

The Revolutionary Spirit of Nagireddy Should be our Ideal

- Viswam

I met Comrade Tarimela Nagireddy for the first time at Eluru in the 1966 Youth Federation conference. On that occasion, he specially attended the core committee meeting of students and youth. In that meeting he spoke at length about imperialism, on the desperate condition of the rural poor and the oppression on them, on the impact of the crisis, on the problems of the students and how to organize student movement etc.

On another occasion I met him in Palcole plenum. There Comrade Basavapunniah explained the Central Committee documents and Comrades Chandra Pullareddy, Kolla Venkayya presented their own documents. At the end Nagireddy proposed a resolution rejecting the document of the Central Committee. This resolution was adopted with thumping majority. The CPM leadership though lost majority in the State Committee, acquired majority by co-opting some more and removed Nagireddy, D.V. etc. from the party. But by releasing 'A Letter to Members of the Party' Comrades D.V, Nagireddy, Venkayya, and Pullareddy announced their revolt against the party. In a state level cadre meeting they formed a committee in the name of Andhra Pradesh Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries. Nagireddy was the convener of that committee.

Those four comrades by preparing two documents viz. 'Lay the Foundations for the Struggle Oriented Movement', and 'Immediate Programme' took steps to organize revolutionary movement and revolutionary party.

In the 1969 state plenum at Atlapragada (Krishna dt), they discussed along with the above two documents a note on Srikakulam Girijan movement and the report of activities. By the time of this plenum Kolla Venkayya changed his stand and joined in the Srikakulam committee feeling that his primary task was to support the movement in Srikakulam.

The resolution on separate Telangana agitation proposed by Nagireddy in that plenum had a class perspective. The essence of the resolution was that the ruling classes as a result of contradictions among them were pushing such agitations to the fore, and people should not divert from the struggles on fundamental issues. But as people and students were widely participating in it, a word of expressing solidarity to the agitation was added at the end of the resolution. By the addition of this small phrase the significance of the discussion and its orientation was lost.

Any how, the arguments supporting the Srikakulam movement and its deviated activities were used to confuse the orientation of the documents. While some quoted Peking radio mentioning the name of Srikakulam some others challenged that the name of Warangal also would be mentioned soon.

It was decided that the party should go to the underground immediately and all the members of the district committee should lead a life of underground. The plenum documents were adopted, in the midst of all these confusions in the plenum. Some were in favour of doing activities in the line of documents and some others to continue the work according to their own agenda in a mechanical way.

As the 'Immediate Programme' gave a call to prepare the peasants for armed struggle by overestimating the situation and as it was a wrong call, efforts were made to support all other diversionist trends.

I was working at that time for the last four months in the East Godavari district. The report of the movement where I was working was before the plenum. Whether Nagireddy observed it or not he took all precautionary measures to protect the movement. Estimating that the people's movement will reach a higher stage, a comrade from Rayalaseema was deputed to give us training. After the plenum, Comrade D.V. attended the meeting of agency cadre. The movement was taking a concrete shape after the state plenum. It seems that Comrade DV did not believe in the leadership of the district committee at that level and so he took me aside and advised me to beat the landlords black and blue if it was necessary. Why I am remembering all these because the steps and advice given

by both the leaders Nagireddy and DV were concerned with the application of Marxism in practice and enhancing potentialities of people for struggle step by step. But some members in the Andhra Committee itself started irresponsible criticism. Some members created disturbance by discussing on secondary things, leaving aside the fundamental things. Nagireddy understood all these things comprehensively and tried to act accordingly. Ultimately the policy of the formulators of mass line and of armed resistance became one and the same. There are reviews which confirm this.

Keeping in view all the efforts made by others to question his sincerity and personality, Comrade Nagireddy shouldered a number of responsibilities as a responsible leader. He did not sit in his house idle. On one side challenging the attacks and vicious propaganda of the rulers, and on the other side protecting, explaining, owning and practicing the revolutionary mass line, all these were to be done simultaneously by Comrade Nagireddy and other comrades. Especially Comrade Nagireddy faced all the challenges from all sides most courageously. He discussed with the activists of Jayaprakash movement and argued that without including the land issue their movement would not be useful. They did not agree with him. Then he declared that we could not be a part and parcel of their movement but would remain as sympathizers.

Hundreds of Girijans of Srikakulam were in prison. Their families were in concentration camps under the surveillance of the police without any kind of freedom. Nagireddy went to the agency and faced that situation militantly. The tour of Comrade Nagireddy and his powerful speeches provided relatively a breathing space to the Girijans. At that time he shouldered several responsibilities like finding lawyers for defence, campaigning for the finances for the defence, building agitations for civil and democratic rights, touring for the unity of revolutionaries, giving guidance to district level committees, struggling for the rectification of alien trends in cultural and teacher fronts, publication of Janasakthi magazine, reorganization of the movement in Girijan areas etc. He played a role in making decision in the party and was very eager and anxious about the implementation. I was a direct witness to observe him in this regard from 1972 to 1976 until he became a martyr. He rejected strongly the proposals of attacks for getting finance to the party and on the other hand he himself started the method of depending on the people and taught it to others. Immediately after the decision on reorganization of the movement he sent the best comrade working under his responsibility to East Godavari in 1975. By sending that comrade Ramireddy, in those days from Anantapur, he was devoid of so many conveniences. He gave more importance to the movement in the agency rather than organisation of the party in Rayalaseema. This is a significant thing to be noted in the activities of Nagireddy who gave first priority to the building of the movement. In my experience I found that some leaders in the name of the movement took the cadre for their convenience only. I am not afraid of commenting on those leaders who lacked sincerity and commitment, exploited the toil of Comrade Nagireddy and deprived him of his conveniences. But Nagireddy was not innocent; he was smart enough to keep in mind all these things. He undertook both the key tasks and ordinary tasks. Comrade Stalin once mentioned that some organizers select important tasks and they refuse to take up small tasks. In addition to practicing the advice of Comrade Stalin, he struggled a lot to declassify from the background of his birth, its comfortable life and its habits.

IN THE MUSHEERABAD JAIL OF SECUNDERABAD

The 'Immediate Programme' document of Atlaprgada conference, April 1969 was taken as a basis for the conspiracy case by the government. After that Nagireddy owned it as his political and moral responsibility. All the activities taken up according to that document also were owned by him. At the same time he did not criticize or expose before the enemy the left adventurist, opportunist politics and practice with which he differed. He treated all these issues as internal issues of the revolutionaries. Some denigrated this dignified attitude of Nagireddy.

Nagireddy gave no importance to this type of propaganda. On the other hand he used to argue in a dignified manner that they got this chance of criticizing him as proper action was not taken at proper time and they will understand the facts in due course. He took this attitude as he aspired for the unity of all revolutionaries.

In the prison Comrade Nagireddy was in the position of a Mayor. He should look after the problems of all Comrades. He should maintain discipline. He should keenly observe whether anybody is yielding to the enemy. He should observe whether all of them are seriously studying without wasting time. He should also see whether they were involved in quarrels. He should only deal with the jail authorities.

Soon after I came to that jail, I found that the undisciplined and those who helped the enemy were sent to another block. As there were petty quarrels in the big block, Comrade Nagireddy gave his single room to Comrade DV and shifted his camp in to the middle of those who were frequently involved in petty quarrels.

Nagireddy used to watering the flower plants and green vegetables every day. He used to study from 6 pm to 9.30 or 10 in the night and used to join with the gambling group and play cards for half an hour. After that again he used to be absorbed in his studies until 2 or 3 in the early morning. He used to rise at 7 in the morning, take coffee and looked after the plants, washed his clothes and took his bath. Though the jail authorities provided a washer man he did not use that facility. He used to press his clothes by pressing with hands and placing them under the pillow and feel happy they were pressed well. He used to spend some time with children of Christopher, the sub jailor. The wife of Christopher used to complain against his husband and got him reprimanded by Nagireddy. Mande Pitchaih was beside his cot, Somachari was just opposite to him and I used to stay beside Somachari. Nagireddy used to give information that he gathered and encouraged Pitchaiah to write. Mande Pitchaih wrote a book called 'Industries in India' in Telugu.

Nagireddy used to give simple English novels and encouraged Somachari to read them which he read with difficulty and with interest. TN and DV both used to discuss with low tone every day in the morning for half an hour at the time of the preparation of the court statement. They used to exchange the paper cuttings and reference books and engaged in their writing activity.

Both of them were affectionate towards me. Almost all the comrades in the jail were like that towards me. Though the comrades in the jail were divided in to two groups because of political differences between the jail committee and the committee outside the jail, they lived in the same commune. The responsibility of the commune, helping some families, defence in the court etc. fell completely on Nagireddy.

I fell seriously ill while I was in Rajahmundry and Visakhapatnam jails. Then I was given special treatment to recoup from it. Devulapalli Venkateswara rao, gave me a box of groundnut lumps with jiggery and advised me to eat one every day and not to offer them to others. To improve my strength Jonna Kotaih, and Nekkhalapudi Ramarao arranged omlet with two eggs for me by talking with the in-charge of the kitchen store. Among those who went on fast in solidarity with the comrades fasting in Visakhapatnam jail condemning repression the pulse of Comrade Nagireddy and myself became weak and the doctors said it was a dangerous sign. In the meanwhile with the intervention of Vavilala and others from outside an accord was made in regard to the issues related to Visakhapatnam jail. So we too stopped our fasting. In order to recoup, additional milk and eggs were granted. A small stove was permitted to Nagireddy. At the time of preparation of the statement he used to prepare and drink coffee for every half an hour and its result is 'India Mortgaged.' He used to prepare pudding for both of us in the night. Whatever may be the differences, on the whole a comradely atmosphere prevailed in the jail. During the jail life I observed in Nagireddy the quality of restraint and the broad mindedness of making friendship even with others who hate him and broadmindedness of looking after their inconveniences and showing kindness to them. I got an opportunity to write about me also on this occasion of recording my memories of Nagireddy. I think this is excusable.

COURT AND TRIAL OF THE CASE

Leaving those who were released in the magistrate court, a session's judge court was formed and the trial was started. Nagireddy and DV argued by themselves. On behalf of others advocates SVL Narasimham, Raavi Subbarao, Prathipati Venkateswarlu argued. At the time of the reading of the statement in the court Chaganti Sankarrao was removed from our defence. Madala Narayana

Swamy, Somachari and some others opposed the defence of SVL and rejected his defence. They announced Prathipati Venkateswarlu as their defence lawyer. This had created problems among the revolutionaries. Among those who were sent to another block in the jail, there were some who turned into approvers by giving an undertaking to the government, along with those who had developed blind opposition and hatred towards our political policy. Kollipara Panduranga Rao was my friend. He left the job of a lecturer and came to work in the party. He took the responsibility of Mantani area. At the time of working there, he became psychologically extremely emotional. He developed hatred and rivalry towards Chandra Pulla Reddy. He was arrested. The police and our political rivals utilized well his mental state in their favour. They diverted the grudge on Pulla Reddy towards Nagireddy. Then we came to know that those who sent all these developments in an exaggerated form to 'Telugu Velugu' magazine were among us. Though the leadership identified them their names were not revealed to us.

In June or July of 1970 during the trial of Hyderabad conspiracy case in the Magistrate Court, Comrade Nagireddy declared without any ambiguity that 'it is impossible to implement land reforms in a democratic manner without armed struggles,' and 'it is clear deception to say that feudalism will disappear without giving a direct call to revolutionary practice.' His speech which ran for two hours uninterrupted was concluded with the statement that it is inevitable to overthrow the ruling classes through class struggle and armed revolt of people.

Comrades Nagi Reddy and Devulapalli decided to stand by the decisions of the party however rigorous the punishment might be. They took Dimitrov in the Reichstag cases internationally and nationally the communists and revolutionaries of Meerut and Kanpur conspiracy cases as their ideal.

The cases on us are of very serious nature. The prosecution was trying to prove that we had conspired to overthrow the state and committed several crimes to achieve it. We had to prove that we did not conspire at all. Our argument was that communists never hide their ideals and goals, they put forward all of them before the people and they themselves will achieve the state power. But the government's argument was that it was a crime to spread awareness among the people to achieve that goal and to achieve rights by themselves. On the other hand our argument was that it was against the rules of nature to prescribe the path to get state power. The government argued that getting elected democratically means winning in the elections. Our argument was that people would get state power in whatever possible way. Our 'Immediate Programme' was to spread awareness among the people for that. So Nagireddy decided to argue that it was not a conspiracy. It was not at all a crime to educate the people to change this system as the policies of the government are at the worst stage. Our duty and great task was to tell the people to achieve what they want in spite of requesting the government repeatedly. While our advocates cross examined witnesses against us from legal angle, Nagireddy crossed them from social and political angle. When Comrade DV was clarifying the land issue while studying the statement, the judge enthusiastically questioned him 'can you distribute if power is given.' DV at once replied 'Centralization of the land will be broken if some weapons of the government are given to the people.' The way in which Comrades TN and DV argued their case was exemplary to all communists who would like to do it.

The prosecution brought about 50 witnesses in support of the 70 accused cases in East Godavari district foisted on hundreds of people and thus tried that we conspired against the state. All these cases were personally against me and Santhiraju. But the prosecution planned to argue that our political line is behind all these cases. By taking me into the room of DV this point was explained to both of us by Nagireddy. Comrades told carefully 'we have to own all these things as this is the practical side of our political line. If we own it we may be sentenced severely but it is necessary to own it.' Accordingly while giving statement in the court I owned it and explained that we have not committed any crime and how the landlords had grabbed the lands of the people and their atrocities. I also explained that it was people who had taken the programme of getting back their lands from the landlords. Thus our leaders exhibited political and organizational talents in strengthening the organizers and facing the plots of the enemy politically. We are following their tradition. We have not yet withdrawn from it. I am declaring this taking support from the quotation of Comrade Lenin

in 'The Blue Note book' 'A communist in his last moments should review his life and be satisfied for living as a communist. One can participate in many struggles and make much sacrifice in the course of his or her life, but towards the end of life one may degenerate. A communist should be satisfied by examining himself or herself whether he or she lived as a communist till the last moment of life.' This is the essence of Lenin's quotation. (At present I could not produce the actual quotation of Lenin).

Right from his release from the jail up to the declaration of emergency Comrade TN worked day in and day out for the democratic rights, legal defence for revolutionaries and for the reorganization of the movement that was fizzled out by the oppression of the enemy. He spent all his time in training the revolutionary activists and in building the organizations of peasants, workers, youth, literary and cultural fronts. In the activists meetings he prophesied the danger of declaration of emergency several months before it was declared. He educated the cadre how to mobilize the people even in the emergency and advised them to remove the illusions of the people by demanding the implementation of the pseudo reforms of the ruling classes. He advised them to expose the ruling classes by publishing pamphlets on each and every issue that is related to the people. He advised them to be skilful in distributing the pamphlets even in severe repression, without the knowledge of the enemy. His ceaseless efforts and work affected his health.

Nagireddy left everything for the sake of the movement. The support given to him by her wife was exemplary. She followed him. She protected his valuable literature. I was surprised to see all the paper cuttings of 1960 decade pasted in the illustrated weeklies were kept in her safe custody and she handed over them to him at the time of preparation of the court statement. Those paper cuttings were related to the news about oppression on the people of Srikakulam, Nalgonda, Warangal, Khammam, and Rayalaseema districts, comments by journalists, comments of the government, and on so many issues. The compilation of all these paper cuttings as files was the reason for my surprise. TN gave some necessary material from them to Comrade Ramalingachari to remember the past.

After knowing that TN resorted to smoke beedies instead of cigarettes, his wife, relatives and friends used to send him odourless cigarettes but he continued to smoke beedies. Only when Laksmikanthamma came for an interview then only he used to keep that cigarette pack in his hand with a broad laugh in order to deceive her.

After his martyrdom also his wife Laksmikanthamma did not leave the pious duty of protecting TN's literature. She felt that those treasure of books were to be used by future generations and handed over them by taking all precautions. She created a trust by depositing thousands of rupees. Though TNM Trust was started with great ideals and goals it faced many ups and downs. In spite of that the Trust is now functioning well. She would have felt extremely happy to see this if she were alive today. As I felt it is necessary to explain her role I wrote all these details.

DURING EMERGENCY

Comrade TN used to attend AP committee meetings as it's in charge. He prepared extensive notes proving how 20 point programme was bogus and asked a young comrade to frame it as an essay. That comrade prepared it as a wonderful essay. Along with the booklet on the attitude of revolutionaries towards reforms, he got printed the essay of Lenin on the era of reforms. During one year in emergency when he was alive I was able to understand closely, his abilities of deep political analysis, a clear understanding of the theory, organizational orientation according to the situation and his quality of restraint. Previously I understood him as a person with broad mind and gentle behavior; I also saw his depth and harshness during this one year. I came to understand that he was not only harsh towards the enemy but he was harsh to himself also. Those who see his plainness and agitational attitude have to correct their view about him. Comrade TN was rigorous towards himself, towards his family towards sincere comrades. Nagireddy was a hard man. Why this hardness? It is for revolution. Do not hate him.....do not love him.....implement him.This is my request.
