

TELANGANA  
ARMED STRUGGLE  
AND  
THE PATH  
OF  
INDIAN REVOLUTION

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## Preface to the Second English Edition (1982)

There took place many peasant revolts, armed and unarmed, during the British colonial regime. Some of them were mentioned by historians. But there are still more which are yet to see the light of the day. Of late, there have been some attempts on the part of those who were associated with peasant struggles to provide the people an account of them in a way understood them. Quite often such accounts are coloured by the politics they pursue. Same is the case with those who have academic interest in them. They are second to none in having their political views, which again colour their study, narration and in drawing their own conclusions.

There is nothing wrong in having one's views, political or otherwise. If they are wrong, they can be contested, criticised and debated. But it is necessary that there should be some objectivity in the presentation of the struggle and the related problems. Once it is guaranteed one can have his own conclusions with which others may agree or disagree.

Armed struggle in Telangana (1946-51) has been a subject of controversy of a serious nature from September 1948 onwards, when the armed people had to face Union armies of Nehru government. This does not mean that there was no controversy earlier. There was one between communists, who were leading the mass peasant revolutionary movement, and the liberal elements who were outside the purview of the communist movement. The pamphlet (Telangana Armed struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution) deals with some of the important aspects of the controversies which came to the surface throughout the struggle.

Both CPI and CPI (M) have their own understanding of the armed struggle which is

shown that this leadership has taken a parliamentary path in the form of revisionism and neo-revisionism.

We hope this review will give basically a correct understanding of Telangana armed str-

uggle in accordance with the variety of the revisionism they are pursuing. The pamphlet deals with the variety of CPI (M) as expressed by P. Sundarayya's book (Telangana people's Struggle and its Lessons). The pamphlet is a review of the book and as such it has its limitations. I have placed the facts relevant to the subject before the people in general, and the revolutionaries in particular, and have drawn my conclusions whose essence is: the armed struggle in Telangana shows the path of Indian Revolution. The title to the pamphlet is given accordingly. But not all revolutionaries understand Telangana Armed Struggle in the same way as I do or the trend I represent. Though not all sections of the revolutionaries have expressed their opinions on this subject, their practice clearly shows that their understanding is different than what is ours. Since a good number of them are rethinking their policies and practices, we are hopeful that they will finally accept our position.

Chandra Pulla Reddy, presently leader of a group called CPI (M-L), has some thing to say by way of opposing what I wrote in this pamphlet. He has added to his book "*The great Heroic Telangana Struggle*" (The book was published in No. 1931, by way of Post Script, (the post script was written on 23-3-1976), a few pages in which he concentrated his-attack against our line and the position I have taken in the said pamphlet. It is necessary that we explain further our views as the question is one of fundamental importance.

Referring to my pamphlet, he says, "Com. DV has written another book giving his own interpretation of the movement." He is wrong

shown that this leadership has taken a parliamentary path in the form of revisionism and neo-revisionism.

uggle (1946 51) as against neorevisionist understanding provided in P. Sundarayya's book *Telangana people's struggle and its lessons.*

when he says that the pamphlet confines to my interpretation of the movement. It is much more than what he says. It is a brief analysis of the movement itself together with the conclusions whose essence is: Here is the path of Indian Revolution and let us follow it. This cannot be just an interpretation, as the essence of the whole discussion makes it clear.

Long before we wrote this pamphlet, we have worked out a circular "*Lay Foundations for the Struggle Oriented movement*", the "*Immediate Programme*" and "*Some Problems Relating to the people's Movement in Srikakulam*." The first was adopted by the then Andhra PC (Provincial Committee) in October 1968. The latter two were adopted by the convention of communist revolutionaries held in April 1969. They represented a brief outline of the path of Indian Revolution based on the revolutionary experience of Telangana Armed Struggle. Ever since we developed a fulfilled line, which we are practising together with a relentless struggle against all varieties of right and "left" opportunism. It is the official line of our organisation and it has come to stay.

It is a fact that sections of revolutionaries were either with us or united with us by accepting this line and left the organisation at different times. Com. CP and a section of his following belong to this category. They were associated with us in the earlier days, when the line contained in the above-mentioned documents was accepted by the organisation as a whole. In our opinion, these who have parted ways with us could not withstand the rigors of our correct revolutionary line and its various aspects. We have commented on this subject earlier, and we will continue the same in future also.

Therefore, there is no ground of com. CP to say that my pamphlet contains my interpretation of Telangana Armed Struggle. It is more than that. We have summed up the experiences in brief and proved that it shows us the path for Indian revolution. That he does not agree with this is a different matter.

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CP thinks that "From the experience of Telangana Struggle, DV draws wrong lessons,

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that unless the people had distributed the lands of the landlords among themselves, there should be no armed struggle.

"Does the history of Telangana movement, as given in the pamphlet, which was also prepared under his guidance, or according to his own new book sustain this wrong theory of DV?" (P. 501; post script).

There is nothing to show, either in my pamphlet, or in his book which he says, "was also prepared under his (my) guidance", that the conclusions I have drawn from Telangana] armed struggle are wrong. I have written enough on this subject in various pamphlets and books long before I wrote the pamphlet "*Telangana Armed Struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution*". The running theme of what I have written is the same. Since the subject matter was dealt from different angles in relation to the problems we had faced in a given time, it should be all the more easy for him to understand my position clearly and correctly. But, he sticks to his own wrong position which can be seen in his political line itself.

Experience has shown that the same facts can be used for correct as well as wrong conclusions. The revisionists used the same facts to show that the armed struggle against the Nizam was correct, but not against the Nehru government. Neo-revisionists used the same facts to show that it was correct to continue the armed struggle after Union armies entered Telangana, but it was wrong to direct the struggle to overthrow the Nehru government. Late Charu Mejurndar did not agree with "our" (when we were "united") under standing of the Telangana armed struggle and advocated a line of "annihilation of class enemies" and practised it. No wonder if CP has drawn different conclusions from the same facts.

Facts are stubborn to those who take objective view of them, but not for those who look at them with a bias and preconceived notions. Those with objectivity will use the facts to fight against wrong conclusions born out of wrong views. The persons belonging to the latter category treat them as soft ones;

which they think they can trim, mutilate and distort so as to serve their wrong views and practices. Com. CP belongs to this category. Therefore, my agreement with, or guidance to his book need not be a reason why we should draw the same lessons from Telangana armed struggle. Let us see how he faces the "stubborn facts."

He says :

"Will the landlords and their government keep silent with folded hands, when the people are mobilising themselves under the leadership, of the Communists, for anti-landlord struggles, seize the land of the landlords and distributed them among themselves and attack the people only after the distribution of the lands?" (P. 501) ; (Postscript)

He answers his own question as following :

"The experience of any peasant movement shows, that the landlords and their class government, the moment they see the people mobilising themselves for anti-land lord struggles, will use their repressive machine to suppress the movement, and the people will be forced (to) defend their movement with all available weapons depending on the preparedness of the people. But the movement should not stop with this: It should be advanced to the stage of land distribution on the basis of which alone prolonged Armed Agrarian Revolutionary struggle could be conducted." (P. 501; Postscript).

Here he bundles together so many issues and forms of struggle so as to confuse the readers in general, and revolutionary ranks in particular. But his work does not provide any opportunity for such a confusion, in spite of certain inaccuracies.

Neither this is the first time for him to raise this question nor for me to answer it. He has nothing to say about my previous answers. Therefore while asking him to refer those answers, I am adding one more.

The book (*The Great Heroic Telangana Struggle*) mentions about the communists' mass revolutionary activities in the following few sentences :

"All the youth with left outlook, and those with Marxist consciousness began to make us of Andhra Mahasabha as a platform and began to work with the people.

"With this the very character of the Andhra Mahasabha began to change. Up to that time the rightists in Andhra Mahasabha had confined themselves to development of Telugu language and cultural activities. They used to pass some pious resolutions on the demand of the poor peasants. But the Marxists began popularising these resolutions among the peasants and mobilising them to fight for these demands under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha. In a short time, the Andhra Mahasabha grew into a really people's organisation

"The rightists in Andhra Mahasabha were afraid of this growth of the movement; they tried to resist it but failed. Slowly by the time of the Bhuvanagiri Mahasabha Conference (1944), the Andhra Mahasabha came under the leadership of the Marxists." (p. 5-6)

This is not a brief account, not to speak of a comprehensive one, of what happened during 1941-44, so that one can understand the link between the earlier and the latter part of the movements. At the same time we can find an idea of what had happened in those days. As against this, a brief out-line of the situation and the nature of the work done by us in those days was given in my pamphlet (See Chapter: II), and an article on "*The Martyrdom of Komaruyya: A turning point in Telangana people's Revolutionary Movement.*" (The Proletarian Line, August 1979) gives more details on the subject.

Even then there is an idea in the above-mentioned extracts that "the Marxists began popularising these resolutions among the peasants and mobilising them to fight for these demands under the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha." What are the demands? What was the nature of the mobilisation? The nature of the demands was given in a subsequent para as following :

"After the Bhuvanagiri conference, branches of the Andhra Mahasabha, in the name of 'Sangham' were formed in many villages. A

big agitation was started throughout the State, against bonded labour, illegal taxes, against compulsory collection of levy grain, and against forcible eviction of peasants from their lands.' (p. 6)

It is a fact that peasant struggles were unleashed after Bhuvanagiri Maha Sabha (11th Session : 1944), but it is not correct to say that the organisation had made an advance and the above mentioned demands were taken up only after the conference. These issues were taken up and local "Sanghams" were organised even earlier. Though there was some agitation in other districts (distribution of pamphlets, representation to the officials), revolutionaries in Nalgonda district, more so in Suryapet Taluk, carried on an intense mass revolutionary work on the basis of demands against bonded labour, illegal taxes and against collection of levy grain and against forcible eviction of tenants from their tenancy lands. (CP's book does not differentiate between a peasant with his own land and a tenant with tenancy land). They so led strikes of the workers in the town of Suryapet.

When the revolutionaries began to work intensely, the agitation took the form of class struggle against the landlords as well as the government even in early phases. They did not sit with folded hands, to use CP's own words. They foisted cases on the revolutionaries and put them in the jail. They terrorised the people by saying that they should not join 'Sangham'; otherwise they would meet the same fate as was the case with the revolutionaries.

Important among these struggles was the struggle of the tenants to defend their tenancy lands from being evicted. That is how we faced the land problem from the beginning. In the same way, we faced repression in the form of cases, and jails, together with a propaganda of mass terrorisation. There were no armed mercenaries of landlords, or the police attacking the people, and there was no mass resistance, not to speak of armed resistance. People joining in the Sangham was the form of organised resistance which did not need any weapons like sticks and slings. It should be noted that

Nizam's government was in no way lagging behind the Congress government in taking repressive measures.

Therefore this part of our experience did not confirm the theory that every mass mobilisation brings in its turn the attack of the armed police and mercenaries of the landlords. In the same way, this does not confirm that armed defence, in one form or the other, becomes necessary as soon as we begin our mass work and mass mobilisation etc.

In the same way, the rightists in Andhra Mahasabha began to resist us, not at the stage of the popularisation of this or that demand. On the other hand, they began their onslaught when our mass mobilisation took the form of class struggle which was directed against their class interests i.e., the interest of landlords and mill owners. The struggle between the two contending forces (revolutionaries and the rightists) continued for two long years, as fiercely as it was between the people on the one side and the landlords and the government on the other. Therefore, it was not an easy task for the communists to take over Andhra Mahasabha by the time of Bhuvanagiri Andhra Mahasabha (1944).

CP's book mentions this aspect of the movement rather casually, and without any cohesion. Therefore, it does not give a deeper understanding of the movement when it was in a preliminary stage. One should have this to have a clear and correct understanding of the latter phase of the movement which developed in Jonagann Taluka, about which some details were given in the book.

This is a basic weakness in his understanding of the Telangana people's movement of this stage. He does not understand that in the preliminary phase of the movement, the people's weapon was organising themselves in 'Sangham'. Their preparedness was to get mobilised in struggles and to use the then existing laws in anticipation that some justice would be done through legal process together with the struggle. We adopted tactics accordingly and met with success to a greater extent.

Again he confuses the two phases of the movement, and draws wrong conclusions to suit his wrong theory of 'armed struggle for self-defence', to avoid the distribution of the land of landlords. Though there is no basis for it in his book, he insists on this theory. Here is an extract from his post - script in which he indicates how he confuses one with the other.

"The experience of the Telangana movement itself proves the correctness of this position. Starting with the anti-feudal struggles of the peasants against bonded labour, illegal exactions, compulsory levy of grain, then it spread to the re-occupation of illegally grabbed lands of the landlords, and against the eviction of the peasants, and when the landlords, the Nizam government used its police and military and used the Razakar Goondas to suppress this peasant movement, the peasants took up arms under the leadership of the party to resist this landlord and Nizam rulers' offensive. Thus from the anti-feudal struggles of the peasants, a peasant armed struggle developed against the rule of the Nizam, and only when the Nawab of Nizam refused to join the Indian Union, the question of land distribution was taken up and Armed Agrarian Revolution developed on the basis of regular guerilla warfare, resulting in the distribution of 10 lakhs of landlords' land among the people. Gram Raj was established in about 3,000 villages".

(Pages : 50-51; Postscript)

Here he attempts to sum up the entire Telangana movement upto Sept. 1948, but again he provides a wrong understanding of the movement itself. It is not a fact that the question of land distribution was taken up only when the Nizam refused to join Indian Union. Neither the facts mentioned in his book prove this. This is how he distorts the facts to suit his wrong theory.

There is nothing to show that "The experience of Telangana movement itself proves the correctness" of the position he took up. Armed forces of the Nizam (government) and the armed mercenaries of the landlords did not

appear on the scene as long as the movement was directed against bonded labour, illegal exactions, malpractices connected with compulsory levy of grain, and against the eviction of tenancy lands. But the government foisted cases against revolutionaries and the village leadership, by taking sides with the landlords. Therefore we cannot say that they were just anti-feudal struggles and nothing more. They were anti-government struggles, whose immediate objective was not overthrowing the Nizam's government. On the other hand, they were struggles objectively meant for preparing the people for it. Therefore, they did not stop at adopting legal forms. On the other hand they combined them with extra-legal forms: (mass mobilisation, minimising the legal procedure, minimising the need to approach officials etc.). This was the phase when revolutionaries organised the people's movement in general, and the tenants' and town workers' movement in particular. Early phase of the peasant movement bore this characteristic.

We adopted legal forms of struggle not because we had illusions on the law. On the other hand, people had legal illusions, and we had used legal forms as long as they had such illusions. Our practice showed that we relied on organised mass movement, and legal forms were secondary although this phase. This continued upto early phase (i.e., the end of 1945) of the peasant movement in Janagaon Taluka.

The Mundrai incident which took place during this period does not indicate the beginning of the armed resistance as CP wants to make out. The incident as narrated in the book is as following :

"At this time, one land issue came before the movement in the village of Mundrai. The lambadi peasants of the village were tilling about 30-40 acres of land belonging to Katari Ramachandra Rao, a notorious cruel landlord. When the term of the period of occupation granted to the landlords was over, the landlords came with a gang of rowdies to reoccupy their land. All the lambadi peasants organised themselves for resistance. The reserve police

and the goondas of the landlords on one side and the lambadi peasants armed with sticks, other village implements and red flags on the other side—all were ranged one against the other for a fight: When the reserve police were ready to shoot, the peasants had to retreat, though with great unwillingness." (P. 6)

It is a fact that such an incident has taken place, though some of the facts and the case itself was not correctly understood and presented. It is twisted and distorted in such a way that the issue involved cannot be understood. This was as follows :

1. This is not the "one" issue which came before the movement at the time. I had the opportunity of surveying the problems related to the feudal exploitation in about 40 villages, most of them were situated in Janagaon Taluka. During my survey, I found that the main problem is acute and the peasants including the tenants were thirsting for land, especially that which the landlords, money and grain-lenders expropriated. They were demanding the land once they enjoyed, either as owners or as tenants, back in their possession. This was one such land.

2. It was a tenancy land with an area of 30-40 acres of wetland which was cultivated by lambadi (Banjara) peasants from a long time under a special system of land tenure. They were evicted by the landlord before they joined Andhra Mahasabha. They were of the opinion that they have a legal right over the land. Therefore they demanded that the land should be restored to them.

3. The landlords of the area were united. So were the peasants. While we were considering the various aspects of this issue, the rest of the landlords, together with their armed mercenaries, helped the concerned landlord to plough the land; their swoop was sudden and the tenants, including ourselves, were unaware of their plans and were unprepared to meet the situation.

4. All the peasants (tenants) wanted to stop the landlords ploughing the land. They came out of their houses and to the land. The

sticks they had were of routine use. They were restive. After seeing that the landlords came there with superior strength, they retreated.

CP misses all these important points and comes out with wrong conclusions that the peasants of Mundrai were ready to put up armed resistance. He did not know that they had legal illusions and they wanted the restoration of the land through legal means (Ploughing the land even after being evicted helps legal proceedings). Therefore, it is correct to say that the restoration of the evicted land had come on the agenda by the end of 1944, but not the armed resistance which needs *casting away* the legal illusions.

He does not differentiate between a tenancy land and the land under the ownership of the peasant. Demand for restoration of tenancy land once evicted does not mean restoration of ownership. Instead of the landlord continues to be the owner of the land and the tenant, a cultivator paying him a rent. The landlords were not ready even for this because they did not want any rights to accrue to the tenants even as tenants, either by the then existing laws or by any future law.

By then (1944), we could defend the land of the tenants under their possession by combining mass action with legal forms of struggle (using the courts and revenue officials). But it was not possible to restore already evicted land. It was possible only during the armed struggle in 1946 and onwards.

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There was another category of lands, which the peasants wanted to be restored to themselves. They were the lands which once belonged to the poor peasants, agricultural labourers and some times middle peasants also, of the village. The landlords, money and grain-lenders more often they are combined into one - had grabbed the lands of the poor by adopting various means, utilising their poverty and ignorance and backwardness, and became owners in the legal sense. But we characterised them as illegally seized lands. During my survey (1944), peasants

came forward to narrate the miserable conditions under which they had to part with their lands, more often under duress, and demanded their restoration. They expected that "Sangham" will take some measures to restore their lands, implying legal forms of struggles. They were not yet ready to seize lands by means of an organised struggle. They came forward to seize these lands after one and a half year i. e. , by middle of 1946. Obviously it meant that they could cast away their legal illusions during this period, learning by their own experience.

But CP has a different and wrong understanding of the problem, without any basis. It is expressed in the following :

*"The great people's resistance, with locally available weapons, against the landlord government offensive using the military, that took place in Kadivendi, pasha Suryapeta, Balemela and Mallareddygudem was on the issues of landlord oppression, Razakar gondaism, forcible levy of grain and other feudal exploitations. At this period the land question has not become central issue of the struggle, but the people had already taken up arms against the Razakars and the Nizam military in defence of their villages. Even at this stage, the people fought with sticks, stones, radisela(sling), chilly powder and other locally available weapons. "*  
(Post Script: P.5) *Emphasis ours)*

Here he gives the readers a highly distorted picture of the relevant phases of the movement. Even his book, with all its limitations, does not provide any factual basis for this conclusion, not to speak of my own pamphlet.

The "offensive" he mentions started after July 1946, when Komarayya was shot dead in the Kadivendi village. The firings by Nizam's military at Balemela, pata Suryapeta, Mallareddy gudem villages took place towards the end of 1946, (There were no Razakars at this phase of the movement. They came on to the scene only after August 1947. He confused the phases in the post script). This was the period when the lands about 3,000 acres were distributed among the poor for the first time. As I mentioned earlier, the land issue came to the surface in 1944 itself. But the peasants came into action in 1946 and it became the central issue of the struggle. Restoration of illegally seized lands, of all varieties, was the basic demand of this phase and it was realised

during this period, which lasted about five months in areas where the struggle was going on. Simultaneously with the land distribution, revolutionary committees at village level had been set up to organise land distribution, to provide free justice etc. The Nizam's offensive with the Armed police and military and our organising armed resistance by people's volunteer squads armed with locally available weapons-sticks, slings etc. as mentioned above - started in this phase of land distribution and not earlier.

Therefore it is wrong to say that the period of 1946 (July-December) was a period when the landlord oppression was the main issue. It was the main issue till the later half of 1944.

Here is what he says in his book :

*"During this time (after the murder of Komarayya, July 1946-DV), the question of those lands which the landlords have forcibly taken away from the people, either through violence or as payment for their debts, came prominently to the agenda. The party and the Andhra Maha Sabha took up this issue intensify this movement and take it to a higher level.*

*"With this slogan the movement reached a new higher stage. Every where the people, especially in Huzurnagar, Suryapeta and Junagan Taluks boldly came forward to reoccupy such lands under the illegal occupation of landlords.*  
(P. 9 - 10)

These lines written by him alone contradict what he says in his post script by way of drawing conclusions. Here he admits that, after the death of Komarayya, the question of lands forcibly seized by landlords 'came prominently to the agenda' and the movement reached 'a new higher stage'. Whereas his conclusion is quite opposite in the post script in which he says "At this period the land question has not become the central issue of the struggle". This is how the stubborn facts are made flexible to suit his line of 'armed struggle without distribution of land.'

Again he states that "people had already taken up arms against the Razakars and the Nizam military.....". He does not know that there were no Razakars on the scene during 1946 resistance movement. But there



was Nizams armed police and the military which conducted the raids on the villages. As mentioned in his book, this was the time when the communists took up the question of seizing back the lands forcibly seized by landlords.

Therefore his conclusion that armed resistance had begun and developed even when there was no land question is wrong, and the facts provided in his book conclusively prove that his contention is wrong.

## 5

There is another incident, mentioned in his book, which gives a wrong understanding of the land problem. Immediately after commenting on the tenants' struggle of Mundrai, he says as follows :

*"Another such struggle took place in the village of Palakurthi. The Deshmukh of Visnur, Kapaka Ramachandra eddy, tried to forcibly occupy the land under the occupation 'Chukali Ilamma. He sent his goondas to forcibly take away standing crops. 18 peasants under the leadership of the adhra Maha Sabha armed with sticks and other village implements fought to save the standing crops of the poor peasant. The goondas were beaten back and crop was safely restored to Ilamma. (P.6.)"*

The nature of the incident is quite different from that of peasants' (tenants) struggle of Mundrai. Therefore it is not correct to say that the Deshmukh tried to occupy her land by way of taking it away for himself. He used his armed mercenaries to snatch her standing crop so that her husband and the two sons, who were in jail due to a foisted case, are forced to surrender before himself because they were defiant to the Deshmukh. This was the context when the party helped her in protecting the crop, with the help of leading comrades and some local comrades from adjacent taluka i.e. Suryapet. They were not local peasants, or volunteers from the local people. We had to bring them from outside, because people of the village and of adjacent villages were terrorised by the Deshmukh's mercenaries.

Therefore the question arising out of this issue was how to face mass terrorisation of feudal landlord's goondas, and not defending the land. Though we could not defend the

crop (it was snatched away by the mercenaries before it reached her house). we could face the terrorisation and silenced the mercenaries by mobilising volunteers on a big scale from the adjacent villages. This was the starting point of our mobilisation of militants against the landlords and mercenaries.

This being the situation, we had come to the conclusion that we have to regain the land forcibly occupied by the landlords, through the struggles and not by legal means. But we had to wait for more than an year till they cast away legal illusions.

## 6

CP makes another vain attempt to "prove" his theory of 'armed struggle without land distribution' by quoting a few more sentences from my pamphlet (*Telangana Armed struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution*). I have mentioned three incidents in all. Two are related to Akunooru and Machireddypalli villages where people en masse resisted the police and government officials with available weapons i.e., sticks, to defend their food grains from being taken away forcibly (compulsory procurement of levy). The purpose of their mentioning was to show that the people had cast away their legal illusions and were ready to use force to realise their demand of refusing to part with compulsory levy of food grains. The government was collecting the grain according to the law, though there had been excesses althrough. Instead of obeying the law they defied and used force to realise their demand. Here the forms of struggle and the nature of the demands are the issues involved.

The third incident I mentioned was about the death of Komarayya, people's resistance to the mercenaries of the landlords and the distribution of land to the peasants. This was meant to show that the armed resistance and the land distribution were inter-connected. This is how I summed up these experiences:

*"Learning from the experience of revolutionary mass activities during these three incidents, the district leadership took the decision to put up armed resistance, against armed hordes of landlords and the police. It has decided to set up*

village committees, which functioned as village soviets and an armed volunteer corps was organised under its leadership. The demands of the people: (i) Return all illegally seized lands by landlords (ii) Return all illegal exactions either in the form of money or grain by landlords (iii) Free justice to all by the village committees (iv) Special People's courts to be set up to try oppressive and cruel landlords etc." (Armed Struggle in Telangana and the Path of Indian Revolution, P.9)

This is how I combined the three incidents and explained how we summed up their experiences and provided the correct direction to the new and higher stage of the movement, by formulating the above demands. It is true that I have mentioned the three incidents separately, one after the other, and divided them into two parts. Akunooru, Machireddypalli incidents being of one category — spontaneous armed resistance to forcible collection of the grain; the other category was organised resistance leading to land distribution. And then, I went on to sum up all the three. Therefore his contention that what I wrote in this respect supports his theory of 'armed struggle without land distribution etc.' has no basis whatsoever. On the contrary it goes against it. One can further see how he confuses and misleads the readers in general and the revolutionaries in particular. After conceding what I said in the above mentioned extract, he says :

"With this decision (contained in the above extract), even according to DV, the resistance spread to about 150 villages, and in the course of this resistance struggle, about 3000 acres of land under illegal occupation by the landlords was distributed among the people." (P. 52. Post Script).

Outwardly it seems as though we have nothing to oppose in what is written here, because it is a fact that the resistance had spread to about 150 villages. It is also a fact that about 3000 acres of land was distributed as mentioned above. But he does not explain the interrelation so that he may have an opportunity to draw wrong conclusions, to suit his theory, as subsequent paras show.

What had happened was after the Kadivendi incident, in all the villages, the land was distributed first and the resistance began

subsequently. Formation of *Grana Rajyas*, organising the resistance squads and distribution of land took place almost simultaneously. There was any delay -- often by a week or ten days -- it was due to practical reasons i.e. delay in the party organiser reaching the village to organise land distribution. Therefore to say that the land was distributed "in the course of resistance struggle", as CP says, is wrong and misleading in the sense that the resistance helped the distribution of land and not the land distribution helped the resistance. It is here he twists and distorts the course of the struggle to substantiate his wrong theory. This is how he slides into the mire :

"If we remember that these events have been taken place, and the above decisions have been taken in 1946, it only shows that the people have taken up locally available weapons to resist landlords and the government forces, even on the issue of anti-feudal issues, even before the distribution of the land of the landlords was not yet the central issue of the struggle." (P. 52. Post Script)

Here he comes out more openly, to deny the role of land distribution. We have shown earlier that except in Kadivendi, land distribution had taken place before armed resistance had begun and the armed resistance was put up to defend the gains of the movement in which the land issue was the basic one. One can see that by distributing about 3000 acres of land, the land issue had already become a central issue. How can he say that it has not yet become a central issue? He can say this only if he could suppress stubborn facts. But he cannot.

## 7

To go back to his blind assertion, which is self-contradictory as well. While talking about the "Experiences of Telangana Movement", which has become a fashion nowadays for comrades like CP, he says :

*Thus from the anti-feudal struggles of the peasants, a peasant armed struggle developed against the rule of the Nizam, and only when the Nizam refused to join the Indian Union, the question of land distribution was taken up, and Armed agrarian Revolution developed on the basis of*

*guerrilla warfare, resulting in the distribution of 10 of landlords' land among the people. Gramraj was issued in about 3,000 villages." (Post Script - P. 51)*

Here also he puts the cart before the horse, not a fact that the question of land distribution was taken up "only when the Nawab Nizam refused to join Indian Union." In fact, it was taken up long before this development. But it was interrupted due to severe recession. It was again taken up after August 1947. He had refused to join Indian Union, before August 1947. The decision of armed struggle against Nizam was taken up some time after August 1947. We were of the opinion that land distribution should again be taken up, together with anti-Nizam armed struggle, so that the struggle may successfully advance. As the right opportunist trend was dominant in the leadership, the proposal was accepted. As a result, it took no time for struggle to get fizzled out. When it was on the verge of fizzling out, we again insisted on a programme of land distribution. Then the leadership conceded to distribute the land of active pro-Nizam landlords, with a ceiling of 500 acres for the rest of the landlords. By insisting this concession -- because the leadership was unwilling for this measure also -- we gained distribution of land extensively, which gave an impetus to the armed struggle. By learning up these experiences, we proposed that the ceiling should be lowered to 200 acres if our proposal was accepted. To the extent this programme of land distribution was implemented, the armed struggle took strong roots among the people, and a regular guerrilla warfare developed more systematically.

There were areas where there was no land distribution but an attempt was made to carry out armed struggle against the Nizam. But it could not withstand the Nizam - Razakar offensive and was fizzled out in no time.

We have earlier mentioned that in Nalgonda district, the land distribution was taken up and armed resistance was organised to defend the land. Therefore it is not a fact that the land question was taken up when the Nizam refused to join Indian Union. It was there even earlier,

but CP refused to accept it, because it goes against his wrong theory. Now again he subordinates the land question to the anti-Nizam struggle. Though there was what was called anti-Nizam armed struggle, its survival depended on the land question. Thus the anti-Nizam struggle subordinated itself to the land question.

He again puts the cart before the horse when he says "Armed agrarian revolution developed on the basis of regular guerrilla warfare." It is true that a successful advance of guerrilla warfare deepens the agrarian revolution, but it is not true to say that agrarian revolution is subordinated to the guerrilla warfare, because guerrilla warfare cannot survive, not to speak of advance, without implementing a programme of land distribution in accordance with the level of consciousness of the peasantry. Though, both of them become interdependent at a certain stage of the movement, guerrilla warfare can not take precedence over land distribution. We can provide numerous examples from the Telangana people's armed struggle, apart from what is written in his book and my pamphlet.

Thus there is no ground for him to stand upon, to prove his theory of 'armed struggle without land distribution.' But still he sticks to this theory, not by the strength of his correct analysis and conclusions, but by suppressing, distorting and twisting the facts.

## 8

It is not out of place to comment on his views on the Tactical Line document of 1951, as expressed by him in the postscript of his book. This is how he writes on the issue.

*"The 1951 programme and tactical line, in spite of certain defects, never said anything to justify the withdrawal of the movement" (Post Script: P. 44, Emphasis ours)*

It is a fact that the documents mentioned do not justify the withdrawal of armed struggle. I have mentioned this in my review of Sundararaya's book and there is nothing new in CP's arguments.

But his attitude towards the document. A Note on the Indian situation in 1951, which is popularly known as tactical line and Kishan document, is ambiguous combined with duplicity. He says there are "certain defects." Does it mean that it is basically correct? There are certain grounds by which we can say that he accepts it with some reservations.

I have commented briefly on this document in my pamphlet while criticising Sundarayya's views. Elsewhere we had explained why we reject it, since the document rejects the path of Peoples War and advocates a combination of armed uprisings of workers in the cities (Insurrection), and partisan warfare in the rural side. (See Fundamental Line and the Question of Unity, P. L. 7; Page 5 of Supplement). Further we have also commented on CP's views and practice in relation to the "Kishan document." But CP is silent on the subject. Does rejecting the path of Peoples War amount to having "certain defects"? Is it not a fundamental question on which one has to take up a position?

The document advocates partisan warfare as a form of struggle for partial demands, which more or less coincides with his views. It means that the partisan warfare can be organised without land distribution. Therefore he is silent over the basic question in the document, i.e., rejection of Peoples War, and says that it has "certain defects." It should be clear that, the CPI (M), whether it is inolementing it or not, claims that it is their official line. As such, we can not accept it not only because it is CPI (M)'s official line, but it rejects the path of People's War. In fact the central point in the document is this.

Though he claims to have accepted the path of People's War, he has never rejected this document in clearest possible terms on this basis. How are we understand him?

He says something about the achievements of the agrarian movement which, in the main, is related to the distribution of forest land running into some lakhs of acres. While we have our reservations as to the veracity of the claims, there are no answers to the following questions:

1. There were forest lands occupied by girijan and non - girijan peasants even before armed struggle in Telangana commenced. The government was in no hurry to evict them for its own reasons. What is the quantum of such types of lands which are included in these "lakhs"?

2. There is nothing to show that the landlords' land was distributed. The landlords in "Godavary vally" are safe with their modern agricultural farms, where they are growing commercial crops and minting money. How is that there lands are not touched?

3. Their reports speak of rise in wages of forest labourers. Though there is much to be said about the artificial nature of these struggles for wages, one thing is clear, that their level of consciousness is not growing. How is that such a situation still continues?

All this goes to show that any movement cannot be characterised as a revolutionary movement. And having some armed squads does not mean that they are organising guerilla warfare. We speak of armed struggle only in relation of seizure of power, and the consciousness of the people required for this purpose. CP's theory of 'armed struggle without land distribution', 'armed struggle for self - defence' etc. does not and cannot answer this fundamental question.

Our theory answers this fundamental question, in that it is related to the seizure of power and consciousness of the people for this purpose. Our summing up the experiences of Telangana armed struggle is quite in accordance with this and we assert that it is correct. This is what we explained in the Telangana armed struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution.

### S

CP has something to say on my performance at the time of withdrawal of armed struggle and split with CPI (M). I will have the occasion to comment on my performance at the time of the split in a suitable place. For the present, I will confine to the former i.e., matters related to Telangana struggle.

He gives long quotations from my pamphlet and comments that there is no ground to believe that I opposed withdrawal of armed struggle, because there is nothing in writing; on the other hand, I have associated my name with the documents which defended withdrawal of armed struggle etc. He also says that I claimed false opposition after Chinese Communist Party condemned the withdrawal of Telangana struggle. He further says that I had not discussed the subject in the then existing Provincial Committee (PC) before writing his book on Telangana. And so on and so forth.

There is a Telugu saying that 'a tree that bears fruit is hit by stones, and not a tree which does not bear anything'. We, the communist revolutionaries of Telangana who had the opportunity to lead the armed struggle to the last, have undergone the same experience. The present-day revisionists slandered those who took a leading part in continuing the struggle after Nehru's armies entered Telangana on a counter-revolutionary mission in a way unknown in the history of the communist movement (1950-51). In the same way the neo-revisionists had slandered us in a way the occasion permitted them. Charu Majumdar's group did not lag behind in this respect. And when CP had entered the scene. The arguments they put forward are almost one and the same. Strangely enough, those who were idling away their time, and those who were sniping at the struggle, were free from any criticism. Sometimes they were held in high esteem.

I have already explained my position in the pamphlet by way of replying Sundarayya, which he did not accept and came forward with so many arguments, which he mentioned in his post-script for his book.

Let us see his position from a different angle before replying his question straightly. Opposing I have a written note opposing the withdrawal of armed struggle and dissociated myself with some of the documents in which my name was included. Where is the guarantee that CP does not come out with another

question: Why have you confined yourself to submitting a note? Why have you not continued the armed struggle, by reorganising the squads? If that was done, where is the guarantee that he does not come forward with another question: Why was it that you could not win victory? Such questions are likely to follow indefinitely.

It may look like taking his question to the absurd limits. But it is not so. I would like to point out that such questions are raised, when the leaders of various groups, revolutionary or otherwise, perfected the techniques of splits, disruption, slander and all that is harmful to the revolutionary movement and the organisation. We have a history of decade and more before us which has provided us such experiences, and one can speak on their basis. CP is no exception to this.

Supposing, utilising my differences on the question of withdrawal of struggle, which could not be kept secret in view of the inner-party situation existing at that time, the government killed many more comrades, what would have been the situation? One may say what if, if a few more were killed after about 4000 were killed in the struggle? Of course it was a matter of judgment, right or wrong. I had it on this side.

Let me take up the question and answer it straightly. The period of Telangana people's revolutionary movement under discussion is ten years (1941-51), in which the period of armed struggle forms 5 years. During this period, I have done so many things by way of contributing to the revolutionary movement, which have not seen the light of the day.

My contribution is there and it cannot be undone by anybody. In the same way, I could not do certain things, because of the limitations imposed by my experience and the situation existing at that time. I gained experience in building revolutionary movement, revolutionary organisation and organising armed struggle. But I did not gain the necessary

experience in inner-party struggle. The concepts of democracy, centralism, discipline, were all guided by needs of the mass movement within the framework of the revolutionary principles of party organisation. If I thought that it serves no purpose to raise the question after the withdrawal of the armed struggle was a *fait accompli*, it could at best be my shortcoming, born out of inexperience in the concerned field of activity. The same was the case with myself associating with some documents. Perhaps CP has different views about the interests of the movement and the organisation than what I have.

He brings in the Chinese condemnation of the withdrawal of armed struggle to question the genuineness of my position. It is true that a good number of leaders switched over to the revolutionary line, not because they had a conviction in it, but because it was having an upper hand in the organisation. It is better for CP to ask himself where he stood at the time of Police Action (September, 1948), and what was he at the time of withdrawal of armed struggle and what was his position after CPC had condemned it.

If one goes through my writings ever since the break with CPI (M), one can find that the ideas they contain are not borrowed and paraphrased from either Chinese writings or somewhere else. Such ideas were there even earlier, born and developed out of experiences of revolutionary movement in Telangana. The only thing that I had done is to further develop and elaborate to meet the requirements of the situation. The study and experience of the last three decades has its share also in it. Therefore the ideological debate which took place had given me an opportunity to express my views, which were more in the form of raw material.

He says that I should have discussed this question at the time of writing his book or even earlier. There were a number of questions to be discussed, but we could not discuss either due to pressure of work or some of the leaders wanted to evade the discussion of the

past. I did not bring it for discussion because thought it was not a controversial question. It remained so as long as we were united. The controversy had come up only in 1976, when he was treating us as an enemy.

As we go into the past, there is little that we have in writing and there is much which is unwritten. We cannot take everything to be correct in what is there in writing. In the same way, we cannot ignore or set aside what is unwritten. There is much to be dug out from what is unwritten to see that our own experience of the past is utilised for the future. The same applies to the past decade and more.

Therefore I have no regrets to what I have written in my pamphlet, which CP had mentioned in his post-script.

## 10

In this context, I have to say something about CP. Some writer in the Mainstream (11-7-1981) had raised the question that: how is that Chandra Pulla Reddy could not develop an agrarian revolutionary movement in the districts of Rayalaseema (Kurnool, Ananthapur, Cuddapah, Chittoor). It would have been better if he chose to reply this question. But he did not. It is a fact that he could not undertake this task through out his party life in that area. In fact, he left the field to the landlords and he was whiling away his time. This was the time when we took up the struggle against feudalism in Nalgonda, which has a unique place in the Telangana armed struggle.

We have not left the question of these districts at that, we have laid down a basic line for these districts in the following way:

“Rayalaseema Areas :

*The repression by the landlords is very severe in this region. Though there are areas of commercial crops and fruit gardens in this region, the landlord domination is very common. There is serious discontent among the people against the landlordism. Owing to the party's failure to shape this discontent into a mass movement, the people are falling prey to the village feuds. Murders have become a routine affair in this region. We should, therefore,*

*build a powerful anti-feudal peasant movement in these areas. This movement should base itself on poor peasants and agricultural labour.*

*"Today, all our work in this region is confined to the legal limitations. We should gradually give it a struggle orientation. We should begin to mobilise the rural masses on demands. We should unite the people, having consciousness, on the class basis. We should, in this way, organise a powerful anti-feudal movement."*

(Lay Foundations for a Struggle-Oriented Mass Movement; a party letter dated 1st September, 1968; See PL No. 3)

We can add something more to the situation in the districts. The programme was worked out as long back as 1968. CP was in full agreement with it. But he did not implement it. Therefore he kept himself away from the experiences of building agrarian revolutionary movement, even from its initial stage not to speak of advanced stage. Successive leaders of the region fared no better. There was enough opportunity for him to fill up the gap he had in this respect. But it was unpalatable for him. Instead, he chose Telangana as his field of operation.

The book he had written (as published in November, 1981) has two parts. The first part was written in Telugu, in 1968, when we were working in the same organisation. The second part is the Post-Script, written in 1976 when we parted our ways and could not see eye to eye. Therefore the two parts reflect his changed positions in accordance with the politics he was pursuing. He had attempted vainly to show that my views, as expressed in the pamphlet *Telangana Armed Struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution*, are at variance from those of his book, which was written under my "guidance." I have explained how his contention is baseless. The circumstances under which he wrote his book and its purpose were different from those of mine. His book has its own story about which he is silent. The book was written to explain, in brief, what was Telangana armed struggle, for a campaign organised by the then party. It was just a narrative account to inspire the people. It's purpose was not at all analytical. In spite of my "guidance," everything that was written is

not accurate. At the sametime, it is a correct narration of the struggle. Its main purpose was to expose the betrayal of revisionists and neo-revisionists. Even then, not all controversies on the subject were dealt with.

The purpose of my pamphlet was different, in that, I criticised the views of Sundarayya as expressed in his book *Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons* which contains a lot of material about Telangana armed struggle. I was consistent although in maintaining the inseparable link between land distribution and armed struggles, in his book as well as my pamphlet, though written in different periods, i.e., 1968 and 1973-74 respectively. I maintained the same even in my earlier writings of 1970-72 in which I joined issues with CP himself in the main.

The fact of the matter was: he has no convictions on the views expressed in his book of 1958 (Telugu). Therefore he took up the task of writing a post-script to his book in which he departed from it all along. It is obvious that it was meant to criticise my views and to give an understanding to the readers that he is taking a departure from what he wrote in 1968. His criticism of CPI(M) was superfluous because my criticism was already there in black and white and he had advanced no new argument to this effect.

## CONCLUSION

He claims that his CPI (ML) has revived "The Great Telangana Movement." There were positive as well negative features of Telangana movement. While defending Telangana armed struggle from the attacks of opponents, right opportunists in the main, we stressed on positive features, while the negative features were not given proper place, in our criticism. The sum and substance of CP's "revival of the Great Telangana movement" is the revival of all its negative features. Actions without people's movement were common for both right and left opportunists. Armed struggle without agrarian revolutionary programme was common among rightists during "anti-Nizam struggle".

There are so many such negative features and their policies and practices represent them in the main. Therefore, a revival means a revival of the negative features, not the positive features.

We are the representatives of its positive features. We had summed up our experiences of these positive as well as negative features, rejected the negative ones, imbibed the positive features, worked out our general line and are practising it. Ours is not a showpiece movement, nor it is meant for propaganda purpose. It is being built on granite foundations, which a revolutionary movement needs.

It is a fact that we have produced some literature by way of fighting right and "left" opportunism. The opportunist scum, which has gathered in the revolutionary movement of our country for the last half century and more, is so much that any amount of literature is too small in quantity to meet the requirement of the situation. If the small amount of literature which we produced is treated as tons of literature, we treat it as a tribute to our efforts though it is a sarcastic criticism against us.

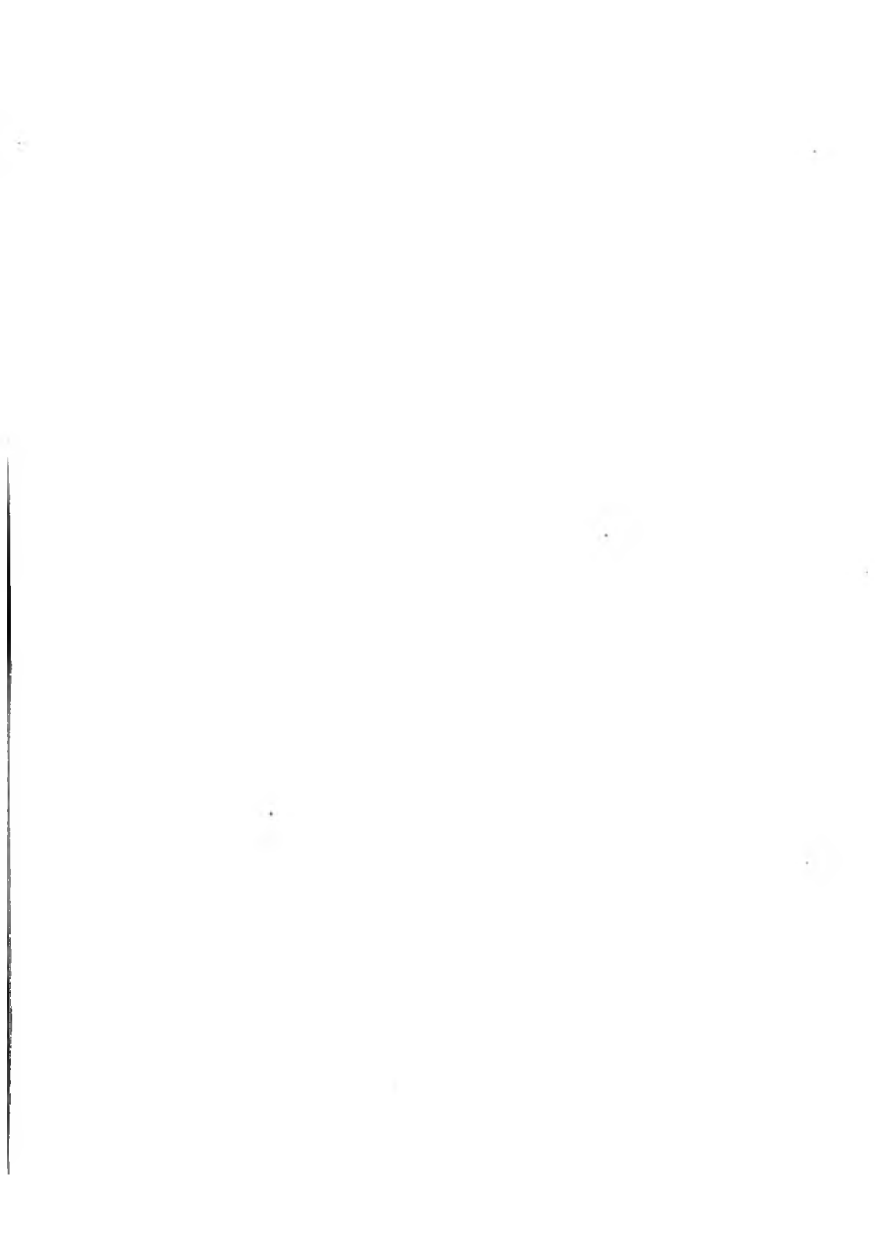
He speaks often about our legality. In fact, his group enjoyed more legality than ours by

discarding the Immediate Programme from 1970 onwards. No useful purpose will be served to bring in such arguments from his side. To conclude: Ours is a mass revolutionary line, in which mass revolutionary movement decides everything. Armed struggle is inseparable from distribution of the land of the landlords which is a higher stage of the agrarian revolutionary movement. It is a correct line though the path is full of thorns. It has its own implication in relation to the course of revolution. Communist revolutionaries as we are, we cannot remove those thorns and go ahead. We are doing the same.

The line advocated by CP is an armed struggle without the distribution of the land of the landlords. By this, the landlords who are major partners of state power are safe till a time when a genuinely organised agrarian revolutionary movement develops under the leadership of communist revolutionaries. Therefore, the landlords as a class have nothing to lose by CP's armed struggle. It has its negative impact on the course of the revolution.

This is how the two lines are before the people.





# Telangana Armed Struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution\*

D. V. RAO

It is more than thirty years that the communists started their work among the people of former princely State of Hyderabad and particularly in Telangana. Working class, peasantry and the students were their main centres of activities and they could build militant movements in the respective mass fronts. Andhra Provincial Communist Committee helped and guided the party in Telangana from the very beginning. Even the first party units were formed by the Andhra P.C.\*\*

Telangana peasantry, after exhausting all legal forms of struggle, took to arms in 1946 and continued the armed struggle upto 1951 till its withdrawal. As it was the first of its kind led by the then CPI, there arose controversies on a number of questions facing Indian revolution strategic as well as tactical. There were controversies even in earlier phases of the movement. But they were not so clear

and open. The very fact that it took more than 20 years (after the withdrawal of the armed struggle) for the leaders of CPI and CPM to write something on the struggle, and to issue some of the documents which they think are relevant to the points they dealt with, is a comment on the state of affairs existing in the party on this subject.

Telangana armed struggle, and the peasant movement preceding it, put to test the policies and practices followed by the then leadership of the CPI. Telangana was not only a part of former princely Hyderabad State, but was part and parcel of British imperialist state also. Therefore the programme and the path worked out for Indian revolution was applicable to Telangana also. It is obvious that the communists take the specific conditions in a given area into consideration while applying the programme and path.

\* This is a review of the book TELANGANA PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE and its LESSONS written by P. Sundarayya, leader of the CPI (M). The book deals with armed struggle in Telangana and his views. The book contains a number of incidents narrating the heroism of the people and the cadres exhibited while fighting the landlords, their mercenaries, the police and the military which belong to the erstwhile Nizam's govt. and subsequently the congress govt. The review article was written in October 1973 and published in two issues (Nov. 1973 and Jan. 1974) of PROLETARIAN PATH, a journal published from

Calcutta. A brief outline of the Telangana armed struggle can be seen in the document THE FUNDAMENTAL LINE and QUESTION OF UNITY published as a supplement in PL No. 7. The development of the movement in Nalgonda district from the beginning upto 1945 can be seen in an article THE MARTYRDOM of KOMARAYYA: A TURNING POINT IN TELANGANA PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT published in PL No. 3. A comment on the characterisation of the congress government's 'Police action' can be seen as an editorial article A MILITARY ACTION AGAINST ARMED AGRARIAN REVOLUTION IN TELANGANA, in PL No. 15

\*\* The erstwhile state of Hyderabad was composed of Telangana, Marathwada and Karnataka. They are now parts of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka states respectively. Present circar and Rayalaseema districts were together named as Andhra, which was part of erstwhile Madras province consisting of Tamil Nadu, a part of Kerala and a part of Karnataka in addition

to Andhra. There was Andhra Provincial Committee (PC) of the CPI, which was in charge of Hyderabad state to build and guide the party. There was a committee for Hyderabad state as a whole and the entire organisation was named, at the time, as Communist Party of Hyderabad for legal purposes, because the state did not permit any political organisation which was a branch of any all-India organisation.

In view of this, the revolutionary mass movement in Telangana, which took the form of prolonged armed struggle from 1946 to 1951, which was the embodiment of mass revolutionary heroism of people, militants and cadres-which is always the case with every mass revolutionary struggle-had its own shortcomings born out of the wrong policies and practices of the leadership including its inexperience. The rich and varied experiences of Telangana revolutionary movement in general, and of armed struggle in particular, provide us abundant material to analyse the party's programme and path, to correct the wrong line pursued all through, and to work out a correct line for the future.

The communist leadership failed to do this for the last 20 years. Now that the party is split into so many groups and factions-CPI, CPM, Communist Revolutionaries and CPI (ML) with its various sub-groups-every one of them is coming out with its own version of the armed struggle. While we are drawing lessons from the armed struggle to work out a programme and path for Indian revolution, the CPI and CPM are trying to give it a liberal reformist colour to suit their thinking of their past and present, regarding the programme and path. Though we can not rule out some variations between their thinking of the past and present, due to so many reasons, their fundamental line of thinking and practice remains the same. Therefore, while commenting on "*Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons*" (by P. Sundarayya), we have to refer to some of the important formulations made by CPI leadership, to show how far they are similar in their fundamentals, and if they differ, the nature and extent of the differences that are existing.

## II

Early communist units were formed in almost all Telangana districts simultaneously, during 1940-41 period. The trends which joined the party were: The disillusioned State Congress Youth offered Satyagraha under Gandhian leadership. It was subsequently

withdrawn and the youth had no programme of action before them. There were young intellectuals, formed into a Comrades Association, confined mainly to the Hyderabad city. They had vague ideas of socialism of Nehru-brand with strong nationalist bent. The third trend consisted of student youths, who had participated in a general strike of the students, which is known as Vandemataram Strike. They left the colleges and went outside the state, where congress ministries were functioning, and influenced by left and socialist movement, which was strong enough in these parts. There were party units in Maratwada and Karnatak areas belonging to one or the other trend (These were Marathi and Kannada speaking parts of former Hyderabad State).

It was in the early stages of second world war, \* which was characterised as an imperialist war, that we began to function. The programme and the tactical line we were provided by the party (P.C. leadership) was based on the Proletarian Path (a document which contains the CPI's line for that period). While it is necessary to go into a detailed analysis of this document, suffice it to say at present that it advocated armed insurrection of working class to overthrow British imperialism. It had not provided the understanding to the party that an agrarian revolution combined with prolonged armed struggle alone can overthrow British imperialism and feudalism completely. Based on this understanding, taking into consideration the feudal autocratic nature of the state where there was no trace of even a formal democracy, the party units were provided with a programme and tactical line, whose essence was to mobilise the people to implement the existing laws, whatever it may mean.

The trends, with which the party in Telangana was composed of, reflected in implementing the party line. The comrades representing the revolutionary trend in Nalgonda district had gone to the peasant masses, took up not only issues like forced labour (Bagari) and illegal exactions, but also boldly championed the cause of tenants, who were faced with the

\*During the second world war, the CPI took the stand that upto June 1941 i.e. when the Soviet Union was

attacked by Nazi Germany, it was an imperialist war. From then onwards it was characterised as a peoples war.

threats of evictions and were victims of exorbitant rents. Besides this, they took up the issue of forcible grain collection from the peasants by the government officials. The revolutionaries relied on mobilising and organising masses for which they had to face intense repression in the form of arrests and sentences of imprisonment. Whereas in other districts, party units relied on representing the grievances to the authorities, which did neither help to build a militant peasant movement nor to mobilise them for further struggles. In this connection an important thing to be noted is that some important preliminary work was done by the units of Warangal and the Hyderabad city for laying foundation for trade union movement. The student movement was organised on sound lines. The enormous influence that the Aryasamaj had on the students was fought to the finish in Nalgonda district, and subsequently they joined the party ranks in large numbers.

There was an element of repression in Warangal (in which the present Khammam district is included) and Karimnagar districts. Excepting this, there were no significant developments in other parts of Telangana. On the other hand, the comrades in Nalgonda district were often criticised as being adventurist in tackling mass problems and hence they were inviting repression.

The book under review does not take note of this important aspect of the peasant movement which has developed into the armed struggle at a later stage. In fact this was the basis of our struggle with the liberal leadership of Andhra Mahasabha, which was defeated and routed from it in 1944, when the communists and other left elements manned and led it. This development, together with the experience they already had in the past struggles, had helped the communists to provide leadership for the fighting peasantry against big and oppressive landlords with more confidence.

Of course, by this time, party policy had changed from one of Imperialist War to People's War, after the Nazi attack on Soviet Union in June 1941. Once we analyse the experiences of peasant struggles led by the party either during imperialist war or earlier period it clearly shows that it never touched the land question. The struggles were mainly confined to what are known as Zamindari areas, and the demands were for providing legal facilities existing in so-called Rayatwari areas,\* where landlordism, big and small, existed. The same was the case with peasant struggles in Jagi areas (another name for Zamindari) which were generally led, not by communists but by liberal landlord elements, who subsequently became the base for Congress, barring a few who became "Sympathisers" of communist party.

Therefore the land question was not on the agenda of the CPI even towards the end of the imperialist war (1941). During this period Communists along with leftist forces led a number of peasant struggles, in which peasants put forward the demand for land seizure, but the Communist leadership did not learn any thing from revolutionary peasantry, and limited the demands to liberal reformism, which could not take the peasant movement to higher levels. On the other hand, these movements were stopped halfway or fizzled out due to repression. The main reasons for this state of affairs are: (i) The leadership had not realised the decisive role of agrarian revolution in advancing the Indian revolution to make it a success; (ii) Their conception of united front with liberal reformist national leadership including the left, has not allowed them to take the revolutionary peasant movement to the level of Land seizure. With this left-oriented liberal reformist outlook and practice, the communist could forward as left forces on the national scene but could not fight for hegemony of the working class on the national movement in general and peasant movement in particular.

\*Rayatwari areas are those where land was directly administered by the governments, though there were landlords who used to lease their lands to the peasants. Whereas

various types of zamindars used to have powers to collect land revenue together with powers to maintain police and judiciary in some special cases. The equivalents in Telangana were called as jagirdars etc.

⊕ The importance of anti-British struggle, over estimated

This was the situation when they adopted what is known as a policy of Peoples War, which meant that party had to co-operate with British-imperialism and native feudalism-including landlordism - to make the war against Nazism and Fascism a success by defending Soviet Union and imperialist allies in which British imperialism was an important one. The book under review gives a long-winded explanation (pages 22-27) how the party had underestimated the danger of Soviet defeat etc., for adopting such a policy. In the same paras, it is admitted that we became isolated from national movement due to this policy. This is neither drawing correct lessons from the experiences nor an honest self-criticism. The policy was an out and out class collaborationist policy, which emasculated the party of its revolutionary content and reduced it into a liberal reformist party, incapable of leading post-war struggles.

It is true that the communists, while performing social reformist tasks, were recognised as selfless workers by the people as well as nationalist elements, but it is wrong to think that this sort of selfless work alone, including idealist way of life, establishes the leadership of the Communist Party over the national movement without a correct political programme and tactical line.

We in Nalgonda district had altogether a different experience which the book under review ignores altogether. While in other districts, Comrades were getting things done (as far as possible) through representations to government offices by way of co-operation, going to the extent of digging canals, and removing silt for growing more food in Krishna district, we in Nalgonda had gone to the peasantry and mobilised them against the atrocities of big landlords, against whom a sustained struggle was unthinkable previously because of the cruelty and their direct connection with the government. It is during this struggle, the district Committee of Nalgonda has surveyed

the rural conditions existing in some of the villages of Jangaon taluka (a part of Nalgonda district, where the struggle was going on) and found that the peasant was land-thirsty, and that we cannot go forward an inch without taking up the land issue, which was incompatible with the then so-called People war policy which calls for co-operation with the government as well as landlords. The book called JANAGAON PRAJALA VEEROCHITA PORATALU (Heroic Struggles of Jangaon people) \* containing the findings of the survey.

In this connection, it should be noted that the centre of peasant movement was Nalgonda district, whereas other districts in Telangana were not on the move. This phenomenon was discussed in the concerned committees more than once, and it was explained away that the conditions in Nalgonda district were horrible, whereas in other districts they were not so. There were comrades who opined that the comrades in Nalgonda district were adopting an adventuristic line, resulting in repression, whereas they were adopting tactics which did not invite repression. It is obvious that such tactics can only be liberal reformist.

### III

There were two important events, which the District Committee assessed correctly and gave a lead to take the peasant movement to a higher level leading to armed struggle. These events took place towards the end of second World War. The first event was by abandoning legal battles, the district leadership had taken a decision to raise a local volunteer corps consisting of Youth coming from anti-feudal classes, primarily agricultural labour, poor and middle peasant, to fight private armed forces of the landlords. This decision was implemented in its proper spirit and the volunteers successfully beat back the armed gangs of the land lords. Basing on this experience, the district committee extended the volunteer organisation to other villages where there was landlord terror.

\* It was a small booklet by D. V. Rao. It deals with feudal exploitation then existing in certain parts of

Jangaon taluk (Telisil) where the CPI led the peasant movement.

Another important event was incidents of Akunoor and Machi Reddy Palli, which were villages outside the purview of our organised movement. People in these villages faced en masse, the Police and revenue officials, who came to the village to forcibly collect grain from the peasants who, including women folk, resisted them with lathis and other weapons which were available at the time. The police in retaliation looted the villages, raped a number of women, and committed inhuman atrocities against the people. The District Committee adopted all possible secret methods to extract information about the form and extent of the resistance put up by the people. It discussed the report thoroughly and came to the conclusion that the time has come, wherein we should ask the people to put up armed resistance not only against the land lords but the police as well.

This was the background when Daddi Komarayya, a poor peasant and local volunteer, was fired at when he was taking part in a procession organised in protest against atrocities of the landlords by the armed henchmen of the landlord in the village of Kadivendi of Jangaon Taluka (Nalgonda district). Enraged with this incident, people from surrounding villages gathered in thousands in that village and set up an elected people's court to try the criminals. The trial took place, some were punished and others, after due warning, were set free. Thus the first People's Court came into existence, with the initiative of the people under the guidance of local party leadership.

People took up all available arms including those snatched from land lords, henchmen, put up resistance and drove them out after giving sufficient beating.

Immediately after a few days, peasants of an adjacent village have come forward to distribute 200 acres of land, which belonged to them once and which was under the possession of local landlord. This distribution also took place under the guidance of local party. As the District Committee studied the Land question on a previous occasion, and found that this could not be solved through legal means, it has further analysed the experiences of the land

distribution of the 200 acres and advanced the slogan of seizing all illegally seized lands from land lords. (Here the word "illegal" does not provide a literal meaning. The land lords could manipulate the legal provisions so as to provide them legal ownership).

Learning from the experience of revolutionary mass activities during these three incidents, the District leadership took the decision to put up armed resistance against the armed hordes of landlords and the police. It has decided to set up village committees, which functioned as village soviets, and an armed volunteer corps was organised under its leadership. The demands of the people. (i) Return all lands illegally seized by land lords. (ii) Return all illegal exactions, either in the form of money or grain, by the land lords. (iii) Free justice to all by the village committees. (iv) Special peoples courts to be set up to try oppressive and cruel landlords etc.

The Movement spread like wild fire, with the slogans mentioned above, to 120-150 villages in four taluks (Tahsils) of the district. When the ordinary police failed to suppress the movement, the military came down, raided the villages, killed about 20 persons including women. The District Committee had failed to realise the importance of organising a guerilla warfare against the armed police and military. Though the land was distributed to the extent of 3000 acres, and armed resistance was put up in about 120-150 villages, the movement was suppressed temporarily.

While the people in Nalgonda district were rising in armed revolt, the party units in other districts were almost silent, contenting themselves with some sort of solidarity campaign. Neither the P. C leadership, nor the District leadership, took lessons from this revolutionary experience, and failed to advance an agrarian revolutionary programme to build an agrarian revolutionary movement and armed resistance. How did it happen? In the name of People's War policy, the party in other districts of Telangana and for that matter, in all the districts of Circars and Rayalaseema, became right opportunist, eschewed anti-land lord mass

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struggles and failed to build an agrarian revolutionary movement, whereas the party in Nalgonda District, did the opposite by learning from experience. Here it should be noted that our party comrades elsewhere felt isolated from national movement and often fell victims to the attacks of the liberal reformist leadership of the Congress but the party in Nalgonda District was the unchallenged leader of the people and was held in high esteem even by national elements. It had a favourable impact on other parts of Telangana, Circars and Rayalaseema Districts, as far as the party was concerned. This gives us the most important lesson to be learnt by the party, which the book under review ignores completely. The lesson is: Had the party taken up agrarian question, built up agrarian revolutionary movement basing on anti-zamindari, anti-landlord programme during anti-fascist war period, party would have been strong and experienced enough to lead post-war agrarian struggles and develop peasant armed struggle in various parts of India. By taking up a class collaborationist and right opportunist line in the name of supporting war efforts, the party has failed to perform its revolutionary tasks. Herein lies the real reason why working class could not achieve hegemony on the national movement.

This is not the proper place where we can assess the role of individual leaders in organising and leading the movement. The P. C. leadership as a whole was helping the movement in all possible ways. It had never opposed the movement as such, but it had never tried to organise such movements in other Telangana districts. There was intense feudal oppression in the districts of Rayalaseema and parts of Circar districts. The Party had not provided any anti-feudal and anti land lord programme, to develop an agrarian revolutionary movement. The party in these districts was stronger and more developed than that of Nalgonda. It would have developed a stronger agrarian revolutionary movement if it had a correct programme and tactical line.

This fact is a conclusive proof that the origin and development of the mass revolutionary peasant movement which took the form of

armed struggle in 1946, was in opposition to the People's War policy of class collaboration. It was the local leadership which learning from the experience of their work among the people, developed this movement.

#### IV

The book under review draws some lessons from this phase of the movement, which have a semblance of self-critical note, at the same time refuses to go into the fundamental question of role of agrarian revolution. This is what all it has to say on the subject:

"One patent fact that emerges from the events of 1945 and 1946 is that, our party had not understood the depth of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses in the immediate postwar situation. Its reformist understanding and functioning during the war period made it force these developments and prepare itself and the people's organisation for them". (P. 52-53.)

"If we had a correct grasp of the things that were shaping up and developed our party on correct Marxist-Leninist principles, taking Telangana itself, we should have trained our cadre and the people for launching vigorous attacks on the whole feudal system, seized the illegally begotten land from the landlords as well as surplus land from them, as we had to do later grasping hastily, step by step. We would have trained our cadre and militants not only with the defence but even for armed defence. We would not have waited for such a long time in allowing our cadre to seize and use even the country guns, which resulted in total dislocation and disruption of the first upsurge." (P. 54.)

The author admits in these paras that the party had no understanding of the depth of post war upsurge and hence it was not organisationally and militarily ready to meet the situation. This is not true in the sense that there was huge mass upsurge even during the war time as witnessed in peasant struggle of Janagaon taluk (Tahsil) of Nalgonda District, which the author himself had mentioned in the same book. An important section of the party was trained for guerilla warfare, so that the party may go into battle in case Japan attacked India in 1941-42 period. In fact the post war upsurge was a continuation of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal upsurge that was there through out the war period (August 1942 movement and anti-feudal struggles in Telangana). Of course the post war upsurge was qualitatively of a higher level, in which



people took up arms against imperialism and feudalism en masse.

The political line that was adopted and practised by the party leadership was not only one of collaboration with British imperialism and feudalism in the name of People's War: it was also one of kowtowing the liberal national leadership that was out for a compromise with imperialism and feudalism. The servility that the party leadership adopted towards Congress leadership was impermissible for a proletarian party (Gandhi-Joshi correspondence). The same attitude continued towards this leadership, which betrayed the national movement and compromised with imperialism and feudalism, basically on the terms dictated by the latter. All these counter-revolutionary forces were for a compromise in the face of the post war revolutionary upsurge, which had reached beyond the limits, so much that imperialism could not suppress it. While this was the basic reason behind the compromise, the international situation emerging out of defeat of Fascism had its own role to play in these developments.

## V

While the revolutionaries were carrying on experiments in land distribution and armed resistance in Nalgonda district, peasant struggles burst up in other parts of India. Struggle for land in Challipalli zamindari area in Krishna District (Andhra), Tebhaga movement in Bengal, Worli Girijan struggle in Maharashtra and Punnappra Vayalar struggles in Kerala are some of the notable among them. The party leadership has named them partial struggles so as to suit their policy of stopping them halfway to arrive at a compromise with counter-revolutionary congress leadership which had assumed power by them.

But the armed struggle in Telangana from 1947-48 had a different accent as far as the leadership was concerned. P. Sundarayya mentions this in the following sentence :

*"It was only in the Hyderabad and Travancore States, which refused to join the Indian Union, that the people's discontent and struggles were further developed, to a certain extent encouraged and supported by the Indian government. ... It was the Telangana struggle in Hyderabad State, again led by our party that gave vent to the post war discontent and orientation to an agrarian revolt."*

*(emphasis original)*

Thus, according to Sundarayya, the agrarian revolt that developed in Telangana, during 1947-48 period had some thing to do with the Nizam's refusal to join Indian union. If it were so, the agrarian revolt had not developed throughout the length and breadth of Hyderabad State, in which Telangana was only a part, of course, a major part. Even in Telangana, Nalgonda district was the main centre of the revolt while Warangal district had played an important role. It is only the border areas in other districts, which were contiguous, which had a touch of this agrarian revolt. The incidents which Sundarayya mentions are a Proof of this situation.

The fact of the matter was, the revolutionaries in Nalgonda were regrouping themselves after the set back which the movement had received towards the end of 1946 and beginning of 1947. It should be again noted here, that though the P.C. leadership was giving all possible help to the revolutionary movement in the district, the movement was of a local origin led by the District Committee. There was no attempt either by the P.C. leadership or the district leaderships in other parts of Telangana and feudal landlord ridden districts of Circars and Rayalaseema to spread it to these areas.

It is a fact that the Nizam of Hyderabad had not joined Indian Union along with other princes, and raised the slogan of Independence, while negotiating for favourable terms with the Union govt. headed by the Congress leadership. It is also a fact that the Union govt. was trying to meet the Nizam half way in agreeing to the terms put forward by the Nizam, in the name of the state joining Indian Union. Both the Union govt. and the Nizam had the blessings of the British imperialism in these protracted negotiations. The Congress leadership, in order to force the Nizam to join Indian Union in some form or other, had taken up an

agitational programme, nonviolent as usual, under the formal leadership of the State Congress. Our party had decided to join this agitation with a tinge of mass mobilisation, in the name of demarcating itself from the Satyagraha movement.

Neither the Congress Satyagraha movement nor our mass mobilisation could withstand the repressive measures taken by the Nizam's govt. and failed to give any favourable results for the Union govt. This was the situation when the Union Government decided to take to armed actions against the Nizam's Govt. to force it to a compromise which was acceptable to either of them. CPI decided to join this "armed struggle," and the P.C. leadership came forward to make necessary preparations for this purpose throughout Telangana. Armed Squads of CPI went into action, as soon as they were ready.

Neither the Congress which went into action from border points of Congress administered provinces, nor party squads operating in the interior parts of Telangana could withstand the armed might of the Nizam in which the Razakars—a para military organisation—were also included. Our armed resistance virtually came to an end in entire Telangana, except in Nalgonda and Warangal Districts, in which our armed squads had the support of revolutionary peasant movement in contrast to the so-called "anti Nizam movement" that burst out through out the length and breadth of the State.

It was in this situation that the Nalgonda District Committee took initiative in demanding land distribution to the peasants combined with setting up *gram-rajyas* (village soviets) to sustain and strengthen the armed resistance to the Nizam's armed hordes. It was difficult to

convince the P. C. leadership to decide on this step, due to the stubborn opposition of liberal reformist section. At last a compromise decision was taken in the form of distributing lands of only the landlords collaborating with the Nizam. Here it should be made clear that, as the resistance was advancing, a few landlords were openly taking sides with the Nizam while majority of them were playing a double game, showing their loyalty to the Nizam as well as the Congress.

The Nalgonda district leadership, instead of getting involved in a fruitless discussion whether a certain landlord was pro-Nizam or pro-Congress, had decided to distribute the land of the landlords, with a ceiling of 200 acres,\* which was accepted by the P. C. Thus it became the slogan for the entire resistance area. Here it should also be noted that the major part of the land distribution took place in Nalgonda district, while the rest was done in Warangal district and in the adjoining areas of Nalgonda district. The armed resistance was sustained and developed to a higher level, primarily in these two districts, giving crushing blows to the Nizam's armed hordes.

This was the period, before and immediately after the Second Party Congress, when the right opportunist leadership was replaced by a left opportunist leadership at the centre of the party. It was during this period, the majority of the Andhra P. C. secretariat, put forward the thesis that the character of Indian Revolution is Peoples Democratic; and it has to traverse the Chinese path, and India being semi-colonial, semi feudal, the strategy is similar to that of China. This thesis was based on the experience of armed struggle in Telangana which confirmed that the Chinese experience is applicable to India in all its fundamentals.

\*Perhaps the idea of ceiling was first introduced by the communist revolutionaries in Telangana in 1947, when the distribution of the land of the landlords appeared on the agenda. Earlier, only the lands of the peasants occupied by the landlords were seized and restored to the peasants. This measure did not involve fixing a ceiling on the lands of the landlords. But when this was realised, the question of further distribution of the landlord's lands came up and a

ceiling was fixed for 200 acres, both wet and dry, so that small landlords may be neutralised in the struggle against the Nizam. In most parts of Telangana lands are not fertile and landlords having upto 200 acres were not well off in many cases. When compared to them, there were landlords possessing thousands of acres all over Telangana. Therefore the ceiling of 200 acres was considered to be reasonable in this context.

Ⓟ The Indian Revolution This was the time when

It was P. Sundarayya who opposed this line, and advocated that the stage of Indian revolution was similar to that of February revolution of Russia (1917) and characterised the Andhra thesis as right opportunist, while conceding that the path of Indian revolution was similar to that of China i.e. protracted armed struggle. Subsequently the left opportunist leadership\* at the centre rejected the Andhra thesis, which was fundamentally correct even to this day, and characterised it as right opportunist. It once again derailed the party from right opportunism to left adventurism. Herein lies the betrayal of the leadership, in refusing to learn from the experiences of armed struggle in Telangana, whose content is agrarian revolution and, which has been a protracted one in a limited sense. (1945-51).

Agrarian revolution had reached the stage of land distribution and took the form of armed struggle, in Telangana, in 1946, when the big bourgeois land-lord leadership of the Congress hatched a compromise with the British imperialism and native feudalism, on the basis of serving the latter's interests and suppressing the Indian revolution entered the stage of agrarian revolution, with all its implications. Revolutionary Communists are expected to distribute the land of feudal and semi-feudal landlords to the peasants so as to carry forward the agrarian revolution to qualitatively higher level, taking the form of armed struggle. Basing on this experience, the Kisan movement under the leadership of Communists should have been transformed from a reformist movement to a revolutionary movement, which alone could have advanced agrarian revolution with protracted armed struggle throughout India, which alone was a correct line.

P. Sundarayya does not hold this view. He is one with the revisionists, in characterising Telangana armed struggle into two stages. The following para makes clear this attitude in unmistakable terms :

\*It refers to the leadership led by B. T. Ranadive. It advocated insurrection to seize power, characterised the entire bourgeoisie to have gone over to imperialism and the rich peasantry as an enemy of the revolution. This policy was rejected in 1950 and a policy advocated by the Andhra

*'But the Telangana movement developed from some partial demands to partisan armed struggle to enforce these demands and later it also developed into an armed struggle to overthrow Nizam's rule itself. The gram-raj committees were in fact organs of struggle and at the same time organs of power. But with the Indian armies entry and merger of Hyderabad State into Indian Union, a different state with an entirely different co-relation of class forces came into existence. So the liberation struggle against the Nizam could not become automatically transformed into a liberation struggle against the Nehru Government of the India state.' (P. 119-10)*

The opinion expressed in this para needs thorough analysis, because this is the theme running through his entire book. Therefore let us deal with the questions arising out of this para.

## VI

In the first sentence, Sundarayya confuse demands with the forms of struggle. Telangana people, particularly the peasants fought for their partial demands in the initial stages and came forward with the basic demand of seizure of land at an advanced stage. It did not take years for them to reach this stage. While the agitation and struggle for initial demands started in 1942 the demand for seizure of land came forth towards the end of 1944, and the actual seizure took place in the middle of 1947. During this period, the peasants exhausted a form of struggle and then took up arms in 1946. Peasant revolutionary committees emerged in the villages under whose leadership land distribution was carried and armed resistance developed, which received a setback towards the end of 1946 and in the beginning of 1947. This is not only an agrarian revolution but an armed struggle to overthrow the Nizam though the Party's and Andhra Mahasabha slogan was to put up armed resistance, and not to overthrow the Nizam's rule. These slogans had emerged not out of people's consciousness but out of the reformist understanding of national and international situation of the

leadership was accepted by the Central Committee. It took no time that another section belonging to the right wing staged a revolt leading to abandoning the policy, and after prolonged discussions a programme was announced in April 1951. As a result, the party took Parliamentary Path.

Party leadership. Therefore, to characterise this stage as one of partial struggles and partisan warfare is reformism pure and simple. Revisionists have no dispute with Sundarayya in characterising the struggle of 1945-46 as partial. They only dispute that the armed resistance that was put up by the peasantry was not even a partisan warfare for partial demands. Therefore the "partisan armed struggle to enforce" the demand for seizure of land and not "these demands" in general, was itself an armed struggle to overthrow the Nizam's rule. The agrarian revolution that took place during the so-called "anti-Nizam" period, 1947-48 (Sept), was a continuation of 1945-46, in a more intensive and extensive form and content. Sundarayya has no such clear cut understanding of the Telangana armed struggle of pre-police action period (Sept. 1948). When he says that "the Telangana movement developed from small partial demands to partisan armed struggle to enforce these demands," he means to say that Telangana peasantry had adopted partisan warfare to enforce partial demands, which is not correct nor based on facts. Sundarayya does not make it clear in this para, as to the nature of armed resistance put up during 1945-46 period, whether it was meant for overthrowing the Nizam's rule or "to enforce these demands." But it clearly implies that the armed resistance put up during this period was for partial demands alone.

Then he goes on to say that "later it developed into an armed struggle to overthrow the Nizam's rule itself. The *gram Raj* Committees were in fact organs of struggle, and at the same time organs of power." Obviously, he means the armed struggle mentioned here is that of the period of 1947-48 (Sept). It is true that there was armed resistance and there were *gram Raj* Committees, that came into existence without any agrarian revolutionary programme, in some parts of Hyderabad State including Telangana. Our point under discussion does not include these parts for the present. The point under discussion is the armed resistance and *Gram Raj* Committees of Nalgonda and Warangal districts along with their adjacent parts, where these were combined with implementation of an

agrarian revolutionary programme, especially that of land distribution. By this characterisation he again identifies himself with the revisionists (CPI), who are of opinion that this phase of struggle alone can be characterised as that of overthrowing the Nizam. But the fact of the matter is that, when the peasantry comes forward to seize land and takes up arms to defend it under the leadership of a revolutionary peasant committee, the latter becomes the embryonic organ of power. This becomes more effective and powerful in form and content, with the Indian Revolution entering the stage of agrarian revolution, i.e. with the transfer of power to Congress leadership in 1947.

Again he says: "But with the Indian army's entry and merger of Hyderabad State into the Indian Union, a different state, with an entirely different correlation of class forces came into existence." Here he reduces himself to a pro-imperialist constitutionalist, who treats Indian Union and Hyderabad State as two separate states. Marxism Leninism teaches us that India was ruled by British imperialism, and Hyderabad State and other Princely States were part and parcel of it. Overthrow of Nizam without overthrowing the British imperialism was unthinkable, before the "Transfer of Power." In the same way, the overthrow of Nizam, without the overthrow of the new regime that had come into existence as a result of "transfer of power" was unthinkable, without the Communist Party developing and leading the agrarian revolution directed not only against Nizam but against the new regime at the Centre as well. The conflicts that arose between the Nizam and the union government were secondary and minor in nature, which were intensified for the time being under the impact of the agrarian revolution that had developed into a serious proposition along with the armed struggle, giving crushing blows to the Nizam's armed hordes. Union armies entered the Hyderabad State through Nalgonda district, via Kodad and Suryapet, where the peasants' guerilla resistance movement was strongest, on the first day of "police action" (Sep. 13, 1948). This action of the Union government is a conclusive evidence to show that the Union Government stepped into the

shoe of the Nizam when the latter failed to crush the agrarian revolution and the peasants guerilla warfare. Thus Sundarayya's two State theory is not only constitutionalism in outlook, but a departure from fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and embracing revisionism. His concluding sentence "So the liberation struggle against the Nizam could not become automatically transformed into a liberation struggle against the Nehru Government of the Indian State" is a corollary of the same understanding.

It is a fact that the "Police Action," and the Hyderabad State joining Indian Union, had brought in their train, a change in the correlation of forces, but not of fundamental nature. The character of the struggle had undergone from "anti-Nizam" to one of agrarian revolution, pure and simple. The sections of rural population who were not allowed to implement agrarian revolutionary programme by the reformist leadership and the town population who were away from the struggle felt relieved from Nizam's yoke. A section of pro-Congress landlords, who were characterised as rich peasants, had gone over to the Congress. Thus the peasantry had to confront the landlords as a class, in the areas where agrarian revolutionary programme was implemented in various degrees. The "anti-Nizam" united front with all its limitations was split. This does not mean that all the landlords had come face to face against the peasantry and the party. Many of them especially the small landlords kept themselves neutral.

The most important feature of the change was the presence of 50,000 Union armies, better trained and equipped than those of the Nizam, who received crushing blows at the hands of peasant guerillas. This was a new experience for us then, but it is no more in these days. The present government attempts to crush the militant mass struggles, first with the help of local special armed forces. When

they fail to do the job CRP comes into the picture. And the army takes over the control of the areas where the struggle is going on in the final stage. The only difference between then and now is that the Hyderabad State was not a part of Indian Union for constitutional purposes.

In view of this situation, the revisionist leadership (CPI) thinks that the armed struggle should have been withdrawn immediately after the "Police Action", itself, while Sundarayya thinks that the continuation of armed struggle was correct, but it should have been in the nature of partial struggle, defending the revolutionary gains i.e. land etc, but not for seizing power i.e. not to overthrow the Nehru Government. Subsequently he deals about the circumstances which led to withdrawal of the struggle.

In view of the above, the leadership of CPI and CPM as they stand today, have no fundamental difference in rejecting character of Telangana armed struggle as starting point of agrarian revolution, a stage in which Indian people's democratic revolution entered. \* While the CPI leadership says that it was an anti Nizam armed struggle, to which its agrarian character had provided the strength, the CPM leadership says that it was an agrarian struggle for partial demands, which due to Nizam's refusal to join Indian Union, had reached a higher level of overthrowing the Nizam, and then dwindled into Partial Struggle after the "Police Action."

While holding identical views on this fundamental question, they differ on the form of struggle that was adopted after the police action. CPI says that the forms of struggle to defend the gains of the armed struggle i.e. land etc., should have been legal and constitutional, while the CPM leadership holds that it was correct to adopt the form of armed struggle. Our position is clear: Telangana armed struggle was the beginning of agrarian revolution

\*We visualise that before transfer of power, the revolution was directed against British imperialism, in spite of peasant participation in it with an agrarian revolutionary programme. With the transfer of power we are in the

second stage, in which the axis of the revolution is agrarian revolution. Though CPI (M) also claims that it is for this understanding, they have no revolutionary programme for it and they are limiting themselves to the parliamentary activities.

tion as part of Peoples Democratic Revolution in India, which was directed not only against the Nizam, but against the British imperialism before the "Transfer of Power," and against the new set of ruling classes who were installed on the *Gandhi*, after the "Transfer of Power". Therefore the Nizam's entry and exit on the political scene does not change its fundamental character. The other aspects of this problem will be discussed later.

### VII

P. Sundarayya, in his book, admits that almost the entire leadership demanded withdrawal of armed struggle, except that of Suryapet-Khammam-Manukota Area Committee (which later became Manukota Area Committee). The main reason they advanced was the changed correlation of forces in which the might of Union armies was an important one. The Huzur Nagar area committee built up a theory that, the anti-Nizam armed struggle was spontaneous, which had died down like a bubble after the "Police Action," and therefore nothing remained to defend or to struggle for. While a section of leadership disbanded the armed squads and dumped arms, some others had gone to the extent of surrendering arms to the Union military. With the intervention of the P. C. leadership, some of these squads were reorganised. A major part of the armed squads were asked to leave the plains, which was the hot-bed of land distribution and armed struggle, and go to the near-by forests and mountainous areas to continue the resistance.

In spite of the leadership's directions of a nature of do's and donts, there were huge losses of our cadre and leadership, political as well military, including arms. Sundarayya tries to explain away these losses as due to organisational and technical defects besides the change in the correlation of forces. We think that the fundamental reason behind such losses, is the lack of understanding of agrarian revolution which passes into various phases, which need a change in political as well as military tactics.

It should be made clear, that the P.C. secretariat had submitted its documents to the Central Committee, immediately after Second Party Congress (Feb. 1948), long before "Police Action" (Sep. 1948) took place. The majority document, held that the character of Indian revolution is People's Democratic Revolution, which takes the Chinese Path, since India is similar to China in many respects as a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. The minority draft, whose author was Sundarayya himself, opposed this and characterised the state of Indian Revolution to be some what that of February revolution of Russia in 1917, though he agreed that the Chinese path of long drawn out armed struggle is applicable to India.

The majority draft was in fundamental opposition to the Political line adopted in the Second Congress, which was upheld by the minority draft. Before we could get the approval of the PB or CC for this line (majority), P.C. could not go to the ranks and educate them; nor work out its implications and take practical steps, organisational as well as military, to implement it. Nobody in the leadership-area committees and others knew about this line except from what they read and understood the Chinese Party literature, especially the works of Mao on "New Democracy" and "Some Aspects of Anti-Japanese Guerilla warfare." Therefore their understanding of the New Democracy was rather abstract, and justifiably so. The P. C. leadership tried its best to develop the armed struggle on the basis of principles of guerilla warfare, but it success was meagre. Failure to develop forest and mountainous areas into resistance areas, which can sustain guerilla forces in the face of ~~some~~ offensive of Union armies, and lack of a plan for timely retreat into such regions is one clear example of this failure. Therefore the entire field leadership was not orientated for a long drawn-out armed struggle. Their understanding was kept limited to the "anti-Nizam" armed struggle.

Neither the Polit Bureau took a decision as to what to do and what not to do, either before or immediately after "Police Action."

When it rejected the majority line of the P.C. secretariat, it had indicated that the armed struggle in Telangana could continue as long as it could. Therefore the entire responsibility of conducting the armed struggle rested on the shoulders of the P.C. leadership, in the face of overwhelming opposition from a section of the senior leadership as well as area leadership, which Sundarayya mentioned in the book.

The opposition had reconciled itself to the policy of armed struggle and carried it with a fundamentally wrong understanding that the P.B. line provided. Even the rest of the leadership had to act according to this line, though military aspect of the armed struggle was directed according to the principles of guerilla warfare. How far this line was carried out can be understood by the incidents, which Sundarayya mentioned in his book.

### VIII

Building of an agrarian revolutionary movement to the level of seizure of landlords' lands is not a simple task. It was so in the past and it is the same in the present period. It was all the more difficult to perform this task for our comrades, party as well as military leadership, who had retreated into the forests, and extended into new areas, in the face of military operations of "encirclement and annihila-

tion" that the Nehru armies conducted throughout the struggle period. With the left adventurist line given by the P.B. leadership, which treats rich peasant as an enemy, which relies on insurrection for seizure of power, it became all the more difficult to move in the proper direction. Therefore, inspite of some achievements in this direction, weakness had crept in the mass revolutionary movement, in the forest as well as plain areas, while in other parts of India no attempt was made to build up an agrarian revolutionary movement, reaching the stage of seizure of land. Instead of going into the left adventurist line pushed by the P.B. and analysing the weakness of the movement in relation to it, Sundarayya takes a defeatist and right opportunist line, in enumerating them. Experience has clearly shown that land distribution could not take place and armed resistance couldnot develop in other districts of Telangana than Nalgonda and Warangal, prior to "Police action", not because there was no people's upsurge etc. but because the leadership had followed a right opportunist line in refusing to develop an agrarian revolutionary movement. A leadership that refuses to learn this lesson from earlier phase of Telangana movement can never understand the root causes of the weaknesses in the movement after the "Police Action."

(To be continued)





## Telangana Armed Struggle and The Path of Indian Revolution

D. V. RAO

(Continued from the last issue)

## IX

Sundarayya links the question of withdrawal of armed struggle in Telangana with the Programme and tactical line adopted by the Party with the help of international leadership and the split in the Communist Party. This is a self-contradictory position he takes up. If the withdrawal of the armed struggle is correct according to the new programme and tactical line, his advancing the split as the main reason is then wrong and the position taken by the C.P.I leadership becomes more or less identical with that taken by Sundarayya himself. If withdrawal of the struggle is wrong according to the new line and the decision of withdrawal was taken due to the split only, it becomes wrong and capitulationist.

Sundarayya, in order to defend his self-contradictory position, does neither reproduce the relevant paras from the "Note on Indian Situation (1951)", nor provides an objective and truthful report of the discussions held between Indian delegation of CPI and that of CPSU led by Comrade Stalin.

Let me state at the very outset, that there is not a word, sentence or a para which denotes withdrawal of armed struggle as tactics permissible under any circumstances in the above document. On the other hand some alternative tactics were suggested, which are revolutionary in nature and which help to come out of difficult situation faced by the peasant guerrilla forces. In the same way, the talks or discussions held between CPI delegation and Comrade Stalin, as reported orally and not in the form of a document, does not contain any

clear cut suggestion to withdraw the armed struggle in Telangana. Yet Sundarayya takes shelter under the cover of the document and conversation with Comrade Stalin, to defend his position that withdrawal of armed struggle in Telangana was correct. It has been the practice of the former leaderships of the CPI to misuse the help and advice given by the International leadership, for its group and factional purposes, to enforce the wrong line of thinking, which was either right or left opportunist. The leadership of 1951 was no exception to this. Sundarayya also followed their foot steps in his book, in connection with the help and advice given by Comrade Stalin.

Sundarayya produced extensive quotations from "The Statement of policy" which is said to have been adopted by the All India Conference of 1951 (from pp 401 to 403) and then quotes some paras, which, according to him are "the omitted parts dealt with the elaboration of some theoretical issues and principles, which go more to explain the theoretical-ideological basis" for the said 'Statement of policy'. He does not make it clear why "The Statement of Policy" was adopted by the conference instead of "A Note on the Indian situation in 1951," which was the outcome of the discussions between CPI and CPSU delegation.

He simply omits first two paras of "A Note on the Indian situation in 1951" and states simply that "the replacement of the present bourgeois landlord state by a people's democratic state is possible only through revolution." And he goes on to explain this point from quotation of "The Statement of policy."

The two relevant paras in the document are given under the caption "Not peaceful but revolutionary Path." They are as follows :

"(1) *The immediate main objective set forth in the Draft Programme of the Communist Party of India are the complete liquidation of feudalism, the distribution of all land held by feudal owners among the peasants and agricultural workers, and achievement of full national independence and freedom. These objectives cannot be realised by a peaceful, parliamentary way. These objectives can be realised only through a revolution, through the overthrow of the present Indian state and its replacement by a People's Democratic State. For this the Communist Party shall strive to rouse the entire peasantry and the working class against the feudal exploiters, strengthen the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, a broad nationwide United Front of all anti-imperialist classes (including the national bourgeoisie), sections, parties and elements willing to fight for democracy and for freedom and independence of India.*

"(2) *While resorting to all forms of struggle, including the most elementary forms, and while utilising all legal possibilities for mobilising the masses and taking them forward in the struggle for freedom and democracy, the Communist Party has always held that in the present colonial set-up in India and in view of the absence of genuine democratic liberties, legal and parliamentary possibilities are restricted and that therefore the replacement of the present state upholding the imperialist-feudal order by a People's Democratic State is possible through an armed revolution of the people. The concrete experience of the last three years in India, after the so-called transfer of power, has only confirmed this thesis."*

Compare the two paras either with his first sentence (p 401) or subsequent paras he quotes from 'The Statement of policy'. The omission of these paras obviously means that CPM does not accept the understanding given in these paras as the ideological-theoretical basis for its statement of policy. It is more correct to say that its statement of policy rejects it.

He again introduces his own (or rather CPM's) conception of partisan warfare as being 'partial partisan struggle' in the heading given to the paras relating to the subject of partisan warfare as PARTISAN STRUGGLE - A MARXIST-LENINIST UNDERSTANDING-PARTIAL PARTISAN STRUGGLE' replacing the '*Partisan warfare of peasants*' which can be found in the original document. In addition to this he omits an important para which provides an understanding towards the preparation of the pe-

sants for the partisan warfare. The omitted paragraphs thus :

"*In the rural areas the party has to rouse all sections of the peasants, including the rich peasants against feudal exploitation and build their unity basing itself firmly on the agricultural workers and poor peasantry who together form the overwhelming majority of the population. While the liquidation of feudalism and the distribution of land to the peasants must remain the key slogans of the agrarian revolution for the entire period, it is necessary to formulate immediate specific demands for each province and each area, like reduction of rent, fair prices for agricultural products, abolition of feudal levies and forced labour, living wage for agricultural workers, etc., and lead actions for the realisation of these demands. The agrarian crisis is maturing rapidly and the peasant masses are seething with discontent against the present Government which rose to power on the basis of their support and afterwards betrayed them. Despite, however, this widespread discontent and despite the numerous peasant actions that have taken place in many parts of the country, the peasant movement in the country as a whole remains weak and large sections of peasants have not yet been drawn in active struggles because of absence of organisation and firm leadership. It is our task to overcome this weakness by intensive popularisation of our agrarian programme, by formulation of such concrete and easily understood demands as can become the basis of the broadest mass action, by patient day to day work and correct leadership of struggles to realise these demands, and by building in the course of these struggles a network of peasant and agricultural workers organisation with underground units in villages as their leading and guiding centres. Volunteer squads of the most militant and conscious sections of the peasants have to be formed to defend the peasant movements against the attack of the enemy squads that will form nucleus of the partisan squads as the movement will develop and reaches the stage of seizure of land and partisan warfare."*

It is clear that the whole para provides one understanding as to how to prepare the peasants for partisan warfare. The last sentence of the para is relevant and important. It gives an understanding that the seizure of land and partisan warfare is inter-linked. Seizure of land of landlords can never be a partial demand. Once peasantry goes into action on this demand, the very foundation of landlordism is shattered and the armed forces of the state come into full scale action against the peasantry and the only course left to the peasantry is to resort to guerilla warfare.

Even the para Sundarayya quoted (P 403) gives the same understanding. "*For example, in a big and topographically suitable area where the peasant*

*movement has risen to the level of seizure of land and food-grains, the question as to how to effect that seizure, and the question how to defend the land so seized will become a burning question. The party is of opinion that the partisan warfare in such a situation undertaken on the basis of a genuine mass peasant movement and the firm unity, under the leadership of the party, of the peasant masses, especially the most oppressed and exploited strata, combined with other forms of struggle, agricultural workers strike, can if correctly organised and led, have a rousing and galvanising effect on the peasant masses in many other areas and raise their own struggle to a higher level."*

Here, the struggle for seizure of land is regarded as a higher level of struggle and linked with armed struggle in the form of partisan warfare.

That Stalin did not think the seizure of land to be a partial demand is clearly shown in one of the answers he was reported to have given to a question mentioned in the same book (PP. 412-13). Here he differentiates between a partisan struggle at the 'stage of land distribution and establishing of village peasant committees' and the partisan struggle for 'smaller demands—let us say—reduction of rent' under certain conditions i.e., 'if the masses are ready and eager'.

In view of this, to say that the '*Note on Indian situation (1951)*' advocates the struggle for land seizure and armed struggle for its defence as partial partisan struggle is baseless. It is the distortion and misrepresentation, in which Sundarayya has indulged, to suit his right opportunist line.

In the same way, this document never advocated withdrawal of armed struggle as a tactic, permissible in connection with partisan warfare.

Here are the relevant portions of the document, which, even if attempted to interpret to mean so, do not provide such understanding :

*"At the same time the party has to act with the utmost flexibility, when overwhelming forces of the enemy are concentrated against the partisan areas and the partisan forces run into danger of defeat and total annihilations" (p. 410).*

Here, 'flexibility' means a revolutionary flexibility and not a right opportunist and

capitulationist flexibility. When the party act with revolutionary flexibility it retreats in face of disadvantageous situation etc. The same idea is clarified in a different context. The answer to one of the questions is given a below :

*'Question : Can partisan warfare even of the most elementary type be developed in areas where communication are well developed ?*

*'Answer : Yes, when encirclement occurs, transfer the best forces to another area. Lead out the armed force so as to join it with the armed forces in another area, so as to create a liberation army of your own.'*

This is a very important formulation. The answer does not advocate withdrawal of armed struggle, even when the partisan warfare is in its earlier stages i.e., on partial demands not the seizure of land as Sundarayya conceives. Instead, it advocates to 'transfer the best forces to another area'. This also provides the understanding for the creation of liberation army, in which such partisan forces which are transferred are expected to join and strengthen them numerically as well as qualitatively.

Therefore to say that the document gives the indication of permissibility of withdrawal of armed struggle even by implication, is wrong and baseless. There is nothing in the document which confirms the contention of Sundarayya, that the withdrawal of armed struggle was done in accordance with the document.

Now, let us deal with the part he deals with i.e. the discussion that was said to have taken place between the CPI delegation and Stalin, on the question of Telangana armed struggle itself. If one goes through the '*Note on the Indian situation (1951)*', one can understand that it was the summing up of the experiences of Telangana armed struggle in the form of tactical line as understood by the CPSU delegation and Stalin himself. In spite of this, a discussion was reported to have taken place on the specific issue of Telangana armed struggle, and Sundarayya gives an account of it (pp. 414-15).

The gist of the discussions which Sundarayya gives here is from oral reports of

delegation from CPI. No authentic verbatim report was made available to the central committee, let alone to lower committees. Therefore the 'gist' Sundarayya gives is neither authoritative nor reliable.

The points he makes out of the 'gist' are :

1) 'It was sectarian and incorrect to continue it as a liberation struggle, against the regime of the Indian Union for establishing people's democracy ...'

'But it was absolutely correct to defend the gains of the Telangana peasantry through armed partisan struggle when those gains of peasantry i.e., land and other democratic liberties were under attack by the Union Government and its armed forces ...' Then he harps on the theme of conducting partisan warfare as partial struggle with the aim of arriving at a negotiated settlement.

I have already explained that there is not a single word or sentence in the original document — 'A Note on Indian situation (1951)' that the struggle for seizure of land and its defence is a partial struggle. Nor there is any scope for interpreting the concerned para to mean as such; on the other hand one of the questions and the answer given to it makes it amply clear about partisan warfare as a form of struggle or partial demands like reduction of rent etc. The gains which the Telangana people had during 'anti-Nizam' armed struggle were of a basic nature. The land seized from landlords, the *gram Rajyas*, (village soviets) set up by the people, and the armed guerilla forces and the militia the people built up are not partial in character, nor can they be changed into partial under any circumstances. Therefore the armed struggle to defend their basic gains can never be equated to the partisan warfare for partial demands which the above mentioned answer suggests. Therefore the armed struggle for defence of those revolutionary gains is for basic demands and hence its character is basic even though it is carried out against Nehru Government.

Here Sundarayya confuses the character of the basic nature of armed struggle with the tactical slogan advanced by the Party i.e. overthrow of the Nehru Government. He seems to take shelter under a para from the document, which runs thus :

*"In spite of the offensive nature of the partisan struggle, it is necessary to emphasise in our agitation and pro-*

*paganda in the initial period the defensive nature of partisan struggle, saying that the objective of partisan struggle is above all to defend the peasants from the attack of the government and its punitive organs. In doing so, special attention should be paid to the demands for which the peasants are fighting and the atrocities of the government which force the peasants to take arms. It is necessary at the same time, to point out that it is the government that is responsible for violence and bloodshed."*

Here the document clearly states that the nature of partisan struggle is offensive, and not defensive. The term 'offensive' is used in the military as well as political sense. Therefore, the defence of revolutionary gains through armed struggle in the form of partisan warfare is an offensive struggle, but not a defensive struggle.

The revolutionary gains being of a basic character, can and must be defended by overthrowing the Nehru Government or whatever Government that exists. Struggle for partial demands and settlement basing on them can take place within the frame work of the existing regime. But the nature of the basic demands, which the Telangana armed struggle had thrown up, is such that no negotiated settlement was possible with the then existing regime. [The same is the case with the present regime.] Therefore, even according to the above document, the offensive character of the armed struggle continued even after 'Police Action'. It is wrong and misrepresentation of the document when Sundarayya says that the character of the struggle has changed after the 'Police Action', either according to the document or according to the opinion of Comrade Stalin, who is said to have approved it.

What are the slogans that the party should have advanced? Time and again the party had advanced the slogan of defending the gains of Telangana armed struggle and explained why the party had to fight for them in the form of armed struggle, while characterising the nature of this struggle to be offensive for the purpose of overthrowing the Government.

The document provides clear understanding of 'coming into existence of liberated territories with their own armed forces in several parts of the country' (p 410), and says that they can

be defended and retained only when the working class comes into action. If Sundarayya's understanding of trimming higher-level of armed struggle into partial struggles which can be withdrawn with or without a negotiated settlement is correct, how can then such 'liberated territories' come into existence? Therefore, the point he mentions and elaborates on this subject, as a part of the 'gist' of the discussions with Stalin, is neither in accordance with the original document, nor tallies with the concerned questions and answers.

Sundarayya adds another para, in which he says, Stalin suggested withdrawal of Telangana armed struggle. It runs thus :

*'It was also observed that in the then prevailing situation, it was unfortunate that the Telangana armed partisan resistance could not be defended and continued. The time had come to withdraw the armed partisan struggle, and it was for the leadership of the Indian Communist Party, to decide on what terms to withdraw it and negotiate, and how long it had to be continued to secure suitable terms, and when exactly to withdraw the armed resistance etc. Undue prolongation of the Telangana armed partisan struggle in the absence of mass peasant upsurge in support of the partisan struggle, might raise the danger of its deteriorating into squad or individual terrorism.'* (pp. 415-16).

Here Sundarayya puts the suggestion of withdrawal of Telangana armed struggle in the mouth of Comrade Stalin. What we were reported does not tally with the 'gist' he gives in this para. It was reported to us (of course, orally) that after studying various aspects of the armed struggle in detail, Comrade Stalin suggested to the Indian delegation to 'send more arms, more cadres, and whatever the partisans need in fighting zones to continue the armed struggle'. This was the first suggestion that he made in one of the earlier meetings which the delegation had with him. Later on, when the delegation pressed him again to advise what to do with the armed struggle, he was reported to have said it is a pity that you cannot defend the struggle and nothing more. When we asked the delegates, who had reported this matter to us, the reason for contradictory nature of the two statements Comrade Stalin had made, it was reported to us that, perhaps, he might have come to the latter conclusion after understanding the depth of the split in

the party. This much was the report we had from Andhra delegates, and nothing more.

In view of the report we had from the Andhra delegates, Sundarayya's omission of Comrade Stalin's first suggestion, which was most important, principled and in accordance with the original document, which he was said to have approved is deliberate and not accidental. He does not mention the split in the party and its effects on the armed struggle as understood by Comrade Stalin anywhere in the 'gist' he gives. Nor he mentions any reason which Stalin might have given for this suggestion, if it was really so, excepting that there was "the absence of mass peasant upsurge, in support of the partisan struggle....." Any person who knows ABC of guerilla warfare, also knows that its tactical principles are meant to meet all situations. The people's upsurge will not be the same, either in quantity or in quality when armed struggle goes on for a fairly long time, when people have to fight a protracted civil war or national war. Assuming that there was a temporary lull in the situation, it does not mean that party should withdraw armed struggle and lay down arms. It could have adopted such tactics which were necessary for survival and become active again when situation permitted for such a step. No International authority, much less Comrade Stalin, visualised a long period of post second world war lull. On the contrary, those parties who have continued armed struggle could carry on for long, some being successful, others still continuing and the rest facing set backs temporarily.

There was no Comintern existing at the time. Every party was sovereign, with powers to take their own decisions on matters relating to questions of revolutions of their own countries. The advice Comrade Stalin and the CPSU delegation gave to the Indian delegation was a help coming out of their responsibility because the leadership of the CPSU had based its policies on proletarian internationalism as long as Comrade Stalin was alive and headed that party. It was left to the leadership of the party who represented, to accept it, amend it or reject it. Experience has proved that the leadership, instead of using it to advance the

cause of revolution, misused it to sabotage and disrupt the revolution. On the contrary, the successful outcome of Chinese revolution proves the correctness of the attitude the CPC under the leadership of Comrade Mao, who, while being loyal to Comintern and receptive to the guidance Comrade Stalin provided, has used the fraternal help and guidance to advance the cause of revolution. Thus, they could come out successfully. Indian leadership could do neither, inspite of genuine attempts of the International leadership to help, during various phases of Indian revolution.

Every one knows that the central leadership of the party had no contribution in developing the armed struggle in Telangana since its earlier stages. In fact, it was the victim of the wrong policies adopted by the leadership from the very beginning. The Telangana armed struggle had developed and survived inspite of the right opportunist and left adventurist policies of the central leadership without any concrete guidance and help. This is the positive aspect of the armed struggle which provides us with the necessary experience which can and must be used for the advance of Indian revolution. At the same time it had its own short-comings born out of the wrong policies that the central leadership had adopted although except for a brief period during 1950.

In view of this, it is strange and monstrous to say that Comrade Stalin asked the leadership of the party to take a decision for withdrawal of an armed struggle which has lasted for about five years with which the central leadership was not positively connected in any way and which has no experience of armed struggle itself.

At the same time we can understand the implications of the words which Comrade Stalin was reported to have used that "it is a pity that you cannot defend the struggle" (meaning Telangana armed struggle). If those words mean anything, it is that, he had come to the Conclusion, by that time, that the leadership was unfit to lead the struggle as it did

not possess the necessary revolutionary characteristics that are necessary to lead the armed struggle in the most difficult circumstance in which it was going on.

In view of the above, the "gist" of the discussions that Sundarayya attempted to reproduce in his book (pp. 414-16), cannot be treated as an honest presentation of the subject discussed. Neither it has any documentary evidence in support of this, nor it is based on understanding contained in the document - "A note on Indian situation (1951)". Hence it has to be rejected as baseless.

## X

The draft programme was released and it was given wide publicity in the national as well as international press. But "A note on Indian situation (1951)" was kept under lock and key and even the provincial committees were not allowed to know and discuss it. In the Central Committee meeting that was held, these two documents were given to the members present, but "A note on Indian situation (1951)" was taken back by the central leadership, so that it may be kept in their safe custody. There were self-contradictory statements when both the documents are taken and read together. After formal acceptance of the documents, the P. B. and the Central Committee were reconstituted. The "Policy statement" that was prepared, emasculating whatever revolutionary element the original document possessed, was issued as a legal version of the document, which was said to have been adopted in a party conference held subsequently. On the question of Telangana, neither the "gist" of the discussion was reported, nor a thorough discussion took place, in the light of the document "A note on Indian situation (1951)". The question of withdrawal of the struggle was neither touched, nor discussed. A resolution on Telangana was adopted for ostensible purpose of mobilising Indian democratic public opinion behind the armed struggle, together with a set of demands to solve the Telangana problem, to expose the hollowness of Nehru Government. That the party never intended to overthrow the Nehru Government was stated in the resolution, but

the demands put forward were of basic nature, which the Government could never accept, and defence of the gains at all costs meant continuation of armed struggle to overthrow the Government.

The demands put forward were as follows:

*"All the lands that are being cultivated by the agricultural labourers and peasants must be distributed and the possession by ownership (patta) rights must be confirmed. No peasant and agricultural labourer cultivating the land should be evicted from the land he has been cultivating. The land forcibly seized from the peasants should be restored to them (emphasis ours)."*

*"--people living in the forest areas must be free to utilize the forest produce, freely for their own personal use and for sale. They must be allowed to freely cultivate the lands in the forests under the supervision of their elected panchayats."*

*"--All village affairs should be conducted by the panchayats elected by men and women."*

These are the demands whose content is to undo what Union military had done from 1948 September to 1951 May. It was obvious that the Government will not accept these demands and a negotiated settlement was not possible on this basis.

The other demands were :

*"-- Withdrawal of all the armed personnel and disbanding of the Home Guards."*

*"--Release of convicted and detained political prisoners, all those connected with Telangana movement. Withdrawal of all pending cases and warrants. Cancellation of collective fines."*

*"-- Withdrawal of the ban on "Andhra Mahasabha" and Communist party. Restoration of civil liberties."*

These were all democratic demands, which the reactionary Government like Nehru's can never accept unless party withdrew the armed struggle and surrendered arms. In fact, all those who were against continuing of armed struggle were released in batches and they were immensely helpful to the Government in condemning the armed struggle as nothing but individual terrorism and in demanding its withdrawal unconditionally. Obviously, the campaign let loose by these forces was much more harmful

to the armed struggle than that one conducted by the ruling classes and their agents.

The last demand was "the question of abolishing the Nizam dynasty's rule as well as the Hyderabad state, and its merger into United Andhra, Maharashtra and Karnatak States, to be left to be decided by a Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise of the people of Hyderabad State." (for all these demands see pp. 419.20).

The first part of the last demand was for the formation of linguistic provinces within the framework of Indian constitution, which the Government accepted in a different set of circumstances (Potti Sree Ramulu's martyrdom and the consequent upheaval in Andhra). Yet the nature of the demand was liberal reformist. The last part of the demand for the Constituent Assembly etc. could serve at best a propaganda purpose as the Constituent Assembly which framed the constitution itself could not see the light of adult franchise. On the contrary, it was composed of indirectly elected representatives with a limited franchise, combined with loyalists of British imperialists and native feudal princes. Therefore this demand, if treated as a demand of action, needed continuation of armed struggle, or else it became merely a propaganda slogan.

Whatever the little discussion that took place on this resolution, the question of withdrawal of armed struggle did not come up at any stage, since the demands were of a basic nature, which were not expected to be accepted by the Government, though it was prepared for negotiations.

The very fact that C. Rajeswara Rao had put forward a note (See appendix No. 2) in the meeting of Andhra Comrades, who attended the May 1951 C. C. meeting, in which specific proposals were contained to continue the armed struggle, even after the above C. C. meeting, is a conclusive proof that the May 1951 C. C. meeting did not discuss the question of withdrawal of armed struggle at all. Hence my acceptance does not arise as Sundarayya tries to attribute it to me (p. 422). The above mentioned note is given in full in a Telugu book written by M. Basava Punnaiah. Its title is

*Telangana Sayudha Poratamu - Vastavala i, e., "Telangana armed struggle and realities" (pp. 233-36).*

Sundarayya also mentions a fact approvingly in his book (p. 416) that "it was very correct on the part of the Central Committee to decide, that on no serious mass struggles and especially one like the armed peasant struggle of Telangana, should final decisions be taken without proper consultations and discussions with the direct participants and leaders of the struggle" (p. 416). But the facts show that the leadership had done a quite opposite thing. In this connection, a circular of the then Hyderabad State Committee is reproduced in Basavapunniah's book (p. 81); it says that 'out of more than 750 comrades who are in guerilla squad organisation three out of four were opposed to withdraw guerilla struggle, without minimum conditions.' Even this is not a fact. Almost all the partisans and the leadership of Manukota area committee were opposed to withdraw armed struggle as such.

Sundarayya mentions another incident with duplicity and in ambiguous terms, in this way :

*"The Central Committee members from Andhra had met separately to assess the situation anew before they were to go to the areas in Telangana to meet and discuss with local partisan leaders. Though there were some differences amongst them initially in the matter of further conducting the Telangana struggle, they were able to overcome these differences and go unitedly before the party ranks and the people"*  
( p. p: 416-17 ).

It is a fact that the members present there met separately, in which I was one, but was by then removed from the Central Committee. Therefore to say that all the members present belonged to the Central Committee is not a fact. He says that they 'had met separately to assess the situation anew before they were to go to the areas in Telangana'.....; that conclusively proves that the Central Committee which met on previous days did not do it, and the resolution adopted by it was not based on an objective assessment of the situation. On the other hand, it was dominated by subjective thinking. It should be noted here that a number of CCMs who were formerly for armed struggle, crossed the floor and took sides with those who were

opposed to it and some of them took a neutral attitude, which always pays in such circumstances. He also accepts the fact that "though there were some differences amongst them initially in the matter of further conducting the Telangana struggle, they were able to overcome these differences and go unitedly before the party ranks and the people". Here he does not mention about the nature of the differences. He does not categorically say that they were resolved after discussions, by convincing each other. He only says that "they were able to overcome these differences" so that they can speak with one voice before the people and the ranks. This means that we came to some agreed decisions, while holding on to their respective views, so as to carry on further discussion. (I have already mentioned about the note put forward by C. Rajeshwara Rao in this connection).

Sundarayya does not reveal what were the factors, which made them "go unitedly before the party ranks and the people." In this way, he exhibits his duplicity and keeps the readers and the people uninformed of the important developments, that are relevant to the subject under discussions i. e. withdrawal of armed struggle.

It was I, along with C. Rajeshwara Rao; who insisted on continuance of armed struggle, with the correction of the mistakes and shortcomings in the light of "A note on Indian situation ( 1951 )." For this purpose, I proposed to go deep into the movement and study its shortcomings. I wanted that sufficient time should be given to rectify them and put the armed struggle on proper rails. While negotiating on the demands we declared, we had no illusion that the Government will ever accept them - we should carry on the armed struggle, without committing the previous mistakes. The others were not confident of the future and they came to the conclusion that the struggle could not be sustained. With our views standing on opposite poles, we came to an agreement on the following points :

1. All guerilla actions either on armed forces or on individuals should be stopped forthwith.



This does not mean withdrawal of armed struggle. All our guerrilla squads will remain as they are, and they will be strengthened by removing weak elements. They will go into action in cases of self-defence, with tactics of active defence.

2. The weaknesses that crept in the movement should be rectified, giving priority to mass mobilisation, mass and party organisation by preparing them for land distribution. Towards the latter part of this period, this aspect was not given due importance, and in some places nothing was done in this respect. On the contrary, actions on individuals became the main pattern of work, which often exceeded the limits, without taking the interest of the mass movement into consideration and without any relation or regard to the political line we were following.
3. The whole line, as incorporated in the document "*A note on the Indian situation (1951)*" has to be explained to the lower level of our ranks, and to the people as far as possible, and we should find out the opinions on the document. We should reorganise the movement on the rails the document provides.
4. Since general elections are approaching, and the party has decided to take part in them, we should utilise this period to reorganise ourselves, in spite of the repression that is likely to continue.
5. After the elections are over, we should meet again, review the situation existing in fighting areas in particular, and the country in general. Since the demands are not likely to be accepted by the Government, possibility of continuing the struggle is also not ruled out.
6. We were not confident that the central leadership will ever deal with the Telangana problem honestly. Therefore, we had decided to put up a stiff resistance in case the central leadership intends to withdraw the armed struggle.

This was the understanding we arrived at which Sundarayya wants to conceal from the people. It was decided that I should go to Warangal - Karimnagar - Adilabad forest area, while Sundarayya was expected to go to Nalla malla forest area. We left to these areas accordingly.

I am in possession of a document of a self critical review of the armed struggle in Amara-bad region (Nalla malla forest region), in which the leadership had pointed out its achievements as well as shortcomings in view of the new line, that was explained by Sundarayya who had been there as a representative of P.C. It contains their decision to continue armed struggle with the corrections that were required by the new line. There is not even a trace nor an indication that the people's upsurge has subsided and there was a lull in the movement. The comrades expressed full confidence in their capacity to carry on the armed struggle, and there was no demand for withdrawal of armed struggle from any quarter. The regional committee, while suggesting some amendments to the demands put forward by the Central Committee, insisted that unless the land problem as demanded by the Party was solved, there should be no compromise with the Government on the question of armed struggle. (This document is dated August 14 or 21, 1951, which was finalised in the presence of Sundarayya. See Appendix No. 1). Sundarayya neither gives the full text nor a "gist" of this document in his book. On the other hand he gives the full text of the resolution approving the decision of the "PC", for withdrawal of armed struggle, which was adopted by the same regional committee three months later, on November 21, 1951 (pp. 426-30). It is clear that the omitted document does not suit his policies while the published one goes or his favour.

The leadership of the Manukota area Committee, a good number of the cadre and armed guerrilla squads functioning under the Committee were for continuing the armed struggle after 'Police Action'. They never vacillated on this line and carried on the struggle. The struggle extended into new areas i. e. Karim

nagar, Adilabad districts and some regions of Bastar, across the Godavari river. They have faced numerous problems in this process and certain mistakes of a serious nature were also committed. It was decided that I should go over there, explain the new line, set right the organisational problems and reorganise the entire movement to be able to face the new situation.

It took some time to convince the leadership about the line we had adopted. At last they accepted the new line. The Government continued its military operations and our guerilla squads had to put up active defence. I, in co-operation with the local leadership, was busy in explaining the new line and putting the whole organisational structure and the revolutionary movement in order. Though I came to know that All India Radio announced the Party's decision on withdrawal of armed struggle through one of the comrades, I continued to implement the decision that was taken by the P. C. in May, 1951. Suddenly, I was recalled from the forest areas to party headquarters for 'urgent consultations'. When I reached the party headquarters, I found none at the place, nor any intimation to see the responsible comrades. While going to headquarters, I came to know that C. Rajeshwara Rao was going to the area where I was carrying on my work. He neither met me nor intimated the purpose of his visit.

While I was trying to contact someone who can be found at the headquarters, I came to know that Sundarayya had been to Amrabad region and completed the necessary arrangements for the withdrawal of armed struggle i. e., disbanding the guerilla squads, dumping arms etc. C. Rajeshwara Rao did the same in the Warangal - Karimnagar forest area. I have reliable information that the local leadership had refused to disband guerilla squads and the squads refused to lay down arms. In spite of this he succeeded in his attempts by using all possible methods, including his personal influence on the leadership. Thus the armed struggle came to an end.

There is no truth in Sundarayya's saying that 'D. Venkateswara Rao, after attending the Central Committee meeting accepted the new understanding and gave his consent for withdrawal'. Sundarayya might have had his own understanding of the new line which means withdrawal of armed struggle as far as he is concerned. My understanding was different from what he had and I have never consented for withdrawal. The fact that C. Rajeshwara Rao had to go over to Warangal forest region to make arrangements for this purpose and I was recalled from those areas without giving any reason, is a conclusive proof for this. Even the August (1951) document of Amrabad regional committee, which was discussed and finalised in the presence of Sundarayya does not mention and deal with this problem.

Curiously enough, these comrades had taken the decision of withdrawal of armed struggle in the absence of B. Narasimha Reddy and myself, who were consistent throughout to continue armed struggle and who were in charge of the fighting areas to guide the struggle. There was no such pressing need to take the decision excluding us, in which case it could never be a P. C. decision, but a decision of individuals, though they might be in majority. To call it a P. C. decision and to hold responsible a member who was neither invited nor present, is a practice never heard in communist organisation's principles.

Sundarayya has narrated a number of factors, that were said to be the causes to take such a decision. Those factors were present, immediately after 'Police Action' and at the time of May, 1951 Central Committee meeting. The only new element that was introduced in the situation was the rejection of our demand in toto by the Government, and release of a number of 'comrades' who were for withdrawal of armed struggle, who made it their day-to-day work to condemn it as individual terrorism. These developments were expected in our discussions and we were ready to face their onslaught. In this connection Sundarayya himself mentions an incident (p. 421) that "Ajoy

Kumar Ghosh threatened that unless Telangana struggle was withdrawn immediately, he would be forced to issue a statement disowning it. Maddukuri Chandra Sekhara Rao, who was then secretary of Andhra Committee, had to retort to him that in that case, they, the leaders of the Telangana movement would be forced to disown him and his leadership - which threat kept him in check". Obviously, the threat was a temporary one. Ajoy Ghosh and his colleagues pursued their line of withdrawal of armed struggle and the four leaders from Andhra had subsequently joined them by taking a decision to that effect.

What the secretary of the Andhra P. C. said in retort to Ajoy Ghosh, was not an empty threat. That was the mood of our fighting ranks and the leadership in which I was one.

In spite of our losses and shortcomings, the situation in the fighting areas was not a desperate one. Our guerillas could break the 'encirclement and annihilation' campaigns of the military and could spread themselves far and wide in mountainous regions of adjacent areas. They were more confident than ever to confront the union armies in a protracted armed struggle. There was not a trace of demoralisation among them, excepting those who advocated the politics of surrender and withdrawal from the very beginning. Sundarayya mentions only opinions of such leaders who were in support of their decision of withdrawal, but he could not cite a single resolution or statement from Manukota Area Committee, endorsing their decision of withdrawal. This was the committee and the area on which P. C. relied on to carry on the armed struggle. The other units who advocated withdrawal, corrected themselves, carried on the resistance, only when they saw that our guerillas could resist Union armies and our party could build mass revolutionary movement in Manukota area. Those leaders who had taken the decision of withdrawal of armed struggle have not only bypassed the P. C. but refused to take into account the opinions of the guerillas and their leaderships. The resolution of Amarabad Regional Committee of endorsing the withdrawal, which Sundarayya mentioned in his book

(pp. 426-30) neither mentions the August resolution, which was adopted by the same committee, nor he gives any reason why it had changed its attitude within two months.

In this connection, I have come across a Circular 'No 3/51' issued in the name of Hyderabad State Committee 'to all party members', in which the reasons for withdrawal of armed struggle were explained at length. It is not dated and there are three names of the secretariat, in which my name is included, suggesting that it was issued by the secretariat of the Hyderabad State Committee. This runs into several pages from 60 to 87 in Basavapunniah's above mentioned Telugu Book. Though the circular is undated, the author says that it was issued in the month of November, 1951, and inclusion of my name towards the end (as a signatory) shows that I was in full agreement with the withdrawal of armed struggle. The fact of the matter was that the decision was taken in my absence, without inviting me to the meeting, and it was announced by the All India Radio towards the end of the third week of October, 1951. I came to know it through a comrade either by the end of October or in the month of November. I was recalled from the forest areas sometime in the later part of November or towards the end of the month. It was inconceivable that I could reach the party Headquarters by the end of November, after trekking a long distance through mountainous regions, from the interior parts of forests to which I had gone. What happened was that the circular mentioned here also was circulated by including my name, just like the decision for withdrawal of armed struggle was taken in my absence and it was paraded as P. C. decision. I had not dissociated with the circular, not because I was in agreement with the decision of withdrawal of armed struggle, but because, my dissociation may lead to further complications in the fighting areas, where guerilla squads were disbanded, arms were dumped and a number of guerillas were left defenceless without arms. They were, at that time, being chased by the military and killed in large numbers. Some of those incidents were mentioned in the letter to

Vellodi, who was the Chief Administrator of the State, which was included in the documents given by Basavapunniah in his above book (p. 145). These leaders created a situation in which withdrawal of armed struggle was total and *fait accompli*. In the inner party situation existing at that time, and the way the documents and statements were issued with the names instead of committees, I decided not to dissociate my name as it might further endanger the lives of comrades who were left defenceless as a result of withdrawal of armed struggle. The discussion on various aspects of Telangana armed struggle was postponed indefinitely for a future date and everyone had his views regarding it.

Thus the leadership, adopting all sorts of dubious methods, faced us with a *fait accompli*, and nothing could be done to save the armed struggle in the situation then existing.

We met only after the general elections were over to discuss the surrender of arms. It should be noted that the arms were dumped, and the guerilla squads were disbanded. A few individual comrades were given arms for self-defence because they were likely to be shot in case they are caught by the police and military. Seeing no immediate prospect of reviving the armed struggle, I gave my consent to surrender of some of the arms which were obsolete by then, while retaining the more useful weapons, for future use. The dumped arms could not be saved due to various reasons, including the betrayal of those in charge of them. Whether obsolete or not, the surrender of arms was politically wrong and I share the responsibility for the decision.

The above facts show that Sundarayya is neither objective, nor honest in providing the people, the relevant parts of the new document (A note on Indian Situation, 1951) nor in explaining them, nor providing them facts on relevant matters. Instead he misused them to slander those who were opposing their revisionist line including myself.

## XI

There is a tragic part of the book, in which Sundarayya puts some questions to himself

and fails to provide a straight forward and bold answer. This is the first part of his questions :

*"What is the position of the Communist Party and where are the principal participants and leaders of the movement now? Were the tactics adopted after withdrawal of the struggle all that they should have been, or could there have been other alternative measures? What else could we have done atleast to be in a far better position than what we are in now, or is it all inevitable? What are the main lessons to be drawn for our future action for the development of the revolutionary movement in our country?" (P. 436).*

In reply to these questions he gives a dismal picture of what happened during the last two decades of parliamentary path and further states :

*"... to day even in those 300 villages where our movement and Party hold a major position, a considerable section of the rural poor, a large percentage of the middle and rich peasantry are with the Congress..."*

*"In fact, the agrarian movement, now-a-days, is not in such a strong position to take up as a practical issue the question of land seizure or distribution of the lands of the landlords over a minimum ceiling which would ensure land to the tiller. The movement is just forced to defend the possession of and the right to continue cultivation of waste lands; or just take up the same old minimum wages demand for agricultural labour, which we demantled and enforced over two decades ago." (P. 439)*

This part of his statement provides the required answers to his question. It is an open admittance that his Party's parliamentary path had led the movement to such a situation. How can a Party which depends on landlords and rich peasants for its votes, understand the mood of the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers whether they are ready to seize the lands of the landlords. CPM is one such Party and has no future. Our experience in Naxalbari, Srikakulam, East Godavari, Warangal districts conclusively proves that the poor peasants and agricultural labourers are ready to seize the lands of landlords and defend it with arms if given a proper direction.

Again, he puts some more questions to himself to which he fails to provide correct answers. They are :

*"Why is all this? Is this inevitable or could the Party have done anything better? Or is it that in areas where advances take place in spurts and in isolation and get crushed by the ruling classes, not to revive for a long time?"*

*Is there no possibility of the revolutionary democratic movement being co-ordinated and defended in the strong areas, till enough areas could join them and a mortal blow could be struck at the state power of the ruling classes and the People's Democracy led by the working class ushered in?" (P. 440).*

He had enough time to put his Party's policies into practice, gain experience, which could have provided the required answers. The very fact that he puts these questions with no positive and assertive answers to give shows conclusively that his talk about revolution and revolutionary movement is sham and seeking a seat here and a seat there through elections, is a reality. There are so many parties and individuals, who talk of revolution day in and day out. Mrs. Indira Gandhi is one of them. Every one knows what they are doing. Experience has shown that he and his Party is one among them.

## XII

Ever since the Soviet leadership in collusion with Indian Government, started and carried anti-China Policies, anything said and done against China gets handsome dividends for political parties and personalities in India. The leadership of the CPM is one which takes every opportunity to have a dig at China' but without a success!

Sundarayya brings the Chinese Party into the controversies of withdrawal of armed struggle in Telangana. He writes the following sentences in this connection :

*"Let me here itself make it absolutely clear that the Chinese Party at no time, during all the years from 1951 to 1967 ever said that the withdrawal of the Telangana movement was wrong, though they could have conveyed it on innumerable occasions when we had the opportunity to meet them personally. Once when we said in a mood of self-criticism that if we had had the correct understanding, we could have retreated with much less losses and with greater gains, they told us not to stress that aspect, but bring forth the revolutionary significance of the fact that the Nehru Government could not suppress a peasant partisan struggle even in a small part of the country." (P. 433).*

Here Sundarayya criticises Chinese Party's attitude during the period from 1951 to '67, the period after the armed struggle has been withdrawn. But his criticism is unfounded. The

Chinese leadership knew well that the document 'A note on Indian situation (1951)' was a rejection of Chinese Path as applied to India. What transpired between the Chinese leadership and the then Soviet leadership in this connection, we do not know. Their direct help and guidance to the armed struggles in Burma and Malaya stands in direct contrast with the attitude the Soviet leadership had taken towards armed struggle in India. In such a situation they might have thought it to be improper to come into controversy with the CPI on a question which was a *fait accompli*.

Sundarayya himself admits that they had no serious discussion with Chinese comrades on the subject. Instead what they said was 'in a mood of self criticism'. Whether it was a mood of self-criticism or an attempt to get an endorsement from the Chinese comrades for what they did, nobody knows. My own assessment is that they intended to get the latter, which the Chinese comrades did not oblige. Their suggestion 'to bring forth the revolutionary significance of the fact...in a small part of the country' indicates their line of thinking. If Nehru Government failed to suppress armed struggle in a small part of a country like Telangana, it would have been impossible to crush it if the armed struggle was developed in more areas. Or, it might mean, when the 'Nehru Government could not suppress a peasant partisan struggle' why should the question of withdrawal arise. All these meanings are implied in four sentences that he mentioned by way of commenting adversely on the Chinese Party.

As I have said earlier and on some occasions, it had been the practice of the CPI leadership, who went abroad as representatives, not to divulge the details of the discussions, or verbatim reports, either to CC or down below to PCs. They kept the records of the discussions as their preserves. They never made them the property of the entire party. Therefore they could use them according to their needs which often went against the interests of a healthy inner-party discussion to evolve a correct line.

Therefore the responsibility of withdrawal of armed struggle in Telangana, rests with those

who have taken the decisions for it and impeded it. Implicating others shows only their weakness and guilty conscience, but not correctness of the decision.

### XIII

I have criticised various formulations of Sundarayya regarding Telangana armed struggle in accordance with the document '*A Note on Indian situation (1951)*', which was otherwise called '*Kishan Document*', not because I uphold it and think it to be a correct tactical line for Indian Revolution. I have done so because CPM leadership has been indulging in a double talk, in presenting '*Statement of Policy*', as their official tactical line, at the same time claiming the other document as its 'ideological-theoretical basis'. His various formulations do not fit in the document, nor the account of the discussions with the international leadership are objective and truthful. To prove this alone, I have taken the above document as the basis for my criticism.

I hold that the majority of the Andhra Secretariat put forward a fundamentally correct line in the middle of 1948 before the Party. If a healthy and principled inner-party discussion had been carried out on the basis of this document that we submitted, it would have been possible for the Party to arrive at a correct line which could advance Indian Revolution. Once the fundamentals of this line was rejected by the Party leadership, it could only adopt a parliamentary path. The only course open to Marxist-Leninists was to continue the ideological struggle on the basis of Andhra documents, adding to it the rich revolutionary experience that we had gained and we were gaining everyday. That we could not perform our revolutionary duty in this respect for a long time, is our weakness, which we could overcome during and after the great debate that took place in the International Communist movement. We are confident that we are on a correct path, and it will lead our revolution to a success.

The path that we evolved, is based on the experience of Telangana armed struggle. The content of armed struggles in Naxalbari and Srikulam is the agrarian revolution, just like Telangana. Therefore the experiences of these

struggles have enriched our path and clarified it further. The losses that we suffered were due to right opportunist and left adventurist mistakes including the inexperience of the leadership conducting the armed struggle.

It should be noted that Telangana was not the creation of the central leadership of that period. Its emergence was in opposition to the policies that the central leadership was practising excepting for a brief period in 1950. Therefore, the losses, the short-comings and the mistakes were bound to be in greater number than what they would have been in a normal course. Not only the CC, but a greater part of the PC, had no direct connection with the movement from its inception. It was only a wing of co-operative PC, that had to carry on this stupendous task. If the losses etc. are understood in this context, we can move with more confidence. It is only the defeatists who are afraid of losses etc. and dissuade the party from taking a revolutionary path. Sundarayya is one amongst them.

During the 1952-62 period there was a general reaction among the rank and file comrades that what Nehru could not achieve with 50,000 armies in action, he could achieve with election i.e. parliamentary system. This means that the party as a revolutionary force ceased to exist, after the withdrawal of the armed struggle. The report of Manukota area he mentions in his book (p. 524-27) and the Amarabad Regional Committee document of August, 1951, show that peasants could retain lands as long as guerrilla warfare continued, though a part of them changed hands and went into the possession of landlords. It was only after the withdrawal of armed struggle, peasants were forced to quit even tenancy lands and the landlord domination was restored in the villages. This is naked truth which everybody knows and feels. The revisionists had been advocating from the very beginning that the lands and other gains could have been defended by legal means if armed struggle was withdrawn earlier i.e. immediately after 'Police Action'. Experience has proved that neither release of all of our comrades, nor the lifting of the ban on *Andhra Mahasabha* and Communist Party, nor presence of a bunch of MLAs and MPs in the assemblies and parliament could save us anything from out of the revolutionary gains of

Telangana struggle. Thus the thesis of revisionists proved to be wrong and capitulationist in unmistakable terms. Their position is understandable since they made it their fundamental policy to support the Congress Government and do nothing to endanger its position. But what about Sundarayya and his CPM? He could not prove in 600 pages of his book, that by withdrawal of armed struggle, people and Party could gain something material out of what they gained from armed struggle, except some MLAs and MPs who could do nothing in this regard except speaking occasionally, sometimes welcoming government measures and some other times opposing them in a low voice with exceptional furious speeches. Sundarayya should know well that major part of the tenancy lands were lost after the so-called progressive Land Reforms Act was passed in Hyderabad assembly in 1954. When this is the immediate truth before us, how can he defend the withdrawal of armed struggle in 1951? He is well aware of the fact that the party and the people could not withstand the armed attacks of land lords and our party and mass movement was virtually liquidated in Manukota Taluka. Even the glamour of assembly and parliament seats was short-lived, and we saw their numbers being reduced to insignificant point.

We have seen Communist Party Government in Kerala and United Front Governments in Kerala and West Bengal, whose experiences were sought to be generalised as 'Kerala and Bengal way', denoting the success of their parliamentary path. When they were disbanded by a stroke of pen by the Centre, they had to quit their "power", unwept and unsung. People were reduced to either passive spectators or peaceful demonstrators. What they achieved constitutionally (if there is one?), they lost it constitutionally. The balance is nil. Light-hearted people could speak of petty things (if any) which they could get done from high-ups. There are no revolutionary gains and therefore no question of revolutionary defence comes before the concerned party or parties.

Therefore, the path open to the people of India is a revolutionary path. This is incon-

testable. But the partial partisan struggles, even if they are practical and conducted, can never be a part of this revolutionary path. Agrarian revolution is the decisive factor for the success of People's Democratic Revolution in India. An agrarian revolutionary movement reaching the stage of seizure of landlords' lands, adopting the highest form of struggle is the only path open to Indian Revolution. If Telangana armed struggle teaches us anything, it is this and this alone. In spite of having setbacks, the experiences of Naxalbari and Srikakulam confirms the correctness of this path.

If Sundarayya and his colleagues content themselves with some achievements in the form of reforms, which are the outcome of everyday revolutionary struggle, we revolutionaries diligently study the experiences of these struggles in which Telangana occupies a unique position, to see that the mistakes committed earlier are not repeated, and the continuity of struggle is maintained at all costs. This is the only correct way for the Marxist-Leninists to look at armed struggle in Telangana. We pay our homage to thousands of martyrs fallen in Telangana, Naxalbari, Srikakulam and other armed struggles, first martyr in this phase being Komarayya, not only in a ceremonial manner but taking forward the behests, which they left behind for us. We are doing it and we will do it. There is no force on earth which can stop us. This is the irresistible historical trend, which will come out successfully.

#### XIV

#### Conclusion

Let us conclude this review for the present with a few sentences. Lenin wrote about revisionism:

*"... To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it*

patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms and that every more or less "new" question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it changes the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or an other". (Lenin, C. W. vol. 151: *Marxism and Revisionism*).

Every clause these sentences contain apply to the policies CPM is practising, though they may say that they stand for People's Democratic Revolution, while practising parliamentary path. The very fact that Sundarayya characterises Telangana agrarian revolution as a struggle for partial demands and the armed struggle for seizure of power as a partisan warfare for partial demands, "give rise to one variety of revisionism" which Lenin has prophetically mentioned in this article *Marxism and Revisionism*. This is what we call neo-revisionism, which led them to condemn the peasant armed struggle of Naxalbari and Srikakulam as left adventurism and individual terrorism, without differentiating between people taking up arms and the leadership taking a wrong line. They have done this for the sake of some "assumed advantages of the moment" as a part of their parliamentary path, by renouncing the path of agrarian revolution and protracted armed struggle under the leadership of the working class, to complete People's Democratic Revolution and then go over to construction of socialism in India.

Therefore, the lessons Sundarayya draws from the armed struggle in Telangana (1946-51) are revisionist in character, in spite of the talk of revolution and the platitudes he used in this connection.

## APPENDICES

[Note: We are giving two extracts from the Telugu documents, translated into English. The extracts are given in quotations. The sentences and passages, without quotation marks and the words in brackets are mine, meant for explaining the sequence. —D. V.]

### Appendix-No. I

[Note: The following are the extracts from the Party Letter No. 5, referred in chap-

ter X, issued by Amarabad Regional Committee in the month of August 1951, dated 14 or 21 which is not clear. The Party letter runs into 21 foolscap papers covering all important aspects of the programme and tactical line ("Note on Indian situation 1951", as understood by Sundarayya and explained by him to the members and important Comrades of the Regional Committee in the month of July 1951. —D.V.]

".....Even today we are leading a peasant guerilla war which provides a Path for entire India. We analyse some weaknesses, which are found in us, for the sake of advancing our struggle. At the same time, we have to shut the mouths of those 'idiots' who instead of observing the strength of People's struggle, see only some weaknesses. (Here a mention is made about the resolution adopted about the faction consisting of such persons).

"Our Strength: There are stupid people who cannot see the strength of our movement and the heroic role the people have played, in spite of having their eyes. Even according to the reports we have today, peasantry has not left the lands it has distributed (among themselves). They are enjoying all illegally seized lands (of the landlords) and the crops without leaving a cent. (Here some facts were shown how the peasantry had occupied Government lands to the extent of 2000 acres towards the end of 1950, and turned them into wet lands, in spite of torturous repression). Lands of the landlords which were forcibly seized are lying fallow. Wherever they are cultivated, the crops are either destroyed or enjoyed by the people. (Here, some examples are given). Labourers are moving into struggles in thousands in spite of repression. About one lakh labourers have participated in the strike in 120 villages of Huzurnagar area, during 1949-50. People have reduced the village guards (who were forced to do the job) into a farce. While being in the (village) guards the people are protecting (guerilla) squads like the apple of the eye. In some places they are resisting the guards. In the same way people have moved in thousands in the new regions of Amarabad, broke open the granaries of landlords and distributed numerous candies (8 to 10 bags for each candy) of grain among themselves. (Here some examples are given).



Besides this, (We) have wiped out (Police) stations of Achampet, Pullalacheruvu, Penu-ganchiprolu, Eliampeta, Loyapalli, Kothapalli (and) Gadivemula, with the co-operation of people, during 1950-51, after Nehru's armies entered, in our region alone. In the same way, we have harassed the police in many centres like Mellacheruvu, Krishna Teeram, Mulkala Kalva, Malkapuram etc. We could snatch arms from them in some cases. In the same way, we have snatched arms from Home guards, organised by Nehru armies to protect land-lordism in Balmoor, Madinepalli, Laxa Puram, Siddeswaram, Venkeswaram etc. villages with the co-operation of people (Here some examples are added).

All this work is being done, due to awakening of people who by their direct struggles are defending (their gains). Those blind men who are not able to see this are characterising the entire struggle as terrorism, and advancing arguments for withdrawal of struggle. In spite of this, we have to go into our weaknesses, in view of new tactics, in order to advance our struggle further, without any regard to such timid arguments (they are advancing).

(After dealing with the main weaknesses in the movement, the Parry letter asks the Party members to implement the following 'intensive' programme).

**Land Distribution :** ( After revising the mistakes committed in the past, some 'principles' were laid down for further distribution with following instructions).

"—(we) have to distribute the lands of big landlords keeping in view the above principles.

"—(we) should not allow the farming of lands of the big landlords distributed earlier but forcibly snatched with the help of Police. If they continue with force, people must snatch away the harvests and enjoy them or else they must be destroyed.

"—In areas where the lands of the big landlords are not yet distributed, a ceiling

should be fixed and people should be mobilised (for their) distribution.

(Programme for distribution of Government lands also was included).

**Illegally seized lands :** (After describing how people are moving to occupy such lands in large numbers the following programme is given).

"—All such lands which are with big landlords should be occupied (by the people) without exception.

"—The problems of such lands, which are in possession of small landlords should be solved in the following manner. (Some suggestions were given in this regard).

**Guerrilla Warfare front :** (After providing a programme for tenancy lands, wages for agricultural labourers and food problem, the Party letter gives a line for guerrilla war. After reviewing the mistakes committed in the past the following programme was given ) :

"(1) We have to concentrate our attacks on the police and the repressive apparatus of the Government. After a number of experiences, comrades have developed skill. Enemy must be harassed and attacked so as to make him immobile. We have to give special training to the squads, so that they may concentrate on the apparatus of the Government specifically. Training is already completed up to area commanders. Initiative of squad leaders has to be developed basing on this (training).

"(2) The role of people's struggle should be developed. (We) should stop, once for all, the trends by which people depend on squads for every work. We should see that the people are given small arms, especially country bombs, so that they may play an important role in overthrowing the government system by themselves, thus providing a correct direction to their hatred. (We) should mobilise people to (attack) on (police) movements, to destroy roads and properties of landlords..."

(Six more instructions are provided to deal with Home Guards etc, cautioning against "individual terrorism in any form).

(In a resolution adopted in the same session under the heading "*The noise of windbags in Hyderabad city*" the following para is to be noted):

"The Central Committee in its meetings of December 1950 and May 1951 has passed resolutions to the effect that all the party members should try to conduct Telangana struggle successfully. In spite of this, the propaganda it is carrying on amounts to helping the Government in liquidating the gains of the people" —p. 16.

(After suggesting some amendments to the demands contained in the Central Committee resolution of May, 1951, the Regional Committee puts forth the following minimum demands without whose acceptance "there should be no compromise under any circumstances" as the resolution says.):

"1. The lands seized by the landlords should be returned to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. No eviction of tenants from their possessions (the lands) where evicted (the lands) should be returned. No sales of the tenancy lands (should be allowed). People (residing in the forests) should enjoy the forest produce freely.

"2. Armies should be abolished. All prisoners should be released. All bans must be removed. All collected fines should be returned. Those not yet collected, should be abolished". p. 17.

(Regarding General Elections, the committee has decided that) "We should carry our propaganda from now onwards to boycott the Election force in all manners, so that the people may make the programme a failure." —p. 20.

(The Regional Committee while conscious of the) "danger emanating from 'leaders' who give a distorted interpretation and stab in the back of our struggles" (p. 20) ends the Party

letter with following words which are pregnant with confidence.

"...Leading an anti-landlord peasant guerilla warfare, which is showing a path for the entire peasantry of India, we should advance by strengthening it. Every party-member should lead the struggle with a redoubled vigour, by developing Marxist - Leninist understanding, while advancing this (struggle). The forces of struggle which are spread over through length and breadth of the country will arise and come forward with this New Policy. Let us unite, at a time when economic crisis is gripping and let us establish peoples' government in place of present cruel government. To-day's international situation is much more favourable to us." (p. 21).

## Appendix No. 2

[ Note : The following extracts, referred in chapter X of the review, as retranslated into English from Telugu, are the concluding part of C. Rajeswara Rao's note which was submitted for discussion in the meeting of Andhra C. C. Ms. (pp. 416-17). After analysing the strength and weaknesses of the revolutionary movement in Telangana, he proposes to continue the armed struggle on the basis of the understanding contained in the "*Note on the Indian situation 1951*". He is one with Sundarayya in denying the character of the armed struggle as one for seizure of power. His proposals, in the main, coincide with the line taken by Amrabad Regional Committee in the month of July-August 1951, under the guidance of Sundarayya. In his proposals C. Rajeswara Rao advocates continuation of armed struggle in unequivocal terms. —D. V. ]

"3. In view of the masses of people in Telangana expressing the preparedness to continue armed peasant guerilla warfare, in view of the enemy camp's isolation from the people, and being in the grip of internal contradictions and confusion, in view of the broad masses of people coming into extensive mass struggles on their own as a result of the intensifying economic crisis in several parts of India, and in view of the disintegration of a Congress on an all-India level, we can continue

armed guerilla warfare in Telangana, by removing our weaknesses. But then we have to lead our movement on altogether new rails in accordance with Party's new programme and tactical line.

"4. The objective of our movement should be defending lands and people's movement resisting the repression of military, home guards and landlords, instead of overthrowing the Nehru Government and establishing People's Raj. We should continue armed struggle to achieve these minimum demands. (We) have to demand that the future of the state should be decided by a constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of adult franchise.

#### Change of Tactics

I. To isolate big landlords, to compromise with small landlords.

II. We have to concentrate our struggle against armed forces, police and home guards, but not against small landlords.

III. We have to concentrate our work on organising Party, squads, mass organisations and educating them.

IV. We have to carry on extensive propaganda on the above mentioned demands and unite with progressive groups and parties.

V. (We) have to build a strong working class movement in the towns, which can come forward to help Telangana armed guerilla movement.

VI. Basing on the above-mentioned demands (we) can have negotiations when there arises opportunity.

(From: *Telangana Sayudha Paratannu-Vastavatu* By M. Basava Punnayya. pp. 235-36.)

— [To be continued]

