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In This Issue

Red Star

March 2

From Bhagat Singh:

From Pages of History

On the slogan of 'Long Live Revolution'

CPI Delegation's Discussion with CPSU Leaders and Com. Stalin in February 1951

Content of the Leaflet thrown in the Central Assembly Hall by Bhagat Singh

[WE ARE reproducing the discussion held by members of CPI delegation, then general secretary, C. Rajeshwar Rao, PB members Ajoy Ghosh, S.A. Dange and CC member Basava Punnaiah on 4th and 6th February, 1951, with G.M. Malenkov, M.A. Suslov, P.F. Yudin and V.G. Grigorian representing CC of CPSU and the CPI delegation's discussion with com. Stalin on 9th February, 1951. It is reproduced from September, 2006 issue of Revolutionary Democracy along with an introduction by its editor com. Vijay Singh. This discussion refers to a crucial period in the history of Indian Communist movement when the party leadership vacillated from right deviation to 'left' deviation, and again to right deviation by the end of 1951 in quick succession discarding the programme, tactical line and policy statement arrived at based on the discussions at Moscow. During this entire period of 1946-1951 when Telengana movement was going on leaders of both right and 'left' deviation had one thing in common: their opposition to Telengana struggle and the line of thinking it put forward as reflected in the Andhra Letter, already published in Red Star. When Kolkata Thesis adopted by Second Party Congress of 1948 intertwined people's democratic revolution with socialist revolution under the leadership of B.T. Ranadive, organ of Cominform, For Lasting Peace, For People's Democracy had published an editorial criticising it as a Titoite approach influenced by Yugoslavian Party which had deviated from Marxist-Leninist path by then. It was when Kolkata Thesis collapsed very soon, international communist movement criticised this erroneous line, different groups emerged within CPI and the CC was not meeting for nearly two years, this delegation went to Moscow. But though based on these discussions party documents were drafted and adopted, by the end of 1951 in effect they were rejected, Telengana struggle was withdrawn, compromises were made to participate in the elections in early 1952 and C. Rajeshwar Rao was replaced by Ajoy Ghosh as general secretary. The collection of Party Documents published by both CPI and CPI(M) do not correctly reveal the developments during this period. But the documents published below provide a good picture of the inner party struggle then going on and com. Stalin's suggestions which were soon rejected by the CPI leadership. These documents also help to evaluate party history in a better way. We acknowledge our thanks to editorial board of Revolutionary Democracy, who collected it from Russian archives and translated to English, for allowing us to republish them — RS]

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Introduction

http://cpiml.in/070326.htm

5/19/2007

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The discussions of February 1951 between the representatives of the CC of the CPI and the CC CPSU (B) have played a pivotal role in the history of the communist movement of India. They arose as a result of the virtual political, ideological, and organisational collapse of the CPI after the two successive leaderships of the party identified with the names of P.C. Joshi and B.T. Ranadive. The P.C. Joshi leadership was regarded as having succumbed to a right deviation for having *inter alia* welcomed the Mountbatten award of 1947, often going to wind up the Telengana struggle and seeking to subordinate the party to the Nehru wing of the Congress Party. The Second Congress of the CPI held in 1948 rejected the right-wing P.C. Joshi leadership but under the direction of B.T. Ranadive embarked on a left-adventurist course far removed from the actual possibilities of working class and peasant activity. Ranadive (like Joshi) succumbed to 'decolonisation' theory by denying the continued grip of British imperialism in India, exaggerating the power of the Indian bourgeoisie and underplaying the prevalence of the survivals of feudalism in the country. These errors were complemented and augmented by the adoption of the theory of the intertwining of the democratic and socialist revolutions which effectively denied the appropriateness of the stage of people's democratic revolution in India. The involvement of the Yugoslav delegates — the Yugoslav Communist Party was the author the theory of the intertwining of different stages of revolution in backward countries — in the Second Congress of the CPI has been accepted as having facilitated the adoption of the Ranadive line which was correctly characterised in the communist literature of the period as the Trotskyite and Titoite deviation. The existing collections of party documents obscure rather than illumine these developments.

The famous Cominform editorial was an attempt to guide the CPI on the error of attempting to intertwine the democratic and socialist revolutions and to indicate the necessity of the stage of people's democratic revolution in India adapted to the requirements of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country where the agrarian revolution would play a cardinal role. This was presented as the 'Chinese path'. Then as now this was mistakenly understood in India to mean the adoption of the particular forms of struggle necessitated by the conditions of the Chinese revolution. The Cominform editorial did not resolve the differences between the different fractions of the CPI leadership who then felt driven to seek the advice of the leadership of the CPSU (B).

The meetings held on the 4th and 6th February took place with the participation of the high-powered delegation of Malenkov, Suslov and Yudin on the side of the CPSU (B) and Rajeshwar Rao, Dange, Ghosh and Basavapunniah from the CPI. The CPI leadership verbally presented an account of the problems which faced the party leadership and the CPSU (B) leaders in turn raised a number of questions on the current situation in the party and movement. The CPSU (B) leadership in addition had before them for reference purposes a hefty file of the key documents of the party, which had been especially translated into Russian for these discussions.

The CPI leaders one by one presented the evolution of the differing views of the CPI leaders in the post-1947 period on the characterisation of the Indian state; the stage of the Indian revolution; on the interpretation of the Chinese path of revolution; the role and particular forms of armed activity in the cities and the countryside; the relation of legal forms of struggle to the armed activity; the evaluation of the importance of the Telengana struggle; the attitude to be adopted to the Nehru government, to its peace policy and its Korea policy; the permissibility or otherwise of the party awarding the death penalty to party members suspected of disloyalty; the appropriateness of the expropriation of the property of landlords and traders prior to the creation of democratic organs of power. After each of the CPI leaders had presented their —contradictory— views the ensuing time on the second sitting was absorbed by a back and forth session in which the Soviet delegation put questions on a range of concerns: the alleged penetration of the Titoites in the party leadership; how the CPI integrated its general line of armed struggle with its support for Nehru's foreign policy towards China; the basis of the reconstitution of the Central Committee and Politbureau in the Plenum of

Agreement on March 8**Madhya Pradesh:
Struggle for Land to be
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December 1950 when the party was so deeply divided in its views; whether or not the CPI had a Programme and Constitution in place; the factual details of the partisan struggle in Telengana and Andhra and the kinds of arms in the hands of the partisan fighters; and, finally, the extent of the political work being conducted by the party in the armed forces. From the discussions and responses of the CPI leaders a unique picture emerges of the situation of the communist movement at that time.

The two preliminary sittings of the Soviet and Indian delegations in conjunction with the documentary preparations set the ground for the meeting of the Indian delegation with J.V. Stalin on the 9th February, 1951. The Moscow meetings initiated the process for the preparation of the CPI programme which was to unite the Indian communists until the onset of modern revisionism.

Vijay Singh

[After mutual introductions by the participants of the discussion, the representative of the CC CPI spoke about the aim of their visit.]

Com. Rao: We are very privileged to have the opportunity to come to the USSR so as to be able to get suggestions directly from the A-UCP(b), the vanguard of international Communism. After the publication of the editorial in the newspaper 'For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy' and the speech of com. Liu Shao Chi at the conference of trade unions of the countries of Asia in Beijing, serious differences have emerged amongst us regarding the political line of the party. The disagreements have resulted in a situation wherein the work of the party has come to a standstill. Every one is expecting help and guidance from the A-UCP(b). The masses also are looking for guidance. In India, at present, many parties and groups are emerging, each of these is trying to mobilise the masses and draw the masses to their side. Our party is demoralised which creates a grave situation. All of us agree that we will not be able to resolve the crisis on internal strength alone. If we don't get help, the Communist Party of India might fall apart. The party as a whole is looking for guidance from the A-UCP(b). I want that the other comrades also speak. I have just stated my point of view.

Com. Ghosh : I have nothing to add to what Com. Rao has said. Serious differences have surfaced in the party, what these are I'll mention later, but for now I would like to say the following: for us it is clear that without the help of the A-UCP(b) we will not be able to move the party forward, we expect help from the international Communist movement and its vanguard — the A-UCP(b). I join Com. Rao in saying that the suggestions of the A-UCP(b) will be acceptable to the whole party.

Com. Dange : It is not for the first time that the A-UCP(b) is giving us directions and guidance. The A-UCP(b) gave us instructions in September 1947 when I was here and when Com. Zhdanov as a representative of the CC A-UCP(b) heard what I had to say about the Indian Question. It is well known that the A-UCP(b) has always been a guiding force for all the parties including the Communist Party of India.

Perhaps the question need not be explained in general terms as it has been done already in the documents that have been sent. Undeniably, the article in the newspaper 'For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy' served as the starting point in our differences. Maybe we misunderstood the article, so we request that we be given advice on how to interpret this article.

Com. Punarnab : There is an uncompromising split in the party. In order to avoid the split we have reached a compromise. In December 1950 a meeting of the CC was held where a discussion took place on how to preserve the unity of the party till such time that we receive the suggestions from the A-UCP(b). Factually, the party is split already. The provincial units are functioning independently. Centralism has been

compromised. The members of the party have great trust in the A-UCP(b) as the vanguard of the international Communist movement. And all the left forces in the country also have trust in the leadership of the international Communist movement — the Informbureau. We need to unite our party as it would give us new strength.

Com. Rao : It has so happened that we have developed the habit of writing documents about our differences that run into hundreds of pages but have no idea of how this tradition began. It would be best if we put down our differences in writing, mention only the most serious questions, more so as, personally, I am not very fluent in English and when speaking can only with great difficulty express my opinion. Apart from this, I am insufficiently settled in my thoughts and need to think through before I can put forward my opinion. I would like to have some more time for this. We want suggestions and assistance on a number of questions both political and organisational and we want to put together here with your help two draft resolutions on political and organisational questions, which we would take back with us, discuss them subsequently and approve them in the conference.

(After exchanging opinions about the procedure of the discussion the Indian comrades expressed their preference to speak about their views)

Com. Ghosh : I was arrested immediately after the Second Congress of the party and let out of the jail only 5 months ago. I do not have full first hand information about what happened. Evidently, a dangerous organisational failure in the party has occurred and the situation today is such that none of us know about the real state of affairs in the party. The repressions against the party are so severe that nobody has any knowledge about the party units in the provinces.

What is my opinion? The policy of the party before the Second Congress was a reformist one. It was severely criticised in the Second Congress. The Political Theses approved by the Congress were broadly correct, but there were a few mistakes also, in particular, there was no mention there about the stage of our revolution and it was so projected as if our revolution combined the features of two revolutions — the democratic and socialist. This was due to the influence of the delegate from Yugoslavia present at the Congress who tried to force this viewpoint on us.

The Congress elected the Central Committee but the CC never met even once till May 1950. The General Secretary Com. Ranadive conducted an ultra-left and sectarian policy that constituted a deviation from the line of the 'Political Theses'. In December 1948, he had drafted the documents that were approved by the Politbureau. An ultra-left sectarian political line was propounded in these documents. I will not talk about them here, they are well known.

This political line was put into practice till the publication of the editorial of the newspaper 'For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy' After this the comrades began to openly criticise Ranadive's political line. In May 1950 a meeting of the CC, the first since the Congress, was held in which 19 of the 31 members of the CC were present.

The CC approved a letter to party members in which the new political line of the party was spelt out. It was mentioned there that this political line has been formulated on the basis of the principles outlined in the editorial of the newspaper 'For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy' and the manifesto of the trade union conference held in Peking ..

After the formulation of this new line of the party, the differences did not disappear, instead they intensified. In December 1950 another meeting of the CC elected by the Second Congress was held but even this meeting failed to iron out the

differences. It was then that we decided to set up a unified Central Committee and Politbureau in order to represent all political trends. Our CC and Politbureau cannot not be considered united in the sense of a unity of views. We had to take this step so as to avoid the party from breaking up.

In my opinion, the mistakes of the party after the Second Congress were of two kinds. The party made a mistake in determining the stage of our revolution and incorrectly considered that our revolution would be a combination of two revolutions.

Secondly, the party made the mistake while evaluating the situation in the country, exaggerated the maturity of the situation and the revolutionary fervour amongst the masses and issued risky slogans thinking that the party would put these in practice and the masses would follow them. These were the two errors.

When the masses began to get disenchanted with the National Congress, the party failed to give concrete slogans and instead went ahead with slogans for rebellion and capturing power. As a result, though the National Congress has been losing people these three years, we cannot say that the CP has increased its strength on Congress's account. On the contrary, other parties, say the Socialist Party, have benefited on Congress's account.

The party could not extend its influence over the radical masses. Such vital questions as the increase of the government's budget and peace movement the party just could not take up so as to take the masses ahead step by step.

In August the representative of the Indian government or, perhaps, Nehru himself declared that general election are to be held on the basis of universal franchise. Till now only about 12-13% of the people could vote. Every party came forward with its own programme that created a great stir. The only party that had nothing to say was our party. If it had at that time come forward with a concrete programme and demanded that the election be held, it would have led to success and intensified the influence of the party, but the party kept silent. The elections were postponed by one year. If the party had come forward then, it would have been able to direct the anger of the masses against the government.

The party documents state that India is in the midst of a civil war, and in one place it is stated that one who cannot see this civil war occurring does not understand the situation. According to me this is an absolute over-estimation of the situation. A civil war, as I understand, takes place when there is an armed struggle between the armed masses and the army of the government on a large territory. Precisely on the basis of this over-estimation the concrete demands of the masses were ignored.

We were unable to build up the peace movement. Why? Is it because we do not have enough hatred amongst the masses for the English and American imperialism? Wrong. Even the Congress newspapers were against the American aggression in Korea. The sympathies of our peoples for the Korean people are well known.

Nehru came out with a statement on the Korean question. All the newspapers responded, but our party did not. This shows that we were unable to show our sympathies for the Korean people and thus got isolated from the people.

One more critical observation. Our CC does not give sufficient importance to the industrial workers. India, undoubtedly, is a colony, but a relatively developed colony with a large working class which occupies an important place in the economy. Therefore, the working class can play a significant role in the life of the country and not only in the agricultural regions. Apart from this, it is carrying on its own struggle against the imperialist and their adherents.

The documents reflect attempts at a blind imitation of the Chinese path. The comrades cannot see the great potential that the working class presents. I consider that our differences are mainly on the questions about the armed struggle and the democratic united front. In our documents we have tried to outline the essence of our differences. The arguments come back to the question of to what extent has the revolutionary situation matured in our country. The different forms of struggle acquire dominance in different situations. The May meeting of the CC acknowledged that at present an armed struggle is the main form of struggle and all forms must be secondary. I think for the colonies in general this to be true, but I also think that the conditions for this to happen have not yet matured. For the party it would be wrong to formally approve this assertion without taking into account concrete conditions.

I consider that the party has become substantially weak due to repressions and our differences. The influence of the party amongst the workers has declined. The last strike by the textile workers was held under the leadership of the socialists.

I consider the main task of the CC CPI is to establish the widest possible unity of the Indian people against English imperialism, feudalism and the collaborationist bourgeoisie. This democratic front must also be an anti-war front. At present an armed struggle cannot be the main form of struggle as the party has lost its influence among the masses. However, where the conditions have matured for an armed struggle, we need to carry it on but present it as self-defence. Such an armed struggle must be a part of the peasant struggle for land. Consequently, we should take recourse to an armed struggle where the conditions for it are present.

Com. Dange : I want to make some additional observations. The differences revolve around the question of how to interpret the Chinese path. I don't want to speak about how the party line kept changing. Our party could never work out its own line without the help of other parties. Whenever the line of the party was wrong other fraternal parties have helped us in correcting it. After the Second Congress the differences started after the speeches of the comrades from Andhra. Discussions were going on whether India would follow the Chinese path. Some people thought one should follow the Chinese path especially after the speech of Liu Shao Chi at the Peking conference who proposed the armed struggle as the main form of struggle. A significant number thought that we are already following the Chinese path and, in every case, emphasis was placed on armed struggle and all other forms of struggle were ignored (strikes, meetings, campaigns for peace etc.). In all cases it was stated: take up arms !

Coordination of all forms of struggles was absent. It was not taken into account that in a democratic front the essence of which is the peasant struggle for land the armed struggle must be present. But it should be consistent with other forms of struggle. Overlooking of this aspect was what I criticised as the new ultra-left sectarian politics.

The second difference cropped up in the interpretation of the Chinese path. How to coordinate the semi-legal and legal methods of struggle with a partisan war? I do not have experience in coordination of such forms of struggle. According to the directives of the CC, practically small armed units received the orders to fight against landlords which can hardly be viewed as a partisan war. Such directives were also extended to cities where workers were given the orders to kill police officers.

In one of the letters in May 1950 it is said that the beginning of the revolution in India is just a matter of days. This is adventurism and I speak out against such an interpretation of the Chinese path.

The question of interpretation of the Chinese path is a difficult one and I want to clarify this issue.

Com. Ghosh: Com. Dange thinks that the question of the Chinese path must be explained in detail. I would want to clarify the question what a partisan war is.

In Andhra a partisan war is being conducted against the landlords. Partisan units kill landlords and take away their belongings. Does such a struggle lead to liberation of the territories and how to prevent the partisan war degenerating into terrorist actions against individual landlords? How to accomplish the task of transforming a partisan struggle into a genuine struggle against the armed forces of the reactionary government?

The next question is about Nehru's government. How to judge its policy? How to correlate with it the struggle for peace? These are the question on which we would like to receive a response.

Com. Punnaiah: As our secretary said insufficient knowledge of English is a serious handicap for us. Comrades Dange and Ghosh have worked in the province of Bombay where people usually write and speak English. We have worked in the provinces where English is not used. Therefore, I would like to be excused for an insufficient knowledge of English. Possibly we will not be able to always correctly convey our thoughts.

If we were to make our remarks on the opinions of Comrades Dange and Ghosh it would amount to repeating what is said in our earlier documents. I am in a difficulty, I do not know how to explain a number of questions. Before coming to the question of the 'Chinese path' and other theoretical questions, I want to remind ourselves of some facts

At the time of the II Congress we were carrying out an armed struggle over a territory that included 3000 villages. The struggle had been going on for about 10 months. This struggle was being stalled by General Secretary Ghosh and his reformist tactics: 'be cautious and leave a loophole for retreat'. The struggle practically had to be conducted in Telengana against the directives of the CC whose representatives demanded that it be stopped.

But the situation forced us to continue moving ahead. During the II Party Congress sufficient attention was not paid to the question of the agrarian revolution in Telengana. The delegation from Andhra and Telengana (more than 180 persons) had to carry out propaganda work among the delegates of the Congress in favour of the Telengana movement. The main speaker Com. Ranadive made all attempts to avoid the question of the struggle in Telengana and Andhra. Our delegation managed to push through a strong resolution at the Congress and thus draw the attention of all the delegates to this problem.

Many problems that were not clear before the Congress have not become any clearer after the Congress. Such questions as the question of the balance of class forces, of the stage and prospects of the revolution, of unity of classes, of the armed struggle surfaced and we could discuss these. On all-India questions we put forward a draft of a speech and asked the CC to allow it to be discussed in the Party units. The CC did not meet. The Politbureau discussed and rejected the draft. We again demanded that our draft be discussed. Then the Politbureau came out with the document 'On Strategy and Tactics' which was a reply to our document.

We stopped all discussions. But, in the provinces, we continued the armed struggle in the form of a defensive struggle. Subsequently the Peking Conference of trade unions of Asia took place and the editorial was published in the journal 'For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy'

After this the differences existing in the Party emerged with greater force. Such are the facts to which I wanted to draw attention.

In May 1950, the Plenum of the CC takes place. In the CC out of 31 only 19 members were left. The rest were in jail, two were removed on allegations of immoral behaviour. The first discussions that took place were very strange. Those comrades who earlier defended Trotskyite positions, like carrying out a single-phase revolution, now started to say that we should begin all over again. They earlier asserted that there is no imperialism in India and that the Indian bourgeoisie is leading the reactionary forces. Now these comrades say that nothing at all has happened and that the Indian bourgeoisie is a lackey of imperialism. In the II Congress a shift from revisionism to sectarianism has occurred. All the members of the Politbureau and the CC came out against the earlier positions. At the same time Joshi published his brochure 'Views', where he defends his consistently reformist line that was totally rejected by the II Congress. Joshi argues against the armed struggle in Telengana., he beckons us to support Nehru's government and proposed putting an end to the struggle in Telengana when the Indian forces enter Hyderabad. Within the party there were comrades who shared Joshi's views. At the December plenum some members of the CC supported Joshi.

In these conditions the new Party line was worked out. The armed struggle was put forward as the main form of struggle with the aim to show that the Party needs to utilise the existing reserves.

When Com. Dange declares that the CC said 'take rifles and shoot', it is a slander against the Party. In many provinces different forms of struggle are present. To oversimplify the issue — means preventing its resolution. The CC approved the new political line after the provinces, where there was an armed struggle in progress, had presented their comprehensive documents in which it was shown how the landlords' land was divided, how our rule was organised, etc. Only after a thorough scrutiny of these documents did the CC take its decision.

The question that we did not create a peace movement and that we did not participate in the elections I'll touch upon later. The CC started its work in June, there was a shortage of cadre as only 9 persons were elected to the CC, of which 4 had to leave the provinces. The rest of the members were demoralised and were in no situation to draft a resolution. The comrades who had been released from jail did not appear in the CC for 6 months. How was it possible in those conditions to demand that the CC must do this and this and that. It is not right to accuse the CC that it did not organise a movement for peace and did not call for an election campaign.

The people who are accusing us say that we got carried away by the idea of an armed struggle to the detriment of all other forms of struggle. I do not understand why do they accuse us of rejecting elections because in Hyderabad, where the armed struggle was being conducted, we participated in the election campaigns but the elections were cancelled.

I believe that we need to come to an agreement on a number of questions. Nobody is objecting against an united National Front, but there are questions regarding the form of this front, about the Chinese path. All in the leadership of the Party are in agreement with the editorial in the Journal 'For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy' about the Chinese path. Comrades Dange and Ghosh say that we want to mechanically apply the Chinese path, but we believe that they have a mechanical understanding of the question of the Chinese path. They say that India is an economically advanced country. They emphasise this aspect in order to prove that India is more developed than China, and say that there was an army in China whereas there is none in India and make a reference to Com. Stalin who has supposedly said that the Chinese path is inapplicable

in India .

Regarding the foreign policy of Nehru. How do we expose this policy? Com. Ghosh said that all the parties have made their statements on Nehru's policies but our party has not. We did not know how to expose the duplicitous policy of Nehru.

It is clear to me that as a result of our discussions we need to put together such documents that would put an end to all factional struggles.

In the past our party has committed many mistakes and these impair party unity. It is also important that you also give your criticism about our mistakes as this would help us in correcting them and unite the party.

Com. Rao: Comrades, in the beginning I would like to make some observations regarding the communication of Comrades Dange and Ghosh. They have simplified our line by typifying it by a formula 'take to guns and shoot'. This is a simplification that does not help our cause in any way. I will demonstrate later on, that Dange is an opportunist. He accuses us of not understanding the role of the working class. I'll talk later about why a range of questions were not raised earlier. We have articulated our communications in the document of over a 100 pages. The question of election campaign is also mentioned there.

I will dwell on what is central, on the question that the armed struggle is the main form of struggle. I will talk of how we understand this question. When it is declared that we speak of the necessity of conducting an armed struggle everywhere, it is not our views that are being spoken about. We conducted an armed struggle in two regions — in Telengana and Andhra, and in other areas we employed other forms of struggle. In Telengana, out of 8 districts we conducted armed struggle in only 2 of them. In Andhra out of 11 only in 4. That is how we expanded the scale of the armed struggle. What do we understand by armed struggle? In present times whatever form of struggle we may start everywhere you will encounter a fascist type repression. That is why we advance the question that the masses with arms in hand should defend their right to struggle. That is why we should directly tell the people that without armed struggle they cannot protect their right of voicing their demands. Our opponents now say the armed struggle can become the main form of struggle in just a few of the regions, but they are not prepared to tell the people in the face the fact that without an armed struggle they can not protect themselves.

There are three trends regarding this question: we — the CC; Second — Joshi. Even though he is not in the Party this trend is present in the party. The third trend is represented by Com. Ghosh. I do not know where Dange stands. As he has changed his stand so frequently, let him ascertain where he stands himself. After his release from jail he made a declaration that was in spirit very close to our view, later he published another statement totally contrary in nature. The document put forward by Com. Ghosh contains many contradictions. In this manner there are three trends: we, Joshi and Ghosh.

Should we speak about the position of Ranadive?

After the publication in 'For A Lasting Peace, For A People's Democracy' he continued to adhere to his own positions and later plunged into a totally opposite direction. He declares that he supports the position of the CC but I am not sure if he does.

Our assessment of the situation regarding the level of the consciousness of the people? As we have pointed out in our document, the Congress Party which plays the central role in the political life of the country enjoyed widespread influence among the

people but has been losing it since 1947, and to the masses who have started to understand the reactionary nature of the Congress, all that the CC with Joshi at its head has to say is that it is necessary to support the Congress party. 75% of the agricultural workers in Andhra, a majority of which consists of the 'untouchables', understood the betrayal by the Congress party tell us 'if you do not accept us, then who will?'

Before the Second Congress we called for a united front of all forces — from the Congress party to the Communists excluding only the small faction led by Patel and others. After the Second Congress we have been saying that though Ranadive has been making a call for a rebellion in reality he has been obstructing us in a number of regions where the masses were ready for an armed resistance.

During the war we refused to organise the agricultural workers as we were afraid of disrupting peasants' unity.

When Gandhi was assassinated clashes between the organisation that perpetrated the killing and other chauvinistic organizations erupted. The government used these as an excuse to liquidate the peasants' movement in the regions of Telegana and Andhra.

Our delegation arrived at the Second Congress illegally. In the Andhra Party organisation a debate on the Chinese path and armed struggle etc. was going on. In response to the draft document presented by the Andhra provincial committee a Trotskyite document 'On Strategy and Tactics' was put forward.

A peasants' movement was rife also in the province of Kerala. The CC did not come to the support of this movement too, taking the plea that 'first create a democratic movement and only then start to organise armed resistance'. There are numerous such instances.

Much has been written in the newspapers regarding use of arms in the cities, but this not true. In many places arms are simply not available. In Bengal where arms were available, Ranadive took them out of circulation. It would be untrue to say that Ranadive organised an armed struggle in the towns. He promoted terrorism in which only one policeman was killed.

We assert that our movement was on the verge of transforming into an armed struggle. In Bengal 19 regions were in the grip of peasants' movement. But the arms taken away from the police were returned.

The leadership of the party in the past has been avoiding the question of the armed struggle. The Congress has not fulfilled even a single promise. The masses are looking towards other parties and we have not made use of this situation. We called for a general strike and nobody supported us, and in places where the peasantry was switching to armed struggle, they were dissuaded from doing so.

The majority of the people are moving away from the Congress, which can now lean only on the armed forces. The Congress party certainly has other means, but the fascist style repression is the main method that we encounter.

Even though we carried out left-wing factional tactics that led to a decline in our influence, the people still are looking towards our party for leadership. Our party is a major force and in some of the provinces the influence of the party is increasing. If we use correct tactics we will be able to attract the wide masses that are moving away from the Congress party to our side. We cannot remain inactive, we are to act and act fast.

Regarding the assessment of the policy of the government, I do not know if it is possible to talk about the progressive nature of the government that was proclaimed to

be reactionary by us.

[Continuation of discussion on 6th February]

Com. Dange: Our country has come to the stage of an agrarian revolution. The landless peasants and the agricultural wage earners constitute the majority of the population of the country. Impoverishment of the peasantry is leading to a decline of production, and the money-lenders that are being helped by the Congress and the police are robbing the peasants. This is the source of the deep agricultural crisis which the government is not capable of resolving. The influence of the Congress is declining. In these conditions a proper solution to the agrarian question must be found.

Many party organisations view the party line formulated in May 1950 in this light: create small armed groups from among the bold party members, kill the land lords and then go into hiding in the jungles. Those landlords that survive will out of fear satisfy the demands of the peasants or alternatively they will call the police. As a result the peasants will learn how to offer resistance to state terror; the police will rule by the day and we by the night. And when the whole of the country will be in the grip of such a struggle we will accomplish the agrarian revolution, we will have a liberation army and be in control of liberated areas.

My objections were that an armed struggle as the main form of struggle under present circumstances is nothing but political adventurism and that we should also pay attention to other forms of struggle necessary for the uniting the people and that would reinforce our armed struggle. The line of the CC of our party is ultra-left adventurism in a new form. Many amongst us talk in terms that it is a matter of days or months before we start our revolution. The question that is being totally ignored is whether the party has the strength to accomplish the charted line regarding the armed struggle as the main form of struggle. And when I criticise this line of the CC I am branded as an opportunist as the existence of fascist style terror in the country justifies the armed struggle. It is not correct to state that whole of the country is in the grip of a fascist style terror, that conditions for a civil war are present in India and that under such circumstances our participation in the elections is unnecessary and we should simply arm ourselves. I think this is not correct.

I have always spoken in favour of the armed struggle in Telengana. I think that the economic crisis in the country would help in organising such forms of struggle as in Telengana --- the most backward feudal princely state under the rule of the Muslims. One should take to arms at the appropriate time and a mechanical generalisation of the experience in Telengana and Andhra would lead us to an untimely insurrection. We know of what has been done in Telengana and Andhra only in very general terms, those regions are characterised by many comrades as regions of peoples' democracy. We must also, at the same time, not underestimate the successes achieved in these regions.

I also want to state that the CC should put an end to the bureaucratic practice of its organisational units and move on a democratic path. I have been unjustly accused, a factional campaign has been initiated against me while simultaneously supporters of left-wing politics have been accommodated in the party. We have been wrongly accused of freezing party funds, of passing on party property to the government etc., etc. some of the differences that have emerged can be resolved but many serious ones still remain.

I want to get clarification on the following questions:

1. How should we pose the question of nationalisation of land in colonial and semi-colonial countries?
2. What is the nature of Nehru's government and its foreign policy? Can Nehru be

viewed as a puppet in the same manner as Chiang Kai Shek and the French government and see them as puppets of American imperialism?;

3. How to exploit the differences and vacillations in the government circles, particularly on the Korean problem.

4. Should we have the practice of passing death penalty to communists as proposed by some comrades if in relation to these comrades doubts remain taking into account their integrity and loyalty towards the party. Recently such a proposal was made but the punishment was not put to effect as it subsequently turned out that comrade was an honest communist. There are fears that such punishment can be used for factional purpose

5. Should the communists in India during the course of an armed partisan struggle expropriate the property of the landlords and traders for the needs of the revolutionary struggle even before creating our own organs of power.

Com. Rao: the National Congress is disintegrating and is losing influence among the people. Anti-Soviet and anti-Chinese sentiments are also declining among the middle classes. The Socialist Party has increased its influence among the people who have been moving away from the Congress, and has been forced to lead the strikes though organising these within the limits of Gandhian non-violence and forcing this tactics on the working class. The left parties are ready to form a coalition with the communists on the question of struggle for peace, the Korean question and coordination of trade union activities. We cannot move ahead without making the partisan struggle as the main form of struggle. Our country has reached the stage of agrarian revolution. It would be wrong to think that we need to first build a party and a democratic front and then begin the armed struggle. Our experience speaks otherwise. In view of ruthless repression a democratic front can be created through an armed struggle and in the process our party organisations will get established and strengthened. Life has demonstrated that an armed struggle should be continued with as recently this struggle has spread to some other regions. We ourselves were surprised when we came to know about the strong support that the peasants offer to the units that were sent by us to these regions. They give them provisions and all other help that they need for their activities. With the help of the masses we must crush the fascist bands and only then we will be able to win the trust of the masses. Outside of the armed struggle we will be forced to do only propaganda work without undertaking any other mass activities.

I think that our struggle in the country must pass, sequentially, through three stages:

1. Partisan action on a wide scale
2. Creation of liberated areas (in Telengana and other areas)
3. Liberation of the whole of India

Dange and Ghosh oppose the armed struggle. This is a reformist path. We do not exclude partisan resistance in any part of the country. The masses are the main factor, and if the people are marching ahead then we should support them and not wait till a large party is established.

It would be wrong to negate the international significance of the Chinese revolution. The fall of Mukden was celebrated by all Indians. Dange and Ghosh do not want to bring out the question of an armed struggle before the masses for discussion.

I want to pose the following questions to comrades Dange and Ghosh:

1. Are you willing to put up the question of the armed struggle before the people?
2. Do you exclude having an armed struggle in the near future in a number of provinces where such a struggle does not yet exist?
3. What tactics do you support in those regions where the government has established a particularly ruthless regime of terror and where we are strong, in Kerala for example? In which provinces there exists a possibility of an armed

struggle.?

Com. Dange did not pay attention to leading the general strike in Bombay . This was wrong and this allowed the other parties to attract the striking workers to their fold. I think that the tactics of an armed revolt and a general political strike in the cities is ruled out for us at present.

The representatives of the CC Communist Party (India- translator) gave their response to the questions that we asked during the discussions

Question: We know from our French and Italian comrades that a special case was made against Com.Dange. What was he accused of, how did this case ended, is there any concluding document and whether you can make it available for us?

Com. Rao: The question regarding com. Dange was considered at the last meeting of the CC. Many people thought that Ranadive had links with the Yugoslavs. Refuting the charges, Ranadive declared that if there is anyone who can be accused of having links with the Yugoslavs then it is Dange who had links with an English girl sent to work on recommendation from Dange. Ranadive also put forward a series of other accusations against Dange. An inquiry committee of the CC was set up that investigated the accusations against Dange and found that these accusations were baseless. This girl is not working in Yugoslavian but in the Czechoslovakian embassy in Delhi . Regarding the addresses mentioned by Ranadive the accusations were also found to be baseless as no addresses were found in the diary referred to by Ranadive.

Com. Punnaiah: I will add something as I was a member of this committee. The question regarding the infiltration of Titoites in the CPI was being considered as also the question that the links of the Bombay committee of the party persisted even after Tito was exposed. Ranadive contended that these links were encouraged by Com. Dange. The committee investigated these accusations and found these accusations were groundless.

Question: We know that CC CPI, while considering armed struggle against the government to be its task, has at the same time given a call for supporting the foreign policy of this government in relation to China . This was communicated in the Indian newspapers. Maybe you are right but we ask you to clarify how do you reconcile such a call with your general line?

Com. Dange, responding to the question said: in relation to Truman's statement about use of the nuclear bomb, before our departure, a draft statement was prepared by us in Bombay endorsing Nehru's policy on the question of condemning China as an aggressor. But we did not discuss this statement or take any decision regarding its publication. Possibly the comrades in Bombay independently decided to publish it. We were not in India already. We need to further think about the contents of this statement.

Comrades Rao, Ghosh and Punnaiah agreed with the answer given by Com. Dange.

Question: You told us about the serious differences amongst you and at the same time in the December Plenum of the CC where these differences crystallised, comrades Dange and Ghosh were admitted to the Politbureau. We wanted to know on what principle these changes were made in the constitution of the Politbureau?

Answer: Com. Ghosh, responding to the observations regarding the changes in the Politbureau said: the CC consisting of 9 persons was unanimous about the need to bring changes in the constitution of the Politbureau. When we came out of the jail we wrote a document criticising the political line of the CC. Factually two tendencies came

to be formed. Then it was decided, in order to avoid a split in the party, to have a CC and Politbureau consisting of representatives of both the tendencies.

Comrades Rao, Dange and Punnaiah agreed with the answer.

Question: Does the Communist Party of India have its own Programme and Constitution?

Answer: Com. Dange: Our party does not have a Programme of its own.

In 1929 the Communist Party of India, at the time of its joining the Comintern, presented a 'Draft Platform of Actions of Communist Party of India', on the basis of which the Communist Party of India was allowed to join the Comintern. However, at present we do not consider that Platform as our Programme.

What concerns the constitution, in 1943 in the I Congress of the Party a constitution of the Party was adopted. In 1948, at the II Congress of the Party the constitution was reviewed and approved with certain changes.

Comrades Rao, Ghosh and Punnaiah confirmed this.

Question: Can you in greater detail inform us about the partisan movement in India. In which regions is the partisan movement taking place and against whom is it directed? What is the scale, are there any regions of substantial scale that have been liberated by the partisans, where have the partisans consolidated themselves and if organs of peoples' democratic power been created? What is the factual state of affairs in Telengana and Andhra, where, as you conveyed, the partisan movement is most developed and what kind of arms do the partisans possess?

Answer: Com. Rao: The partisan movement is taking place mainly in the provinces of Telengana and Andhra.

In Telengana till 1948 before the arrival of the Indian army in Hyderabad, regular partisan units were active total number of which was 2 thousand armed men. They were poorly armed and possessed 30 automatic (weapons – transl.) 200 rifles and the rest were armed with spears, swords and hunting weapons. After the strong measures taken by the armed forces against the partisan units the number of partisans dropped significantly. At present these units have about 500 men. The units operate in small groups at night. They are divided into groups of 5 men. The party has sent 400 political workers to support them, who do not participate in the armed raids but conduct political work among the people.

There never were liberated region with their own organs of power in the past and there are none now.

In Andhra in 1949 there were about 1000 persons in the partisan units. As a result of government repression part of the armed partisans moved into Telengana and at present there are no regular armed partisan units in Andhra.

Com. Ghosh making an observation regarding the answer given by Com. Rao said that in assessing the scale of the partisan movement there exists a tendency to exaggerate and view any incident in the rural areas as a revolt.

Responding to this observation Com. Punnaiah said that he used the figures from foreign media as the CC CPI does not have any information from the provincial party committees.

Question: What work is being conducted by the Communist Party of India in the army and what is its influence in the army?

Answer: Com. Rao: The party has not done any work in the army and has no influence there. The party has a little bit of influence in the air force and the navy.

The government, in order to suppress the peasants' actions, sends in the army units from other provinces that are as a rule not acquainted with the language of the populations where the incidents take place. A significant part of the army is recruited in Nepal under a special agreement between the Nehru government and the government of Nepal.

[Translated from the Russian by Tahir Asghar]

[Discussion with com. Stalin in next issue]

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From Pages of History

Record of the discussions of Comrade J.V. Stalin with the Representatives of the C.C. of the Communist Party of India Comrades, Rao, Dange, Ghosh and Punnaiah, 9th February 1951

[The first part of this discussion with representatives of the CC of CPSU(B) was published in March Issue of Red Star. The latter discussion with Com. Stalin is given below.]

Comrade Stalin: Your questions have been received. I will reply to them and then express some of my own understanding.

Perhaps it might seem strange that we are having these discussions in the evening. During the day we are busy. We are working. We are free from work at 6 o'clock in the evening.

Possibly it might appear unusual that we go into the discussions at considerable length, but regretfully, otherwise we may not be able to fulfill our mission. Our CC charged us to meet you personally in order to render help to your party by giving advice. We are little acquainted with your party and your people. We are looking at this mission with great seriousness.

As soon as we took upon ourselves to give our advice, we took upon ourselves the moral responsibility for your party, we cannot give you lightly thought out advice. We wish to acquaint ourselves with the materials, together with you, and then give advice.

You may think it to be odd that we have put a few series of questions to you and it almost looks like an interrogation. Our situation is such that we cannot do otherwise. The documents do not give a full picture and so we resort to this method. It is a very unhappy way of doing things but it cannot be helped. Circumstances compel us. Let us proceed to the essence of the matter.

You ask: What is your appraisal of the impending Indian revolution?

We, Russians, look at this revolution as mainly agrarian. It signifies – the liquidation of feudal property, the division of the land amongst the peasantry and it becoming their personal property. It means the liquidation of feudal private property in the name of the affirmation of the private property of the peasantry. As we see this none of this is socialist. We do not consider that India stands before the socialist revolution. This is that Chinese path which is spoken of everywhere, i.e. the agrarian, anti-feudal revolution without any confiscation or nationalisation of the property of the national bourgeoisie. This is the bourgeois-democratic revolution or the first stage of the people's democratic revolution. The people's democratic

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Two Paths of Development

revolution that began in the eastern countries of Europe, even before it did in China, has two stages. The first stage – agrarian revolution or agrarian reform, as you desire. The countries of people's democracy in Europe went through this stage in the very first year after the war. China stands now at this first stage. India is approaching this stage. The second stage of the people's democratic revolution as shown in Eastern Europe is characterised by the agrarian revolution passing over to the expropriation of the national bourgeoisie. This is already the beginning of the socialist revolution. In all of the people's democratic countries of Europe the plants, factories, banks are nationalised and handed over to the state. China is still far from this second stage. This stage is also far off in India or India is far from this stage.

Here you speak of the editorial of the newspaper of the Cominform concerning the Chinese path of development of the revolution. This editorial was a challenge to the articles and speeches of Ranadive which considered that India stood on the road to socialist revolution. We, Russian communists, considered that this is a very dangerous thesis and decided to come forward against this and point out that India is on the Chinese road, i.e. the first stage of the people's democratic revolution. For you this has the attached importance of building your revolutionary front for a revolt of the entire peasantry and the kulaks against the feudal lords, for an uprising of all of the peasantry so that the feudal lords feel themselves isolated. A revolt of the public is necessary as of all the progressive stratum of the national bourgeoisie against English imperialism, in order to isolate the bloc of the English imperialists with the national bourgeoisie. Amongst you the view is prevalent that all of the imperialists need to be expelled in one blow, all, the English and the Americans. It is impossible to build such a front. The sharp blade of the all-national front is necessarily directed against English imperialism. Let the other imperialists, including the Americans, think that you are not concerned about them. This is necessary so your actions do not unite all of the imperialists against yourselves, and for that you must sow discord among them, Now, if the American imperialists themselves want to get into a fight, the united national front of India will need to plunge into action against them.

Ghosh : I am unclear why only against British imperialism when at present the entire world is in struggle against American imperialism which is considered to be the head of the anti-democratic camp?

Comrade Stalin : It is very simple; the united national front is against England, for the national independence from England, and not from America. It is your national specificity. India was semi-liberated from whom? From England, and not from America, India is in the concord of nations not with America but with England. The officers and the specialists in your army are not Americans but Englishmen. These are historical facts and it is impossible to abstract from them. I wish to say that the party must not load itself with all of the tasks, the tasks of the struggle with imperialism throughout the world. It is necessary to take up one task: to free oneself from English imperialism. It is the national task of India. We must also consider the feudal classes. Of course, the kulaks are enemies. But it would be unwise to struggle against the kulaks as well as with the feudal lords. It would be unreasonable to take on to oneself two burdens — the struggle against the kulaks and the struggle against feudalism. It is necessary to build the front in such a manner that it is the enemy and not you who are isolated. It is, so to say, a tactic to facilitate the struggle of the Communist Party. Not one person, if he is wise, will take on himself all of the burdens. It is necessary to take on oneself one task – the liquidation of feudalism, and the survivals of the empire of England. In order to isolate the feudal lords, to liquidate the feudal lords, and bring down English imperialism, do not brush against the other imperialist powers for the time being. If you proceed on your way like this – it will lighten matters. Now, if the Americans poke their noses in, it will then be necessary to carry out the struggle against them, but the people would know that not you but they had attacked. Certainly, the time to take on the Americans and the kulaks will come. But it will be later, each will have their turn.

Ghosh : I am now clear.

Dange : Would this not hinder the carrying out of propaganda and agitational work against the American imperialists and the struggle against them?

Comrade Stalin : Of course not. They are enemies of the people and it is

necessary to struggle against them.

Dange : I put this question so that no one interprets this as opportunism in the task of struggle against American imperialism.

Comrade Stalin : The enemy needs to be isolated in a wise manner. You are raising the revolution not against the Americans but against the English imperialists. If the Americans interfere, then it is another matter.

Rao : Among the kulaks there is a small part which is engaged in feudal exploitation : they let land on lease and they are usurers. They usually stand on the side of the landlords.

Comrade Stalin : This is not significant. In comparison to the major general task of the liquidation of the feudal lords, it is a particular task. In your propaganda you need to speak against the feudal lords but not against the prosperous peasantry. You must not yourselves push the kulak into a union with the feudal lords. It is not necessary to create an ally for the feudal lords. The kulaks have a large influence in the village, the peasantry considers that the kulak makes his way in life thanks to his own ability etc. It is not necessary to give the kulaks the possibility of splitting from the peasants. Do your feudal lords belong to the nobility?

Rao : Yes.

Comrade Stalin : The peasants do not love the nobility. Here it is necessary to grasp this in order that the feudal lords are not given the possibility of having an ally among the peasants.

Punnaiiah : Amongst us there exists confusion on the question of the national bourgeoisie. What is to be properly understood under the national bourgeoisie?

Comrade Stalin : Imperialism is the politics of the seizure of another's country. Does your national bourgeoisie really think of capturing other countries? Meanwhile British imperialism seized India. The national bourgeoisie – the middle, large are your national exploiters. It is necessary to say that you are not against their continuance, but against the foreign enemy, against the English imperialists. Among the national bourgeoisie are to be found many elements which find themselves aligned with you. The top national bourgeoisie – it is already in alliance with imperialism, but it is only a part and besides it is not big. The bourgeoisie is basically interested in supporting you in the struggle for the full independence of India. It is interested in feudalism being liquidated. The bourgeoisie needs a market, a good market, if the peasantry acquire land there will be an internal market, there would be people who would have the capacity of making purchases. It is necessary to elucidate all this in the press. It will be advantageous for you so that the national bourgeoisie does not move over to the side of the English. You have to order matters in such a way that the English imperialists do not acquire new allies in India. In China by no means are steps being undertaken to appropriate the bourgeoisie. Only Japanese property was nationalised in China, even the American enterprises are not nationalised, they are functioning. If your revolution is of the Chinese type you must not for the present undertake those steps which will push your bourgeoisie to the side of the English imperialists. Here is your Chinese path. In China the national bourgeoisie did not go over and now they have come forward against the American imperialists and they help the Chinese people's government. This signifies that they may consider the American imperialists are isolated in China. Concerning the division of India that is a piece of fraud organised by the English. If you are drafting a programme of action then you must say in there that you need a military and economic union between Pakistan, India and Ceylon. These three states, which are artificially separated from one another, will come closer. This will culminate in these states uniting themselves. This idea of drawing together must be put forward and the people will support you. The elite in Pakistan and Ceylon would be against it but the people have doubts about them. This artificial division is clear particularly in Bengal. The province of Bengal will fall away from Pakistan at the first opportunity.

Dange : The understanding of the national bourgeoisie is constantly brought up in the following spirit amongst us: the middle bourgeoisie is called the national bourgeoisie. In India the big bourgeoisie has passed over to the side of the English imperialists.

Comrade Stalin : Do you have in India banks which are purely English?

Dange : Yes, in India there are English banks as well as joint ones. In our programme there is a demand for the nationalisation of the big bourgeoisie, that is bureaucratic capital.

Comrade Stalin : It is not bureaucratic capital but industrial trading capital. Bureaucratic capital in China made a fortune by means of the state. It is capital related to the state and very little connected to industry. Through privileged contracts with the Americans the family of Sun and others received money. The concerns of the big industrialists and traders in China: they have remained intact. I do not advise you to expropriate the large capitalists, even if they are in alliance with American and English banking capital. It would be better to say quietly that whoever goes over to the side of the enemies would lose their property. Indubitably, if your revolution heats up, then a part of such big capitalists will run away. Then declare them to be traitors and expropriate their property, but I will not suggest expropriating the big bourgeoisie just for its alliance with English capital. If there is a demand for the expropriation of the big bourgeoisie in your programme, then it is necessary to cross it out. You will need to draw up a new programme or platform of action. It will pay you to neutralise the big bourgeoisie and to tear off from it nine-tenths of the entire national bourgeoisie. It is not necessary for you to artificially create new enemies for yourself. You already have many of them: the turn of your big bourgeoisie will come and then, certainly, you will have to confront them. The problems of the revolution are decided in stages. The stages need not be mixed up. It is necessary to decide upon the stages and to beat the enemies separately — today one, tomorrow another, and when you grow stronger, you may be able to beat them all, but for the present you are still weak. Your people copy our revolution. But these are different stages. The experience of the other fraternal parties needs to be critically taken into account and this adapted to the specific conditions of India. You will be criticised from the left but you need not worry. Bukharin and Trotsky criticised Lenin from the left, but they became a laughing stock. Ranadive criticised Mao Zedong from the left, but Mao Zedong was correct - he acted in correspondence with the conditions of his own country. Follow your own line and do not pay attention to the ultra-leftist cries.

Now on the second question, about the Chinese path.

I have already spoken on the Chinese road in the political and social spheres. It would be an agrarian revolution. Concerning the armed struggle it needs to be said that the Chinese did not speak of the armed struggle, they spoke of the armed revolution. They regarded it as partisan war with liberated regions and with an army of liberation. This means that it is necessary to speak of the armed revolution and partisan war and not of armed struggle. The expression 'armed struggle' was first mentioned in the Cominform newspapers. The armed struggle signifies more than a partisan war, it means the combination of partisan war of the peasantry and the general strikes and uprisings of the workers. In its scale a partisan war is narrower than an armed struggle. How did the armed revolution in China begin?

In 1926-27 the Chinese comrades broke with the Guomindangists. They distinguished themselves in a separate camp having prepared an army of 40-50 thousand persons against the Guomindang. This army was the basis of the partisan war. They hid themselves in the forests and mountains far from the towns and the railways. Of course, wherever the CC of the Chinese Communist Party was there, together with them, the basic cadres were to be found. The Chinese liberation army could not settle down in the towns and it was easy to encircle it. In order not to be encircled and destroyed they left the towns and railways far behind and founded a series of free partisan regions. They were encircled, then they would break out of it, leave behind old liberated regions and create new ones and endeavoured not to do battle. The further they continued, the more the Chinese communists were alienated from the workers and the towns. Mao Zedong did not wish, of course, to break relations with the workers, but the path of partisan war led him to that, and he lost contact with the towns. It was a grievous necessity. At last they were established in Yan'an where they defended themselves for a long period. They called the peasants to themselves, instructed them how to conduct agrarian revolution, expanded their army and transformed it into a serious force. But all the while they did not evade

that minus which characterised partisan warfare.

What is a liberated partisan region? It is entirely an island in the state, there is no rear in this region, it may be encircled, blockaded; it has no rear on which it can lean. That is what happened. Yan'an was encircled and the Chinese left that place with large casualties. This would have continued for a long time if the Chinese communists had not decided to cross over to Manchuria. Moving into Manchuria they rapidly improved their own position, they found a rear in the form of a friendly state. It was not now an island, it was something like a peninsula which rested on the USSR at one end. After this Chiang Kai-shek lost the possibility of encircling the Chinese partisans. And only after this, as the Chinese rested, they had the possibility of going over to the offensive from the north to the south. Such is the history. What follows from this? The partisan war of the peasants is a serious matter and a big acquisition for the revolution. In this area the Chinese made new contributions in revolutionary practice, particularly for the backward countries. And, of course, each Communist in a country where the peasants are 80-90% of the population is obliged to carry this method in the arsenal of their struggles. This is indisputable. But also from this experience of the Chinese comrades it follows that partisan warfare with liberated regions has its own big minuses. These minuses are that the partisan regions are islands which are always open to blockade. It is possible to break out of this ring victoriously only by creating a stable rear, link up with and rest on a friendly neighbouring state and turn this state into one's own stable rear. The Chinese took the sensible step of moving over into Manchuria. If they had not done this I do not know how matters would have ended. In partisan war one has insufficient strength to achieve victory. Partisan war leads without fail to victory if it rests on a friendly neighbouring state. It is highly characteristic that till the Chinese comrades reached Manchuria they did not wish to attack, fearing encirclement, and only after this transition they began to plan to advance and scored successes against the troops of Chiang Kai-shek. We need to take into consideration these minuses of partisan war. It is said in India that partisan war is altogether sufficient to obtain the victory of the revolution. This is incorrect. In China there were more favourable conditions than in India. They had a people's liberation army ready in China. You have no ready army. China does not have such a dense railway network as India which was more comfortable for the partisans. The possibility of successful partisan war is lesser for you than in China. In industrial relations India is more developed than China. This is good from the point of progress, but bad from the point of view of partisan war. However many detachments and liberated regions are created all these will only be islets. You do not have such a neighbouring friendly state on whose back you can depend as had the Chinese partisans with the USSR.

Afghanistan, Iran and Tibet, places the Chinese communists are still unable to reach.... There is no such rear as the USSR. Burma? Pakistan? All of these are land frontiers, which leaves – the sea. Therefore it is necessary to find a way out.

Do you need partisan war? Indubitably you do.

Will you have liberated regions and a national liberation army?

You will have such regions, and possibly you will have such an army. But this is insufficient for victory. You need to combine partisan war with the revolutionary actions of the workers. Without this, partisan war alone might not have success. If the Indian comrades can seriously organise general strikes of the railway workers that will paralyse the life of the country and the government it could prove to be an enormous help for the partisan war. Take the peasant.... if you say to him – this is your partisan war and you have to do it all, then the peasant will ask – why is this burdensome struggle to lie on me alone, what are the workers going to do? He will not agree to take on himself the whole weight of the revolution, he is intelligent enough, he has the consciousness to know that all evil comes from the towns – taxes etc. He would want an ally in the towns.

If you say to him that he would carry the weight of the struggle together with the workers, he would understand and accept it. Such was the case with us in Russia. You need to carry out work not only amongst the peasantry, not only to create partisan detachments, but also to carry out serious intensive work amongst the working class, strive for their trust and win over their majority, you need to have

armed detachments amongst the workers, prepare strikes of the workers, of the railwaymen and to have workers' detachments in the towns.

When these two streams link up — victory may be considered to be secure. You know that in 1905 in Russia the tsar yielded to the people, gave the Duma and a range of other freedoms. The Tsar was forced to retreat.

What evoked such terror in the tsar. The strikes of the railway workers! The capital was cut off from the country, the railway workers only let into Petersburg the workers' delegations and did not permit entry to goods or anything else.

The significance of the railway workers' strikes was very great in the revolution and this helped the partisan detachments.

Then — work amongst the garrisons, amongst the soldiers. In 1917 we had carried out propaganda amongst the soldiers to the extent that all the garrison stood on our side.

What brought over the soldiers? The question of land. It was such a weapon which even the Cossacks, who were the praetorian guards of the tsar, could not withstand. To carry out correct politics, one might sow a revolutionary mood and evoke differences within the reactionary circles.

The Chinese path was good for China. But it is not sufficient for India where it is necessary to combine the proletarian struggle in the cities with the struggles of the peasants. Some think that the Chinese comrades are against such a combination. This is incorrect. Would Mao Zedong have been discontented if the workers of Shanghai had gone on strike when his army left for Nanking, or if the workers had struck work in the armaments factories? Of course not. But this did not take place as Mao Zedong's relations with the towns were severed. Of course, Mao Zedong would have been happy if the railwaymen had struck work and Chiang Kai-shek was deprived of the possibility of receiving projectiles. But there was an absence of relations with the workers — it was a grievous necessity, but it was not an ideal. It would be ideal if you strive for that which could not be done by the Chinese — to unite the peasant war with the struggle of the working class.

Dange : We almost turned the theory of partisan warfare into one which did not require the participation of the working class.

Comrade Stalin : If Mao Zedong knew this he would curse you. (Laughter) Let us go on to the next question. May the government of Nehru be considered a puppet of English imperialism such as the Kuomintang government of Chiang Kai-shek was a puppet of American imperialism and as currently the French government of Plevin is a puppet of the American imperialists.

According to my understanding, Chiang Kai-shek could not be considered a puppet when he was based in China. He became a puppet when he crossed over to Formosa. I cannot consider the government of Nehru as a puppet. All of his roots are in the population. This is not like the government of Bao Dai... Bao Dai is actually a puppet. Hence it follows that in India it is impossible that partisan war can be considered the main form of struggle, maybe it is necessary to say the highest form of struggle? There are different forms of struggle leading to the highest form. For the peasants: boycott of the landowners, agricultural workers' strikes, withdrawal of labour by the tenant-farmers, individual skirmishes with the landlords, seizure of the lands of the landowners and then partisan war as the highest form of struggle. For the working class: local strikes, branch strikes, political strikes, the general political strike as the doorway to an uprising, and then the armed uprising as the highest form of struggle. It is therefore impossible to say that partisan war is the main form of struggle in the country. It is also untrue to assert that civil war in the country is in full swing. In Telangana land was seized but it proves little. This is still the beginning of the opening of the struggle but it is not the main form of the struggle from which India is still distant. The peasant needs to learn to struggle on the small questions — lowering lease rents, lowering the share of the harvest which is paid to the landlord etc. It is necessary to train the cadres on such small questions and not speak at once of armed struggle. If you begin a broad

armed struggle, then serious difficulties will arise at your end as your party is weak.

It is necessary that the party becomes strong and orientate the mass struggle in the needed direction and sometimes even restrain the masses. How did we begin in 1917?

We had many sympathisers in the army, in the fleet, we had the Moscow and Leningrad Soviets. However we restrained the insurrectionary movement of the workers. They presented the demand of driving out the Provisional Government. But this did not enter into our plans then for the Leningrad garrison was not in our hands. In July the workers of the main Putilov factory where 40-50,000 people worked, began demonstrations in which the sailors and soldiers joined in. They demanded the overthrow of the Provisional Government and they came with these demands to the CC building. We held them back as we knew that all the preparations had not been made for the serious uprising we planned. The objective factor for the uprising existed – when the masses strove forward, but the subjective factor of the uprising did not – the party was still not ready.

The question of the uprising was put into place in one month, in September. We decided to organise the uprising, but it was an arch-secret. We did not publish anything about this. When Kamenev and Zinoviev, members of the Politbureau, spoken out in print against the uprising, considering it adventurist, Lenin declared them traitors and said that they had handed over our plans to the enemy. Therefore never shout about the uprising, otherwise the element of the unexpected in the uprising is lost.

Here Comrade Rao says – come before the people and ask them about the armed uprising... This is never done, never cry out about your plans, they will arrest all of you. Let us suppose the peasant says: Yes we need an uprising. But this still does not mean that we should follow the people, and drag oneself along the tail of the people. Leadership signifies that one has to carry one's own people. The people sometimes say that they are ready for an uprising, taking as their point of departure the facts and events of their own region, but not from the point of view of the entire country in conformity with the overall achievability of the uprising. This question must be decided by the CC. If this is clear then we can go over to the next question.

Indian Comrades: Yes, it is clear.

Comrade Stalin : You ask, may the party organisation carry out the death sentence on a member of the party upon whose devotion doubts have arisen. One cannot. Lenin always taught that the highest form of punishment which the CC may carry out – is expulsion from the party, but when the party comes to power and some party member breaks the laws of the revolution, then the government conducts the prosecution as its responsibility. From some of your documents one can see that comrades frequent incline to the side of individual terror in relation to the enemy. If you ask us, the Russian comrades, about this, then we must say to you that amongst us the party is always trained in the spirit of negating individual terror. If our own people struggle against a landlord and he is killed in a skirmish we would not consider that to be individual terror in so far as the masses participated in the skirmish. If the party itself organises terrorist detachments in order to kill a landlord and this is done without the participation of the masses, then we always come out against this as we are against individual terror. Such active operations of individual terror when the masses are in a condition of passivity murders the spirit of the self-activity of the mass, trains the masses in the spirit of passiveness, and, moreover, the people judge matters in the following way – we cannot engage in activity, it is the heroes who will work on our behalf. Thus, there is a hero and on the other side is the crowd which is not participating in the struggle. From the point of view of the training and organisation of the activity of the masses such a view is very dangerous. In Russia there was such a party – the SRs – which had special detachments to terrorise the main ministers. We always came out against this party. This party lost any credit among the masses. We are against the theory of the hero and the crowd.

You ask also, how does one at the present time put the question of the nationalisation of land in India?

At the given stage you do not need to advance this demand, never, on the one side, put forward the demand for the division of the landlords' land and simultaneously say that the land must be given to the state. In the countries of people's democracy the nationalisation of land was nowhere proclaimed, more so in China. How did they deal with this in the people's democratic countries? There they forbid the buying and selling of land. This is the method of approach to nationalisation. Only the state may acquire land. The accumulation of land in the hands of individual persons has to cease. It would be disadvantageous now for you to advance the demand for nationalisation.

Some of your comrades consider that civil war has started in India. It is early yet to speak about this. The conditions for civil war grow but they still have not grown.

What is to be done by you now?

It would be good if you had something like a programme, or let us say, a platform of action. Of course you will have discord. There was also discord amongst us, but we decided that : whatever was resolved by the majority would become law. Even those comrades who did not agree with the majority decision, honestly carried out these decisions so that the party acted with a single will. All of you desire discussion. This may be permissible for you in times of peace but a revolutionary situation is growing at your end and you must not permit yourself this luxury. That is why you have in your party so few people, your unending discussions have disoriented the masses. The Bolsheviks in the period 1903-12 carried out open discussions so far as it was possible under the conditions of tsarism with the objective of driving out the Mensheviks as we then had the line of splitting with them. But you do not have such a situation where the party contains enemies. After that, as we hurled out the Mensheviks in 1912 and created our party, free of Mensheviks, the party became homogeneous. There were differences—then we would gather in narrow circles, discuss the problem and, as decided by the majority, we all worked. After the Bolsheviks came to power Trotsky thrust discussion on the party which we did not wish to embark upon. Trotsky provocatively stated that the party did not wish to have a discussion as though the party wanted to fight against the truth. We began the discussion and defeated Trotsky. But this was a discussion against which the entire party stood. If the party is more or less homogeneous and has ideological unity, then such a party is not in need of a discussion. The discussion needs to be carried out in narrow circles, and not in print. There, what is decided by the majority, that is the law.

Ghosh : Comrade Stalin is correct. Open discussion is no longer admissible for us.

Comrade Stalin : In our party there are 5,600,000 members of the party and 800,000 candidate members. What is the significance of candidate membership? Earlier instead of admitting members into the party we verified those wishing to join it. Some were kept waiting for four years, five years, we verified, we trained them. Many wished to join the party, but they had to be, first, verified and, second it was necessary to train them. Elementary socialist education is necessary and after that, admission. In our practice the institution of candidacy has justified itself. Around the party we have a large layer of sympathisers. But we must not overcrowd the party with new members, we must not overly enlarge the party. The main thing is that the admitted person has a deep quality, and not the quantity of the party members.

You also ask me -- under which conditions might one undertake partisan war. In the advanced capitalist countries partisan war may not have great significance, here the partisans are quickly seized. An especially great significance attaches to partisan war in medium-developed and backward countries. For example, it is very difficult to initiate partisan war in the United States of America or in Germany. Here essentially there are many large towns, a developed railway network, industrial regions, and the partisans in these conditions are at once caught. It is necessary, in order that the mass of the people themselves consider that they are heroes, and the heroes consider themselves as the executors of their own will, that separate acts, directed against the enemy, leads to passivity of the mass but to heightened activity.

In every way it is necessary to support what has originated in Telangana. It is the first sprouts of civil war. But one does not need to rely on partisan war alone. It, of course, renders assistance but itself it is in need of help.

It is necessary to have bigger work amongst the people, amongst the workers, in the army, amongst the intelligentsia, the peasantry. If you brought armed detachments into being amongst the workers, they might at the right opportunity in situation of general confusion seize government institutions. In Leningrad we had the workers' guards, we trained them, and the workers proved to be of great service to us at the time of the uprising, they seized the Winter Palace. Our peasantry had big assistance from the side of the working class. In general, out of all the classes of society the peasants have great trust in the working class. It is necessary to unite these two forms of struggle -- the struggle of the workers and peasants, the peasant uprising and the march of the workers.

You remember the events in Indonesia. The leadership of the communist party was good in Indonesia, but they were provoked into a premature uprising. They were good, legendary, courageous people, but they got provoked and perished.

It would be good for you if you have a platform or a programme of activity. Put as the focal point of this platform or programme the agrarian revolution.

You ask me also about the character of the foreign policy of Nehru. It is one of playing off and manoeuvring and it is intended to show that he is against the American policies. In its deeds the Nehru government plays off England and America.

Comrades Rao, Dange, Ghosh and Punnaiah : thanked comrade Stalin for the discussion and declared that on the basis of the instructions of comrade Stalin they will reconsider all of their activity and would act in correspondence with these instructions.

Comrade Stalin : I have given you no instructions, this is advice, it is not obligatory for you, you may or may not adopt it.

The conversation continued for more than three hours.

Taken down by V. Grigor'yan 10.II.51.

(Signed) V. Grigor'yan

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