

PRAKASH KARAT

P. Sundarayya:

The Builder of the Communist Party

The birth centenary of Putschalapalli Sundarayya, who was born on May 1, 1913 is being observed this year. P. Sundarayya is recognized as a builder of the Communist Party, strategist of the agrarian revolution, a defender of Marxist Leninist principles and a man closely associated with the masses. As General Secretary of the CPI(M) from its inception in 1964 to 1976, Sundarayya played a key role in the formation and the development of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Three years ago in 2009, the birth centenary of his colleague and contemporary in the Indian communist movement, EMS Namboodiripad was observed. Both were leaders with similarities in terms of their political upbringing, their experience in the Congress-led national movement and their evolution into leading communists of the pre-independence generation. Both emerged as leaders of the Communist Party of India and later the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

EMS & PS: PARALLEL TRAJECTORIES

EMS and PS joined the national movement as students. Neither completed their college studies. Both of them participated in the civil disobedience movement of 1930-31. Both were jailed in the satyagraha. It is in this period that they got disillusioned with the Gandhian movement and began looking for radical alternatives. P. Sundarayya came to communism earlier. While studying in college in Madras, PS joined a youth group set up by H.D. Raja a communist and was later recruited by Amir Hyder Khan into the Party. Later he joined the Congress Socialist Party as per the Party's decision. Thus, he became the first communist contact for the Kerala CSP leaders like P Krishna Pillai and EMS Namboodiripad.

Another parallel development is their social awakening and the revolt against the caste system. While EMS came out against the moribund caste practices of the Namboodiris, the young PS sat on a hunger strike in his own village against the upper caste landlord discrimination against the dalits. Though both came from landlord families their empathy for the economically and socially oppressed made them deeply involved with the agrarian question. It is not surprising therefore to find that the political activities of

both of them veered towards organizing the peasantry and the agricultural workers against landlordism.

While EMS wrote about the conditions of the peasants under jenmi landlordism, in the case of PS he was a pioneer in studying the classification of the peasantry. As early as 1937 he had undertaken a classification of the peasantry in the coastal districts based on revenue records. EMS in 1939 wrote his dissenting note to the Malabar Tenancy Committee which has become a classic analysis of jenmi landlordism in Malabar.

Sundarayya was the first to recognize the necessity to set up the independent class organisation of agricultural workers. He set up the first agricultural workers union in his village, Alaganipadu, in 1932. EMS stressed the importance of organizing the agricultural workers in their own organisation in 1936.

The anti-landlord struggles developed in Andhra in the late 1930s and the peasant movement in Malabar around this period stemmed from the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal strategy adopted by the fledgling Communist Party.

The trajectory of these two leaders has striking parallels. This is not surprising as both were products of a historical period where from within the independence struggle emerged a stream, inspired by the October Revolution in Russia and socialism, they found their way towards an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal programme.

The Communist leaders who emerged out of the Congress-led nationalist movement who adopted this convergent strategy of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism were successful in building a Communist Party with a mass base. These areas have maintained a Communist mass base even after six and half decades of independence and bourgeois-landlord rule.

Sundarayya's quest for the agrarian revolution led him on a different path. PS was a direct participant in the historic Telangana peasants struggle. He had the unique experience of leading the biggest peasant armed struggle in the country between 1946 and 1951. This experience had a profound impact on him and fashioned much of his understanding of the Communist Party and its strategic path. But before going into this experience it is necessary to underline the role of Sundarayya as the builder of the Party.

ORGANIZER OF PARTY IN SOUTH INDIA

Sundarayya himself marks his becoming a communist to the year 1930. He was 18 years old and a college student at that time. From an early acquaintance of Marxism to becoming a full-fledged communist was a rapid transition as far as PS was concerned. His remarkable abilities as an organizer, his steadfastness and convictions and courage was what attracted Amir Hyder Khan, who had been sent as an organizer of the Party to South India, to approach him to join the Party. It also speaks of the farsighted

judgment of the proletarian seaman that Amir Hyder Khan was that he could discern the revolutionary characteristics of the young PS by just one encounter with him.

The arrest of Amir Hyder Khan in 1933 led to PS stepping into his role as an organizer of the Party. In 1934, at the age of 22 PS was taken into the Central Committee of the Party, the first organized leading body of the Party which was constituted after the release of the Meerut prisoners.

Thus from the outset of the Party becoming an all India organized unit, Sundarayya became part of its leadership. The intuitive choice of PS by Amir Hyder Khan proved fortuitous for the Party. He set about the task of building the Party from scratch with a zeal and determination which was remarkable. In the coastal districts of Andhra which was part of the Madras province and in the Telangana region of Hyderabad, PS toured various parts of the state, in village after village to enlist members and supporters to the Party and to recruit the first cadres who would work among the peasants and workers. He very quickly absorbed Lenin's principles of Party organisation and became a Party organizer par excellence.

While undertaking this herculean task in Andhra, PS also devoted time and energies to developing the Party in other states all over India. His discussions with the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party from Kerala – P Krishna Pillai and EMS Namboodiripad – in Mumbai and elsewhere led to his visit to Kerala, after which the first communist unit was set up in 1937. This unit consisted of P Krishna Pillai, EMS Namboodiripad, K Damodaran and N C Sekhar. Sundarayya was accompanied by S.V. Ghate when this unit was constituted. In the Tamilnadu part of the Madras province, Sundarayya played an important role in contacting and recruiting some of the early communist leaders. He worked with P Ramamurthy, P Jeevanandan, B. Srinivasa Rao, A.S.K. Iyengar and others. In 1936, in the presence of PS and S.V. Ghate, the first Communist unit of Tamilnadu was set up.

What stood out in this period of Party building was the unique capacity of Sundarayya to identify potential cadres, recruit them and nurture and develop their talent and capacities. He also was able to provide the guidance for them to work in the class and mass organisation. From the outset Sundarayya would concentrate on recruiting students and youth who would then be initiated into work among the basic classes. By consistently working among the masses and identifying with their lives and way of living he also inspired the cadres by his personal example to devote themselves to the people.

The discipline observed in the Party by its cadres and members comes from this dedication to serve the people and the consciousness which arises out of working and leading the struggles of the people. Here Sundarayya was a Communist leader unparalleled in putting into practice the principles of a revolutionary organisation.

PARTY BASED ON DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

The work put in by Sundarayya for building the Party in these early years is one of his great contributions. It is only after the release of the Meerut case prisoners that an all India Centre was set up in 1933-34. PS became part of this effort to build an all India centralized Party. That is why B.T. Ranadive in his tribute to Sundarayya on his death, pinpointed this important aspect:

The fight for the Party principles, the fight for the superiority of the Party over every thing else and the fight for revolutionary discipline in the Party are the fights Comrade P. Sundarayya has fought and this great contribution of Comrade P. Sundarayya made him an outstanding leader of the Party.

The essence of the organisational structure of a Communist Party is democratic centralism. P. Sundarayya grasped this fact and he made a distinctive contribution to build the Party with the discipline based on democratic centralism. P. Sundarayya directly led the historic armed struggle of the peasantry in Telangana. This was a struggle which involved the mass of the peasants and agricultural workers in the fight against feudal landlordism under the Nizam. Thousands of ordinary peasants, men and women took up arms to defend their right to land and against the feudal and social oppression of the jagirdars and razakars of the Nizam. The struggle reached such heights because of the building of a disciplined and organised Communist Party.

When the Communist Party of India (Marxist) was formed after the break with revisionism in 1964, Sundarayya was elected as the General Secretary of the Central Committee. It was a recognition of his leading role in building the Communist Party for three decades.

The fight against revisionism was conducted on the political and ideological level over a period of time in the united party. But after the formation of the CPI(M), it was necessary to settle accounts with revisionist and reformist methods and practices which had crept in to the organisation.

The document adopted by the Central Committee in 1967 "Our Tasks on Party Organisation" was written by P. Sundarayya and M. Basavapunniah. This resolution bears the imprint of Sundarayya's concept of Party organisation. Analysing how in the United Party the Leninist principle of organisation was undermined, the resolution states that:

In our drive for a mass Party we have reduced the standard and quality of Party members to that of a militant or striker, and reduced the Party organisational structure to one that is suited only for parliamentary activity, to one of Social Democratic variety.

This grave failure of not building such a party organisation did not get liquidated at one stroke, and it persists even after our breaking away with the revisionists in 1964. A sustained and prolonged struggle is necessary

to overcome it. But several amongst us while formally accepting this difficult and inescapable task tend to leave this task to spontaneity, and in a way, entertain the illusion that the correct ideological, political and mass line worked out by the Party would automatically, in course of time, set right the party organisation, and consequently neglect this task which should be fulfilled as the foremost task facing our Party at the present juncture.

The resolution pinpoints the revisionist trends in the organisation which undermine the character of the Party as the vanguard, class conscious, Marxist detachment of the working class by loosening the recruitment into the Party and reducing the Party membership level to that of the mass of militants without requisite political and ideological level. It also stated that democratic centralism, the highest principle and the kernel of a Marxist-Leninist Party was subjected to furious assaults and was seriously undermined. Hence, a major step proposed in the resolution was restoring the primacy of democratic centralism in the functioning of the Party. The resolution stated:

The principle of democratic centralism, so evolved, elaborated and insisted upon by Lenin and which has come to be universally accepted by all the Communist Parties as an absolutely correct principle, is the only organisational principle that can keep the Communist Party in fighting trim and can sustain the Party as a real revolutionary party.

The resolution goes on to explain what democratic centralism means.

Centralism in our Party means: leading bodies are elected by the party membership and enjoy their confidence. It is this that gives them the authority to manage all party affairs and command the obedience of the individual to the organisation, of the minority to the majority, of the lower organisation to the higher, and of all constituent bodies to the Central Committee. The Party's centralism instead of being separated is based on democracy.

Democracy in our Party means: party meetings are convened and carried through under proper leadership; resolutions are adopted after thorough preparation and careful deliberation; elections are held after carefully prepared list of nominations. In our Party democracy is neither democracy without leadership, nor is it ultra-democracy nor anarchy within the Party.

It is only by bringing out a high degree of inner-party democracy, and on that basis that a high degree of centralism in party leadership can be achieved.

FOR A LENINIST PARTY ORGANISATION

For Sundarayya, the development of the class and mass struggles, the linking of the working class and peasant movements and the fight against the ruling classes and the State when it unleashes repression on the workers and peasants – all require a disciplined party based on democratic centralism. In the twelve years when he was the General Secretary of the Party from 1964 to 1976, the building of such a Party was taken forward. The success was seen in the development of a strong Party organisation in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. In some other states too, the basis for a Communist Party organisation was laid.

Democratic centralism and the concept of a revolutionary Party based on this principle are coming under attack from various quarters today. Since 2008, there has been a concerted attack on the CPI(M), in particular, and the Left in general. The role of the CPI(M) in fighting against the neo-liberal policies and against the strategic alliance with US imperialism drew the ire of the ruling classes and imperialism. The attack is not only confined to the policies and ideology of the Party, it is also trained against the Party structure, its organisation and functioning.

In West Bengal, the sustained onslaught against the Party has been marked by the talk of countering cadre raj and “autocracy” of the Party. In Tripura where the Left Front government is near completing 20 years continuously in government since 1993, there is the constant barrage of propaganda against the Party’s monolithic grip over the government and all aspects of public life. In Kerala, we have seen massive propaganda about the Party’s autocratic ways and the suppression of dissent and the elimination of opponents and the stifling of democracy.

All this is summed up by labeling the CPI(M) as “Stalinist” and a regimented organisation from top down. What is branded as “Stalinist” is actually the Leninist concept of organisation. This is deliberately mixed up with the serious violations of inner-Party democracy, in Stalin’s time. This attack on the Party and its organisational principles from its class opponents and the rightwing media has to be squarely met.

For the Communist Party, the question of organisation has a Central place in implementing its strategy and tactics. As Lenin explained:

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, to the ‘lower depths’ of utter destitution, savagery and degeneration, the proletariat can become, and inevitably will become, an invincible force only when its ideological unification by the principle of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organisation which will weld millions of toilers into an army of the working class. (*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*)

P. Sundarayya’s legacy for the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is this Leninist outlook of Party organisation. More than four decades after the

tasks set out to rebuild the Party on correct Marxist-Leninist principles, we cannot say we have succeeded in building such a Party from top to bottom. It is necessary to streamline the Party organisation and its functioning on the principle of democratic centralism. There is the need to infuse inner-Party democracy while maintaining the common discipline and united purpose. Even today, a large number of Party members do not work actively in the class and mass organisations; this must be ensured. The Party must have a correct approach in building broad-based mass organisations which function independently and which encompasses the widest sections of the various sections of the working class people. There has to be a sustained and systematic effort to politically and ideologically educate the Party members and cadres.

TELANGANA PEASANTS STRUGGLE

Sundarayya from the beginning identified the agrarian revolution as the crux of the democratic revolution in India. The fight against landlordism and the old social order that it fosters and the distribution of land of the landlords to the tillers was central to Sundarayya's strategy for the democratic revolution. The years of work from 1940 onwards which went into the building the Communist Party and the peasant movement and the broad front of the *Andhra Mahasabha* resulted in the historic Telangana people's armed uprising. The fight against the *jagirdar*-landlordism under the Nizam's rule in Hyderabad, according to Sundarayya "brought to the fore the agrarian question and its role in the democratic revolution". The Telangana people's armed struggle began in 1946 and ended in 1951. In this period, ordinary peasants, men and women rose up against the cruel exploitation and violence perpetrated by the big landlords of the region. They had to fight the *razakars* sent in by the Nizam alongwith the police and armed forces sent in by the Nizam which led to the development of guerilla squads to defend the lands taken over by the people and their popular gram sabhas. At the height of the movement, 3000 villages were liberated from the Nizam's rule and the landlords driven out and the lands taken over. In 1948, the Indian army was sent to not only integrate Hyderabad into the Indian Union but also to suppress the peasant struggle. In all four thousand communists and peasant militants were killed. More than 10,000 communist cadres and people's militants were thrown into detention camps and jailed for three to four years. More than 50,000 people were beaten, tortured and intimidated in police and army camps.

The Telangana peasants struggle proved an object lesson on the nature of the Indian State after independence. While it moved to end the rule of the Nizam and integrate Hyderabad into the Indian Union, it was from the outset hostile to the interests of the peasantry and the rural poor. The army and the administration was used to snatch back lands from the peasants and

restore it to the landlords. P. Sundarayya, M. Basavapunniah, M Hanumanta Rao, L.B. Gangadhara Rao and others who later joined the CPI(M) were clear that the struggle had to be continued, after the entry of the Indian army, to defend the partial gains made by the peasantry and to protect their lands. They resolutely fought against those in the Party who considered the struggle as adventurist after the integration of Hyderabad into the Indian Union. At the time when the decision to withdraw the struggle was taken by the Central Committee of the Party, it was Sundarayya who went into the forest to meet the guerilla squads and convince them to give up arms as the fight for land and their demands had to be carried out through other forms of struggle.

AGRARIAN REVOLUTION AS THE CRUX

The experience of leading the Telangana armed struggle had a lasting impact on Sundarayya. From then onwards he had a distinctive understanding of the agrarian revolution and the strategy and tactics to be adopted in this regard for accomplishing the people's democratic revolution.

In Sundarayya's words:

A series of issues such as the role of the peasantry in the people's democratic revolution, the place and significance of partisan resistance and rural revolutionary bases, the questions of concretely analyzing the classification among the peasantry, and what role is played in the revolution by the different strata of the peasantry . . . were thrown up for serious inner-Party debate and decision. (Telangana People's Armed Struggle and Its Lessons, Page 4)

For P. Sundarayya, the agrarian revolution had to lead to the abolition of landlordism and the takeover of all lands owned by landlords for distribution to the landless and poor peasants. Throughout his life, he was uncompromising in pursuing this goal as central to the agrarian strategy.

In Andhra Pradesh, the division which arose within the Party on the approach to the Telangana struggle and its withdrawal was mirrored later in the split in 1962-63 which led to the formation of the CPI(M).

STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM

In the fight against revisionism within the united CPI, P. Sundarayya constituted the core group of leaders who led the struggle. At the fourth Congress held in Palghat in 1956, P. Sundarayya was amongst those who opposed the stand taken by S.A. Dange, P C Joshi, C Rajeswara Rao and others who argued for a National Front and alliance with the Congress. It was the strong opposition of Sundarayya, Basavapunniah, Surjeet, P Ramamurti and others which led to the Right draft being rejected.

Preceding the Congress was the first assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh in 1955 where despite great expectation the Party failed to win a majority getting only 15 seats though it polled 31 per cent of the vote. This immediately set off an inner-Party struggle in Andhra where a section of the Party took a liquidationist line. Sundarayya stood firmly against such an understanding and the firm stand that Sundarayya took against revisionism can be traced to both the inner-Party struggles during the last phase of the Telangana struggle and the post-election situation.

Harkishan Singh Surjeet has acknowledged that in the early stage of the fight against the revisionist trend he had joined with the Andhra leadership of Sundarayya and Basavapunnaiah. For Sundarayya at the heart of the struggle lay the understanding of the Indian State as a bourgeois-landlord State. There could be no completion of the agrarian revolution and the democratic revolution without putting an end to this State of the ruling classes. For him the Congress Party was the premier party of the bourgeois-landlord classes and therefore there was no question of any alliance with that party. Later, he extended this approach to other parties of the ruling classes like the Jan Sangh and would not countenance any tactical understanding with them too.

Sundarayya was strongly opposed to the changes in the Party organisation structure which was brought about in the special Congress held in Amritsar in 1958. He saw the changes in the Party Constitution as an organisational manifestation of the revisionist trend. He was among those who led the struggle against the revisionist draft of the Programme and the draft political-tactical line in the 6th Congress held in Vijayawada. He was in the lead in criticising the revisionist formulations adopted by the CPSU, within the Party. He was also among those who took a determined stand against the nationalist stand adopted by a section of the Party on the Indo-China border issue and was firm in maintaining that proletarian internationalism demanded that India and China settle the border dispute through negotiations peacefully. In the decade long struggle against revisionism, P. Sundarayya at every turn in all the issues which cropped up adopted a clear position against class collaboration and lining up with the national bourgeoisie. For him it meant a betrayal of the agrarian revolution and the prospects of completing the democratic revolution in the country.

It was this steadfast and leading role played by P. Sundarayya which marked him out to be the first General Secretary of the CPI(M) when he was elected by the Central Committee to that post at the 7th Congress in 1964.

FIGHT AGAINST LEFT DEVIATION

It was in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh that the Left sectarian understanding found fertile ground. The legacy of the Telangana armed struggle and its withdrawal and the appeal of the Chinese model of

revolution led finally to both type of deviations. The first was the trend towards revisionism which got heightened after the defeat in the 1955 assembly elections. The other contrary trend was the Left adventurist line which sought to one-sidedly glorify the armed struggle without taking into consideration the conditions in society and the consciousness of the people. When the CPI(M) was formed, the Left sectarian trend within the Party got sustenance in a period when the entire leadership was in jail from December 1964 to mid-1966. The extreme rhetoric and adventurist slogans being put out by the Communist Party of China in the throes of the Cultural Revolution, were avidly lapped up by these elements. Between 1966 and 1968 an ideological struggle was waged against the Left sectarian trends.

For PS this was a new challenge and he had to fight it primarily in his home ground Andhra Pradesh. After coming out of jail, he took the lead in fighting the wrong line of the ultra-Left. The Naxalbari incident took place when the United Front government was in office in West Bengal. Sundarayya alongwith Promode Dasgupta, the Secretary of the West Bengal State Committee went to Naxalbari to talk to Kanu Sanyal and the local leaders. They were told to take up the land struggle and whatever surplus waste land was taken over, they would be legalized by the government. But they were not interested in the land struggle, they wanted to pursue the armed struggle against the State.

After the Burdwan Plenum in 1968 settled the issues, it was in Andhra Pradesh that an important section of the leadership went against the Party. Two of the Central Committee members T Nagi Reddy and Devalapulli Venkateswara Rao led this revolt and they carried a substantial section of the cadres with them, around 40 per cent.

The battle was joined in Andhra Pradesh where the Left sectarian leaders and cadres were expelled. The Polit Bureau issued a "Letter to Andhra Comrades" which nailed down the Left sectarian ideas and exposed their petty bourgeois revolutionism. Sundarayya alongwith M Basavapunnaiah and M Hanumanta Rao had to bear the main brunt in defending the Party's line and fighting against the Left deviation. The champion of the Telangana armed struggle had to expose how the votaries of armed struggle nearly two decades later were negating mass work and the building of mass movements necessary to fight the bourgeois-landlord State.

According to PS, the failure to undertake the agrarian revolution had complicated the agrarian question and as capitalism developed, made it more complex. It also produced a facile solution: taking up arms and waging guerilla struggles against the Indian State.

FORMATION OF LINGUISTIC STATES

The Communist Party formulated the stand on the formation of states based on linguistic nationalities as a major step towards the restructuring of the

state on democratic lines. As part of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, the Party put forth the demand for the recognition of states to be formed on the linguistic basis. P. Sundarayya wrote his pamphlet Praja Rajyam in *Vishalandhra* in 1946. This was the first clear cut exposition of the need for a separate state of Andhra Pradesh for the 30 million Telugu speaking people. This booklet of P. Sundarayya became a popular manifesto for the *Vishalandhra* movement. It was during this period that EMS Namboodiripad spelt out the case for *Aikyakerala* to bring together all the Malayali speaking people into a single state and the slogan of *Samyukta Maharashtra* and *Samyuktha Karnataka* were coined. The platform of the Telangana struggle also included the slogan of *Vishalandhra* to bring together the Telugu speaking areas of the Madras Province, Hyderabad and Bombay Province.

Sundarayya was clear that the formation of linguistic states would strengthen the unity of India and widen democracy for the people. When later the demand for a separate Telangana arose in the late 1960s, he saw it as a diversionary move of the ruling classes and a retrograde step which would break up the unity of the Telugu speaking people.

Sundarayya had a deep interest in the issues concerning the national question and national unity. He was a strong advocate of teaching children in their mother tongue and opposed the three language formula. He stood for equality of all Indian languages and was against the imposition of Hindi as the official language against the wishes of the non-Hindi speaking people. As General Secretary of the CPI(M), the notes he submitted to the National Integration Council meetings in 1968 and 1973 were a sound Marxist analysis of the problems of national unity and the exposure of the undemocratic approach of the Indian State to the national question.

IN PARLIAMENTARY FORUMS

After the withdrawal of the Telangana struggle and after the first General Elections in 1952 Sundarayya was elected to the Rajya Sabha. He became the leader of the CPI group in the upper house while A K Gopalan was the leader of the Party in the Lok Sabha. He resigned from the Rajya Sabha in 1955 to contest the assembly election in Andhra Pradesh. In the three year period, Sundarayya showed how a communist parliamentarian should function. He would prepare meticulously for his parliamentary interventions and raising of questions. His cycling to Parliament House exemplified his simplicity and identification with the people. His was an instructive example of how communist parliamentarians should raise the issues of the people and consistently adopt the class stand point.

Sundarayya served three stints in the Andhra Pradesh assembly the last one after he relinquished his responsibility as General Secretary and returned to Andhra Pradesh in 1977. As a legislator, Sundarayya was known

for his meticulous study of official reports and for raising questions based on that. His expertise on irrigation and the use of water resources was remarkable.

MODEL COMMUNIST

Work in the parliamentary forums never affected his lifestyle whose simplicity was legendary. He was a man with extraordinary physical stamina and till middle age he was constantly on the move traveling long distances by cycle or on foot. He endeared himself to the ordinary people by his simple way of life.

Throughout his life, Sundarayya was a voracious reader who read widely and had the best collection of books amongst the CPI(M) leadership. He always urged the young cadres and students to read and acquire knowledge which could be put to use for the movement.

Sundarayya's unique quality to identify and nurture young cadres was once again on display after the formation of the CPI(M). He looked after the student front for the Party for a decade. In this period, he personally paid attention and reared a whole generation of student cadres who moved on to take up responsibilities in the Party and the class and mass organisations. Many of these "Sundarayya cadres" are in the leadership of the Party at the Central and state levels.

LAST PHASE

Sundarayya had definite views on how the strategic tasks of the Party should be translated into action. He had increasing differences on the political-tactical line and the line to be pursued in the trade union and kisan fronts. By 1974-75, these differences led Sundarayya to conclude that his continuing as the General Secretary was untenable as the overwhelming majority in the Polit Bureau and Central Committee did not share his views. P.S dealt with the issue, in characteristic fashion, within the framework of democratic centralism. Having fought for his line and lost, he bowed to the majority decision. He decided to remain in the Polit Bureau and later in the Central Committee and to concentrate his work in Andhra Pradesh. He threw all his energies, despite failing health to develop the Party and the movement. This period till his death in 1985 helped the Party in Andhra Pradesh to reorient itself to mass work and to revive the organisation at all levels.

P. Sundarayya will be remembered in the history of the communist movement as one of its builders. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) remains as his enduring legacy.

The 20th Congress of the CPI(M) which was held at Kozhikode in April 2012 gave a call for a year-long observance of the birth centenary of

Sundarayya. The Central Committee has decided to utilize the centenary year to streamline and rejuvenate the Party organisation – something which was greatly cherished by P. Sundarayya.