

# NTR's ONE YEAR

*A Report on the Democratic Rights in Andhra Pradesh*

Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee  
People's Union For Democratic Rights (Delhi)

January, 1984

# **N T R's O N E Y E A R**

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People's Union For Democratic Rights [Delhi]  
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*On the ninth of January, 1983, Shri Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao was sworn in as the first non - Congress Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. In the assembly elections held on 5th, his Telugu Desam party won an unprecedented 202 seats in an assembly of 293. Among the many slogans of the party's election campaign were the centre's domination over states and the authoritarianism and misrule of Congress-I. But by the end of a year the state government has requested the centre for an additional assistance to the tune of Rs. 22 crores and two battallions of centre's Central Reserve Police Force to tackle 'the law and order situation', especially in some parts of Telangana. This decision is only a climax of a year - long process of violation of democratic rights of the people. This process is reflected and recorded through the working of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee. In the course of last one year, APCLC has investigated about thirty cases and published its findings, submitted a number of memoranda to the authorities at various levels ranging from local police officials to the Chief Minister, issued countless press statements and its lawyers defended a number of people implicated in various cases from magistrate courts to the High Court. The present document is compiled, from these and other sources, by People's Union For Democratic Rights, Delhi. APCLC and PUDR hope that this record will make a larger number of people aware of the tale of repression, this time by a non - Congress government.*

**Telugu Desam pledges that in all circumstances and in all matters,  
it will abide by democratic values and traditions.**

**— Election Manifesto  
Telugu Desam  
December, 1982**

**They (police) may be violating democratic rights. But that is a  
law and order problem and it is not in my hands.**

**— N. T. Rama Rao  
Chief Minister,  
talking to a delegation  
of APCLC and PUCL.  
19th March, 1983**

## INTRODUCTION

Ever since 15th August, 1947, the liberal Indian intellectual has been searching for a guardian of democracy. This endless search has taken him (or her) to Nehru, to Indira to Janata and lately to regional parties. The emergence of regional parties and leaders and the subsequent appointment of Sarkaria Commission to go into some aspects of the Centre - State relations have generated hopes in the struggle against Indira Gandhi's ceaseless mania for centralisation of power and her equally intense aversion to assertion of rights by the people.

Telugu Desam party, led by Shri N. T. Rama Rao, which emerged on the Andhra political scene in 1982 and swept into power by January 1983, is aware of this context. For, the three major themes of its election campaign include not only the corruption and inefficiency of Congress - I, but also the institutionalised dominance of the centre over the states and the undemocratic structures and habits erected by Congress-I. Progressive concentration of powers at the centre under Indira Gandhi's reign, coupled with the inept and corrupt leaders appointed by the whims and fancies of their supreme leader are perhaps experienced in all parts of India. But it is the institutionalisation of repressive mechanism which has a place of its own in Andhra Pradesh. Right from the end of the second world war, one region or the other in the state witnessed massive popular upsurges. Telangana peasant movement in the late forties and the tribal movement in Srikakulam, led by Naxalities, in the late sixties are among the notable examples of it. The repressive laws and methods which came up during such periods have become permanent features thereafter. Thus the Andhra Pradesh suppression of Disturbances Act, 1948, promulgated during the Telangana struggle remains on the statute today and is currently operative in many areas covering over 2.5 million people. Similarly the elimination of select

political activists in the so-called encounters by the police which came up during the late sixties is still in vogue and in the last three years alone 19 such encounter killings took place. The legitimacy of this kind of repressive mechanism and the attitudes and habits that form around them is always argued on the basis of the need to curb the movements of the time. But they continue even after the movement has ceased and become permanent features not only in those areas, but also in all other areas, affect not only those sections of population involved in the movement but also all other sections. Thus the Superintendent of Police of Vijayawada recently threatened to 'encounter' an unruly Congress - I leader. Similarly the Hyderabad police arrested two special branch police of Warangal recently and kept them in detention for four hours.

It is in fact an effective articulation of sentiments against these trends by Telugu Desam, both in its manifesto and also in the eloquent election speeches of N. T. Rama Rao, that led the party into the seat of power. And when it came to power, Telugu Desam government was already facing a powerful peasant movement in parts of Telangana region. The movement is led by some CPI (M-L) groups. It is this movement which is the focal point of repression now. Although this organised repression and its scale does serve as an evidence of the new party's attitude towards democratic rights of people. Not only the people of Telangana region but all others have had to experience these attitudes. Hence this report focuses on the record of N. T. Rama Rao government regarding democratic rights of people as a whole in the last one year of its rule.

In one sense an investigation of this kind has a scope and significance beyond the one year rule of a regional party in a state. For, as mentioned earlier, the party emerged in the context of increasing focus on centre-state relations and increasing institutionalisation of authoritarian tendencies.

Centre-state relations are obviously an important issue and devolution of power to the states is certainly a desirable goal. But, if democratic assertion is (even temporarily) content to rest here, it will lead to dangerous distortions. For one thing even if democracy is to be defined in institutional terms, fiscal autonomy of the states is only one element in democratic re-organisation of the Indian polity. If the whole issue of decentralisation of power stops with the autonomy at state capitals, then it will only reproduce Indira Gandhis in miniature. But more important than this is the fact that democracy has to be defined primarily in terms of people's rights and their realisation of them and not in terms of institutions. Institutions are merely a means for achieving rights. State autonomy becomes desirable not because a decentralised polity per se is superior but because it enables people to realise their rights better. Hence it is the democratic rights of the people and their attempt to assert them that becomes the ultimate criterion to judge the issues that have come up in recent times and the attitudes of those who are championing them. Presented below is a record of democratic rights of the people of Andhra Pradesh in the last one year under the N. T. Rama Rao government.



## GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

*The administrative machinery has become the bonded servant of the ruling party..... The rulers have decided to underwrite the destruction of democracy. Brutal laws like National Security Act and Essential Services Maintenance Act are examples of this.*

—Election Manifesto

**Telugu Desam**

Soon after it came to power the new government reduced the retirement age of its employees from 58 to 55. Later in June the government brought a new ordinance which curtails certain democratic rights of the employees. Resentment over these two measures, coupled with some long standing economic demands, led to the formation of the Joint Action Committee by 36 unions of Non-Gazetted Officers (NGO) of the state. They gave a call for strike from 16th July.

Telugu Desam government, helped by its party, undertook a massive campaign against the employees. Thousands of posters setting the people against the employees appeared all over the state. Abusive speeches of the Chief Minister (calling the employees, among other things, bandicoots and buffalos!) were recorded in cassettes and were circulated all over the state. In some towns Telugu Desam activists forced the population to observe a *bandh* against the strike. Mobs were mobilised to demonstrate outside the homes of NGO leaders. Yet the six lakh employees went ahead with their strike.

On 14th July, 46 services of the state government were declared "essential" under Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) and strike became illegal. On the day of the strike, hundreds of employees were arrested all over the state. Subsequently even the students and civil rights activists protesting against these measures were arrested. Throughout the period of the 16 day strike armed policemen were deployed in all the district headquarters.

## WEAKER SECTIONS

*Telugu Desam believes that weaker sections in the society should be given special preference in order to bring them to the level of other sections.*

—Election Manifesto  
Telugu Desam.

An overwhelming majority of the population in the areas of peasant movement who are being subjected to repression belong to what are called weaker sections. They include untouchable communities, tribal communities and artisan castes. In addition to this repression in the Telangana districts, there are number of instances where police or the landed elite perpetuated atrocities on the weaker sections.

The first major incident took place on the day of election itself. On 5th January at Padirikuppam (Chittoor district), 60 Kilometres from Tirupati from where N. T. Rama Rao was contesting the election, the harijan hamlet was attacked by 30 armed goondas led by the upper caste gentry of the area. Petrol was poured on their huts and burnt. Altogether 86 houses were burnt, property worth Rs. 6 lakhs was destroyed and 4 persons were burnt alive in the massacre. Enquiries revealed that supporters of Telugu Desam were behind the attack. Report of the judicial enquiry, six months after its submission, is still not released to public.

Seshapuram is another village of Chittoor district. In this village an upper caste girl by name Rukmini was reported to have eloped with a harijan youth, Chinnadora. In revenge the upper caste gentry attacked the harijan hamlet, and burnt their huts. Nine houses were destroyed and some people were injured. Here also the landlords are associated with Telugu Desam and the police took no action against them.

According to the state home ministry report during the period between January and April, 2 people were killed, 4 were injured and women were raped in various atrocities against weaker sections. According to newspaper estimates between June and August, 40 attacks on weaker sections took place.

## WOMEN

*Telugu Desam opposes the feudal culture which regards woman as an object of pleasure and as property .... It will strive with all its might to provide protection to women from the atrocities of anti-social elements.*

—Election Manifesto  
**Telugu Desam**

Having secured a large chunk of women's votes in the elections, NTR government was obliged to take special measures concerning women. A bill giving equal property rights to women and a university meant exclusively for women were all part of it. But sexual offences against women by men in uniform continued unabated.

Reporting on sexual offences against women is extremely difficult due to the unwillingness of the victims to report. This problem is more acute in the rural areas of the five Telangana districts, where police camps have been set up. Usually as soon as an armed police camp is set up in a village, most of the men of the village abscond fearing torture and women are left alone. Armed men in these camps indulge in a variety of sexual offences against women including rape. In the last one year, scores of such instances came to the notice of civil liberties committee. But almost in no case they were able to establish conclusive evidence. Socially enforced inhibitions apart, further reprisals from the police prevent the victims from talking to a fact-finding committee, leave alone complaining to the authorities.

Two notable incidents of custodial rape which were reported by the press are, one in Srikakulam police station area on 30th May and another in Yellareddypeta in Sircilla taluq of Karimnagar district, on 9th June. In the latter case a beggar woman was raped by the village police patel and two of his friends.

Two major incidents which attracted widespread attention were from urban areas, Vikarabad and Hyderabad. Vikarabad

is a town 70 kilometres from the state capital. In June, one Shri A. Rajaiah reported a theft in his house. On 17th June police arrested his servant, Mehboob and on 18th his maid servant Parvatamma (32). Mehboob was tortured for three days. Parvatamma was raped by the Circle Inspector at his house. Later, on 20th, she was taken to Dharoor police station. On the way she was again raped in Anantagiri forest. The incident led to a *bandh* in the town and furore both inside and outside the assembly. The state government promptly announced the suspension of the policemen involved. But a week later, when the Civil Liberties Committee visited Vikarabad and investigated, it was discovered that the policemen were not suspended but were only transferred. More recently in November, OPDR investigated a case in the state capital itself. One Shri Shabuddin of Riyasatnagar reported a case of theft in his house on 25th November. Police decided to pursue the case almost a fortnight later and came to Shabuddin's house on the night of 8th December. The Sub-Inspector arrested Sofia Begum and Azimuiddin, sister and brother of Shabuddin (!) and took them to police station. They were subjected to severe beating. When the girl asked for water, SI instructed a constable to urinate in her mouth. He attempted to molest her. They were released next morning with a threat that if they reported the incident to any one, he would come to their house and rape all the women members of the family.

In almost all these cases government took no action against the erring police officials which in turn increases the unwillingness of the victims to report the incident.

## RURAL POOR

*If Telugu Desam government comes to power, it will give special preference to the rural poor.*

— Election Manifesto  
Telugu Desam

The 23 districts and 53.5 million population of Andhra Pradesh are divided into three regions. Coastal Andhra, along the east-coast, Rayalaseema to the south of the interior and Telangana to the north of the interior. Four of the nine coastal Andhra districts are relatively prosperous being in the Krishna and Godavari delta. Rayalaseema and Telangana are backward regions.

Over the last five years, a peasant movement has taken shape in some of the Telangana districts, both in the plains and in the tribal inhabited Godavari basin forests. The demands of the movement relate to the implementation of minimum wages act, implementation of equal remuneration act, distribution of surplus land, better living and working conditions to the bonded labourers etc., and as such form part of the obligations of the state. The people are usually organised into *Ryot Coolie Sangham* (Sangham) peasant labour associations. The Sanghams are associated with two CPI (M-L) groups. The government almost by routine treats all the activities of the Sanghams as "extremist" activities. But it has never denied the mass character of the movement. According to a newspaper report, quoting "informed sources of police department", in the last one year 11,000 people were involved in 'extremist' cases. And it is on such a large scale that the repression is taking place.

Currently the strength of the movement and the brunt of the repression is concentrated in five north-western Telangana districts; Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam and Nizamabad. The Sanghams in these villages face repression both

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*For a detailed account, see APCLC booklet "Repression on The Rural Poor in Andhra Pradesh", November, 1983.*

from the landlords and police. The landlords, most of whom were supporters of Congress-I, switched their allegiance to Telugu Desam in the last one year. The police then and now are with the landlords. In these areas even senior police officials have shed the pretense of neutrality. Thus in Bhattupalli, where landlords killed a political activist, the DSP of Warangal district (rural) gave a statement that there was no case against them because they had committed the murder in self-defence! It is this contemptuous attitude not only towards the people but also towards the law of the land that marks the entire operations of the police.

The police assault usually begins with a raid. As soon as Sangham begins to function, the police decide to raid the village. Police from the nearby station, armed reserve police, men of Andhra Pradesh Special Armed Police Force all take part in these long drawn out barbaric exercises. Report after report by the Civil Liberties Committee gave details of police raids in a number of villages in the last one year alone. The details make monotonous repetition of the same story again and again. The dates change, the villages change, the victims change but the details of a raid remain the same. Yet it is impossible to recapture the psychological and material impact of an armed police raid in a village. Destroyed houses, broken cots and utensils, ornaments lost, pulses and grains thrown into the well, men with broken arms and limbs, molested women terrorised into silence, greet any visitor the morning after a raid. In some villages one can notice the heart-rendering scene of women washing the rice, grain by grain, thrown into kerosene by the armed raiders, the night before. In almost all cases this kind of senseless destruction and violence has no purpose other than terrorising the people back into servility. Altogether 40 villages in Adilabad, 110 villages in Karimnagar, 70 villages in Warangal, 30 villages in Khammam are affected by such police raids in the last one year. The armed raiders take away with them large number of people after every raid.

The victims are initially subjected to severe beating in the village itself and are thrown into jeeps or vans. They are taken to the concerned police station and are kept in illegal detentions for long periods. The period itself ranges from two to three days to even two months. Throughout the period of their detention they are subjected to a variety of torture. Continuous beating for hours together by policemen in turns, forcing the thirsty victims to drink each other's urine, forcing them to unnatural sexual acts are very common. Physical injuries, sometimes permanent, loss of bread to the family are the immediate consequences of such prolonged detention and torture. It simply is not possible to give the total number of rural poor who were detained illegally and tortured in the last one year. At any point of time there will be hundreds of rural poor undergoing torture in the countless police stations of the five districts. To give just one example, between October and December, 1983, atleast a hundred landless and poor peasants suffered illegal detention and torture in Madikonda police station alone (Warangal district). Their periods of detention range from two days to even 60 days as in the case of two villagers from Bhattupalli. It should be noted that one of the reasons for the institutionalisation of illegal detentions is the monetary benefits involved for the policemen. They are usually given lucrative rewards, both in cash and in kind by the landlords or contractors, if they detain and torture leading activists. On the other-hand the victims themselves are forced to bribe the policemen to earn freedom.

After such prolonged periods of illegal detention and torture, the detainees (not all of them) are implicated in whatever case the police can think of. In First Information Reports, police usually name one or two persons and add anything from 10 to 100 unnamed "others". This enables the police to implicate anybody in any case. The magnitude of these cases can be understood from the fact that in the 365 offences supposed to have been committed by 'extremists' in 1983 over 11,000 people are implicated according to the newspaper report quoting "Informed sources", referred earlier. If producing the people in court means an end to physical torture in illegal detention, other forms of harassment begins with foisting of false cases.

In courts, it is difficult to procure bails for the poor people. In the first instance magistrates are not willing to grant bail easily, either out of prejudice or out of fear of the police. And if the bail is granted the poor and landless peasants lacking any worthwhile property, they need others to give sureties. Police scare the sureties. There are instances where the sureties are kidnapped by the police, outside the premises of the court. Sometimes activists are implicated in a number of cases, one after another. Thus if they get bail in one case, they are arrested outside the jail and implicated in another. In Narampet (Warangal) during November and December, ten youth were implicated in 10 to 12 cases each. The government has set up two special courts to try 'extremist offences' in Warangal and Khammam. These courts are segregated from other courts and all approach points to these special courts are usually haunted by police both from special branch and armed reserve forces. If our legal system prevents poor people from entering its precincts, in special courts the armed guards ensure it by force. The atmosphere around these special courts makes any attempt to legal remedy, totally meaningless.

If all these measures fail to terrorise Sangham activists, then an armed police camp is set up in the village. The camp usually consists of men either from Armed reserve police or APSP battallion. The number in each camp range from 8 to 10. Once a police camp is set up in a village, the life of the people undergoes a change in almost all aspects of their day to day lives. People are regularly brought to the camps and are subjected to unspeakable torture. In Bhattupalli, Warangal, for instance, police thrashed a 50 year old woman Lachchamma till she lost consciousness. Next day, on 7th December, she attempted to commit suicide but was too weak to successfully kill herself. In Dumala, Karimnagar in June, fear of torture in the camp led Suddala Lingayya, a 70 year old poor peasant to suicide. In Manikyaram, a tribal village in Khammam, on 5th August the torture of a villager, Rangaiah led to internal haemorrhage due to which he died the next day. We have already referred to a number of unconfirmed rape cases in these villages. But rape, physical torture and death are not the only consequences of an armed



police camp. The camps are usually set up in a school, Panchayat office or in a landlord's house and with them the ruling elite of the village acquire additional power. The already existing social domination gets accentuated by armed police camps. People are forced to do *begar* for the men in the camp. They are forced to supply free of charge part of their earnings whether it is cash, or grains. They have to supply such luxuries as chicken or liquor. Armed men often loot their property with impunity. As part of their periodic terror campaigns police also prevent people from sowing or harvesting their fields. In a number of villages crops go waste as a result of police camp. It results in a loss to both the economy of the state and also takes away the meagre and only source of income for the poor and landless peasants. It is not possible to give a precise account of the long range impact of a prolonged armed police camp on the life and livelihood of the rural poor and on the economy of the village. Unfortunately, it is difficult to give even the precise number of armed police camps in the five Telangana districts and also in two taluqs of East Godavari districts. The duration of the camps varies from two weeks to even two years in some cases. The state home ministry maintains no record of police camps. But our own estimate indicates that 20 such camps in Adilabad, 50 in Karimnagar, 20 in Warangal, 10 in Khammam and 20 in Nizamabad have been set up.....with varying duration.....by the new government. At the time of writing of this report there are 100 armed police camps in the five Telangana districts. With the arrival of Central Reserve Police (CRP) Force battallions, the number is likely to go up.

## TRIBALS

*The forest officials and money-lenders are oppressing the innocent tribal inhumanly. Telugu Desam will put an end to this oppression.*

—Election Manifesto  
Telugu Desam

Although the tribal movement is part of the same peasant movement in the plain areas, it requires a separate treatment because of the distinctive nature of their problems. In Andhra Pradesh forest tribes (Gonds, Pradhans, Kolams, Naikpods, Koyas, Kondareddys, Kondakapus etc.) live in two forest belts: Godavari valley forest that runs across the Maharashtra and Andhra borders and the eastern ghats' forest. The two forests meet in the East Godavari agency area. Presently the movement is active in Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Khammam districts of Godavari belt and Rampachodavaram and Ellavaram taluqs of East Godavari forest. In addition tribal communities in plain areas such as Lambadas, Waddera, Erukula also are part of the movement.

In forest regions, tribal communities face the twin set of problems related with land and forest. The infertility of land and the continuous alienation of tribal land leads the tribals to bring forest under cultivation. This results in intense conflict with the forest department which controls the forest. On the other hand, since the land can only sustain them for three months in a year, they are dependent on forest and its products for the rest of the year. Here they are exploited by the contractors, officials of Forest Department, autonomous bodies like A. P. Forest Development Corporation and the monopoly houses to whom forest is leased out. Wages, abject conditions of labour which includes bonded labour, physical harassment by contractors and officials are some of the issues in the forests. In addition in East Godavari, shifting cultivation is also a problem. It should

be noted here that a mass movement is necessary for bare survival. For, if they are not organised they can neither continue to cultivate the forest land nor can they resist the onslaught of the officials and contractors. Repression against these tribals is the same story of armed police raids, detentions and torture, false cases and police camps. The repression in these regions is usually against communities as a whole. That is why, perhaps, in many villages, even the tribal police patels are arrested by the police. But information concerning the violation of democratic rights of these communities in far-flung villages is scant and sketchy. On some occasions the information reaches civil liberties committee months after the event.

Tendu leaf collection is an important source of conflict in all the forest areas. Tendu leaf trade is common to both the forest villages and also to the villages in the plains which have some forest in the adjoining areas. Apart from abysmally low wages (till recently it used to be 4 or 5 paise for picking 100 beedi leaves), the villagers also have to give a substantial part of their collection as part of customary payments to the contractors. Although the tendu leaf trade is nationalised in Andhra, the state, in turn appoints contractors to collect the leaf, who are the source of oppression. In the season, May-June period every year a large number of villages in these five districts face problems related to tendu leaf collection.

Another important source of social conflict in these areas is country liquor (arrack). In Andhra Pradesh the contract for brewing and selling country liquor is auctioned off to the highest bidder every year in what is called excise auction. Distilling and/or selling unlicensed arrack is an offence. But the government fixes only the quantity that the contractors can sell and not the price. As a result the higher the bid, at the excise auction the higher will be the retail price. For instance, in last three years the retail price has gone up by more than 200% in many parts of Telangana. This necessitates the people to search for other means and they brew their own liquor. In forest areas, they make what is called *ippasara* made out of *ippa* (mahuva) flowers and in the plain areas, they brew *gudumba*, made out of jaggery.

This illicit brewing of liquor brings them into conflict with the licenced contractors. Though in the initial years the contractors were only of village level, in recent times district or even region level contractors have emerged. The huge amounts of profits involved (it was estimated that in the last year in Peddapalli taluq of Karimnagar district alone the contractor has made a profit of Rs. 90 lakh !) makes them all too powerful. Usually associated with electoral politics, they maintain a huge army of goondas. These private armies conduct widespread attacks against people involved in the brewing of liquor privately. Legally, it is the excise department which is incharge of the operation. But contractors, often accompanied by the police, raid the tribal hamlets. Beating men, detaining and torturing them are very common. But the worst sufferers in these attacks are invariably tribal women. Hordes of goondas indulge in mass molestation and rape as a matter of routine. In recent times people are beginning to get organised and resist these attacks. Youth organisations like Radical Youth League have become very active in this movement. This year all over Telangana various organisations successfully enforced a boycott of arrack depots. This led to further intense attacks by the combined gangs of armed goondas and armed policemen. Atleast two of the political killings reported this year are related to this conflict. It has reached such proportions that the Director General of Police listed 'arrack agitation' as one of the main reasons for deployment of CRP battalions.

## POLITICAL KILLINGS

The ultimate form of repression is the physical elimination of the activists. They are either killed by the landlords and their henchmen or by the police in so called encounters. Given below are the political killings during the last one year.

**GHANPUR :-** Pisra is a small village in Ghanpur taluq of Warangal district. A family of three brothers, holding about 400 acres virtually rules the village. The wages, at the level of Rs. 2/- to 3/- per day, are one of the lowest in the district. Since early 1982 sangham began to function in the taluq. On 13th January, the mutilated body of the leading organiser of the area, Ramarao, was discovered on the outskirts of the village. Investigations have revealed that he was killed by the Pisra landlord brothers two days before. 12 days later, his mother and 20 year old wife went to the village to find out the details. Police detained them and subjected them to gruelling interrogation. Later again they were called to Madikonda police station and were interrogated, all in an attempt to find out who have informed them about the murder.

**THUNGATHURTHY :** Yanala Chandra Reddy was the President of the Tungaturthy taluq (Nalgonda district), Ryot Coolie Sangham. On the afternoon of 2nd February he was waiting for a bus in Kotrapalle bus stand when some goondas attacked him with knives and axes. He was killed on the spot. The goondas were reported to be associated with Congress—I.

**KONARAOPETA :-** In Konaraopeta, Karimnagar district, Sangham was organised around the issues of forced extractions, embezzlement of co-operative loans and sexual offences against women by the landlord goondas. In the last week of January, Sangham organised a successful social boycott of the landlord. Police conducted a massive raid on the village and arrested leading members of the Sangham and tortured them for six days in illegal detention. 22 year old Bhupathi Reddy was one of them. A few days after their release, Reddy was returning from his fields when he was attacked by the agents of landlord with knives and axes. He was killed on the spot.

**RAMPUR :-** Rampur is situated on the Warangal-Hyderabad highway, about ten kilometres from Kazipet. In October the arrack agitation led to the closure of the local arrack shop, owned by landlords. Subsequently armed police raided the village. On 21st October, Venkatamallu one of the members of the Sangham and brother of Ramulu, the leading activist of the village, was beaten up by the sons of the landlord. He was taken around to different landlord's houses and was beaten up at each house. Eventually his dead body was thrown at the outskirts of the village.

**BHATTUPALLE :-** At Bhattupalle, Warangal district, a Sangham activist Ravinder was knifed to death in broad day light by a Reddy landlord family, on 30th October. None of the people involved in the case were arrested. But a police camp was set up in the village church, which began terrorising the villagers. Most of the young activists fled the village. Their parents, about ten to fifteen were arrested and were beaten up.

**NANCHERLA :-** Nancherla is a small village in the 'disturbed' Mayala taluk of Karimnagar. On 6th November, Shankar, a leading organiser of the area was attacked in broad day light by 30 goondas of the landlords. He was killed on the spot.

**ENCOUNTERS :-** So-called encounters by the police, in which select activists are eliminated have by now become well known. In the period from 1969 to 1977 about 430 people were killed in encounters. After the emergency, under the Congress government, 16 people have been killed in 'encounters'. The practise continued under the new government also.

**RATNAPUR :-** In February police announced that armed Naxalites raided the village Ratnapur and were chased out by the villagers and in the fight a Naxalite, Atram Ashok, was killed. Ratnapur is a god-forsaken Gond hamlet in Adilabad, right on the western border with Maharashtra. It consists of about 30

houses. Last year the Sangham (in forest areas Sanghams are Girijan Ryot Coolie Sanghams) activists began to organise the villagers. On the night of first February, some activists were staying in the village when armed police, informed by the police patel of the village, raided around 3 o' clock. The youth were sleeping in the open, outside the hamlet. The police straightaway opened fire at the sleeping people. When they got up and tried to flee, the police fired again. Bullets hit a Gond youth Atram Ashok, who died in the hospital next day. Subsequently police arrested Hanumantha Rao, President of Adilabad Girijana Ryot Coolie Sangham for murder of Ashok !

**CHANDRAGIRI TANDA :-** Wardhannapet taluq in the eastern part of Warangal district is a backward taluq of a backward district. A large number of *lambadas* live in this taluq; clusters of their houses are attached as hamlets (Tanda) to mainly non-tribal villages. Eanagallu has 14 hamlets attached to it. Chandragiri Tanda is one of them. In this area radical youth have been organising Lambada community. The community faces horrendous attacks by liquor contractors regularly all over the district and the resistance to them is the focus of their movement. On 16th April, Mamidala Haribhushan, leading organiser in the area, was talking to some people, when police came dressed as frog-catchers and sent a boy to call him out. He came out, saw them and began to run. Police followed him and fired. He died on the spot. Next day they announced that Haribhushan was killed, in a fierce exchange of fire. When the Collector ordered the ritual of a magisterial enquiry into the incident, the two women who were witness to the incident were kidnapped by the police and were detained for a week illegally. They were produced only when APCLC filed a habeas corpus petition. In the custody they were forced to sign a statement to the effect that they were not present at the time of incident.

**PINNARAM :-** In the first week of September newspapers announced that, Superintendent of Police of Adilabad

district received a cash reward on behalf of five policemen who "braved their lives and participated in an encounter at Pinnaram village in Chennuru taluq of Adilabad district". Pinnaram is a small village on the hills in eastern part of Adilabad district. It is among the string of villages on the banks of Pranahita river in Chennuru taluq. In this area Sangham has become strong in recent times. The Sanghams took up issues related to land, wage, share cropping, besides corrupt practises of forest employees and wages for tendu leaf collection. On 30th August Palle Kanakayya, leading organiser of the area was visiting Pinnaram, when policemen saw him. They chased him as he ran past the harijan hamlet. As he was entering the fields, police caught up with him and shot him dead.

Thus altogether 3 people were killed in 'encounters' and six people were killed by the landlords in the last one year.



## POLICE FIRINGS

In the last one year police opened fire at a number of places. There are at least 25 known instances where police opened fire. Among these the major incidents are recorded below :

**TANGUTURU :-** In the third week of February, the state government held talks with the state tobacco ryots association and agreed to pay Rs. 14/- per Kilo. This agreement was not respected, by the monopoly companies like Indian Tobacco Company (ITC), Golden Tobacco, National Tobacco and Navabharat Tobacco. Tobacco ryots went on agitation and called for a bandh in the Tobacco growing region of Central Andhra. On 14th March 3000 ryots holding Dharna at Tangutur, Prakasam district were fired upon. Three ryots were killed and fifty injured.

**ANNAPUREDDY PALLE :-** Annapureddy Palle is a small tribal village in Alwarupeta taluq of Khammam district. The village Panchayat annually gives the fishing rights of the village pond on rent. This year an outside contractor took the pond on a rent of Rs. 9/- per month. (The fish he markets will be anywhere between Rs. 12/- to Rs. 16/- per Kg.) The contract expired on March. The villagers, for whom it is a primary source of living during lean seasons, went to their traditional collective fishing expedition on 12th April. Next day the goondas of the contractor, whose contract expired, (much later government claimed that the contract was extended for two more months this year) attacked the villagers which they successfully resisted. But a week later police opened fire on those tribals. The irony was that the tribals who were fired upon neither belong to the village nor did they fish in that pond. Another set of tribals returning from a fishing expedition from nearby Rajapuram were resting near the cool pond of Annapureddy Palle, after walking more than ten kilometres. Around 4 p. m., police (probably mistaking them to be fishing in the pond) came from the bushes at the back and opened fire. Three tribals were killed on the spot and one seriously injured.

**MANJULAPUR :** Manjulapur is a small village, two kilometres away from Nirmal town in Adilabad. On 25th September, people of the village gathered to witness the performance of a *mantrik* who, they believed can catch witches and sorcerers. The gathering added by hundreds of people from neighbouring villages soon swelled into thousands. Police lathi-charged the crowd in which the village sarpanch was also injured. When people expressed their resentment the DSP apologised. But while they were returning, on the road outside the village, police opened fire (probably to avenge the apology). Two people were killed on the spot while two people died enroute to hospital.

**CUSTODIAL DEATH :** Yadagiri was a rickshaw - puller in Hyderabad. In July he visited his village Bacchannapeta, in Warangal taluq. On 22nd July he was arrested in a case of theft of gold ornaments. The only basis of the suspicion was that he was an ex-criminal, who had once been in jail for a couple of months. But he had subsequently given up crime and became a rikshaw puller. Police arrested him and tortured him to make him tell the names of goldsmiths who had purchased ornaments from him. Unable to bear the beating he would tell some names, and they would take him along with them to interrogate the goldsmith. Thus they took him to Nalgonda, Bhongir, Konne, Kodavaturu, Chanchanna Kota and Veledanda. If the interrogation turned out to be fruitless, as it did in each case, the police would beat him further. Yadagiri suffered this torture for 36 days and finally died on 27th August. Police claimed that he had been arrested the night before and that he committed suicide in the police lock up. There was wide-spread public reaction against the incident, which also led to furore in the state assembly. But the government did not take any action.

# **S T U D E N T S**

Student community in Andhra Pradesh, faces most severe repression, next only to rural poor. In most of the Telangana districts, students in all educational institutions ranging from high schools to universities are influenced by two student organisations, progressive Democratic Students Union (PDSU) and Radical Student Union (RSU) both of which are associated with the same CPI (M-L) groups which are engaged in organising the rural poor in sanghams. In addition to taking-up student problems, these student organisations play a supportive role to the rural movement.

Repression against them begins right at the time of elections to student unions. Police, by beating, arresting and terrorising, create obstacles at the time of nominations itself. They threaten the prospective voters. If even in these circumstances, they manage to win, which they do in most of these districts, the unions are not allowed to function. In Warangal town, for instance, where RSU won in almost all of the colleges, no union was allowed to conduct any of its functions this year.

Whenever these organisations take up any issue and organise protest action, they face lathicharge. Among the notable instances in the last one year are, the savage beating of students going to a combined RSU, PDSU, DSO rally at Kazipet railway station on 18th August, Lathicharge on RSU students at Macherla on 29th January, on PDSU students at Secretariat on 12th February and students of Arts and Science College, Warangal on 21st December. In the last incident, police jumped the walls of the college and went on a spree of lathi-charge beating students, teachers and *Karmacharis*. Altogether in 13 major incidents of severe lathicharge on students more than 8,000 students were beaten up in the last one year.

Police also frequently conduct raids on student hostels. In these raids particular targets have been the social welfare

hostels meant for backward and scheduled caste students. Among the notable such raids are those at Jangaon, Hanamkonda (Warangal), Karimnagar, Peddapalli (Karimnagar) and Dilshuknagar (Hyderabad).

Both these organisations also conduct a 'go to village campaign' during the summer vacation. They are meant to survey the socio-economic conditions and conduct political education campaigns. These small groups of students in remote villages are picked up by the police and are subjected to torture. Thus in May, a PDSU leader Venkatesam was arrested at Pajulanagar, Vemulawada taluq, Karimnagar district. He was tortured for sixteen days in illegal custody.

Students in villages and junior colleges in mofussil areas are treated in the same way as the rural poor. Illegal detentions, torture, false cases etc., are very common. In villages where the armed police camp is set up in the school itself, as in the case of Kalva Srirampur, Karimnagar, students live under the shadow of guns and rifles.

Even relatively more autonomous university campuses in the city do not escape this fate. In Kakatiya University, a police camp was set up in 1982. Now it became a permanent police outpost. Whenever the students attempt to conduct any form of democratic activity, they are prevented by the armed police in the campus. Vice-Chancellor has become such a willing tool in the hands of the police that there are instances when he forwarded student applications on student problems to local circle inspector. The auditorium of the Arts and Science College is under the occupation of APSP battallion. Recently, in Osmania University an armed police camp of APSP was set up. Both these universities continue to remain under police even now.

## WRITERS

The Secunderabad Conspiracy case launched against well known Telugu writers by the Congress Government in 1974 still continues. In addition, writers were arrested at a number of places this year.

In April, in pursuance of a call by Revolutionary Writers Association to go to villages for socio-economic investigations, four young writers went to Vemulawada taluq of Karimnagar district. On 17th April all of them Tota Mahadev, Jukunti Jagannatham, B.S. Ramulu, and Chandra Aanjeneyulu were arrested at Kishampeta village and were taken to Vemulawada police station. They were tortured for four days and were produced in court on 21st.

On 25th July Radical Youth League organised a meeting at Mahabubabad in memory of four students killed in an encounter at Giraipalle during the emergency. The meeting was attended by an estimated 3000 people, and was addressed by well known writer Varavara Rao. After the meeting police indulged in widespread lathicharge. Hundreds of people were arrested and beaten up. Varavara Rao himself was arrested and implicated in a case of looting, destruction of public property and attempt to murder along with 41 others including four women. The irony was that the attack was led by the very same sub-inspector who was examined in the abortive Bhargava Commission of enquiry for his role in Giraipalle encounters.

# CIVIL LIBERTY ACTIVISTS

*The liberty enjoyed by ordinary  
citizen is the touchstone of democracy*

— Election Manifesto  
Telugu Desam

As Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee has been consistently bringing to light the instances of violation of law by the police, the committee itself has become a target of police repression. In January, police implicated Dr. K. Balagopal (presently secretary of APCLC) along with Varavara Rao and others in a case charging them with obstructing police on duty. Neither of them were there on the day when the alleged incident took place. In Warangal police did not allow APCLC to hold public meetings. When APCLC continued to function by issuing pamphlets police published counter pamphlets and actually distributed them themselves. Eventually the printing presses were directed not to print pamphlets of APCLC. On 19th July police arrested Kodandaram Reddy (presently Jt. Secretary, APCLC) along with 10 others as they attempted to organise an exhibition of posters on the repression against striking state government employees. On 10th October police arrested K. Mallareddy, Secretary, Karimnagar Unit of APCLC at Sir-cilla. Police were incensed by APCLC investigation of a death in a police camp at Dumala village (referred above). He along with other activists were beaten up in the police station and was forced to sign a statement contradicting APCLC findings. On 11th October Jagtial taluq treasurer of APCLC, Ellanki Anjaiah was arrested. He was severely tortured for two days in illegal detention. On 30th November President of Mettapally taluq APCLC, Gangarajam, was arrested while he was collecting funds for the victims of flood. He was implicated in an attempt to murder case. In recent times the most severe action on APCLC and other organisations have been in Nizamabad. No public meetings are allowed in that district. When APCLC applied for permission to hold public meeting on 23rd October, it was denied. Both the Secretary of Warangal Unit of APCLC Jeevan Kumar and the present Secretary of APCLC were arrested while pasting posters and the case against them is still pending. In December, an executive member of OPDR was arrested in Nalgonda.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident that institutionalisation of repression has reached a stage where repressive mechanism seems to have become completely immune to changes in the Government. Any discussion on the N. T. Rama Rao Government's fight against authoritarianism and against center's domination over states must accept this reality.

But it is not the continued operation of an apparatus that is built over decades, but the encouragement given to it by the new Government that is more striking in the record presented above. It is not merely a record of systematic violation of democratic rights of all sections of population but behind it lies, ironically, a consistent violation of law by law enforcing authorities. In all cases the state Government has refused to take cognisance of the trend, leave alone checking it. Even in cases which resulted in public furore both inside and outside assembly, as in the case of custodial rape at Vikarabad or custodial death at Bacchannapet, the Government refused to take any action against the erring police officials. On the contrary they were given positive encouragement. The Sub-inspector who was responsible for the infamous lathi charge inside the Kakatiya University College is being promoted as circle Inspector reportedly to the police station in Kakatiya University itself.

The new Government's attitude towards democratic norms is also indicated by its abject dependence on police apparatus. For instance, soon after he came to power chief minister directed the then police commissioner of the state capital, a notorious and corrupt official, to go on leave, pending an enquiry. But within 24 hours, he was obliged to call a press conference to announce the withdrawal of the order. A more striking pointer of this dependency is the one man police commission of enquiry.

The new government appointed Shri K. Ramachandra Reddy as one man commission of enquiry to go into various matters related to police. The commission conducted its enquiry

through public *darbars* and by circulating a questionnaire. The commission is yet to submit its report. But Shri Reddy has indicated the general trend of the report to pressmen. His recommendations include :

- a) extension of the duration of detention in police custody from the present 24 hours to 72 hours
- b) abolition of the provision for anticipatory bail
- c) proposal to consult the victim's opinion before granting bail to the accused
- d) proposal to treat confessional statements in police lock-ups on par with those given to magistrate
- e) delegation of some judicial and magisterial powers to police and
- f) organisation of public prosecutors as a separate government service under the charge of Director General of Police.

Most of these recommendations, if accepted, in all probability will be struck off as unconstitutional. But what is more important to note is the contemptuousness with which these recommendations are being paraded at such a high level of liberal reformism. Shri Reddy was Inspector General of Police during the emergency and is also a member of Telugu Desam party.

The refusal to take any action against erring police officials, positive encouragement to them in some cases and the abject dependence on the police apparatus are not merely a reflection of the power of repressive mechanism over elected representatives in power. For the cabinet itself has taken many policy decisions that strengthened this process.

Andhra Pradesh has already the largest number of police officials in the country, with one Director General of Police, seven Inspector Generals, 20 deputy Inspector Generals. The new government had added one more by appointing a DIG (special) for curbing 'extremist activities'. In addition to the 20,000 armed reserve police and 7000 special armed police, two battalions of central reserve police force have been borrowed. In



addition to the center's share of Rs. 70 lakhs to the state police budget, a special grant of Rs. 22 crores has been requested.

It should be noted that in matters related to strengthening of repressive mechanism, there seems to be no conflict between center and state. Thus a pointless controversy arose over the amount of center's financial assistance for flood relief, but no dispute arose in the case of Rs. 22 crores meant for police budget. So is the case with CRP battalions.

This unity inspite of the much publicised diversity and the consequent strengthening of police apparatus is sought to be justified on the grounds of 'increasing extremist violence'. It is difficult to understand how 'extremist violence' can justify the lawless savagery of law enforcing authorities. In any case the contradictory statements emanating from the state government belie this justification. Thus while the chief minister says that Naxalites have committed 11 murders' his Director General of police says that 20 murders were committed in the same period. But a news paper report quoting "informed sources of police department" maintains that Naxalites have committed 26 murders. Thus even as a rationale for government policy, leave alone as an aspect of reality, the 'extremist violence' stands on weaker grounds.

The history of progressive institutionalisation of repression both in Andhra Pradesh and in the country as a whole clearly establishes that in each phase it begins with such kind of rationale with or without validity. But its latter octopus like growth threatens the very foundations of democratic polity.

It is in this context that one must view the last one year of N. T. Rama Rao's rule. The present repression on a mass scale on communities of people as a whole in large parts of the state, in disregard to the law of the land, is generating habits and methods of repression which will linger on, to haunt all sections of population in all areas for generations to come. It is this birth and growth of a culture of repression that is capable of reproducing itself at all levels that demands immediate attention from all democratic sections.

## I. STRENGTH OF POLICE

Civil Police	..	Officers	..	2,557
		Men	..	27,590
Armed Police	..	Officers	..	903
		Men	..	19,313
APSP				
Battallions	..	Officers	..	285
		Men	..	6,658
Director General of Police	..			1
Inspector General of Police (IG)	..			7
Deputy Inspector General of				
Police (DIG)	..			20

(Source : Andhra Pradesh Statistica  
Abstract, 1980)

## II. ENCOUNTER KILLINGS

<u>Period</u>	<u>No.</u>
1969-1977	430
1977-1982	16
1983	3

## DISTURBED AREAS

Date of Notification	District	Taluq	Population 1981
1. 16-9-1969	Khammam	Nuguru*	69,409
		Burgampadu	72,818
		Bhadrachalam	1,46,449
		Illendu	1,13,118
		Sudimella*	1,20,035
		Kothagudam (except the town and Tankella police station area)	1,60,203
2. 17-11-1969	Warangal	Mahabubabad	2,29,304
		Maripeda *	1,53,121
		Narsampet	1,52,997
		Gudur *	1,02,822
		Mulug	1,08,824
		Eturnagaram *	65,701
3. 17-11-1969	Karimnagar	Manthani	69,151
		Mahadevpuram police Station area	74,333
4. 4-10-1978	Karimnagar	Sircilla	2,20,505
		Vemulawada *	1,33,621
		Jagtial	1,86,800
		Malyala *	1,33,621
5. 29-7-1976	East	Ellavaram	1,04,413
	Godavari	Rampachodavaram	67,936
Total			24,85,181

\* Taluqs which were formed due to administrative redivision after the notification. These taluqs are born disturbed areas.

## APCLC INVESTIGATIONS : 1983

S.No.	Date/Month	Incident	Place
1.	6th February	Murder by Landlords	Pisara, Warangal Dt.
2.	February	Rape by landlord	Kadam, Adilabad
3.	9th April	Murder by landlord	Konaraopet, Karimnagar Dt.
4.	21st April	Encounter	Ratnapur, Adilabad Dt.
5.	23rd April	Police firing on Tribals	Annapureddypalle Khammam Dt.
6.	1st May	Encounter	Chandragiri tanda Warangal Dt.
7.	26th May	Police raids/camps	Eturnagaram, Warangal Dt.
8.	1st July	Rape by Policemen	Vikarabad
9.	3rd July	Police camp	Gurrampet, Warangal Dt.
10.	10th July	Police Repression	Mamnour, Warangal Dt.
11.	14th July	Police camps and raids	Gummalapur, Chintakunta, Karimnagar Dt.
12.	26th July	Police camp	Kondaparthi, Warangal Dt.
13.	8th August	Landlord repression	Konukulagadda, Karimnagar Dt.
14.	10th August	Death in police lock-up.	Dachepally, Guntur Dt.
15.	14th August	Police Raids/Camps	Sudimalla, Illendu Tq., Dt. Khammam.

16.	15th August	Police Repression	Rampur, Unikicherla, Warangal Dt.
17.	23rd August	Police raids on Social Welfare Hostels	Jangaon, Dt. Warangal.
18.	4th September	Police Raids/Camps	Jagtyal, Dt. Karimnagar
19.	11th Sept.	Encounter	Pinnaram, Dt. Adilabad
20.	14th Sept.	Death due to Police terror	Dhumala, Dt. Karimnagar
21.	18th Sept.	Police Repression	Posanipeta, Gidda, Kannapur, Nizamabad Dt.
22.	September	Death in police lock-up	Bacchannapeta, Warangal Dt.
23.	25th Sept.	Raids/Camps	Sultanabad, Dt. Karimnagar
24.	2nd October	Raids/Camps	Rechapally, Laxmidevarapally and other villages, Dt. Karimnagar
25.	October	Police firing	Manjulapur, Dt. Adilabad
26.	12th Oct.	Flood damage	Warangal town
27.	16th Oct.	Flood damage	Kanchanpally, Warangal
28.	23rd Oct	Flood damage	Wardhannapet, Warangal Dt.
29.	30th, 31st October.	Police Repression on Tribals	Yellawaram, Rampachoda- varam, E. Godavari D
30.	10th Dec.	Police Camps	Bhattupally, Venkatapur, Mallareddypalli Dt. Warangal.

## ONE YEAR OF N. T. RAMA RAO : A RECORD

1. Number of people killed in police firings	10
2. Number of people killed in police 'encounters'	3
3. Number of people killed by landlords	6
4. Number of armed police camps	125
5. Number of villages affected by police raids	310
6. Number of services brought under ESMA	49
7. Number of arrests under NSA	6
8. People living in disturbed areas	24 85,000