

## Killer Gangs in AP

Over the last decade, the people of Andhra Pradesh have been hearing of killer gangs describing themselves by various names, such as 'Green Tigers', 'Tirumala Tigers', 'Kranti Sena', etc. Now we are hearing of 'Narsa Cobras' and 'Kakatiya Cobras'. Threats are publicly being issued by these outfits, mainly to persons working in civil rights organisations or various mass organisations, alleged by these outfits to be close to the Naxalites. That these are not idle pranksters is attested by the fact that they have owned up to a number of murders.

Green Tigers claimed to have killed T Purushotham and Azam Ali, both of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), in the years 2000 and 2001 respectively. Someone calling himself Singamalai of Tirumala Tigers claimed to have kidnapped and tortured G Laxman of APCLC in the year 2004. The Kranti Sena claimed to have killed a number of rural supporters of the People's War group in the 1990s. One person claiming the name of Haribhushan used to repeatedly threaten Burra Ramulu and other office-bearers of Human Rights Forum (HRF) at Warangal. Now, we hear of the Narsa Cobras who have proclaimed the killing of Kanakachari, teacher and democratic activist of Mahbubnagar district. Apart from killing the above-named persons, these outfits have repeatedly been issuing public statements threatening to kill a long list of activists of various mass organisations.

Though this has been going on for more than a decade now, the government's response has been a deafening silence. Who are these faceless gangs? How can the government of any civilised country turn a blind eye to the presence of self-proclaimed killer groups in the midst of society? How is it that the government has not a word to say about them? In the case of the

Naxalites, the police do a thorough investigation and have in their possession all the personal details of the leaders and cadre of the Naxalite groups. A hunt goes on for them day and night. Many are arrested and some are killed. But how is it that by contrast there is not even an acknowledgement from the government or the police about these gangs? It is as if they do not read the papers and have never seen the claims these outfits make to the authorship of crimes of violence, and the threats they hold out to activists.

Would it be unfair to conclude from this that the government is not unhappy to have these vigilante gangs around? Perhaps because what the government cannot directly do, these anonymous killer gangs can, and the former, if challenged, can pretend to be busily investigating the matter. In all the crimes of violence listed above, some investigation has been done, some individuals have been charge-sheeted, and tried and acquitted by the courts. But there is not a word about the gangs themselves. What has the investigation revealed about the Green Tigers, the Tirumala Tigers, the Kranti Sena, the men called Singamalai and Haribhushan? And what investigation has been taken up about Narsa Cobras and Kakatiya Cobras? As Haribhushan was foolish enough to issue threats even during the "peace period" of 2004-05 when the government could not ignore such complaints, he was identified and arrested. He turned out to be an ex-police constable by the name Javed.

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### Correction

In the letter to the editor, 'Madrasas Misunderstood', February 4, 2006, the gender of Saral Jhingran was wrongly referred to as 'he'. The error is regretted.

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But he had no personal grievance against the HRF whose office-bearers he used to threaten. He was somebody else's tool. Who set him up? Was his criminal activity unknown to the higher-ups of the Warangal police? As for the rest of these gangs, the silence of the government continues.

This is a matter of the credibility of the government as much as the safety and security of the people. After all, the gangs are operating in public and indulging in extortion, threats and homicide in broad daylight.

S JEEVAN KUMAR, K BALAGOPAL  
Hyderabad

## Guha Niyogi

Rahul Banerjee (January 7, 2006) has rightly noted the absence of any reference to the role of socialists and communists in mobilising peasants and industrial workers in Shaibal Gupta's paper on the socio-economic base of political dynamics in Madhya Pradesh (November 26, 2005).

However, Banerjee himself had made only a passing mention of other forms of mobilisations, including that of the mine workers in Dalli-Rajhara.

The role of Shankar Guha Niyogi in mobilising the unorganised workers against their exploitation by the industrialists in that area deserves

special mention. The murder of Guha Niyogi in 1991 by an assassin hired by several industrialists was then widely reported in the media.

However, the sentimental outpourings in the media missed the significant point that Guha Niyogi was essentially a proponent of an alternative development movement and his work provided a model of how the unorganised poor workers from an exploited backward region could be mobilised to bring about real socio-economic changes.

The role and significance of the work of Guha Niyogi and the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha deserve an in-depth study.

A K DASGUPTA  
Hyderabad

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