

15

SEPTEMBER 2008  
*IPCS Research Papers*

# **Naxal Movement in India: A Profile**

Rajat Kujur



**Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies**  
New Delhi, INDIA

© 2008, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)

The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies is not responsible for the facts, views or opinion expressed by the author.

The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), established in August 1996, is an independent think tank devoted to research on peace and security from a South Asian perspective.

Its aim is to develop a comprehensive and alternative framework for peace and security in the region catering to the changing demands of national, regional and global security.

Address:  
B 7/3 Lower Ground Floor  
Safdarjung Enclave  
New Delhi 110029  
INDIA

Tel: 91-11-4100 1900, 4165 2556, 4165 2557,  
4165 2558, 4165 2559

Fax: (91-11) 4165 2560  
Email: [officemail@ipcs.org](mailto:officemail@ipcs.org)  
Web: [www.ipcs.org](http://www.ipcs.org)

## CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	4
A Short History .....	2
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation .....	6
People’s War Group (PWG).....	7
Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) & Communist Party of India (Maoist) .....	11
About the Author .....	14
Recent IPCS Publications .....	14

## Executive Summary

---

In order to understand the current phase of Naxalism, we need to understand different aspects of organizational transformation that have occurred within the Naxal movement, since the genesis and current phase of the movement is a reflection of continuity and change. To understand its continuity over the decade, one has to understand its dynamics of change, just as to understand the changing nature of the Naxal movement, one has to understand the factors responsible for its continuity. And this reestablishes the dynamic character of the movement.

The characteristic feature of the Naxal movement is its disorganized character which led to some interesting formulations, quite uncommon in the history of Movement Organizations (MO)<sup>1</sup>. The fragmented character of the movement gave rise to a plethora of possible trends and groupings and thereby, paved the way for new avenues of organizational conflict. Due to its fragmented character, the movement

witnessed the comeback of many past leaders and cadres from oblivion. This aspect of Naxal organizational politics is important to understand, as it enabled the reemergence of a whole range of questions that were assumed to have been resolved once and for all.

---

<sup>1</sup> Historically socio-political movements whether extremist, revolutionary or peaceful, operate through organizations which are known as Movement Organizations. The movement organizations are mostly characterized as loosely structured, decentralized and prone to political challenges and counter cultural practices.

## A Short History

---

To understand the genesis of the Naxal movement, one needs to locate it within the framework of the Communist movement in India. To be more specific, any study on the Naxal movement cannot overlook the importance of the rise and fall of the Telangana Movement (1946-51), since Telangana will always remain the glorious chapter in the history of peasant struggles for Indian communists. In fact, it was the first serious effort by sections of the communist party leadership to learn from the experiences of the Chinese revolution and to develop a comprehensive line for India's democratic revolution. On the other hand, the experience in Telangana also facilitated the growth of three distinct lines within the Indian communist movement. The line promoted by Ranadive and his followers, rejected the significance of the Chinese revolution, and advocated the simultaneous accomplishment of the democratic and the socialist revolutions, based on city-based working-class insurrections. The group drew inspiration from Stalin and fiercely attacked Mao as another Tito.

The second line mainly professed and propagated by the Andhra Secretariat, drew heavily on the Chinese experiences and the teachings of Mao, in building up the struggle of Telangana. The Andhra leadership, while successfully managing to spearhead the movement against the Nizam, failed to tackle the complex question of meeting the challenge of the Government of India. The Nehru government embarked on the road to parliamentary democracy, conditioning it with reforms like the 'abolition of the Zamindari system'. All these objective conditions facilitated the dominance of a centrist line, put forward by Ajay Ghosh and Dange. This line characteristically pointed out the differences between Chinese

and Indian conditions and pushed the party along the road to parliamentary democracy.

In 1957, the Communists succeeded in forming a government in Kerala, which however, was soon overthrown. Additionally, following the India-China war, the party split into two during 1964 – Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI [M]). While the CPI preached the theory of 'peaceful road to non-capitalist development', the CPI (M) adopted the centrist line. Though there were serious differences on ideological and tactical grounds, both the parties went ahead with their parliamentary exercises and formed the United Front government in West Bengal.

In the backdrop of such organizational upheavals within the Indian Communist movement, an incident in a remote area transformed the history of left-wing extremism in India. In a remote village called Naxalbari in West Bengal, a tribal youth named Bimal Kissan, having obtained a judicial order, went to plough his land on 2 March 1967. The local landlords attacked him with the help of their goons. Tribal people of the area retaliated and started forcefully recapturing their lands. What followed was a rebellion, which left one police sub inspector and nine tribals dead. Within a short span of about two months, this incident acquired great visibility and tremendous support from cross sections of Communist revolutionaries belonging to the state units of the CPI (M) in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Though the United Front Government of West Bengal, headed by the CPI (M) was able to contain the rebellion within 72 days

using all repressive measures possible, these units had a formal meeting in November 1967, as a result of which the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR) was formed in May 1968. 'Allegiance to the armed struggle and non-participation in the elections' were the two cardinal principles that the AICCCR adopted for its operations. However, differences cropped up over how an armed struggle should be advanced and this led to the exclusion of a section of activists from Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, led respectively by T. Nagi Reddy and Kanhai Chatterjee.

On the question of the 'annihilation of the class enemy', the Kanhai Chatterjee group had serious objections, as they were of the view that the annihilation of the class enemy should only be undertaken after building up mass agitations. However, a majority in the AICCCR rejected this and the AICCCR went ahead with the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) in May 1969. This led Chatterjee to join the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC). The CPI (M-L) held its first congress in 1970 in Kolkata and Charu Mazumdar was formally elected its general secretary.

Since then, both the CPI (M-L) and the MCC continued with their respective forms of armed struggle for the next couple of years. During this period, Charu Majumdar became the undisputed *Naxalite guru* and with the organizational skills of Kanu Sanyal and Jaghal Santhal, the movement spread to different corners of the country. The country witnessed the euphoria of a Maoist revolution. However, it was far more short-lived than expected. What was generally perceived by Indian as well as Chinese Communist revolutionaries as the final enactment of the revolution, in reality, proved to be no more than a dress rehearsal. As hundreds of CPI (ML) cadres lost their lives, and thousands were put behind bars, the movement witnessed confusion, splits and disintegration. Charu Majumdar's

larger-than-life image also had its negative impact, for after his death in 1972, the central leadership of CPI (ML) virtually collapsed.

The history of the Naxal movement post-Charu Mazumdar, is characterized by a number of splits, brought about by personalized and narrow perceptions about the Maoist revolutionary line and attempts at course-correction by some of the major groups. Even Kanu Sanyal, one of the founders of the movement, could not escape this. He gave up the path of "dedicated armed struggle" by 1977 and accepted parliamentary practice as a form of revolutionary activity.

It was during 1974 that an influential group of the CPI (ML), led by Jauhar (Subrata Dutt), Nagbhushan Pattnaik and Vinod Mishra, launched a major initiative, which they termed 'course-correction'. This group renamed itself the CPI (M-L) Liberation in 1974, and in 1976, during the Emergency, adopted a new line that called for the continuation of armed guerilla struggles along with efforts to form a broad anti-Congress democratic front, consisting even non-communist parties. The group also suggested that pure military armed struggle should be limited and there should be greater emphasis on mass peasant struggles, in an attempt to provide an Indianized version of Marxism-Leninism- Maoism.

However, during the next three years, the movement suffered further splits with leaders, such as Kondapalli Seetharamaiah (Andhra Pradesh) and N. Prasad (Bihar) dissociating themselves from the activities of the party. This led to Prasad forming the CPI (M-L) (Unity Organization) and Seetharamaiah started the People's War Group (PWG) in 1980. While Seetharamaiah's line sought to restrict the 'annihilation of class enemies', the PWG's emphasis was on building mass organizations, not developing a broad democratic front.

Since then, the principal division within the Naxalite movement has been between the two lines of thought and action, as advanced by the CPI (ML) Liberation and the PWG. While Liberation branded PWG a group of "left adventurists", the PWG castigated the Liberation group as one of the "revisionists" imitating the CPI (M). On the other hand, the growth of MCC as a major armed group in the same areas, created the scope for multifarious organizational conflicts among the Naxal groups. Liberation took a theoretical stand of correcting the past mistake of 'completely rejecting parliamentary politics'. On the other hand, PWG and MCC completely rejected the parliamentary democratic system of governance and vowed to wage 'people's war for people's government'. In the process, while the Liberation group registered its first electoral victory in Bihar in 1989; Naxalite factions such as the CPI (M-L) New Democracy, the CPI (ML) S.R. Bhajjee Group and the CPI (M-L) Unity Initiative, emerged in the state.

The following years witnessed certain distinct phenomena in the history of the Naxal movement. First, the intra-organizational conflict and rivalry among different groups touched several high points, resulting in the loss of a considerable number of cadres of rival groups. Secondly, despite the large-scale inner conflicts, there were always ongoing efforts at various levels to strive for unity. Thirdly, 1990 onwards, the affected state registered a considerable increase in the number of violent incidents and at the same time, a considerable change in the policy approach of the government was also witnessed. While the Naxal movement has mostly been characterized by fragmented groups and innumerable splits; successive governments at the national and state levels were never able to follow a uniform approach to deal with the problem of Naxalism, thus, leading to a marked impact in the growth of the Naxal movement.

There are three broad currents of the Naxal movement. For reasons which will become obvious from the following discussion, this paper will examine the Communist Party of India (ML) Liberation, Peoples War Group (PWG), Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and the Communist Party of India (Maoist). It will examine the circumstances in which these groups were formed, their ideological bases and programmes, and the similarities and dissimilarities between them. The paper, in particular, will look into different aspects of organizational politics in relation to these Maoist organizations and try to locate their impact on the course of the contemporary Naxal movement.

The following are the main issues on which there appear to be considerable differences among the Naxal groups and which are primary causes of conflict between them.

- The analysis of the first phase (1967-71) of the Naxalite movement and the line of annihilation that was followed
- The position that armed struggle is the principal form of struggle and the armed guerilla squad, the primary unit of struggle
- Since the principal form of struggle is armed struggle, the entire activity of the agrarian struggle should be underground
- Whether the contradiction between feudalism and the Indian masses is the principal contradiction in Indian society or whether India has emerged as a capitalist state and hence, the contradiction between capitalism and general public is the principal contradiction
- Whether it would be prudent to form a united front with various forces and movements like the dalit,

farmers', ethnic and regional, and ecological movements etc.<sup>2</sup>

However, these are not the only issues; several other issues pertaining to ground-level reality and control of territory are crucially linked to the functioning of Naxalite organizations.

---

<sup>2</sup> Prakash Louis, *People Power: The Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar* (New Delhi: Wordsmiths, 2002) p. 277.





# Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation

---

Historically, the origin of CPI (ML) Liberation dates back to 1974. However, the post-emergency phase of 1977, when most leaders of the Communist movement were released from jail was the time when the activities of Liberation first came to notice. The Party Central Committee (PCC), in a move to unite the splinter groups which owed their origin to CPI (ML), called a meeting during 30 January-2 February 1981. However, the meet did not deliver expected results. "From this point onwards whereas the PCC group goes on to become irrelevant and splits up into various factions, the M-L movement begins to polarize between the Marxist-Leninist line of CPI (ML) (Liberation) and the anarchist line of CPI (ML) (People's War)."<sup>3</sup>

During 1982, the Indian People's Front (IPF) was launched in New Delhi at a national conference. In due course, IPF became the party's open political platform, actively intervening in national politics. Same year, the Third Party Congress took place at Giridih, Bihar, where the issue of participation in elections was finalized. This shift in the outlook of CPI (ML) Liberation proved to be vital in designing the subsequent course of activity of the Naxal movement. The Liberation group, according to Bhatia, "considers itself the true inheritor of the CPI (ML) legacy, its political line has changed dramatically from that of the original CPI (ML)."<sup>4</sup>

With this strategic shift in functioning, the CPI (ML) Liberation recorded its first electoral victory under the banner of the IPF in 1989 and Ara (one Lok Sabha Constituency in Central Bihar) sent the first

"Naxalite" member to Parliament.<sup>5</sup> In a special conference convened in July 1990, the party decided to resume open functioning. This decision was formalized at its fifth Congress in December 1992. In 1994, the Indian People's Front was disbanded. The Election Commission recognized the party in 1995, and since then the CPI (ML) has been contesting successive elections at national and state levels.

The CPI (ML) Liberation, though functioning over ground within the parliamentary democratic setup, has not completely disbanded the path of armed rebellion. "The Party does not rule out the possibility that under a set of exceptional national and international circumstances, the balance of social and political forces may even permit a relatively peaceful transfer of central power to revolutionary forces. But in a country where democratic institutions are based on essentially fragile and narrow foundations and where even small victories and partial reforms can only be achieved and maintained on the strength of mass militancy, the party of the proletariat must prepare itself for winning the ultimate decisive victory in an armed revolution. A people's democratic front and a people's army, therefore, remain the two most fundamental weapons of revolution in the arsenal of the Party."<sup>6</sup> This again points to the dilemmas within the ultra left movement, which is very often reflected, in the unpredictable character of the Naxal movement.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Thirty Years of Naxalbari*, an un-dated publication of CPI (ML) Liberation.

<sup>4</sup> Bela Bhatia, *Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar, Economic and Political Weekly*, April 9 2005.

---

<sup>5</sup> *History of Naxalism*, Hindustantimes.com

<sup>6</sup> A Party document of CPI (ML) Liberation titled *The General Programme*.

## People's War Group (PWG)

---

PWG is the most important among all the splinter groups representing the Naxal movement because the dominant line within the Naxal politics today, is the PWG line of thought. Though it is popularly known as PWG or PW, its official nomenclature is Communist Party of India—Marxist-Leninist (People's War). If today, Naxalism is considered as the greatest internal security problem and Naxals claim to be running parallel government in different parts of the country, its credit mostly goes to the PWG. "The CPI (ML) (People's War) was formed on Lenin's birth anniversary on April 22, 1980."<sup>7</sup> Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, one of the most influential Naxalite leaders from Andhra Pradesh and a member of the erstwhile Central Organizing Committee of the Communist Party of India—Marxist-Leninist (CPI-ML), is the founding father of the PWG; who later, was ironically expelled from the group.

"The programme of our Party has declared that India is a vast 'semi-colonial and semi-feudal country', with about 80 per cent of our population residing in our villages. It is ruled by the big-bourgeois big landlord classes, subservient to imperialism. The contradiction between the alliance of imperialism, feudalism and comprador-bureaucrat-capitalism on the one hand and the broad masses of the people on the other is the principal contradiction in our country. Only a successful People's Democratic Revolution i.e. New Democratic Revolution and the establishment of People's Democratic Dictatorship of the workers, peasants, the middle classes and national bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class can lead to the liberation of

---

<sup>7</sup> *30 years of Naxalbari*, An undated Maoist literature, Vanguard Publication, p.30. Vanguard was the organ of PWG.

our people from all exploitation and the dictatorship of the reactionary ruling classes and pave the way for building Socialism and Communism in our country, the ultimate aim of our Party. People's War based on Armed Agrarian Revolution is the only path for achieving people's democracy i.e. new democracy, in our country."<sup>8</sup> Rejecting the parliamentary democratic system of the country and branding individual annihilation as individual terrorism, PWG declared that people's war was the only path to bringing about a people's government in the country.

From the above quote from an important PWG party document, it is clear that there were organizational, strategic and tactical conflicts going on within the CPI (ML), which paved the way for the split and creation of a more radical party. Broadly speaking, the party programmes of CPI (ML) Liberation were mostly focused on the cause of peasants, while the group led by K. Seetharamaiah wanted the party to be a platform for peasants, workers, tribal and other weaker sections of society. It was the prime agenda of Liberation to build up a political front focusing on peasant struggles, whereas PWG was more interested in the formation of mass organizations instead of any democratic front. One of the renowned guerrilla leaders of the erstwhile PWG summarizes the essence of the conflict between CPI (ML) Liberation and CPI (ML) People's War. "In the *Liberation* group, which at one time was one of the strong groups defending Charu Mazumdar's revolutionary line, after the martyrdom of

---

<sup>8</sup> '*Path of People's War in India – Our Tasks!*', a comprehensive PWG party document highlighting its aims, objectives and strategies. The document was adopted by All-India Party Congress, 1992. We obtained this document from one of the principal ideologue of the PWG.

Com. Johar, with the leadership falling into the hands of Vinod Mishra, they began betraying the Indian revolution. As part of a conspiratorial plan, a once revolutionary party was gradually changed into a revisionist party, like the CPI and CPM. The armed resistance struggles against the state's attacks, taking place under the then leadership of *Liberation*, was ended. The armed struggle to crush the feudal private armies was made a secondary task. In this way, they diverted the entire group away from the basic path outlined by the unified CPI (ML), and particularly of its founder, Com. CM — that of protracted people's war — into becoming agents of the ruling classes, by surrendering them to the parliamentary path. They converted the Com. Johar-led *Liberation*, from being a revolutionary movement, into a legalist, reformist and parliamentary movement; and changed the underground organization into an open opportunist and revisionist organization.”<sup>9</sup>

The above two official statements of the PWG clearly suggest that the birth of PWG which resulted from a split within the CPI (ML-Liberation) was on account of the dynamics of conflict among a host of its cadres. For a considerable period after its birth, PWG's activities were chiefly limited to Andhra Pradesh, while the CPI (ML) Liberation continued to hold its turf in Bihar. It was during this period that another organization came into existence on 1 January 1982. It was named the Communist party of India (ML) Party Unity, which came into existence due to a merger between CPI (ML) Unity Organizations and Central organizing Committee CPI (ML). Hereafter, left-wing extremism in India witnessed some of the worst-ever conflicts which again forced many organizations to take a position and adopt new tactics. Bihar has always remained a strong battleground of Naxal

operations and ironically, in Bihar, most of the clashes were between CPI (ML) Party Unity and CPI (ML) Liberation.

When these conflicts were taking a toll on the cadres on both sides, another development was simultaneously taking place. In August 1998, Party Unity merged with CPI (ML) People's War Group and the group came to be known as People's War. “The merger of the two parties is the culmination of the unity process which began in March '93 and continued for over five years during which differences on several political, ideological and organizational questions were resolved through thread-bare discussion.”<sup>10</sup>

The statement continues, “The emergence of the united Party -- the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [People's War] -- does not mark the completion of the process of unification of the genuine communist revolutionary forces in India. The newly Unified Party will continue its efforts in right earnest to achieve this unification. We also call upon the other genuine revolutionary elements in the various M-L parties in India who are being led astray by both right and left opportunist leadership, to fight against these deviations and rally under the banner of the United Party. The United Party pledges itself to avenge the death of thousands of martyrs who fell in the course of the ongoing democratic revolution in India paved with blood by these martyrs until their cherished goals are accomplished. This is the era of Revolutions.”<sup>11</sup>

With this merger, the PWG became a force to reckon with in Bihar and in other areas where PU had a presence. Further developments suggest that with the merger, the element of armed rebellion of the Naxal movement became stronger, while on the

<sup>9</sup> Sharvan, the then Secretary Bihar State Committee of CPI (ML) Peoples War, in an interview given to *People's March*, Volume 2, No. 3, March 2001.

<sup>10</sup> People's War literature titled '*Joint Declaration by Communist Party of India (ML) People's War and CPI (ML) (Party Unity)*', August 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

other hand, with its parliamentary practices, Liberation was loosing its turf to PWG. Liberation, which once controlled the whole of central Bihar, was now loosing its territory and supporters to PWG and MCC. Not only in Bihar, but also elsewhere, Liberation was systematically shrinking on the map of Naxalite politics. By advocating electoral methods and not being able to make an impressive mark, the Liberation's way of movement became weak and the PWG's armed operations started gaining momentum.

So while the Liberation, with its changed modus operandi was being reduced to a small political party, the PWG in the same period, managed to register its presence outside Andhra Pradesh and gradually gained strongholds in different areas of Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, and Maharashtra. While the conflict between PU and Liberation made both groups suffer the loss of considerable numbers of their cadres; as already stated, it also resulted in the merger of PU and PWG and ultimately the violent consolidation of the movement.

The formation of People's War also resulted in tactical changes in several aspects of the Naxal movement in general. 'In our agenda for a new democratic revolution, there are two aspects -- the agrarian revolution and fight for nationality.'<sup>12</sup> This statement shows the amount of organizational change witnessed by the Naxal movement in all those years. In 1967 it started in the name of 'agrarian revolution', which gradually took the stance of replacing the parliamentary form of government; but the question of nationality was never raised. This reflects the pattern of conflict between PW and Liberation. By questioning 'nationality', PW wanted to make it clear that it wanted a broad revolutionary pattern and while 'land

---

<sup>12</sup> Interview of Muppalla Lakshmana Rao *alias* Ganapathy, the then head of the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist People's War. <http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/oct/07gana.htm>

to tillers' could be a programme, it could not become the sole agenda of the revolution.

Between 15-30 November 1995, the PW conducted an All India Special Conference in some unknown locality of Dandakaranya. There, it adopted two important party documents. The 'Party Programme' as adopted in the Conference reads, "India is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society; here the New Democratic Revolution (NDR) has to be completed victoriously paving way to the Socialist Revolution and to advance towards the ultimate goal of Communism. The Indian people are weighed down by three big mountains: feudalism, imperialism and comprador bureaucrat capital; these are the targets to be overthrown in the present stage of NDR.

The four major contradictions in the present-day Indian society are: the contradiction between feudalism and the broad masses; the contradiction between imperialism and the Indian people; the contradiction between capital and labour and the contradiction within the ruling classes. While the first two are fundamental contradictions to be resolved through the NDR, the contradiction between feudalism and the broad masses is the principal contradiction at the present stage. India is a multi-national country--a prison-house of nationalities and all the nationalities have the right to self-determination including secession. When NDR is victoriously completed, India will become a voluntary and genuine federation of all national people's republics."<sup>13</sup>

The second document, which was adopted in the conference, was the document on the 'Strategy and Tactics'. It reads, "The political

---

<sup>13</sup> This report on the Special conference was posted in a website ([www. cpimlpwg/repression.html](http://www.cpimlpwg/repression.html)) which claimed itself as the unofficial website of PW. The website has been withdrawn. During its existence the site claimed it to be the unofficial website of PWG. But during my interaction with many PW rank and file I found that it was no less than their official website.

strategy to be pursued in the present stage of NDR in India is one of forming a broad united front of all the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist forces--the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie--under the leadership of the working class to overthrow the common enemies--feudalism, imperialism and comprador bureaucratic capital. The military strategy or the path of Indian Revolution is the path of protracted people's war i.e., liberating the countryside first through area wise seizure of power establishing guerilla zones and base areas and then encircling the cities and finally capturing power throughout the country. The unevenness in the economic, social and political development of Indian society calls for different tactics i.e., forms of struggle and organization, to be pursued in different regions of the country, while the political tactic line throughout the country remains the same. In urban areas the political and mass work should be carried out observing utmost precaution and the organizational work should proceed keeping in view the long-range perspective. Caste is a peculiar problem in India; and appropriate forms of organization and struggle should be evolved vigorously to fight out untouchability, caste discrimination and to finally root out the caste system. The tactics of boycott of elections have to be pursued for a long time in the prevailing conditions in India; and participating in parliamentary and assembly elections under any pretext only weakens the class struggle.<sup>14</sup>

These two documents, containing different organizational aspects of PW, make a clear-cut demarcation for the issues pertaining to organizational conflict between the Liberation and PW. The People's War, on the basis of its assessment of the people's level of preparedness for an armed struggle, discarded 'annihilation of class enemies' as the only form of struggle and stressed instead, on floating mass organizations. It established several front organizations.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

During the 1980s, the Radical Students' Union and *Rayatu Kuli Sangham* emerged as organizations with an impressive mass following and most of the PWG's present base and political cadres developed through that practice. However, during the 1990s, the growth of militarization became the characteristic feature of the PWG. The formation of People's Guerrilla Army (PGA), special guerrilla squads, Permanent Action Team (PAT) and Special Action Team (SAT) were the distinctive features of PWG activities for quite some time, before it merged with MCC to form the CPI (Maoist).<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>In response to a government decision to launch coordinated action against the Naxalites by police forces of the various Indian States affected by Naxal violence, the PWG formed the PGA, its military wing in December 2000 by reorganizing its guerrilla force. The PGA functions under a single operational command, the Central Military Commission. In the Indian State where the PGA has a presence, there is a State Military Commission and in special guerrilla zones there is a Zonal Military Commission. A Regional Military Commission supervises a group of State Military Commissions or Zonal Military Commission Each Regional Military Commission reports to the Central Military Commission. All armed cadre of the PWG are organized under the PGA. Ref: "*People's Guerrilla Army*",

[http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/terroristoutfits/peoples\\_guerrilla\\_arms\\_left\\_wing\\_extremists.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/terroristoutfits/peoples_guerrilla_arms_left_wing_extremists.htm)

## **Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) & Communist Party of India (Maoist)**

---

The next important group within the broad spectrum of the Naxal movement is the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC). It stands apart from a number of organizations, since, conventionally speaking, it was never a part of the CPI (ML), which many claim as the mother of all Naxal organizations. "The MCC, while supporting the Naxalbari struggle, did not join the CPI (ML) because of some tactical differences and on the question of Party formation."<sup>16</sup> The MCC was formed on 20 October 1969, around the same time that the CPI (ML) was formed, although during those days it was known as Dakshin Desh. It was in 1975 that the group renamed itself the Maoist Communist Centre. In 2003, MCC merged with the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India-Maoists (RCCI-M) to form the Maoist Communist Centre-India (MCC-I).

Right from its inception, the MCC stood for taking up armed struggle as the main form of resistance and waging a protracted people's war as the central task of the party. This position of the MCC has been repeatedly expressed and emphasized in a multitude of Maoist literature. "This armed revolutionary war is the war of the armed people themselves; it is 'Protracted People's War' as shown by Mao Tse Tung. The concrete economic and political condition of India leads to the very conclusion that the path shown by the great leader and teacher, Mao Tse Tung, the path of the Chinese Revolution, that is, and to establish a powerful people's army and people's militia and to establish dependable, strong and self-sufficient base areas in the countryside, to constantly consolidate and expand the people's army and the base areas, gradually to encircle the urban areas from the countryside by liberating the countryside, finally to capture the cities and

to establish the state system and political authority of the people themselves by decisively destroying the state power of the reactionaries -- this very path of the protracted People's War is the only path of liberation of the people of India, the path of victory of the new democratic revolution."<sup>17</sup>

### **Communist Party of India (Maoist)**

The Naxal movement in India entered yet another phase of organizational transformation with the merger of two of the principal armed organizations, viz. People's War (PW) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCC-I), which resulted in the formation of the Communist Party of India (Maoist). "The formation of the unified Communist Party of India (Maoist) is a new milestone in the history of the revolutionary communist movement of India. A unified Maoist party based on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is a long delayed and highly cherished need of the revolutionary minded and oppressed people of the country, including all our ranks, and also all the Maoist forces of South Asia and internationally. Now, this long-aspired desire and dream has been transformed into a reality."<sup>18</sup> This statement, made by the first Secretary of CPI (Maoist) Ganapathy, assumes a great deal of importance as it

---

<sup>17</sup> *Red Star*, Special Issue, p. 20. Red Star is the English language organ of the MCC, as quoted by Alope Banerjee in a pamphlet titled "*Inside MCC Country*", dated June 2003. Red Star was the English language organ of the MCC. Also quoted in '*MCC India Three Decades Leading Battalions of the Poor*', [http://www.awtw.org/back\\_issues/mcc\\_india.htm](http://www.awtw.org/back_issues/mcc_india.htm). Though it denies but many treat this as the unofficial organ of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM.)

<sup>18</sup> Ganapathy, in an Interview given on the occasion of the formation of CPI (Maoist). *People's March*, Vol. 5, No.11-12, November-December 2004.

---

<sup>16</sup> *30 years of Naxalbari*, p.36.

reflects the organizational politics that was going on all these years between these two organizations representing the Naxal movement.

The improvised aim of the CPI (Maoist) as announced on the occasion of its formation is to establish a compact revolutionary zone, stretching from Nepal to Bihar to Andhra Pradesh and beyond. While continuing their pursuit of a people's democracy; the ultimate aim of the CPI (Maoist) is to seize power through protracted armed struggle. The press statement, issued on the event of announcing the merger, stated, "The immediate aim and programme of the Maoist party is to carry on and complete the already ongoing and advancing New Democratic Revolution in India as a part of the world proletarian revolution by overthrowing the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system under the neo-colonial form of indirect rule, exploitation and control.

This revolution will remain directed against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism. This revolution will be carried out and completed through armed agrarian revolutionary war, i.e. protracted people's war with the armed seizure of power remaining as its central and principal task, encircling the cities from the countryside and thereby finally capturing them. Hence, the countryside as well as the PPW (Protracted People's War) will remain as the 'center of gravity' of the party's work, while urban work will be complimentary to it."<sup>19</sup> According to the same press release, the CPI-Maoists "will still seek to unite all genuine Maoist groups that remain outside this unified party."<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> "Maoist-Influenced Revolutionary Organizations in India" available at <[http://www.massline.info/India/Indian\\_Groups.htm](http://www.massline.info/India/Indian_Groups.htm)>

<sup>20</sup> "Maoist-Influenced Revolutionary Organizations in India" available at <[http://www.massline.info/India/Indian\\_Groups.htm](http://www.massline.info/India/Indian_Groups.htm)>

It is important to examine the significance of the merger, particularly when earlier attempts had been unsuccessful. In fact, the merger is largely being seen as a result of the gradual convergence of views of these two groups on areas such as the role of the party, approaches to revolution and adoption of strategies and tactics. In the formative years, Charu Mazumdar and Kanhai Chatterjee represented two irreconcilably different lines and approaches to 'revolution'. At the time of the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) CPI-ML in 1969, the Dakshin Desh (the earlier form of the MCC), remained opposed to the process due to sharp differences with the CPI-ML over issues such as the formation of a communist party, existence of revolutionary mass struggle and preparedness of the people to participate in it.

The joint press statement released by the erstwhile General Secretaries of PW and MCC (I) highlighted the essence of the merger. "In the past history there were many splits within the M-L movement. But splits are only one side of the coin; the brighter side was that there were continuous efforts to unify the revolutionaries. The CPI (ML) (PU), though it had its origins in Bengal, it spread and strengthened by unifying several revolutionary groups. The CPI (ML) (PW), though it originated in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, it unified with revolutionaries in almost all the states where it was working. The MCC too, had originated in Bengal, unified many revolutionaries groups in it in many States and became the MCCI."<sup>21</sup> This statement underlines the continuous process of organizational politics within the broad spectrum of the Naxal movement, which resulted from organizational conflict.

Looking back, the need for a joint, unified platform was felt by the leadership of both

---

<sup>21</sup> Ganapathy, in an Interview given on the occasion of the formation of CPI (Maoist). *People's March*, Vol. 5, No.11-12, November-December 2004.



the parties as early as 1981. “The PW and MCC began unity talks from their very first meeting in 1981. However, the reason for the delay in the process was the lack of continuity of leadership. The arrest of Comrade Kondapally Seetaramaiah (KS), the leader of the PW, and later the internal crisis of the PW and split in the Central Committee (CC) delayed the unity process for several years. In the early eighties, the MCC lost its two top leaders Comrades Amulya Sen (AS) and Kanhai Chatterjee (KC), which had some negative impact, resulting in further delay in the unity process.”<sup>22</sup>

However, this is not to suggest that the formation of the CPI (Maoist) was the final stage of the Naxal movement. As one official Maoist document puts it, “Revolutions never proceed in a straight line. The history of all successful revolutions shows this. The path is zig zag, there are ups and downs, there is victory and defeat repeated a number of times.....before final victory. Of course, there is no final victory until the stage of communism is reached.”<sup>23</sup> The above-mentioned analysis makes the forceful plea that since the Naxal movement is essentially a political problem, it needs to be examined from the perspective of organizational politics.

From the above discussion we can derive the following conclusions. First, the history of the Naxal movement is the history of a continuous process of organizational conflicts, splits, and mergers. Second, the movement essentially represents simultaneous, though not necessarily peaceful coexistence of many streams; and looking from this angle, the movement can be said to have its presence in all parts of

the country. Third, the growth of the Naxal movement is closely linked with the ongoing process of organizational conflict. This is because the ultimate political objective behind all organizational exercise, as reflected by the statements of various senior Naxalite leaders, is to build a leftist alternative and mobilize people against increased ‘imperialist intervention’ and ‘pro-imperialist policies’ pursued by the union government, in support of ‘revolutionary war’ based on the Chinese leader, Mao’s theory of organized peasant insurrection. Similarly, the history of the naxal movement, right from its first phase of 1967, demonstrates that even if there has been a continuous evolution in terms of their understanding of the Indian situation, the focus of the movement, its character, and the fighting capabilities and financial resources of these groups; they have remained more or less consistent as far as their core ideology is concerned.

Barring the Liberation, they all reject the parliamentary system of governance and want to bring about a fundamental change in the nature of the Indian state. For this, they have adopted the strategy of protracted armed struggle, which entails building bases in rural and remote areas and transforming them first into guerrilla zones and then liberated zones, besides area-wise seizures and encirclement of cities and finally, the seizure of political power and achievement of nation-wise victory. Fourth, the history of the movement so far, has been the history of conflicts and splits. However, one cannot deny that its history is also one of mergers.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *State Repression*, this is the title of the document which was posted at [www.cpiimpwg/repression.html](http://www.cpiimpwg/repression.html). The website now has been withdrawn. During its existence the site claimed it to be the unofficial website of PWG. But during my interaction with many PW rank and file I found that it was the official website.

---

<sup>24</sup> For more information on integrated checkpoints, see the website of the Ministry of Home Affairs ([http://mha.gov.in/BM\\_Div/BM\\_IntCheck\(E\).pdf](http://mha.gov.in/BM_Div/BM_IntCheck(E).pdf)).

## About the Author

**Dr. Rajat Kumar Kujur** teaches Political Science at the Gangadhar Meher Junior College, Sambalpur, Orissa. He can be reached at rajatkujur@gmail.com.

## Recent IPCS Publications

### August 2008

Arabization: Changing Face of Islam in Asia

Baladas Ghoshal

Issue Brief 81

Asian Security Architecture: India and Ideology

Jabin Jacob

Issue Brief 80

Indo-US Nuclear Deal: Entering Homestretch

Gretchen Smith

CBRN Issue Brief 10

Impeaching Musharraf: Issues and Questions

D. Suba Chandran

Issue Brief 79

Safeguarding Pakistan's Nuclear Assets: The American Debate

Prashant Hosur

CBRN Issue Brief 9

South Asian Union: Divided We Stand

Abhishek Raman

Issue Brief 78

India's Myanmar Policy: An Alternative Roadmap

Ann Koppuzha

Issue Brief 77

India-Vietnam Economic Relations: Opportunities and Challenges

Pranav Kumar

Special Report 57

### July 2008

Ten Years After Pokharan-II: The Nuclear Debate in India

Henri Laniece

CBRN Issue Brief 8

Thinking outside the Box: A New Approach to Burma

Baladas Ghoshal

Issue Brief 76

Sam Manekshaw: India's Finest Hour

PR Chari

Special Report 56

Failing and Failed States: The Global Discourse

Sonali Huria

Issue Brief 75

June 2008

Asia-Pacific Community: Options and Opportunities for India

Vibhanshu Shekhar

Issue Brief 74

Nathu La: Bridging the Himalayas

Satyajit Mohanty

Issue Brief 73

Suicide Terrorism (Jul-Dec 2007): A Review

Kanica Rakhra

Special Report 55

Pakistan's Economy: Pangs of Political Instability

D. Suba Chandran

Issue Brief 72

Terrorism in India (Jan-Mar 2008): A Review

Devyani Srivastava

Special Report 54

Pakistan's Nuclear Assets

How Safe are the Weapons of Deterrence?

Prashant Hosur

CBRN Issue Brief 7

War by Other Means: Attacks on Embassies & Foreign Nationals

Sonali Huria & D. Suba Chandran

Issue Brief 71