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.

The communist detenus in the jail sent petitions to the government to try them in the court of law. They maintained that they were fighting for the independence of their country just like the British people who were fighting against their enemies to protect their nation. They charged the government that it was obstructing them from protecting their country from a disaster. They held the opinion that the British have no right to detain them in jails.[131]

Despite severe kinds of repression the communists were able to carry out anti-war campaign through open and underground activity. Due to the anti-war campaign, the strength and prestige of CPI increased rapidly and CPI was able to control all the mass organizations. While Congress was trying to get more benefits from the war situation through compromise with imperialism, the communists urged the people to convert the war into revolution. However, CPI's plan to convert the situation of war into a revolution did not take place, not primarily because of events in India itself, but rather because of 'Operation Barbarossa' – the march of Hitler's troops on Soviet Union.

**Conclusion**

The radical line of the CPI during the Second World War and its independent action against the British, at a time when the Congress was following a wait and see policy, has led to the division of nationalist forces. This division of nationalist forces that took place during the period of 1940-41 had continued into the post–independence period as well. One fall out of this division was the emergence and consolidation of the Communists as an alternative political party to the Congress both in the final phase of independence struggle and in the post-independence period as well. The gulf between the two parties widened after Hitler's attack on Russia when the CPI and Congress revered their positions towards the War. In the final phase of India's struggle for independence the Communists and Congress followed different strategies to achieve Independence. Thus, with the separation of Communists from Congress and CSP, there began a direct struggle between the Congress and the CPI for the hegemony over the national movement.

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[131] Letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras from Kruthiventi Venkateswararao, Detenu, Central jail, Vellore dated 10th May 1941 in G.O. No. 1955 dated 27th September 1940, Public Department, Government of Madras.

# Chapter 5
# The Politics of Alternative: Emergence of CPI as an Alternative to the Congress in Andhra

The period between 1942 and 1947 witnessed several changes in the worldwide political situation. Hitler's attack on Soviet Union had changed the political scenario of the world. The *imperialist war* became *people's war*. With the attack of Hitler on Soviet Union, Communist parties all over the world changed their strategy and decided to support the war efforts of U.S.S.R and the Western countries against Fascist forces. It was during this period Japan started attacks on India.

In India also, the period witnessed several changes. The CPI which was struggling hard to prepare people to overthrow the British rule in India using the opportunity provided by War, suddenly changed its strategy and supported the War. The CPI changed its earlier characterization of War as *imperialist war* and called it as *people's war* and supported the War efforts of the government. At the same time the Congress, which was trying to come to an agreement with the government, did not recognize the change in the nature of War and decided not to co-operate with the War efforts and it started the Quit India Movement. This led to further split in the nationalist forces and isolation of communists from Congress and other nationalist forces. The hostilities between Congress and Communists increased during 1942-45. While the Congress leaders were in jail, Communists consolidated their position among workers and peasants and other sections of the people. The rise in the Communist strength alarmed the Congress and they made several attempts to contain the rise of Communist strength. It was after the formation of Congress governments in provinces after the elections to the provincial legislatures, that the Congress ministries crushed the communists and finally banned the CPI in Madras presidency. Despite this, the communists were able to win over a major section of the people to their side and emerged as an alternative to the Congress in Madras Presidency, especially in Kerala and Andhra regions.

The present chapter is an attempt to discuss the strategies followed by communists to build up an alternative political party to the Congress and to establish their hegemony over the national movement. During this period the Communists, who were separated from the main stream of the national movement due to their people's

war strategy, adopted a variety of methods to build an alternative to the Congress. Though the communists succeeded to become an alternative to the Congress in Andhra, they failed to establish their hegemony over the national movement. The activities of communists during 1942-47 influenced the programmes and policies of the Indian National Congress and the congress government in the post independence period.

The present chapter starts with the analysis of change in the attitude of communists towards Second World War and explains the influence of international political developments in the shaping of tactics of communist movement in India, the adaptation of people's war strategy and its implementation in Andhra, the release of communists from jails and lifting of the ban on Communists, the re-organization of CPI in Andhra, Quit India call and the role of communists and the anti-communist propaganda by the Congress.

Though the CPI differed with the Congress regarding their attitude towards the ongoing War and extended its support to the government's War efforts, it carried rigorous campaign against government repression on the national movement. The CPI thought that the repression on Indian people would alienate people from the government and hamper the war efforts of the government against fascism. It argued that for the effective prosecution of War, the support of all Indians was necessary to the government. However, the government resorted to severe repression on the national movement and its leaders. The CPI demanded the government to stop repression release the national leaders from jails and form a national government in the centre with the representatives from major political parties in India. The activities taken up by CPI for the release of national leaders, the campaign for national unity, the theory of self-determination of nationalities, the attitude of CPI towards the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, the relations between Congress and CPI and the expulsion of communists from the AICC are also discussed in this chapter.

During the period from 1942-1948, the Communists worked among the people and successfully redressed the day-to-day problems of the people. The activities of communist volunteers in the towns and villages during the war period, the Grow More Food campaign, famine relief programmes, repair of irrigation canals, attacks on black marketers, struggles for the effective implementation of government schemes

and other welfare activities taken up by CPI and its frontal organizations are also discussed in this chapter.

The chapter also discuses the peasants' and working class struggles organised by the communists against their exploitation by Zamindars, landlords, industrialists and the government, the demand for the distribution of fallow lands to the landless poor, struggles against the exploitation of peasants in Munagala, Challapalli, and Venkatagiri estates, petitions to the government demanding more irrigation facilities, disputes between zamindars and peasants of Munagala, the Telangana peasants armed struggle and role of Andhra communists, the attitude of Congress towards anti-zamindari struggles, the struggles of working class for increase in salaries and other facilities and for the reduction of working hours, struggles of Visakhapatnam harbour workers, jute mill workers, municipal workers strikes, the impact of I. N. A. trails and R. I. N. revolt on Andhra and rise of working class struggle.

The activities of CPI were not limited to political and economic struggles. As an attempt to overthrow the hegemony of the bourgeois, the CPI realized that it was necessary to overthrow the hegemony of bourgeois in the various structures in the society, which were created, by bourgeois to protect their hegemony. The religion, myths, superstitions and several other institutions were attacked through Cultural Revolution and attempts were made to build a new culture in Andhra through literary and theatrical organizations and social reform movements. The present chapter discusses the changes that were brought in Literature by the communist movement in Andhra, the emergence of progressive writers' movement, the ideas projected by progressive writers and the impact of progressive literature on people's movements. It also discusses the spread of communist ideas through art forms. The revival of traditional art forms, formations of theatre association, the ideas propagated by theatre associations and their impact on the society. The social reform ideas take up by CPI, the youth movement, formation of libraries, reading rooms, night schools to educate masses against the bourgeois hegemony and the attempts of communists to build alternative hegemony through social reform activities are discussed in this chapter.

The electoral performance of Communists in Andhra in 1946 elections, the struggle of the communists for the formation of Visalandhra, the rise of peasant and working class struggles in Andhra by the end of 1946, the declaration of Madras

Maintenance of Public Order Act by Prime Minister Prakasam, arrests and detention of Communists, attacks on Communists by land lords and police, Second Congress of CPI at Calcutta, the beginning of armed resistance and policy of 'teeth for teeth and eye for eye', and beginning of brutal repression are also discussed in this chapter.

**People's War Strategy**

With the attack of Hitler on Soviet Union, the war became people's war, with the communist and democratic forces on one-side and dictatorship and fascist forces on the other side. A new worldwide alliance came into being against Hitler – the anti–Hitler coalition consisting U. S. S. R., U. S. A., U. K. and France. Germany's attack on Russia created great impact on the nationalist movement in India. Several nationalist leaders keenly followed the developments with anxious interest. The Indian national Congress expressed its sympathy to the Soviet Union. In an official resolution of the Working Committee, it declared, "the Soviet Union has stood for certain human, social and cultural values which are of great importance to the growth and progress of humanity. The working committee considered that it would be a tragedy if the cataclysm of war involved the destruction of this endeavor and achievement. The Congress Working Committee has admired the astonishing self-sacrifice and heroic courage of the Soviet people in defence of their country and freedom and sent them warm sympathy".[1] Though the Congress expressed sympathy to the U.S.S.R., it did not change its neutral policy towards the war.

Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union made the situation complicated for the CPI by presenting a dilemma to combine the national tasks with the international tasks. The communists detained in jails at several places in India wrote letters to the Party centre demanding a change in the policy of the party from opposition to war into support for the Soviet Union and other nations which were united with the Soviet Union in the aim to defeat Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo who had made the anti-comintern Axis. A.S.R. Chari, a prominent member of CPI, who was detained in Nasik Jail, sent a document to P.C. Joshi, the General Secretary of CPI, demanding for a change in the policy. However, Joshi rejected it and said that Soviet Union was strong enough to protect itself and there is no need for a change in the policy of CPI.[2]

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[1] Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, The Perennial Press, Bombay, 1960, p.191.

[2] A.S.R. Chari, *Memoirs of an Unrepentant Communist*, Orient Longman, Bombay, 1975, pp.94-95.

When the inner party discussion was going on in the CPI, the Deoli thesis, prepared by prominent members of CPI, S.A.Dange, B.T.Ranadive and S.V.Ghate who were detained in the Deoli detention Camp jail, solved the crisis. The document prepared by Deoli communist detenus said, "if the soviet is defeated, if the armed proletariat with all its vast resources is defeated, the international working class will remain enslaved for years. Even the severe battering for the USSR will mean the disaster for the world proletariat. It will immeasurably weaken the incubating revolutionary forces waiting to be unleashed. The only guarantee of future revolutions, of colonial liberation, the only way to safeguard the cycle of revolutions, is a successful defence of Soviet" While discussing about the role of CPI in India in the changed situation, the document said, "the party of the proletariat in India must positively intervene in this war, declare it to be a people's war and strain every nerve to win it as quickly as possible".[3] It also advised the CPI to carryout campaigns demanding civil liberties, democratic rights, transfer of defence to Indians, Indianisation of army, National government at the center etc.

Until then, the Communists outside the jail – P.C.Joshi, G.Adhikari, P. Sundarayya, Somanadh Lahiri, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and others were following the anti-war line. They maintained that they must fight harder for India's freedom in order to defend Soviet Union. Some of the communist detenus in Deoli jail camp and some members of the P. B. did not support the people's war strategy. S. S. Batliwala and Ajay Ghosh who were in Deoli camp jail did not sign on the Deoli thesis.[4]

A meeting of the Polit Bureau was convened to discuss the Deoli thesis and to formulate a new line. After a daylong discussion, the PB prepared a new line to be followed by the party and passed a resolution characterizing the World War as *People's War* against Fascism. The Polit Bureau recognized that the policy followed by CPI during the period from June 1941 to December 1941 was wrong and it was against proletarian internationalism. While accepting the new line proposed in the Deoli thesis, the Polit Bureau said, "this (Second World War) is a peoples' war.

[3] "The People's War against Hitler Fascism", document prepared by the Communist detenus in Deoli jail, in Jyothi Basu and others (eds.), *Documents of The Communist Movement in India*, Vol. IV, 1939-1943, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997, pp.273-319.

[4] Later Batliwala left CPI arguing that there was a secret deal between P.C.Joshi, General Secretary of CPI and Mr. Maxwell, secretary of the Government of India in 1942. On the other hand Ajay Ghosh became a prominent leader of CPI and worked as the General Secretary of CPI from 1951 to 1962.

Imperialism has become a prisoner in this peoples' war. The victory in this war would not be the victory of the British, but the triumph of the people. When victory is achieved (over fascism) finally, it would be the Soviet Union that would represent the aspirations of the people the world over. Though the British and other imperialist forces are temporary allies, they would not be in a position (later) to stop the peoples of the world in their march towards freedom." It said that the immediate task of the CPI was to organize a *People's War Movement* and rouse the people to understand the supreme significance of the people's war against fascism, as a war of world liberation headed by Soviet Union, to develop their initiative and activity, to make them participate in the war, so as to throw the full weight of India and her resources on the side of the progressive forces".[5]

The new line of the CPI was widely accepted by the Leftists in the country. Majority of Andhra communists accepted the new line. The CPI, through its inner party documents, instructed its cadre to carry out rigorous anti-fascist propaganda, to celebrate anti-Japanese day, to hold demonstrations for the release of political prisoners, to enroll themselves into official A.R.P. to get elementary A.R.P. training, to form people's volunteer brigades (P.V.B.) and to continue the underground apparatus until the party attains legality.[6]

In April 1942, the CPI released another document, in which it demanded unconditional release of all Communist prisoners, removal of restrictions on Communists, withdrawal of arrest warrants on underground communists, and the withdrawal of ban on party journals. The document also mentioned that, after their release the communists would carry out countrywide anti-fascist propaganda, undertake recruitment of suicide squads and provide guerilla training to them, form people's volunteer brigades to protect the people from fascist attack, and work for increase of production in the agricultural and industrial sectors.[7]

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[5] "The All People's War against Fascism and Our Policy & Task", Resolution of Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India, dated 15-12-1941, in Jyothi Basu and Others (ed.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India, Vol. IV (1939-1943)*, pp.328-329.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp.333-347.

[7] "Memorandum on Communist Policy and Plan of Work", in Subodh Roy (ed.), *Communism in India: Un Published Documents*, 1935-1945, Vol. II, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1976, Reprint 1985, pp.362-374.

The decision of the CPI to support the war efforts of the British was conveyed to the government through a meeting between the government official R.M. Maxwell and P.C. Joshi. In his meeting with Maxwell on 15th May 1942, Joshi assured him that the CPI would co-operate with the war efforts of the Government and demanded to release all the communists from jail.[8]

In March 1942, the government released several communists with a condition that they should not participate in any political movement against the government.[9] The detention orders on several communists were cancelled with a view to facilitate them to participate in the anti-fascist war activity and help the government's war efforts.[10] The restrictions on communist literature were also removed.[11] The communist literature seized by the police was returned.[12] Finally, the government lifted the ban on CPI in July 1942.[13]

The people's war strategy was first propagated among students and youth. The students' unions conducted several meetings and debates explaining to people about the change in the nature of War and appealed them to render support to War efforts of the government. The APSF published several pamphlets and booklets describing the change in the nature of War.[14] Resolutions on the new line were also introduced in the conferences of trade unions and peasant associations and the cadre was instructed to propagate the line.

While campaigning for the success of anti-fascist struggle, the communists continued their struggle against colonial oppression in India. The communist conferences demanded the government to release all the political prisoners to facilitate them to participate in the anti-fascist war. The CPI controlled youth leagues organized several conferences demanding the release of political prisoners.[15] Apart from meetings and speeches, the CPI published several books, pamphlets and songs

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[8] *Ibid*., p.381.
[9] G.O. No. 964, G.O. No. 968 and G.O. No. 969 dated 24th March 1942, G.O. No. 1042 dated 28th March 1942 and G.O. No. 1065 dated 1st April 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras. Also see, *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd July 1942, p.2 and 26th June 1942, p.5.
[10] *Andhra Patrika*, 7th July 1942, p.2.
[11] G.O. No. 2540 dated 20th August 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[12] G.O. No. 1073 dated 1st April 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[13] G.O. No. 2152 dated 23rd July 1942, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[14] M. Radhakrishnamurthy, *Prapancha Praja Yuddame Bharata Swatantrya Yuddam*, (Telugu), Andhra Rashtra Vidyarthi Sangham, Bezawada, 1942.
[15] *Prajasakthi*, 17th June 1942, p.6.

depicting the on going war as *people's war*. Several songs were written with anti-fascist ideology and depicting the atrocities committed by Nazi forces in Europe and Japanese military in Asia.[16] The folk art forms like Burrakatha, Jangam Katha, Street Play and others were also used to propagate anti-fascist ideology.[17]

The students' and youth organizations in Krishna district organized a training camp to train people in anti-fascist propaganda and prepare them to fight against fascist aggression. The troupes of youth and students associations visited around 80 villages in Gudiwada, Gannavaram, Bezawada and Bandar taluks and organized public meetings. Apart from speeches in the meetings, they also conducted several cultural programmes with folk art forms like Burrakatha, Street plays and songs to attract people to the meetings and anti-fascist ideas were taught through the performances.[18] Training camps were established to train people in Air Raid Precautions (ARP). The CPI trained 50 ARP troupes all over Andhra.[19]

An armed training camp was organised for communist volunteers to train them in the use of firearms, the techniques of guerilla warfare and to face Japanese attack.[20] The camp was organised in a hilly area near Poona. Around 300 volunteers received training by British officers.[21] Kondepudi Lakshminarayana, Thammareddi Satyanarayana, Viramachaneni Prasad (Bombay Prasad) and others received training in this camp.[22] The Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI also thought to form guerilla fighting squads against the fascist attack. Immediately after the bombing on Visakhapatnam and Kakinada by the Japanese, P. Sundarayya visited Visakhapatnam and conducted a survey in the hilly region to set up a base for the Guerilla squads of the party.[23] However, the idea was dropped when the Japanese threat receded. With

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[16] Vattikonda Rangayya, *Viplava Jvala (Anti-Fascist Songs)*, (Telugu), Author, Virulapadu (Krishna Dt.), 1942.
[17] *Prajasakthi*, 8th July 1942, p. 7.
[18] *Prajasakthi*, 17th June 1942, p.6.
[19] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part II, 1936-42, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1988, p.131.
[20] P. Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, first edition 1986, Third Edition 1994, p.120.
[21] Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, p.206.
[22] S.V. Satyanarayana, *Avishranta Porata Yodhudu Thammareddi*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1998, p.5 and Chalasani Prasadarao, *Ila Migilem*, Perspectives, Hyderabad, 1991, reprint 1993, p.90.
[23] P. Sundarayya, *Viplava pathamlo na Payanam*, Part – I, p. 120, Y. Vijaya Kumar, *Jivitha Saramsam* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Pragathi Printers, Hyderabad, 2002, p.30 and C.V.K. Rao, *Athmakatha*, Part – II, (Telugu), People's Vanguard Movement Publication, Kakinada, 1992, pp.126-127.

this, the CPI lost an opportunity to organize a "Red Army" which might have been of incalculable significance for CPI. The communists might have entered into the army, if the Japanese continued their attacks on India.

**Quit India Movement**

When the CPI was trying to mobilize in the anti-fascist struggle, the Indian National Congress, which maintained neutrality towards the war efforts of the government, intensified its efforts for a compromise with the government and finally started Quit India Movement. To appease the Congress and other political parties and to get their support for the War efforts, the British Government deputed Cripps Mission to hold discussions with the Indian political parties. The Cripps plan provided that India would have Dominion Status and a constitution making body after the end of the war. And that in the meantime, the British government, with the cooperation of Indian people, would retain control and direction of the defence department as part of their world war effort.[24] But the Congress rejected the proposals made by Cripps and demanded immediate transfer of power, including the defence department to a national government comprising of the representatives of Indian People. Gandhi dismissed the proposals outright as 'a post dated cheque on a falling bank'.[25]

With the failure of the Cripps proposals, Gandhiji began to threaten the government that he would start Satyagraha demanding the withdrawal of the British from India. On 14 July 1942, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and adopted a resolution, which subsequently came to known as the 'Quit India Resolution'. The resolution was discussed in the AICC meeting held at Bombay on 7th and 8th August 1942. The AICC session rejected the amendments proposed to the resolution by the communist members of the AICC.[26] The AICC resolved to start a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale under the leadership of Gandhiji in case the government failed to accept the demand for independence.[27] Thus, the AICC did not start struggle against the government, but sanctioned the Congress to start struggle under Gandhiji's leadership. Gandhiji declared that first he

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[24] Sankar Ghose, *Indian National Congress: Its History and Heritage,* All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, 1975, pp.74-75.
[25] *Ibid*, p.75.
[26] Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India,* p.213. Also see, *Prajasakthi*, 12 August 1942, pp.2-3.
[27] P.D. Kaushik, *The Congress Ideology and Programme, 1920-47: Ideological Foundations of Indian Nationalism During the Gandhian Era,* Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1964, p.247.

would wait and plead the Viceroy to accept the Congress demand. But the Government did not wait for Gandhi's overtures and forthwith started a 'blitz' against the Congress. On the morning of 9th August 1942, Gandhiji, all members of Congress Working Committee and other prominent leaders were arrested and the Congress was declared as an illegal organization.[28] Even though it was known by August 7-8 to all AICC members that they would be arrested immediately after the quit India resolution, they did not make arrangements to go underground or to set up any Congress organizational machinery to continue the struggle after their arrest. The AICC did not give any clear cut programme to the people to be carried out in the Quit India Movement. When the people resorted to violent activities, Gandhiji and Congress disowned them and they said that Congress was against the disturbances and destruction of public property.

CPI opposed the Quit India Movement launched by Congress. CPI felt that it was suicidal to launch the Quit India struggle in a manner that would obstruct the war efforts of the Allied Powers including the Soviet Union in the prevailing world situation in which the very future of the Soviet Union was hanging in the balance and a large part of Asia including the eastern border countries of India came under Japanese occupation. The CPI did not agree with the view of Bose of liberating India with the assistance of Japan. So the Communist Party kept itself aloof from the Quit India Struggle as well as from the activities of I.N.A. Not only that, the CPI did not hesitate to organize campaigns among the people that the activities on these lines were suicidal. At the same time, the CPI condemned government repression on the national movement. The CPI felt that the repression on Congress would create a gulf between the government and people and lead to the failure of government to enlist the support of a large section of people in the War efforts of the Government. The Central committee of CPI in its resolution in September 1942 charged the government that it was responsible for the political crisis in the country. The resolution said, "The national leadership had declared their readiness to undertake the full responsibility for uniting and organizing people for the armed defence of the country against fascist aggression, provided that Indian independence was recognized and a provisional government set up, enjoying the confidence of people and supported by the major national parties. But the British government, instead of pursuing the policy of winning

[28] *Ibid*.

the friendship and alliance of the Indian people, launched a war against the people and provoked a countrywide conflict".[29] The resolution of the Central Committee of CPI urged its cadre to carry out a political explanatory campaign to turn patriots away from the suicidal path of sabotage and to isolate and expose the fifth columnists; to start a countrywide campaign for the national unity and for the release of national leaders.

Throughout the period from 1942-45, the CPI organized meetings and processions in Andhra condemning the arrest of Congress leaders and demanding their release.[30] The CPI urged the people not to involve in destructive activities and prevented sabotage activities. It appealed the people to strive for the unity of entire nation to achieve release of national leaders and to establish national government.[31] CPI observed a 'national unity week' in November 1942 demanding the release of national leaders and urging the people to strive for Hindu – Muslim unity. The members of CPI visited the people in 750 villages and collected signatures from 125000 people on the memorandum demanding the release of national leaders.[32]

In fact, the communist volunteers protected government properties from the damage. The communists, who were considered as more radical than the Congress in the struggle against imperialism, started working in favour of the government. The shift in the policy of CPI from *imperialist war* to *people's war* created confusion among the communists and the masses with which they have established contacts. It was an uphill task for the organisers to convince them about the changed police of CPI.[33]

The stand of the CPI to support the war efforts of the British, and its opposition to the anti-war slogans separated it from the general nationalist and anti-imperialist forces in the country. It was a period of great trial for the CPI. It was placed in a situation in which it had not only to challenge the bourgeois leadership of the Congress but had to move against the current of anti-imperialist feelings which had become strong among

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[29] Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Vol. IV, (1939-1943), pp.395-402.
[30] G.O. No. 763 dated 12th March 1943 and G.O. No. 1024, dated 10th April 1943, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[31] G.O. No. 5268, dated 12th February 1943, Home Department, Government of Madras.
[32] Y.V.Krishnarao and others, *Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra*, Part II, 1936-42, p.11.
[33] G.O. No. 5558, dated 5th April 1943, Home Department, Government of Madras.

all classes and sections of the people. The Communist party faced an extreme political isolation in this period. The national Congress, the socialist party, and all other leftist parties and trends along with R.S.S. and Hindu Mahasabha conducted slanderous propaganda against the Communist Party and its line. The communists were called as 'Agents of Moscow' and 'Anti-patriotic'.

The people's war strategy and the role of CPI in Quit India movement became a subject of open debate in the CPI. When some of the leaders justified the line of CPI, others criticized it as a serious mistake of CPI. E.M.S.Namboodiripad, while accepting that the CPI failed to properly appreciate the popular feelings and denounced those who participated in the Quit India Movement as fascist agents, felt that the CPI had adopted a correct policy suitable to that period.[34] On the other hand, some of the prominent leaders of CPI in their later writings felt that though the idea of people's war was correct, the CPI had failed to correctly implement it to achieve national unity and to fight against fascism and imperialism. P. Sundarayya wrote that the CPI failed to combine the international and national perspectives and subordinated the national struggle to the anti-fascist struggle.[35] Later the CPI itself realized that its stand to support the war efforts of the British, opposition to anti-war slogans, one sided emphasis on the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan without a simultaneous attack on the separatist line of its leadership alienated it from the general nationalist and anti-imperialist forces in the country and damaged its prestige.[36]

Despite the omissions and commissions, the CPI adopted a policy, which was by and large correct during the Quit India Struggle. It adopted an independent, working class revolutionary attitude facing both the provocations and threats from the rulers and the rising popular sentiments under the leadership of the bourgeois. The CPI made rapid progress during this period and consolidated its position among the peasants and workers. The CPI organized massive campaigns exposing the anti-people politics of the government and stressing the fact that the anti-fascist war could not be fought keeping the congress leaders behind the bars. Simultaneously, the CPI also made efforts to foster trade unions, peasants' organizations, socio-cultural

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[34] E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, p.773.
[35] P. Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, pp.116-117.
[36] Political – Organizational Review of Andhra Pradesh Committee of CPI, 1947-58, dated 9th December 1958, p.50.

associations and organizations of students, youth and women, and to bring the masses in the struggle against hoarding and black marketers by systematically organizing relief work in the 1943 famine in Bengal and other provinces. As a result of all these activities, there was tremendous increase in the membership of CPI, the circulation of party journals and people's contributions to the party fund.

This however does not mean that the CPI did not commit any error in translating its general approach towards the Quit India struggle into practical activities. Failing to properly appreciate the popular feelings behind the struggle, the CPI had often displayed a tendency to denounce those participating in the struggle as fascist agents. It had also made certain errors in organizing mass struggles during this period. All such errors were subjected later to severe self-criticism, particularly in the second party Congress held in Calcutta in 1948.

**Reorganization of CPI in Districts**

The lifting of the ban helped CPI to expand its base among people and re-organise its units in district and taluk levels. Until 1940, there were no offices and regular office bearers for the CPI. Senior leaders in the district and taluk levels used to carry out its activities secretly after receiving guidelines from the state committee leaders. Immediately after the lifting of the ban, the CPI convened conferences at every taluk and district and elected executive committees to carry out its activities in all districts and taluks.

The organized units of the CPI in district and taluk levels systematically carried out the new programme of the CPI while organizing the struggles of working class, peasantry and agricultural labourers. During this period, the communists extended their support to all sections of people, and they used to appear whenever there was a problem. It is not an exaggeration to say that the communists extended their activity to all spheres of public life, social, economic, political and cultural. Communist volunteers while propagating the *people's war* strategy and anti-fascist ideas organized and supported the struggles of workers and peasants.

The lifting of the ban on CPI had for the first time in its history provided the opportunity to conduct open conferences. The first Congress of CPI was convened in Bombay in May 1943, which was attended by delegates of CPI from all over India.

Andhra committee of CPI was represented by P. Sundarayya to the conference. A Cultural troupe from Andhra headed by Mukkamala Nagabhushanam[37] attended the conference. The cultural troupe performed *Burrakatha, Kolatam* and several other folk art forms in the conference and received appreciation from the leaders.[38]

The CPI made rapid progress in the organizational front from the middle of 1942. The lifting of the ban on CPI and imposition of ban on the activities of Indian National Congress helped CPI to strengthen its base. The CPI conducted a series of provincial, district and taluk level conferences and reorganized its units in the district and taluk levels.

Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI organized a conference in Vijayawada on 21st January 1943 on the occasion of Lenin's death anniversary. The conference was attended by CPI members from all districts in Andhra. P. Sundarayya spoke on the role of Lenin and U.S.S.R. in world revolution and exhorted the people to help in the war efforts of the government to defeat Fascism and Nazism. He explained in the conference as to how the CPI was working in Andhra to fulfill the pledge of Stalin to defeat Fascism.[39] This was the first open conference organized by the Andhra communists since the formation of CPI in Andhra. It was said that the membership of CPI in Andhra reached to 3250 during the time of the conference. The circulation of party journal *Prajasakthi* which began with 2000 copies reached to 9500 and was distributed in 1900 villages all over Andhra.[40] A large number of communists sold out their personal property and donated the amount to the party.

Another important conference the CPI organized in Andhra during this period was the third conference of Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI in Bezawada on 3rd July 1943. Reflecting the policy of CPI during the Second World War, the portraits of Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah and several other leaders of Communist International were decorated in the state along with the Flags of Congress, Muslim League and CPI. Chalasani Vasudevarao, a member in the provincial committee of CPI, hoisted the

[37] Born in Krishna district, important leader of the communist party, worked as the president of Andhra Provincial ryots association in 1945, surrendered to the police in 1948. Again joined in the party in 1952 and remained in CPI after the split in 1964.

[38] *Prajasakthi*, 09-06-1943, p.6. Also see, G.V. Purnachand & Maitreya, *Sri Mukkamala Nagabhushanam Jivita Sangraham*, (Telugu), Krishna Jilla Rachayitala Sangham, Vijayawada, 1991, pp.38-39.

[39] *Prajasakthi*, 27th January 1943, p.7.

[40] *Ibid*.

Red Flag in the conference. He explained in the conference how the Red Flag became the symbol of proletariat and freedom. P. Sundarayya inaugurated the conference. In his speech in the conference, Sundarayya traced the history of CPI in Andhra since its inception and urged the cadre to take up the task of defence of the country from the fascist forces. Sundarayya urged the members of the party to work for national unity, fight against food crisis, agitate for the release of national leaders, continue the *Grow More Food* campaign, work for the increase of industrial production to serve the needs of War and oppose the fifth columnist activities.[41] It was estimated that around 2 lakh rupees was collected as party fund by the year 1943. The report presented to the conference revealed that there were 70000 peasants, 24000 workers, 40000 youth and Baladalam members and 24000 agricultural labourers, working for the CPI in Andhra in 1943. This shows the rapid growth of the party in Andhra after the lifting of the ban.[42] The conference elected Chandra Rajeswararao as secretary and P. Sundarayya, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Makineni Basavapunnaiah, Chalasani Vasudevarao, Kadiyala Gopalarao and S.V.K. Prasad as members to the State Secretariat of CPI.[43]

While organizing conferences at the provincial and district levels, the CPI also reorganized its branches at district and taluk levels and new committees were formed to carry out the party activity effectively. The branches of CPI were reorganized in Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur and Nellore districts.[44]

The CPI was also able to increase its strength in Rayalasima. The CPI sent some of the able organizers from Krishna and Guntur districts to organize the activities of CPI in Rayalasima districts. Prior to 1942, The CPI was able to establish its base in some pockets in Rayalasima region. In the year 1943, the CPI conducted district level conferences in all the Rayalasima districts and appointed new committees to build up the party in the Rayalasima region.[45]

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[41] *Prajasakthi*, 14th July 1943, pp.1,3.
[42] *Prajasakthi*, 21st July 1943, p.4.
[43] Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Rashtra Communistu Mahasabhala Sankshipta Charitra*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Communist Committee, Hyderabad, 1998, pp.9-10.
[44] *Prajasakthi*, 14th July 1943, p.3 and 21st July 1943, p.11. Also see, Andhra Patrika, 10th July 1943, p.3. and 12th July 1943, p.4.
[45] N. Sivarama Reddy (Ed), *Arunodayam: Cuddapah Zilla Communistu Udyama Smrithulu*, (Telugu), Cuddapah District Committee of CPI, Cuddapah, 1998, pp.22-23; Y.V. Krishnarao and Others (Ed)

A branch of CPI was formed in Munagala Zamindari on the borders of Hyderabad State and Thatavarthi Venkateswararao was deputed to organize the party in Munagala and Lingamgiri Estates. Venkateswararao was able to recruit 500 members into the CPI during 1942-45.[46] The Andhra Communists were successful in establishing contacts with the progressive minded people in Hyderabad State and finally a branch of CPI was formed in Hyderabad State.[47]

**Press and Publications**

The publication of Communist literature was revived after the lifting of the ban. The CPI started a publishing company, *Prajasakthi* and a weekly journal, *Prajasakthi* from 17th June 1942 with Katragadda Rajagopalarao as editor and publisher and Tummala Venkatramaiah, Chalasani Vasudevarao and Kondepudi Lakshminarayana as members of the editorial board.[48] It was declared that the aim of the weekly was to popularize the anti-fascist ideas among the people, to build unity among the people of India and to defend the country with the help of the people. It also declared that Prajasakthi would help the peasantry and working class to solve their problems.[49]

Prajasakthi Press published several classics in Telugu literature. Apart from several books on the political developments in India and world; translations of the writings and speeches of All India CPI leaders, Prajasakthi published several books on people's movements. Books on science and technology, psychology, medicine and anthropology were also published apart from history, politics, Economics and literature. Books on the revolutionaries in Russia and China, important leaders of communist parties all over the world and anti-fascist songs were published the copies of which were sold out as hotcakes.[50]

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*Andhra Pradeshlo Communist Udyama Charitra, Part – II*, p.174. Also see *Andhra Patrika*, 21st June 1943, p.3 and 23rd June 1943, p.3.

[46] Thatavarthi Venkateswararao, *Munagala Paragana Praja Udyama Charitra*, (Telugu), Vuppala Kantha Reddy – Chillamcharla Raghunadham, Munagala, 1981, pp.96-97.

[47] Raj Bahadur Gour & Shameem Faizee (ed.), *Tribute to C.R.*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995, pp.3-4 and P. Sundarayya, *Viplavapathamlo Na Payanam*, Part – I, p.125. Also see Barry Pavier, *The Telangana Movement 1944-51*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1981, p.81.

[48] *Prajasakthi*, 17th June 1942.

[49] *Prajasakthi*, 17th June 1942.

[50] For a list of books published *Prajasakthi* from 1942 to 1944, see Chandra Rajeswararao, *Party Nirmanam*, (Telugu), Nilam Rajasekhara Reddy Research Center, Hyderabad, 2003 (First Published by Prajasakthi in 1944), pp.108-111 and Andhra Provincial Committee, CPI, *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Committee Plenum Samavesam* (11-19 July 1944), (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1944, pp.108-109.

The CPI established its headquarters in the newly constructed Prajasakthi Nagar in the communist stronghold Mogalrajapuram in Vijayawada. The offices of CPI and other front organizations and the residences of important organizers were shifted to Prajasakthi Nagar.[51] A *Commune* was established in Prajasakthi Nagar to provide shelter to the cadre who visited the party office from the districts.[52]

The well organized units of CPI swung into action and started implementing the new line of CPI. As part of its *People's War Strategy,* the CPI carried out rigorous propaganda among the people to support the war efforts of the government. The main political document adopted at the first Congress of the CPI at Bombay in May 1943 declared that the supreme task of the people was the defence of the motherland. The CPI defined the World War as war between *People* and fascism. It linked India's freedom with the fight for world freedom. It also urged for the unity of the nationalist forces for the defence of the country. The CPI gave a call to its members to join the police and military to take up the task of defence of the country from the fascists.

**Welfare Activities**

During the period from 1942-45, the communists interfered in every sphere of activity of people and effectively articulated the grievances of the people. While continuing the *People's War* policy and supporting the war efforts of the government, the CPI intervened in the day to day problems of the people and worked for the redressal of those problems. Due to their hard work and welfare activities among the people, they were able to convince and win over large number of people into their fold.

The food crisis and famines in Bengal, Rayalasima and other parts of the country were some of the important problems taken up by CPI during this period. The war time shortage of essential commodities, especially food grains, following the stoppage of rice imports from Burma and South-east Asia, the procurement of supplies in large quantities by the military authorities for their troops in India and surrounding countries, had resulted in an unprecedented rise of prices. The

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[51] Josyabhatla Satyanarayana, *Jivitam Atu Potlu: Oka Swatantrya Yodhuni Athma Parishilana,* (Telugu), J.V.S. Trust, Vijayawada, 1988, p.88.

[52] Sunkara Subbarao, *Swiya Gnapakalu,* (Telugu), Author. Vijayawada, 2000, pp.15-16. Also see, *Manavi* (Quarterly Bulletin of AIDWA), July – September 2003, p.4 and Kadiyala Gopalarao, *Adarsa Communistu Manikonda Subbarao,* (Telugu), Communist Party of India (Marxist), Andhra Pradesh Committee, Vijayawada, p.23.

government felt that the rise of prices would restrict the people from purchasing the goods. But in practice, it led to black marketing and further increase of prices.

The CPI felt that the bankrupt economic policies of the government were the root cause for the food crisis in the country. To solve the food crisis in the country, the CPI demanded government to bring down the prices of food stuffs to the purchasing level of the ordinary consumer and assure reasonable price for the production to the peasants;[53] to give powers to the local food committees to inspect the food stores; to establish shops for the supply of food grains and other essential goods at control rates; to provide dearness allowance to the workers according to their life standards; to implement rationing for the distribution of food grains; to start new irrigation projects in Rayalasima; to export excess food grain from the coastal region to Rayalasima region; to empower the food committees to purchase the excess grain in the delta region and to export them to the famine stricken areas.[54]

The CPI and its frontal organizations took up the task 'grow more food' and carried rigorous propaganda among the peasantry urging them to increase the production. The Grow More Food campaign was in fact the central task of the Andhra Communists on the peasant front, and this was linked with the campaign to bring waste lands under cultivation and to allot fallow land to the landless and poor peasants.[55] To increase the production of food grains and to solve the food crisis in the country, the CPI demanded the government to distribute the cultivable banjar lands including the banjar lands in Zamindari areas to the landless poor; not to impose penalties on the crops cultivated in the non-irrigated areas like canal banks, donkas, and other banjars, and to cancel all the penalties; to remove irrigation taxes on newly irrigated areas, to consider non-irrigated tanks and Panchayat tanks as banjars and distribute them for cultivation; to encourage peasants to cultivate food crops in non-food crop areas; to provide loans for the newly cultivated lands; to avoid confiscation of crops; to fix minimum price for the food crops; to provide grazing facilities to the cattle; to declare moratorium on agricultural debts; to distribute agricultural

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[53] Andhra Provincial Committee, CPI, *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Committee Plenum Samavesam* (11-19 July 1944), (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1944, pp.12-13.
[54] Andhra Rashtra Rytu Sangham, *Andhra Rashtra Rytu Sangha Samavesam, Bezawada (15-16 March 1943),* (Telugu), Andhra Rashtra Rytu Sangha Karyalayam, Bezawada, 1943, pp.28-29.
[55] *Andhra Patrika*, 12th June 1943, p.3.

implements at cheaper rates and to construct Tungabhadra, Polavaram, Sangameswaram, Sabari, Budameru irrigation projects.[56]

The CPI formed food committees in towns and villages and forced the officials to import food stuffs and distribute it to the local people at control prices.[57] The Food Committees helped the peasants to retain minimum quantity of grain necessary for the maintenance of his family and to sell the surplus food grain through people's food committees at a reasonable rate. People's Food committees and Food volunteers unearthed the big hoards, stopped illicit export of grain by profiteers and forced the officials to sell the goods so seized to the public at controlled prices.[58] In certain places where the food committees have secured stocks of sugar, kerosene, they have successfully organized rationing under popular control.

As part of its 'grow more food' campaign the kisan sabha forced the Madras government to enact new laws which made it obligatory for the zamindars to repair all the irrigation works under their charge, it empowered the peasants to get them repaired themselves in case they failed, and deduct these expenses from the rent they pay to the zamindars.[59] The kisan sabha also succeeded in forcing the government to take up and complete several irrigation works in Krishna, Godavari and Rayalasima areas. With the initiative of Kisan Sabha, 12000 acres of banjar land was distributed to landless poor. The government was forced to legislate whereby, even the zamindari banjars would be brought under the plough. Penalties imposed by the local officials on the poor kisans who came forward to grow more food were reduced to nominal sums. Modern agricultural methods were introduced by the owners in deltaic areas to increase productivity. Through kisan sabhas, the peasants could get loans to the extent of 5 lac rupees for purchasing superior seeds and manures. The government was forced to take steps to arrange sale of agricultural implements (especially iron instruments) at controlled rates through their agricultural department and its branches.[60]

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[56] *Ibid*.,pp.31-32.
[57] Sunkara Subbarao, *Swiya Gnapakalu*, (Telugu), Author, Vijayawada, 2000, pp.18-19.
[58] *Comrade Nelakuditi Jivitham* (Biography of Nelakuditi Nageswararao), (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1945, p.45.
[59] "All India Kisan Sabha 8th Annual Session, Bezawada, 14-15 March 1944 – Address of chairman of Reception Committee, C. Vasudevarao", Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1944.
[60] *Ibid*.

The communist cadre collected the details of waste and cultivable land in villages and wrote petitions to the government to allot the land to the poor peasants and labourers. They argued that it is necessary to bring more land under cultivation to increase the production. The logic of CPI worked out and at several places, they succeeded in getting land to the poor peasants and labourers. In that process, they had to face resistance from the land lords and zamindars who were enjoining those lands illegally. The organisers of peasants association and agricultural labourers association visited several places and encouraged people to send petitions to the government for the distribution of land. They felt that the 'Grow More Food' programme of the government would not succeed unless the waste and barren lands were allotted to the landless poor.[61]

Apart from the demand for distribution of lands to the landless poor, the CPI and peasants associations demanded government to distribute agricultural implements, fertilizers and seeds to the peasants at control rates. Andhra Provincial Kisan Sabha published several books written by experts on the scientific methods of cultivation.[62]

**Canal Repairs:** As part of the Grow More Food Campaign, the CPI demanded the government to provide irrigational facilities to the lands that were brought into cultivation to increase the production. It urged the government to repair the existing irrigation canals and to force the Zamindars to take up the repairs of the irrigation tanks and canals. At some places, the CPI took the initiative to repair the irrigation canals. The members of CPI repaired the Bandar canal - an important channel to supply water for irrigation in the Bandar and Divi Taluks of Krishna district.[63] After the repairs, the irrigation canal was able to provide water to 50000 acres in addition to the existing 580000 acres.[64] The voluntary work of communists earned it sympathy from the peasants and helped to strengthen the influence of CPI among the peasantry. Inspired by the Krishna Canal repair works, the members of peasants associations

[61] *Prajasakthi*, 24th June 1942, p.7.

[62] Mukkamala Nagabhushanam, *Bharata Swatantrya Samara Charitra*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1990, Reprint 2003, p.274.

[63] "Prajalakosam Prajale Neraverchina Kartavyam", *Viplava Virudu Challapalli Narayana Rao Smaraka Souvenir*, (Telugu), Challapalli, 2003, p.89; *Prajasakthi*, 17 May 1944, p.11. Also see P. Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Na payanam*, Part – I, pp.123-24 and Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Rytumitra Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 2005, pp.73-74. Also see, *Prajasakthi*, 7-6-1944, p.6.

[64] Mukkamala Nagabhushanam, *Bharata Swatantrya Samara Charitra*, p.274.

carried out similar works at Vuyyuru, Kapileswarapuram, Attili, Nidadavolu and several places in Krishna and Godavari districts.[65]

**Famine Relief Work:** The communists attacked the government for neglecting to take necessary action to solve the famine conditions in Rayalasima. It accused the government for not giving remission of rents and for not starting famine relief activities. It urged the peasants to start famine relief activities in association with Congress, Muslim League and other local associations. It also decided to collect funds for the famine stricken people.[66]

The communist controlled Kisan sabha sent 28 volunteers to Rayalasima to study the conditions of the famine stricken people in Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapur and Bellary districts.[67] In addition to this, the CPI sent 23 volunteers with money and materials to Kurnool district to help the famine stricken people.[68]

According to the guidance provided by the peasants' association, the volunteers who belong to Krishna and Guntur districts visited Rayalasima districts and started famine relief activities. Though the government officials maintained hostile attitude towards them, the volunteers did remarkable work in the four Rayalasima districts by helping the local people and charge officers of the Famine relief camps.[69] The police kept vigilance on the activities of the communist volunteers and warned the villagers not to provide shelter to volunteers. At some places, the volunteers were not allowed into the relief camps. In Kurnool, the police arrested volunteers along with the organizer of the District Communist Party, V.Bapaiah.[70] Similarly in Cuddapah district, the police kept strict vigilance on the volunteer, who reached Cuddapah from Mudunuru in Krishna district. When the volunteer was involved in the protection of railway and telegraph properties in the district with the

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[65] Andhra Provincial Committee, CPI, *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Committee Plenum Samavesam* (11-19 July 1944), pp.39-41. Also see Indukuri Subbaraju, *Na Gnapakalu,* (Telugu), Author, Hyderabad, 2004, pp.25-26 and J.S.R. Anjaneya Sastri, *Swiya Charitra,* p.54.

[66] Andhra Rashtra Rytu Sangham, *Andhra Rashtra Rytu Sangha Samavesam, Bezawada (15-16 March 1943),* p.41.

[67] Telakapalli Ravi (Ed), *Marxist Medhavi Shramika Varga Yodhudu Nanduri Prasadarao,* (Telugu), Communist Party of India (Marxist) Andhra Pradesh Committee, Hyderabad, 2002, p.63.

[68] P. Dastagiri, *Comrade Idukallu Sadasivan Jivitha Visheshalu,* (Telugu), Idukallu Sadasivan Memorial Society, Anantapur, 1997, p.71.

[69] Memorandum presented by Kadiyala Gopalarao, President of Andhra Provincial Ryots Association, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated 18th September 1943.

[70] G.O. No. 393 dated 4th February 1944, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

help of district Communist party members, the police arrested him on the charge that he has tried to destroy the telegraph lines.[71]

When Cholera attacked several villages in Anantapuram district in 1943, V.K. Adinarayana Reddy and others stayed in the villages and organized relief activities to educate the villagers on cleanliness and hygiene. [72] The volunteers of CPI approached the government to take necessary action to prevent the spread of diseases like cholera. They wrote petitions to the government on the health conditions of people and demanded the government to provide free medicines to the people.[73]

The 8th conference of All India Kisan Sabha held in Bezawada in March 1944 felt that the inadequate irrigation facilities in Rayalasima were the main reason for the famine in Rayalasima. A resolution passed in the conference said that unless permanent relief works like irrigation projects are taken up on extensive scale in that area, the problem of recurring famine cannot be effectively tackled. The kisan Sabha appealed to the peasants of Rayalasima to carry on continuous agitation and build a strong kisan movement to exert pressure on the government to take up irrigation projects.[74]

In 1943, the Visakhapatnam district was also affected with famine. So many people died with starvation and several others suffered from malnutrition. The famine led to an extinction of cattle due to the scarcity of food. The CPI formed 'Famine Relief Committee' with Palakodeti Guru Murthy, a Congress leader as President and Y.Vijayakumar, J. Ramalingaiah and Koduganti Govindarao as members to carry out famine relief activity.[75] The CPI sent some of the volunteers from Krishna and Guntur districts to take part in the famine relief work in Visakhapatnam district. The volunteers established famine relief camps and provided medicines and treatment to the people.

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[71] Memorandum presented by Kadiyala Gopalarao, President of Andhra Provincial Ryots Association, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated 18th September 1943.
[72] P. Dastagiri, *Avismaraniyudu Comrade V.K.* (Biography of Comrade V.K. Adinarayana Reddy), (Telugu), V.K. Parvatamma, Anantapuram, 2003, p.60.
[73] *Prajasakthi*, 30th December 1942, p.9.
[74] Resolutions passed in 8th Conference of All India Kisan Sabha, in G.O. No. 634, dated 24th February 1944, Public (General) (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.
[75] Y.Vijayakumar, *Jivitha Saramsam* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Pragathi Printers, Hyderabad, 2002, p.34 and K.S. Sastri, *Na Adarsalu, Anubhavalu,* (Telugu), Author, Visakhapatnam, 2004, p.81.

The CPI in Visakhapatnam utilized all its resources to create consciousness among the people on the effects of famine in the district. A. Paidiraju, a famous artist was deputed to visit villages to narrate the effects of famine through pictures.[76] All those paintings were published as a book and distributed in Andhra.[77] Narla Chiranjivi and other writers wrote several songs on the famine[78] while Tapi Chanakya and others narrated them through performances organized at several places.[79] The famine relief activities taken up by the CPI impressed several people and attracted their attention. People from various streams of life attracted by the activities of CPI came into the fold of the party.

**Bengal Famine**: The 1943-44 Bengal famine was undoubtedly one of the greatest tragedies that modern India has ever experienced. The news published in contemporary newspapers reveal that the famine resulted in starvation deaths, diseases, out-migrations, sales of assets, food dacoities and related crimes, hunger-suicides, sales of children, abandonment of dependents etc. According to official estimates, 1.5 people died during the famine in Bengal in 1943-44, while a more expansive view of the long-term impact up to 1946 suggests that perhaps 3.5 million died from starvation and related diseases.[80] The disruption of the paddy market by the government and its neglect to carry out relief measures were the main reasons for the famine in Bengal.

The CPI took up the task of helping the people suffering in Bengal due to severe famine. The 8th conference of All India Kisan Sabha held in Bezawada in March 1944 called upon the kisans to continue and further strengthen their fight

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[76] Y.Vijayakumar, *Jivitha Saramsam* (Autobiography), 2002, p.34

[77] Bhadriraju Seshagirirao, *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu*, (Telugu), Telugu Academy, Hyderabad, 1990, p.42.

[78] *Rytu Gitalu* (Peasant's Songs), (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1945, pp.5-21.

[79] Y.Vijayakumar, *Jivitha Saramsam* (Autobiography), p.34.

[80] Paul R. Greenough, "Political Mobilisation and the Underground Literature of the Quit India Movement, 1942-44", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 17, No.3, 1983, p.375. For further details on the causes and effects of Bengal Famine, see, P.C. Mahalanobis, Ramakrishna Mukherjea, Ambika Ghosh, *A Sample Survey of the After-Effects of the Bengal Famine of 1943*, Statistical Publishing Society, Calcutta, 1946; T. G. Narayan, *Famine Over Bengal*, Book Company Ltd, Calcutta, 1944; Kali Charan Ghosh, *Famines in Bengal, 1770-1943*, Indian Associated Publishing Co., Calcutta, 1944; Bhowani Sen, *Rural Bengal in Ruins*, People's Publishing House, Bombay, 1945; Tarakcandra Das, *Bengal Famine (1943)*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1949; Amartya Sen, "Starvation and Exchange Entitlements: A General Approach and its Application to the Great Bengal Famine", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vol. 1, 1977, pp.33-59; and Paul R. Greenough, "Indian Famines and Peasant Victims: The Case of Bengal in 1943-44", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 14, No.2, 1980, pp.205-235.

against famine with more seriousness and greater sacrifice than before and even with greater skill and more effectiveness.[81]

The Bengal famine influenced the minds of several writers and poets, and artists came forward to participate in the famine relief works carried out by CPI. Some of them wrote poems on Bengal and the problems faced by the people during the famine. Narla Chiranjivi, a famous poet of the period wrote a poem on Bengal and urged people to come forward to help Bengal.[82]

CPI and its front organizations formed famine relief committees to mobilize resources to help the famine stricken people in Bengal. Artists and writers formed troupes to create consciousness among the people on the famine. Several songs and dramas were written in Telugu depicting the conditions of people of the famine stricken areas in Bengal. Mukhdum Mohiuddin's poem 'Bengal Famine',[83] Vemulapalli Srikrishna's one act play, *Annachellella Samvadam*[84] (dialogue between Brother and Sister on Bengal famine) and Burrakatha performances composed by Sunkara Satyanarayana, Bollimunta Sivaramakrishna[85] and Sheik Nazar[86] propagated the miserable conditions of people in Bengal and mobilized people in support of Bengal. The communist voluntary organizations formed troupes with students, youth and women to mobilize funds and other materials to assist the cyclone affected people in Bengal.[87]

In the name of welfare activities, the communists used the opportunity to expand their organizational base to remote places. Through Grow More Food campaign, the CPI demanded the government to distribute lands and to implement welfare activities. The anti-fascist conferences were used to attack imperialism in general. The local officials recognized that the communists were politically exploiting the critical situation. They felt that the communists would emerge as a dominant force

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[81] Resolution passed in the 8th Conference of All India Kisan Sabha, in G.O. No. 634, dated 24th February 1944, Public (General) (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.
[82] *Prajasakthi*, 29th September 1943, p.5.
[83] "Mukhdum Mohiuddin – Oka Parichayam", *Prajasahiti* (Mukhdum Pratyeka Sanchika), (Telugu), October 2003, p.30.
[84] Etukuri Krishnamurthi (Ed), *Gunturu Jilla Communist Udyama Vaitalikulu*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Swatantrya Samara Yodhula Samstha, Hyderabad, 2004, pp.98-99.
[85] *Prajasahiti*, September 2001, p.51.
[86] Mukkamala Nagabhushanam (Ed), *Nenu Communistunu Ela Ayyanu*, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1946, p.13.
[87] *Prajasakthi*, 30th December 1942, p.10.

if they were allowed to continue their activities among the people. With this view, the officials created several obstacles to the activities of the communists. A large number of communists who were involved in famine relief activities and other welfare activities were arrested and detained in jails on the pretext that they were helping the Congress leaders and encouraging labourers to loot grain shops.[88]

**Movements for the release of national leaders and national unity**

While propagating the people's war line, the CPI and its frontal organizations started rigorous propaganda to for the release of national leaders. The CPI accused the government and bureaucracy for its failure to get the support of the congress and other nationalist forces to the war efforts. It said that the highhandedness of government and bureaucrats pushed the congress to resort to quit India call. It demanded the government to form a national government immediately with the Congress and other nationalist parties. The CPI felt that the nationalist government alone can make effective arrangements for the defence of the country from fascist attack. The CPI criticized the government for the arrests and detention of Congress leaders and demanded to release all the Congress leaders and form a national government. The CPI felt that Congress and Gandhiji were willing to fight against fascism but the adamant attitude of government forced the Congress to adopt quit India resolution. In a statement issued on 11th February 1943 in Bezawada, C. Vasudevarao, a member of the Secretariat of Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI said that Gandhiji was against to anarchic conditions that prevailed in the country. He stated that the Congress wanted a national government for effective war effort and winning the war. He urged the government to release Gandhiji and other national leaders. He appealed to all the patriots of the country to unite and bring their mass pressure on the government for the release of Gandhiji and other national leaders. He said, "Without them in our midst, we cannot win a national government and without a National government we cannot solve our food problem, and defend our nation against the fascist hordes".[89] Stressing on the need for the formation of a national government at the centre to defend India from the fascist attack, the CPI felt that India's defences are scanty and weak and it required the entire support of the entire nation to defeat the fascists. According to a CPI leader, "the British rule in India has created such a wide gulf

[88] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd January 1943, p.4, 27th January 1943, p.1, 1st March 1943, p.3. 3rd March 1943, p.3. 7th June 1943, p.3 and 23rd June 1943, p.3, 16th June 1943, p.3, and 30 December 1943, p.3.
[89] *The Hindu*, 13th February 1943.

between the people and government that the Indian people could not be mobilized under the name of the existing government. It requires a patriotic appeal from a national government which could spread for the entire nation. The Indian Patriots who worked for the people and who suffered for the country, which enjoyed the confidence of the people could enthuse the people for resistance against the Fascist aggression. Unity of all the people of India represented by the unity of all the political parties unifying the Congress, Muslim League and a national government representing this unity, was the cry need of the hour".[90]

Under the guidance of CPI, the members of the progressive writers association wrote several songs in *Prajasakthi* demanding the release of Gandhi and other national leaders from jails, condemning the disruptive activities carried out in the name of Congress and the urging unity of Congress and Muslim League.[91]

The CPI condemned the ban on the Congress and restrictions on the meetings of Congressmen. The CPI felt that the restrictions on the Congress would obstruct the unity of nationalist forces and prevent the formation of national government at the centre which was necessary for the defence of the country from the fascist aggression. The Secretary of Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI condemned the action of the district Magistrate of Guntur for banning the conference of Congress legislators proposed to be held at Guntur on 3rd August 1944. The Secretary of CPI felt the restrictions were unwarranted at a time when the congress was moving to solve the national crisis by concluding an understanding with the Muslim League.[92] The CPI appealed to Gandhiji and the Congress leaders to oppose fifth columnist activities which would help the Japanese aggressors. It also urged them to come to an understanding with the Muslim League as regards their demand for self-determination.

Though the CPI opposed the activities of INA during the war period, it carried out rigorous propaganda for the release of INA prisoners when the government was planning to launch trail on INA prisoners. The CPI demanded the government to

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[90] Letter dated 5th December 1942, from Pulupula Venkata Sivvayya to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, in G.O. No. 5268, dated 12th February 1943, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[91] Jayadhir Thirumala Rao (Ed), *Swatantrya Samara Gitalu,* (Telugu), Sahiti Circle, Hyderabad, 1991, Reprint 1995, pp.116-121.

[92] *The Hindu*, 6th August 1944.

release the prisoners without trail. The communists also mobilized defence fund for the relief of I.N.A. prisoners,[93] and organized general strike for the release of INA prisoners. The members of CPI participated in the post-war revolutionary activities that swept the country in 1945-46. They organized several peasant and working class struggles all over India. All these incidents helped CPI to gain strength and emerge as an alternative to the Congress.

**Pakistan and Self – determination of nationalities in India**

The Muslim Leagues' demand for Pakistan aroused great interest in CPI. This led the CPI to formulate its own policy on the problem of nationalities in India. Till 1940 CPI viewed India as a single 'nation' engaged in a united struggle for freedom and condemned the Muslim League as a reactionary communal organization. From 1940 onwards the CPI changed its attitude towards Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan and argued for the right to self-determination of nationalities in India. On the question of nationalities, the CPI leaders derived their understanding from Stalin's definition of nationalities.[94]

CPI's statement on the problem of nationalities in India was first expressed in June 1940 by Dr. K.M. Ashraf in a student's conference. While criticizing the Congress for its notion of Indian self-government based on reactionary Hindu principles which led to the separation of nationalist forces on the basis of religion, Ashraf also opposed the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan.[95] This view was popularized among the student community in which Ashraf was an active organizer. This view was again expressed in the end of 1940 at the annual session of the AISF in which Ashraf led the communist fraction of the student community. A resolution passed in the conference declared that the future India should be a 'voluntary federation of regional states based on mutual confidence'.[96] The theory of self-determination was widely propagated after the lifting of the ban on CPI in 1942.

At the same time, the CPI opposed the two-nation theory of M.A.Jinnah. It did not agree with the Leagues' slogan that all the Muslims comprise a nationality. It

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[93] Fortnightly Report from the Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary to Home Department, Government of India, dated 24th December 1945.
[94] G. Adhikari, *Pakistan – Jatula Svayam Nirnaya Hakku,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1943, p.30.
[95] Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*, The Perennial Press, Bombay, 1960, pp.491-492.
[96] *Ibid*., pp.188-189.

showed the examples of Pathans who aligned with the Congress to overthrow the British Rule and the Muslims of the Kashmir who supported National Conference instead of Muslim League in their struggle for self – determination. Thus, the CPI felt that neither the concept of India as one nation, nor that of Muslims as one nation can help towards a real understanding of the past history or present problem of achieving Indian unity – but, rather, both concepts only build further barriers between the Congress and the League and hinder the achievement of unity for the final battle. The CPI felt that the best way to mobilize people in the final struggle for independence was to grant the right to self-determination of nationalities of India. It said that if the Congress refuses to apply within free India what it demands from the British, it cannot hope to get the confidence of those freedom–loving Indians who are outside the Congress, but will only rouse their fears. Similarly, if the league cannot make Muslim self-determination a part of Indian self-determination it can never get the support among Hindus for the self-determination of Muslim-majority homelands but will only rouse their worst suspicions. To achieve national unity, the CPI advocated the formation of a constituent assembly consisting of representatives elected by constituent assemblies of the 17 sovereign nationalities of India.[97]

However, the CPI did not continue this policy throughout the period from 1942-47. During 1943-45, the CPI slightly modified its theory of self-determination of nationalities to suit the demands of Muslims League. It urged the Congress to accept the demand of Muslim League and to form a national government at the centre. The CPI thought that the acceptance of Muslim League's demands by the Congress would lead to the national unity and strengthen the national movement to overthrow the British Rule in India. The Muslim League was depicted as a progressive organization working for the rights of Muslim nationalities in India.[98] The CPI viewed the 1940 Lahore Resolution of Muslim League as self-determination of nationalities in India.[99] The CPI went to the extent that it criticized the other Muslim nationalities especially the Pathans of NWFP and Unionists of Punjab, who were

[97] P.C. Joshi, "For the Final Bid to Power: The Communist Plan Explained", Published in 1946, reproduced in Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents on the Communist Movement in India*, Vol. V, 1944-1948, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1998, pp.128-218.
[98] Sajjad Zahir, *Congress – League Ikyata* (Congress – League Unity), (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1944, p.8.
[99] *Ibid*, pp.9-10.

opposing the domination of Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan.[100] The CPI declared that opposition to Muslim League's demand was opposed to Independence of the country.[101] The CPI viewed the statements of Muslim League leaders as a step towards introduction of Socialist system in independent Pakistan.[102] It failed to view the reactionary character of Muslim League and its leaders and their demand for the creation of Pakistan on the basis of religion and treated Muslim League as a democratic and revolutionary organization. While Muslim league was demanding for the creation of separate state with the Muslim majority areas, without recognizing the right of self-determination of various nationalities in Muslim majority areas, CPI said that Pakistan movement under the banner of Muslim League was a democratic movement for various nationalities. [103]

The policy of CPI towards the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan was one of the most debatable issues in the history of Communist Movement in India. In fact it damaged much of the popularity attained by CPI during 1942-45. The Congress and other opponents of CPI treated it as a betrayal to the nation. They misinterpreted CPI's support to the self-determination of nationalities and propagated that CPI was working against the interests of the nation and planning to divide India on the basis of religion.

The attitude of CPI towards Muslim League's demand for Pakistan received criticism even from some of the closest allies of CPI. Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, a non-communist and ally of communists in Kisan Sabha, opposed the idea of formation of a separate Pakistan in the name of self determination of nations. He said that the idea of self – determination of nationalities proposed by Stalin was dangerously misplaced in India, especially in the case of Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. Quoting the words of Stalin, he said that military and economic union between the nationalities and the rest of the country; complete emancipation of the peasants which can be nothing short of the absolute liquidation of all sorts of landlordism; and the handing over of the entire political power in the hands of the kisans and workers, were the three basic elements and factors which constitute

[100] *Ibid*, pp.10, 22-27.
[101] *Ibid*, pp.11-12.
[102] *Ibid*, pp.18-19.
[103] Shri Prakash, "CPI and the Pakistan Movement", in Bipan Chandra (Ed), *The Indian Left: Critical Appraisals*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1983, p.249.

together the national self-determination policy. Sahajananda said that either Jinnah or the leadership of Muslim League were not in agreement with these three fundamentals of the theory of self-determination of nationalities.[104] Sahajananda said that the Muslim League and its leaders did not believe in the self – determination of nationalities and propagated the two nation theory on the basis of religion. Sahajananda reiterated that the national question is mainly territorial but not religious or cultural. Quoting Stalin again, Sahajananda said that complete emancipation of peasantry was a basic component for the grant of self-determination of nationalities. He said that the Muslim peasants had not identified themselves with the demand for Pakistan. Another principle he quoted from Stalin was that the nationalities could not be allowed to secede until the masses become economically and politically conscious to rule themselves.[105]

Because of its mistaken policy on Pakistan, the CPI had to pay a heavy price. It neglected building up of popular movements in the Muslim majority areas. It left the whole scene to be dominated by Muslim League. CPI's support to Muslim League, led to the isolation of CPI from the masses and the Congressmen started attack on the CPI for not only supporting the British, but also the League. This enabled the Congress to contain the expansion of CPI and to strengthen its base among the working class.

In 1946, after R.P. Dutt's advice,[106] the CPI changed its line towards Pakistan. In its memorandum to the Cabinet Mission on April 15, 1946 the CPI demanded for a 'free voluntary democratic union' of 'sovereign units'. The memorandum demanded the formation of a provisional government with representatives belonging to Congress and Muslim League with the task of setting up a boundaries' commission to redraw the boundaries so that the re-demarcated provinces become as far as possible *linguistically homogenous national units* with the right of self-determination.[107] The August 1946 resolution of Central Committee of CPI declared that the League's demand for Pakistan reflected the policy of Muslim bourgeois feudal vested interests,

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[104] Presidential Address of Swami Sahajananda Saraswati at the All India Kisan Sabha 8th annual session, Bezawada, 14-15 March 1944, Lakshmi Power Press, Tenali, 1944, pp.13-14.
[105] *Ibid*, p.15.
[106] According to Dutt, the determining factor behind Pakistan was not nationality but religion. The League wanted to mobilize all over India to oppose the 'Hindus' not the British. Cited in Shri Prakash, "CPI and the Pakistan Movement", p.254.
[107] *Ibid*. p.249.

who were seeking for a compromise with imperialism for a share of administration in a divided India.[108] Adhikari now argued that the demand for Pakistan was undemocratic because it denies the right of self-determination to the nationalities.[109]

Based on CPI's theory of self-determination of nationalities, the communists in Andhra demanded the formation of Vishala Andhra (Greater Andhra) with Telugu speaking people of British India and other princely States. When the Congress was demanding for the formation of Andhra State by separating the Telugu speaking areas of Madras Province, the communists demanded Greater Andhra by merging the Telugu speaking areas of Madras State and princely States of Hyderabad and Mysore.

The Congress treated CPI's demand for self-determination of nationalities, as a conspiracy to split India into various parts with view to end the hegemony of the Congress and to make a revolutionary conquest of India part by part.[110] Others viewed it as conspiracy of Soviet Union to split India into parts to establish its hold on the smaller countries in the Indian Sub continent.[111] In spite of opposition from both Congress and Muslim League for the self-determination of nationalities, the CPI submitted its memorandum to the Cabinet Mission, demanding the formation of seventeen sovereign states with the right to secede from the Indian Union.[112]

During the period when the CPI was jumping from one position to the other and back, the all-India ruling classes were meticulously moving to make India a centralized unitary state, blowing to the winds all the promises given to the people before 1947 that the new Indian constitution would be representing a loose federal system allowing utmost autonomy to different nationalities. All-India monopolies, together with the Hindu revivalists, succeeded in pushing through this conspiracy, and the unitary constitution, which denies even elementary democratic rights to the different people of India, came into force. The CPI leadership not only did not raise any protest against this treachery, but also even surrendered totally in front of the emerging centralized power at the all-India level by withdrawing all the struggles and

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[108] *Ibid.,* p.254.
[109] *Ibid.,* p.255.
[110] Selig S. Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades,* Oxford University Press, Madras, 1960, Reprint 1968, p.152.
[111] *Ibid*., p.153.
[112] "Memorandum of the Communist Party of India to the British Cabinet Mission" in T.G. Jacob (Ed), *National Question in India: CPI Documents, 1942-47,* Odyssey Press, New Delhi 1988, pp.236-240.

declaring Mountbatten award as a democratic measure which would lead India towards progress.

**People's Movements**

Though CPI concentrated its activity on anti-fascist fascist propaganda and welfare activities, it did not neglect the struggles in the economic front. During the period from 1942-45 the CPI formed a number of front organizations and conducted struggles in the social, cultural, economic and political fronts. Due to the changes in the political line of CPI towards the War and the Government, the CPI faced stiff resistance from the nationalist forces in every field of activity. Despite this, the communists succeeded in retaining their hold on All India Trade Union Congress, All India Kisan Sabha, All India Students Federation as well as youth and students organizations. The communists also formed women's and children's associations. As a step to overthrow the hegemony of the bourgeois in the society, the communists formed literary and theatre associations. All these organizations served the CPI as useful instruments for action and propaganda among various sections of the people and helped to recruit large number of people into it. By forming a variety of front organizations the CPI approached various sections of the people and created an impression that the CPI would work for the welfare of those sections. The communists frequently warned its members against using mass organizations solely as 'party platforms'. Party leaders constantly disavowed Communist domination of any organization, and instead called for unity of diverse political forces. These supple tactics enabled the party to operate with greater effectiveness than might have been expected in view of the general hostility of the national movement.

The communists fought on the political, economic and social issues of every section of the toiling people. It fought for such peasant demands as fair price for his produce, for supply of agricultural implements and fertilizers; for working class demands for supply of all necessities of life at controlled rates and increase in wages; for student demands for supply of white paper, kerosene at controlled rates, against detentions, for amenities-such as tiffin sheds and rest rooms in educational institutions; for women's demands such as provision of separate sanitary facilities in villages, maternity and welfare centres, for strict implementation of the anti-child-marriages Act, for educational facilities and for equal rights; on middle class issues

against high house rentals, housing scarcity, etc. In one word, wherever and whenever people were in difficulties, there you could see a Communist with a red flag on his shoulder. That was a common phenomenon in those days. All through these campaigns, the main political task of the people—the struggle against fascism—was specially stressed and achievements of the Soviet Union were widely popularised.

**Working Class movements**

With the transformation of imperialist war into People's War, the Communist party and most advanced sections of the Working class, instead of going into the path of industrial strikes, fully devoted themselves to the task of national defence against fascist aggression. The CPI treated the anti-fascist War as a war of freedom to India and the world; and production as national production for defence of the country.[113] Yet, at the same time, in defence of workers against capitalist exploitation, the communists organized numerous working class struggles on several partial demands.

The lifting of the ban on CPI helped it to expand its base among the working class by organizing the workers in various sectors. The ban on Congress and arrests of important congress leaders provided an opportunity to CPI to consolidate its control over mass organizations in many spheres.

The CPI had to face stiff resistance from the nationalists in the Trade Union to mould the AITUC to the People's War line. In the 19th session of the AITUC held in Kanpur on 8-9 February 1942 Bankim Mukherjee, introduced a resolution advocating unconditional support to the war efforts of the United National Alliance, placing simultaneously also a charter of national demands for certain improvements of a political and economic nature in order to make war effective and enthusiastic.[114] The resolution failed to secure three-fourth majority and the policy of AITUC towards War remained the same as in 1940. Though the AITUC did not change its attitude towards the War, the communists in the AITUC began to function according to their own out look towards the War. Finally, in the 20th session of the AITUC held in Nagpur on 1-3 May 1943 the communists secured majority support to the people's

[113] B.T. Ranadive, *Karmikavargam – Desa Rakshana,* pp.69-70.
[114] Sukomal Sen, *Working Class of India: History of Emergence and Movement, 1830-1970,* K.P. Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, 1977, Reprint 1979, p.392.

war line and a prominent Communist S.A. Dange was elected as the president of the AITUC.

As part of its people's war policy, the CPI followed a no-strike policy in the workers movement. The CPI urged its cadres to work for the increase of industrial production to serve the needs of the War efforts of the government. The CPI felt that the repression and denial of just demands of workers would force the workers to resort to strikes and stop the production process which would further weaken the War efforts of the government. The CPI felt that there was a need to increase the production to help the national resistance to the fascist invasion.

At the same time, the CPI felt that the government failed to mobilize the industrial and productive resources of the country in the common fight against Fascism. The government was not able to utilize the existing industry to its full capacity and satisfy the normal requirements of the people. The failure of transport system led to food famine in the country. The government's industrial policy was in favour of the industrialists. As against the policy pursued by the government and industrialists, the CPI pursued a policy based on organizing production for total national defence and resistance.[115]

The CPI also felt that the workers can not be mobilized in favour of increase of production with mere slogans and propaganda. The CPI recognized that the workers would feel it as slavery if the production is carried out through force. It felt the government should solve the basic problems of the workers to make them increase the production. To involve the workers in the production process, the CPI proposed the government (1) to pay full compensation to meet the intolerable rise in the cost of living; adequate dearness allowance, (2) immediate grant of bonus, (3) 25% of rise in basic wage, (4) recognition of trade unions and full freedom to organize mill and factory committees in every plant and industry, to liquidate grievances and production problems, and (5) limitation of profit in the interest of the people. The CPI said that the neglect of these demands would ruin the production process in the country. The

[115] B.T. Ranadive, *Karmikavargam – Desa Rakshana*, pp.6-7.

CPI urged its cadre to minimize the strikes and at the same time to mobilize the workers to defend their interests and the nation.[116]

During the period from 1942-47, the CPI in Andhra spread its hold among the workers of different fields. In 1943, the CPI was seen working among railway workers, press workers, municipal workers, tobacco industry workers, harbour workers, handloom weavers, leather workers, jute mill workers, fibre workers, rice mill workers, transport workers, mica mine workers, drawcart pullers and several others. There were around 24000 members in the communist controlled Trade unions in Andhra in 1943. With the efforts of the Communists, all the important workers unions in Andhra were affiliated to the All India Trade Union Congress. Apart from demands for the better working conditions and increase of wages, the workers unions organized several demonstrations and meetings demanding government to release national leaders, and form a national government at the centre.

The communists organized 6th annual conference of Bezawada Press Workers conference on 13th June 1943 in Bezawada under the presidentship of Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu and passed resolutions demanding the government to provide war time allowance to workers, to recognise workers unions, to allot half of the paper produced in the country to the use of people and to provide cloth to the workers at cheaper rates.[117]

Another conference of the representatives of all the trade unions that were affiliated to the All India Trade Union Congress was held in Bezawada on 8-9 October 1943 under the presidentship of C.V.K. Rao. The conference passed resolutions demanding increase of salaries to compensate the hike in the prices of commodities, to establish a control board to monitor the supply of cloths and to release the national leaders to solve the political crisis in the country. The conference passed another resolution on the *Grow More Food*, advising the peasants to increase the production of food grains. Resolutions were passed on the problems of mining industry workers, jute mill workers, municipal and press workers demanding the

[116] "Production Policy and Trade Union Tasks", Resolution passed by the Enlarged Plenum of Central Committee of CPI on 22nd September 1943, reproduced in Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents on the Communist Movement in India*, Vo. IV, 1939-1943, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1998, pp.543-44.
[117] *Andhra Patrika*, 16th June 1943, p.3.

government to solve those problems. In another resolution the conference expressed its gratitude to the workers community in Britain and Australia for making resolutions demanding the government to solve the political crisis in the country. The conference passed another resolution urging all the workers unions to help the Bengal and Rayalasima famine relief activities. The conference elected C.V.K. Rao as the President of Andhra Provincial Trade Union Council and Polepeddi Narasimha Murthy and Bhaskara Rao as vice – president and Secretary respectively.[118]

Though the CPI followed anti-strike policy with a view to increase industrial production and help the war efforts of the government, it did not hesitate to organize workers for the improvement of living conditions of the workers. It felt that the improvement of the living condition of workers was necessary for the increase of production. The CPI and Andhra Provincial Trade Union Congress organized several strikes of working class during 1942-45. In this process the CPI had to face stiff resistance from the industrialists. In most of the cases the government supported the industrialists and helped them to suppress the workers movements. In all the cases, the CPI tried to solve the problems of workers through negotiations with the management and resorted to strikes after the failure of negotiations.

In spite of its no strike policy the CPI was able to mobilize a large section of working class into its fold. Though it followed the policy to supporting the war effort of the government, it did not neglect the day to day problems of the workers. The CPI recognized that the neglect of workers rights would lead to the strikes and damage the production process. It constantly urged the government to solve the workers problems and increase the production. Its attack on the officials helped the CPI to gain control over the working class. Thus, by the end of 1945, the CPI emerged as a strong force among the workers.

**Peasant's movements**

The period from 1942-47 witnessed the rise of a strong peasant movement under the leadership of communists in Andhra. Despite anti-fascist campaign and its support to the war efforts, the repressive measures of the government made it necessary to the All India Kisan Sabha to continuously fight against the anti-people's policies of the

[118] *Andhra Patrika*, 19th October 1943, p.1.

government. The CPI and peasants association mobilized peasants against the atrocities of officials on peasants. Struggles were launched against forcible collection of War Fund and corruption of officials. The officials used to harass the peasants who were not able to pay War Fund. The forest officials were demanding bribes from the peasants. The CPI organized the peasants against these atrocities of the officials.

The rise of communist influence among the kisans and dominant role of communists in the Kisan Sabha activities led to the split in the Kisan Sabha. When the Communist members were busy in anti-war propaganda during 1939-41, N.G. Ranga tried to combat the rise of communist influence among the peasantry. The communists had to work hard to regain their hold among the peasantry in Andhra. The All India Kisan Sabha appointed Chalasani Vasudevarao as the organizer to reorganize the branches of Kisan Sabha all over Andhra.[119] The communists successfully countered the attempts of N.G. Ranga group and reorganized peasants associations in all districts and formed Andhra Provincial Peasants Association which was subsequently affiliated to the AIKS. In 1943, the communists were able to enroll 70000 members into the Peasants association.

The peasants associations under communists demanded the government to reduce the rent on crops and to provide irrigation facilities to more land. When the government was propagating its Grow More Food policy, the CPI demanded the government to reduce taxes on peasants and provide irrigation facilities. It also demanded the government to allot cultivable waste land to the poor peasants.

The communists increased their activity among the peasants after lifting of the ban on CPI. The peasants were mobilized to occupy the waste lands. In Challapalli Zamindari area, the communists encouraged the peasants not to vacate the lands of the Zamindar when the Zamindar terminated their tenancy rights. The police intervened in this and arrested Challapalli Narayanarao and 27 members of the peasants and agricultural labourers association.[120] Again after their release, the peasants and agricultural labourers resorted to Satyagraha and prevented the Zamindar's men from entering into the lands. The police visited the place and arrested Chandra

[119] Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithi Pathamlo* (Autobiography), p.71.
[120] *Andhra Patrika*, 7th July 1942, p.1.

Rajeswararao, Gunturu Bapanaiah, K. Pratyagatma and several others in this incident.[121]

In West Godavari, district the peasants association organized training schools to train the peasants in politics as well as various issues related to the peasantry. It carried out rigorous propaganda for 'Grow More Food' and demanded the government to supply fertilizers. The peasants association worked for the distribution of more than 3000 acres of banjar lands to the land less poor in West Godavari district. It started agitation against the black marketing of the food grains, fertilizers and other agricultural implements. At several places the volunteers of CPI and peasants associations carried out attacks on the hoardings of black marketers and forced the government officials to distribute the goods to the people at control rates. The CPI opposed the compulsory purchase of War bonds and submitted several memorandums to the officials to exempt the poor peasants from the purchase of war bonds. It has forced officials to release water till the end of the crops and to conduct repairs to the existing irrigation canals. It also carried out agitations demanding the government to construct new irrigations projects in the district. The peasants association and the volunteers of CPI took up the task of canal repairs in Tanuku and Narsapuram taluks.[122]

The members of Peasants association actively participated in the famine relief work in Rayalasima. Though the government maintained a hostile attitude, the volunteers of Kisan Sabha assisted the people in famine stricken areas in several ways. Apart from mobilizing material support to help the famine stricken people, it worked for the supply of agricultural implements, fertilizers, and loans and forced the government to conduct repairs to the irrigation sources and take up new irrigation projects in the famine stricken areas.

During this period, the Andhra communists successfully organized the 8th annual conference of All India Kisan Sabha in Bezawada on 9th – 15th March 1944.[123] The success of the conference created fear among the officials. They thought that the

[121] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd July 1942, p.3. *Prajasakthi*, 8th July 1942, p. 6.
[122] Sanku Apparao, "Paschima Godavari Jilla Rytu Udyama Charitra", in Y.V. Krishnarao (Ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu – Poratalu*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1986, pp.103-105.
[123] Rose Yardumian, "Record of the Kisan Sabha", *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 14, No. 11, 6th June 1945, p.141. Also see, *Prajasakthi*, 15th March 1944, pp.1-7 and 22nd March 1944, pp.1-10.

communists were gaining hold among the rural population by using kisan sabha as a cover. A government report mentioned "The Madras Presidency Communists are sparing no pains to capture the ryots, and it was clearly with that intention that they staged this conference and put into it so much energy…. Unquestionably however, the communist influence among the ryots is growing".[124]

Apart from organizing conferences and submitting petitions to the government, the communists organized peasants in several zamindari areas against the atrocities and exploitation of Zamindars. The anti-zamindari struggles which began in late 1930s were revived after the lifting of the ban on CPI. Through these struggles, the communists were successful in establishing their hold among the peasantry.

Apart from the struggles in the Zamindari areas, the communists organized several struggles in ryotwari areas demanding the government to distribute lands and take up new irrigation schemes as well as repair several existing schemes. The peasants associations demanded the government to provide loans at minimum interests and declare moratorium on the agricultural debts. They demanded the government to provide agricultural implements and fertilizers at cheaper rates. The peasants associations in West Godavari district submitted memorandum to the government to start water pumping schemes in Tadepalligudem. Because of these struggles, pumping schemes were launched on several canals in West Godavari.[125]

In organizing the peasants, the communists had to face stiff resistance from the landlords, the Congress, and the Government. Inspite of CPI's support to the War efforts of the government, the government imposed several restrictions on CPI and its frontal organizations and kept strict vigilance on individual members. They were not allowed to hold conferences at several places. The local officials issued section 144 of Criminal procedure Code, prohibiting the conferences of CPI and its frontal organizations on the pretext that they were supporting congress and making speeches supporting congress. Apart from the restrictions on the 8th conference of All India Kisan Sabha, the Madras Government imposed ban on the Andhra Provincial Kisan

[124] Report of the Superintendent of Police, S.B.C.I.D., to the Under Secretary to the Government, dated 24th April 1944.
[125] Indukuri Subbaraju, *Na Gnapakalu*, pp.32-33.

Sabha conference which was scheduled to be held on 28-29 March 1945. It also imposed several restrictions on the Guntur district Kisan Sabha conference held in April 1945.[126] In Anantapuram the police created several obstacles to disturb the conference of peasants association in 1945. The communists had to face opposition from the landlords and the local police.[127]

Inspite of government repression and opposition from Congress, the CPI was able to build up a strong base among the peasantry during 1942-45. The Grow more food campaign, the demand for the distribution of banjar and other cultivable lands to the landless poor, repair of irrigation sources, struggle for the construction of new irrigation projects, struggles against the atrocities of Zamindars, demand for the supply of agricultural implements and sanction of loans and the implementation of minimum support price for agricultural products and various other welfare measures, helped the CPI to gain a strong hold among the peasantry. By the end of 1945, the peasantry became a strong base for the CPI in Andhra.

During 1942-45 the CPI made remarkable progress in the peasant front. Though it failed to force the government to distribute the banjar lands in Zamindari areas, it succeeded in forcing the government to distribute the banjar land to the landless poor in the ryotwari areas. The peasant movements organized by communists revolutionized the agrarian movements and created political consciousness among the rural masses. It also forced the bourgeois political leadership to adopt policies that gave some relief to the peasants and agricultural workers.

**Agricultural labourer's movement**

During the period from 1942-47 the communists organized a powerful agricultural labourers movement in Andhra and worked for the improvement of the living conditions of labourers. By the end of 1947 CPI established strong hold over the entire community of agricultural labourers and in turn the agricultural labourers provided hard core support base for the communist party in Andhra.

Agricultural labourers were the worst sufferers of the effects of the Second World War. With their normal wages, they could not afford to buy food grains due to

[126] *Andhra Patrika*, 17th April 1944, p.2.
[127] P. Dastagiri, *Comrade Idukallu Sadasivan Jivitha Visheshalu*, p.52.

the rise in the prices of the essential commodities. The living condition of the labourers became miserable. The agricultural labourer who was a farm hand used to get a salary between Rs. 100 and Rs. 250 for the whole year. The daily wage labourer used to get wages from Rs. 0.25 to Rs.1 according to season and area.[128] Women were paid even less. The farm labourers did not have even a single holiday in a month. There was no limitation on working hours. They had to work at all odd hours.

The intellectuals, who emerged from the agricultural labourer communities, did not try to solve the economic problems of the labourers. Adi-Andhra Mahasabha and other Dalit organizations of that period did not concentrate on the emancipation of labourers on class lines. They concentrated on the social inequalities and degradation of agricultural labourers in society. Most of the intellectuals produced several writings condemning the untouchability and caste system. The scheduled Castes federation formed by Dr. Ambedkar tried to mobilize the Dalit communities to gain political power. But they did not recognize the fact that the Dalit communities could not be mobilized without solving their day to day problems.

During this time the communist party intervened and mobilized agricultural labourers on their day to day problems. The CPI recognized the need of mobilization of agricultural labourers in the struggle against British imperialism and for the establishment of socialism in India. It decided to create itself a strong base among the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. The CPI formed associations of agricultural labourers in several villages and held regular conferences to discuss the problems of the labourers. At several places the organizers of the agricultural labourers convinced the peasants to increase the wages of labourers. Struggles of agricultural labourers were launched in several places against the rich landlords for better treatment and for fair wages and mobilized the peasants in support of these strikes. The communists organized *Akali yatralu* (hunger marches) against government officials demanding them to solve the problems of the labourers. At several places, the communists organized *Akali dadulu* (hunger raids) against the hoardings and landlords and forced

[128] P. Sundarayya, *Vishala Andhra*, People's Publishing House, Bombay, 1946, p.27.

them to distribute food grains to the labourers.[129] In Guntur district, the communists instigated agricultural labourers to conduct raids on the grain shops.[130]

The communists organized rigorous campaign for the increase of wages of agricultural laborers as well as for better working conditions for them. Night schools were conducted at several places to educate the labourers. As part of the 'Grow more food' campaign the communists demanded the government to distribute banjar land to labourers. They also demanded the government to hand over the contract works of all development activities, i.e. repair of roads, irrigation tanks and canals and several other works to the agricultural labourers associations.

The communists organized ceaseless struggles against untouchability. Propaganda units were formed to campaign against untouchability. The communists lived in the hamlets of agricultural labourers and encouraged them to struggle against the economic exploitation of the people.

The CPI suggested the government to bring more land into cultivation to prevent the rise of the prices of agricultural goods and supply sufficient goods to the successful prosecution of ongoing Second World War. It urged the government to take necessary steps to prevent rise of prices of essential commodities and to open government shops in the villages to supply goods to agricultural labourers at cheaper rates. As part of its Grow More Food campaign, the CPI demanded the government to distribute fallow lands to agricultural labourers. With the efforts of the CPI, the government agreed to provide the railway lands to the agricultural workers for cultivation. The local committees of CPI identified the lands and demanded the officials to distribute those lands to the agricultural labourers and landless poor.

By the year 1943, the Agricultural Labourers Association of CPI emerged as the premier organization of all the Agricultural labourers in Andhra. The association was active in solving all the problems of the agricultural labourers from family troubles to land problems. The association reached a position, where it occupied the

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[129] Padala Ramarao, *Antarvani* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Andhra Sri Publications, Rajahmundry, 2004, pp.50-51.
[130] Aluri Bhujangarao, *Gamanagamanam*, (Telugu), Rahul Sahitya Sadanam, Shahabad, 1999, pp.26-27

position held by the caste heads in the villages. It also worked to solve the differences between various communities among the agricultural labourers.

The communists worked hard to establish cordial relations between peasants and agricultural labourers. The CPI felt that the unity of peasants and agricultural labourers was necessary to solve the problems of both the sections. It felt that both peasants and agricultural labourers were exploited in the hands of zamindars as well as the oppressive tax system of the government. The peasants who were exploited by the landlords and zamindars were trying to exploit the workers. The peasants were becoming labourers due to the exploitation of landlords and zamindars. It urged the peasants to give proper wages to the labourers, not to follow traditional oppressive measures, to abolish illegal measurement systems, not to abuse workers, to extend welfare activities in localities of labourers and to include agricultural labourers in the local bodies and co-operatives.[131]

The congress leaders like Vennelakanti Raghavaiah and others made abortive attempts to mobilize agricultural labourers under the Congress banner. The Congers used its harijan members to attract agricultural labourers into its fold.[132] In West Godavari, Congressmen conducted an intensive propaganda among the Scheduled Castes in order to wean them away from communist influence and in East Godavari the District Collector reported that each party was vying with the other to gain a hold over local labour.[133]

The communists proposed a broad united front for the political development of agricultural labourers. After the emergence of Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF), the CPI suggested formation of a united front of all scheduled castes people under the SCF with the members belonging to every political group, Ambedkarites, Congress and Communists.[134] Similarly it invited the members of all political parties to become members of the agricultural labourers association of CPI and work for the welfare of labourers. It invited the agricultural labourers who believed in the ideology of

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[131] Andhra Rashtra Rytu Sangham, *Andhra Rashtra Rytu Sangha Samavesam, Bezawada (15-16 March 1943)*, pp.38-38.
[132] *Andhra Patrika*, 22nd June 1945, p.6.
[133] Fortnightly Report, from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to Secretary to Home Department, Government of India, dated 8th July 1945.
[134] Andhra Provincial Committee, CPI, *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Committee Plenum Samavesam* (11-19 July 1944), p.28.

Congress and Scheduled Castes Federation to join the Agricultural labourers association while continuing as members of those political parties. The united front strategy followed by communists attracted the labourers belonged to various political parties to join the communist controlled agricultural labourers association. The communists made constant efforts to mobilize the agricultural labourers into associations and win over a large section of labourers into its fold. They urged the labourers that the British rule and the exploitative economic system introduced by them were significant causes for the problems of the agricultural labourers. The CPI encouraged the labourers to start united struggles of peasants and agricultural labourers against the exploitation of zamindars and landlords and British imperialism and work for the establishment of a socialist system in India.[135] The simple life style, hard working nature, and dedicated work of the communists attracted large number of labourers into its fold.

The communists also campaigned against the social evils and superstitions among the agricultural labourers. The members of CPI educated the labourers and asked them to revolt against the hereditary caste heads who were exploiting the labourers by passing various restrictions in the labourers on the name of traditions.[136]

The government of Madras considered the agricultural labourers' demands impracticable and warned them of being misled by 'Communist agitators'. As the movement grew, it resorted to repression. The government imposed strict restrictions on the activities of agricultural labourers association. Several leaders of the association were arrested and imprisoned and some of them were killed by the police. Kandikatla Nagabhushanam, an important organisor of Agricultural workers Association was arrested under the Criminal Tribes Act in 1946. Later the police killed Kandikatla Nagabhushanam and Penmetsa Anantam of East Godavari district.

However, despite government onslaught and opposition from landed gentry, the communists were able to expand unionism amongst the poor labourers. Unlike Congressmen, the communists were able to develop and sustain the labour movement in rural areas over a period of time due to their stronghold in Dalit hamlets. The prevailing objective conditions in the Andhra rural social structure, i.e. intensive

[135] Mukkamala Nagabhushanam (Ed), *Nenu Communistunu Ela Ayyanu,* pp.31-39.
[136] Chandra Rajeswararao, *Party Nirmanam,* p.62.

stratification within peasantry, helped the growth of the agricultural labourers' movement.

With the dedicated work among the agricultural labourers, the communists were able to enlist a large number of agricultural labourers into CPI. Around 15000 members of agricultural labourers association attended the 8th annual conference of AIKS held in Vijayawada in March 1944 and among the 4000 volunteers, who worked for the conference, 1000 members belonged to agricultural labourers associations.[137]

**Students' Movement**

Hitler's attack on Soviet Union and the subsequent changes in the Communist strategy all over the world affected the Students Movement in Andhra. The anti-fascist campaign launched by CPI attracted several students towards Russia and Communism and majority of the students accepted the people's war strategy and recognized the need to defeat fascism.[138] While supporting the War efforts of the campaign the CPI tried to solve the day to day problems of the student community through representations to the officials. Strikes of the students were also organized at several places. The students' organizations organized several meetings and processions demanding the release of Congress leaders and the formation of a national government for the effective mobilization of the India's resources in the war against Fascism.

The people's war strategy of CPI was first announced openly at a conference of the All India Students Federation held in Delhi on 15th May 1942.[139] P.C.Joshi, the General Secretary of CPI, who had just come out from underground, attended the conference. The conference gave a call to the students to start their struggle against Fascism. The conference decided that the struggle against fascism would finally lead to the independence of India. Sajjad Zahir who opened the conference said that the duty of the students was to support the anti-fascist war efforts. The conference demanded the government to release all the student detenus who were willing to

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[137] Andhra Provincial Committee, CPI, *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Committee Plenum Samavesam* (11-19 July 1944), p.56.
[138] S.V.K. Prasad, *Poratala Batalo: Anubhavalu – Gnapakalu* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Prachi Publications, Hyderabad, 1998, pp.16-17.
[139] *Prajasakthi*, 17-6-1942, p.8

participate in the anti-fascist struggle. It also passed a resolution urging the students to continue their studies during the war period and demanded the government not to close the educational institutions during the war, not to reduce the wages of teachers but to reduce the student's fees; to provide compulsory military training to the students; and to give importance to technical courses. Swami Sahajananda Saraswathi, Perin Barucha, Rangnekar, Romesh Chandra, Arun Bose, Viswanatha Mukherji, Sohan Singh Josh and several others spoke in the conference.[140] S.V.K. Prasad led the 5 member Andhra delegation to the meeting.[141]

Though majority of the students were in agreement with the Communist party and its policy towards the Second World War, the CPI did not declare it as a communist organization. The CPI wanted to work in association with students belonging to all political parties and to establish hegemony of the communist ideology in the student's movement. In several meetings of the student's organizations, the communists made it clear that the student's federation was not a communist organization. In a statement issued on 31st October 1944, the secretary of Andhra Provincial Students Federation, S.V. Narasaiah rebutted the allegations that the student's federation was dominated by the communists. He said "it is known fact that the students federation is working for the welfare of students. It is the biggest among all student organizations in Andhra. It is not true that all the 478 delegates who attended the recent conference of students were communists".[142]

The moderate handling of the students' organizations helped CPI to attract prominent non-communists into the students' organizations. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Dr. B.C. Roy, Prof. R.K. Mukherjee and several other non-communists presided over the AISF conferences during 1942-45.[143] Inspite of the general opposition to its people's war strategy, and rivalry of the Congress, the CPI gained control over the student organizations and by the end of 1945, the AISF overshadowed the rival group. Thammareddi Satyanarayana, S.V. Narasaiah, Dasari Nagabhushanarao and V.

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[140] *Ibid*.

[141] Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Andhra Jatiya Punarujjivanalo Communist Party Mahojvala Patra*, (Telugu), Sanghamitra Prachuranalu, Vijayawada, 2001, p.73.

[142] Statement issued by S.V. Narasayya on 31st October 1944, see *Andhra Patrika*, 3rd November 1944, p.3.

[143] *AISF Charitra: Ujvala Ghattalu*, (Telugu), A. I. S. F. Andhra Pradesh Committee, Hyderabad, 1985, pp.26-27.

Madhusudanarao played active roles in the activities of Students federation in Andhra during 1942-47.

After the adaptation of the people's war strategy, the Andhra Provincial Students Federation took up the task of mobilizing students in support of the anti-fascist propaganda. Anti-fascist ideas were popularized through literature and art forms. Sri M. Radhakrishna the secretary of Andhra Students federation published a booklet explaining to the students that anti-fascist war would lead to the independence of the country.[144] While supporting the war efforts of the Government, the APSF organized movements for the release of national leaders and the formation of national government at the centre.

The students played an active role in the famine relief committees. Members of the APSF enrolled themselves as volunteers to assist people in the famine stricken areas. Volunteers of the student's federation visited several places in Andhra and performed plays, and Burrakathas on the Bengal Famine to draw the attention of the people and to mobilize resources for the famine stricken people in Bengal.[145] A delegation of Andhra Students Federation headed by S.V. Narasaiah visited Bengal to get first hand information on the condition of people in Bengal. The members of the delegation who visited several places in Bengal for 15 days, after their return, organized 40 meetings in Andhra and explained the miserable conditions of the famine stricken people in Bengal.[146]

During this period the APSF continued to organize students on their day to day problems. Struggles were organized against the detention system, the reduction of fees and for the provision of sports, hostel, library and other facilities in schools and colleges.[147] During this period, the CPI organized several conferences and mobilized students in support of its activities. Several strikes were organized against the ill-treatment and severe punishments by the principals, while there were demands for the freedom of speech and other fundamental rights to the students.[148]

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[144] M. Radhakrishna, *Prapancha Praja yuddame Bharata Swatantrya Yuddam.*
[145] *V. Madhusudanarao Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Souvenir,* (Telugu), Hyderabad, 1997, p.3.
[146] *Prajasakthi*, 19th January, 1944, p.3 and 26th January 1944, p.3.
[147] *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Committee Plenum Samavesam (11-19 July 1944)*, p.78
[148] P. Dastagiri, *Avismaraniyudu V.K.* (Biography), (Telugu), Smt. V.K.Parvatamma, Anantapuram, 2003, pp.6-7.

The students' organizations also worked for the cultural renaissance of Andhra. Cultural conferences were organized alongside the student's conferences at several places. Sports, songs, painting and essay writing competitions were held to encourage the students in those fields. Several poets, writers and artistes were invited to the meetings as speakers to deliver lectures on the literature, history and culture of the Telugu people. Adavi Bapiraju, Tapi Dharmarao, Nidadavolu Venkatrao and several other famous personalities, though non- communists, were invited to the students conferences to deliver lectures.[149]

The student's organizations carried out rigorous campaign for the release of national leaders and formation of national government. They conducted signatures campaign for the release of national leaders. Several meetings and processions were held in protest against the detention of National leaders. At several places the officials denied permission to the communists to hold meetings of AISF. The district Magistrate of Kakinada in his explanation to the chief secretary for prohibiting students conferences East Godavari district, said that the communists were carrying out Congress propaganda in the students conferences.[150] In spite of government repression, the communists were able to spread the activities of the students' movement to all the districts in Andhra. All these activities of CPI in the students' front attracted a large number of students into the fold of CPI. It is estimated that 25 percent of the total student population were members of the AISF in 1946.[151]

**Youth Movement**

The CPI organized a powerful youth movement in Andhra during 1942-47. The youth played a key role in implementing the constructive programme carried out by CPI during 1942-47. The CPI felt that the youth, if left without any orientation, would become anti-social elements and create troubles to peaceful life in villages and towns. The CPI felt that the deplorable economic conditions that prevailed in the country may help the communal forces to attract the youth into their trap. To prevent this, the CPI wanted to attract the attention of the youth into the social reform and social welfare activities and instill revolutionary ideas into the minds of the youth.

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[149] Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Andhra Jatiya Punarujjivanalo Communist Party Mahojvala Patra,* p.66.
[150] G.O. No. 1014, date 27th March 1944, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[151] A.S.R. Chari, *Andhralo Communist Vyatirekula Nagna Swarupam,* (Telugu), Praja Prachuranalayam, Hyderabad, 1946, pp.32-33.

With the attack of Hitler on Soviet Union, the youth leagues functioning under the guidance of CPI recognized the change in the nature of war and carried out rigorous anti fascist propaganda through meetings. A conference of Guntur district youth league was held at Inturu village from 29th to 30th April 1942. Sri M. Radhakrishna, secretary of Andhra Provincial Students Federation presided over the conference. Mukkamala Nagabhushanam, Tapi Dharmarao and others spoke on the duties of youth in the Peoples War.[152] They said that the War was fought between the people's governments and fascist governments. They urged the youth to work for the defeat of fascists and to help the formation of the people's governments after war.[153]

Youth leagues were formed in several villages in Andhra. Games and Sports competitions conducted in the villages had brought a radical change in the world view of the youth. Youth leagues carried out campaigns against feudal system and child marriages, and propagated widow re-marriages. At several places they have opposed child marriages and organized marriages for widows. The activities of the youth leagues reformed the youth in the villages who were involved in drinking, gambling and other bad habits and brought them into the fold of youth leagues by conducting sports competitions and other cultural programmes. Several plays were written and performed on the duties of youth. Parakala Pattabhiramarao wrote '*Bhavi Paurudu*' (Future Citizen), a one act play depicting the role of the youth in society. Youth leagues also played an important role in bringing women into politics.

The youth leagues played an important role in the cultural revolution of the society. The CPI introduced a new culture in the villages and town through youth leagues. Cultural troupes were formed in several villages and towns to conduct cultural performances and sports competitions. Several tours and excursions were organized to improve the knowledge of the youth. The adult education programme conducted by youth leagues needs special mention. Night schools were established at several places to provide basic education to the youth in the villages. Libraries were also formed in several villages.[154]

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[152] *Andhra Patrika*, 27th April 1942, p.5.
[153] *Andhra Patrika*, 7th April 1942, p.5.
[154] *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Committee Plenum Samavesam*, 11-19 July 1944, p.81.

The youth leagues carried out campaigns against superstitions and social evils through art forms. Social reform themes were introduced in the performances. Campaigns were also conducted in villages to create awareness among the people about various diseases and the methods of prevention and treatment.[155] Youth leagues carried out rigorous campaigns of social reform and organized death anniversaries of Kandukuri Viresalingam, a doyen of social reform movement in Andhra, at more than 70 places and popularized the social reform ideas.

The Youth leagues had done remarkable work for Famine relief. They collected money and materials for the famine stricken people of Rayalasima and Bengal. The problems of famine areas were popularized through cultural shows to draw the attention of the people and to mobilize funds.

The growing influence of communists among the youth alarmed the Congress leaders. They started rival groups of youth associations and tried to woo the youth in the name of nationalism. They accused the CPI as being anti-national and urged the youth to join in the youth leagues controlled by Congress. The members of the Congress controlled youth leagues used to carry out anti-communist propaganda and create disturbances in the meetings of CPI and its frontal organizations.[156] In spite of this, the CPI was able to attract a large number of youth into its fold. During 1945-56, there were 30000 members in the CPI controlled youth Leagues in Andhra.

**Women's movement**

The CPI did not underestimate the role of women in bringing revolution in society. CPI recognized the fact that women form 50% of the total population of the society and any attempt to change the society would not be successful without the participation of women. So it decided to bring women into the mainstream of politics. The members of CPI were instructed to take up constructive programme in the villages and involve women in the activities of CPI. CPI advised its members to carry out rigorous propaganda against superstitions and social evils.[157] Reading rooms were established to inculcate the habit of reading, and books on the lives of heroic women like Tanya and Jhansi Lakshmi Bhai were made available to women in the village

[155] Chandra Rajeswararao, *Party Nirmanam*, p.184.
[156] G.O. No. 3245 dated 9th November 1943, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[157] Chandra Rajeswararao, *Party Nirmanam*, p.211.

libraries.[158] Women's associations at several places propagated anti-fascist ideas and social reform ideas among the women in villages.

With the attack of Hitler on Soviet Union, CPI started rigorous anti-fascist campaign in the coastal districts of Andhra region. The CPI felt that there was a need to train women in self defence to protect them against the fascist attack. With the Japanese bombing on Visakhapatnam and Kakinada in early 1943, the security and protection of the honour of womenfolk became a live issue for women's associations in Andhra. The Communist leader P. Sundarayya suggested the women to get trained in self-defence with a view to protect themselves in case of fascist attack. There was overwhelming response from the women to this call. Women from various walks of life came forward to receive training in self-defence and anti-fascist propaganda.[159] Training camps were organized in Bezawada, Guntur and several other places to train women in self defence, military drill and anti-fascist campaign.[160]

Women's associations organized conferences at several places in Andhra and mobilized thousands of women into women's associations under the guidance of CPI. The women's association demanded abolition of child marriages and advocated widow re-marriages and demanded the government to bring laws for equal rights to women in inheritance and property rights. The women's associations recognized that the economic dependence of women was the main cause for all the problems of women. The women's associations carried out rigorous propaganda on the progress of women in Soviet Union and urged women that the establishment of a Socialist system in India was the only solution to all the problems of women.[161] The women's association demanded the government to make amendments to the constitution and to provide equal property rights to women.

The women's associations have taken up the day to day problems of women in villages and worked to solve them. The women's associations demanded the government to establish ration shops to distribute essential commodities at cheaper

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[158] *Ibid.*, p.212.
[159] Mukkamala Nagabhushanam (Ed), *Nenu Communistunu Ela Ayyanu*.
[160] Goparaju Sitadevi, *Janani Janmabhoomischa: 50 Samvatsarala Mahila Udyama Anubhavalu – Gnapakalu*, (Telugu), Sanghamitra Prachuranalu, Vijayawada, 1998, p.44.
[161] Manikonda Suryavathi, "Mahila Udyama Charitra – Anubhavalu", in Telakapalli Ravi (Ed), *Mahila Udyama Manipusa Manikonda Suryavathi*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Mahila Sangham, Vijayawada, 1993, p.50.

rates. The members of the association carried out campaigns on hygiene and cooking, maternity and child care, and various other social problems faced by women. They went on deputation to the local authorities demanding them to open maternity clinics, drinking water facilities, and lavatories for women and better sanitation facilities in the villages.[162] The members of women's associations organized queues in front of ration shops helped the poor and the illiterate to get ration cards, collected signatures in support of the Rao's committee's recommendations about Hindu women's property rights.[163] Apart from this, the members of the women's association also demanded the government to release the national leaders and to establish a national government at the centre for the effective prosecution of war against fascism.

The women members of CPI played an active role in the activities of Praja Natyamandali, a cultural organization started by CPI to propagate the communist ideology through art forms. They popularized the anti-fascist ideas and social reform ideas through art forms. Till 1940, the role of women was played by men in the performances. The CPI changed this scene and encouraged women to participate in the performances. Separate troupes were formed with women members to perform Burrakatha. Through various art forms, the members of Women's associations helped to spread the ideas of communism in Andhra. The women cultural squads used to enlighten people about political developments through street plays, burrakatha, and folk songs. The performances of Burrakatha squad, consisting of Moturi Udayam, Chintala Koteswaramma and Mahankali Parvathi, attracted several people to the Communist party. Apart from anti-fascist ideology, they have popularized the vision of great social reformers like Gurajada Apparao, Kandukuri Viresalingam and others.[164]

Thus, by the end of 1947, women's movement under the leadership of CPI, spread to all the districts in Andhra and provided a strong base for CPI in the villages.

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[162] *Prajasakthi*, 31-5-1944, p.12.
[163] Renu Chakravarthy, *Communists in Indian Women's Movement, 1940-1950*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980, p.139.
[164] Parvathi Menon, *Breaking Barriers: Stories of Twelve Women*, Left Word Books, New Delhi, 2004, p.92.

With the active work of the women's associations, the membership of women's associations reached to 20000 in 1945.[165]

The communists had to face several difficulties in organizing women's movement. The widow remarriage movement launched by CPI received severe criticism from the opponents. At several places anti-social elements conducted attacks on the activists of CPI to prevent widow remarriages.[166] The Congress leaders started slanderous campaign on CPI and its leaders. Absurd allegations and abusive language were hurled at communists and vulgar street plays were staged against them. While the CPI was encouraging women to participate in party activities and mobilizing large number of women into political movements, the congress leaders discouraged the participation of women in public life. Well known congress leaders like N.G. Ranga and Ayyadevara Kaleswararao encouraged their followers to start anti-communist propaganda. At a meeting organized in Machilipatnam, in which Ranga and Kaleswararao were main speakers, speeches were made depicting the women members of CPI as 'butterflies'.[167] At several occasions the CPI activists had to use force to teach the anti-social elements a lesson, who attempted to disturb the women's conferences.

The repression on communist movement also affected the women's movement in Andhra. In 1948 the government prohibited the women's conference proposed to be held in Bezawada in May 1948 and arrested the leaders of the women's movement. The publication of *Andhra Vanitha*, a journal launched by women's association was also banned.[168] Around 75 members of the women's association were arrested and detained in Nandigama sub jail.[169] Dr. K. Atchamamba and Manikonda Suryavathi were sent to detention in Vellore jail.[170] Thus, due to severe repression on the communist movement the activities of women's movement came to a halt during 1948-52.

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[165] P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons*, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Calcutta, 1972, p.145.
[166] Josyabhatla Satyanarayana, *Jivitam – Atu Potlu: Oka Swatantrya Samara Yodhuni Athma Parisheelana*, pp.72-73.
[167] Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Stri Vimukthi Udyamam: Nadu, Nedu, Repu,* (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samakhya, Hyderabad, 2000, pp.9-10.
[168] *Udayam Udyamam*, (Telugu), AIDWA, Andhra Pradesh Committee, Hyderabad, 2003, p.69.
[169] Renu Chakravarthy, *Communists in Indian Women's Movement, 1940-1950*, p.143.
[170] *Udayam Udyamam*, p.7.

**Baladalam**

The CPI mobilized the children into Baladalam (children's' Troupes) to train them in class lines. Baladalam's were formed in several villages in Krishna and Guntur districts.[171] The members of Baladalam visited villages with slogans '*bharatamata biddalam, baladalam sabhyulam*' (we are sons of India, we are members of children's troupes) and received the attention of the people. They carried out anti-fascist campaign through songs and other art forms. Sports competitions were also organized for children in the villages.

Baladalam's were formed in Kautavaram, Betavolu, Mylavaram, Nadellavaripalem, Nandigama, Nemali and Kavuluru villages in May 1943.[172] Nadakuditi Lakshmipathi started Baladalam in Chiruvolulanka village and started a handwritten magazine *Bala Kesari*.[173] He was arrested in 1949 and killed by the police when he was a student in Bandar.

CPI organized a training camp in Guntur in 1944 to provide training to the children in constructive programme. The members of Baladalam participated in the famine relief activity and also worked as volunteers at ration shops to maintain queue in front of the ration offices.[174]

The CPI organized training camps to provide training to the children in politics and to instill anti-fascist ideas into their minds. Children were taught on the effects of Bengal famine and advised to participate in the famine relief works along with anti-fascist propaganda and campaign for the release of national leaders.[175]

A Baladalam in Endagandi village in West Godavari formed into Burrakatha troupe and staged Burrakatha at several places. They played *Kasthajivi*, *Tanya*, *Viresalingam* and other Burrakathas. The children used to play burrakatha at the venue of Women's conferences. The members of Baladalam campaigned against superstitions and child marriages.[176] By the end of 1945, the activities of Baladalam

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[171] *Prajasakthi*, 9th June 1943, p.9.
[172] *Prajasakthi*, 9th June 1943, p.9.
[173] *Viplava Virudu Challapalli Narayanarao Smaraka Souvenir*, p.14.
[174] *Bharata Communist Party Andhra Rashtra Plenum Samavesam,* 11-19 July 1944, pp.84-85.
[175] *Ibid*, p.84.
[176] Parakala Pattabhiramarao, *Andhra Jatiya Punarujjivanalo Communist Party Mahojvala Patra*, pp.75-76.

were spread to 1200 villages in Andhra. There were 40000 Baladalam members in Andhra.[177]

Though the CPI and its frontal organizations were supporting the war efforts of the government and opposing the attempts of the fifth columnists to disturb the war efforts of the government, the government did not allow CPI and its frontal organizations to work freely. The repression of CPI continued even after the lifting of the ban. The government did not release some of the prominent leaders even after the ban was lifted. Uddaraju Ramaraju, a prominent leader of CPI in West Godavari district, who was arrested in 1942, was kept in detention till 1945.[178] Though the government released majority of the CPI leaders from detention, CPI's activities were viewed with suspicion. The CIDs kept an eye on the activities of the CPI leaders. Some of the leaders were interned in their houses. Several leaders, who were released after the lifting of the ban, were again arrested and kept in jail. In May 1945, the police arrested P. Sundarayya and detained him in jail without trail.[179] Later he was released with a condition that he should not participate in political meetings.[180] Similarly, in Madras, the police arrested Anisetti Subbarao, a student activist of CPI for distributing the pamphlets published by CPI and he was imprisoned for one year.[181]

**Cultural Movements**

In addition to their political activities, the Andhra Communists took the lead in the cultural movement which can be described as the movement for National renaissance of Andhra. The cultural movement is the struggle against the bourgeoise ideological hegemony over the society, to remove the structures and ideologies created by it and to establish the hegemony of proletarian ideological hegemony through literature, art forms, and various other methods of mass contact. The cultural movement plays an important role in any revolution. The cultural movement should prepare the ground ready for the launch of revolution against the bourgeois system by destroying the various structures and ideologies created by it. Literature, art and social

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[177] *Ibid*., p.85.
[178] G.O. No. 1333 dated 18th May 1943, Public Department, Government of Madras.
[179] *Andhra Patrika*, 23rd May 1945, p.4 and 25th June 1945, p.4.
[180] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th June 1945, p.4.
[181] *Andhra Patrika*, 11th June 1944, p.4.

reform movements play a key role in establishing the hegemony of the proletariat in place of the bourgeois ideological hegemony.

Gramsci has said that the Revolutionary party should have a cultural organization to popularize the ideology of the revolution and to create a consciousness among the people and to counter the hegemony of bourgeoisie ideology in the society. To perform these tasks the socialists should have a cultural organization. The cultural organization which the socialists should promote must be one whose scope and aims are defined by a class. It must be an institution of the proletariat, directed to precise ends. Gramsci pointed out that the absence of a cultural organization is one of the deficiencies of the party.[182]

The bourgeois society creates a false consciousness among the people through religion and superstitions. Thus, any criticism of the religion and belief is also the criticism of the society which created it. According to Marxism, the struggle against religion is the struggle against the social relations which created it.

The cultural association was to take charge of the process of education, to set about creating convictions. The formation of cultural organization also serves the problem of intellectuals. Intellectuals represent a dead weight within the movement, because they do not have a specific task in it, a task suited to their capacities. They would find it in the association; and their intellectualism – their real intellectual qualities – would be put to rest.[183] By setting up this cultural institute, the socialists would deliver a death blow to the dogmatic and intolerant mentality which bourgeois mentality had instilled in the people. The cultural organization has to change the minds of the people.

The necessity of a Cultural Revolution was recognized by communists in Russia in 1905.The failure of 1905 revolution in Russia to establish a democratic revolution was attributed to the fact that the political revolution was not preceded by an ideological revolution in the manner that the Enlightenment preceded the Great

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[182] Richard Bellamy (Ed), *Antonio Gramsci – Pre-prison Writings*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, p.36.
[183] *Ibid*, p.37.

French Revolution.[184] The communists all over the world realized this fact and started efforts to build hegemony of the proletariat over the society along with efforts to establish the political hegemony. The socialists and communists realized that education plays a key role in establishing the hegemony of the proletariat over the society. For that they started training schools to the party cadre and widely used literature and art to propagate the ideas of communism and to establish the hegemony of the proletariat over the society. The communists in Andhra also followed the same and carried out rigorous propaganda through literature and art forms to overthrow the domination of bourgeois ideological hegemony over the society.

As part of the cultural movement, the CPI in Andhra established literary and theatre associations and worked for the establishment of hegemony of leftist ideology over the society through literature and forms. The CPI also carried out social reform activity. Through the activities of cultural associations and social reform activity, the CPI wanted to establish the hegemony of the leftist ideology over the society.

The CPI has taken up the task of social and cultural reform activity carried out by Kandukuri Viresalingam, Gurajada Apparao, Chilakamarthi Lakshminarasimham, Gidugu Venkata Rama Murthy and Komarraju Venkata Lakshmanarao. The works of Kandukuri and Gurajada were unearthed and popularized. Social reform ideas were popularized through performances based on the life and works of the early reformers. The religious content in the traditional art forms was changed to revolutionary themes. While continuing the social reform activity through Students, youth and women's organizations, the CPI formed Literary and Theatre Associations especially to carry out social reform activity and to propagate the revolutionary ideas. The aim of these organizations was to overthrow the hegemony of bourgeois ideology over the society by following new trends in literature and art forms. This was a turning point in the cultural history of Andhra. The social reform movement started by Kandukuri was taken up by Student, youth and women's associations while Abhyudaya Rachayitala Sangham took up the task of literary reform and production of new ideas through literature. Prajanatyamandali performed these ideas through art forms. All these association propagated the ideas of communism along with social reform movement. Literature and arts started moving towards people. Anti-fascist struggle, repression on

[184] Jutta Scherrer, "The Cultural Hegemony of the Proletariat: The Origins of Bogdanov's Vision of Proletarian Culture", *Studies in History,* Vol. 5, No.2, 1989, p.199.

national movement, Bengal famine, Grow more food, national unity, struggles against exploitation, social equality, Telugu National renaissance etc, became themes in the writings and art forms. Several traditional art forms were revived. The art forms depicted the anti-fascist struggle, and struggles against zamindars. Several poets emerged from the people.

The demand for Visalandhra increased the prestige of Andhra communists. The songs written by Vemulapalli Srikrishna and P.V. Sivaiah became famous in Andhra. Though the early poets wrote several books praising the history and culture of Andhras,[185] they failed to remind the people about their immediate responsibilities.[186] The communists in their songs while remembering the heroic culture of Andhras reminded the people about their immediate responsibilities and mobilized them in the struggles against exploitation and movement for the formation of Visalandhra.

The cultural movements carried out by communists in Andhra created a new chapter in the history of Andhra. The rise of communist movement in Andhra and its growth in the ideological field created terror in the minds of the bourgeois. The communists were subjected to severe repression. As part of its attack on the CPI, the government targeted the cultural movement. The Prajasakthi press which was the heart of communist publications was burnt and several writers and artistes were killed by the government, while others left the party and settled in the Cinema industry. Thus the fight against the hegemony of the bourgeois ideology was stopped abruptly. But the impact of these movements continued to influence the society.

**Progressive Writers Association**

The spread of communist ideas, the formation of branches of CPI at different places in India, and the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe which posed a threat to World peace and culture brought a change in the thinking of intellectuals in India. The new thinking among the intellectuals in different parts of India led to the changes in the content, language and ideas in literature. This led to the emergence of Progressive Writers Association in India.

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[185] The works of Rayaprolu Subbarao (*Andhravali)*, Viswanatha Satyanarayana, (*Andhra Prasathi* and *Andhra Pourusham)*, Jampana Chandrasekhararao (*Andhrajvala*) were some of them.

[186] Nagabhairava Sivaramakrishnayya, *Abhyudaya Rachana*, (Telugu), Kavitavanam, Bezawada, 1943, pp.19-20.

The progressive section of the Urdu writers played an important role in the emergence of Progressive Writers Movement in India. The seeds of progressive ideas in Indian literature can be found in *Angare*, a collection of 10 Urdu short stories by Sajjad Zahir, Rashid Jahan and others published in Lucknow in December 1932.[187] It initiated a major change in the form and content of Urdu Literature and helped to lay the basis for the foundation of Progressive Writers Association.

The Marxist literary movement in India received its first impetus from Europe. The rise of Fascism and Nazism and the destruction of cultural heritage, atrocities on intellectuals and communists, Japanese attack on Manchuria, and fall of Abyssinia posed a serious threat to world peace and culture. The intellectuals all over the world began to mobilize themselves to protect the world from Fascism. The communists, social democrats and progressive intellectuals of Europe organized a meeting of Anti-fascist worker's Congress in Paris in June 1933.[188] Again in 1935 Romaine Rolland, Thomas Mann, H.G. Wells, Maxim Gorky and others held a conference of writes to discuss the threat of fascism and the duties of writers and artists in the movement against fascism. Sajjad Zahir and other Indian students in London were influenced by this conference and with the help of Ralph Fox they prepared a manifesto for Indian Progressive Writers' Association.[189]

The Marxist intellectuals in India, led by Sajjad Zahir organized the first conference of All India Progressive Writers' Association in Lucknow on April 10, 1936 under the presidentship of the famous Hindi writer Prem Chand.[190] The conference of progressive writers rejected the theory of art for art's sake and proposed that the artist must rebel against the evils in the society. In the resolutions passed in the conference, the PWA condemned Mussolini's aggression on Ethiopia, Japanese attack on China and suppression of civil liberties in India by the British Government. The conference elected Sajjad Zahir as the General Secretary of the All India

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[187] Shabana Mahmud, "Angare and the Founding of the Progressive Writers' Association", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, No.2, 1996, p.447.

[188] Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents* (1936-1947), Vol. I, Mrs. Santi Pradhan, Calcutta, 1979, reprint 1985, p.ix,

[189] Sajjad Zahir, "Reminiscences", in Sudhi Pradhan (Ed), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India*, Vol. 1, pp.30-31.

[190] Hafeez Malik. "The Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, August 1967, p.649.

Progressive Writers' Association with the responsibility of organizing provincial and linguistic associations of Progressive Writers.[191]

The second conference of the All India Progressive Writers Association was held in Calcutta in December 1938, with Rabindranath Tagore as president of the conference. The Progressive Writers Association started a quarterly journal *New India Literature* in 1939. Abburi Ramakrishnarao from Andhra was one of the editors to this journal.[192] Later it was revived in Bengal with the formation of Anti-fascist writers' and artists' Union in April 1942. But the activities of this association were stopped due to government repression on the organizers.[193]

The activities of PWA were revived after the lifting of the ban on CPI and the fourth conference of Progressive Writers Association was held at Bombay along with the first Congress of the CPI in May 1943, with S.A. Dange as president. The Bombay conference decided to shift the headquarters of PWA from Lucknow to Bombay. The conference elected Sajjad Zahir,[194] as the General Secretary, Vishnu Dey and K.A. Abbas as joint secretaries and Mama Warerkar as treasurer.[195]

The writings of progressive writers reflected the policy followed by CPI in 1940s. Several songs and stories were written against fascism, and wishing the victory of Soviet Union in the war against Germany. Like CPI, the PWA also considered War as People's War and denounced the attempts of Congress to start Quit India Movement. Describing the Second World War as People's War, Mukhdum Mohiuddin wrote two poems *Jung hai Jung Azadi* (This war, independence war) and *Tarana-i-Azadi* (Song of Freedom). Faiz Ahmed Faiz wrote a highly moving *Siyasi Leader Kay Nam* (To a political leader) to warn the Congress leaders of the dangers lurking in their strategy and its effects on the War efforts of the Soviet Union.[196]

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[191] *Ibid*., p.651.
[192] Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India,* Vol. I, p.105.
[193] Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India,* The Perennial Press, Bombay, 1960, pp.432-433.
[194] An Oxford educated communist from Uttar Pradesh, who was later sent to Pakistan to lead the branch of Communist Party in Pakistan after the partition of India. While in Pakistan, he was arrested and detained in jail for several years in connection with the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case launched in 1951.
[195] Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India,* p.433.
[196] Hafeez Malik. "The Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan", p.655.

The members of the progressive writers' association directly supported the people's movements in India and some of them played active roles in these movements. Mukhdoom Mohiuddin and Sardar Ali Jafri directly participated in the Telangana people's struggle and several others encouraged Telangana people with their writings.

**Formation of PWA in Andhra:**

The formation of All India Progressive Writers Association gave an impetus to the rise of Progressive Writers Movement in Andhra. Some of the delegates from Andhra attended the conference of AIPWA held in Lucknow. According to the decisions taken in the Lucknow conference of the All India Progressive Writers Association, its branches were established in several provinces in India.

The All India Progressive Writers Association appointed Sri Sri, Chadalavada Pitchaiah, Tummala Venkatramaiah and Tapi Mohanarao as conveners to form its branch in Andhra. The first conference of Andhra Progressive Writers Association was held in Tenali on 13-14 February 1943 under the presidentship of the famous writer Tapi Dharmarao.[197] In his speech to the conference, Dharmarao criticized the writers of traditional school for concentrating on the lives of kings and zamindars in their writings. He strongly felt that there was a need for change in literature, keeping in view the struggles going on all over the world and suggested the progressive writers to bring reformation through their writings.[198] Chadalavada Pitchaiah, one of the founders of the PWA in Andhra, said that contemporary literature failed to reflect the living conditions of the people. He advised the writers to look into the problems in the society with a scientific view and to work against the exploitation of one country by another and to work for a society which provides freedom, equality, peace and progress.[199] The conference declared the formation of an Andhra Provincial Progressive Writers Association and elected Chadalavada Pitchaiah as its secretary and Tapi Dharmarao, Tummala Venkatramaiah as members of the editorial board for the PWA publications.[200]

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[197] Tummala Venkatramayya, "Andhra Abhyudaya Rachayitala Prathama Mahasabha", *Abhyudaya*, (Telugu), Vol.3, No.2, January 1979, p.10.
[198] *Prajasakthi*, 24th February 1943, p.3.
[199] Etukuri Prasad (Ed), *Abhyudaya: Yabhai Ella Abhyudaya Sahityodyama Patralu*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Abhyudaya Rachayitala Sangham, Hyderabad, 1988, pp.23-24.
[200] *Prajasakthi*, 24th February 1943, p.3.

The branches of PWA were formed in all the towns in Andhra. Annual conferences of PWA were conducted at Madras, Bezawada and Rajahmundry. Famous writers and artists of Andhra played active role in the activities of PWA. Throughout the period from 1943 to 1947 the organizers maintained that the PWA was an independent organization not affiliated to any political organization. Though the PWA was dominated by communists, several non-communist members also joined in the organization.

Apart from the production of progressive literature, the PWA organized training schools to train the young poets to improve their writing skills on progressive lines. The PWA announced that the aim of the school was to enlighten the young writers on the history and culture of traditional literature and to train them with new literary skills to produce literature on progressive lines.[201] For the first time the PWA organized a literary school in Pedapudi village in Guntur district from 11th May 1946 to 10th June 1946. Well known writers in Telugu attended the school as teachers. The school was attended by 55 students and Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma was the principal of the school. Panchagnula Adinarayana Sastri, Ayyala Somayajula Nrusimha Sarma, Kodavatiganti Kutumbarao, Nidadavolu Venkatarao, Korada Ramakrishnaiah, Chilukuri Narayanarao, Srirangam Srinivasarao, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao and others delivered lectures on the history of Telugu and Prakrit literature and language, literary theories, modern trends in Telugu literature, and various literary forms like drama, short story and novel.[202]

By the year 1947, the activities of PWA spread to all the major towns in the Telugu speaking regions. In his report to the All India Progressive Writers Association, Chadalavada Pitchaiah, secretary of Andhra branch of PWA wrote that Andhra Progressive Writers' Association had 900 members in 1946 with 16 branches spread in the Telugu speaking areas of Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State. It also had a library and head office at Bezawada.[203]

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[201] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th March 1947, p.6.
[202] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th May 1946, p.4. Also see, Sudhi Pradhan (Ed), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India*, Vol. I, pp.352-353.
[203] Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India*, Vol. I, p.351.

The progressive writers published hundreds of literary works in the form of poetry, plays, stories, fiction and literary criticism representing progressive ideas. The progressive writers rejected the idea of Art for Art's sake and declared that the writers should produce the writings with a purpose of creating consciousness among the people about their problems and make them ready to fight against the exploitation of man by man. They reminded the writers of the role played by Rousseau and Tolstoy in France and Russian in creating revolutionary consciousness among the people.[204] The progressive writers pointed out that culture and ideology were used as weapons by the bourgeois to continue economic exploitation. Criticizing the role of religion in ancient and medieval societies, Sri Sri wrote that the bourgeois society has created religion and myths with a view to establish its hegemony over every sphere of activity in the society.[205]

Bengal famine, Telangana people's struggles, peasants and workers movements in Andhra, Second World War, Soviet victories in the war, International politics, Liberation struggles all over the world and movement for separate Andhra state became the themes in the writings of the members of progressive writers association.

The PWA published several songs urging the people to revolt against the exploitation. Songs were also published for workers, peasants, women, students, agricultural labourers and various others sections of the society.[206] The PWA and its members started several journals *Abhyudaya*, *Visalandhra*, *Nagara*, *Prajasakthi*, *Telugutalli*, *Navasahiti*, *Aruna rekha*, *Sandhya*, *Udayini* and so on and published progressive literature.[207]

The ongoing Telangana peasants' armed struggle inspired several writers to produce poems, novels, stories and dramas on it. Two dramas *Mundadugu* (step forward) (1945) and *Mabhumi* (our land) (1947) written by Sunkara Satyanarayana and Vasireddi Bhaskararao were prominent among them. In these dramas the authors described the problems faced by peasants and how they revolted against the

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[204] Nagabhairava Sivaramakrishnayya, *Abhyudaya Rachana,* pp.27-28.
[205] Sri Sri, *Khadga Srushti*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1973, p.61.
[206] Kothapalli Rangarao, *Melkolupu,* (Telugu), Kranthi Press, Tenali, 1943; Krishna Jilla Mahila Sangham, *Strila Patalu,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1943 are some of the examples.
[207] Etukuri Prasad (Ed), *Abhyudaya: Yabhai Ella Abhyudaya Sahityodyama Patralu,* p.127.

Zamindar. The drama was written in the Krishna district colloquial language and reviewers felt that the drama was written based on the incidents that happened in a Zamindari area in Krishna district. But the story reflected the condition of Peasants all over Andhra and Telangana region.[208] The progressive writers wrote several articles in *Prajasakthi*, *Abhyudaya*, *Nagara* and other journals expressing solidarity to the people's struggles against the exploitation of landlords and atrocities of Razakars in Telangana.

The progressive writers carried out rigorous campaign for the struggle against fascism and advocated national unity for the defence of the country. They also propagated the idea of class struggle. Sri Kodavatiganti Kutumbarao wrote several articles in leading newspapers on the need to defeat fascism and national unity.[209] On the occasion of the First conference of the progressive writers association held in Tenali in 1943, Arudra wrote a poem 'Vijaya Viharam' (victorious path). Arudra, then a young progressive writer, inspires the soldiers fighting in the war to destroy the Nazi forces.[210] Sri Sri, Sunkara Satyanarayana, Vemulapalli Srikrishna, Koganti Gopalakrishnaiah, Mukkamala Nagabhushanam, Kundurthi Anjaneyulu and others wrote several songs exposing the cruelty of fascists and wishing the victory of USSR in the War.[211]

The members of the progressive writers Association wrote several articles and books on the social reform and popularized the activities of great social reformers of Andhra. The writings of Kandukuri Viresalingam, Gurajada Apparao and Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham received special attention. While propagating the social reform ideas like widow marriages, women's education and removal of untouchability, progressive writers worked hard to popularize the activities of early social reformers. They linked social reform with the economic conditions.

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[208] *Andhra Patrika*, 13th January 1946, p.7. Also see, G.O. No. 184, dated 18th January 1946, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[209] *Andhra Patrika*, 7th November 1943, pp.3 and 6.

[210] R. Narasimharao, *Abhyudaya Kavitvamlo Arudrata*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1992, p.224.

[211] Thammareddi Nirmala, "Telugu Sahityam – October Viplava Prabhavam", in C. Narasimharao (Ed), *Telugu Samskriti – Marxism Prabhavam*, (Telugu), Jayanthi Publications, Vijayawada, 1992, pp.28-30 and Prakasarao, *Prajasahiti, Samskritikodyamam – Communistulu*, (Telugu), Janasakthi Prachuranalu, Vijayawada, 2004, p.18.

One of the significant contributions of the PWA was literary criticism in Telugu. The members of CPI and Progressive Writers Association reviewed the existing Telugu literature and felt that most of the works in existing Telugu literature were written with a view to protect the bourgeois ideological hegemony in the society. They have condemned the reactionary and anarchic views expressed in the existing literature.[212]

The history and culture of Andhras and the movement for the formation of separate Andhra State is one of the major themes in the writing of progressive writers. The progressive writers made a dedicated effort to unearth the history and culture of Andhras through their writings and made an appeal to the people of Andhra to protect the culture of Andhra. Several books, stories, novels, plays and songs were written to popularize the history and culture of Andhras.[213]

The writers and artists protested against the repression unleashed against the people's movements organized by CPI and its frontal organisations. A number of articles were published in newspapers and journals condemning the brutal repression on the people's movement in Andhra.[214]

Apart from the economic interpretation of social and political phenomena, the progressive writers' movement had significant repercussions on the Telugu literature and writers. It brought radical changes in the choice of theme and its treatment and in the use of language and style. In the field of journalism and literature, the progressive writers promoted simple, clear and crisp, moderate prose, in place of the old style. The progressive writers took up the tasks carried out by Kandukuri Viresalingam and Gidugu Venkata Rama Murthy who started a movement for the adoption of spoken Telugu as the medium for literary expression. Sri Sri was, perhaps the first to try the experiment in verse. He discarded the Sanskritised word compounds and traditional

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[212] Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, *Andhra Sahitya Punarvikasam*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Prachuranalayam, Vijayawada, 1958 and V.R. Bommareddi (Ed), *Comrade Sundarayya Erina Rachanalu*, Part II, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1987, 85-109.

[213] Songs written by Vemulapalli Srikrishna (Cheyetti Jai kottu Telugoda), Pulupula Venkatasivayya (Palanadu Velaleni Maganira), Kondepudi Lakshminarayana (Padara o Teluguvada), Mukkamala Nagabhushanam (Telugu tejamu dipti jendaga) were some of the examples. See, S.V. Satyanarayana, *Adhunika Kavitvam – Vibhinna Dhoranulu,* (Telugu), Vemulapalli Srikrishna Memorial Lecture, 8th April 2004, pp.14-15.

[214] *Prajasakthi*, 8th September 1947, p.13. Also see, M. Gangadhar, *Adhunika Telugu Kavitvamlo Viplava Doranulu*, (Telugu), Pranahita Prachuranalu, Dharmasagar, Warangal Dt., 1994, pp.166-167.

metrical patterns and went back to some of the folk metres and rediscovered the untold wealth of their instant suggestion and intimate association in the minds and hearts of common people. By using the English expressions in the midst of the body of Telugu verse, Sri Sri, Arudra and several other progressive writers freed the language of poetry from all its old fashioned inhibitions.[215] Kundurthi Anjaneyulu, one among the progressive poets was considered as the father of 'free verse' poetry.

In their struggle against bourgeois ideological hegemony, the communists popularized the library movement. Libraries and night schools were established in several villages. The progressive and Marxist literature was made available to the readers in those libraries. Several Marxist classics were translated into Telugu. The number of low-price editions on basic science, philosophy, economics, polity, history of freedom movement in India and communist movements all over the world were published and the ideas of Marxism were disseminated through literature with a view to overthrow the bourgeois ideological hegemony over the society.

The activities of progressive writers Association and the literature produced by Progressive Writers received wide spread criticism from the traditional writers who did not like criticism on the traditions and bourgeois system. They have criticized that anti-fascist poetry alone does not mean progressive literature.[216] The importance given to Kandukuri Viresalingam, Gurajada Apparao and other social reformers, in the writings of progressive writers and social reform campaign of CPI, also received criticism from the traditionalists. Sri Digavalli Sivarao wrote a series of articles entitled 'Comrade Viresalingam' criticizing the communist for the use of Viresalingam and his activities in the social reform movement.[217] Sivarao wrote that the communists were decorating the works of Viresalingam with communist ideas.[218] Sivarao felt that Viresalingam was a representative of bourgeois society who tried to reform his own surroundings.

The progressive writers replied to their critics by projecting new ideas through literature. The progressive writers established a link between people and literature.

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[215] D. Anjaneyulu, "Impact of Socialist Ideology on Telugu Literature Between the Wars" in B.R. Nanda (Ed), *Socialism in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1972, Reprint 1991, pp.258-259.
[216] *Andhra Patrika*, 31st October 1943, p.3.
[217] Digavalli Sivarao, "Comrade Viresalingam", *Andhra Patrika*, 14th June 1944, p.3.
[218] Digavalli Sivarao, "Comrade Viresalingam", *Andhra Patrika*, 15th June 1944, p.3.

While supporting the good features of Indian culture and traditional literature, the progressive writers attacked the evils in the society. Within a short span of four years (1943-47) the progressive writers' association achieved a remarkable progress in the field of cultural revolution. It has attracted a large number of young writers along with prominent traditional writers into its fold. The activities of the progressive writers' movement alarmed the bourgeois, who had just formed provincial governments in the provinces and the centre and they started repression on the progressive writers. The repression on progressive writers and internal bickering in the PWA finally led to the stagnation in the activities of PWA.

Though the PWA was run by communists and most of the office bearers of the PWA were communists, several non-communists were invited to join the association. Since its inception, several non-communists participated in the conferences and dominated the proceedings in the conferences. The non-communist members failed to identify themselves with the progressive ideas proposed by PWA. The communist members of the PWA did not digest the domination of non-communists in the proceedings and demanded that PWA should be class organization and it should function according to the guidelines of the CPI.

The state committee of CPI gave repeated warnings to the organizers of PWA to correct the mistakes and sent several circulars and letters to its organizers raising objections to the activities of the Secretary of the PWA, Chadalavada Pitchaiah and its assistant secretary Prayaga Kodandaramasastri. Instead of correcting his mistakes the secretary of PWA, Pitchaiah replied that he was strictly following the rules of the organization and accused the CPI leadership that it was following a sectarian line.[219] Later he carried out open criticism against the prominent members of the Andhra Communist Party Basavapunnaiah and Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao.[220] Finally the state committee expelled Chadalavada Pitchaiah and Prayaga Kodanda Ramasastri from CPI.[221] Soon after this, the executive committee of PWA which met in Madras on 29th September 1947 accepted the resignation offered by Pitchaiah.[222]

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[219] Chadalavada Pitchayya, *Andhra Communist Committee Agranayakula Nagnasatyalu,* (Telugu), Nalanda Press, Tenali, 1948, pp.100-101.
[220] *Ibid*., pp.51-104.
[221] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd July 1947, p.8. Also see, Chadalavada Pitchayya, *Andhra Communist Committee Agranayakula Nagnasatyalu,* p.192.
[222] *Ibid*., pp.231-232.

When the CPI was striving to correct the mistakes done by the progressive writers association, the government increased its repression on CPI and its frontal organizations. Several books written by Progressive writers were banned after 1947. The Madras government issued warnings to *Prajasakthi* on several occasions[223] and imposed penalties and heavy security deposits.[224] Several journals and publishing houses which were publishing the writings of progressive writers were closed due to government repression. The police set to fire several manuscripts of progressive writers and several other valuable collections of their personal libraries.[225] The library of Prajasakthi press was also set to fire and a police troupe was camped in the press.[226] Several libraries known for their collection of Progressive literature were also set to fire.[227]

The activities of PWA came to a stand still due to the reign of terror carried out by the government against the CPI and its frontal organizations. Due to their proximity to the CPI, several members of the PWA were arrested and detained in jails.[228] Majority of the writers who had close connections with the CPI went underground[229] while Arudra, Anisetti Subbarao, Ma. Gokhale and other non-communists dissociated themselves from the PWA.[230] Several others left the party and settled in other professions. Quite a number of writers went to Madras and joined the film industry. Thus, the internal bickering and government repression led to the stagnation in the activities of PWA.

Though the activities of the PWA was interrupted for a brief period from 1948-52 due to government repression on CPI, it did good service to the progress of modern literature in Telugu Under the light of Marxism, writers and artists realized

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[223] G.O. No. 2700 dated 14th December 1946, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[224] G.O. No. 3050 dated 3rd October 1947, G.O. No. 236, dated 2nd February 1948, and G.O. No. 1017, 29th April 1948, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[225] *Prajasahiti*, Vol. 6, No.1, July – August 1981, p.50
[226] V.R. Bommareddi, *Communist Patrikalu – Charitra, Vikasam*, Visweswararao, Vijayawada, 2002, p.22.
[227] Vemana Granthalayam of Telaprolu in Krishna district was one among them.
[228] Tummala Venkatramayya, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Avasarala Suryarao and several others were arrested and detained in jail. See G.O. 2038, dated 29th June 1949, G.O.2388, dated 25th September 1948, and G.O. No. 3895, dated 10th November 1949, Public (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.
[229] Sunkara Satyanarayana and Mahidhara Ramamohanarao went underground.
[230] S.V. Satyanarayana, *Alochana*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1996, p.61. Also see Arudra, *Samagra Andhra Sahityam*, Vol.13 - *Adhunika Yugam*, Prajasakthi Book House, Vijayawada, 1991, p.9.

their responsibilities in the struggles against exploitation. The Progressive Writers Movement established clear link between art and politics. Very useful books have been published by PWA. The literary activities of its members have produced a great awakening in the country. The PWA created tremendous influence on the new generation to come forward to fulfill their responsibilities in the revolutionary movements. Within a short period in which it was active it succeeded in claiming the allegiance of the advanced elements of the urban intelligentsia and the educated sons of the rural peasantry. An entirely different species of writing flourished under the direct aegis of Communist Party. It also attracted large number of traditional writers into its fold. It could attract even judges of Madras Court, P.V. Rajamannar and V. Govindarajachari to preside over its conferences. It was possible only due to its strong ideological base. The activities of progressive writers association during 1943-48 led to the emergence of a variety of literary organizations with progressive ideology and created a tremendous impact on several social, political and literary movements in the post-independence period.

**Theatre Movements**

Art forms are another weapon used by CPI to spread its ideology among the people and to bring Cultural Revolution in the society. Both literature and art forms play an important role in the cultural revolution of the society. They attack the religion; myths, superstitions and other institutions created by bourgeois ideology and create social, political and economic consciousness among the people. Apart from providing entertainment to the public, art forms strongly influence the world view as well as the thoughts of the people and lead them towards the path of progress. While literature serves as a vehicle to transmit the progressive ideas to the educated people, art forms serve both literates and illiterates. Art forms are considered as a means for popular education and an organizing medium to draw people into political organizations.

Andhra has a rich tradition of varied folk art forms. The existence of art forms can be traced to the Satavahana period. *Kridabhirama* of Srinadha gives information about various art forms in Andhra during the medieval period.[231] The modern art forms like Yakshaganam and Kuchipudi dance emerged as prominent art forms during the 15th century. Along with *Street Play, Kuravanji, Tolubommalata, Veedhi*

[231] Ponangi Srirama Apparao, *Telugu Nataka Vikasam*, (Telugu), Natyamala Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 1967, pp.110-114.

*Bhagavatam*, *Bhama kalapam*, *Gollakalapam*, *Pagati Veshalu* and various other forms[232] were popular among the people. Jamgam katha performances have been held in villages. *Balanagamma Katha*, *Bobbilikatha*, *Desing Raju Katha* were some of the folk and historic stories popular in the villages.[233] Separate communities also existed to stage these performances to the general public. Because of the hold of bourgeois hegemony on the society, the themes in all these performances were taken from religious scriptures[234] and they used to propagate the ideas projected in the religion and puranas which were created by the bourgeois to protect their ideological hegemony over the society. The use of art forms to expose the corruption of officials began during the medieval period. A troupe of Kuchipudi performers exposed the atrocities of a feudatory Guravaraju through their performance in front of the King Krishnadevaraya.[235]

Since the beginning of modern period and the entry of Britishers, plays were written in Telugu on the model of modern Drama. It was during this period that several dramas based on religious stories, myths, fiction and history were written in Andhra. Several dramas from the European languages were also translated into Telugu. The beginning of British rule, growth of education and influence of western ideas led to the emergence of social reform movements in Andhra in the 19th century. Several writers produced dramas representing the ideas of social reform. The writers recognized that art forms should serve a purpose. The reformers also used the existing art forms to popularize their ideas of social reform. Several dramas and one act plays, written and staged, protested against the social evils.[236] Though they protested against the social evils, basically the social reformers of 19th and early 20th centuries aimed at reforming the mistakes in the bourgeois society and not to overthrow bourgeois

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[232] For a brief description of various performing arts, see, B. Ramaraju, *Folklore of Andhra Pradesh*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1997; M. Nagabhushanasarma, *Folk Performing Arts of Andhra Pradesh*, Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1995 and Mikkilineni Radhakrishnamurthy, *Teluguvari Janapada Kalarupalu*, (Telugu), Telugu University, Hyderabad, 1992.

[233] K. N. Kesari, *Chinnanati Muchhatlu*, (Telugu), Kesari Kutiram, Madras, 1953, Reprint 1999, p.90.

[234] V. Ramakrishna, *Social Reform in Andhra (1848-1919)*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, p.114.

[235] Ponangi Srirama Apparao, *Telugu Nataka Vikasam*, p.115.

[236] Kandukuri Viresalingam, *Brahma Vivahamu* (1880) and *Vyavahara Dharmabhodhini* (1880), Gurajada Apparao, *Kanyasulkam* (1892), Tripuraneni Ramaswami Chowdary, *Kurukshetra Sangramamu* (1911) and *Sambhukavadha* (1920), Kallakuri Narayanarao, *Chintamani* (1921), *Varavikrayamu* (1923) and *Madhuseva* (1926) Muddukrishna, *Asokamu* (1934) are some of the examples.

ideological hegemony. To defend their writings the reformers quoted religious scriptures.

With the beginning of the national movement, art forms received new stuff into their themes. In the beginning of the 1920s the Indian National Congress started using the traditional art forms for the propagation of political ideas among the people. Before that Balagangadhar Tilak used Ganesh Festivals for the propagation of political ideas and to create national consciousness among the people.[237] Andhra Ratna Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah encouraged the use of traditional folk art forms for the purpose of propagation of political ideas in Andhra.[238] Influenced by the ongoing national movement, several songs and plays were written on the history, geography and historical persons and several incidents in the national movement. The works on Chandragupta, Rana Pratapa Sinh, Sivaji, Mahamantri Timmarasu and Mahatma Gandhi were some of the examples of this type. The aim of these writers was to remind the Indians about their history and culture and encourage them to fight against the Britishers. But either the social reform plays or historical plays did not try to analyze the class character of Indian society and or made any attempt to replace the bourgeois ideological hegemony.

Andhra witnessed a radical change in the cultural activity during the period after 1940. A variety of dramatic associations were formed in Andhra. Several new trends emerged in the performing arts. The struggles launched by CPI against the exploitative system attracted the attention of large number of writers. The formation of Praja Natyamandali was the beginning of a new era in the history of Telugu art forms. The communist party revived the decaying art forms like Jamukula katha, Burrakatha, Gollasuddulu, Kolatam, Vidhi Bhagavatam and others with a view to utilize these art forms for the spread of progressive ideas.

The use of folk art forms for the spread of political ideas began when the communists were involved in anti-fascist campaign immediately after the lifting of the ban on CPI. Several art forms were revived and the youth leagues took active part in these performances. Folk art forms were utilized for effective transfer of ideas to

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[237] Richard Cashman, "The Political Recruitment of God Ganapati", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. VII, No.3, September 1970, p.348.
[238] K. N. Kesari, *Chinnanati Muchhatlu*, p.91.

even illiterate people. The themes in the traditional art forms were changed and new themes with anti-fascist ideas and social and political problems were introduced. The themes in the performances reflected the ideology of the CPI.

The attack of Germany on Soviet Union alerted the whole world against the fascist threat. Writers and artists from all over world opposed fascist attack on Russia. In India the CPI adopted *People's War* policy and mobilized all its resources in the war against Fascist forces. The members of CPI used art forms to propagate anti-fascist ideas among the people. Communist party conducted anti-fascist training camps at several places.

For the first time Anti-Fascist training camp was organized in Kodali village in Krishna district in March 1943 to train the youth in anti-fascist propaganda. Tammareddi Satyanarayana and Kondapalli Sitaramaiah were the organizers of this camp. Mikkilineni Radhakrishna Murthy, S.L.Perumallu, Chadalavada Kutumbarao, Davuluri Narayana, Machineni Venkateswararao and several others were trained in anti-fascist propaganda[239] and they were inducted into the cultural troupes of Andhra Prajanatyamandali after its formation in June 1943. The youth were educated on world politics, dangers of fascism, and the nature of people's war and the heroic deeds of soviet military. They were also trained in Dappu performance, Burrakatha performance. Several performing troupes were formed all over the district. Each troupe was sent to a taluk. They propagated the dangers of Fascism and encouraged people to fight against Fascism. The troupes also collected cloths, food grains and money from the people and sent them to the people who were suffering from famine in Bengal. Children were also trained in the camp and separate troupes were formed with children as performers. The Krishna District cultural troupe was formed in 1943 with all the youth who were trained in Kodali Anti-Fascist training camp as its members.

A cultural festival was organised in Bombay on the occasion of the first congress of the communist Party in May – June 1943. In the folk festival arranged on the occasion of party congress in 1943, the Andhra cultural squads was unanimously acclaimed to be the best, for the varies art forms that it exhibited, for its real genius in

[239] Mikkilineni Radhakrishnamurthy, *Teluguvari Janapada Kalarupalu*, pp.770-771.

adapting the forms to the new content. The mainly peasant composition of the Andhra party found reflection in the delegation. There were 10 members in the squad, all from peasant families, five of whom were women.[240] The leader of the squad Nagabhushanam, in addition to being the composer of several patriotic songs and an actor in several of these items, was also the president of the Krishna district Kisan sabha. Sanyasi dance by Mukkamala Nagabhushanam, Harijan dance by Koganti Gopalakrishnaiah and Kolatam performance by Women's troupe were some of the other art forms presented by Andhra Cultural Squad. In all these performances, the performers replaced the content with anti-fascist ideology. They denounced the Fascist forces and wished the victory of Soviet Union in War.[241]

After the completion of performances, the organizers of cultural squads of various provinces met in Bombay on 25th May 1943 and declared the formation of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). A resolution passed in the conference said that IPTA was to revitalize the stage and the traditional arts and to make them express and organize people's struggle for freedom, cultural progress and economic justice.[242] The conference elected N.M. Joshi as the president of IPTA and Anil De Silva as General Secretary. The conference also appointed organizers to form branches of IPTA in all the provinces. Dr. Rajarao, Pitchaiah and Krishna Murthy were appointed as members to organize a branch of IPTA in Andhra.[243] Later a meeting of the cultural troupes in Andhra was organized in Bezawada on 1st July 1943 under the presidentship of Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao. The meeting elected Dr. Rajarao as the secretary of Andhra Praja Natya Mandali, a branch of IPTA in Andhra.[244]

After its formation, for the first time the performances of Andhra Prajanatyamandali were organized on the occasion of the third Congress of the Andhra Communist Party held at Vijayawada in June 1943.[245] Guntur and Krishna

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[240] Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents,* Vol. I (1936-1947), Mrs Santi Pradhan, Calcutta, 1979, 2nd Edition 1985, p.196.
[241] Mikkilineni Radhakrishnamurthy, *Praja Poratala Rangasthalam Andhra Praja Natyamandali,* (Telugu), Renuka Prachuranalu, Vijayawada, 1999, pp.33-34.
[242] Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents,* Vol. 1, p.151.
[243] *Ibid*., p.152.
[244] Chintapalli Suryanarayana, *Praja Natyamandali – Praja Kalarupalu,* (Telugu), Author, Vijayawada, 2007, p.63.
[245] *Prajasakthi*, 14th July 1943, p.1.

district units of Praja Natyamandali participated in the cultural programmes.[246] Krishna district unit performed *Hitler Bhagavatam* a street play. Mikkilineni, Chadalavada and Kesavarao performed the roles of Hitler, Mussolini and Tozo. Dr. Rajarao played the role of Red soldier. The play depicts the defeat of Nazi forces in the hands Red army.[247] Guntur district troupe consisting of Nazar, Vimala, Ramakoti and Purushottam sung songs on Hitler's attack on Russia and defense of Moscow by Red Army.[248] The performances of these two troupes inspired the members of CPI to form performing troupes all over Andhra.

Three troupes were organized to carry out Burrakatha performances. Later a women troupe was also formed with Vallam Radha, Tapi Rajamma and Viramachaneni Sarojini.[249] Apart from the Burrakatha troupes, dramatic troupes were formed to stage dramas. The dramas *Mundadugu* and *Mabhumi* written by Sunkara Satyanarayana and Vasireddi Bhaskara Rao were staged at several places all over Andhra. The plays *Mundadugu* and *Mabhumi* reflected the life of the Telangana people and depicted the struggles of peasants against the exploitation of landlords and the autocratic state.[250] All classes of people and all political parties have paid tributes to the authors and appreciated the efforts of the Andhra Praja Natyamandali for enacting the drama. Six members of the Madras ministry personally attended the performance on 2nd June 1947 in Madras and applauded the great service rendered by Andhra Praja Natyamandali by rousing the people against the atrocities of Nizam.[251] Other plays *Kashtajivi*, *Telangana* and *Alluri Sitaramaraju* written by Sunkara Satyanarayana depicted the atrocities of Zamindars in Telangana and the revolt of tribals against exploitation in Agency region in Coastal Andhra.[252]

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[246] Mikkilineni Radhakrishnamurthy, *Praja Poratala Rangasthalam Andhra Praja Natyamandali*, pp.38-39.

[247] Koganti Gopalakrishnayya, *Kotigontula Koganti*, (Telugu), Prashanthi Publications, Vijayawada, 1992, pp.4-14.

[248] *Prajasakthi*, 21st July 1943, p.6.

[249] Kanuri Venkateswararao, *Katha kani Katha: Kanuri 60 Yendla Kalaranga Anubhavalu*, (Telugu), Arunodaya Samskritika Samakhya, Hyderabad, 2005, p.34.

[250] Vasireddi Bhaskararao & Sunkara Satyanarayana, *Mabhumi*, (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1947.

[251] G.O. No. 1274, dated 6th April 1948, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[252] Daniel Nigers, "Trois Récites Communistes De l'usage de la populaire chantèe en pays tèlugou", in Bulletin D'ètudes Indiennis, Association of Francaise pour Les Études Indiennes, No' 17-18, 1999-2000, pp.424-425.

With the spread of Praja Natyamandali activities to the rural areas, local units of Praja Natya mandali were formed at several places all over Andhra. Andhra Communist party conducted a survey with well known progressive writers and musicians of the province to find out the folk art forms existing in the province. They found there was not less than sixty folk art forms were prominent among the people.[253] The Andhra communist committee recognized the need to train the people through cultural associations and to give revolutionary orientation to the performances of these units. They also recognized the need of a well trained unit of performers to organize training camps for performers and to monitor the activities of local units. Prominent performers in the district troupes were co-opted into state troupe. They were asked to get training in the art forms from the traditional performers. Traditional Burrakatha performers were brought to the training camps to train the artistes. State wide training camps were conducted to train the youth in performing arts with a view to disseminate the ideology of communist party. The youth were taught the techniques of art forms, national and international politics, the ideology of Communist party, and detailed analysis of local problems. Rehearsals were conducted for several dramas and other performances. They were also trained in writing essays and articles on the local problems. A brief discussion of some of the art forms and themes presented by Praja Natyamandali and the ideas projected by them are given below.

The artistes Praja Natyamandali produced a large number of dramas and staged them all around Andhra. *Parivartana* (repentance), *Apaninda* (slander) *Pratima* (statue), *Mabbutera* (Shadow of the clouds), *Kanyasulkam* (bride price), *Mundadugu* (step forward), *Mabhumi* (our land), *Press Worker* and others reflecting the ideas of social reform and national unity and urging the people to help the famine stricken people in Bengal and Rayalasima, and exposing the atrocities of the Zamindars and landlords on peasants.[254] There are also among them songs specially meant to sing by children, women, and kisans. Andhra Communist Committee published several books on folk songs.[255]

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[253] Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents,* Vol. 1, p.305.
[254] Chintapalli Suryanarayana, *Praja Natyamandali – Praja Kalarupalu,* pp.135-137.
[255] Krishna Zilla Mahila Sangham, *Strila Patalu,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Press, Bezawada, 1943 and *Rytu Gitalu*, Prajasakthi Prachuranalayam, Bezawada, 1945.

Vidhi natakam (street play) is another folk art form popularized by Praja Natyamandali. This art form is also called as 'Bayalata' (open play) in Rayalasima region and 'Turpu Bhagavatam' in Eastern Andhra and played during the festivals in praise of God by specialist performers called 'Bhagavathulu'. It is performed in the streets in open air. But with the emergence of modern drama with curtain, stage, screen and new techniques, the open air performance lost its patrons. The members of Praja Natyamandali replaced the religious content in this art form with political content. 'Hitler patanam' and 'Simla Bhagavatam' composed by Koganti Gopalakrishnaiah are some of the important street plays performed by Praja Natyamandali.[256]

Burrakatha performances very much attracted the people towards communist party. When Congressmen started anti-communist propaganda in 1940s, the Burrakatha performances helped the Communists to counter the congress propaganda and to spread communist ideology among the people. Burrakathas exposed the plans of government to divide the country, and the exploitation of the people by Zamindars and landlords. Through these performances several misconceptions on Communists were wiped out and people were interested to join the Communist party. Sunkara Satyanarayana wrote a burraktha *Stalin Grad yuddamu,* which depicted the victory of Red Army on German soldiers, helped the spread of anti-fascist ideology in Andhra. Another Burrakatha *Kasthajivi* written by Sunkara Satyanarayana depicted the difficulties of peasants and labourers in the hands of the zamindar and how they revolted against the zamindar. The author of these two performances, Sunkara Satyanarayana was invited by the Communist Party to join in the cultural troupes. Sunkara wrote several dramas and burrakathas when he was working in Praja Natyamandali. The activists of Praja Natyamandali prepared Burrakatha on the life of *Viresalingam* and another on the life of *Tanya,* a Soviet woman who fought against the Nazi forces in the battle of Stalin Grad.[257]

Apart from the official policy of the Communist party i.e., the demand for the release of national leaders, Congress League unity, formation of national government, Social reform, anti-feudal propaganda, Movement for Visalandhra, Tebhaga

[256] Chintapalli Suryanarayana, *Praja Natyamandali – Praja Kalarupalu,* pp.135-137.
[257] *Andhra Patrika*, 26th April 1944, p.4.

movement in Bengal, Telangana Movement and Punnapra -Vayalar movement in Kerala were the major themes in the performances of Praja Natyamandali.

In spite of their concentration on the struggle against fascism and revival of social reform activities, the CPI did not neglect the struggles against imperialism. In fact, most of the performances of Praja Natyamandali were aimed against the British Government in India. The plays like *Cripps Rayabharamu, Simla Bhagavatam* and *Alluri Sitaramaraju* succeeded in creating strong nationalist feelings in the minds of the people and encouraged them into action.

Apart from the Agricultural labourers and industrial workers, middle and poor peasants formed a strong base for CPI in villages. Reflecting the importance given to the peasantry by the CPI, several performances of Praja Natyamandali depicted the exploitation of peasants in the hands of the Zamindars and encouraged them to revolt against the exploitation. Dramas like *Mundadugu* and *Mabhumi* are the best examples of this kind.

The history and heritage of Andhra, and regional patriotism were also popularized. Several songs were written and sung with conferences glorifying the history and culture of Telugu people: Vemulapalli Srikrishna's song popularized the legacy of Andhra and mobilized people in favour of Vishalandhra. P.V. Sivaiah's song *Palanadu Velaleni Maganira* reminded the people about the glory of Palanadu region and how the British Rule destroyed it. By reminding the history and the heroic battles waged by the people of Palnadu against exploitation and social equality, it urged the people to imbibe those revolutionary traditions and fight against the British rule.[258]

**Role of Women**: The entry of women into the dramas and other popular stage art forms started with Andhra Praja Natya Mandali. Women artistes of Praja Natyamandali participated in the Dramas, Burrakathas and other performances. Separate troupes of women performers were also formed by Praja Natya Mandali. Tapi Rajamma, Komarraju Padma, Mikkilineni Sitaratnam, Moturu Udayam, Viramachaneni Sarojini, Vellanki Annapurnamma and some others were the members

[258] Gajjela Malla Reddy and others (Ed), *Palanadu Velaleni Maganira*, (Pulupula Venkata Sivayya Smaraka Sanchika), (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Abhyudaya Rachayitala Sangham, Vijayawada, 1978, pp.137-142.

of this squad.[259] Among all the performances of the women's troupe, a burakatha *Tanya* on the life a Russian woman, who fought against the Fascist forces, received appreciation from wide range of audience.[260]

**Telangana Armed Struggle**: Praja Natyamandali played a historic role in the Telangana People's armed struggle. The performances of Andhra Praja Natyamandali influenced the youth to resort to direct action in the struggle against exploitation. Andhra communist leaders and cultural troupes attended the 12th session of the Andhra Mahasabha held in Khammam in 1945. Dr. Rajarao, Ramakoti, Nazar, Karnati Lakshminarasaiah and several artists of Praja Natyamandali attended the conference and inspired people with their performances.[261] Members of Praja Natyamandali visited several places in Telangana and played *Mabhumi*, *Mundadugu*, *Kasthajivi*, *Telangana* and other plays.

Thus, the Andhra Praja Natyamandali becomes a nucleus for the serving of freedom and happiness for all sections of people in Andhra. Besides preserving and developing folk art, it has through its various performances, educated and roused the patriotism of the people. Only one look at the figures and facts given in the report of the Second conference of IPTA would bring to our mind the vast popularity that the organization enjoyed and the potentiality of the folk art as an instrument for rousing the masses in action and arousing pride in their own glorious past. In 1946, Praja Natya Mandali had 21 cultural squads, working fulltime. In addition there were 30 part time squads. In every district there was an organizer to look after and supervise the work of the squads and two provincial organizers to guide the work of the district squads.[262] The report of IPTA revealed that the cultural squads operating in Andhra gave 375 performances of Burrakatha in 1944, and they were witnessed by around 6 lakhs of people.[263]

The popularity attained by the dramas *Mundadugu* and *Mabhumi* created tension in the minds of the officials. They thought that through these performances the

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[259] *Manavi* (Quarterly Bulletin of AIDWA), April – June 2003, p.3.
[260] Jayaprabha, *Nalugo Goda: Telugulo Adhunika Natakam,* (Telugu), Charita Prachuranalu, Hyderabad, 1992, p.131.
[261] Karnati Lakshminarasayya, *Manasulo Mata* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Sahiti Mitrulu, Vijayawada, 2001, p.32.
[262] Sudhi Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents,* Vol. 1, p.311.
[263] *Ibid.,* p.306.

communists were instigating the people to revolt against the Zamindars. The government machinery which was protecting the interests of the bourgeois sections decided to impose ban on the performances of Praja Natyamandali. On 26th December 1945 R. Gilletti, the collector of Krishna in a letter to the secretary of the Home department, government of Madras recommended to impose ban on the drama *Mundadugu*.[264] Subsequently the drama was banned by the government in January 1946. Another important drama *Mabhumi* which was performed all over the state for several times was also banned by the government in 1947.[265]

Another two performances *Simla Bhagavatam* (street play) written by Koganti Gopalakrishnaiah and *Alluri Sitaramaraju* (Burrakatha) written by Sunkara Satyanarayana, both directed against the British were also banned by the government.[266] After the formation of Congress government in Madras, the Home minister Dr. Subbaroyan rejected the appeal made by the Communist member in assembly P. Venkateswarlu, to lift ban on *Alluri Sitaramaraju* and *Simla Bhagavatam*.[267] The ban on these two performances was lifted only after the formation of Andhra Pradesh in 1956. This is very interesting that the plays which roused anti-imperialist feelings and which praised the national heroes like Sitaramaraju were banned by the government headed by the Nationalists.

The cultural movement of Andhra Praja Natyamandali received a rude shock in 1948 when, along with the communist party all its frontal organizations were banned and large-scale repression was unleashed. The aim of the government was to stop the spread of Communist ideology through the performances. Several leading figures of Praja Natyamandali were arrested.[268] The offices of Praja Natyamandali and the houses of its members were raided and ransacked. Shoot at sight orders were issued against the organizers of the Praja Natyamandali. Some of them went underground[269] and some of them were killed. Others became passive and took to

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[264] G. O. No.184, dated: 18.1.1946, Home department, government of Madras.
[265] G.O.No.1274, Dated: 6-4-1948, Home Department, Government of Madras
[266] G. O. No.2082, dated 2nd June.1948, Home Department, Government of Madras.
[267] *Andhra Patrika*, 12th October 1947, p.2.
[268] Dr. Rajarao, Karnati Lakshminarasayya, Mikkilineni Radhakrishnamurthy, Perumallu and C. Kutumbarao were arrested and tortured in the police camp. Koganti Gopalakrishnayya, Allu Ramalingayya, Gummadi Venkateswrarao, Mukkamala Nagabhushanam were arrested and detained in jail.
[269] Sunkara Satyanarayana and Vasireddi Bhaskar Rao authors of *Mundadugu* and *Mabhumi* dramas went underground.

their earlier professions. Quite a few talented actors migrated to the cinema industry.[270] As a result of this repression, the whole movement got paralyzed temporarily.[271]

In spite of this, the cultural movement launched by communists created a tremendous impact on Andhra society. It challenged the ideology of the National Movement and succeeded in spreading the ideology of CPI. The Praja Natyamandali played a remarkable role in mobilizing people into revolutionary movements. The communist party fully utilized the talented artistes, performers, writers, and poets to rouse the consciousness of the toiling masses against the injustices meted out to them by the feudal landlord and imperialist rule. Hundreds of youth who were influenced by the performances of Praja Natyamandali directly participated in the Telangana People's Struggle and in the movements against imperialism.

The left ideology was taken to the people through these art forms. A linkage between ideology and struggles was clearly established by popularizing literature and theatre. Several people in the villages were given training and thousands of artistes sprang up from the common people. Sheik Nazar, Sunkara Satyanarayana, Koganti Gopalakrishnaiah and several others emerged as people's writers. The activities of Praja Natyamandali helped the artists to find market for their art. The artists began to improve their living conditions in Stage, Screen, Radio, Gramaphone and private profit making institutions.

The activities of Praja natyamandali succeeded in disseminating the revolutionary ideas proposed by the Communist Party of India. They carried out rigorous campaign against social evils and superstitions in the society. The struggle against religion, myths and other institutions created by bourgeois society led to the emergence of new culture in Andhra society. The new social and cultural ideas propagated by Praja Natyamandali had far reaching impact on Andhra society. It

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[270] Dr. G. Rajarao, T. Prakasarao, Mohan Das, Mikkilineni, Ramakoti, Gummadi Venkateswararao, Allu Ramalingayya, V. Sarojini, V. Madhusudanarao, Chadalavada Kutumbarao, Karnati Lakshminarasayya and several others.

[271] A meeting of Praja Natyamandali was organized at Vijayawada in May 1948. Important functionaries of the organization attended it. Muddukuri Chandrasekhararao, who was in charge of cultural wing of CPI, informed the members that the CPI decided to suspend the activities of Praja Natyamandali temporarily. He asked the performers to go to their villages and settle in their earlier professions. See, Nazar, *Pinjari* (Autobiography), (Telugu), Doctor Angadala Venkata Ramanamurthy, Vijayawada, 2001, pp.32-33.

prevented the growth of reactionary ideas and political institutions in Andhra and succeeded in creating a 'secular culture'.

Thus, in spite of certain sectarian mistakes, CPI's participation in the movements against exploitation and in the movements for the release of national leaders, its participation in various welfare activities and use of literature and art forms effectively for the spread of its ideology, helped it to emerge as a strong political party with its base among all sections of the society.

**Anti-Communist Propaganda and Congress – Communist Rupture**

By the end of 1945, the Congress leaders came to know that the British would leave the country very soon. The Congress leaders were eagerly waiting to get power after the exit of the British from India. They were not interested to start any struggle against the British. They even opposed and criticized the RIN mutiny against the British. They just wanted peaceful transition of power from the hands of the British government to Congress.

On the other hand the CPI started radical movements with a view to gain strength among the workers and peasants and other sections of the society and to overthrow the imperialism. The growing popularity of the communists alarmed Congress and other nationalist forces. The congress and its supporters started anti-communist propaganda to suppress the rise of communist movement. Initially this campaign was started by the Congress leaders who were arrested and detained in jails during Quit India Movement. Later the Congressmen outside the jail carried out this campaign very rigorously. From 1942 onwards, the bourgeois press started false propaganda against CPI in Andhra. Andhra Patrika, the longest survived daily in Andhra, now defunct, which popularized the leftist ideas and their activities in the 1930s, became vehicle for the publication for anti-communist news and statements after 1942. Andhra Patrika published a series of articles written by Bhargava criticizing the policy of communists.[272]

Though the communists were trying to align with the congress, the Congress leaders maintained hostile attitude towards CPI. The CPI realized that the People's War policy followed by the CPI led to the division of nationalist forces and the

[272] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th July 1943, p.3; 15th August 1943, p.3 and 5th September 1943, p.5.

alienation of CPI from the Congress. The leaders of CPI made several attempts to improve relations with Congress.[273] With a view to get entry into the Congress, in all the conferences of CPI and its frontal organizations the communists emphasized on national unity, release of national leaders and formation of a national government. As a result of this unity campaign, Smt. Sarojini Naidu in the course of her speeches in the public meetings suggested clearly that Communists should not be expelled from the Congress merely because they were communists but this was not received too well by the congress cadre.[274]

While communists were trying to build national unity by uniting all the political parties in India, the local Congress leaders in Andhra maintained a hostile attitude towards CPI. The Congress leaders Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao, Konda Venkatappaiah and Kalluri Chandramouli rejected to meet P.C. Joshi, when Joshi informed them through P. Sundarayya that he wanted to discuss with them about the political crisis in the country. In his reply to Joshi, Kaleswararao criticized CPI for its pro-British stand. Kaleswararao accused CPI that it has suppressed the Student, youth and peasants associations of the Congress by using its relations with the government.[275] Konda Venkatappaiah, another Congress leader who was invited to meet P.C. Joshi rejected the invitation and said that the ideology of Communists was different from Congress. He assumed that there was no possibility for an alliance between the Congress and CPI.[276] Joshi expressed dissatisfaction over the attitude of Congress leaders of Andhra for their animosity towards the CPI. Rebutting the charges made by the Congress leaders, Joshi listed out several activities of the communists – from famine relief work in Bengal and Rayalasima to movements for the release of national leaders. He urged the people to convince the congress leaders to work in association with the CPI.[277]

The rivalry between Congress and Communists reached its heights in 1944. At several places, there was fighting in the streets between Congress and the

[273] Fortnightly Report, from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to secretary to the Home Department, Government of Madras, dated 6th January 1945. Also see, N.Sivarama Reddy (Ed), *Arunodayam: Cuddapah Jilla Communist Udyama Smrithulu*, (Telugu), CPI Cuddapah District Committee, Cuddapah, 1998, p.121.
[274] Fortnightly Report, from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to the secretary to the Home Department, Government of India, dated 7th February 1945.
[275] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th March 1944, p.1.
[276] *Andhra Patrika*, 13th March 1944, p.2.
[277] *Andhra Patrika*, 16th March 1944, p.1.

Communists. The Congressmen started physical attacks on communists and increased harassment on the women members of CPI. On 13th January 1944 there was a clash between Congress and Communist activists in Bezawada in which five people received injuries.[278]

In 1944, the congressmen started attacks on communist conferences. While Communists were demanding the release of national leaders in these conferences, the Congressmen started slanders to malign the communists and described communists as 'anti-national elements'. Though this type of criticism had started during the quit India movement, it reached its peak in 1944. They did not spare even Congress leaders and attacked them whenever they participated in communist conferences.[279]

Along with the Congress, the communal forces under the leadership of R.S.S. also treated Communists as their enemy. The theory of nationalities proposed by CPI and its propaganda for the formation of sovereign nations for all nationalities including the Muslim nationalities irked the communal forces which were trying to keep India as one country. There were frequent clashes between the activists of R.S.S. and Communists in Bezawada.[280]

By the year 1945, the Congressmen in Andhra increased their anti-communist campaign. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao and other Congress leaders instigated Congressmen to carry out anti-communist propaganda and there were street fights between Congress and Communists at several places. In Krishna district, Gottipati Brahmaiah and Vemula Kurmaiah who were expecting to contest the upcoming elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly, increased attacks on communists in the villages of Machilipatnam and Divi Taluks.[281] Brahmaiah declared that he was ready to sacrifice his life in the struggle against communism.[282] Similarly in the Western parts of the Krishna District, Kakani Venkatartnam and Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao took up the task of anti-communist activity while Marupilla Chitti was involved in the

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[278] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th January 1944, p.1. Also see *Prajasakthi*, 19th January 1944, p.7. Also see Y.V. Krishnarao (Ed), *Sannihitula Smrithipathamlo C.R.*, (Telugu), N.R.R. Research Centre, Hyderabad, 2007, pp.28-29.

[279] *Andhra Patrika*, 31st March 1944, p.1.

[280] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd October 1944, p.3.

[281] Gottipati Brahmayya, *Na Jivana Nauka*, (Telugu), Telugu Vidhyarthi Prachuranalu, Machilipatnam, 1976, pp.259-261.

[282] G.V. Purnachand, *Dinajana Bandhavudu Vemula Kurmayya*, (Telugu), Sri Madhulata Publications, Vijayawada, 2000, pp.112-113.

same in Vijayawada. After his release from jail in 1944, since the Congress was under ban, Kakani Venkataratnam instructed his followers to form into an open organization to fight against the communists. They formed the 'Krishna District Congress Assembly' with Kalapala Suryaprakasarao as secretary and Myneni Ramakotaiah, Akkineni Bhaskararao and others as members.[283] The members of the association visited several villages to conduct anti-communist propaganda. They even visited Communist strongholds like Telaprolu and Katuru to conduct anti-communist propaganda.[284]

Konda Venkatappaiah who was known as *Desabhakta* for his activities as the champion of national movement in Andhra was another leader who became a staunch anti-communist and encouraged congressmen to start anti-communist propaganda. He himself issued statements and spoke against communists in several conferences. While speaking in a conference organized to felicitate him in Amritaluru village which was a strong centre of communist activity, Konda Venkatappaiah declared that there was a clear cut difference between the congress and communists. He said "Stalin is the leader of communists where as Gandhi is our leader. Our Flag is the national flag; communist flag is the foreign red flag".[285]

In Guntur district, Bachina Subbarao and Kosaraju Ammaiah, the ardent followers of N.G.Ranga, formed the 'National Youth League' to carryout anti-communist propaganda and to conduct attacks on Communists.[286] They published several pamphlets condemning the people's war line of CPI as reactionary and anti-national and urged the youth to inculcate nationalist ideas. Under the open instigation of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiah and N. G. Ranga, all-India Congress leaders, raids were organised on CPI offices, attacks were made on individual members and important leaders, and CPI rallies were disturbed.

As part of their anti-communist campaign, the Congressmen composed a drama *Comrade Vengamma,* a satire on Communists, written by Yadlapalli

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[283] Kalapala Suryaprakasarao, *Kakani Venkataratnam Jivitha Charitra,* (Telugu), Kakani Smaraka Committee, Vijayawada, 1977, pp.77-80.
[284] Kalapala Suryaprakasarao, *Anubhavalu – Gnapakalu,* (Telugu), Nilima Publications, Vijayawada, 1985, p.66.
[285] *Andhra Patrika,* 19th March 1945, p.5.
[286] G.O. No. 4309 dated 24th May 1943, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

Kotaiah.[287] There were severe clashes between congressmen and communists at several places when the Congressmen attempted to perform the drama *Comrade Vengamma.*[288] Finally, the government prohibited the performance of the drama under the Dramatic Performances Act.[289]

A fitting reply to all this criticism came from P.Sundarayya. Speaking in the youth conference organized in Eluru on 18th February 1945, Sundarayya said that the Communists were following the 1942 August resolution of the Congress. Quoting from the 1942 August resolution of the Congress, Sundarayya said that Congress resolved that it would not disturb the war efforts of the government and it desired the victory of Britain and its Allies in the War. According to him, the Congress resolution also declared that the Congress would fight against Japan in the War if India was given independence. He felt that there is no difference between the August Resolution of Congress and the people's war strategy of the CPI. He accused the congress leadership that the expulsion of Communists from the congress committees on the pretext that they were supporting the war efforts of the government, would lead to the weakening of the Congress.[290] Replying to the criticism on CPI's support to Russia, Sundarayya reminded the critics that the Congress was also supporting China, Abyssinia and Spain when they were attacked by the fascist forces. Regarding the criticism on communists that they have no respect for nationalism and the nation, Sundarayya said that the members and leadership of CPI have led the revolutionary movements for achievement of freedom to the nation and spent several years in jail. He also said that the communists carried out the Congress programme and strengthened it when the Congress was under ban during 1942-45. He strongly protested against the anti-communist propaganda in Andhra region as well as the

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[287] Yadlapalli Kotayya, *Comrade Vengamma,* (Telugu), Lakshmi Power Press, Tenali, 1944. There is no story proper in the drama except a small love episode of a woman by name Vengamma, the wife of a congressman, who was inveigled by the communist leader Sundayya and how in the end, she was ill-treated by the leader after she became a physical wreck. The whole drama portrayed the activities of communists in a very uncomplimentary manner and in general impeaches the principles of the CPI and its frontal organizations in the blackest possible colours. In short, it was a tirade against the communist party and its frontal organisations.

[288] Fortnight Report, from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to the Secretary, Home Department, Government of Madras, dated7th February 1945; G.O. No. 3118, dated 11th September 1945, Home Department, Government of Madras. Also see, *Andhra Patrika*, 24th January 1944, p.1.

[289] Report from, the District Magistrate Kistna, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated 6th August 1945, in G.O. No. 3118, dated 11th September 1945, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[290] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th February 1945, p.3.

harassment and ill-treatment meted out to women activists of the CPI by the Congress goondas.[291]

The Congress–Communist rivalry spread to jails where a large number of Congress and communist members were detained by the government. The Congress leaders accused that the Communists were acting as informers to the government in jails.[292] The fact was that the congress leaders got annoyed with the transformation of majority of satyagrahis into communists, in jail. Most of the Congressmen who went to jail as satyagrahis were transformed as communists in jail. All this work was done by the communists by conducting political classes in jail. They also invited Congress leaders to attend the classes. The Congress leaders failed to convince the youth and started anti-communist propaganda with false news and illogical arguments. On one hand the Congress leaders condemned the August 1942 disturbances and disowned the responsibility for those incidents. At the same time they could not tolerate the condemnation of those incidents by communists. They called the CPI anti-national and anti-Congress for condemning August 1942 incidents. Sarat Chandra Bose, a Congress leader from Bengal, speaking in a conference in Bombay on 27th September 1945 treated the communist activities as anti-national and demanded the CPI to seek apologies from Gandhiji.[293]

The congress leaders continued rigorous anti-communist propaganda throughout the year 1945. They said that the communists were working against the decisions of the CWC. In September 1945 the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee recommended the AICC not to allow communists to become members in Congress committees and to suspend the existing members of CPI from the Congress committees.[294] Similarly the executive committee of Tamilnadu Congress Committee which met in Madras under the presidentship of Kamaraj Nadar recommended the AICC not to allow communists to become members in the congress.[295]

*Gandhi – Joshi Correspondence:* Based on the reports sent by the Congress leaders Pattabhi Sitaramaiah and A. Kaleswara Rao explaining the activities of Communists

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[291] *Ibid*.
[292] *Andhra Patrika*, 21st September 1945, p.10 and Prajasakthi, 26th September 1945, p.9.
[293] *Andhra Patrika*, 29th September 1945, p.7.
[294] *Andhra Patrika*, 19th September 1945, p.1.
[295] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th September, p.4.

in Andhra,[296] Gandhiji wrote a letter to P.C. Joshi. In his reply to Gandhi, Joshi rejected all the allegations as baseless. Joshi replied 'if my own father had written to me what you have written, I would NOT have answered his letter and I would never again have gone to meet him'.[297] He requested Gandhi to arrange a trial before the people of Andhra with Rajagopalachari or Mrs. Sarojani Naidu as judges to enquire about the facts of these accusations on communists. He also explained as to how Kaleswararao misinterpreted Engels' book 'Evaluation of Family, Property and State' and said that the communists never propagated group marriages. He said that the CPI was the only political party in India that could guide, criticize and mould both personal and political life of the members. Later Kaleswararao agreed that he had misunderstood the meaning of Angels's book and rectified it after reading the book again.[298]

By the end of 1945, most of the Congress leaders at the all India level, became anti-communist, and tried to suppress the growth of Communism in India. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was considered as a staunch supporter of Left wing within the Congress, said that the people's war policy of CPI was a blow to the Indian nation. He alleged that the CPI had joined with the government when the Congress was fighting against the British government. He accused the CPI that it was emphasizing *other* issues which would hamper the struggle for independence.[299]

It was at this juncture that a sub-committee appointed by the AICC with Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Govind Vallab Pant, to inquire into the activities of communists in Congress, submitted its report to the Congress Working Committee and recommended the suspension of communists from the All India

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[296] In his report to Gandhi on the activities of communists in Andhra and jails in South India, Kaleswararao accused that the communists were forcing the Brahmin members of their party to eat flesh and the training classes held in jails yards were anti-Gandhi, anti-khaddar, anti-truth, anti-non-violence, anti-congress and anti-God and advocated sexual anarchy. He also accused that the communists were preaching Engels book in the classes which advocated group marriages and twin marriages and condemns the monogamy as the bourgeois invention to suppress women's freedom. Kaleswararao also complained that the communists were acting as spies to the government against the congressmen. See, Mahatma Gandhi to P.C. Joshi dated 30th July 1944 in Partha Sarathi Gupta (Ed), *Towards Freedom: Documents on the Movement for Independence in India, 1943-44,* Indian Council of Historical Research, Delhi, 1997, p.1712. Also see, Kotipalli Suryanarayana, *Ayyadevara Kaleswararao Jivitha Charitra*, Navodaya Publishers, Vijayawada, 1962, pp.202-204.

[297] P.C.Joshi (Ed), *Correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and P.C. Joshi,* People's Publishing House, Bombay, 1945.

[298] *The Hindu*, 22nd July 1945, p.6.

[299] *Andhra Patrika*, 26th October 1945, p.1.

Congress committee and other elected bodies of the Congress. At the same time the committee permitted the communists to enroll themselves as ordinary members of the congress. The committee in its report entitled "Charges on the Communist members in the Congress" traced history of relations between CPI and Congress since 1920s and said that the CPI was opposing Congress since its inception. The committee felt that the line of CPI towards the Muslim League and communal problem in India was completely against that of the Congress.[300] Based on the report submitted by the Sub-committee, the Congress working Committee suspended communist members S.G. Sardesai, V.G. Bhagavat, V.D. Batale, K.M. Ashraf, S. Sajjad Zahir, Sohan Singh Josh, Karyanand Sarma, and R. D. Bhardwaj from AICC on 12th December 1945.[301] It also instructed the provincial congress committees to prevent the members of the communist Party from holding any elective offices in the Congress organization. Even before the suspension of communists from AICC the General Secretary of CPI had already instructed the CPI members in the Congress except the members in the elected bodies, to resign from the Congress. With the suspension of communists from AICC the rupture between Congress and CPI was completed.

Despite the slander and opposition from the right and Left leaders of the national movement, the Communist party though it lost some of its masses, grew in strength in the country as a whole. Its membership rose from 10000 to 50000. Its organized strength among the working class, peasants and the students also increased in the same measure. Throughout the period the nationalist bourgeois leadership continued its slanderous attack on the communists, inciting and provoking attacks on the communist party offices and presses and even against individual members of CPI. But the real face of the national leaders was unmasked when the post-war revolutionary upsurge broke out toward the end of 1945. Terrified by the rising tempo of the revolutionary activity of the masses, the leaders of the Congress and Muslim League took the path of compromise and collaboration with imperialism. While the communist party was participating in the heroic struggles in connection with the release of INA prisoners and later on fully supported the great revolts of Royal Indian Navy and armed forces, the Congress leaders denounced the fighting masses as goondas and turned their backs on the struggles of the masses.

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[300] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th December 1945, p.2.
[301] *The Hindu*, 14th December 1945, p.4 and *Andhra Patrika*, 14th December 1945, p.2.

The communists in Andhra had successfully overcome the obstacles created by Congress. Inspite of this strong opposition from Congress, through their active work among various sections of the people, the communists in Andhra were able to establish their hold among various sections of the people. With their active work among various sections of the people, their struggle for the release of national leaders, the formation of a national government, their ceaseless efforts for Hindu Muslim Unity, and their role in helping the people in their day to day activities, and participation in various people's movements helped the CPI to increase its strength and to emerge as a strong political force in Andhra. The strength of communists in Andhra was revealed in the elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1946.

**1946 Elections**

Immediately after War, the government announced its plan to conduct elections to the provincial legislatures and central legislature on the basis of the Government of India Act 1935. According to the Act, the members of the provincial legislature would be elected by the people through limited franchise and the provincial legislatures would elect the central legislature which would function as the constituent assembly to a draft constitution for India. The Indian States ruled by native rulers were empowered to nominate their representatives to the constituent assembly. Thus, according to the act, the members of the constituent assembly would be elected through indirect election.

The CPI declared that a constitution making body based on a limited franchise and indirect elections was a mass disfranchisement of the majority. It felt that the constituents of the constitution making body should be sovereign constituent assemblies of Pathan land, Baluchisthan, Sind, Muslim Western Punjab, Sikh homelands of Central Punjab, Hindusthan, Bihar, Rajasthan, Assam, Orissa, Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bengal. The Election Manifesto of CPI declared that it would work for the grant of right to self – determination of nationalities. The election manifesto of CPI proposed (1) abolition of landlordism, nationalization of land, redistribution of land to make the uneconomic holdings of the poor peasants into consolidated economic holdings and to make large-scale co-operative farming possible; (2) All agricultural credit through co-operative state banks; (3) ban on private trade in people's food; People's state to ensure direct

purchase from the peasant at fair price; (4) Large-scale mass peasant initiative to be directly aided by the People's State for starting a network of co-operative sales and purchase societies to buy from the peasant his surplus produce at a fair price and make available to him his daily necessities at cheaper rates.[302]

Regarding the industrial production, the CPI advocated the rapid planned industrialization of India to proceed under the direct guidance of the people's state on the basis of – (1) nationalization of all key industries, (2) state control of all capital resources for the development of the country as per State plan, (3) Planned and even development of the industrial resources in different parts of the country, and (4) large-scale expenditure on social services, guaranteed living wage to all workers.[303]

The Manifesto declared that it would stand for complete abolition of the social oppression of the millions of untouchables. It would fight to secure equal economic and political status for them in the governance of the country. It also declared that, in implementing the programme for the redistribution of lands, it would give special attention to the untouchables, who form a large portion of the landless poor.[304]

Based on the election manifesto published by Central Committee of CPI, the Andhra Committee of CPI published its election manifesto entitled *Vishala Andhra* authored by P. Sundarayya.[305] In this manifesto Sundarayya declared that CPI would work for the all round development of Andhra by resolving the basic needs of the people. It assured Food, Cloth, Shelter, free medical treatment, employment and social and economic justice to all sections of people. It also envisaged the abolition of jagirdari and Zamindari systems, land reforms, and land to the tiller, industrialization and new irrigation projects. It also declared that the CPI would fight for the formation of *Visalandhra* state by bringing together all the Telugu speaking areas of British India and Native states and would strive for the establishment of *Prajarajyam* (people's rule) in it.

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[302] P.C. Joshi, "For a Free and Happy India, Election Policy of Indian Communists", first published in 1946, reproduced in Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents on the Communist Movement in India*, Vol. V, 1944-1948, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1998, pp.264-280.
[303] *Ibid*.
[304] *Ibid*.
[305] P. Sundarayya, *Vishala Andhra*, People's Publishing House, Bombay, 1946.

The election campaign of Congress was launched in September 1945 by the President of APCC T. Prakasam, a famous Congress leader, who was mobilizing the Congressmen of Andhra in favour of his candidature for the chief ministerhsip of Madras against C. Rajagopalachari. The Congressmen organized a public meeting in Bezawada on 6th September 1945 in which T. Prakasam, Konda Venkatappaiah, Ayyadevara Kaleswararao, Unnava Lakshminarayana and other top most leaders of the Congress from Andhra region participated. Mr. Prakasam, in his speech to the conference, felt that the people were solidly behind the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi and said that people would elect the Congress candidates with clear majorities in the forthcoming elections. Criticising the decision of Communists to contest the elections, Prakasam said that the policy adopted by the Communists was wrong. He advised them to think over the matter critically and correct their mistakes and strengthen the Congress.[306]

In his speeches in the meetings conducted as part of election propaganda Prakasam said that the CPI was following Russian doctrines and advised CPI not to follow foreign doctrines.[307] He said that the congress would strive for the revival of traditional agrarian system and make villages self-sufficient. As part of his election speeches, he made several false allegations on CPI. He said "they (CPI) helped the government to arrest Congressmen. They decided to destroy and kill the Congress. They played dual game by supporting government on one hand and demanding the release of Congress leaders on the other". He predicted that the communists would be routed in the elections and advised the CPI not to contest the elections.[308]

The CPI officially declared its election strategy on 30th September 1945 in a conference organized in Bezawada under the presidenthsip of Tammina Potharaju. In this conference, P. Sundarayya, the stalwart of Andhra Provincial committee of CPI, announced decision of the CPI to contest the elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1946. He accused the Congress that it has become a bourgeois organization by allowing into it the zamindars and big landlords who worked against the Congress and national movement. He said that the CPI would fight the elections in

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[306] *The Hindu*, 9th September 1945, p.6.
[307] Fortnightly Report, from the Secretary to Government of Madras, to Secretary to Home Department, Government of India, dated 7th September 1945.
[308] *The Hindu*, 4th October 1945, p.2 and *Andhra Patrika*, 13th October 195, p.3.

alliance with the Muslim League and Scheduled Castes Federation.[309] He condemned the attitude of Congress towards the Muslim League.

The CPI announced its list of candidates for elections to be held in March 1946 for the Madras Legislative Assembly. The CPI decided to contest from 22 general constituencies, 2 labour constituencies and 3 constituencies reserved for scheduled castes.[310]

The Congress also announced its list of candidates for the Madras Legislative Assembly elections. T. Prakasam, Ayyadevara Kaleswararao, V.V. Giri, Kala Venkatrao, Maganti Bapinidu, Tenneti Viswanadham, Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, Kalluri Chandramouli, Bezawada Gopala Reddy, Kadapa Koti Reddy, Kalluru Subbarao, Nilam Sanjiva Reddy, Krovvidi Lingaraju and Mallipudi Pallamraju were some of the prominent Congress leaders who contested the elections.[311] Out of 215 seats in the Madras Legislative Assembly, 93 seats were filled without contest.[312] Elections were held for the remaining 122 seats during 18-25 March 1946.

Mr. Prakasam, the Congress leader and P. Sundarayya, the communist leader toured the districts simultaneously addressing meetings at different places. Both attracted large audiences wherever they went and in several places, there were incidents of assault and stone throwing.[313] In all the meetings the communists used to decorate the venue with Congress and Muslim League's flags along with the Red Flag.[314]

The congress leaders organized a conference in Rajahmundry on 6th November 1945 under the presidentship of Dr. A.B. Nageswararao, who was contesting from Rajahmundry in the elections. In their speeches in the conference, the leaders concentrated on the communist activities in Andhra. Krovvidi Lingaraju explained that the CPI was working against Congress since its inception. He condemned CPI's

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[309] Fortnightly Report, from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to the Secretary to Home Department, Government of India, dated 25th October 1945.
[310] *Andhra Patrika*, 28th February 1946, p.3.
[311] *The Hindu*, 14th February 1946, p.3, 21st February 1946, p.6 and 23rd February 1946, p.4. Also see *Andhra Patrika*, 7th February 1946, p.1, 4th March 1946, p.8, 5th March 1946, p.1, 6th March 1946, p.1, and 7th March 1946, p.1.
[312] *The Hindu*, 8th March 1946, p.6.
[313] Fortnightly Report, from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to the Secretary to Home Department, Government of India, dated 26th November 1945.
[314] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th November 1945, p.3.

efforts for unity between Congress and Muslim League. He said that the Muslim League was trying to brand the Congress as Hindu organization. He also accused the Muslim League that it was responsible for the famine in Bengal and told that Muslim League did not organize any struggle for independence. He ruled out the possibility of alliance between Congress and Muslim. Kala Venkatarao, Secretary of APCC condemned the people's war line of CPI and said that it was a war against people. While agreeing that the CPI had worked among the people and helped them in their day-to-day problems during the War period, Venkatarao said that the CPI had also created several obstacles to the Congress and national movement.[315] The Congress leaders organized a conference of Youth League in Rajahmundry in which again they started attack on the policy of CPI during the War. The communist members tried to obstruct the speeches in the conference when the speakers tried to criticize CPI's policy.[316] Bhupathi Koteswararao, who was known for his anti-communist activities in the Youth movement, challenged the communists to answer some of his questions. But the organisors did not allow communist members to the Dias when they tried to answer the questions posed by Koteswararao in the conference.[317]

The communist leader P. Sundarayya, who was contesting in the elections from Bezawada constituency, participated in several meetings in Krishna district. The CPI members organized a conference in Mangalapuram village in Divi taluk under the presidentship of Malempati Sitaramaiah in which Sundarayya was the main speaker. In his speech to the conference, while urging the people to vote for CPI, Sundarayya said that the CPI would impose restrictions on personal property if they came to power. He said that the individuals' property should not cross 100 acres per head. He also announced that there should be no rent or tax on the land for the peasants who were having less than 5 acres of land.[318]

In November 1945 T.Prakasam visited several villages in Krishna district to inquire into the problems of the people in Divisima after floods in which several villages were inundated in sea water. He criticized the CPI for not participating in the

[315] *Andhra Patrika*, 12th November 1945, p.2.
[316] *Andhra Patrika*, 12th November 1945, p.3. Also see, Fortnightly Report, from the Secretary to the Government of Madras, to the Secretary to Home Department, Government of India, dated 26th November 1945.
[317] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th November 1945, p.5.
[318] *Ibid*.

flood relief programme and said that the communists were trying to get votes from the people without doing any thing for their welfare. He also dismissed the popular talk that Krishna, Guntur and West Godavari districts were communist strongholds. He said that the CPI was able to maintain its influence in these districts by resorting to violence against congressmen. He advised the CPI to withdraw from the elections and work for the victory of Congress in the elections.[319]

All India leaders of CPI also participated in the election campaign in Andhra. P.C. Joshi visited several places along with P. Sundarayya and spoke in several conferences. Joshi visited Bezawada, Nandigama, Challapalli, Narasaraopeta, Telaprolu, Razolu and several other places in Andhra.[320] One lakh people attended the meeting arranged by communists in Challapalli, in which communist leaders P.C. Joshi, P. Sundarayya and C. Rajeswararao urged the people to defeat the imperialist and Zamindari agents and elect communists. Joshi politely refused to take the garlands sent to him by the Zamindar of Challapalli.[321] The Congressmen made several attempts to foil the meetings attended by P.C. Joshi. The students' leaders of Congress tried to obstruct P.C. Joshi's speech in Pentapadu village in Krishna district on 22nd February 1946 which resulted in a severe clash between both the groups.[322] The police made elaborate security arrangements for conferences in which Joshi participated. The government imposed 144 section in Bezawada and Tenali for one week from 16th March 1946 to 23rd March 1946.[323]

The Congress leaders argued that Congress party was the only national party which continuously carried out struggle for the independence of the country. In his election speeches, T. Prakasam demanded CPI to withdraw from contesting the elections. The president of Congress controlled Weavers Association Pragada Kotaiah urged the weavers to work for the victory of congress in the elections said that Congress party was only a political party which has the capacity to lead Indian people

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[319] *Andhra Patrika*, 27th November 1945, p.3.
[320] Mullapudi Suryanarayana, *Vaikuntapalee: Communist Udyamamlo Na Anubhavalu, Anubhutulu, Alochanalu,* (Telugu), Author, Rajahmundry, 2004, p.56 and Kondrugunta Venkateswarlu, *Communistu Karmikodyamalalo Na Gnapakalu,* (Telugu), Prajasakthi Book House, Hyderabad, 2006, p.6.
[321] Kavuri Kutumbarao, *Challapalli Estate Rytanga Poratam*, (Telugu), Kavya Publications, Hyderabad, 2004, pp.66-67.
[322] *Andhra Patrika*, 28th February 1946, p.5.
[323] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th March 1946, p.4 and 20th March 1946, p.2.

in the struggle for independence. He lured the weavers that the Congress would work for the welfare of the weavers if it came to power.[324]

Pattabhi Sitaramaiah was another Congress leader who carried rigorous anti-communist campaign during the elections. Sitaramaiah launched anti-communist campaign though his journal *Janmabhumi* and also devoted his election speeches to the attack on communists. He rejected the CPI's proposal for national unity and dubbed it as a plan of communists to occupy the Congress. He openly declared that he was against communism and Russia. He said the policies followed by communist regime in Russia were not different from the policies of Czarist Russia. He also accused the Russian communists alleging that they have killed 70 lakhs of people in Russia who opposed communism. He also said that the Congress party was working for the establishment of *Indian communism* in independent India and urged people not to allow the seeds of Russian Communism to grow in India. He has mentioned religion, family system and individual property as the three basic principles of Indian culture and explained in a conference that the communists were against these basic principles. He said that Communism in Russia has destroyed the temples, family system and nationalized individual property. Discussing about the election manifesto of CPI, he said that the CPI was trying to destroy the traditional village economy. He said that the Congress would bring land reforms if they came to power.[325] Speaking in a conference organized in Machilipatnam on 7th March 1946 Sitaramaiah informed people that they would be working against the nation and independence if they vote for CPI and urged them to vote for Congress to get independence.[326] Similarly Congress leaders Kala Venkatarao, Ayyadevara Kaleswararao, Kalluri Chandramouli, and Konda Venkatappaiah carried out rigorous campaign and urged people to vote for congress.[327] There were clashes between Congress and Communist workers at several places in Krishna and Guntur districts. Most of the incidents took place when the Congressmen tried to obstruct the speeches of Communist leaders in the conferences.[328]

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[324] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th March 1946, p.1.
[325] *Andhra Patrika*, 8th March 1946, p.1.
[326] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th March 1946, p.5.
[327] *Ibid.*, p.7.
[328] *Andhra Patrika*, 14th March 1946, p.2.

The CPI used all its resources and men for the election campaign. The cultural troupes of Communist Party under the banner of Praja Natyamandali carried out elections campaign through various art forms. As part of election campaign, Garapati Satyanarayana and others arranged a *burrakatha* performance in Eluru on 14th March 1946. There was a severe clash between congress and communist workers when the congressmen tried to disturb the performance.[329] Severe clashes took place between Congress and Communist workers on the election day in Katuru and Kondapalli villages in Krishna District and Appikatla village in Guntur district.[330] Katragadda Narayanarao, a CPI candidate who contested in the elections from Bezawada constituency was arrested in one of those incidents.[331]

The election result came as expected by the Congress. The CPI won from one labour constituency in Andhra region. The CPI though did not win more seats, succeeded in getting considerable number of votes in coastal Andhra districts mainly Guntur and Krishna districts. In the 27 constituencies it contested, the CPI got 24 percent of the total polled votes. The qualifications prescribed for the voting was one of the reasons for the failure of CPI in the elections. The Colonial Government provided voting right to the tax payers and propertied people. With all these restrictions, only 13 percent of the total population got the opportunity to vote in the elections.[332]

In some constituencies in coastal Andhra, the communists gave a tough fight to the Congress candidates. Soon after the elections, in his letter to Ayyadevara Kaleswararao, Sardar Patel congratulated him for his victory against CPI in the communist stronghold Vijayawada. In his report to the Governor General, on the election campaign in Madras Presidency, the Governor of Madras wrote that the congress leaders in the province were worried that the CPI would be able to get a majority in the future elections in the presidency.[333]

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[329] *Andhra Patrika*, 16th March 1946, p.4.
[330] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th March 1946, p.4.
[331] *Andhra Patrika*, 27th March 1946, p.1.
[332] Selig S. Harrison, "Caste and the Andhra Communists", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 50, No.2, June 1956, p.387.
[333] Mukkamala Nagabhushanam, *Bharata Swatantrya Samara Charitra*, p.294.

**Electoral Performance of CPI**:

| Sl. No | Constituency | Name of the Candidate | Total Votes | Votes Polled to CPI | % of Votes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Madras (Labour) | P. Jivanandam | 8907 | 3419 | 38.39 |
| 2 | Nellore (Rural) | Duvvuri Balarami Reddy | 25637 | 6187 | 24.13 |
| 3 | Ongole – Bapatla (Rural) (General) | Kolla Venkaiah | 61362 | 8814 | 14.36 |
| 4 | Ongole – Bapatla (Rural) (S. C.) | Kabothu Ramaswami | 60373 | 8888 | 14.72 |
| 5 | Narasaraopet | Pulupula Venkatasivaiah | 32126 | 5453 | 16.97 |
| 6 | Tenali | Makineni Basavapunnaiah | 61740 | 10215 | 16.55 |
| 7 | Gunturu - Tenali (Urban) | Ravi Ammaiah | 18213 | 2131 | 11.70 |
| 8 | Gunturu - Sattenapalli (Rural) | Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah | 42274 | 11344 | 26.83 |
| 9 | Gunturu - Nellore (Christian) | N. Joseph | 21335 | 6761 | 31.69 |
| 10 | Gunturu - Krishna - Godavari (Labour) | Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu | 12395 | 6368 | 51.38 |
| 11 | Bandar - Bezawada (Urban) | Tammina Potharaju | 18695 | 3314 | 17.73 |
| 12 | Bezawada (Double) (General) 1 | Katragadda Narayanarao | 104513 | 34833 | 33.33 |
| 13 | Bezawada (Double) (General) 2 | Putchalapalli Sundarayya | 100819 | 32713 | 32.45 |
| 14 | Machilipatnam (Double) (General) | Chalasani Vasudevarao | 100374 | 27909 | 27.81 |
| 15 | Machilipatnam (Double) (S. C.) | Gunturu Bapanaiah | 101345 | 29190 | 28.80 |
| 16 | Bhimavaram | Yallabandi Polisetti | 50535 | 9810 | 19.41 |
| 17 | Narasapuram | Uddaraju Ramaraju | 58389 | 12522 | 21.45 |
| 18 | Eluru (General) | Garapati Satyanarayana | 46136 | 8968 | 19.44 |
| 19 | Eluru (Women) | Dr .Komarraju. Atchamamba | 7959 | 2041 | 25.64 |
| 20 | Rajahmundry - Bhadrachalam (Double) | C. Satyanarayana Das | 61594 | 12047 | 19.56 |
| 21 | Amalapuram (General) | N. Bapannaidu | 57227 | 10559 | 18.45 |
| 22 | Kakinada (Urban) | C.V.K. Rao | 9313 | 1852 | 19.89 |
| 23 | Visakhapatnam - E.Godavari (Labour) | Yalamanchili Vijaya kumar | 10853 | 4356 | 40.14 |
| 24 | Kurnool (S. C.) | Timmappa | 38121 | 3919 | 10.28 |
| 25 | Kurnool (General) | Chandra Pulla Reddy | 36106 | 3350 | 9.28 |
| 26 | Rajampeta | Panjam Narasimha Reddy | 16657 | 2618 | 15.72 |
| 27 | Anantapuram | Tarimela Nagi Reddy | 24675 | 2741 | 11.11 |
| | | **Total** | **1187673** | **272322** | **22.93** |

Source:- Andhra Patrika, dated 26th March 1946, p.1, 27th March 1946, p.4, 28th March 1946, p.6, 29th March 1946, p.4, 30th March 1946, p.8, and 31st March 1946, p.8.

The congress government was formed in Madras on 30th April 1946 with Prakasam as Chief Minister against the wishes of the Congress High Command.[334] Immediately after assuming the office, Prakasam declared that he would release all political prisoners and refund the punitive tax collected from the people.[335] But Prakasam could not maintain this liberal attitude towards the communist Party. He initiated repression on the CPI after assuming power.

[334] Tanguturi Prakasam, *Na Jivitha Yatra (Autobiography)*, (Telugu), Vols. III – IV, M.Seshachalam and Co., Vijayawada, Second Edition 1994, p.681. Also see, G. Rudrayya Chowdari, *Prakasam: A Political Study*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1971, pp.167-169.
[335] *The Hindu*, 1st May 1946.

**Renewal of People's Movements and Repression**

After the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces, the CPI organized several strikes of working class and peasantry against the exploitation and economic burden. The government imposed the economic burden on the middle class after the end of War. The prices of essential commodities were increased. Several people, who were employed in various activities during the war, became unemployed after the end of the War. The workers started movements against the retrenchment in major industries.

At the end of the Second World War, India witnessed a series of revolts against imperialism. The masses faced police and military repression during the demonstrations in Calcutta for the release of INA prisoners. The RIN struggle, the strike in the RIAF and other armed forces, the strikes among the police, showed that the idea of national resistance against imperialism was maturing in the minds of Indian people and armed forces. The fraternization between the people and the army, the country-wide protest strikes in support of RIN mutiny, the refusal of the Indian military to shoot the people and mutineers on many occasions foreshadowed new forms of struggle.

The strikes all over the country and the militant hunger marches in rural areas influenced CPI to change its policy. In December 1945, some of the members of the central committee questioned the sagacity of carrying the understanding of the war period to the post-war world, living on the illusion of peaceful development and expecting too much from the social democratic leadership of British Labour party. They have forced the central committee to reformulate its strategy. Finally, the Central Committee of CPI which met in August 1946 completely changed its policy and gave a call for a revolutionary struggle against imperialism and to expose the compromising policies of the bourgeois leadership. The resolution gave a line which sought to rescue the party and the working class from the clutches of the bourgeois and make the proletariat strike an independent path in opposition to both sections of the compromisers.[336]

[336] "For the Final Assault – Tasks of the Indian People in the Present Phase of Indian Revolution", Resolution of the Central Committee of CPI – August 1946, reproduced in Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Vol. V, 1944-1948, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1998, pp.103-127.

On the other hand, the Congress leadership felt that the disturbances created by the people of Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta were in every way very harmful and served as an obstacle in the way of the Congress. It demanded the government to suppress the outburst. Patel even offered to send Congress volunteers to assist the government to suppress the revolts. Discussing the Naval mutiny, G. Adhikari noted that the Congress leaders had begun to develop cold feet as the tempo of the post-war revolutionary upsurge was rising. He also pointed out how the League and the Congress were thinking that they could pull off a unilateral settlement with imperialism.[337]

With the out break of mass struggles all over India, the communists in Andhra also started mobilizing people on revolutionary lines. The defeat in the elections did not deter the communists from organizing peoples' movements. The communists intensified workers and peasants movements as well as students and agricultural labourers' movements from the beginning of 1946. The Congress government maintained a hostile attitude and attempted to put down the popular movements with the help of Congress volunteers and police. When the Inspector General of police approached the government for instructions on how to handle the communists, Prime Minister Prakasam ordered the police to continue the policy of repression followed by the Governor prior to the formation of Congress ministry.[338] At several places the Congressmen carried out physical attacks on the communists who were leading the people's movements. The police also used hired rowdies to sabotage the peaceful strikes. In spite of these obstacles the communists continued to highlight the problems through petitions, processions, meetings and strikes.

**Working Class Movements:** Workers movements began in Andhra as part of the post-war upsurge all over India. In Visakhapatnam district the workers in Chittivalasa Jute mill and Visakhapatnam shipyard started strikes demanding increase of wages in early 1946. The strikes were organized for 15 days.[339] Again the Shipyard workers

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[337] Shri Prakash, "CPI and Pakistan Movement", in Bipan Chandra (Ed), *The Indian Left: Critical Appraisals*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1983, p.252.
[338] Tanguturi Prakasam, *Na Jivitha Yatra*, Vols. III-IV, p.699.
[339] Josyabhatla Satyanarayana and K.L. Mahendra, *Andhra Pradesh Karmikodyama Charitra*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1986, p.28.

continued strike for 46 days against the retrenchment of workers.[340] The communists Y.Vijayakumar, M.V.Bhadram and Ramalingaiah led these struggles.

In April 1946, the communists in Guntur organized historic tobacco workers strike demanding increase of wages. The workers of all the tobacco companies in Guntur joined the strike under the banner of tobacco workers union. The communist leaders Komarraju Atchamamba, Moturi Kattaiah, Kanaparthi Nagaiah, Talluri Venkata Krishna, and others led the workers strike at several places in Guntur town simultaneously. The tobacco merchants tried every possible method, legal and illegal to break the strike of the workers and in their effort they used the police headed by A.S.P. B. Subbarayudu, who was known as the notorious Dappula Subbarayudu.[341] The Police arrested Moturi Kattaiah and 25 others on 1st April 1946 when the strike was in progress.[342]

The workers and general public in Guntur condemned the attitude of government and in a public meeting held on 16th June 1946, a resolution was passed demanding the government to release the communists.[343]

In Madras, Darisi Chenchaiah organized a strike in Spencer Company in which 1200 workers participated. The management refused to increase the wages and closed down the company. The Congress government rejected to take any action against the management.[344]

The municipal workers strike organized by CPI in August 1946 was one of the important struggles it organized in Andhra. The CPI demanded increase of wages and other facilities to the scavengers and other municipal workers and organized 10000 municipal workers belong to 30 municipalities in Andhra in the strike. The strike began on 9th August 1946 in Nellore, Tenali and Visakhapatnam. Later it spread to all the towns in Andhra. The members of CPI and Municipal Workers Association

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[340] Y.Vijaya Kumar, *Jivitha Saramsam,* (Telugu), Pragathi Printers, Hyderabad, 2002, p.45.

[341] For further details on the notorious activities of Dappula Subbarayudu, see, Ramachandruni Venkatappa, "Ongolu Talukalo Bahumukha Rajakiya Chaitanyam", *Gullapalli Adinarayana Shasthipurthi Sanmana Sanchika,* (Telugu), Ongolu, 1972, pp.153-155.

[342] Etukuri Krishnamurthi (Ed), *Gunturu Jilla Communist Udyama Vaitalikulu,* (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Swatantrya Samara Yodhula Samstha, Hyderabad, 2004, p.136.

[343] G.O. No. 1843 dated 27th August 1946, Public (General) (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.

[344] Darisi Chenchayya, *Nenu Na Desam,* (Telugu), Andhra Grandha Mandali, Vijayawada, 1952 Fourth Edition 2004, pp.329-335.

organized processions in the streets with red flags. The government appointed a conciliator to discuss with the municipal workers and requested them to stop the strike.[345] While the government was trying to solve the problem through discussions, the Congress leaders in Andhra made several attempts to end the strike. The Congress volunteers started the cleaning of streets which led to clashes between municipal workers and Congress members. In Rajahmundry the Congress Volunteers attacked CPI office and smashed records and other material.[346] With a view to obstruct the strike, in Bezawada the Congress leaders Marupilla Chitti, Pothina Ganapathi Rao and others mobilized 300 volunteers and cleaned streets. This led to a severe clash between the CPI and Congress volunteers in which 26 scavengers were arrested by the police under Criminal Tribes Act.[347] The municipal workers of Madras City organized a huge procession in support of the scavengers who were on strike.[348]

In August 1946, Communists organized a general strike in the South Indian Railway, involving 40 percent of the total staff, which caused considerable dislocation to traffic. At several places workers resorted to violent methods.[349] In Ongole the communists attacked a police van.

While communists intensified the struggles of working class all over Andhra, the government resorted to repression on the movements. The government prohibited the conference of Andhra Provincial Press Workers Union proposed to be held in Bezawada in June 1947.[350] Lathi charges and firings on the workers became a common phenomenon in the Madras province. The police injured 3 persons in ILTDC Company in Chirala.[351] Most of the organizers of the Working Class movements were arrested and detained in jail.

According to an article published in Prajasakthi, during the first four months of the Congress rule in Madras, the police resorted to firing in three places and killed 6 persons. Around 600 persons received severe injuries in the lathicharge resorted to by the police in 25 places. The police also arrested 1120 persons. Among them several

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[345] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th August 1946, p.1.
[346] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th August 1946, p.7.
[347] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th August 1946, p.1 and Darisi Chenchayya, *Nenu Na Desam*, p.339.
[348] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th August 1946, p.1.
[349] G.O. No. 2615 dated 21st August 1947, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[350] *Prajasakthi*, 16th June 1947.
[351] Kondrugunta Venkateswarlu, *Communist, Karmikodyamalalo Na Gnapakalu*, p.7.

trade union activists were convicted and sentenced upto 10 years of imprisonment.[352] The government also resorted to severe repression on the press and other publications of CPI. In November 1946, the government issued warnings to communist journals *Prajasakthi* and *Janasakthi* and imposed Rs. 2000 as security deposit.[353]

**Peasants Movements:** After the end of the War, the AIKS decided to intensify the struggles of the peasantry. A meeting of the Central Kisan Council of the AIKS which met in Calcutta in November 1946 passed a resolution demanding the provincial governments to abolish Landlordism without compensation, to protect the rights of the tenants, and to impose a maximum limit of 25 acres for self-cultivation. The Kisan Council demanded the government to declare, all evictions that were made after the formation of the provincial governments as illegal and to apply the rule to the tenants of Sir, Khudkashat, Bakasht, Khas, Home farm lands etc and to cancel all the arrears of rents.[354]

The CPI and Kisan Sabha intensified their activities among the peasants all over Andhra. The Andhra Provincial Kisan Sabha led several agitations against the atrocities of zamindars and demanded the government to abolish zamindari system. It gave a call to the peasants in the zamindari areas not to pay taxes to the zamindars till the abolition of zamindari system and pay directly to the government after the abolition of Zamindari system.[355] The no-tax campaign spread to all the zamindari areas in Andhra and at several places there were severe clashes between the peasants and Zamindar's men. In all these incidents the government tried to protect the Zamindars by sending special police parties to crush the peasants.

After the formation of Congress ministry in Madras in 1946, the government declared that it was going to bring law for the abolition of Zamindari system, reduction of land rents, and another law on the rights of tenants. Terrified by these announcements of the government and Congress leaders, the Zamindars started selling of lands under their illegal occupation. At several places they have sold the

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[352] Kondepudi Lakshminarayana, "4 nelala Police himsakanda (Police repression since last 4 months), *Prajasakthi*, 8th September 1947, p.13.
[353] G.O. No. 2700 dated 14th December 1946, Public (General) (Confidl) Department, Government of Madras.
[354] M.A. Rasul, *A History of the All India Kisan Sabha*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1974, p.133.
[355] Y.V. Krishnarao, *Rytu Udyama Charitralo Pradhana Ghattalu*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1979, p.13.

common lands left out for grazing and other purposes in the villages. The tenants were forcibly evicted from the lands with a view to sell them to private persons. The zamindars wanted to sell away all the excess lands under their control, before the enactment of Zamindari abolition act. This led to severe clashes between the Zamindars and peasants at several places.

The communist party and Kisan Sabha mobilized peasants against the atrocities of Zamindars and removal of tenants from cultivation. At several places the peasants under the leadership of CPI occupied the lands which were under the illegal occupation of Zamindars. The tenants refused to surrender the lands given to them for cultivation. When the zamindars tried to evict them forcefully, they revolted against the goondas of Zamindars and protected their rights. At the same time the government did not take any action to prevent the eviction of tenants from the lands or to stop alienation of lands by the zamindars. At several places the government deputed police to help the zamindars to protect the zamindars and to suppress the peasants who were struggling to protect their rights. Some of the prominent incidents in the anti-zamindari struggles were described below.

*Mirzapuram Estate:* The communists organized peasants in Mirzapuram estate to occupy the lands under the illegal occupation of the Zamindar. The peasants occupied lands in Kesarapalli in Mirzapuram zamindari. The government sent special police troupes to suppress the peasant's movement. Jasti Basavarao who took active part in this movement was arrested and imprisoned for 45 days.[356] Later Basavarao was killed in an encounter with the police on 2nd January 1950.[357]

*Mandasa Estate:* The Zamindar of Mandasa Estate in Visakhapatnam district forcibly evicted tenants from the lands and forced the tenants to pay the rents and confiscated the properties of tenants at several places. The executive committee of Andhra Provincial Kisan Sabha discussed the condition of peasants in Mandasa estate and appointed a committee with Anumarlapudi Venkata Sitaramarao, Y.V. Krishnarao and Koduganti Govindarao as members to enquire into the conditions of peasants in

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[356] J.S.R. Anjaneya Sastri, *Swiya Charitra,* (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Karmika Sangham, Hyderabad, 1995, p.75.

[357] *Krishna Jilla Amara Virulu,* (Telugu), CPI (ML) Janasakthi, Krishna District Committee, Vijayawada, 1997, p.24.

the Mandasa estate.[358] The committee reported that the condition of tenants and poor peasants became miserable in the Estate.[359] The committee found that the peasants sold out their lands to pay heavy rents. At several places the Zamindar confiscated the lands of poor peasants when they failed to pay the rent due to crop failure.[360] The communists formed a branch of Kisan Sabha for North Visakhapatnam district to mobilize peasants against the atrocities of Zamindars of Mandasa, Baruva and Jalantra estates. G. Tarunachari, B. Gauraiah and Marpu Padmanabham played an active role in the anti-zamindari struggles in Mandasa Estate.

*Venkatagiri Zamindari:* Venkatagiri Zamindari was one of the biggest among the Zamindaris in Madras presidency. The taxes imposed on the peasants were heavy and unbearable. In 1930s the peasants in Venkatagiri Zamindari revolted against the Zamindar under the leadership of N.G. Ranga and Nelluri Venkatramanaidu. But the movements were halted during the War period. In 1946, the communists Gujjula Yellamanda Reddy, Sanikommu Kasireddy, G.C. Kondaiah and others mobilized peasants against the atrocities of Zamindar in Kanigiri, Podili and Darsi taluks. Yellamanda Reddy formed *Rytu Dandu* (Peasants Military), a volunteer group.[361] The members of Rytu Dandu visited several villages and advised the peasants not to pay taxes to the zamindar. At the end of their march, they organized a conference in Kanigiri town in which the speakers advocated not to pay taxes to the zamindar.[362]

*Munagala Zamindari Struggle***:** The communists revived the anti-zamindari struggle in Munagala after the formation of Congress ministry in Madras. Communist leaders Nanduri Prasadarao and Vuppala Ramaiah led a deputation to Madras and presented a memorandum to the Prime Minister Prakasam on 5th November 1946 demanding the government to force Munagala Zamindar to implement the Brahmaiah Award.[363] Meanwhile the Zamindar established a milk processing company in Munagala and transferred to the company some of the lands under the illegal control of Zamindar. He also started selling of grazing lands and forest lands. Zamindar forcibly evicted the

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[358] Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo,* p.75.
[359] Bhadriraju Seshagirirao, *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu,* pp.41-42.
[360] Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo,* p.76.
[361] Y.V. Krishnarao, *Rytu Udyama Charitralo Pradhana Ghattalu,* p.13.
[362] Y.V. Krishnarao, *Na Smrithipathamlo,* pp.84-85.
[363] Thatavarthi Venkateswararao, *Munagala Paragana Praja Udyama Charitra,* (Telugu), Vuppala Kantha Reddy – Chillamcharla Raghunadham, Munagala, 1981, pp.81-82.

peasants from the lands cultivated by them for several years and tried to sell them to private individuals.[364]

The peasants association revolted against the attempts of zamindar and started preventing the Zamindar's people from entering into the inam lands cultivated by them. The anti-zamindari struggle in Munagala Estate began on 7th May 1947 with the hoisting of a red flag on the fort of zamindar in Munagala. On the same day, the peasants of Ramapuram, Siripuram, Karivirala, Kalukova, Munagala, Akupamula and other villages entered in the lands that were leased to them and other lands that were occupied by the Zamindar through illegal methods and hoisted Red flags in those lands.[365] This led to the severe clashes between Zamindar's men and peasants. The Madras government deputed special police parties to help the Zamindar and crush the peasants. The zamindar also used his influence to get police forces from Hyderabad State and the Nizam police and Razakars conducted regular attacks on Kokkireni, Madhavaram, Munagala, Narasimhulagudem villages of Munagala Estate on the pretext that some of the villagers were providing shelter to the communist leaders of the Hyderabad State.[366]

*Challapalli Zamindari:* The anti-zamindari struggle organized in Challapalli was one of the important struggles in the history of communist movement in Andhra. The communists mobilized the peasants, tenants and agricultural labourers against the atrocities of Zamindar. The peasant struggle in Challapalli also helped the CPI to establish its hold among large sections of the peasantry in Krishna district.

The land struggles in Challapalli Zamindari area began in September 1946 when the Zamindar tried to sell out the lands leased to tenants in Guntur and Krishna districts. The zamindar made this attempt with prior knowledge of the Land Tenancy Act to be adopted in the Madras Legislative Assembly which proposed to provide owner ship rights to the tenants.[367]

In Krishna district, Communist leaders Challapalli Narayana Rao and others set up the ryots to claim possession of the lands that they had been cultivating on

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[364] *Ibid.*, pp.82-83.
[365] *Ibid.*, p.83.
[366] *Ibid.*, pp.83-84.
[367] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th September 1946, p.4.

annual leases.[368] This led to severe clashes between the agents of Zamindar and ryots at several places. The government treated this as a problem of law and order and decided to curb the activities of communists with force. The fortnightly confidential report dated 29-10-1946 observed, "There seems to be little doubt that the agitation and the threats of resort to violence are instigated by members of the Communist Party. If evidence is forthcoming the sub-divisional magistrate will take action under section 107 Cr. P. C. to bind over persons who are inciting the breach of peace".

The clashes between Challapalli Zamindar and peasants in Krishna district gave an opportunity to the government to crush the communist movement as a whole in Andhra. Citing the disturbances in Challapalli Zamindari area as a threat to law and order, the government of Madras passed an ordinance known as Maintenance of Public Order Act to contain the activities of the communists in the villages.[369] The premier of Madras, T. Prakasam announced in the assembly that the existing laws in Madras followed by the colonial government were not enough to deal with the communists in the province.[370] Thousands of Special Police were deputed to the villages.[371] New police stations were created in Divi taluk. New Police Circle was created with Avanigadda as the circle and new police stations were created at Mangalapuram, Kodur and Gajullanka villages.[372] The police were appointed to protect the lands of the Zamindar. The police parties prevented the peasants from entering into the lands of the Zamindar. Clashes took place between the peasants and police at several places. Several peasants and organizers of the communist party were killed in the encounters. The police killed Bavireddi Viyyamma and 4 others in a clash with the peasants of Gajullanka village.[373] Several communists were arrested and detained in jails.[374] The police killed Challapalli Narayanarao, Gogineni Tataiah,

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[368] Kavuri Kutumbarao, "Challapalli Estate Rytula Virochita Poratalu", in Y.V. Krishnarao (ed.), *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu-Poratalu,* (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1986, p.158.

[369] *Andhra Patrika*, dated 25th January 1947, p.5; 6th March 1947, p.4; 7th March 1947, p.6.

[370] *Andhra Patrika*, dated 12th February 1947, p.3; 29th June 1947, p.5.

[371] *Andhra Patrika*, dated 12th September 1946, p.3. and 29th June 1947, p.5.

[372] G. O. No. 2568, dated 24th June 1949, Home Department, Government of Madras.

[373] G. O. No. 3004, dated 27th September 1947, Public (General) Department (Confidential), government of Madras; *Andhra Patrika*, dated 13th April 1947, p.1; 16th April 1947, p.6; 18th April 1947, p.2; 22nd April 1947, p.3.

[374] G. O. No. 2619, dated 21st August 1947, Public (General – E) Department (Confidential), Government of Madras; *Andhra Patrika*, dated 11th February 1947, p.2.

Chalasani Jagannadharao and 40 other prominent leaders of the peasant movement in Challapalli Zamindari.[375]

The radical peasant movements all over the country forced the government to adopt the Zamindari Abolition Act. Finally the then revenue minister Kala Venkatrao introduced the Zamindari Abolition Bill in the Madras Assembly on 4th August 1948. The Bill became act and came into force on 7th September 1949. The Zamindari abolition act was passed after a great deal of consultation over compensation and allowing sufficient time for the zamindar to dispose of their lands and make all other arrangements. The Zamindar was paid huge amounts of money and the peasants were made to pay this from specially imposed taxes. Zamindar was given rights over lands which he had snatched from the peasants earlier. All the title deeds granted by the Zamindars to their relatives, dependents, and sycophants were declared valid. Tenants who were cultivating lands for years together did not get any right over their land. Zamindars evicted several tenants on the pretext of self-cultivation. Later, in the 1950s the Zamindar of Challapalli, Y. Sivarama Prasad joined the Congress Party and became a member of Congress ministry in Andhra in 1960s.

**Telangana Armed Struggle**: The role of Andhra Communists in Telangana People's struggle can be said as a glorious chapter in the history of Communist Movement in Andhra. The Telangana people's struggle which started against atrocities of local landlords and autocratic rule of Nizam was directly guided and run by the Andhra Communist Party.

With the rise of people's struggles all over India after the War, the CPI started armed revolt against the autocratic rule of Nizam and feudal exploitation. At several places they revolted against the exploitation and atrocities of landlords. They took up such immediate issues of the people as *vetti,* illegal exactions, bribery, etc., and fought against the local deshmukhs. When the deshmukhs let loose goondas, people resisted and drove them back. The clashes between people and landlords reached their height with the murder of Doddi Komaraiah in Kadivendi village. The CPI, which was functioning as Andhra Mahasabha, organized *samghams* in several villages to fight back the attacks of Nizam police, Razakars and private armies of Landlords.

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[375] *Viplava Virudu Challapalli Narayanarao Smaraka Souvenir*, (Telugu), Challapalli, Krishna District, 2003.

The Hyderabad government took drastic steps to crush rising popular unrest. It increased repression on communists and several leaders were arrested in 1946. The police, Razakars[376] and the goondas of landlords raided several villages to suppress the people's movement. They began to loot the property of the people and commit arson, murder and rape on a mass scale.

In order to save their hearths and homes and their own lives from the murderous attacks, people formed into guerrilla bands and began putting up militant resistance under the political, organizational and ideological leadership of the Communist Party. The rule of the exploiters was coming to an end. Thousands of acres of land were being confiscated and distributed and people's committees were being established. The Razakar armies were let loose on the people. People under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha and Communist Party began heroically resisting the Nizam regime.

The Communist Party in Andhra, especially in the four coastal districts which were on the borders of Nalgonda and Warangal districts, served as a rear base for the Telangana fight. The CPI in Andhra gave a call for an all-out assistance to the struggle of the Telangana people against the Nizam, to help them overthrow the feudal regime and establish Vishalandhra. Thus, it sought to implement the election slogans of 1945-46, unlike the Congress whose promises evaporated into thin air. The call was responded to on a mass scale.

The Communist Party, the Andhra Provincial TUC and the Kisan Sabha welcomed and organized relief for the people from Telangana who sought protection from torture, rape and loot. The guerrilla fighters and leaders got the guidance and help they wanted. The whole movement was under the ideological, political and organizational leadership of the Communist Party. In the whole of Andhra, a national fervour to fight and liquidate Nizam's rule and unify Andhra had been roused. With what eagerness and readiness people came forward to help their fighting brethren across the border, can be understood from the single fact, that in just three days, in Bezwada town alone, Rs. 20,000 were collected for purchase of arms to the

[376] Armed volunteers, affiliated to Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Musliman, a social and cultural organization in Hyderabad State which later involved in politics with the slogan *Anal Malik (we are the rulers).*

guerrillas.[377] The Communist movement and the Party had become the backbone of the Telangana people's armed struggle.

The CPI and its frontal organizations propagated the difficulties faced by the people of Hyderabad state under the autocratic rule of Nizam and condemned the atrocities on the people of Hyderabad State. Several conferences were organized in Krishna and Guntur districts and resolutions were passed, condemning the atrocities on the people in Hyderabad State. As part of its demand for the formation of Vishalandhra, for the merger of Telugu speaking areas of Hyderabad State and Madras State, the CPI carried out rigorous campaign against the autocratic rule of Nizam. The conferences organized at several places demanded the Indian government and Madras government to interfere into the matters of Hyderabad State. A conference organized by CPI in Nandigama demanded judicial enquiry on the police firings in Balemla, Devaruppala and Patasuryapeta villages in Telangana.[378] The communist leaders of Telangana region attended several meetings organized by CPI in Andhra region. Mallu Swarajyam and Baddam Yella Reddy participated in the meetings organized by CPI in Tadepalligudem in West Godavari district and narrated the miserable conditions of people in Hyderabad State.[379] In December 1946 Andhra Committee of CPI organized a military training camp in Kondapalli village in Krishna district to train the communist leaders of Telangana. Arutla Ramachandra Reddy, Bhimreddy Narasimha Reddy, K. Rami Reddy, Kodanda Rama Reddy and several others received training.[380]

To stop the aid coming from Andhra region to the Telangana people's struggle, the police of Hyderabad state started attacks on the border villages in Krishna district. On 8th December 1946, the government of Hyderabad declared Andhra Committee of CPI, Hyderabad State Committee of CPI, the Communist Faction of Andhra Mahasabha and other frontal association associated to CPI as unlawful organizations and banned their activities in Hyderabad State.[381] The police forces belonging to Hyderabad State and Madras province conducted surprise raids on

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[377] P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons*, CPI (M), Calcutta, 1972, p.149.
[378] S.V. Satyanarayana, *Avishranta Porata Yodhudu Thammareddi*, p.7.
[379] Indukuri Subbaraju, *Na Gnapakalu*, pp.42-43.
[380] Y.V. Krishnarao (Ed), *Sannihitula Smrithipathamlo C.R.*, pp.54-55 and S.V. Satyanarayana, *Avishranta Porata Yodhudu Thammareddi*, pp.7-8.
[381] *Andhra Patrika*, 10th December 1946, p.4.

villages in Munagala Zamindari area on the pretext that some of the underground communists of Hyderabad State were taking shelter in Munagala area. There were frequent raids by the Nizam police on the border villages in Andhra region in Krishna district. The police of Hyderabad State made regular visits to Bezawada, Nandigama and Jaggayyapeta in Krishna district to identify and arrest the communist leaders of Hyderabad state. The secretary of Andhra Provincial Committee of CPI, Chandra Rajeswara Rao demanded the government to keep a check on the atrocities of the Nizam police in Andhra region.[382] Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu, M.L.A. met the home minister and demanded the government not to allow Nizam police into Munagala area and to provide political asylum to the political activists of Hyderabad State in Andhra Region.[383]

The people's struggle in Telangana which started against the atrocities of landlords and feudal oppression, took the shape of anti-Nizam struggle. The Congressmen also supported the people in their struggle against the Nizam. During this struggle, communist squads were able to establish people's government in 4000 villages and distribute 1200000 acres of land to the people. Around 4000 people were killed in this struggle. Ravi Narayana Reddy, Baddam Yella Reddy, Mukhdum Mohiuddin, Devulapalli Venkateswararao, Rajabahadur Gour, Bhimreddy Narasimha Reddy, Arutla Ramachandra Reddy, Mallu Swarajyam, S. Ramanatham, Nalla Narasimhulu and several others led this struggle against the landlords and the government of Hyderabad. The Andhra Committee of CPI, which was guiding the Andhra Mahasabha and Communists in Hyderabad State, played an important role in the Telangana Armed struggle. P.Sundarayya, Lavu Balagangadhara rao, Tammareddi Satyanarayana, S.V.K.Prasad, Bombay Prasad, Nallamala Giri Prasad and several others led the armed squads in the struggle against the landlords and government military, while others like Chandra Rajeswararao and Makineni Basavapunnaiah provided arms, guidance and material support to the Armed Struggle.

The people's movements of Andhra and Telangana and the role of communists in those movements helped them to emerge as a strong political force in Andhra. The struggles of workers and peasants in Andhra mobilized the vast sections of workers and peasantry under the banner of CPI. The role played by CPI in the

[382] *Prajasakthi*, 18th May 1947.
[383] *Prajasakthi*, 21st May 1947.

Telangana people's struggle helped the CPI to spread its influence among various sections of the people in Andhra. By conducting rigorous propaganda in Andhra region about the problems faced by people in Telangana, CPI was able to mobilize the support of all sections of people to their brethren in Hyderabad state. Thousands of people joined the armed squads to fight against the Razakars and Nizam government. The demand of communists for the formation of Visalandhra by merging the Telugu speaking areas of Madras and Hyderabad states, and the struggles launched by CPI to liberate the people of Hyderabad state from the autocratic rule of Nizam attracted large sections of people into the fold of CPI. The growing popularity of CPI among various sections of the people created panicky in the minds of the bourgeois leadership. The Congress leaders decided to contain the rising growth of communism in Andhra with a view to prevent communists from emerging as an alternative to the Congress.

**Repression in Andhra:** The government maintained a hostile attitude towards the popular movements organized by communists in Madras presidency. Immediately after the formation of Congress ministry in Madras, the government started repressive measures on CPI and its members. While the government resorted to large scale arrests of communists at several places, the Congress leaders carried out rigorous anti-communist propaganda. They inspired Congress activists to conduct physical attacks on CPI members. The Congress leader Pattabhi Sitaramaiah carried out vicious propaganda on CPI. He accused CPI that the communists participated in the *direct Action Day* observed by Muslim League. He advised the Congress members to become soldiers to protect themselves from the CPI.[384]

After the formation of ministry in Madras, the Congress tried to crush the communist movement with severe repression. Communists were arrested at several places for their participation in people's movements.[385] The Congress government did not allow the CPI members to install red flags in villages. [386] The government felt that the installation of Red Flag would lead to law and order problem in the village.[387] The Madras government decided to appoint a four member publicity committee in each

[384] *Andhra Patrika*, 17th September 1946, pp.1-2 and 30th October 1946, p.3.
[385] *Andhra Patrika*, 22nd May 1946, p.4 and 25th May 1946, p.6.
[386] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th July 1946, p.3.
[387] *Andhra Patrika*, 11th February 1947, p.2. Also see, G.O. No. 1760 dated 4th June 1947, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.

district to carryout anti – communist propaganda. The minister for press and information Vemula Kurmaiah prepared a scheme to carry out anti-communist propaganda with the government officials.[388]

The repression on CPI in Andhra was not an isolated incident. It happened as part of the repression on Communist Parties all over the world. Immediately after the end of the War, the colonial governments and the governments in newly independent countries in the middle and South East Asia took drastic measures to crush the communist parties. The government conducted raid on the Communist party office in Burma and arrested top communist leaders of the country. Raids were conducted on the communist party offices and communist press in Greece and Egypt and several other countries in the Middle East Asia.[389] The minister of foreign affairs of the British government declared that the British government had prior information about these raids which confirms that these raids were conducted on the advice of the British government.[390]

Similarly in India also, the Central government and Congress governments in several provinces began repressive measures against the Communist Party. The Congress government in United Provinces took drastic measures on the members of CPI and its frontal organizations and requested the central government to ban the CPI. In the second week of January 1947 the provincial governments of Bombay and Bengal conducted raids on the CPI offices in Bombay and Calcutta on the pretext that some of the essays published in the *People's War* were objectionable and harmful to the maintenance of law and order in the country. The police seized several records and arrested G. Adhikari, the editor of People's War, Viswanatha Mukherjee and M.A. Rasul in Bombay and 31 important communist leaders in Calcutta.[391]

*Public Safety Ordinance, 1947***:** The Madras Government promulgated an ordinance known as "Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act 1 of 1947' on 22nd January 1947 and began the offensive on the communists in the Province from the mid night of 22nd January 1947. The ordinance was passed by the governor under special powers and came into force from the mid night of 22nd January 1947. The ordinance gave special

[388] *Andhra Patrika*, 15th October 1947, p.1.
[389] *Andhra Patrika*, 19th July 1946, p.1.
[390] *Andhra Patrika*, 18th June 1946, p.1.
[391] *Andhra Patrika*, 16th January 1947, pp. 1-2.

powers to the Madras government to tackle emergency conditions. According to the ordinance the police got powers to arrest anybody without framing charges and arrest warrants and to keep the persons under detention without producing them in courts, and to carry out search in the residences and other places without any orders. The act also gave powers to the government to impose fines on group of persons or villages, and to censor the news published in the newspapers on the incidents happening in the province.[392] It was declared in the Madras government gazette that the ordinance was passed by the government since the assembly was not in session. It also declared that the government decided to control the law and order problem with immediate effect. It declared that the government would prohibit the meetings and processions that would create disturbance to the law and order problem in the province.[393]

On the mid night of 22nd January 1947, the police conducted simultaneous raids on the offices of CPI and its frontal organizations and the residences of CPI leaders all over the province and seized several records and arrested important communist leaders without any charge. In Madras city the police conducted raids on the Janasakthi Press, and other offices run by CPI. The Police arrested N.K. Krishnan, Darisi Chenchaiah, K. Murugesan, K.L. Narasimham, Doraikannu, Ramakrishnan, T.R. Subramanyam and others in these raids.[394] The Tram workers in Madras resorted to a general strike to protest against the arrest of trade Union leaders in the city.[395]

In Bezawada, a strong party of reserve police, headed by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, conducted raid on the Prajasakthi office and its premises as well as the residential quarters of the staff in the early hours of 23rd January 1947. The police arrested Katragadda Rajagopalarao, Publisher and Editor of *Prajasakthi*, Kambhampati Satyanarayana, News editor of *Prajasakthi*, Golla Radhakrishna Murthy, local correspondent for *People's Age*, Nanduri Prasadarao, General Secretary of Andhra Provincial Ryots Association and L.V. Ratnam, President of Andhra Provincial Municipal Workers Union.[396] The police locked and sealed the office of

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[392] *The Hindu*, 24th January 1947 and *Andhra Patrika*, 25th January 1947, p.5.
[393] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th January 1947, p.5.
[394] Darisi Chenchayya, *Nenu Na Desam*, pp.345-346.
[395] *The Hindu*, 25th January 1947 and *Andhra Patrika*, 24th January 1947, pp.1-2. Also see G.O. No. 2615 dated 21st August 1947, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[396] G.O. No. 1550, dated 23rd May 1947, G.O. No. 1620 dated 27th May 1947 and G.O. No. 2349, dated 29th July 1947, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras. Also see, Parakala

the Krishna District Committee CPI and the offices of the Trade union, municipal workers union and Praja Natyamandali.[397] The police also carried out searches in the office of P. Venkateswarlu, a member of Madras Legislative Assembly and sealed it.[398] In the mid night of 22nd January 1947 the police conducted raids on the offices of the CPI and residences of communists in Machilipatnam and arrested Vemulapalli Anjaneyulu. He was taken to Vellore jail along with the other communists arrested in Bezawada.[399] The police also conducted raids on the houses of prominent communists in Katuru, Kaluvapamula, Ventrapragada, Buddavaram, Pedana villages in Krishna district and seized several documents. Arrest warrants were issued on prominent communist leaders including P. Sundarayya and Chandra Rajeswara Rao.[400] In Bezawada the local sub-magistrate issued 144 section orders for 15 days prohibiting conferences or processions by communists or their sympathizers in Bezawada or within the radius of 5 miles from Bezawada to condemn or to oppose the government policy towards communists or the arrest of communists.[401] The police conducted simultaneous raids on the offices of CPI and houses communists in Visakhapatnam, Vijayanagaram, Kakinada, Pithapuram, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Machilipatnam, Guntur, Tenali, Repalle, Chirala, Ongole, Nellore, Cuddapah, Chittor, Kuppam, Madanapalli, Rajampeta, Anantapuram and Kurnool towns and arrested prominent communists.[402]

In an official statement issued on 24h January 1947, the government declared that it had passed the ordinance to protect the law and order problem in the province. The statement said that the communists were instigating peasants and workers to

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Pattabhiramarao (Ed), *Kambhampati Satyanarayana Swiya Charitra – Rachanalu*, (Telugu), Visalandhra Publishing House, Hyderabad, 2000, p.15.

[397] *Andhra Patrika*, 24th January 1947, pp.1-2.

[398] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th January 1947, p.5.

[399] *Andhra Patrika*, 25h January 1947, p.5.

[400] *Andhra Patrika*, 25h January 1947, p.5. Also see *Prajasakthi*, 26th January 1947, p.3 and 28th January 1947, p.1.

[401] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th January 1947, p.5.

[402] For further details on the repression on CPI all over Andhra see, *The Hindu*, 24th January 1946, *Andhra Patrika*, 24th January 1947, pp.1-2, 25th January 1947, p.5, 26th January 1947, p.4 and G.O. No. 563 dated 22nd February 1947, G.O. No. 567, dated 22nd February 1947, G.O. No. 862 dated 18th March 1947, G. O. No. 1226 dated 26th April 1947, G.O. No. 1390 dated 10th May 1947, G.O. No. 1508 dated 21st May 1947, G.O. No. 1528 dated 22nd May 1947, G.O. No. 1554, dated 23rd May 1947, G.O. No. 1610, dated 27th May 1947, G.O. No. 1658, 28th May 1947, G.O. No. 1726, dated 31st May 1947, G.O. No. 1780, dated 6th June 1947, G.O. No. 2129, dated 12th July 1947, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras. Also see, Mullapudi Suryanarayana, *Vaikunthapali: Communist Udyamamlo Na Anubhavalu, Anubhutulu, Alochanalu*, p.62, Y.V. Krishnarao (Ed), *Athmiyula Smrithipathamlo Nilam Rajasekhara Reddy*, C.R. Foundation, Hyderabad, 2000, p.15, Y.Vijaya Kumar, *Jivitha Saramsam* (Autobiography), p.46 and C.V.K. Rao, *Athmakatha*, Part – II, (Telugu), People's Vanguard Movement Publication, Kakinada, 1992, pp.150-51.

revolt against the government and were trying to overthrow the government through violence. The statement said the government had clear information about the communist conspiracy and passed the ordinance in the mid night of January 22, 1947 to prevent the conspiracy. The government announced that the ordinance would be made as a law in the coming assembly sessions.[403]

Inside the jails, the government put several restrictions on communist detenus and rejected to provide minimum facilities which the British government provided to the political prisoners throughout the period of War. Under the Congress regime, there was a drastic cut in the diet given to the political prisoners.[404] Idukallu Sadasivan in a letter written to his wife Rajamma from jail said that the food given to detenus in jail was 'not enough and many comrades were suffering for want of full meals'.[405] The Congress leaders and Congress governments maintained a hostile attitude towards the communists who worked along with them in their fight against imperialism for several years. The minister of Law Bashyam, who visited the jail, replied that the diet given during the War period was heavy to the prisoners. The demand of the detenus to allow them to read books and journals that were not banned by the government was also rejected. While the colonial government treated the political activists as 'political prisoners' in jail, the Congress government rejected it and treated them as prisoners guilty of violence.[406] In the charge sheets against the detenus, the government framed the charges in the cases dating from 1938. Some of the charge sheets made against the communists during the advisors' rule were revived and reframed. The charge against Katragadda Narayana Rao was that he spoke against the Federation scheme in 1938. A charge against another communist was that he has participated in the Quit India Movement in 1942. The main charge against Vajravelu Chetty of Kuppam was that he has led the miners strike at Kolar Gold Fields and criticized management of mines and Mysore Government. One of the charges on Katragadda Rajagopalarao was that he published false reports against the Nizam government in his paper *Prajasakthi*.[407]

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[403] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th January 1947, p.2.
[404] Darsi Chenchayya, *Nenu Na Desam*, p.347.
[405] P. Dastagiri, *Comrade Idukallu Sadasivan Jivitha Visheshalu*, p.60.
[406] "Inside Vellore Jail – Stop this Vindictiveness: P.C. Joshi's Memorandum to the Congress Working Committee", dated 13th March 1947, reproduced in Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents on Communist Movement in India*, Vol. V, 1944-1948, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1998, pp.328-32.
[407] See, G.O. No. 2619, dated 21st August 1947, Public (General) Department (confidl), Government of Madras.

Like that, most of the charges made on the detenus were irreverent and had nothing to do with the law and order in Madras Province.

The repression on CPI and its frontal organizations in Madras Presidency received criticism from the all over the country. Even some of the Congress members of the Madras Legislative Assembly strongly opposed the manner in which the ordinance was passed.[408] In a statement issued on 25th January 1947, the General Secretary of CPI, P.C. Joshi urged people to oppose the repressive measures of the Prakasam government in Madras.[409]

The Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party criticized the government for the arrest of communists. A conference of CSP organsied in Gudiwada under the presidentship of Musunuri Balakrishna to discuss about the formation of CSP branches all over Andhra, felt that the ordinance passed by the government was detrimental to the civil liberties and fundamental rights of the people and suggested the government to withdraw the ordinance.[410] In spite of criticism from all quarters of society, the Madras government decided to implement the ordinance and introduced the ordinance in the Madras Legislature to seek its approval to make the ordinance as a law.

While introducing the ordinance as bill in the Madras Legislative Assembly on 30th January 1947 the Prime Minister T. Prakasam said that the members of the CPI were instigating the innocent people to revolt against the government. Prakasam accused CPI that its members were attacking the police through Guerilla methods and using fire arms against the government officials. He also accused the CPI that it hatched a conspiracy to overthrow the government. He said that the CPI members held a secret meeting under the leadership of A.S.K. Iyengar in Madras and decided to overthrow the government.[411] He said that the government brought the ordinance to prevent the conspiracy and protect law and order in the province. He said that the government needed special powers to contain the atrocities in the province. He assured the Assembly that the government would abolish the act after establishing law

[408] *Andhra Patrika*, 3rd February 1947, p.1.
[409] *Andhra Patrika*, 27th January 1947, p.3.
[410] *Andhra Patrika*, 5th February 1947, p.4.
[411] *Andhra Patrika*, 2nd February, 1947, p.5.

and order in the province and requested the members to support the bill.[412] The bill was passed in both the houses of the legislature in spite of stiff resistance from the members of CPI and Muslim League.[413]

While Prime Minister Prakasam was busy with the repression of communists in the province, the opponents of Prakasam in the Congress organized a meeting of the Congress legislature party on 28th February 1947 and passed a no-confidence motion against the leadership of Prakasam. Very soon after the enactment of the bill, T. Prakasam resigned as chief minister on 22nd March 1947 and O.P. Ramaswami Reddiyar was elected as the Chief Minister.[414] It is believed that Prakasam took drastic measures against CPI with a view to divert the attention of his party men who were trying to oust him and strengthen his position in the Congress circles through his strong anti-communist stand. Through the new act, the government wanted to consolidate its hegemony over the national movement by suppressing the CPI and people's movements which were becoming a threat to the hegemony of the Congress in the national movement.

Here it is necessary to note that the Communist Party was neither preparing for the overthrow of the Government by force, nor was it indulging in violence of any sort, as was slandered by the Congress Government. The Party was just championing the day-to-day interests of the workers, of agricultural labour and poor peasants; it was leading their struggles for their just demands, the elementary right of the people even in a bourgeois parliamentary democracy. And for this 'crime' the Congress Ministry replied with this Black Act. Thus it was the Congress Government that started the unwarranted offensive against the Communists and the people and not the other way round, as the Government shamelessly propagates in its lies.

**People's Resistance:**

However, the increase of repression could not prevent the CPI from participating in the people's movements. In fact the CPI increased its activity among the people after repression. The CPI systematically encouraged the peasants to occupy zamindari and

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[412] *Andhra Patrika*, 31st January 1947, p.1.
[413] *Andhra Patrika*, 5th March 1947, p.3, 6th March 1947, p.4. and 7th March 1947, p.6, 8th March 1947, p.4. and 9th March 1947, p.5.
[414] Tanguturi Prakasam, *Na Jivitha Yatra*, pp.718-720. Also see, G. Rudrayya Chowdary, *Prakasam: A Political Study*, Orient Longman, Madras, 1971, pp.169-170.

banjar lands and to resist eviction and police or military intervention while the workers were encouraged to seize hoarded food stuffs and distribute them to the public. In Krishna, Guntur, West Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts, an aggressive campaign was launched urging Zamindari ryots to resist land evictions and to occupy lands in defiance of all prohibitory orders.

The communist party decided to counter the government repression with stiff resistance by mobilizing people. Struggles of working class were organized all over Andhra. During this period the members of CPI concentrated their activities among the peasantry in zamindari areas in Krishna district. Challapalli and Munagala estates became the centers of communists' activity in the year 1947. It was from these centers that hundreds of active communists were trained and sent to Hyderabad State to assist the communist sponsored Telangana People's armed Struggle.

The atrocities of Zamindar and police against the labourers and peasants in Challapalli forced the peasants to resort to violent methods. They have occupied the lands of the zamindar in Yarlagadda, Velivolu, Amudallanka and several other villages. Slowly the land struggles spread to Ryotwari areas in Machilipatnam taluk and at several places the peasants encouraged by the communists occupied the communal lands.[415]

The Madras government instead of helping the peasants, decided to crush the land struggles in a ruthless manner. Thousands of police forces were deputed to the villages in Krishna district. In July 1947 the government declared that it had arrested 60 persons in Krishna district under the new Act and evacuated peasants from 2000 acres they occupied in Challapalli Zamindari.[416] While the government continued its repression on CPI, the Congress members in Guntur district, especially the followers of N.G. Ranga started physical attacks on the workers of CPI branding them as anti-national and anti-social elements. Several communists received injuries as they were attacked by the Congress workers. In all these incidents, the police arrested the communists saying that the communists were responsible for those clashes.[417]

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[415] *Andhra Patrika*, 19th June 1947, p.5.
[416] *Andhra Patrika*, 5th July 1947, p.3.
[417] *Andhra Patrika*, 22nd July 1947, p.4.

In Munagala Zamindari around 600 peasants attacked the village officials and occupied the lands of the zamindar. They did not allow the police to arrest the leaders of the land struggle. The police resorted to firings on the mob and killed two people.[418] The president of the West Krishna Congress committee, Kakani Venkataratnam declared that the communists were creating trouble in the Munagala zamindari by instigating innocent people to revolt. On the other hand Kolla Venkaiah, secretary of Andhra Provincial Kisan Sabha demanded the government to conduct an enquiry on the police firing in Munagala.[419] Later the government arrested Kolla Venkaiah on 29th July 1947 in Kavali village in Nellore district under the law and order act when he visited Kavali to preside over the district Kisan conference.[420] The Kisan Sabha leaders Gujjula Yellamanda Reddy and Kanuri Balaramaiah condemned the autocratic rule of the government and demanded the release of Kolla Venkaiah.[421]

In the first week of August, the revenue minister in Madras Government Kala Venkatrao shared the dias with the Zamindar of Munagala in a conference organized by the Munagala Zamindari Congress Committee and declared that he would solve the problems of the peasants through legislation and advised the peasants to co-operate with the government. He announced that the government would bring the Zamindari Abolition act very soon. Munagala Zamindar, who attended the conference, attacked the communists for creating troubles in Munagala Zamindari. He felt that the communists gained strength among the peasants due to the absence of Congress workers in the villages. He accused the Congress that they visit villages during elections and disappear after elections. He said the failure of the Congress to maintain relations with the people ultimately forced them to join with the communists.[422]

While the government was following a duel strategy, suppressing the peasant movement with the help of police on the one hand, and deceiving the people with false assurances on the other, by convincing them that the government would abolish the Zamindari system and urging them to co-operate with the government, and

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[418] *Andhra Patrika*, 20th July 1947, p.5.
[419] *Andhra Patrika*, 25th July 1947, p.5.
[420] *Kolla Venkayya Rachanalu,* Part – I, (Telugu), Kolla Venkayya Samsmarana Committee, Guntur, 2002, p.22.
[421] *Andhra Patrika*, 1st August 1947, p.4.
[422] *Andhra Patrika*, 6th August 1947, p.6.

helping the zamindars to sell the excess lands under their control and suppress the peasants who oppose them, the communists mobilized the peasants in the villages and occupied the lands belonging to zamindar. In Challapalli the peasants occupied the communal lands and zamindari lands in Nidumolu, Palankipadu, Jonnaladoddi, Ayyanki, Mangalapuram, Majedu, Vakkalagadda and several other villages and chased the henchmen of Zamindar who tried to prevent the peasants from entering into the lands. The government also increased its repression on the peasant struggle in Challapalli Zamindari. Several communists were arrested and detained in jails.[423] The repression was more severe in Krishna district after 1947. Hundreds of communists were killed by the police during 1948-52. The police killed Challapalli Narayanarao, Gogineni Tataiah, Chalasani Jagannadharao, Nadella Venkatakrishnaiah, Yalamanchili Venkateswara Rao and several other prominent leaders of the peasant movement in Challapalli Zamindari.[424]

*Munagala*: The anti-Zamindari struggles organized by communists in Munagala need special attention in our study. The peasant's struggle in Munagala helped CPI to establish a strong base among the peasantry and to use Munagala Zamindari area as a base to carry out its activities in Telangana region.

The declaration of the government on the abolition of Zamindaris created tension in the minds of zamindars all over Andhra. At several places the Zamindars tried to sell the excess lands under their control to private persons. They removed the tenants from cultivation and tried to sell away the lands. In Munagala Zamindari in Krishna district, on the borders of Hyderabad State, the zamindar evicted several tenants and tried to sell the land to private persons. With the support of CPI, the peasants opposed the move of the zamindar and occupied the lands leased to them in several villages. The tenants of Venugopalapuram, Kalikova, Ramapuram and Karivirala villages resisted the attempts of the Zamindar to sell the lands leased to them. The Madigas of Kalikova village led by local communist Kollu China Kotaiah opposed the attempt of zamindar to sell the inam lands in the village. The Madigas of Kalikova trespassed into the 30 acres of Inam land on the ground that the land was

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[423] G. O. No. 2619, dated 21st August 1947, Public (General – E) Department (Confidential), Government of Madras; *Andhra Patrika*, 11th February 1947, p.2.

[424] *Krishna Jilla Amaravirulu*, (Telugu), CPI (ML) Janasakthi, Krishna District, Committee, Vijayawada, 1997. Also see, *Viplava Virudu Challapalli Narayanarao Smaraka Souvenir*.

originally Service Inam of the Madigas of the village. The government treated this as an attempt of the communists to disturb law and order in rural areas. A government report says "the movement is largely led by young and rash communists who are not inclined to accept a compromise with the zamindar. They are frankly out to destroy the existing social and economic order".[425]

Though the government officials were not willing to act in support of the Zamindar, the pressure from the government and local political leaders forced them to adopt repressive methods on the people's movements. In his report on the agrarian trouble in Krishna district, the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Northern Range said "the local officers consider that the local politician is all powerful and can exert direct influence over the personal fortune of the local official. Everybody is frightened of responsibility for fear not only that the present authority in power may disapprove but also that the present authority may change, and the present authority's successor might disapprove".[426] The official felt that the ambiguous pronouncements of the ministry regarding abolition of the Zamindari system and the subsequent inaction in implementing those pronouncements were the main cause for the agrarian trouble in Krishna district. He said "the irresponsible statements of high ranking individual political leaders of the party in power who promised the peasants free gifts of land aggravated the situation. The pronouncements and subsequent inaction gave an opportunity to the zamindars to resort to every trick and manipulation to dispose of the land, which the intended legislation was going to deprive them of, by means of *benami* transactions. This has also given an opportunity to the communists to foment agrarian discontent amongst the peasantry. Above all the tactics adopted by the Zamindars had given the communists the inestimable advantage of using the legitimate grievances to canalize the general discontent and direct it both against the government and against the zamindars". He identified that the development of communist movement in Krishna district was similar to its development in south East Asian countries. The official felt that the proposed Zamindari abolition bill alone can settle the problem. But the government decided to solve the problem with the use of police force.

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[425] Report of Sub-Collector, Bezawada to the District Magistrate, Kistna, dated 19th July 1947.

[426] Report of the Inspector – General of Police, Northern Range, to the Inspector General of Police, Government of Madras, dated 21st June 1947.

Two platoons of police forces were stationed in Munagala and Nadigudem villages. The reserve police with the help of the Zamindar's men raided village after village and arrested people whomever the Zamindar's men pointed out. Indiscriminate lathi charge had become a daily occurrence in Munagala paragana. In those raids on villages, the police inspector of Nandigama engaged the notorious thieves convicted for various crimes for beating the ryots. The reserve police and goondas of Zamindar raped the wife of kisan worker in Akupamula village.[427] The people of Munagala were not allowed to celebrate the Independence Day due to imposition of order under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code which prohibited meetings and processions in the Estate.[428]

At this juncture the Krishna District Committee of CPI issued a circular to its members urging them to fight back the police repression. It urged the cadre to establish links with the other sections of the society and to resist police repression with their help. It advised the cadre to avoid direct confrontation with the police and to follow guerilla methods to attack the police.[429]

Later Munagala Paragana became the centre of communist activity in Telangana Armed Struggle launched by CPI. Some of the offices of Communist Party and Andhra Mahasabha in Warangal and Nalgonda districts were shifted to Munagala region. Munagala Paragana was used as a shelter zone to take shelter and to provide training to the cadres in the Telangana armed struggles.[430] All the communication between the Andhra provincial committee and Telangana communists were carried out through the CPI offices established in Munagala region. The governments of Madras and Hyderabad recognized the importance of Munagala region and the role played by the CPI members of Munagala in Telangana Armed struggle and increased repression on communists in Munagala. Hundreds of peasants and their leaders were killed in Munagala area during 1947-52 and several others were detained in jails.

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[427] Petition by the President of Munagala Paragana Ryots Association, to Sir O.P. Ramaswami Reddiyar, Premier of Madras, dated 12th June 1947.

[428] Memorandum dated 16th August 1947, presented by Jaladi Ramakotayya, General Secretary of Krishna District Ryots Association to Kala Venkatarao, Minister for Revenue, Government of Madras.

[429] Circular issued by Krishna District Committee of CPI. In G.O. No. 3559, dated 10th December 1947, Public (General) Department (Confidl), Government of Madras.

[430] Thatavarthi Venkateswararao, *Munagala Paragana Praja Udyama Charitra*, pp.99-104

The peasants in Gampalagudem, Gopalapuram, Kalavapalli, Nuzividu, Vuyyuru, Mirzapuram and Mukthyala estates also resisted the attempts of Zamindars to sell the lands leased out to tenants.[431] The Zamindar of Vuyyur had alienated 150 acres of forest land in Mettapalli village to his wife. The people of the village opposed this act of zamindar and prevented the entry of Zamindar's men into the area.[432] The Zamindars of Kondaparva and Elamarru villages also alienated the communal land to private persons as a precaution to escape from the proposed Zamindari abolition act.[433]

In West Godavari, communists encouraged ryots of Kanur and Pendyala to trespass into the lands under illegal occupation of Zamindar.[434] In Visakhapatnam district a no-tax campaign was carried by communists in the Mandasa and Tekkali Estates. The government sent special police parties to suppress the peasants' movements in these estates. There were severe clashes between the peasants and private armies of Zamindars. In Kanuru and Pendyala villages the peasants opposed the attempts of the Zamindar to sell out the common lands that were leased to peasants.[435] In Gopalapuram Zamindari area the police killed 4 people when they revolted against the police who came to disperse the peasants from the lands.[436] The communist organizers Devarakonda Subbarao and Edpuganti Purnachandra Rao were killed by the police.[437]

The communist daily *Prajasakthi* carried out rigorous propaganda against the police atrocities in the province. It provided upto date information on the arrests and repression in Andhra after the formation of Congress ministry in Madras province. It proved how the Congress ministry encouraged the police to suppress people's movements. *Prajasakthi* published several secret documents of the government which

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[431] Report of B. Subbarayudu, Special Deputy Superintendent of Police to the District Superintendent of Police, Kistna, dated 12th July 1947.
[432] *Prajasakthi*, 17th July 1947.
[433] Y.V. Krishnarao, "Rendava Prapancha Yuddanantaram Rytanga Poratala Velluva", *Rytulokam,* Vol. 11, No.5, May 1979, p.63.
[434] G.O. No. 2615, dated 21st August 1947, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[435] Y.V. Krishnarao, "Rendava Prapancha Yuddanantaram Rytanga Poratala Velluva", p.64.
[436] Indukuri Subbaraju, *Na Gnapakalu*, p.36.
[437] Sanku Apparao, "Paschima Godavari Jilla Rytu Udyama Charitra", in Y.V. Krishnarao (Ed), *Andhra Pradeshlo Rytu Udyamalu-Poratalu*, p.107.

were sent to the local officials, giving directions to them to suppress communist activities.[438]

The government also concentrated its attack on the communist daily *Prajasakthi*. As part of its attack on CPI and its frontal organizations, the police conducted raid on the Prajasakthi Press in Bezawada and arrested its editors.[439] Later the local officials recommended the government to ban the daily on the ground that it had published several secret documents of the government related to law and order problem. The District Magistrate of Krishna recommended the government to impose pre-censorship on the news published in Prajasakthi.[440] The government ordered the publisher Katragadda Rajagopalarao to deposit Rs. 2000 as security against the publication of censored news in Prajasakthi. Later, in 1948, the police raided Prajasakthi and destroyed the press and Prajasakthi was closed down for four years.

While the communists in Andhra were involved in organizing the people against the Nizam in Hyderabad and against police repression in Andhra, the central leadership of CPI deviated from the stand taken by the Resolution of Central Committee of CPI in August 1946 and advised the Andhra provincial committee to go slow in its resistance to the repression. The central committee felt that the criticism of the Congress ministries which were suppressing the worker's and peasants' struggles, as agents of vested interests was incorrect. All the struggles of the people were dubbed as vanguardist actions that provoked police repression on the people. This trend was advocated mainly by the then General Secretary of CPI, P.C. Joshi representing the reformist trend inside the Central Committee.[441]

Meanwhile, the much awaited Mountbatten plan was declared on 3rd June 1947 and subsequently the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act on 18th July 1947 declaring India as an independent state from 15th August 1947. The Madras government released most of the communist detenus on 15th August 1947 on

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[438] *Prajasakthi*, 16th September 1946, 3rd November 1946, 20th September 1946, 13th January 1947 and 22nd March 1947, and 3rd April 1947.

[439] G. O. No. 2619, dated 21st August 1947, Public (General – E) Department (Confidl), Government of Madras.

[440] G.O. No. 3050, dated 3rd October 1947, Public (General - E) Department (Confidl), Government of Madras.

[441] "Political – Organizational Review of Andhra Pradesh Committee of Communist Party of India, 1947-1957", dated 9th December 1958, p.50.

the eve of Independence Day celebrations.[442] The members of CPI celebrated the Independence Day with meetings and processions.[443]

The Central committee of CPI which met in June 1947 viewed Mountbatten award as a concession to the national movement and Indian people. It rejected the amendments proposed by some of its members who felt that the Mountbatten Award was a concession to the national bourgeoisie and that the national bourgeoisie leadership was striking a deal against the interests of the people. Instead of exposing Congress leadership's policy of treacherous collaboration with imperialism and its feudal allies, the CPI lined up behind Gandhiji and Nehru and became a supporter of the Nehru government. The CPI built up a theory on differences between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Nehru and Gandhiji[444] who in fact were pursuing the same policy as Sardar Patel.

**Conclusion:**

Throughout the period from 1942-47 the communist party followed a revisionist and reformist strategy. The statements issued by the leaders of the CPI and leaders at several occasions shows that the CPI wanted to follow the Congress in the nationalist movement. The CPI and its frontal organizations praised the Mountbatten Plan and hoped that India would achieve progress under the leadership of the Congress.

The strong reformist trend of certain members of CPI forced the party to view the Mountbatten Award as an advance, instead of a new offensive of imperialism. It considered the national government as a strategic weapon of advancing towards national freedom, instead of as a government of compromise and surrender. This led the party to come out with slogans like 'All support to Nehru government', when the government was attacking the masses and betraying the cause of Indian freedom. It made the party come out with an opportunist slogan of a united front between the government and the people, when the government was suppressing the people in the interests of the big business. This developed illusions about national reconstruction and co-operations for it with the government of the national bourgeois, when the later was daily attacking the living standards of the workers. With this outlook the party

[442] G.O. No. 566 dated 6th March 1947, Public (General) Department, Government of Madras.
[443] Y.V. Krishna Rao, *Na Smrithi Pathamlo…* (Autobiography), Author, Hyderabad, 2005, p.88
[444] Darisi Chenchayya, *Nenu Na Desam*, p.349.

got completely confounded and confused by the wave of riots and mass massacres following partition and began to trail completely behind Nehru and Gandhiji.

But, by the end of 1947, a large number of communists were dissatisfied with the reformist and revisionist policy of the leadership and demanded for a change in the CPI programme. At this juncture, the Second Congress of CPI which met in Calcutta in February 1948 replaced the General Secretary P.C. Joshi with B.T. Ranadive, who gave a call to replace the bourgeois led government at the center with a government led by working class.[445] It gave a call to the cadre to start armed revolt against the government. The declaration of revolution against the State when the situation was not ripe to start revolution, led to the suppression of Communists all over India.

The Communist Movement received a death blow in India in general and in Andhra in particular during the period from 1948 – 51. The call given by the Second Congress of CPI for the armed struggle to overthrow the Nehru government caused a blow to the movement. Armed troupes were formed all over Andhra. Attacks were conducted on police stations. They looted arms and ammunition from the police stations.

The government also increased its repression on communists. The police killed several active and leading communists and gross root organizers of the movement. Special police parties were sent to Andhra. New police stations and police out posts were opened to counter the communist activities and suppress the movement. Attacks were conducted on the communist dominated villages. The so-called Red villages in Krishna suffered worst during this period. The police raided Elamarru and Katur villages on 14th July 1949, gathered men and women, beat the men folk and stripped them naked. Later they marched the naked men, followed by women, in a procession through the streets.[446] The special police parties frequently attacked the villages and tortured the villagers to get information about the

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[445] "Review of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India", issued by the Polit Bureau of Central Committee of Communist Party of India, March 1948, reproduced in Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Vol. 5, (1944-1948), National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997, pp. 753-754.

[446] *Visalandhra* (Weekly) 1st August 1949. Also see, P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons*, p.155.

underground troupes of communists. Several youth who were sympathetic to the communists were killed in the fake encounters.

In Cuddalore jail, where communists were detained police opened fire on the detenus, and killed four members, including Anumarlapudi Venkata Sitaramarao, Krishna district kisan leader. He was shot at point-blank range by the jail constables after he fell flat, with the gun held directly above him.

Several prominent activists of the CPI in Andhra were killed by the police during 1948-51. In West Godavari district the police killed Prerepu Mrityunjayudu, West Godavari district Secretariat member, Devarakonda Subbarao, leader of Pendyala-Kanur peasant struggle and District Committee member, Narra Anjaneyulu, Padala Subbarao, Edpuganti Purnachandrarao, West Godavari district Secretariat members. Similarly Kandikatla Nagabhushanam, Penmetsa Anantam and Chintam Satyanarayana Dass, members of East Godavari district Secretariat of CPI were also killed.[447]

In Krishna district the police killed Chintapalli Paparao, Krishna District Secretariat member, Nadella Venkatakrishnaiah, Divi Area Committee member, Yalamanchili Venkateswara Rao, another area committee member, Chalasani Jagannatharao, Secretary of the Divi Area Committee, one of the founder-members of the Communist Party in Krishna district, Challapalli Narayana Rao, agricultural workers union leaders in Krishna district, Gogineni Tataiah, Dronavalli Satyaprasad, Gannavaram Area Committee member, Katragadda China Venkatarayudu and his companion, Kadiyala Narayana Rao, both of whom had reorganized the Gannavaram area Party, Chalasani Rajagopala Rao of Nuzividu taluka, Atluri Purnachandra Rao and Marireddi Satyanarayana, Gudivada area leaders of Krishna district, Chalasani Srinivasa Rao, a member of the Andhra Student Fraction Committee, Bellam Shobhanadri, Bezwada labour leader and several other important functionaries.[448]Most of the CPI leaders in Munagala Vuppala Ramaiah, Kollu

[447] K. Pratapa Reddy, *Ralina Ratnalu*, (Telugu), Author, Hyderabad, 1993, pp. 125-126.
[448] P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons*, pp.164-167. Also see *Krishna Jilla Amaravirulu*, CPI (ML) Janasakthi, Krishna District, Committee, Vijayawada, 1997.

Nandaiah, Vangali Papaiah, Gattu Gopalakrishnaiah and others were also shot dead.[449]

In Guntur district, Kasturi Kutumba Rao, Secretary, Andhra Handloom Weavers Association, Chivukula Sesha Sastry, Bapatla town CPI leader, M. Lakshminarayana, Guntur District Teachers' Federation Secretary, Danda Narayanaswamy, Narasaraopet taluk CPI leader, Dasari Subbaiah, Rapalle taluk CPI leader, P. Mallikarjuna Sarma, Guntur district agricultural labour leader, Kantamaneni Venkataratnam, the Area Committee member, his den-keeper, Moturi Venkataratnam and his two year-old baby died of gun shots.[450]

The leaders of the Congress faction in faction ridden villages used the situation and handed over their rivals to the police by branding them as communists. Several innocent people were also killed when they were working as couriers to the underground communists. Several leading communists were arrested and kept in jails without trail. Hundreds of organizers went underground. The movement was totally paralyzed. Prajasakthi, the Daily organ of the Communist Party was closed down and police burned the valuable literature preserved in Prajasakthi press. A police camp was stationed in Prajasakthi press. The printing machines were destroyed and the press was burned. Almost all the leaders and activists of the party were either killed, or driven underground while the remaining of them were arrested and kept in detention. With the ban on the communist party, the communists were prevented from working legally. The activities of communists were limited to underground. In other words, the government forced the communists to take up arms against the government through this indiscriminate repression. The repression on the communist movement and sacrifices made by the members of CPI helped the CPI to further strengthen their hold among the people. This was proved in the elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1952 in which communists got 41 seats out of the 61 it contested in Andhra against 40 by Congress.

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[449] Thatavarthi Venkateswararao, *Munagala Paragana Praja Udyama Charitra*, pp. 32-33.
[450] Etukuri Krishnamurthi, *Gunturu Jilla Communistu Udyama Vaitalikulu*, (Telugu), Andhra Pradesh Swatantrya Samara Yodhula Samstha, Hyderabad, 2004.

# Chapter 6
# Conclusion

The impact of 1917 October revolution closely followed by the failure of Congress led non-cooperation movement during 1920-1922 have greatly contributed to the emergence of new political ideas and movements in India. The activities of the Left wing within the Congress and the developments at international level helped the rise of workers' and peasants' movements all over India. It was in this background that serious Left wing nationalists emerged in Andhra, which later transformed itself as a branch of Communist Party of India.

The social base of the Communist movement in Andhra was among the middle class intellectuals and the educated children of rich peasant class. The educated youth and middle class intellectuals, who were disappointed by the Gandhian methods of struggle, started searching for alternative forms of struggle for independence. The influence of Marxism could be seen spreading easily among these ideal youth. The Marxist literature played an important role in attracting the youth towards Marxism.

Most of the educated middle class who found communist party in Andhra belonged to dominant communities in the fertile districts of coastal Andhra. Most of them came from Brahmin, Kamma, Reddy and Raju (or Kshatriya) communities. Their simple lifestyle, Spartan discipline, personal integrity and supreme sacrifice helped them to integrate themselves with the peasant masses.

The people, who were influenced by Marxism and became socialists and communists after 1930, can be divided into two groups i.e., the students and Satyagrahis. Most of the participants of the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32 joined in Congress Socialist Party after its withdrawal by Gandhi in 1934, whereas the students, who studied Marxism but had not participated in CDM, have directly joined the CPI. Later these students distributed Marxist literature and transformed several satyagrahis and Congress socialists into communism.

The spread of Marxist and socialist ideas in Andhra, after the 1917 October Revolution in Russia had created a nucleus of dedicated young socialists and Marxists within the womb of the nationalist movement in Andhra. Marxist literature was in

mass circulation in Andhra in the form of books, novels, poems and articles. The Andhra nationalists showed keen interest in the Russian Revolution and the changes that followed in Russian society. The Russian Revolution, and the life, thought and the work of Lenin aroused great interest among a large number of people in India. A number of books were published praising Russian Revolution and Lenin, throughout the twenties. With the influence of October Revolution, a new trend was started in Telugu literature. The new generation of poets vigorously popularised new social and political perceptions among the people. They created a strong social base for the left and radical ideas, especially among the youth. By popularising universal, rational and progressive ideas, they laid the foundation for the hegemony of left ideology in Andhra.

The social reform movements of the 19$^{th}$ and early twentieth centuries also contributed for the growth of communist ideas in Andhra. The social reformers exposed the social evils and superstitions through their writings and activities. They condemned the evil practices in the society and advocated equality of men and women, fought for the abolition of child marriages, growth of education among women, and encouraged widow remarriages. They also condemned the practice of untouchability. The social reform movements created an awareness of the need to reform the old society. The dissemination of new social ideas through these reform movements created an ideal background for the emergence of socialist ideas in Andhra. Most of the first generation leaders of the communist movement in Andhra were inspired by these reform movements and had actually worked in those movements. The youth who were working in the social reform movement especially for the upliftment of women found that the unemployment and economic dependence of women were the major reasons for the oppression of women in society. They observed that the problems of women could not be solved in the bourgeois social structure in which women were made inferior to men. At this stage they found that the problems of women could be solved under the socialist system in which women were free from their economic dependence. Thus, their search for alternative social structure led them towards Socialism. The communists in fact intensified the social reform movements in Andhra after the formation of the communist party in 1934.

The economic depression of 1929-30 and the rise of peasant movements were the other factors that contributed for the growth of communist ideas in Andhra. The context in which the peasant movement expanded was the world economic depression and its aftermath. When the depression set in, prices slumped between 1929 and 1935; 50 to 60 percent fall in the commodity prices was a common phenomenon in Andhra. The increase of production of agriculture products like Rice and Cotton in Burma, Uganda, Egypt and U.S. reduced the prices those products in India. The fall in the prices was disastrous for the peasantry because it reduced their cash incomes. The peasants' inability to pay revenue and rent resulted in the large-scale accumulation of arrears. Peasants' indebtedness also grew. Local credit was not freely available to the peasants. The cultivators who had lend their money to the neighbours lost hope of getting the amounts back. The moneylenders, the main source of credit in the rural areas on the other hand started investing their money in the industries in towns. Due to these financial difficulties several peasants sold their lands and became agricultural labourers or migrated to the towns. The expansion of towns and establishment of industries led to the formation of working class and later trade unions at several places. The depression also affected the income of Zamindars. They failed to pay their annual rent to the government. To survive at several places, the Zamindars adopted illegal methods to collect increased taxes from the peasants. The consequent resentment of peasants against the atrocities of the Zamindars led to the formation of peasant associations. The peasant leaders, who were influential in the Congress lead Civil Disobedience movement, were so disappointed by the withdrawal of the movement by Gandhi in 1934 that several of them have turned towards Socialism from 1935.

Another important factor, which had mostly contributed for the rise of Socialist ideology in Andhra, was the impact of the revolutionary terrorists of Northern India on the youth. During the period from 1922 to 1933, the revolutionary terrorists of north India exerted a considerable impact on Andhra youth and students. The students and youth influenced by these revolutionaries joined in the freedom movement. The youth wore Bhagat Singh caps instead of Gandhi Caps. During the time of the death sentence of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhadev all sections of the people demanded that they should be saved from the gallows. The people were uneasy when Gandhi entered into a pact with Irwin who refused to commute the death

sentence of the three revolutionaries. Later the revolutionaries who were sent to jails in South India transformed several youth into socialists. The revolutionaries who were transformed as socialists during their stay in jails regularly hold classes to teach the revolutionary literature to the young satyagrahis. The youth who were released from jails trained by the revolutionaries took active part in organising the left wing political parties, i.e., the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party.

The Civil Disobedience movements of 1930-34 were most significant events in the history of Indian National movement. The failure of these movements ultimately led to the rise of Socialism in India. Before 1920, the freedom struggle was a limited struggle, consisting of only middle class educated people. It had a narrow social base. After 1920's with the emergence of Gandhi, efforts of social reformers, emancipation of peasants and emergence of youth leagues created political consciousness among the all sections of the people. The participation of youth, women, students and untouchables in the freedom movement widened the social base of the movement. It was during the period from 1930 to 1934 the youth, women and students actively participated in the Civil Disobedience movement. The young nationalists mostly with peasant background took active part in the movement. However, the suspension of the movement, the police repression during the movement and the Gandhi-Irwin pact created disillusion among the youth. They felt that Gandhi-Irwin pact did not give adequate protection to the peasantry and other sections of the people who suffered in the movement. Even though the movement was again revived after the failure of the second round table conference, it was not successful. The youth who had already influenced towards leftist ideology during the Karachi session of the Congress, raised doubts about the success of the movement led by middle class educated people. They realised the need for a change in the Congress creed and change in leadership. At this juncture, their quest for alternative brought them closer to Socialism.

The Formation of Communist Party in Andhra sharpened the differences among the nationalist forces. Most of the youth who were dissatisfied with the Gandhian methods of struggle, joined in the Communist Movement. The rigorous campaign carried out by Communists among workers and peasants made them conscious about their problems and influenced them to come forward to participate in

the movements against exploitation. The formation of Communist Party in Andhra also marked a change in the nature of social participation in the national movement. The participation of workers and peasants in the national movement increased after formation of united front between Congress, Communists and Congress Socialist Party in 1936. The entire new generation mobilised under the banner of Communist Party confronted with the Congress right wing on many issues and supported the left wing under the Congress Socialist Party. Thus, with the formation of Communist Party in Andhra, began struggle for hegemony within the Indian National Movement between the right wing and left wing.

In the early years of its formation the CPI in Andhra was following a sectarian line and separated from the main stream of the national movement. The separation of communists from the mainstream of the national movement gave an ample opportunity to the government to suppress the CPI. The government officials clearly identified the communists working in the workers unions and resorted to large-scale repression. At this juncture, the united front strategy advocated by the Comintern helped the communists to rejoin with the nationalist forces. The communists in the Andhra formed United National Front and joined the Congress Socialist Party. The entry of communists into Congress Socialist Party led to the consolidation of left wing forces within the Congress.

During the period from 1936-39, the Left wing within the Indian national movement made several attempts to establish its hegemony over the Indian national movement and civil society. With this aim, it attempted to influence the programmes and policies of the Indian national congress from within and outside the Indian national congress. For a brief period the Left wing worked within the Congress and tried to transform the ideology of the Congress towards Socialism. By 1939, the left wing achieved majority within the Indian National Congress. This was proved with the election of Subhash Chandra Bose as the president of Indian National Congress for the second term in spite of opposition from the right wing Congress and Gandhi. However, the election of Bose led to serious differences within the Congress. The right wing did not agree their defeat and in the Tripuri session, G.B.Pant introduced a resolution to the effect that Bose should select his Working Committee by consulting Gandhi. The conference passed the resolution and Bose resigned as the president of

the congress because Bose wanted his friends in the working committee. During the voting on the Pant's resolution the Congress Socialists abstained from the voting because they thought if they vote against the resolution it would lead to the defeat of the right wing and further it would lead to a major split in the Congress into right wing Congress with Gandhians and left wing Congress with Subhash Bose and communists who were backing him at that time. They also thought that the split in the Congress would lead to the disintegration of the united front achieved so far in the nationalist movement. To prevent such a split in the congress the Socialists abstained from the voting on the resolution. The differences among various left wing forces in the national movement led to the erosion of left wing domination over the Indian national Congress.

By 1940, the Congress Socialist Party, which made several attempts to unite all the leftist forces in the country under one banner to give a socialist orientation to the Congress, thought that the unification of all leftist forces in the country and the majority of leftist forces within the Indian National Congress would lead to a split in the Congress. They did not desire the hegemony of the left wing in the Indian National Congress, for they wanted to remain as an influential force within the Indian National Congress and no more than that.

Yet the Left wing in Andhra played an important role in shaping the policies and programmes of the Indian National Congress and took up the leadership of the leftist forces during the entire period of united front and successfully countered the right Congress leadership on various issues like the council entry and office acceptance, and the organization of peasant and working class movements.

The Congress right wing declared that Congress was a national organization representing all sections of the people in the country and it did not encourage class organizations and class movements. However, the socialists thought that unless the workers and peasants fight in the forefront the freedom cannot be achieved so to include the peasants and workers in to the national movement and to broaden the social base of the national movement they organized several peasant and workers unions and led several peasant movements and working class movements. This created serious differences between the right and the left wing factions within the Congress, which was headed by the Congress Socialist Party and Communists.

The Left wing in Andhra thought that the Congress led Civil Disobedience movement had failed due to lack of support from larger sections of the peasantry and working class. They decided to broaden the social base of the freedom movement by mobilising the peasantry and working class against the colonial government. To create political and economic consciousness among the peasants, working class and the youth, they organized a number of Summer Schools on economics and politics. They also organised several training camps and led several working class strikes and peasant movements. In organising these peasant and working class struggles, they confronted with the Congress leadership and the Congress Government in Madras. The Congress leadership thought that the activities of the Leftists would damage the prestige of the Congress Government and would frighten the Zamindars and capitalists and lead to hatred of one section of the people against the other. The Congress leadership and the Congress Government opposed the activities of the Socialists and Communists and even tried to suppress them. They used the power of the offices not only to establish their hegemony in the Congress organization but also to suppress the left wing within the Congress, which posed a challenge to their programme and methods of struggle.

Despite these internal fissures, the activities of the Left wing in Andhra created a strong mass base for the Congress organization. During the period from 1936 to 1940 the Socialists and Communists by participating in several popular movements created political and economic consciousness among the people. They linked political freedom with economic freedom. They urged the people to fight against Zamindars and capitalists, whose interests the British Government has been protecting in India. Therefore, they exhorted the peasantry and working class to fight against the British imperialism on the one hand and against the landlords and capitalists on the other.

During the period from 1936-39, the United Front Strategy followed by Socialists helped to the growth of CPI in Andhra. During 1930s, while the CPI was under ban, the Congress Socialist Party by allowing the Communists into it gave a protecting cover to the CPI and helped it to escape from the government repression. During this period the Communists extensively used the cover of CSP and increased their hold among the working class and the peasantry, which were under the control

of CSP. This helped the CPI to expand its base among peasants, workers, students, youth, women and other sections of the society after 1940.

It was during the period of united front the real foundations of Communist Party was made in Andhra. The communists remained as a small force until the formation of United National Front. The activities of the communists were limited to Industrial working class and the agricultural labourers. However, with the entry of the rich and middle class peasant background youth into the communist movement, the CPI started looking into the problems of rich and middle peasants. The activities of the CPI among the peasants were intensified after the formation of United National Front. With this, the CPI got complete hold over the peasant movements and most of the peasant nationalists joined CPI after 1940. It is argued that the rich peasant background of the CPI leadership and its attachment to the peasants' cause finally led them to adopt the New Democracy Theory proposed by Mao, even before its success in China.

The beginning of the Second World War marked beginning of a new era in the history of communist movement in Andhra. The outbreak of Second World War brought radical changes in the programme of left wing political parties in India and led to the disintegration of United National Front. In the early years of the War the CPI, which stood for the unity of nationalist forces, demanded Congress to utilize the opportunity provided by the war and to start mass Satyagraha. Though the INC declared non-cooperation to war efforts, it did not call for any resistance to war efforts and even offered its willingness to enter into a compromise with the British. The CPI strongly criticized the inaction of Congress and began independent efforts to organize workers, peasants and other sections of the society in the anti-war activities. This independent action of CPI detached it from the bourgeois dominated Indian National Congress.

The CPI leadership felt that War was an opportunity to further the cause of Indian revolution. It dubbed the War as imperialist in nature having no connection with democracy. The CPI demanded the Congress to organise anti-war conferences and demonstrations in co-ordination with the kisan sabhas and trade unions and to start mass campaign to stop transfer of men, material and money in support of the imperialist war. It thought that by organizing mass demonstrations and intense

campaign against war such a situation must be created as would compel the Congress leadership to initiate struggle. It visualized that political and economic effects of the war would result in mass starvation and suppression of civil rights and would thus bring the common people in direct conflict with the government. The CPI expected that the gravity of the situation would force the Congress to adopt a policy of struggle on the model of old Satyagraha. And once, Satyagraha was declared, the CPI considered that mass repression would follow and by utilizing that opportunity it would continue a widespread guerilla struggle and by drawing the bulk of the masses they would in course of time, reach its final victory.

The revolutionary policy of CPI at a time when the Congress was trying to strike a compromise with imperialism helped CPI to attract several patriotic youth into its fold. Though most of them do not agree with political line of CPI and its adherence to the Comintern, they supported and participated in the mass demonstrations and other anti-war activities organized by the CPI. At several places the Congress leaders provided all the facilities to the communists to launch underground activities.

Thus, the communists, while criticizing the Congress leadership for its inaction, mobilized all section of the society in anti-war campaign. At the same time they made constant efforts to pull the Congress into the anti-war activity. At some places where the communists were in majority, they involved the Congress committees into action. But on the whole the Congress did not work against the British in this period. The Congress activity did not create any trouble to the Government in this period. The radical line of communists and their criticism of the Congress leaders for its inaction increased the differences between Congress and Communists. The differences between the two parties further widened after the change in the policy of Communist Party towards the War.

The radical line of the CPI invited attention of the government and it took drastic measures to suppress the communist movement in India. The CPI paid dearly for its radical policy. After the beginning of the War, the government clearly identified the Communists who were so far working under the cover of Congress Socialist Party and concentrated its attack on the members of CPI and its

sympathizers. Most of the leading communists were either arrested or driven to underground.

Despite severe repression the communists were able to carryout anti-war campaign through open and underground activity. Due to the anti-war campaign, the strength and prestige of CPI increased rapidly and the CPI was able to control all the mass organizations.

The radical line of the CPI during the Second World War and its independent action against the British when the Congress was following a wait and see policy, led to a division within the nationalist forces. The division of nationalist forces took place during the period of 1940-41 continued in the post – independence period. This division also led to the emergence of Communists as an alternative political party to the Congress in the final phase of independence struggle and in the post-independence period. The gulf between the two parties widened after Hitler's attack on Russia when the CPI and Congress revered their positions towards the War. In the final phase of the struggle the Communists and Congress followed different strategies to achieve Independence. Thus, with the separation of communists from Congress and CSP, there began direct struggle between Congress and CPI for the hegemony over the national movement.

At this juncture, the attack of Germany on USSR changed the political developments all over the world. With the attack of Hitler on Soviet Union, the Communist parties all over the world changed their strategy and decided to support the war efforts of U.S.S.R and the Western countries against Fascist forces. Hitler's attack on Soviet Union made the situation complicated for the CPI by presenting a dilemma to combine the national tasks with the international tasks. The CPI which was struggling hard to prepare people to overthrow the British rule India using the opportunity provided by War, suddenly changed its strategy and supported the War. At the same time the Congress which was trying to come to an agreement with the government, did not recognize the change in the nature of War and decided not to co-operate with the War efforts and started Quit India Movement. This led to the further split in the nationalist forces and isolation of communists from the Congress and other nationalist forces.

In such a situation, the British imperialists were also under severe pressure to announce major concessions to the national movement in India, but at the same time, they wanted to mop up whatever resources and manpower were possible from India for the war effort without giving any substantial political freedom. The government, which was eagerly waiting for the co-operation of Indians in the War, readily accepted the offer of the communists.

However, the offer of co-operation did not dispel the doubts of the government about the intention of CPI. The government felt that the offer of CPI was a manoeuvre to increase its influence on all fronts in conditions of legality in order to start struggle against the government at an appropriate time. Though the government was reluctant in accepting the communist offer of support in army and police, they thought it was unavoidable to release the communists and to remove the ban on CPI.

The intention of the government in releasing the communists at a time when it was arresting the Congress leaders was that it wanted to divide the communists from the mainstream of the nationalist movement. The Congress leaders utilised this opportunity to malign the CPI among the people by saying that the communists have joined with the government. The activities of CPI in this period also contributed to create an impression that the CPI joined with the government. Their opposition to the quit India movement, opposition to workers strikes and pro-war campaign created an impression among the common people that the CPI was working for the government. The CPI had to work hard to remove that impression and gain hold among the people.

When the CPI was moving closer to the government to support the War efforts, the Indian National Congress, which maintained neutrality towards the war efforts of the government, intensified its efforts for a compromise with the government and finally started Quit India Movement.

The CPI opposed the Quit India Movement launched by Congress. CPI felt that it was suicidal to launch the Quit India struggle in a manner that would obstruct the war efforts of the Allied Powers including the Soviet Union in the prevailing world situation in which the very future o*f* the Soviet Union was hanging in the balance and a large part of Asia including the eastern border countries of India came under Japanese occupation. The CPI did not agree with the view of Bose of liberating

India with the assistance of Japan. Therefore, the Communist Party kept itself aloof from the Quit India Struggle as well as from the activities of I.N.A. Not only that the CPI did not hesitate to organize campaigns among the people that the activities on these lines were suicidal. At the same time, CPI did not hesitate to condemn the government repression on the national movement. The CPI felt that the repression on Congress would create gulf between the government and people and lead to the failure of government to enlist the support of large section of people in the War efforts of the Government. Throughout the period from 1942-45, the CPI organized meetings and processions in Andhra condemning the arrest of Congress leaders and demanding their release.

The People's war stand of Communist Party, its support to the war efforts of the British and opposition to anti-war slogans separated it from the general nationalist and anti-imperialist forces in the country. During this period, several left wing congressmen who were working with the communists in the national movement severed their links with the CPI. It was a period of great trial for the CPI. It was placed itself in a situation in which it had not only to challenge the bourgeois leadership of the Congress but had to move against the current of anti-imperialist feelings which had become strong among all classes and sections of the people. Furthermore, immediately before launching their attack against the Congress, the authorities released many well-known communist leaders from the prison and withdrew arrest warrants issued against many others who had escaped arrest. This had helped to create an impression among a large section of the people who had participated in the Quit India struggle or who were otherwise sympathetic towards the struggle that 'the communists had struck a deal with the British'.

The Communist party faced an extreme political isolation in this period. The national Congress, the socialist party, and all other leftist parties and trends along with R.S.S. and Hindu Mahasabha conducted slanderous propaganda against the Communist Party and its line. The communists were called as 'Agents of Moscow' and 'Anti-patriotic'. Isolation from the main stream of the nationalist movement is extreme damage to the Communist Party. The party of the proletariat instead of gaining ground in the direction of the hegemony over the national liberation struggle of the country actually lost much ground in this period. The relations between the

proletarian party and the national bourgeoisie strained to the last, with the result that the national bourgeois could further consolidated its hegemony over the national liberation movement.

It was wrong to say that anti-fascist war had become a people's war, even before the fascists entered India and the people began to resist. It was wrong to renounce the anti-imperialist struggle for these reasons. This was a period when class collaborationist politics were adopted by communist party. The Indian communists should have prepared the people for revolution by continuing the anti-imperialist struggle, according to their independent policies. The struggle should have been intensified, after the defeat of Nazis in the Stalin grad battle.

India could have attained independence through the revolution of the Indian people. The international situation, such as the defeat of fascism and the victory of socialism and democracy, only helps the revolution, but it could not be substitute for the revolution, nor could it complete the tasks, which a revolution does. The Indian Communists of those days had deviated from this fundamental point. This laid the basis for class collaborationist policies.

Despite this, the CPI made rapid progress during this period and consolidated its position among the peasants and workers. The CPI organized massive campaigns exposing the anti-people politics of the government and stressing the fact that the anti-fascist war could not be fought keeping the congress leaders behind the bars. Simultaneously, the CPI also made efforts to foster trade unions, peasants' organizations, socio-cultural associations and organizations of students, youth and women, and to bring the masses in the struggle against hoarding and black marketers by systematically organizing relief work in the 1943 famine in Bengal and other provinces. As a result of all these activities, there was tremendous increase in the membership of the party, the circulation of party journals and people's contributions to party fund.

The lifting of the ban helped CPI to expand its base among people and re-organise its units in district and taluk levels. The organized units of the CPI in district and taluk levels systematically carried out the programme of the CPI while organizing the struggles of working class, peasantry and agricultural labourers. During this

period, the communists extended their support to all sections of people and communists used to appear whenever there was a problem. It is not an exaggeration to say that the communists extended their activity to all spheres of public life social, economic, political and cultural. Communist volunteers while propagating the *people's war* strategy and anti-fascist ideas organized and supported the struggles of workers and peasants. They stood behind the people and questioned the officials to implement the government schemes properly.

Though the CPI extended its support to the anti-fascist war and criticized the Congress's call of Quit India movement, it did not keep quite on the repression unleashed by the government on Indian national leaders. It condemned the military and police rule of blood and terror let loose by the imperialist bureaucracy against the people. The CPI and its frontal organizations carried out rigorous propaganda for the release of national leaders. They submitted memorandums, conducted signature campaigns and mobilized people in support of the national leaders. The CPI felt that the repression on the people drove the vast masses of the people from the path of national defence. It said that the release of national leaders and formation of national government was only solution to end the political crisis in the country and defend the nation from the fascist threat. The campaign of the CPI for the release of national leaders and formation of national government reached a stage that the government refused to give permission to CPI even to conduct anti-fascist conferences. At several places officials reported that the CPI has taken up the role of Congress after the arrest of Congress leaders and carrying out Congress propaganda. It shows that the CPI while supporting the war efforts of the government, tried to unite the people of India in its struggle against imperialism.

The CPI felt that the nationalist government alone could make effective arrangements for the defence of the country from fascist attack. The CPI criticized the government for the arrests and detention of Congress leaders. The CPI demanded the government to release all the Congress leaders and to form national government. The CPI felt that the Congress and Gandhiji were willing to fight against fascism but the adamant attitude of government forced the Congress to adopt quit India resolution. The CPI condemned the ban on the Congress and restrictions on the meetings of Congressmen. The CPI felt that the restrictions on the Congress would obstruct the

unity of nationalist forces and prevent the formation of national government at the centre, which was necessary for the defence of the country from the fascist aggression.

The national unity campaign for the unity of Congress and Muslim League was another important activity taken up by CPI during this period. The CPI felt that, to build the united national front of the peoples of various communities and nationalities that inhabit India, for the defence and freedom of the country, it was necessary to dispel the mutual distrust and suspicion that existed among them. CPI recognized Muslim League as the second biggest political organization in country. It felt that Muslims could be mobilized in the war against fascism if their demand for self-determination was accepted by the Congress.

The CPI urged the Congress and other nationalist forces to recognize that the Indian people which has contiguous territory as its home land, common historical tradition, common language, culture psychological make-up and common economic life as a distinct nationality with the right to exist as an autonomous state within the free Indian union or federation and would have the right to secede from it if it may so desire. This means that the territories which are homelands of such nationalities which are splits up by the artificial boundaries of between British India and Native States would be reunited and restored to them in Free India. Thus, the Free India should be a federation or union of autonomous states of the various nationalities such as Pathans, Muslims, Sikhs, Sindhis, Hindusthanis, Rajasthanis, Gujaratis, Bengalis, Assamis, Biharis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamils, Kannadigas, Maharashtrians, Keralites, etc. It also said that the rights of minorities in the newly formed states should be protected by the constitution and all the disabilities, privileges and discrimination based on caste, race or community should be abolished. While urging the Congress to agree for the self-determination of nationalities, CPI felt that the recognition of the right to self-determination would not lead to separation but dispels the mutual suspicious and brings unity between the nationalities of India.

Through the campaign for national unity, release of national leaders and formation of national government at the center for the effective prosecution of War, the CPI interlinked the anti-fascist struggle with the struggle against imperialism. The CPI, which was alienated from the large sections of the people for its opposition to

Quit India call and its support to the War efforts, regained its hold among the people through the campaign for the release of national leaders and formation of national government.

Though CPI concentrated its activity on anti-fascist propaganda and welfare activities, it did not neglect the struggles in the economic front. During the period from 1942-45 the CPI formed a number of front organizations and conducted struggles in the social, cultural, economic and political fronts. Due to the changes in the political line of CPI towards the War and the Government, the CPI faced stiff resistance from the nationalist forces in every field of activity. The communists succeeded in retaining their hold on All India Trade Union Congress, All India Kisan Sabha, All India Students Federation as well as youth and students organizations. The communists also formed Women's and children's associations. As a step to overthrow the hegemony of the bourgeois in the society, the communists formed literary and theatre associations. All these organizations served the CPI as useful instruments for action and propaganda among various sections of the people and helped CPI to recruit large number of people into it. By forming a variety of front organizations the CPI approached various sections of the people and created an impression that the CPI would work for the welfare of those sections. The communists did not enforce strict party discipline in these associations but tried to accommodate people of different ideologies in these associations. The communists frequently warned its members against using mass organizations solely as 'party platforms'. Party leaders constantly disavowed Communist domination of any organization, and instead called for unity of diverse political forces. These supple tactics enabled CPI to operate with greater effectiveness than might have been expected in view of the general hostility of the national movement

Communists fought on the political, economic and social issues of every section of the toiling people; on such peasant demands as fair price for his produce, for supply of agricultural implements and fertilizers; on working class demands for supply of all necessities of life at controlled rates and increase in wages; on student demands for supply of white paper, kerosene at controlled rates, against detentions, for amenities-such as tiffin sheds, rest rooms, in the educational institutions; on such women's demands as provision of separate sanitary facilities in villages, for maternity

and welfare centres, for strict implementation of the anti-child-marriages Act, for educational facilities and for equal rights; on middle class issues against high house rentals, housing scarcity, etc. In one word, wherever and whenever people were in difficulties, there you could see a Communist with a red flag on his shoulder. That was a common phenomenon in those days. Through these campaigns, the main political task of the people—the struggle against fascism—was specially stressed and achievements of the Soviet Union were widely popularised.

While continuing its support to the war efforts of the government and organizing movements for the national leaders, the CPI organized peasants, workers, agricultural labourers and students and other sections of the society on class lines. The CPI organized several conferences of workers, peasants and other associations and strengthened its base among all sections of the society. While facing criticism from the Congress and other nationalist forces for its support to the War efforts of the government, the CPI was able to attract large sections of people into its fold because of its work among the various sections of the people. By the end of the War, in spite of several obstacles the CPI emerged as a strong political force in Andhra.

Though the CPI and its frontal organizations were supporting the War efforts of the government and opposed the attempts of the fifth columnists to disturb the war efforts of the government, the government did not allow CPI and its frontal organizations to work freely. The repression of CPI continued even after lifting of the ban. The government did not release some of the prominent leaders even after lifting of the ban. Several restrictions were imposed on the meetings and processions of CPI and its frontal organizations. A close vigilance was kept on the activists of APSF and false cases were launched on students to contain the growth of student's movement. At some places the local officials did not allow CPI to organize conferences and meetings in support of the war efforts of the government. Though the official policy of CPI was in favour of war efforts of the government and helped government to conduct the war successfully, the demand of CPI for the release of national leaders irked the administration. The police did not hesitate to use the Defence of India Rules against the communists who were involved in the pro-congress propaganda. Several communists were arrested and detained throughout the period of 1944-45 for making

speeches in the conferences demanding the release of national leaders and formation of national government.

In addition to their political activities the Andhra Communists had also taken up simultaneous fight against the feudal Zamindari system and various cultural systems it had created in the society. Along with land struggles and peasant movement and working class struggles, the CPI carried out ideological struggles to overthrow the hegemony of feudal bourgeois civilization and literature over the society.

The demand for Visalandhra increased the prestige of Andhra communists. The songs written by Vemulapalli Srikrishna and P.V. Sivaiah became famous in Andhra. Though the early poets wrote several books praising the history and culture of Andhras, they failed to remind the people about the immediate tasks. The communists in their songs while remembering heroic culture of Andhras reminded the people about their immediate responsibilities and mobilized them in the struggles against exploitation and movement for the formation of Visalandhra.

After the formation of ministry in Madras in 1946, the Congress tried to crush the communist movement with severe repression. Communists were arrested at several places for their participation in people's movements. The Madras Government promulgated an ordinance known as "Madras Maintenance of Public Order Act 1 of 1947' on 22$^{nd}$ January 1947 and began the offensive on the communists in the Province. The communist party decided to counter the government repression with stiff resistance by mobilizing people. The struggles of the peasantry and working class were organized all over Andhra.

While the communists in Andhra were involved in organizing the people against the Nizam in Hyderabad and against police repression in Andhra, the central leadership of CPI deviated from the stand taken by the Resolution of Central Committee of CPI in August 1946 and advised the Andhra provincial committee to go slow in its resistance to the repression. The central committee felt that the criticism of the Congress ministries which were suppressing the worker's and peasants' struggles, as agents of vested interests was incorrect. All the struggles of the people were dubbed as vanguardist actions that have provoked police repression on the people.

This trend was advocated mainly by the then General Secretary of CPI, P.C. Joshi representing the reformist trend inside the Central Committee.

The Central committee of CPI which met in June 1947 viewed Mountbatten award as a concession to the national movement and Indian people. It rejected the amendments proposed by some of its members who felt that the Mountbatten Award was a concession to the national bourgeoisie and that the national bourgeoisie leadership was striking a deal against the interests of the people. Instead of exposing Congress leadership's policy of treacherous collaboration with imperialism and its feudal allies, the CPI lined up behind Gandhiji and Nehru and became supporter of the Nehru government. The CPI built up a theory on differences between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Nehru and Gandhiji[1] on the other who in fact were pursuing the same policy as Sardar Patel.

However, the struggles organized by CPI under severe repression by the government yielded good results for the CPI. The municipal workers strike and the struggles of the working class in several towns strengthened the position of CPI among the workers. It was proved in the elections to the municipalities in Andhra held in September 1947. The Congress party received set back in the elections. At several places, independents supported by the CPI won the elections. In Rajahmundry and Kakinada CPI members were elected to considerable number of seats in the municipal councils.

Throughout the period from 1942-47 the communist party followed revisionist and reformist strategy. The statements issued by the leaders of the CPI and leaders at several occasions shows that the CPI wanted to follow the Congress in the nationalist movement. The CPI and its frontal organizations praised the Mountbatten Plan and hoped that India would achieve progress under the leadership of the Congress.

The strong reformist trend of certain members of CPI forced it to view the Mountbatten Award as an advance, instead of a new offensive of imperialism. It considered the national government as a strategic weapon of advancing towards

[1] Darisi Chenchayya, *Nenu Na Desam*, Andhra Grandha Mandali, Vijayawada, 1952, fourth Edition 2004, p.349.

national freedom, instead of as a government of compromise and surrender. This led the CPI to come out with slogans like 'All support to Nehru government', when the government was attacking the masses and betraying the cause of Indian freedom. It made the CPI to come out with opportunist slogan of a united front between the government and the people, when the government was suppressing the people in the interests of the big business. This developed illusions about national reconstruction and co-operations for it with the government of the national bourgeois, when the later was daily attacking the living standards of the workers. With this outlook the party got completely confounded and confused by the wave of riots and mass massacres following partition and began to trail completely behind Nehru and Gandhiji.

However, by the end of the 1947, a large number of communists were dissatisfied with the reformist and revisionist policy of the leadership and demanded for change in the CPI policy. At this juncture, the Second Congress of CPI which met in Calcutta in February 1948 replaced the General Secretary P.C. Joshi, with B.T. Ranadive, who gave a call to replace the bourgeois led government at the center with a government led by working class.[2] The Second Congress of CPI gave a call to the cadre to start armed revolt against the government. The declaration of revolution against the State when the situation was not ripe for revolution, led to the suppression of Communists all over India.

The Communist Movement received a deathblow in India in general and in Andhra in particular during the period from 1948 – 51. The call given by the Second Congress of CPI for the armed struggle to overthrow the Nehru government caused a blow to the movement. Armed troupes were formed all over Andhra. Attacks were conducted on police stations. They looted arms and ammunition from the police stations. The police killed several active and leading communists and gross root organizers of the movement. Special police parties were sent to Andhra. New police stations and police out posts were opened to counter the communist activities and suppress the movement. Attacks were conducted on the communist dominated villages. The so-called Red villages in Krishna suffered worst during this period. The

[2] "Review of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India", issued by the Polit Bureau of Central Committee of Communist Party of India, March 1948, reproduced in Jyothi Basu and Others (Ed), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India,* Vol. 5, (1944-1948), National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997, pp. 753-754.

police raided Elamarru and Katuru villages on 14 July 1949, gathered men and women, beat the men folk and stripped them naked. Later they marched the naked men, followed by women, in a procession through the streets.[3] The special police parties frequently attacked the villages and tortured the villagers to get information about the underground troupes of communists. Several youth who were sympathetic to the communists were killed in fake encounters.

Throughout the period from 1942 to 1947, the policy of CPI was subjected to several shifts due to the influence of several national and international factors. The rise of Fascism in Europe and the atrocities committed by fascists all over the world and the repression on communists in India by the colonial government, forced the CPI to form the United National Front with the national bourgeois to fight against fascism and colonialism. Similarly the attack of Hitler on Soviet Union led to the adaptation of people's war strategy which alienated the CPI from the mainstream of nationalist forces.

In spite of CPI's support to the War efforts, the government's suspicion and surveillance continued on CPI and its frontal organizations. The correspondence between the officials and government shows that the government had reluctantly conceded CPI the right to exist as a legal political party without any illusions about its 'trouble making' potentiality after the War was over. By allowing CPI to function legally and releasing the Communists from jails, while arresting the Congress leaders, the government wanted to create a gulf between the CPI and Congress. On the other hand, the CPI considered itself as a part of a world wide anti-fascist movement led by the Soviet Union, and believed that the fall of fascism would create appropriate conditions for achieving victory in anti-imperialist struggle. However, the CPI utilized the freedom given to it to operate as a recognized political party to increase political consciousness across communal barriers among the lower strata of society. The people's war policy of CPI and its theory of self-determination of nationalities in India invited severe criticism from the bourgeois nationalists. The bourgeois accused CPI as anti-national and agent of U.S.S.R. In spite of this, the CPI was able to establish contacts with a large section of progressive minded people through its anti-

[3] *Visalandhra* (Weekly) 1 August 1949. Also see, P. Sundarayya, *Telangana People's Struggle and Its Lessons*, CPI (M), Calcutta, 1972, p.155.

fascist campaign, movements for national unity, release of national leaders and formation of national government. The role played by the CPI and its frontal organizations in famine relief work in Rayalasima and Bengal, and several other welfare activities carried out by them, helped CPI to establish a strong base among the various sections of the people. The struggles in economic front, the workers and peasants' struggles also helped CPI to attract a large number of people into its fold.

The CPI leadership under P.C. Joshi followed right reformist policy during the whole period of 1942-47. CPI leadership did not try to understand the selfish class policies of the national bourgeoise. It failed to propagate Gandhiji as the leader of bourgeoise leadership. Having separated from the Quit India Movement, the CPI was more and more pushed into taking a non-struggle, non-class approach on every sphere because of the basic defect in the party line. In the name of concretely helping the people's war the main slogans of the agrarian front were given less importance. The demand for abolition of landlordism, for reduction of debts, rents, the actual struggle to conduct them, the struggle against forced collection of war levy were pushed to the background and their place was taken by Grow More Food campaign, and so on. Due to the faulty understanding of the role of imperialism, the CPI came out with wrong formulations about the socialist party, Forward Bloc and other left groups. They were denounced as fifth-column while in reality it was imperialism that was doing the work of the fifth column. This characterization of these parties as fifth column alienated the sympathy of many people and earned the CPI hostility of thousands. In the name of Grow More Food Campaign, instead of starting struggle against the imperial land system and against land lords, the CPI helped procurement plan of the government and raised illusions that even exploiting profiteering class would be a partner in the movement, thus leading to class collaboration.

The basic slogans of CPI about people's war of winning the war, of national government, of national unity, of national defence, Grow More Food, and all were correct. However, it followed reformist ways to implement these slogans and failed to get full advantage of the policy.

It was not only in connection with its attitude to imperialism but also in connection with the understanding of the day to day developments of the War, that the CPI committed a number of mistakes. The CPI believed that the final military

collapse of fascism would automatically lead to the freedom of the world and it neglected to recognize the changes in the military situation developing during the course of the war, which would have helped CPI to modify its line to suit to the new conditions. The battle of Stalin Grad was one of the turning points in the war. If the CPI recognized the importance of the battle of Staling Grad, it could have changed its attitude towards the government. Even ordinary men began to see that after the battle of Stalin Grad, it was very difficult for Japan to invade India with any chance of success. But the CPI still went on believing that invasion of India was as easy as before, that the battle of Stalin Grad did not alter anything so far as India's defence was concerned, and that was carried on to such a ridiculous extent that even when the entire world was saying that the Japanese invasion had receded to the background, the communist press kept on saying that the Japanese would attack again and again. However, the CPI was in an illusion that the fall of fascism would lead to automatic independence to the colonies. Therefore, it failed to assess the political significance of the changed character of the War after the battle of Stalin Grad.

The leadership of CPI also developed illusions about the bourgeois leadership of the country. The CPI courageously opposed the Quit India Movement called by national Congress leaders, but failed to understand the compromising policy of the Congress leadership. To save its anti-imperialist prestige, the CPI glorified the National congress leaders as anti-fascist when sections of them wanted Japan to invade India. Because of its reformist understanding, the CPI failed to lead the spontaneous revolts that shook the country after the War. On the other hand it attacked the revolutionary strategy as surrender to economism and elementary upsurge. The CPI praised the provincial governments as popular governments and resisted any attack on the governments by its members. The CPI's treatment of provincial ministries as popular governments led to the slow down of the people's movements against the bourgeois government.

The August 1946 resolution of the Central Committee revolted against the reformism of the party leadership and advocated a revolutionary line to carry out people's struggles. However, while implementing this strategy, the leadership of CPI slowly led the party towards reformism by the end of the middle of 1947.

The CPI also committed several mistakes regarding the theory of self-determination of nationalities. The CPI failed to expose the bourgeois leadership as an obstacle and disruptor of the self-determination. Fight against bourgeois leadership was not made an integral part of the struggle for self – determination. The document prepared by G. Adhikari 'Pakistan and National unity' failed to attack the League leaders and their cry for Pakistan as a weapon of compromise with imperialism. The obstructionist role of Muslim League in dividing the Muslim masses from the common struggle was ignored. The class character of Muslim League was not seen. In fact, during this period, the CPI failed to remember the elementary fact that each nationality is composed of several classes and that the bourgeois would always strive to exploit the freedom urge or consciousness of any mass to suit its own selfish interests. The CPI forgot the Leninist axiom that the bourgeois is incapable of securing the right of self-determination of any nationality and whether it must dominate over other nationalities or it must surrender to imperialism and thus keep the people in bondage. Throughout the period of War, the CPI believed that the acceptance of self-determination of nationalities by the Congress and Muslim League was the only solution to end the political deadlock. Instead of winning the Muslim masses independently for anti-fascism and for self-determination and common democratic struggles and freedom, the CPI looked upon the League as an organization of Muslims. The Muslim League, on the other hand, without championing the cause of any nationality, successfully disrupted the struggle of nationalities and the common struggle of the Indian freedom. It is very strange that throughout these years, the CPI hardly gave any call to the Muslim masses to join the CPI, but encouraged them to join Muslim League.

The role of Muslim League leaders was glorified, but their separatism was not attacked and the idea of self-determination was brought nearer to the demand of Pakistan. CPI continued to glorify the progressive policy of the Muslim League, at a time when Jinnah and his admirers had done nothing to fight against the hoarder, the landlord, and even to save the East Bengal peasant from Bengal famine. When Rajagopalachari proposed his formula for the division of the country, CPI supported it. That it was almost acceptance of the contention of a basic principle enunciated by both Muslim League and Rajaji formula for a separate state on the basis of Muslim religion. Instead of exposing and rejecting the wrong and disruptive principle which

was common in both Rajaji formula and Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, the CPI took a position of separation based on religion.

Despite the setbacks suffered due to their reformist policies, the communists emerged as a major anti-imperialist force, and one with a chance of forging Hindu – Muslim unity in the course of such struggle. The post war upsurge in several towns and the fast growing influence of CPI among the people terrified the bourgeois leaders. The Government felt that the delay in handing over the power to the Indians would help communist takeover of India. They preferred to handover the power to Congress and Muslim League instead of CPI with a view to retain their economic hold over India. Thus, finally the Congress, the League, and the British rulers 'saved' India from Communism and plunged it into fratricidal bloodshed – a bloodshed that continues to date.

In spite of these weaknesses, with their active work among the people, the communists in Andhra were able to establish their hold among various sections of the people. Several villages in Krishna and Guntur districts became strongholds of CPI and they came to be known as *Red Villages.* Elamarru and Katuru in Krishna district came to known as Lenin Grad and Stalin Grad in Krishna district and Narsayapalem village in Guntur district also came to known as *Stalin Grad*. Comparatively, the CPI emerged as a dominant political organization in Krishna district. In the elections to the provincial legislature in 1952 communists got majority in all the constituencies except one in Krishna district. The Krishna district unit of CPI emerged as the strongest among all the district units of CPI in India.

People from all walks of life joined the CPI. The new comers including Gandhians like Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah were attracted towards polices of CPI during 1942-45. The activities of communists among the peasants attracted peasantry to join CPI while the activities among agricultural labourers brought thousands of agricultural labourers into CPI. Similarly Students, Workers, Women's, Youth, Childrens movements, and literary association and theatre movements brought thousands into the fold of CPI. The CPI did not try to implement its ideology strictly in these mass organizations. They allowed several non-communists to share the stage along with the communists. Several writers and artistes who were not communists played an active role in the growth of literary and theatre movements. Similarly

peasants, agricultural labourers and student's organizations allowed several non-communists to work along with them.

Hundreds of CPI members donated their properties to the party. P. Sundarayya, C. Rajeswara Rao, M. Basavapunnaiah, L.B. Gangadhara Rao, Manikonda Subba Rao, Karumanchi Venkateswara Rao and several others donated their property to the party and several others spent their property for the growth of the party. Some of them had to severe links with their families while some of them transformed their family members to become communists.

The communist Movement in Andhra has established new traditions in the society. It carried out struggle against social evils like the dowry system and child marriages and advocated widow remarriages. In the field of social reform the communists followed what they preached. Communist party revived the reform activity of Viresalingam and brought radical changes in the society. The marriage system was simplified. Women's education was popularized. The members of CPI encouraged women to participate in the public affairs and party meetings. Around 20000 women attended the Kisan Sabha conference held in Bezawada in 1944. As told by Mahidhara Ramamohanarao, it is not an exaggeration to say that the communists brought revolutionary changes in Andhra society within a short span of 15 years.

The simple life style, honesty and hard work of communists helped them to lead congress committees at the taluk and district levels. During the period of united front (1936-39), several communists were put in charge of taluk and district level Congress committees. The congress leaders used to praise the communists as true congressmen and true nationalists. The high moral values, their commitment to the national movement and people, were recognized widely. Communist leader P. Sundarayya was called as 'Communist Gandhi' while another leader C. Rajeswararao was known for his commitment and simple life style, even after becoming General Secretary of CPI.

The communists faced several difficulties in their life time. Several of them lost their properties and houses during police raids. However, these difficulties did not deter them from their path. They lost their lives while fighting for the cause in which

they believed. The victory of communists in the elections in 1952 revealed the impact of communist movement on Andhra society.

During the whole period from 1942-45, the CPI intervened in every sphere of life of the people and tried to solve the problems of the industrial workers, peasants, agricultural labourers and students and highlighted the problems. They combined the economic struggles with politics. While continuing struggles on the basis of economism, the CPI tried to create political consciousness among the people. The movements organised by CPI for the welfare of the people helped it to develop its base among the people.

The CPI achieved remarkable progress in all fronts during 1942-47. There was rapid growth in the membership of the party. The CPI came out as the stalwart defender of the toiler's rights by leading their day-to-day struggles on urgent economic issues. The communist party stood against all injustices, inequality, and suppression of fundamental rights. Such was the influence of the CPI in the villages that not only on economic demands but for every trifling matter such as kerosene or rice ration cards or excess of municipal taxes or some social injustice etc., the people used to rush to the office of the CPI and seek redress of their grievances.

The social reform movements carried out by Communists completely transformed Andhra society. The struggles against superstitious religious beliefs helped the growth of secular ideas in the society. Unlike the north Indian provinces, the national movements in Andhra did not use religion for its growth. In north India, especially in U.P. and Bihar, religion and revivalist movements are linked with the growth of the nationalist ideology. The secular legacy of communist movement prevented the entry of communal forces into Andhra politics in the post-independence period.

The communist party with the help of its cultural organizations revived traditional art forms and used them to popularize the leftist ideology. The art forms exposed the bourgeois ideology and the structures created by it. Hundreds of branches of the cultural association were formed in Andhra. Through these art forms, stories on peasants' lives, biographies of national heroes, militant struggles of the Andhra people and the heroic exploits of Soviet Guerillas, were popularised.

The communist Movement in Andhra has created a strong impact on Telugu literature. It changed the orientation of Telugu literature and helped the emergence of a progressive writer's movement under the aegis of CPI. With the influence of communist ideas, the intellectuals recognized the need to use literature as a weapon in the struggles against exploitation. The progressive writers rejected the idea of 'art for Art's sake' and started depicting the social, economic and political problems of society in the literature. Within a short span of 5 years, Prajasakthi Publishing House published a record number of nearly 800 books on various topics; politics, theory of Marxism, histories of various countries, on literature, on science, on economics, short stories, dramas, burrakathas etc, which no other organization had done till then. On every burning problem of the people and the country, on every significant event in the international field, Prajasakti came out with a pamphlet and constantly kept the people abreast of events, and brought the general masses to a higher political level.

Thus, in spite of certain reformist mistakes and politics, the Communist Party in Andhra became a broad mass party, came forth as the champion of the toiling masses, as the unquestioned leader of the workers, as a builder of the revolutionary peasant movement, as a staunch fighter for social justice and as the beacon light of a new culture in Andhra. Thus, as indicated above, the communist movement in Andhra was in an unusually strong position, relative to other parts of India by the end of the World War II, despite the fact that the CPI movement in Andhra had started at a later date than the Communist Movement elsewhere in India, despite their decision to keep apart from the Quit India Movement of Congress.

With its hold among every section of the society, the communist party in Andhra emerged as a strong opposition to the congress by the end of 1947. However, the wrong assessment of independence and the adaptation of adventurist tactics at a time when the conditions in India was not ripe for revolution, led to the destruction of CPI after 1948. However, the unmatched sacrifices made by the members of CPI helped to retain its hold among the people. This was proved in the first general elections to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1952.

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*Journal of Peasant Studies*
*Modern Asian Studies*
*New Left Review*
*Pacific Affairs*
*Past and Present*
*Political Science Quarterly*
*Problems of Communism*
*Proceedings of Andhra Pradesh History Congress*
*Proceedings of Indian History Congress*
*Social Forces*
*Social Scientist*
*Socialist Perspective*
*South Asia*
*Studies in History*
*The American Political Science Review*
*The Marxist*

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**Ph.D thesis**

# Synopsis

**Title:**

## Left and National Movements in the Madras Presidency, 1930-47: A Study in Politics of Hegemony


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## I. Introduction:

The study of Indian National Movement is one of the important themes for research in Modern Indian history. The period from 1930 to 1947 was very important in the history of Indian National Movement, because during this period several political parties and groups came into existence with far reaching impact on the political developments in the post-independence period. Apart from Congress, Congress Socialists, Communists, Forward Blocists and Royists worked within and outside the Congress for the advancement of the freedom struggle and simultaneously challenged the ideology and strategy of the Indian National Congress. Each group had their own ideology and strategy to carry on struggle for Independence and the nature of state in independent India.

In this study, an attempt has been made to discuss the activities of the Communist Party, which emerged in the early 1930s with the spread of socialist ideology under the impact of the socialist experience in Soviet Russia and the effect of economic depression in the early 1930s. Our study covers the history of the movement in Andhra from the 1920s to 1947. Concentrating on Andhra region we have studied the rise of leftist ideology, formation of Communist Party, the impact of the decisions of Communist International on the Communist movement, the United Front strategy of Communists, the role in workers' and peasants' movements as well as youth and agricultural labourers' movements, activities during the Second World War and the response to Quit India movement. The study also brings out the role of Communists in the literary and cultural fields in Andhra, for the study of politics of hegemony invariably brings into focus the culture and consciousness.

The study covers the period from 1930-1947 and discusses the role of Communists in the national movement in Andhra. The branch of Communist party was formed in Andhra in 1934. However, the study discusses the factors that helped for the growth of leftist ideology in Andhra since 1930. The study also discusses the political developments that took place in the 1920s, for they helped the origin and growth of leftist ideas in Andhra. The study ends with the attainment of independence in 1947. The period also signifies the end of a stage in the communist party's strategy. The strategy of CPI under the period of study

was called as a strategy of united front with Congress. However, after 1947, the CPI changed its strategy and began armed revolution to overthrow the existing government and to establish the dictatorship of proletariat. The present study covers the activities of CPI in Andhra until 1947, with special reference to their role in the struggle for independence.

The Telugu speaking districts of the former Madras Presidency that is the coastal districts of Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore, and the Rayalaseema districts of Anantapur, Kurnool, Cuddapah and Chittor, have been taken as the Andhra region for the purpose of this study. The city of Madras, which was the head quarters of Madras Presidency, in which the above said districts were a part as well as the districts of Bellary and Ganjam, which are now outside Andhra Pradesh are also included as part of Andhra region, for the purpose of this work. The Telangana region of Hyderabad state, which is a part in present Andhra Pradesh and where the communists had put their ideology into practice, during 1946-51, has been omitted form the present study for practical reasons. Moreover, the history of left movement in Telangana had originated from a different political and economic situation, distinctly different from the British ruled Andhra region.[1] Since we have included Madras in our study, the history of these movements can broadly be related to the Madras Presidency, as Madras city was also the center of Left activities.

Like the other regions in India, Andhra too played an important role in India's struggle for independence. In Andhra, along with the Congress, the Communist Party played an important role in creating political and social consciousness among the people and making them ready to fight against the British imperialism on the one side and against the landlords, moneylenders and industrialists on the other. In other words, while the Indian National Congress was invoking what Bipan Chandra calls the "primary contradiction" between the Indian people vs colonial state, the left articulated anti-colonial struggles, as a

[1] Barry Pavier (1981), Rajeswara Rao, C. (1972), Venkateswa Rao, D. (1988), Sundarayya, P. (1972), Pulla Reddy, C. (1968), Basavapunnayya, M. (1972), Narayana Reddy, Ravi (1990), Mohan Ram (1973), Javeed Alam (1991), Rangarao, K. (1979), Dhanagare (1983), Thirumali, I (1996 and 2003),

struggle against both the "primary contradiction" and the "secondary contradiction" reflected in the Indian society.[2]

A great deal has been written about the freedom struggle in Andhra. In all those works, the fight for independence has been conceptualized as a 'dual contest' between the Congress Party on the one hand and the 'Raj' on the other without taking other 'players' (Communists and other left groups) into account.[3] Separate studies are to be made to understand the role of peasantry, working class and agricultural labourers led by the Communist Party in the national movement in Andhra from 1920s to 1947. A careful study of the activities of Communist Party during the national movement reveals reasons for the electoral victories of communists and development of Communist Party as an alternative to the Congress Party in Andhra in the 1950s.

While the base for the communist strength in Andhra in the 1950s lay in their activities during the independence struggle, the existing works did not focus on this aspect of the communists. Most of the works on Communist movement in Andhra concentrated on the description of electoral performance of Communists[4], ideological debates and splits and the Maoist movements[5] in the post independence period and they did not discuss the factors that helped Communists gain strength in Andhra, in particular the character of hegemony that they sought to build in civil society.

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Thirumala Rao, J. (1988) and Varavara Rao, P. (1988) have described the various dimensions of Communist Movement in Telangana.

[2] Bipan Chandra, "Nationalist Historians' Interpretations of Indian National Movement", in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, & Romila Thapar (eds.), *Situating Indian History: For Sarvepalli Gopal*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, p.218. Also see Kapil Kumar (ed), *Congress and Classes: Nationalism, Workers and Peasants*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1988, pp.xi-xii.

[3] M.Venkatarangayya, *Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra),* Vol. IV, Hyderabad, 1974; Regani Sarojini, *Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh,* Hyderabad, 1972; B.Kesava Narayana, *Political and Social Factors in Andhra,1900-1956,* Vijayawada, 1976; B.Seshagiri Rao, *Freedom Movement in Guntur District, 1920-1947,* Prasanna Publications, Ongole. No date.

[4] Selig S. Harrison, "Caste and the Andhra Communists", *American Political Science Review,* 1956; *India: The Most Dangerous Decades,* OUP, Madras, 1965, Mohan Ram, *Indian Communism: Split within a Split,* Vikas, Delhi, 1969; and "The Communist Movement in Andhra Pradesh" in Paul R. Brass & Marcus F. Franda (ed), *Radical Politics in South Asia,* MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1973, pp. 281-321.

[5] Shanta Sinha, *Maoists in Andhra Pradesh,* Gain Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989.

The History of the Communist movement in the Madras Presidency was somewhat distinct from the Communist movement in other parts of India. Unlike Bombay, Kanpur and other north Indian towns, where the Communist Party was formed in 1925,[6] in Madras the Communist Party was formed only in 1934. There were several contributing factors for the emergence of CPI in the Madras Presidency. The October Revolution of 1917 exerted a great influence on the youth. The failure of Non-cooperation movement, Economic Depression of 1929-30 and the consequent fall in prices of agricultural goods, the spread of socialist ideas through literature and the influence of revolutionary terrorists of northern India had their influence on the formation of a branch of Communist Party of India in the Madras Presidency. However, it was with the failure of the Civil Disobedience movement that the youth dissatisfied with the Congress politics turned towards Communism. Thus, the Communist Party was formed in 1934.

Before 1934, the Communist Party of India attempted to spread its influence and form its branch in the Madras Presidency. In 1931, the Central Committee of Communist Party of India sent Amir Hyder Khan, a Moscow trained Communist and an absconder in the Meerut Conspiracy Case (MCC) to Madras to form its branch.[7] Amir Hyder Khan came to Madras, changed his name as Shankar, and started his activities among the workers. He started a workers union, called *Young Workers League* in Madras, in 1932. However, the government acted swiftly and arrested him in May 1932 and with that, the activities of *Young Workers League* came to a premature end.[8] Before his arrest, Amir Hyder Khan established contacts with Putchalapalli Sundarayya, (P.Sundara Rami Reddy) a student, studying Intermediate in Madras Loyola

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[6] Bibekbrata Sarkar, *Nationalism and Marxism in India: Quest for People or Power (1920-1940),* Kalinga Publications, Delhi, 1990, p.54.

[7] Amir Hyder Khan, *Ãthma Katha (Autobiography),* Translated into Telugu by V.Srihari as *Dakshina Bhãrata Dêsamlô Communist Pãrty Prãrambhamu* (Beginning of Communist Party of India in South India), Prajasakthi Book House, First edition 1983, Second edition 1997, Vijayawada, p.13.

[8] *Socialist Organisations in Madras Presidency,* Report of the Superintendent of Police, S.B.C.I.D., Govt of Madras to Home Department, Govt. of Madras, dated 20-5-1935, *Selected Extracts From the Secret Files,* in *History of Freedom Struggle Files Andhra Pradesh,* Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad, p.4535.

College. When Amir Hyder Khan was in jail, P.Sundarayya formed a branch of Communist Party of India in Madras and acted as its Secretary.[9]

P.Sundarayya took active part in the formation of Communist Party of India in the Madras Presidency. He met several Congress leaders and Youth Congress Socialists and convinced them to join the C.P.I. He travelled in the districts of Andhra and met several people, who were dissatisfied with the Gandhian methods of struggle and convinced them to join the C.P.I. In the late 1930s, with the initiative taken by Sundarayya, the Congress Socialists from Kerala like E.M.S.Namboodiripad., A.K.Gopalan, P.Krishna Pillai and others joined the ranks of CPI. Putchalapalli Sundarayya, Chandra Rajeswara Rao, Maddukuri Chandrasekhararao, Chelasani Vasudevarao, Tanikella Venkata Chalapathi, Alluri Satyanarayana, Polepeddi Narasimha Murthy, Pulupula Venkata Sivaiah, Tummala Venkatramaiah, Nanduri Prasada Rao, Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu, Kambhaampati Satyanarayana, Katragadda Balakrishna, Uddaraju Ramaraju (Ramam), Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, Jonnalagadda Ramalingaiah, Pendyala Lokanadham, Inturi Venkateswararao, Tarimela Nagi Reddy, Vidwan Viswam, Idukallu Sadasivan, and Chundi Jagannadham from Andhra region; P.Rama Murthy, B.Srinivasarao, P.Jeevanandam, K.Murugeshan and A.S.K.Iyyengar from Tamilnadu region and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A.K.Gopalan, P.Krishna Pillai, K.Damodaran and N.C.Sekhar from Kerala region were the early activists that have contributed to the development of Communist Party of India in the Madras Presidency.

In this study, the activities of CPI are analysed using the Gramscian theory of hegemony. Gramsci put forward his theory of hegemony in the wake of rise of Nazism and Fascism in Europe and the retreat of revolutionary movements in Italy and other European countries at a time when people expected a series of revolutions in Europe after the Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917. The fall of Communism in Western Europe and rise of Fascism and Nazism in Italy and Germany forced him to think for alternative theories to be followed by the Communist parties in Western Europe. After studying the rise of Fascism, he prepared a new theory i.e., theory of hegemony, which consists not only the

[9] P.Sundarayya, *Viplava Pathamlo Nā Payanam* (Autobiography), (Telugu) Part 1, Prajasakthi Book

economic sphere but also other spheres of influence (cultural and ideological) in which the hegemony of the proletariat has to be established for the success of revolution.

According to Gramsci hegemony i**s** the `spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group [i.e. class]; this consent is `historically' caused by the prestige (and consequently confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.[10]

Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony in the Prison Notebooks as part of his elaboration of a strategy for revolution in situations where the state holds power in reserve, through the institutions of civil society, rather than through force alone. This strategy he calls `war of position', by contrast with the `war of movement' or direct assault on the state. The war of position entails a process of the establishment of hegemony during what might be a long period before the seizure of state power by the revolutionaries.

The activities of CPI, and the formation of peasants and workers unions, youth and women's organizations, literary and theatre associations, ideological and political training through training camps and summer schools, publication of books and newspapers, and the spread of new social ideas and new political consciousness through songs, dramas, folk arts, and literature were discussed using the theoretical tool spelled out above. In particular, the Gramscian theory of hegemony is crucial for our study of the politics of hegemony. The activities of Communists were located within the framework of an attempt to establish their hegemony over the civil society and national movement.

**Review of Literature**

A number of works have been published giving an account of the freedom struggle and Communist movement in India, both at the regional and all India levels. However, those studies generally deal with the prominent events and personalities of the movements. In particular, strategic considerations have

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House, Vijayawada, First edition, 1986, Third edition, 1994, p.72.

[10] Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (Ed), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci,* Orient Longman, Chennai, 1996, Reprint 1998, p.12.

generally been at the centre of most of the studies of South Asian Communism. The earliest publications dating from the cold war era retained the former imperial government's fixation with the 'Bolshevik conspiracy'. Set within the context of post-second world war globalisation of American foreign policy they were concerned mainly with the 'Communist threat' to the newly emerged independent countries. The degree of dependence and responsiveness of South Asian Communism, in particular the Communist Party of India, to directions from Moscow received special attention.

*The Communist Party of India: A Short History* by M.R.Masani (1954) is one of the earliest works on the Communist movement in India. Masani, an admirer of Liberal Socialism and a prominent member of Congress Socialist Party, criticized the Communists as *Trozen Horses* and followers of Russia. Masani describes, "The activities and fortunes of the Indian Communist Party are not directly inspired or affected by the condition of the Indian people, their poverty or their prosperity, but by the fortunes of the Soviet dictatorship of which they are an appendage". The Soviet help to CPI was described as intervention of USSR in the internal affairs of India. Describing USSR as the fatherland of Communism, Masani criticized the shift in the strategy of communists during the Second World War from imperialist war to people's war as a strategy to save the fatherland of socialism, USSR.

Some of the writers on Indian communist movement treated it as a foreign conspiracy or a ramification of the International Communist movement. Overstreet and Windmiller (1959) speak of the 'dual environment of the communist party of India. According to the authors, the CPI represented an element of a national political community and of the international communist community, and functioned in two environments. They conclude that the guidance from Comintern prevented the growth of CPI as a strong opposition to the Congress in India.

Victor, M.Fic (1969) describes the Communist Party of India as an instrument to implement the strategy of Russia by violence. David N. Druhe

(1959) also describes the influence of Soviet Union on the policies of CPI prior to 1947. In the pattern of other studies, he has made no attempt to evaluate the impact of internal political dimensions on the policies of CPI.

Similarly, John H. Kautsky (1956) in his book *Moscow and the Communist Party of India* attempts to trace the Indian Communist Party's strategy and its relation with Moscow and Peking. Kautsky amply demonstrates that for all its local deviationism, the CPI has depended on the Cominform and ultimately Soviet Union for directions particularly in settling its internal dislocations. Although this book is not intended to be a history of CPI, perhaps greater attention to the context of important events in India would have provided a different perspective. The cabinet mission of 1946 and the Mountbatten Plan of 1947 are mentioned, only as having activated responses in the Communist Press and alterations in the CPI tactics. Their importance to India's future has not been brought out. Kautsky isolates CPI from Indian History and thus makes his book understandable only to those with intimate knowledge of Indian events. Because of this kind of a political motivation, the author was interested on the external influences rather than internal influences in the shaping of polices of the CPI.

Mohan Ram (1969) takes a similar view of the communist movement. He writes, "Distinctively western in origin, the communist movement in pre-independence India was a colonial adjunct of the Communist Party of Great Britain which in turn was suborned to Moscow"[11]. Mohan Ram assumed that splits in the Communist Party of India were because of the betrayal of the CPI to the revolutionary traditions of the Telangana movement of 1940s by United CPI and by CPI (M) in 1967. He identifies the Andhra Communists led by T.Nagireddy as the most revolutionary.[12] Bhabani sen Gupta (1978) in his *Communism in Indian Politics*, attempts to place Indian Communism in the wider context of India's political culture, as it emerged and evolved after independence, and traces the international and national factors and constraints affecting its growth and spread.

[11] Mohan Ram, *Indian Communism: Split Within a Split,* Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1969, p.1.
[12] Mohan Ram, *Maoism in India,* Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1971.

Another group of historians, sympathetic to the left politics studied the Communist movement in India, mainly concentrating on the strategic failures or tactical mistakes done by the communists. For them the notion of united front has been the point of departure in their historiographical perspective. They sought to explain the failure of Indian communists to hegemonize the national movement or at least to become a significant force during the period 1925-1947, from the point of view of communists' failure in implementing or developing the united front strategy.

Contrary to the above-mentioned studies, Javeed Alam (1991) argues that the activities of CPI in India were determined by the internal political situation and policies of State towards CPI. The author discuses that the State had weakened the CPI by repression and appropriation of some of its policies.

Sashi Joshi and Bhagvan Josh (1992) in their three volume book, Struggle for Hegemony in India, traces the history of left movements and its relation with the freedom struggle in India and the struggles of the left to establish its hegemony over the national movement. The authors view the Congress Party and the left movement as two components of same the totality, each moving to occupy the space left vacant by the other. In their analysis of the structure and character of the movements, the authors try to locate the historical processes of colonial India in the light of Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony', though the concept of hegemony used in their analysis is in much variance with the original idea of Antonio Gramsci. The authors in their voluminous work failed to discuss the role played by the left to overthrow the ideological hegemony of the bourgeois society. Without considering struggles for ideological hegemony and the propagation of leftist ideas, the authors discussed the political events and wrongly concluded that the left in India has failed to establish its hegemony over the national movement.

Sanjay Seth (1995) discusses the history of Marxism in India starting with the Marxist theorists such as M.N. Roy and S. A. Dange in the 1920's and tries to link class struggle with the nationalist struggle. Seth concludes that the

differences of CPI with nationalist forces and its non-participation in the major political movements launched by bourgeois nationalist forces were the reasons for the marginalization of CPI in the nationalist politics.

Sankar Ghose (1971) deals with the history of socialist and communist groups and trends of thought in India until 1970. He traces the ideas and programmes of early nationalist economists, Gandhi, M.N. Roy, Nehru, subsequent congress party tendencies represented by Indira Gandhi, various non-communist socialist parties and the Indian communists. The author, who was a practitioner of law in the Supreme Court of India, presents the arguments of each group in their own terms and left most of the questions unanswered.

Selig S. Harrison (1965) in his study discussed about the early victories of the CPI in electoral politics in Andhra and the nature of the participation in the CPI activities as well as the Caste domination in Communist Parties. Due to his political motivation, Harrison tried to underestimate the influence of communism in Andhra by attributing its growth to the 'successful mobilization of caste and regional patriotism'.

T. J. Nossiter (1982) discussed experience of Indian communist parties in elections and coalition governments in the states of Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal. Nossiter, in his study, argues that the regional communist leaders have pursued a generally moderate and parliamentary path and have owed part of their success to their identification with regional aspirations and antipathy to the central government. Sympathetic to the situation of Kerala's communists, Nossiter sees them as making a 'creative contribution to the pool of applied communism'.

Amit Kumar Gupta (1996) provided a brilliant analysis of agrarian revolts in India organized by communists and Kisan activists. Gupta organized the issues and events thematically within a chronological framework. Gupta's use of theatrical metaphor to organize the facts is a valuable element of this book.

As per South India, the works dealing with the nationalist movement and other works by the participants in the Communist Movement offer general information about the Communist movement in Madras Presidency, but without any detailed exposition of the history of Communist Movement in Madras Presidency. E.M.S.Namboodiripad's ***How I Became A Communist*** gives a vivid account of the nationalist movement and the activities of Congress Socialists in South India. In this book, the author described his disagreement with the Congress and Congress Socialists and also describes how finally he transformed to a Communist. A.K.Gopalan in his ***In the Cause of the People Reminiscences*** described the transformation of Congress Socialist Party into Communist Party in Kerala. However, these two works naturally deals with the emergence of Communist Party in Kerala region. They did not cover the activities of Communist Party in the entire Madras Presidency. M.Venkatarangaiya's ***Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh ((Andhra) Vol.'s IV,*** is an extensive work on the course of events during the national movement pertaining to the Andhra region and contained several documents on the subject. However, this study is also not a comprehensive and analytical to the present topic. Sarojini Regani's ***Highlights of Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh*** is also confined to the important events in the national movement. Kambhampati Satyanarayana's ***Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra*** gives a detailed account of the activities of Communists in Andhra. It deals only the beginning of the Communist Party in Andhra and its activities up to 1936. Another work ***Andhra Pradesh lo Communist Udyama Charitra*** written by Y.V.Krishna Rao and others gives a descriptive account of the activities of the Communist Party. Apart from this, a large number of biographies and autobiographies of the freedom fighters provides valuable information for the construction of the history of freedom struggle and the role of Left wing in Andhra.

**Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of our study is to analyze the role of Left wing in the national movement in Andhra and how CPI emerged as strong political force in Andhra opposing the mighty Indian national congress. While discussing the role of Congress in the national movement in Andhra, the present study discusses the

factors that were contributed for the rise of communist ideology in Andhra. What were the differences between the ideology and strategy of Congress and communists and how the left succeeded to attract people into its fold while opposing the Congress? What was the attitude of CPI towards the Congress led national movements? How the CPI did understood the Andhra society and what it has done to bring revolutionary changes in the society? What was the nature of struggles organized by CPI to overthrow the hegemony of bourgeois in the society? and to find out organizational network and activities of frontal organizations of CPI and their role in the spread of communist ideology in Andhra were some of the important objectives of this study.

**Chapterisation**

The present study is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter deals with the review of literature on the history of Communist Party of India, various approaches to the study of communist movement in India, description of the region (Madras and Andhra), the objectives of study, chapterisation and the description of sources which are used in the study. A brief history of Communist movement in India is also discussed in this chapter by way of foregrounding the history of left movement in the Madras presidency. This chapter also elaborates the theoretical framework of the study, Gramscian theory of hegemony and the applicability of his idea of the strategy 'war of position' to the Indian conditions instead of 'war of manoeuvre'.

The second chapter starts with the analysis of the emergence of Communist Party of India and the political conditions in the Madras Presidency. We mainly deal with the factors that contributed to the growth of Communist ideas in Madras Presidency, i.e., the impact of October Revolution, the impact of Economic Depression of 1929-30 on Andhra society and the disappointment of youth with the Civil Disobedience movement. The changing trends in the Telugu literary production and the spread of socialist ideology through literature are discussed in this chapter. The activities of N. G. Ranga, influence of Jawahar Lal Nehru and his writings on Andhra youth, the failure of civil disobedience movements of 1930-34 and the consequent dissatisfaction of youth with the Gandhian methods of struggle and their search for alternatives methods of struggle for Independence are discussed in detail.

Another aspect that is dealt with in this chapter is the story of the revolutionaries of North India who were arrested during 1920s and 1930s and sent to jails in different places in South India where they became strong believers of Communism. They taught the ideals of communism to the youth who came to jails during the Civil disobedience movements of 1930-34. Several young men of Andhra who were influenced by the revolutionaries became socialists and communists and took part in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party and later Communist Party in Andhra in 1934.

This chapter also discusses the efforts of Communist Party of India to form its branches in Madras, activities of Singaravelu Chetti, Amir Hyder Khan and P. Sundarayya, Telugu students of Benares Hindu University, and the formation of Congress Socialist Party and Communist Party in Andhra and Madras.

In the third chapter, we mainly looked at the struggle for the left wing to establish its hegemony over the national movement and the differences between the dominant right wing leadership of the Indian National Congress and Left wing, on the strategies to be followed in the national movement. The internal differences with in the left wing, in terms of the ideology as well as the strategies that should be followed from within the anti-colonial struggles and outside and also the impact of national and international factors on the policies and programmes of left movement in Andhra are discussed in this chapter.

The differences between the left wing and right wing leadership on the constitutional reforms introduced by the Government (Government of India Act of 1935), the council entry and office acceptance are discussed in this chapter. Other important aspects that are discussed in this chapter are the differences between the Left wing and right wing on the question of organizing peasants, workers, agricultural labourers, women, youth and students into associations as part of the national movement. The left wing argued that the organisation of these groups into separate class organisations would not only help them on class issues but also help integrating them with the national movement to draw them into the movement and broaden its social base. But the Congress leadership argued that the formation of class associations like workers and peasants unions would create class hatred in the society and further widen division among the forces of national movement. The right wing leadership also thought that the left

wing would dominate the national movement if these forces were organized simultaneously on class issues. Therefore, the right wing did not encourage the formation of class associations and even tried to suppress the movements organized by these associations, led by the Left wing Congressmen. This led to a bitter ideological struggle between the Right wing and Left wing within the national movement and the analysis of this struggle forms a dominant part of this chapter.

The fourth chapter of the present study discusses the role of Communists in the ideological struggle in the Congress between the Right wing and the Left wing forces, efforts for a left wing, for the radicalisation of the national movement and also for the unity of the left wing forces, formation of left consolidation committee, the expulsion of communists from Congress socialist party and the disruption of left wing unity.

This chapter also discusses the activities of communists during the Second World War period. The anti-war campaign by Communists, pressure on Congress to start mass movement against the decision of the government to pull India into *Imperialist war*, secret propaganda by the communists against war efforts, publication of books and newsletters on with anti-war propaganda and arrests of communists during the war, is also discussed in this chapter.

The Fifth chapter starts with the discussion on People's War strategy of CPI. During this period, the communist party underwent several changes in its policy. The communists, who had opposed the war efforts of the British since 1937, suddenly changed their policy and extended support to the war efforts of the British government. The impact of the people's war policy of the communists and their relationship with the mainstream national movement is discussed at length.

The activities of the communists in the national movement from the time of the quit Indian call given by the Congress, campaigns for the release of national leaders from jails, demand for the formation of national government, and signature campaigns for the unity of Congress and Muslim League, and the removal of communists from the All India Congress Committee after 1945, are discussed in this chapter.

During the period from 1942 to 1948, the Communists adopted an active strategy of taking up day-to-day problems of the people and mediated with the

government for their successful redressal. The activities of communist volunteers in the towns and villages during the war period, the Grow More Food campaign, repair of Bandar canal, attacks on black marketers and formation of night schools are explained in this chapter by way of showing the process of establishing the hegemony of communists over the civil society.

The Telangana armed struggle and the role of Andhra Communists in the struggle are important aspects of any study that deals with the history of left movement in India. The Telangana armed struggle, though it was started by the local people against the feudal exploitation, inspired the left leadership of Andhra who organised the movement from 1940s. The activities of Andhra Mahasabha in Hyderabad state prior to 1940, the attempts of Andhra Communist Party to form a branch of Communist Party in Hyderabad, activities of Chandra Rajeswararao and S. V. K. Prasad in Hyderabad, formation of CPI in Hyderabad, the role of Andhra Communist leaders in the Telangana armed struggle are therefore discussed in this chapter. The social and cultural movements launched by the Left wing in Andhra were also discussed in this chapter. The activities of Progressive Writers Association and Theatre organizations were discussed in detail.

The impact of the communist movement on the Andhra society, reasons for the success and failures of the communists; how far the communists succeeded in establishing their political and ideological hegemony over the national movement and civil society, are discussed in the concluding chapter.

**Sources used for the study:**

A variety of sources have been used for the study. The sources used for this can be divided into five categories. They are a) Government Records b) Newspapers and periodicals c) Documents of Communist Party of India d) Interviews with the contemporaries and e) Books and Articles. Each one of the sources gives a clear picture of the history of the Left movement in the Madras Presidency. Information collected from each category of the above sources was cross-checked with the other source to establish the authenticity of the source.

**Government records: T**he Government records give first hand information about the activities of communist party during the period of study and also the details about the attitude of the government towards the communist movement.

The government records provides information about the official correspondence, letters to the superiors, C. I. D. reports, detention orders, arrest warrants, jail records, correspondence between local police/C. I. D. and the government, letters seized by the government, books and other publications banned by the government and official discussion on the activities of the freedom fighters/ communists. Among the government records category, the G. O.s of Home, Law, Political, Judicial and Public Departments of government of Madras, the annual administrative reports of Police and Jail departments, fortnightly reports of the District officials to the Chief secretary of the Government of Madras, History of Freedom struggle files (*HFSAP*) were some of the important sources referred for the purpose of this study.

**Newspapers and periodicals:** Newspapers and periodicals published during 1930s and 1940s were used for this study. *Andhra Patrika* (1920-47)*, Krishna Patrika* (1933-43)*, Navasakthi* (1937-39) *and Prajasakthi* (1942-1948) were some of the important newspapers and journals referred for this study.

**Documents** related to the Communist Party of India, Andhra provincial committee of CPI and the documents related to the frontal organisations like Peasants organizations, workers union, Students, women and youth associations are another important source used in this study. Pamphlets, press notes, memorandums, resolutions, circulars to party members, monographs and several others documents were used for this study.

**Interviews** of the participants are the important sources used for this study. The participants were the eye - witness for the historical incidents. The interviews with the participants give us first hand information about the political developments prior to 1947. The subjective elements in the interviews can be testified with the evidence available in the other sources, government records, newspapers of that period and secondary sources.

**Books and articles:** Apart from the above said primary sources, several secondary sources available in the form of books, essays and articles published in journals are also used in this study. Books published in English and Telugu, articles published in Telugu and English journals and other periodicals, souvenirs, biographies, autobiographies, special issues, unpublished dissertations, mimeographs and private collections comes under this category.

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**(c). Newspapers and journals**

**(1) English**

| | |
|---|---|
| Communist | (1937-1939) |
| Congress Socialist | (1937-1939) |
| Indian Express | (1940-1941) |
| National Front | (1938-1938) |
| New Age | (1937-1939) |
| People's War | (1942-1945) |
| The Hindu | (1930-1945) |

**(2) Telugu**

| | |
|---|---|
| Abhyudaya (Monthly) | (1946-1948) |
| Andhra Patrika (Daily) | (1920-1947) |
| Krishna Patrika (Weekly) | (1933-1943) |
| Navasakthi (Weekly) | (1937-1939) |
| Prajasakthi (Weekly) | (1942-1945) |
| Prajasakthi (Daily) | (1945-1948) |
| Samadarsini | (1928-1930) |
| Sandesam (Monthly) | (1954-1962) |
| Telugu Swatantra | (1949-1950) |
| Telugu Talli | (1944-1946) |
| Visalandhra (Monthly) | (1948-1949) |
| Visalandhra (Daily) | (1952-1955) |
| Zamin Ryot (Weekly) | (1934-1939) |
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