

The Threatening Disruption And Split of the Party— How to Avert the Disaster?*

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1. We, the Communists of India, have no other pressing and urgent problem on hand to immediately attend to and solve than that of inner-Party unity. Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad is completely correct when he, in his document on 'Revisionism and Dogmatism in the C.P.I.' states that 'the unity of the Party has been completely broken', 'that we are in the midst of the most serious inner-Party crisis in history' 'and that the Party is on the verge of complete disruption and split.' He made these incisive observations some nine months ago, with an earnest appeal to the central leadership of the Party to take necessary steps to restore inner-Party unity.

Nothing effective has been done during these nine months to arrest the deterioration in the inner-Party situation and improve it. On the contrary, the attitude adopted by the central leaders on a number of political-organisational issues facing the Party and the steps they have taken have only helped to further aggravate the inner-Party crisis. As a matter of fact, looked at from the angle of political, ideological and emotional unity, our Party is already split. The apparent and formal organisational unity that still exists is also hanging on by a thin thread.

*This document, circulated in December 1963 by the Central Secretariat of the C.P.I., was also signed by : K. Ramani, P. Ramamurti, M R. Venkatraman, N. Sankariah, A.K. Gopalan, E.K. Imbichibava, C.H. Kanaran, V.S. Achutanandan, E.K. Naynar, P. Sundarayya, M. Hunarhantha Rao, N. Prasad Rao, P. Negi Reddy, Vajubhai Shukla, M. Poonamiya and R P. Saraf.

The great majority of our Party members and well-wishers are extremely worried and agitated over this alarming state of inner-Party affairs. They feel depressed and demoralised in face of the threatening prospect of disruption of our Party, the Party built with the sweat, toil, tears and blood of our Party members and common people during the last three decades. They rightly look to and demand of the central leadership of our Party that they awaken to this danger and take immediate steps to arrest the present drift towards a devastating rift. Future history would not forgive us, if we do not earnestly address ourselves to this task and do everything in our power to maintain inner-Party unity and evolve proper ways and means to restore the differences that exist in our Party today.

2. While addressing ourselves to this highly complicated and difficult problem of inner-Party unity, none of us can afford to lose sight of the fact that this phenomenon of inner-Party differences and disunity is not of recent origin, but goes back to the period of the Second Party Congress in 1947-48, when we attempted to assess the class meaning and content of the Mountbatten Award. Since then many other problems of a very complex nature which cropped up during the course of building the revolutionary movement in India have added to it. Despite the repeated attempts to solve these differences, at different CC, CEC and National Council meetings and Party Congresses, we could not solve any single basic question satisfactorily. Consequently, instead of resolving the inner-Party differences, as and when they arise, they went on constantly piling up. They got accentuated to such an extent that sharp division and disruption became a chronic malady in our Party. To add to our misfortune the acute controversy and conflict that has, of late, engulfed the international communist movement, on a number of political-ideological questions is superimposed on our Party which is already strife-ridden.

In view of this background, it would be totally wrong to think that the achieving of inner-Party unity is an easy task.

The whole issue has to be comprehensively and concretely analysed and precisely formulated, so that we can tackle the problem in a patient and systematic manner. We should, first of all, strive to take some immediate steps to put a stop to the further deterioration of the situation and proceed, step by step, to achieve complete political-ideological unity of the Party. If there still remain certain issues on which we may not succeed in arriving at satisfactory solutions, we shall have to aim at a type of working agreement while deferring the final clinching of those issues for the future. All this may look like 'conciliating and compromising'. We should like to emphasise in this connection that howsoever tortuous and prolonged this struggle for unity might be, there is no alternative to it except that of a disastrous split, which we should avoid at all costs. There can be no price we should hesitate to pay for the unity of our Party, which unity, of course, is not of an 'unprincipled and opportunistic' type but one based on Marxism-Leninism and unflinching loyalty to the cause of the working class.

3. The inner-Party struggle for unity is further complicated also by the direct and open intervention of the government and the monopoly, anti-Communist press of India. There has been a persistent and systematic slander campaign against the leadership of the C.P.I. at different levels, labelling one section as anti-national, unpatriotic, pro-China, etc., while characterising the other as national, patriotic, anti-China, etc. The national emergency that was imposed in the wake of the large-scale Sino-Indian border armed clashes during the September-October months of 1962 was fully exploited by the government to strike at our Party, of course, directing its main blows on one section of the leadership, maligning it as pro-China, etc. One thousand Communists were detained under the draconian DIR in different parts of the country. Even today, after one full year, there remain as many as 400 of them in jails. Big sections of the leaderships in States like West Bengal, Punjab, Tripura and Bombay and some prominent leaders in U.P. and Assam are still

under detention. As nearly as 20 members of the National Council, including six leading members of the CEC, continue to languish in different jails. This in itself imposes enormous difficulties and serious limitations in the way of a free, fair and democratic inner Party discussion to resolve our differences. Add to all this, several dailies such as Goenka's *Indian Express* and *Andhra Prabha* together with other dailies like *Patriot* and *Jugantar* have started a fresh round of vicious campaign through their editorial and feature columns, openly urging the government not to release the Communists in West Bengal, Punjab, Bombay, etc., and also demanding that the government throw back into prison some more leaders who have been released in recent months on the alleged ground that the security of the nation is in danger. Weeklies like *Blitz* and *Mainstream* have joined hand with notorious rags like *Indian Observer* in the same vicious campaign of slander as described above. (The material is separately collected to be given as an information document). These calumnious writers through their press are also emboldened to openly taunt central leaders like Comrade S. A. Dange to discipline and expel some communist leaders, as, according to them, they are pro-Peking, 'splitters', 'dissidents', etc., and thus prove their 'nationalistic' and 'patriotic' bonafides.

The avowed enemies of our Party and the communist movement in India are resorting to every conceivable strategy to divide, disrupt and destroy our Party. One should bear in mind all these dangerous conspiracies and conduct the inner-Party struggle for unity in a principled and constructive manner, giving no quarter whatsoever to the machinations of our opponents. To put it bluntly we are of the firm opinion that the success or otherwise of the inner-Party struggle for unity is closely linked with and very much dependent upon the success or otherwise of our united struggle against the foul attempts of disruption by our class enemies.

‡. All of us are aware that the inner-Party differences that sharply divide us today cover a fairly wide range of subjects

of ideological, political, theoretical and organisational character. They pertain not only to the national sphere but are closely mixed up with the international arena. It is not our purpose to try to deal with all of them in this document. Probably it would take a fairly long time to satisfactorily tackle all those stupendous problems that face our Party and revolutionary movement. We propose to confine ourselves here to solving the problem of urgent and pressing issues which, in our opinion, constitute the first minimum necessary steps in the arduous struggle for achieving inner-Party unity.

5. On ideological differences: It is clear to all students of Marxism-Leninism that the sharp differences in the world communist movement are not of recent origin but date back to the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Its deliberations and decisions have introduced certain basic and far-reaching departures in some of the fundamental propositions concerning war and peace, forms of transition to socialism, assessment of the role of Stalin and the cult of personality, etc. This resulted in great confusion in the ranks of Communists all over the world. Since then there have been repeated discussions at different levels within each Communist Party as also between different brother Communist Parties. The international gathering of Communists in 1957 and again in 1960 in Moscow attempted to thrash out these differences and the two documents of historic importance, namely the 1957 Declaration and the 1960 Moscow Statement embody the decisions arrived at these meetings. Then again sharp differences have arisen in the interpretation and implementation of these decisions. The international communist movement today is in the midst of a furious ideological-political debate which is increasingly assuming serious proportions threatening the very foundations of world communist unity. It is obviously wrong to think that the whole affair is only a dispute between the two biggest Communist Parties representing the two mighty socialist states of the USSR and the People's Republic of China. The fact that these two communist giants occupy the central place in

the whole debate representing two sharply opposed viewpoints cannot hide the truth that the issues under discussion are of such a vital character as concern every Communist and the entire international communist movement. Naturally, the Communist Party of India can neither afford to be indifferent nor neutral in the debate as the issues under discussion have a direct bearing on the revolutionary movement in India, besides their international significance. It is, of course, equally wrong for us either to remain as passive spectators of this historic debate or to uncritically line up behind one or the other of the two sharply polemised positions of the CPSU and the CPC. In order to arrive at definite conclusions on all these matters, a thorough and well-organised inner-Party discussion is an immediate necessity. Those decisions independently arrived at after a democratic discussion throughout the Party will not only go a long way to unifying our Party but they also will enable us to play our humble role in assisting the unity of the world communist movement.

6. It may be asked, have there not been discussions and decisions on all these matters in our Party and are they not independent decisions of our Party? Certainly, there had been discussions and decisions on the 20th Congress of the CPSU, on the 1957 Moscow Declaration, on the 1960 Moscow Statement and the 22nd Congress of the CPSU. But all these discussions, in the first place, had often been of a cursory nature and confined to top committees such as the CEC, NC and in some cases, State Committees. Secondly, many decisions over these questions were taken amidst sharp divisions in the Party Committees concerned. There has not so far been a well-organised inner-Party discussion drawing all the rank and file Party members into it. The decisions taken in the top committees amidst the sharpest divisions and violent disagreements have not helped to unify the Party but only aggravated the differences and disunity. Now a stage has been reached when the acute differences on ideological-political questions are no more confined to some top committees and senior cadres but embrace the entire Party

from top to bottom. It cannot be dismissed as an exaggeration if we were to state that the inner-Party division is so deep that the Party is, more or less, evenly divided, though the depth and breadth of the division may vary from State to State and at different levels of the Party. Hence the urgency and necessity of conducting organised inner-Party discussions without hurriedly forcing on the Party decisions which smack of toeing either the line advocated by the CPSU or the CPC. We should realise that the faith in a great many of our comrades that certain parties or individual leaders are infallible Marxists-Leninists is, now, completely shattered. Some of our Party members are strongly of the opinion that the ideological-political line advocated by the CPSU is departing from scientific Marxism-Leninism and deviating in the direction of revisionism while others are equally emphatic in asserting that the CPC's line is nothing but dogmatic and sectarian. There are still others who consider that the open debate and polemics are causing immense damage to the world communist movement, that both the sides are distorting the real positions held by the other and the level of the debate is daily deteriorating in its stature and dignity as to cause dismay and depression in our political following. People ask: what remains of the thesis of the 'new epoch' if the world communist movement is divided and disrupted and above all, if the Soviet Union and People's China fall apart as is happening today? Terrific confusion and consternation is caused when the entire monopoly bourgeois press in India jubilantly gives in its columns wide publicity to the Sino-Soviet differences while at the same time, pretending sympathy for the Soviet side and unconcealed hostility to the Chinese point of view. This display of 'affection' to Soviet communism and hatred for the Chinese version of it are terribly intriguing. In view of all this, it is futile and harmful, too, to impose hasty decisions by the top committees on the Party, as they would be neither implemented properly nor contribute to building the unity of the Party. Our Party, as an independent, sovereign unit of the

international communist movement, shall arrive at its own independent decisions after a full and democratic discussion in the entire Party. No question of either 'pro-Peking' or 'pro-Moscow' shall arise whatever our enemies shout to slander the cause of communism. We should not resort to open criticism and attacks either on the positions of the CPSU or the CPC until our Party concludes its inner-Party discussions to arrive at its own conclusions.

7. The second biggest question that is badly dividing our Party is that of the Sino-Indian border conflict and the correct Marxist-Leninist approach to the whole question. It is now more than four years since this issue began being discussed repeatedly at CEC or National Council meetings and certain resolutions were adopted. These discussions revealed serious differences on the political evaluation of the whole border dispute and its character, on its genesis and growth, on levelling certain criticism for this or that incident against one of the two governments, on endorsing or opposing specific moves for negotiated settlement, etc. But all of us have been unanimous all through on one point, i.e., this border dispute, its continuation and aggravation are all extremely harmful for both India and China, it endangers Afro-Asian solidarity and world peace, comes handy for right reactionary and imperialist forces, and results in weakening the popular and democratic forces in the country. Similarly, we are also united in categorically asserting that the only correct solution of the dispute lies in a peaceful and negotiated settlement and that the talks of resorting to military means to decide the issue is futile as well as dangerous to both.

8. It is unfortunate that our Party could not and did not mobilise public opinion around the latter correct aspect on which we are united. We got stuck in discussing the differences from time to time and allowed the situation to be exploited by all sorts of chauvinistic and right reactionary forces in the country to fan the flames of hatred against China and do everything possible to prevent the formation of the climate for a peaceful and negotiated settlement of

the dispute. The overall developments during the entire four-year period of border tension and more particularly the experience during the last one year after the large-scale military clashes in October-November confirm the truth that it is the extreme right that has gained in the country and the democratic forces have suffered heavily. It is coming to be increasingly realised by the people that the perpetuation of the Sino-Indian border dispute and the heavy military burdens that it entails is harming national advance, weakening democratic movement, strengthening the hands of Indian monopolists and their foreign collaborators, causing terrible suffering and immense misery to the common people. Not merely that, greater and greater dependence on the imperialists for military and economic assistance is threatening our independence. The independent foreign policy of peace and non-alignment is greatly affected. The continuation of the national emergency and the increasing growth of right reaction are threatening the foundations of democratic life and institutions in the country.

9. It is imperative that our Party awakens to this growing danger and strives to build popular movement to arrest the shift to the right and to register the growth and advance of the democratic forces. The most important issue that can bring about a radical change in the situation is the peaceful and negotiated settlement of the Sino-Indian border dispute. Whether we succeed or not in bringing about a negotiated settlement as speedily as we wish it, one thing is certain, that is, the further advance of the democratic and revolutionary movement is very much dependent upon the systematic and persistent struggle we carry on to bring about such a settlement.

Right reaction in the country is advocating a military solution to the dispute and if necessary to join the alliances of Western imperialism to achieve it while scorning any talk of peaceful negotiations. The Government and its main spokesman, Nehru, have been stating that they basically stand for a peaceful and negotiated settlement while not ruling out

military methods if necessary. In actual practice, the Government is left without any independent initiative in the matter, is often bullied by the Right reaction and is drifting on the path of daily-growing defence expenditure.

Our Party cannot play any effective role by merely giving support to the declared intentions of the Nehru Government for peaceful settlement, etc., without mobilising popular opinion independently with its main stress on peaceful settlement and for a fresh initiative by our Government to that effect, while, of course, taking all necessary steps to strengthen the defence of the country. To do this, our Party should re-orientate its whole agit-prop line and evolve correct slogans of action from time to time, instead of being swayed by anti-Chinese propaganda of the Rightist forces in the country, as is now often done. The unbridled criticism of the Chinese Government and the open and vituperative attacks on them, irrespective of the correctness or otherwise of their contents, are not conducive to creating a climate of peaceful negotiations in the country. The increasing stress on peaceful negotiations and for a fresh initiative to break the deadlock by our Party, will not only bring about greater unity among us, but also unite the broadest democratic opinion behind the slogan of negotiated and speedy settlement of the border dispute. We should defer the discussion on those aspects that divide us and concentrate on the pressing and urgent issue of negotiations. The details cannot be worked out here and the CEC and NC will have to undertake that task if the party leadership takes on hand, and in right earnest, the unification of our Party.

10. The current political line of the Party and how to implement it while the inner-Party struggle for correct political-organisational line and unification continues is the third important issue we should address ourselves to. We are fully aware of the fact that the political report adopted by the Vijayawada Congress was a line advocated neither by the so-called Right nor the so-called Left. After a prolonged and bitter controversy in the Party at different levels, the

late Comrade Ajoy Ghosh put forward a document which embodied in it broadly agreed points by different schools of thought, while leaving issues like 'non-capitalist path' and 'national democracy' for future discussion and decision. To implement the broadly agreed and unified decisions of the Vijaywada Congress, we did also elect a united and composite leadership. As things stand now, this entire position is changed. First of all, big developments have taken place inside the country and the world, which demand of us a serious reassessment of the situation to work out a tactical line. Secondly, the unified and composite leadership that was expected to truthfully interpret and implement the Vijayawada political line got shattered completely.

The so-called Left comrades are no more represented in the Central Secretariat. So-called neutral and centrist comrades like E.M.S. Namboodiripad who is supposed to command the confidence of all as the General Secretary has left the seat. Only the Chairman, Comrade Dange, who got elected to the post (which post itself was created by the unanimous vote of the National Council as a part of the attempt to set up a composite leadership at the centre together with some other like-minded comrades) remain in the Secretariat. Naturally, under these circumstances, it is difficult to do justice either to the political line of the Vijayawada Congress or to command the confidence of all comrades holding different viewpoints. Any attempt to enforce the Vijayawada line as interpreted by one section of comrades who now occupy the leading positions, through organisational methods such as disciplining individual leaders for their political views, the dissolution of elected committees and appointing of organising committees, will not pave the way for either effectively implementing the line or keeping the Party united, leave alone helping the process of further unification.

11. The sharp division inside the Party on political-ideological questions, the attempt to resolve them through organisational methods would only result in aggravating the

differences and weaken the discipline. This is precisely the reason why our Party Constitution which is based on 'Democratic Centralism' not only enjoins on all its members that 'minority shall carry out the decisions of the majority' but also directs that 'when serious differences arise in a Party Committee, every effort should be made to arrive an agreement. Failing this, decisions should be postponed with a view to resolving differences through further discussions unless an immediate decision is called for by the needs of the Party and the mass movement.' In view of such specific directions and the critical inner-Party situation prevailing now, we should concentrate on the pressing and urgent problems of the mass movement and desist from attempting to rush through political-ideological decisions arrived at under conditions of sharp differences and divisions. It is precisely on pressing mass issues that we can attain maximum unity amongst us and such united work in turn will pave the way for greater unity and understanding. While abiding by and implementing the political line as adopted at Vijayawada, we shall have to organise the inner-Party discussion on the following subjects without delay:

a) Reassessment of the Vijayawada line in the light of developments since then and particularly during the last one year;

b) 'National Democracy' and 'Non-Capitalist Path' as applied to Indian realities;

c) The Party Programme.

12. It has been already explained how inner-Party discussion is required on the ideological questions in the international communist movement, as well as problems connected with the revolutionary movement in our country. To conduct organised and principled inner-Party discussion, the National Council should set up a small body of seven comrades who represent and command the confidence of all comrades in conducting free and fair discussion. Similar bodies may be set up at different State centres wherever it is found necessary. Pending final decisions at the appropriate

Party conferences and Congress, the dates of which will have to be decided keeping in view the nature and intensity of Government's repression on our Party, the Party press should not act as a vehicle to propagate views held by one or the other sections of comrades on the accepted policy of the Party. The Party press also should decisively come out in defence of all Communists, while sharply refuting the slanderous attacks of the bourgeois press which constantly vilifies some as 'pro-Peking' and 'anti-national', urges on the Government to arrest them, appeals to the Central Party leadership to expel them, etc. The Party has to fight back this blatant and open intervention of the bourgeoisie in the inner-Party struggle and demonstrate its unity and solidarity despite ideological-political differences, which can and will be solved.

13. To restore mutual confidence and promote the cause of inner-Party unity, certain organisational measures taken during the last one year by the National Council in the midst of an acute inner-Party crisis have to be reviewed and revised. The same has to be undertaken by all the State, district and other local committees and they will have to amend disciplinary actions, if any, which have arisen because of political-ideological differences.

a) The Provincial Organising Committee appointed should be dissolved and the State Council in West Bengal should be restored.

b) In Punjab an extraordinary Provincial conference was hurriedly convened in the wake of large-scale arrests of most of the leading comrades following the declaration of emergency in 1962 and it elected a new State Council. Irrespective of the merit of the issue, the newly-elected Council should immediately give place to the one duly elected by the regular Punjab Party Conference when the majority of the detained leaders are released from prison.

c) All moves for constituting enquiries into the conduct of leaders like Comrades Gopalan and Sundarayya should be withdrawn and the Central Control Commission should

be directed to stop further activities relating to the issues mentioned above.

14. *Party conferences and the Party Congress:* After full inner-Party discussion the National Council should plan out a programme of conferences in districts and States where leaders are released and some normal conditions have come to prevail. As for the all-India Party Congress, we should await the release of many prominent leaders from Bengal., Punjab, Assam, Maharashtra, Tripura, Manipur and U.P. All the outstanding issues under discussion have to be thrashed out at this Congress and decisions taken. As for actual holding of the Congress, even in normal times a very unsatisfactory state of affairs exists in our Party as regards membership enrolment and its renewal. It has been very irregular and not checked up properly. But when the party leadership at different levels was united, all such omissions and commissions could be dispassionately judged and decided without much difficulty. But due to large-scale arrests of leading comrades in several States and at the Centre, neither the renewal of the old members nor the recruitment of the new could be satisfactorily done. In order to conduct the Congress in a fair and democratic manner so that it might help our Party's genuine unification and advance, the National Council should remove all apprehensions of inflated membership or unjust denial of opportunity for renewal. With this in view we propose:

a) That the membership rolls on the basis of which we had held the Vijayawada Congress should form the basis for the next Party Congress, too, as that was accepted by all unquestionably.

b) That full opportunity should be given to all Party members to renew their cards within a specified time. Where repression is not relaxed, time may be extended to do it.

c) Wherever new membership recruitment has taken place, that has to be scrutinised by agreed sub-committees to be set up at the State and national level to scrutinise it and recommend to the appropriate bodies whether it is genuine

or not and whether they should be accepted as full members for the purpose of participation as delegates in the conferences and the Congress. In no case should this issue be allowed to lead to violent differences and disagreement.

Comrades, we have placed our views so as to form the basis for discussion in the National Council regarding the question of inner-Party unity, how to restore it and the immediate initial steps in that direction. We do not claim that it is either adequate or exhaustive. Many other suggestions can be made and the draft improved upon. We hope that the Council will give serious consideration to this earnest appeal of ours and save the party from threatened disunity and disruption.