

# The Troubled Times

## Introduction

The city of Calcutta, India, was a hotbed of political and social unrest in the late 1960s. The city's young people were energized and eager for change, and they found inspiration in the Naxalite movement, a radical left-wing group that advocated for armed revolution. The Naxalites' activities, along with the government's heavy-handed response, led to a period of intense violence and upheaval in Calcutta.

In this book, we will explore the Calcutta movement in all its complexity. We will examine the social and political forces that gave rise to the movement, the diverse backgrounds of the activists involved, and the impact of the movement on Calcutta and beyond. We will also consider the movement's legacy and the lessons that can be learned from it for today's activists.

This book is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the Calcutta movement. Rather, it is a collection of essays that explore different aspects of the movement. The essays are written by a variety of authors, including scholars, activists, and journalists. Each essay offers a unique perspective on the movement, and together they provide a rich and nuanced understanding of this important chapter in Indian history.

We hope that this book will inspire readers to learn more about the Calcutta movement and its legacy. We also hope that it will encourage readers to get involved in their own communities and work for social justice.

The Calcutta movement was a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It was a time of great hope and idealism, but it was also a time of violence and bloodshed. The movement's legacy is still being debated today, but there is no doubt that it was a watershed moment in Indian history.

This book is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to learn more about the Calcutta movement. The essays are well-written and informative, and they provide a comprehensive overview of the movement. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in Indian history, political activism, or social change.

## Book Description

**The Troubled Times** is a comprehensive and thought-provoking exploration of the Calcutta movement, a period of intense political and social unrest in India in the late 1960s. The book features essays by a variety of authors, including scholars, activists, and journalists, each offering a unique perspective on the movement.

The essays in this book examine the social and political forces that gave rise to the Calcutta movement, the diverse backgrounds of the activists involved, and the impact of the movement on Calcutta and beyond. The book also considers the movement's legacy and the lessons that can be learned from it for today's activists.

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**The Troubled Times** is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the Calcutta movement. Rather, it is a collection of essays that explore different aspects of the movement. The essays are written in a clear and accessible style, making them suitable for a wide range of readers.

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This book is a timely and important contribution to the study of the Calcutta movement. It provides a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the movement, and it will be of interest to scholars, activists, and general readers alike.

# Chapter 1: The Spark

## The social and political climate of Calcutta in the late 1960s

Calcutta, India, was a hotbed of political and social unrest in the late 1960s. The city's young people were energized and eager for change, and they found inspiration in the Naxalite movement, a radical left-wing group that advocated for armed revolution.

The Naxalites were a product of their time. India was in the midst of a period of great economic and social change. The country had recently gained independence from British rule, but it was still struggling to find its footing. The economy was stagnant, and there was widespread poverty and unemployment. The government was seen as corrupt and unresponsive to the needs of the people.

In this climate of discontent, the Naxalites offered a radical alternative. They argued that the only way to

achieve real change was through armed revolution. They called for the overthrow of the government and the establishment of a socialist state.

The Naxalites' message resonated with many young people in Calcutta. They were drawn to the movement's idealism and its promise of a better future. They were also attracted to the movement's emphasis on violence. They believed that violence was necessary to break the cycle of poverty and oppression.

The Naxalites' activities quickly attracted the attention of the government. The government responded with a heavy-handed crackdown. Thousands of Naxalites were arrested and imprisoned. Many were tortured and killed.

The government's crackdown on the Naxalites only served to further radicalize the movement. The Naxalites became more determined to overthrow the government, and they began to carry out more violent attacks.

The violence in Calcutta reached its peak in 1971, when the Naxalites launched a series of coordinated attacks on government buildings and police stations. The government responded with even greater force, and the city was soon engulfed in a cycle of violence.

The violence in Calcutta eventually subsided, but the Naxalite movement continued to operate underground. The Naxalites remain a threat to the Indian government today.

The social and political climate of Calcutta in the late 1960s was a complex and volatile one. The city was a hotbed of political and social unrest, and the Naxalite movement was a product of this unrest. The Naxalites' activities had a profound impact on Calcutta, and their legacy continues to be debated today.



# Chapter 1: The Spark

## The emergence of a new generation of activists

The 1960s was a time of great social and political change around the world. In India, the decade began with the Sino-Indian War, which led to a wave of nationalistic sentiment. This was followed by the Green Revolution, which brought new agricultural technologies to India and helped to increase food production. These events created a sense of optimism and hope among many Indians, particularly the young.

In Calcutta, the 1960s saw the emergence of a new generation of activists. These young people were inspired by the ideals of socialism and communism, and they were determined to fight for a more just and equitable society. They were also influenced by the Black Power movement in the United States and the anti-war movement in Vietnam.

The new generation of activists in Calcutta came from a variety of backgrounds. Some were students, while others were workers or farmers. They were united by their common goal of social change.

One of the most important organizations for the new generation of activists in Calcutta was the Students' Federation of India (SFI). The SFI was founded in 1943, but it became increasingly radical in the 1960s. The SFI organized protests against the government and against the Vietnam War. It also provided support for the Naxalite movement, a radical left-wing group that advocated for armed revolution.

Another important organization for the new generation of activists in Calcutta was the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA). The PWA was founded in 1936, but it also became more radical in the 1960s. The PWA published a magazine called "New Age," which featured articles and poems by young writers who

were critical of the government and of the established order.

The new generation of activists in Calcutta played a major role in the Naxalite movement. The Naxalites were a radical left-wing group that advocated for armed revolution. The Naxalites were active in Calcutta and other parts of India in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They carried out a number of attacks on government targets, including police stations and government offices. The Naxalite movement was eventually suppressed by the government, but it had a lasting impact on Indian politics.

The new generation of activists in Calcutta also played a major role in the anti-Vietnam War movement. The anti-Vietnam War movement was a global movement that opposed the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. The movement included people from all walks of life, but it was particularly strong among young people. In Calcutta, the anti-Vietnam War

movement was organized by the SFI and other student groups.

The new generation of activists in Calcutta was a diverse group of young people who were determined to fight for a more just and equitable society. They were inspired by the ideals of socialism and communism, and they were influenced by the Black Power movement in the United States and the anti-war movement in Vietnam. The new generation of activists played a major role in the Naxalite movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement. They also helped to create a new political consciousness in India.

# Chapter 1: The Spark

## The role of art and culture in the protest movement

Art and culture played a vital role in the Calcutta protest movement of the late 1960s. Artists and intellectuals were at the forefront of the movement, using their work to raise awareness of the government's repression and to inspire others to join the fight for social justice.

One of the most important forms of protest art was street theater. Street theater groups would perform short plays and skits in public spaces, often using humor and satire to critique the government and its policies. These performances were often very effective in reaching a wide audience, and they helped to build support for the movement.

Another important form of protest art was music. Musicians wrote and performed songs that expressed

their anger at the government and their hopes for a better future. These songs were often very popular, and they helped to spread the message of the movement to a wider audience.

In addition to street theater and music, other forms of art and culture also played a role in the protest movement. Visual artists created posters and other artwork that was used to promote the movement and to raise awareness of its goals. Writers published articles and books that analyzed the government's policies and called for change.

The role of art and culture in the Calcutta protest movement was significant. Artists and intellectuals used their work to raise awareness of the government's repression, to inspire others to join the fight for social justice, and to provide a sense of hope and solidarity to the movement's supporters.

**This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.**

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