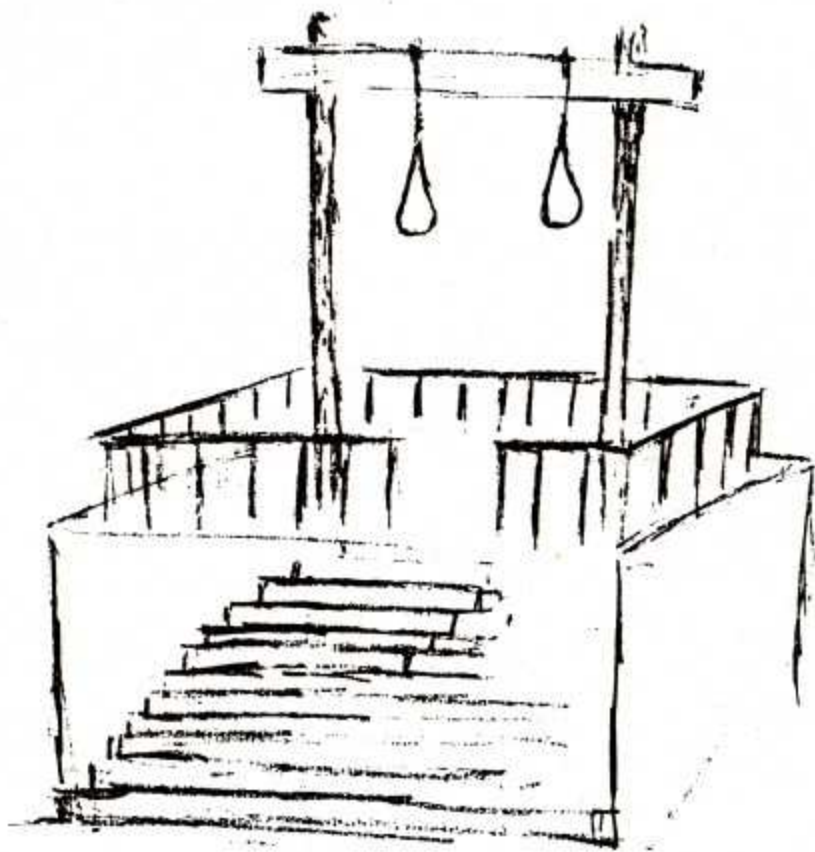


POLITICAL ACTIVISTS HANGED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



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KISHTAGOUND AND BHOOMIAH

When the people and the press of the whole world have been strongly denouncing the Spanish government for the brutal executions of the five political activists in Spain, we think it is time they also protest as strongly against the two political executions that took place on December 1, 1975 in India, the "biggest democracy in the world". On that morning, G. Kishtagoud, 45, and J. Bhoomiah, 48, two political activists from Andhra Pradesh were hanged at the Hyderabad district jail. Both had been convicted on January 5, 1972, of killing one landlord.

At the time India became "independent" all previous death sentences passed against offenders acting on political motivation were commuted to imprisonment for life. Later, on the "25th Anniversary of India's independence," the government announced the commutation of all but two death sentences passed prior to 15 August, 1972. Kishtagoud and Bhoomiah had been the two exceptions. According to the President of India, these two Indian citizens were not educated enough, nor did they come from higher social and economic class, so as to understand the political implication of murdering one tyrant of a land lord in order to bring about social changes. Hence, they were treated like ordinary criminals.

Kishtagoud and Bhoomiah are but two of the millions of peasants for whom India's parliamentary democracy has been a failure. India's countryside, as has been widely reported in both the domestic and foreign press, is controlled by a few powerful landlord-moneylender-boarders, who have been carrying out illegal tax collections, usury and forced evictions by means of privately hired musclemen.

Attempts to institute land reforms, abolish bonded labor and stop forced evictions, etc., have been ineffective in the past because of the close ties the ruling Congress party has with the landlords. Protection of the fundamental rights of the poor landless peasants through judicial means by the various civil liberties unions across the country has generally been frustrated by the landlords who resorted to intimidation of witnesses, lawyers and judges, even up to the extent of kidnap and in some instances, murder. In Kilvenmani village, Tanjore District of South India, 49 men, women and children were burnt to death by the landlords (Economic & Political Weekly, Bombay, India, No. 21, May 1973) to terrorize the peasants and to prevent them from organizing a movement to protect their fundamental rights. Incidentally, the same judicial system which sent Kishtagoud and Bhoomiah to the gallows, in their verdict, found these landlords not guilty of any crime whatsoever.

Driven to desperation by the forced subhuman economic and social conditions, these poor peasants acted against starvation, exploitation and human degradation. Kishtagoud's and Bhoomiah's actions stem from such social and economic injustices.

Both Kishtagoud and Bhoomiah were landless peasants and were from Girijan tribe of Andhra Pradesh, one of the most oppressed minorities in India, and both had joined a peasant movement to regain control of their lands from the local feudal lords. They had taken a leading part in the armed peasant movement of the late forties in Telengana, Andhra and had been active members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)-CPI(M-L), which in late sixties and early seventies had driven landlords from about 300 villages in Andhra Pradesh and established grass roots democracy in the region.

To roll back the revolutionary tide which was sweeping Andhra Pradesh and other regions of India in 1970, notably West Bengal, the Indian government increased its police strength several fold, established paramilitary forces made up of hoodlums organizing goon-squads and anti-social elements and brought in the army. In West Bengal many army divisions were moved in under the pretext of the border security (during the Bangladesh war) to crush the peasant uprising led by CPI(M-L). Severe repression followed. People suspected of being CPI(M-L) sympathizers were dragged out of their homes in broad daylight and shot, sometimes in full view of the public. These were officially described as "armed encounters" with the "Naxalites" (members of CPI(M-L)). Tens of thousands were jailed and many were murdered inside. The jail killings were euphemistically described as jail breaks. Ordinances such as Defence of India Rules and Maintenance of Internal Security Act were promulgated to bypass the normal judicial processes and naked terror was launched under the pretext of maintaining law and order. It was during this wave of government repression that Kishtagoud and Bhoomiah were arrested. What followed was the first two legal murders of political activists by the government of India.

That the actions of the two men were politically motivated was not denied even by the Supreme Court of India, which on 3 October, 1975, when it rejected their appeal, commented: "We share the revulsion (the executions of political prisoners in Spain have created) with the world, but the jurisdiction of this court is limited."

Recognizing the social and political content of their acts, 136 attorneys of the Supreme Court including several former chief justices and judges of high courts, editors of newspapers, 75

members of the parliament, hundreds of poets, professors, cultural workers, artists and intellectuals had appealed to the government for the commutation of their death sentences. In the face of these public appeals, the government had to stay the execution orders twice in the past.

Since the imposition of the last emergency, in June, 1975, fundamental rights have been suspended, severe press censorship imposed, a number of local journalists imprisoned and some foreign journalists expelled. With these measures in effect, the government of Indira Gandhi carried out the first political executions of "independent India" in the backstage of public information.

A Civil Rights Protection Committee which had launched a nationwide campaign for clemency, compared the case of two convicted prisoners to that of Dostovsky, whose death sentence was commuted in the last minute to hard labor by the Czar and appealed to New Delhi saying, "Let it not be said that Czar Nicholas was more compassionate and merciful than the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India." With an ignominious record of repression and murder and now these legally sanctioned killings, the "Sovereign Democratic Republic of India" has joined the ranks of some of the most notorious dictatorships of the world.

We urge all democratic people to condemn these executions of patriots, of whom all of us are so proud, so that such reprehensible acts are not repeated in future.

WHEREVER THERE
IS OPPRESSION
THERE IS
RESISTANCE!

LET US WITH ANGUISH AND ANGER OUR VOWS RENEW

We who held mass meetings, we who signed numerous petitions, we who put up posters in the stillness of the night, we who marched in protest in various parts of this country, have now learnt, with anguish and anger, the profundity of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's observation, "To die for the people is heavier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather." Comrades Jangam Bhoomiah and Kishtagoud are dead - murdered by the fascist Indira regime. And their death weighs on us heavier than Mount Tai.

Forty-eight year old Bhoomiah and 45-year-old Kishtagoud, defiant political workers hated by the zamindars and the police, were seasoned communist revolutionaries who played a leading role in the Telengana Struggle in the '50s. Later, when the CPI (M-L) was formed they participated in party activities, organizing peasant struggles all over Andhra Pradesh. It was during one such struggle in Asifnagar, in 1970, that they rid the people of a landlord known for his oppressive ways. Arrested in the same year, they underwent a "trial" which lasted for over a year and were sentenced to death by the Adilabad Sessions judge in 1971.

The harshness of the sentence immediately called forth a wave of indignation and protest all over the country. Workers, peasants, petty-bourgeois intellectuals, students and various political parties pressed for clemency. The attention of democratic India was focused on the death-row in Murshidabad jail in Andhra Pradesh. Along with genuine democrats, class traitors and betrayers too infiltrated the movement for clemency. Thus, the Right CP, which had no compunction in allowing the government headed by it in Kerala, to appeal for death sentences for the accused who were given life imprisonment by the Sessions Court, in what has come to be known as the Kumil case, could plead 'eloquently' to the Government of India to save the lives of Com. Bhoomiah and Kishtagoud!

In spite of such charlatans, the movement grew in strength and depth. And for a moment everything seemed hopeful. But after many legal battles and two petitions to the President of India, the death sentence was only confirmed.

On December 1, 1975, early in the morning, as the sun rose in all its fiery splendour over this land of congealed misery and exuberant wealth, Com. Bhoomiah and Kishtagoud, dauntless fighters for a classless society, brave sons of the Indian Revolution, marched to their murder.

They marched, just as millions have marched all over the world. With a smile on their lips, perhaps with a song in their hearts, they marched as we have marched many a time in the past in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Franco's Spain, Chiang's China and Salazar's Portugal. They marched as we have marched in recent times, in the colonies of Africa and Asia. They marched in the tradition of Petrograd, Shanghai, Madrid; in the tradition of Peterloo, Haymarket, Punnappa-Vayalar and Naxalbari. They were, besides everything else, of the old guard of Telengana.

With their death new names have been inscribed on the role of honor of the Indian communist revolutionaries. Beginning from Shaheed Bhagat Singh, it stretches to the countless martyrs who have died unknown, unwept, but never unhonored, in the streets of Calcutta, the hills of Srikakulam, the fields and jungles of the Terai...

It was before his departure to Spain and to a new life, that Com. Norman Bethune wrote:

"To that pale moon I raise my angry fist,
And to those nameless dead my vows renew:
Comrades who fall in angry loneliness,
Who die for us - I will remember you."

And as we move on to a new war, -the war against fascism in India--we raise our clenched fists to the memory of Com. Bhoomiah and Kishtagoud.
Inquilab Zindabad!

INDIA--THE PUTSCH AGAINST THE PEOPLE PEACEFULLY, PIECEMEAL

There was skeptic incredulity among some Indians when it was predicted that the 1971 elections might be the last. They were proved wrong not only by the sequence of events unfolding since then, quite true to pattern, but also by Mrs. Gandhi's lieutenants who floated the message of "limited dictatorship". The sounding was done at a time when it was safe to prepare the people for getting used to the idea.

Too, it was proved to the hilt that the Parliamentary Opposition, despites its noises, had been the partner of the ruling Congress party in the game of people's betrayal. It never prepared the people with any program of alternatives. It swore more loudly than the Congress Thugs its undying loyalty to the parliamentary process, which had been under erosion since long. Nothing could suit the ruling party more; they had turned the democratic apparatus into a pitiable nullity. The Indian Press helped all along. While it front-paged the epic details of sex and violence involving Vidya Jains and Shamim Rahmanis of Delhi and Lucknow, it only grudgingly and nearly invisibly reported the arrest and torture of the leftists and freedom fighters in an inconspicuous corner. It earned the brand of slavery and servility as if by choice. The Constitution which the ruling party has been busy manipulating to its purpose uninhibitedly was made into a divine oracle - for the Parliamentary Opposition at the legislatures defensively outswore the Congress allegiance to it.

The diabolic mode of operations of the ruling party was again evident in the cold-blooded executions of two peasant leaders of Andhra Pradesh - Kishtagoud and Bhoomiah - soon after the world emotion and uproar had spent

itself on the execution of Spanish revolutionaries. The gagging of the Indian press and the expulsion of the dozens of foreign correspondents helped them to hang the two patriots conveniently, silently. The gory act was announced after accomplishment in order to warn and terrorize the people.

The consummation and curriculum are shocking. With a Press wholly strangled, with foreign reporters expelled, with the Press Council abolished, with Parliamentary immunity snatched, with a ban on reporting the Oppositions speeches in the Parliament now effective, with a judiciary cowed and subservient to the ruling party, with the Opposition absent from the Lok Sabha (Lower House of the Parliament), and the Congress dissidents behind bars, with civil, military and foreign services manned by Mrs. Gandhi's lackeys, our TRYST WITH DESTINY is complete!

Was this the future we had bargained for? Was the martyrs' blood shed for goons to seize power? Did the Tebhaga and Naxalbari peasantry pay in its blood for our future thus to be clouded? Would Telengana struggle go in vain? Shall we allow to go unredeemed the pledge and dream of the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny, 1943? Shall we shun the path lit for us by the Provincial Armed Constabulary of Lucknow which refused to fire on the striking students two years ago and was then butchered by the military for its conscientious objection? Shall we not avenge the murders of hundreds of political activists and tens of thousands of others who were tortured inside the jails in the early seventies?

Has it not been made amply clear by now that the British transferred the state power to their native collaborators

The first two articles on Comrade G. Kishtagoud and Comrade J. Bhoomiah and the third article on the contemporary affairs in India during their hangings have been communicated to SPARK.

---Editor, SPARK

who continued the pauperization of our people, hogging the privileges, stripping our polity of people's participation, and massacring the registers and dissidents? Shall we yet wait to determine that power was usurped by a clique, that people were betrayed, that our masses remained submerged in the morass of exploitation - relentless and unabashed? Shall we still, for the benefit of morons and mandarins, swear by parliamentary democracy, having been witnesses so long of it prostitution for naked dictatorial purposes?

Is there a way out? How long shall we remain aloof from the mainstream of freedom struggles the world over? Unambiguously and irrevocably the answer is armed struggle, mass mobilization, people's militia, simultaneous and countrywide struggle for freedom and self-respect, for our rights as humans and our duties as Indians. Has not the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) been teaching us this since its very birth in 1969? The path is hard, the preparation no less. But no soft options have been left open to the peace-loving people in India. There were none anywhere.



"An oppressed class which does not strive to learn the use of arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. . . That is such an elementary truth that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it."

--V. I. Lenin, The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution

SOUTH ASIA (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and Afghanistan) is one of the least known regions of the world in the campus community. In cases where it has been portrayed at all through the bourgeois media to the campus community it could never transcend the picture of a region of millions lost in the quagmire of meditation and misery. It must be pointed out that this way of picturing the South Asians to the American people has two principal motivations. Firstly, it tries to assert that South Asians like other "Third World" people are in essence subhuman races, who cannot take care of themselves, thus developing a sense of aggrandisement among the American people and hence dissociating them from the broad masses of South Asia. Secondly, camouflaged by such aroma of condescension, every act of imperialist aggression would appear to the common masses of the United States of America as so called "aid" for South Asia; and those who can see through the smokescreen of such imperialist plot could, at best, form a "silent majority". SPARK (The South Asia Students Association Newspaper) attempts to combat such diabolical imperialist propaganda. It endeavors to enlighten the campus community about the true political, cultural, social and economical situation of the people of South Asia and work towards carpeting a common path for the two peoples.



KISHTAGOUD AND BHOOMIAH

This song has been dedicated to all the patriots who have been murdered, in the fields—on the picket lines—in the jails, by the government of India. G. KISHTAGUUD and J. BHOOMIAH were hanged on December 1, 1975 in Hyerabad jail, Andhra Pradesh, India. They were the first two martyrs whom the government of India killed through a "judicial process", unlike the tens of thousands of other political victims.
—Editor, SPARK

Kishtagoud and His Comrade Jangam Bhoomiah

Are leading the history,
To the victory, from feudal India.
They are two martyrs,
Their names are immortal
Like Charu Mazumdar,
Naxalbari & Telengana.

Kishtagoud and His Comrade Jangam Bhoomiah

Are bringing us closer,
All peasants, workers,
And intelligentsia.
They're leading the toiling masses,
From the neo-colonial clutches,
And are breaking the chain of slavery,
For the people of India.

Kishtagoud and His Comrade Jangam Bhoomiah

They tried a killer, big landlord —
They convicted that killer, grain hoarder
They punished that killer, money lender—
In Andhra, India.

'Cause millions of peasants,
Been deprived of human rights.

And that's why they're building
the people's militia.

Kishtagoud and His Comrade Jangam Bhoomiah

Can never be killed,
Can never be lynched,
'cause they stand like the
Himalayas.

They will be born again,
Wherever grows the grain.

And they'll destroy all hoarders,
and money lenders,
all over India.

Kishtagoud and His Comrade Jangam Bhoomiah

Are two worthy sons,
Who can fulfill the dreams,
of our Mother-India.

They are glory to all,
We can listen to their call,
From the Latin People,
Europeans,
and in Asia, Africa.

*Where Law is Tyranny,
Revolution is Order*