

“I Will Unmask Myself”, Says Ranadive

PARTHA CHOUDHURI [1]

[From Liberation, Vol. I, No. 4 (February 1968).]

In the January issue, *Liberation* reproduced some "Pages from Party History", which our readers may have found quite illuminating. In the following very interesting extracts from the Self-Critical Report (too lengthy to be reproduced in its entirety) dated May 20, 1950, and from the report of his self-critical speeches made on May 28, 29 and 31, 1950, by B. T. Ranadive, then General Secretary of the C.P.I. and now the chief 'theoretician' of the C.P.I.(M), member of its Polit Bureau and editor of its central organ, *People's Democracy*, Ranadive accuses himself of various crimes against the Party [2]. . . .

On 31st May 1950, Ranadive said:

"Both in my report and in my speech I could not really and properly criticize myself. **My criticism on organizational part has been criticized as insincere. I accept it.... I have stabbed the Party in the back.** It is an enormous guilt which only those who are guilty of [it] realize but on lines given by Vanu **I will unmask myself.**"

With this promise "I will unmask myself" ended Ranadive's self-criticism. His self-criticism had already revealed quite a hideous face, what more hideous crimes of his he had yet to unmask we do not know. We are not also aware if he fulfilled this promise afterwards. In the Seventh Congress of the Party held in Calcutta, Ranadive's colleagues promised to submit their self-critical reports. These reports, we are afraid, will never be submitted, for most of them have a past which they prefer to hide.

What are the principal crimes of which Ranadive accuses himself?

First, Ranadive admitted that, under the influence of Kardelj and other Titoite agents he wrongly characterized the stage of the Indian revolution as one interlacing the two stages - democratic and socialist -, screened imperialism and feudalism in the name of fighting capitalism and ignored the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal character of the revolution. This led to *left adventurist practice in the urban areas*, which cost the Party very dearly. At the same time this led to *right opportunist practice in the countryside* and sabotaged the agrarian struggles, like that of Telengana, which had already started. Today also, though Ranadive, Sundarayya, Basavapunniah, Namboodiripad and Co. have described the present stage of revolution as People's Democratic, they are *in practice* ignoring its anti-imperialist, anti-feudal character by describing the Indian big bourgeoisie as independent and the Indian state as sovereign, and sabotaging the agrarian revolution the rumblings of which can be heard.

Secondly, Ranadive admitted that he could never understand the CPC (the Communist Party of China) and had slandered it. Only a fool or a knave could claim that without assimilating the rich

experience of the CPC and without understanding Comrade Mao Tse-tung's Thought, a party of the working class could accomplish a successful revolution in any country of the Third World. The same failure to understand the CPC, the same hostility towards this great Party, characterizes the present attitude of the "Marxist" leaders.

Thirdly, Ranadive admitted that he represented a Titoite trend both politically and organizationally. Titoism, which the 81-Party Statement of 1960 described as a "variety of international opportunism" and as a betrayal of Marxism-Leninism, was the first bourgeois-nationalist revolt from within a Communist Party against the international Communist movement. Titoite agents were then active and Ranadive became such an active exponent of Titoism that he maligned Mao Tse-tung and the great Chinese Revolution. He went so far as to suppress all international documents which warned the Indian Party against the disastrous line it was pursuing under Ranadive^[3]. . . .

Today the "Marxist" press lauds to the skies the "achievements" of the Soviet Union and the East European "socialist" states and idealizes Castro, and the "Marxist" bookshops are the main centres selling revisionist literature while documents of the international communist movement are mostly suppressed. Today, also, they are maligning the CPC, the leader of the international communist movement.

Fourthly, Ranadive admitted that he had not only suppressed authoritative international documents but had also suppressed by every conceivable means all criticism of his treacherous policy made by party committees and individual comrades here. No meeting of the central committee was convened; only Ranadive and one or two PB members arrogated to themselves the right of dissolving even elected Provincial Committees.

Bhowani Sen said:

"This led to a whole series of bureaucratic action inside the Party. Democratic centralism was thrown overboard. Members of the Central Committee were being expelled, suspended and censured. Every criticism of the Party policy was being suppressed. Left-adventurism was being forced upon the entire Party. The Central Committee was never functioned as the Central Committee. Every opposition was muzzled by raising the scare of reformism."

Thus the enemies of the Party were successful in liquidating the Party almost completely. Today also, elected Party Committees, local and district, even State Committees like that of the U. P., are being disbanded without even the formality of a charge-sheet against them, and innumerable militant comrades are being hounded out of the Party in order to pursue an utterly opportunist political line. The scare of left adventurism is also being raised for the same purpose. The organizational methods are not *essentially* different from those of 1948-49.

One may ask, "How was it possible for one, two or three men to derail the Party despite elaboration of a correct political-tactical line by the Secretariat of the Andhra Provincial Committee, experience of a large majority of comrades including members of the CC and PCs, criticism by many of them of the disastrous strategy and tactics pursued by Ranadive and his accomplices, and despite the repeated advice from the international communist movement? How

could this Ranadive phenomenon arise at all?" We think that it was the utterly wrong conception of party discipline which gave enormous power to a few individuals at the top. It may be an extreme manifestation, but, usually, in the name of democratic centralism, the worst kind of authoritarianism is practiced and democracy stifled within the Party. This negative example should teach us that revolt against wrong politics and bureaucratic organizational methods of the leadership is not only justified but also the duty of a communist. As Mao Tse-tung said, "**An erroneous leadership that endangers the revolution should not be accepted unconditionally but should be resisted resolutely**". He has pointed out that even within a Communist Party there exist contradictions between proletarian trends and bourgeois and other reactionary trends. In India, since the birth of the Party, the representatives of the reactionary trends, besides agents planted by the enemy, have tried successfully to derail the Party from the correct Marxist-Leninist line and hampered the growth of the Party. Today the conflict between the two trends within the Party has become acute, especially, after the Naxalbari struggle. In the name of democratic centralism, the lackeys of the big landlords and the big bourgeoisie, who adorn the positions of authority in the Party, will no longer be able to impose their counter-revolutionary line on the Party comrades. "**Communists**", Comrade Mao Tse-tung said, "**must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything, use their own heads and carefully think over whether or not it corresponds to reality and is really well founded; on no account should they follow blindly and encourage slavishness.**"

It does not seem that Ranadive's self-criticism was sincere. In record time, in two years, he was able virtually to liquidate the Party and class organizations trampling underfoot all advice or criticism from abroad and from within. Even when the Cominform article [\[4\]](#) came, he tried to justify his political line and published in *Communist* of February-March, 1950, a statement justifying it. Only when his chief comrade-in-arms, his principal accomplice - Bhowani Sen - also discreetly deserted him and submitted a very damaging self-critical report, Ranadive admitted his crimes against the Party. His self-critical report and speeches remind one of a criminal caught red-handed, trying to wriggle himself out of a very uncomfortable situation by debasing himself as much as possible in the hope of worming his way into the Party hierarchy at a more suitable moment.

Our quarrel is not with Ranadive but with the Ranadives, the Joshis, the Danges, the Namboodiripads and so on. They are not merely individuals but also types. Just as there are quite a number of Danges within the Party who shield one another (otherwise, Sripad Amrit Dange would have been found out long ago), so there are several Ranadives and Joshis holding top positions in the Party. Ranadive and Joshi are not the only criminals who, to use the apt words of Ranadive himself, "stabbed the Party in the back." It is time that these enemies and the true features of their counter-revolutionary politics were unmasked.

NOTES

1. Partha Choudhuri was the pen-name of Suniti Kumar Ghosh.
2. For lack of space, these extracts which took more than nine pages of *Liberation* are not being reproduced. Briefly, Ranadive confessed that he represented "the most hardened left-sectarian trend," that he refused to recognize the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist character of our revolution, that "with regard to the revolutionary form of struggle in the

rural areas" he took "a right reformist attitude" while insisting on "Adventurist practice" in the urban areas, that he opposed "the very struggle of the nationalities for self-determination" and so on. He also criticized himself for his "unexampled conceit and arrogance and lack of political seriousness", "the unfathomable depths of [his] political bankruptcy", "the entirely warped outlook and the distorted understanding of politics which has become a second nature" and his "arrogant and conceited attack on Mao [which] was part of this repudiation of Marxism-Leninism."

3. The next few lines have been omitted because of the space problem.
4. "Mighty Advance of the National Liberation Movement in the Colonies and Dependent Countries", editorial of For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy, organ of the formation Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties, 27 January 1950. It advised the CPI to learn from the experience of the Chinese Revolution.