

**An Extract From
Telangana Armed Struggle
And
The Path Of Indian Revolution**

CHAPTER IX

(We are reproducing a chapter from Com. DV's document, *Telangana Armed Struggle and the Path of Indian Revolution* written criticising P. Sundarayya's book, *The Telangana People's Struggle and its Lessons*. This chapter criticises P. Sundarayya's attempt to cite Stalin's advice as well as the Kishan Document [*A Note on Indian Situation (1951)*] to defend the withdrawal of Telangana armed struggle. This chapter also explains to an extent how the *Statement of Policy, 1951*, was preferred by deleting references to revolutionary path etc. in the *Note on Indian Situation 1951*. The author also criticises the duplicity of CPM leaders in relation to the above two documents. Readers should note that Com. DV made it clear time and again that, inspite of having some revolutionary content, *The Note on Indian Situation, 1951*, rejects the path of people's war as not applicable to Indian conditions and hence cannot be accepted by Communist revolutionaries.

P.Sundarayya was always opposed to the path of people's war as the path of Indian revolution. If he was quoting *A Note on Indian Situation 1951* here and there, it was as a part of CPM leadership's method of opposing the peoples war path and by no means an honest approach towards the above document. In view of the illusions being spread by some groups, it is all the more necessary to understand this aspect of neo-revisionist politics. We hope the following part of Com. DV's above-mentioned document helps the purpose. See p.58 -- Ed.)

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 guerilla 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 clearcut 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 in 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 408) 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 delegations.

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 objectives 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 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, and build, under the leadership of the working class 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 the 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 peasants for the partisan warfare. The omitted para runs 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 interlinked. 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 guerrilla warfare.

Even the para Sundarayya quoted (p 409) 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 foodgrains, 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, such as social boycott of landlords, mass peasant struggle, and 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 opportunistic and capitulationist flexibility. When the party acts 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 as below:

Question : Can partisan warfare, even of the most elementary type, be developed in areas where communications are well developed?

Answer : Yes, when encirclement occurs, transfer the best forces to another area. Lead out the armed forces 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 dealt 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 the 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 for 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 propaganda, 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 framework 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 areas, 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 setbacks 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 of 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.

Everyone 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. (1974)