

February 4, 1951

Meeting of Top CPI and CPSU Comrades

Citation:

"Meeting of Top CPI and CPSU Comrades", February 4, 1951, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGASPI F.558, Op. 11, D.310, LL. 12-32. Translated for by Tahir Asghar.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/119262>

Summary:

Delegation representing the Indian Communist Party, including Rao, Ghosh, and Dange, discusses the internal disagreements within the ICP following the party's Second Congress, stemming largely over the question of armed struggle. Also touches on how the ICP should react to foreign policy issues, including US involvement in the Korean War.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Present: Comrades G.M. Malenkov, M.A. Suslov, P.F. Yudin, and V.G. Grigorian.

Representatives of the CC CP India, General Secretary Cde. Rajeshwar Rao, members of the Politbureau Comrades Dange and Ghosh, and member of the CC CP India Cde. Punnaiah.

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

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 AUCP(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 Cde. Liu Shaoqi at the conference of trade unions of the countries of Asia in Beijing, serious differences have emerged among 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. Everyone is expecting help and guidance from the AUCP(b). The masses are also looking for guidance. In India at present, many parties and groups are emerging, [and] each of these is trying to mobilize the masses and draw the masses to their side. Our party is demoralized, 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 AUCP(b). I want the other comrades to also speak. I have just stated my point of view.

Ghosh: I have nothing to add to what Cde. 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 AUCP(b), we will not be able to move the party forward. We expect help from the international Communist movement and its vanguard-the AUCP(b). I join Cde. Rao in saying that the suggestions of the AUCP(b) will be acceptable to the whole party.

Dange: It is not for the first time that the AUCP(b) is giving us directions and guidance. The AUCP(b) gave us instructions in September 1947 when I was here and when Cde. Zhdanov as a representative of the CC AUCP(b) heard what I had to say about the Indian Question. It is well known that the AUCP(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.

Punnaiah: 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 AUCP(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 AUCP(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.

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 and 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 organizational, and we want to put together here with your help two draft resolutions on political and organizational questions, which we would take back with us, subsequently discuss, and approve in the conference.

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

Ghosh: I was arrested immediately after the Second Congress^[1] of the party and let out of jail only 5 months ago. I do not have full firsthand information about what happened. Evidently, a dangerous organizational 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. 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 criticized at 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 projected as if our revolution combined the features of two revolutions—a democratic and a socialist one. 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 until May 1950. The General Secretary Cde. 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 Politburo. 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 until the publication of the editorial of the newspaper 'For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy.' After this, the comrades began to openly criticize 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 spelled 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 Politburo in order to represent all political trends. Our CC and Politburo cannot be considered united in the sense of a unity of views. We had to take this step so as to prevent 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 fervor amongst the masses, and issued risky slogans thinking that the party would put these into practice and that the masses would follow them. These were the two errors.

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

The party could not extend its influence over the radical masses. The party just could not take up such vital questions as the increase of the government's budget and peace movement 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 elections were to be held on the basis of universal franchise. Until now, only about 12-13 percent of the people could vote. Every party came forward with its own program 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 program 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 among the masses for English and American imperialism? Wrong. Even the Congress newspapers were against American aggression in Korea. The sympathies of our people 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 imperialists 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 [other] forms must be secondary. I think this is true in general for the colonies, but I also think that the conditions for this to happen have not yet matured. For the party, it would be wrong to approve this assertion formally 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 to be establishing 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-defense. 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.

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 Shaoqi at the Peking conference which proposed 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, armed struggle must be present. But it should be consistent with other forms of struggle. Overlooking of this aspect was what I criticized as the new ultra-left sectarian politics.

The second difference cropped up in the interpretation of the Chinese path. How [are we 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.

Ghosh: Cde. Dange thinks that the question of the Chinese path must be explained in detail. I would want to clarify the question of 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 prevent the partisan war from degenerating into terrorist actions against individual landlords? How [are we] 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 [do you] judge its policy? How [are we to] correlate it with the struggle for peace? These are the questions on which we would like to receive a response.

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. [It is possible that] 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 was said in our earlier documents. I have 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 Second 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 Second 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 favor of the Telengana movement. The main speaker Cde. 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 [and] 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 Politburo discussed and rejected the draft. We again demanded that our draft be discussed. Then the Politburo 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^[1] 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 took place. In the CC, only 19 out of 31 members were left. The rest were in jail [and] two were removed on allegations of immoral

behavior. The first discussions that took place were very strange. Those comrades who earlier defended Trotskyite positions such as carrying out a single-phase revolution now started to say that we should begin all over again. Earlier, they 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 Second Congress, a shift from revisionism to sectarianism has occurred. All the members of the Politburo and the CC came out against the earlier positions. At the same time, Joshi [1111] published his brochure, 'Views,' where he defends his consistently reformist line that was totally rejected by the Second Congress. Joshi argued against the armed struggle in Telengana, beckoned 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 utilize existing reserves.

When Cde. Dange declares that the CC said 'take rifles and shoot,' it is slander against the party. In many provinces, different forms of struggle are present. To oversimplify the issue means to prevent its resolution. The CC approved the new political line after the provinces, where armed struggle was in progress, had presented their comprehensive documents in which it was shown how the landlords' land was divided, how our rule was organized, etc. Only after a thorough scrutiny of these documents did the CC make 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 cadres, as only 9 persons were elected to the CC, of which 4 had to leave the provinces. The rest of the members were demoralized 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 organize 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 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 to a united National Front, but there are questions regarding the form of this front [and] 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 emphasize 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 Cde. Stalin who has supposedly said that the Chinese path cannot be applied to India.

Regarding the foreign policy of Nehru. How do we expose this policy? Cde. 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.

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 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, we conducted armed struggle in only 2 out of 8 districts, [and] in Andhra only 4 out of 11. 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 cannot 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 Cde. 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 Cde. Ghosh contains many contradictions. In this manner, there are three trends: us, 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. Seventy-five percent of the agricultural workers in Andhra, a majority of which consists of the 'untouchables', understood the betrayal by the Congress party [and] 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 organize the agricultural workers as we were afraid of disrupting peasants' unity.

When Gandhi was assassinated, [iv] clashes between the organization that perpetrated the killing and other chauvinistic organizations erupted. The government used these as an excuse to liquidate the peasant movement in the regions of Telengana and Andhra.

Our delegation arrived at the Second Congress illegally. In the Andhra party organization, 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 peasant movement was also rife in the province of Kerala. The CC did not come to the support of this movement too, taking the plea that [they must] 'first create a democratic movement and only then start to organize armed resistance.' There are numerous such instances.

Much has been written in the newspapers regarding use of arms in the cities, but this is 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 organized 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 the peasant 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 the Discussions (6 February)

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 [Party] is declining. In these conditions, a proper solution to the agrarian question must be found.

Many party organizations view the party line formulated in May 1950 in this light: create small armed groups from among the bold party members, kill the landlords, 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 is 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 uniting the people 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 criticize 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 the 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 favor of the armed struggle in Telengana. I think that the economic crisis in the country would help in organizing 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 generalization 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 characterized 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 organizational 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. 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 nationalization 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 Jiang Jieshi and the French government and seen as puppets of American imperialism?

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

4. Should we have the practice of passing the 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 into effect as it subsequently turned out that the comrade was an honest communist. There are fears that such a punishment can be used for a 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?

Rao: The Congress Party is disintegrating and is losing influence among the people. Anti-Soviet and anti-Chinese sentiments are also declining among the middle class. 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 organizing these within the limits of Gandhian non-violence and forcing this tactic 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 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 organizations 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 until a large party is established.

It would be wrong to negate the international significance of the Chinese revolution. The fall of Mukden [Shenyang] 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?
4. In which provinces does the possibility of an armed struggle exist?

Cde. 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 [of India] 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 Cde. Dange. What was he accused of, how did this case end and is there any concluding document that you can make available for us?

Rao: The question regarding Cde. 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 the 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.

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 was 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 Cde. Dange. The committee investigated these accusations and found that 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 you reconcile such a call with your general line.

Dange: In relation to Truman's statement about the 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 Cde. Dange.)

Question: You told us about the serious differences among you and at the same time in the December Plenum of the CC where these differences crystallized, [and when] Comrades Dange and Ghosh were admitted to the Politburo. We wanted to know on what principle these changes were made in the constitution of the Politburo?

Ghosh: The CC, consisting of 9 persons, was unanimous about the need to bring changes in the constitution of the Politburo. When we came out of jail, we wrote a document criticizing 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 Politburo 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 program and constitution [charter]?

Dange: Our party does not have a program 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 the 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 program.

What concerns the constitution-in 1943, during the First Congress of the Party, a constitution of the Party was adopted. In 1948, at the Second Congress of the party, the constitution [charter] 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 so, [where have] 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?

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

In Telengana, until 1948, before the arrival of the Indian army in Hyderabad, regular partisan units were active, the total number of which was two thousand armed men. They were poorly armed and possessed 30 automatic [weapons], 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 who do not participate in the armed raids but conduct political work among the people to support them.

There never was a liberated region with its own organs of power in the past, and there are none now.

In Andhra in 1949, there were about 1,000 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.

Cde. Ghosh, making an observation regarding the answer given by Cde. 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, Cde. Punniah 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?

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.

[\[i\]](#) The Second Congress of the Communist Party of India took place in Calcutta, opening on 28 February 1948. It was highly critical of "right-wing reformism" ready to compromise with the new Nehru government and called for armed struggle in a Political Thesis authored by General Secretary Bhalchandra Trimbak Ranadive.

[\[ii\]](#) Liu Shaoqi's report designating China as the model for Asian revolution was presented in December 1949 to the Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australasian Countries of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in Beijing. The speech during Mao's visit to Stalin in January 1950 was not published in Russian.

[\[iii\]](#) P. C. Joshi was General Secretary of the Indian Communist Party in the 1930s and into the 1940s. He was purged from the Politburo in 1948 and forced to perform "self-criticism" at the Second Congress.

[\[iv\]](#) Gandhi was assassinated on 29 January 1948.