

J. LAXMAREDDY

Senior leader of AP civil Liberties committee
shot dead by police in Karimnagar on 7, November.

Peoples Union for Democratic Rights

Delhi

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On Friday, 7, November, Japa Laxma Reddy, President of Karimnagar unit of AP Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) was shot dead by police in his house at Alaganur, Karimnagar. The assassination followed the killing of DSP Bucchi Reddy by unidentified people, believed to be Naxalites on 6, November, at Badapalli, 50 Kms, from Karimnagar. According to newspaper reports assassination of Laxma Reddy by the police is a retaliatory action. It may be recalled that in a similar manner police killed Dr. A. Ramanatham, Vice-President of APCLC on 3, September, last year.

Sixty five year old Laxma Reddy was a veteran of the Telengana peasant struggle of the late forties. He continued to be a senior leader of the CPI and later of the CPI (M) in the district. He was also sarpanch of his village for over fifteen years. But in the late sixties he left the party and active political life. He reentered public life in 1974 when he joined the Karimnagar unit of the APCLC. He was its secretary for some years. Later he became its president and also a member of the state executive.

Since 1984 police have mounted their attacks in villages which they suspect to be sympathetic to the Naxalite movement. In the name of curbing 'extremist' activities, masses of village communities, including tribals on the border of the district, were subjected to massive repression. In many instances, APCLC brought the police lawlessness to public notice. Consequently police increased their attacks on APCLC itself. Last year advocate Mallikarjuna Rao was tortured by the police and forced to resign. Gradually one by one all other members were forced to resign. In a raid on his house

that took place on 23, May, this year, police threatened to kill Laxma Reddy if he did not follow suit. Six months later when they executed their threat he was the sole member of the APCLC in Karimnagar.

Four policemen, in plain clothes, came to his house in the early hours of Friday, 7, November, called him out and shot him dead. Eyewitness accounts by his family members quoted in the Andhra Jyothi, a leading Telugu daily, even named the police officials involved. Next day the state Home Minister Vasanta Nageswara Rao issued a statement that Laxma Reddy was killed by 'extremists'. Why should 'extremists' kill a senior and respected leader of an organisation which according to him is an 'extremists front organisation', he did not chose to explain. But his police sent summons to the correspondent of Andhra Jyothi to appear before them and disclose them sources of his report.

The retaliatory assassination of Laxma Reddy in the wake of the killing of the DSP by 'extremists' raises fundamental issues. First the target of the police retaliation- both in Warangal and Karimnagar it is civil rights activists who were killed by the police. This is a deliberate police plan to use 'extremist' violence to exterminate legitimate protest. Civil rights organisations hold no brief for extremist violence. In fact they have not taken up a single instance of lawful police activity against the so-called extremists. It is the unlawful acts of the police against any citizen that is the concern of the civil rights movement. In that sense the only real issue that Laxma Reddy's killing raises is the licence that the police are given by the NTR government, to take law into their own hands. The record presented here speaks for itself.

Karimnagar Police Violence : A Record

MASS RAIDS:

Taluq	No. of villages
Jagityal	40
Sirisilla	40
Mahadevpur	30
Peddapalli	20
Sultanabad	20
Husnabad	10
Total	160

Rough estimate of
population involved: 30,000

Sexual Assault: There were four recorded instances (Samudralin-
gapuram, Jammikunta, Korutla and Gummalapuram) of custodial
rape. In a horrendous instance of its kind in May 1985 police
forced all the women of the village Laxmipuram to strip and
perform Batukamma (a kind of folk dance) in front of Panchayat
Samiti Office.

<u>Killings:</u> Death as a result of mass beatings	5
Custodial deaths	1
Encounters	22
Total	28

ANDHRA PRADESH:

	1984	1985	1986	Total
Custodial Deaths	24	18	15	57
Encounters	-	35	13	48
Other forms, including police firing	39	9	3	51
	63	62	31	156

(Note: The incidents of mass raids and sexual assault
mentioned here in case of Karimnagar are only
recorded incidents and form only a fraction of the
actual incidents. 1986 details are only upto
October. All incidents investigated or recorded
by APCLC).