



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST)

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Press Release

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Red Homage to Pattipati Venkateswarlu, a founder leader of the civil liberties movement in Andhra Pradesh!

On June 11, 2011 Pattipati Venkateswarlu, a people's lawyer and founder-secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) breathed his last in Hyderabad. With his death the oppressed people of India, particularly the people of Andhra Pradesh have lost one of their well-wishers, a people's lawyer and a civil rights leaders who had relentlessly fought for their rights. The CC, CPI (Maoist) is paying red homage to Pattipati and is sending its deep condolences to his family, friends, relatives and colleagues in the civil rights movement.

Pattipati was born in Tanguturu of Prakasam district in 1934. He was one of those several mass organization leaders who came forward to work for the rights of the oppressed masses and fighting people in our country in the wake of Naxalbari and particularly in AP during the Srikakulam armed struggle. With the notorious fake encounters which were intensified during the Vengala Rao fascist regime to suppress the Srikakulam struggle and the innumerable atrocities, arrests etc of revolutionaries and innocent people perpetrated by the government mercenary police and paramilitary forces, the need for a civil rights movement was felt more than ever in the 70s. APCLC was formed in 1973 and Pattipati became its first secretary while the legendary poet Sri Sri was its first president. Both of them had toured the length and breadth of AP to build up a strong civil liberties movement and their names became synonymous with this movement during this period. Pattipati was known for his fiery speeches which exposed the cruelest and fascist repressive face of the state. He strove like a one-man army to build up the units of APCLC in all the districts to strengthen the organization. Between 1970 and 1975 it was to him that the victims of state repression turned to, both as a lawyer and as a firebrand civil rights leader who passionately fought for them. His home in Isamiya Bazaar was one of the few places in Hyderabad where the activists of mass organizations, victims of state repression, people on whom false cases were framed, revolutionary writers, civil rights activists etc congregated almost on a daily basis sharing the meagre food, shelter and contemporary revolutionary thoughts with him.

Pattipati would always be remembered for his memorable role in fighting for the annulment of the death sentences of comrades Bhumaiah and Kista Goud, the revolutionary peasant movement activists (pronounced in 1974) and for turning it into a country-wide issue. He was instrumental in involving leaders from various political parties in this campaign which included Jaya Prakash Narayan, Chandra Rajeswara Rao, Bhupesh Gupta, Vajpayee and George Fernandes. A committee was built up with this exclusive demand and he coordinated this from Hyderabad. His efforts in building solidarity for this demand internationally merit special mention. More than 300 intellectuals from all over the world (including Jean Paul Sartre and Tariq Ali) demonstrated in various countries like France and US in support of this demand. He argued their case and brought a stay when the state tried to hang them the first time. He would always be remembered by the movements which are being built the world over for a total ban on death sentences.

When emergency was declared on the midnight of June 25-26 in 1975, Pattipati was the first political activist and civil rights leader to be arrested in AP. During the time he was in jail his family had to undergo many trials and tribulations as he was the sole breadwinner. As Pattipati continued making phone calls, writing letters and sending telegrams even from jail to coordinate civil rights work the government brought a special G.O. banning such things. Between 1970 and 1977 as a lawyer he saved the lives of many revolutionary leaders and hundreds of activists whenever they were illegally arrested and were in the danger of being 'encountered' by the state. After the emergency Pattipati continued as a lawyer and campaigned hard for including the 'Right to Work' in the fundamental rights till his last breath. He remained a people's lawyer till the end.

Though Pattipati was not active in the civil rights movement after the lifting of emergency, he continued to sympathize with the revolutionary movement and believed in Marxism. The Central Committee of CPI (Maoist) pays red homage to Pattipati for his role in building the civil rights movement in AP and his role as a people's lawyer during one of the darkest periods of repression in the state between 1970 and 1977. Our party sees the struggle for democratic rights of the oppressed people by comrades like Pattipati and civil rights organizations as an integral part of the overall fight against feudalism, comprador bureaucratic capitalism and imperialism for a new democratic society where all rights of the oppressed people are guaranteed. At a time when an unprecedented country-wide multi-pronged offensive in the name of Operation Green Hunt has been unleashed in the form of 'War on People' by the fascist Indian ruling classes and every single right won by the people and civil rights movements through years of struggles are being curbed, it is necessary to remember the services rendered by civil rights leaders like Pattipati who fought for these rights. At a time when there is a need for the civil rights movement in the country to become active more than ever, it is necessary to propagate the struggles and the services rendered by organizations and individuals as part of it which went into creating the present improved and greater democratic awareness about the inalienable rights of the people. The CC is appealing to his family, friends, colleagues in the civil rights movement and people's lawyers to propagate and emulate the services done by him for the oppressed masses of this country so that the younger generation is inspired to work for the rights of the people as inheritors of the struggle legacy.



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