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THE EXTENDED PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Extended Plenum of the Central Committee was held in Calcutta from December 30, 1952 to January 10, 1953. It was attended by members of the Central Committee, members of the Central Control Commission and 61 delegates from the provinces.

This was the first all-India gathering of the Central leadership together with representatives of the Provincial Committees since the All-India Party Conference held in October, 1951. That Conference was the first positive step towards taking the Party out of the serious inner-Party crisis in which it found itself since 1950. Though a big step towards unification, that Conference had left unresolved several points of controversy which, it was felt at that time, could be solved only on the basis of acquiring a certain amount of experience in practical day-to-day activity.

The Plenum was meeting fourteen months after the All-India Party Conference. In this period the Communist Party had won a leading position in the political life of the country and had come to be considered by the masses as the spearhead of the democratic opposition to the Congress. The influence of the Party had grown steadily among all sections of people and in all areas. The Party was now confronted with tasks and responsibilities bigger than what it had ever faced in its entire history.

These tasks had to be carried out and these responsibilities had to be discharged at a time when mass opposition to the Government and to the reactionary vested interests had reached greater heights than at any period since 1947, at a time when the economic crisis had deepened and famine and mass unemployment were spreading all over the country, at

a time when, against the machinations of the imperialist warmongers who were striving to spread the flames of war, the peoples of the world were holding the mightiest rally for Peace at the historic Conference in Vienna.

Some of the developments that had taken place in the national arena since the All-India Party Conference were as follows :

1. The entire Party went into the election campaign immediately after the Conference. Not only Party Members but tens of thousands of supporters and sympathisers plunged into the election campaign, popularising the achievements of the Party and its present slogans, rallying millions of people.

The successes of the Party in the elections showed how profoundly mistaken they had been who had seen only frustration and demoralisation among the people and who had thought that the Party had been isolated from the masses.

2 The manner in which the Congress manoeuvred itself into office in the states of Travancore Cochin and Madras as well as the skilful tactics by which it sought to confuse the masses and divide their ranks showed that there was no ground whatsoever for the facile assumption that the Congress was finished. It had still immense influence, immense manoeuvring capacity. Advance could be made only by resolute exposure of the Congress, resolute struggle against its policies and methods, resolute building of popular unity in action.

3 In order to maintain itself in power the Congress was counting not only on its own influence and its own manoeuvres, but also on the disruptive tactics of the Praja Socialist Party. Further, the Congress was being objectively helped by the tactics of a number of other parties, who, after the elections, adopted a pronouncedly anti-Communist stand, thereby harming the democratic movement. Some of these parties even went to the length of lining up with notorious communalists for voicing the demagogic demand of "sanctions against Pakistan", in an effort to gather support for themselves.

4 Despite all this, however, the very deepening of the economic crisis and the policies of the Government that accentuated the crisis and threw increasing burdens on the

people in order to help the landlords and monopolists, were rallying increasing sections of people against the Government and the reactionary vested interests. Never since August, 1947 had there taken place so many mass actions, never was the urge for fight and for unity expressed in so many struggles, never was mass unity forged so spontaneously, wherever effective lead was forthcoming.

5 A characteristic feature of the struggles had been that new strata of people and new areas had gone into action. Even when the Plenum was meeting, three significant struggles were going on—the all-in struggle of the people of Saurashtra against the Sales Tax measures, the strike of teachers in the Punjab, the strike of policemen at Madras. No reason existed to think, as some people thought, that after the elections the mass movement had received a setback, that reaction had seized the initiative.

6. The agrarian crisis had deepened as never before. The purchasing power of peasants had fallen catastrophically. Famine conditions were spreading from one province to another. And on the industrial sector, not only the small industries had been ruined but even big industries were now affected. Mass unemployment had become a common phenomenon. This was the result of the Government policy of trade dependence on Britain and America, of inflation which enriched the rich and robbed the poor, of refusal to lighten the burden on the peasantry.

7. Instead of reversing the policies that had led to these disastrous results, the Government was continuing these same policies. It was moving towards closer collaboration with imperialist Powers—now with Britain, now with America—increasing its dependence on them as revealed in the agreements with the American imperialists and in the decisions of the Commonwealth Conference. It was imposing fresh burdens on the people. Its Five Year Plan was not a Plan of national reconstruction but a Plan which would maintain India's semi-colonial economy intact, intensify the agrarian and industrial crisis and impose colossal burdens on all sections of people including industrialists and merchants, middle-classes and artisans. It was the monopolists' way out of the crisis, a Plan of throwing the consequences of the crisis on to the shoulders of the common people.

8. All these were intensifying and would intensify still further the conflict between the narrow clique of landlords and monopolists on the one hand and the mass of people on the other. It was also leading to sharp conflicts inside the Government circle itself. Possibilities were growing, therefore, of forging the broadest United Front.

9. In face of the attack of the Government and the vested interests, in face of the growing danger to India's sovereignty, the masses were building unity in action—against the food policies of the Government and for famine relief, against unemployment, against rising school and college fees, against evictions, for linguistic provinces, etc. Organisations of workers, peasants, students were reviving in all parts of the country.

10. Confronted with popular unity and due to its weakening base, the Government had on many occasions been compelled to make concessions and beat retreat before the people. The latest example was the declaration about Andhra Province. It was a serious mistake on the part of the party not to fully publicise the victories won and use them for enthusing the masses, for instilling confidence in them, for demonstrating concretely that popular unity and popular struggle can hurl back the attack of the vested interests and the Government.

11. Despite the big advance made in the post-election period it was also obvious that on the whole the mass movement had still remained weak and was characterised by great unevenness. Most of the struggles still remained on the sectional plane, although possibilities are greater than at any time before of mobilising all sections of people for support to each action. A real national upsurge for full freedom and democracy has yet to be developed. This has not yet happened, above all, because the working class has not yet been united, has not yet been made conscious of its leading role and because the Party still remains weak, its effective strength is still confined to relatively small areas even in the States where it is a major force.

12. The developments in India were taking place as an integral part of the developments in the international arena whose features have been described with masterly precision and lucidity by Comrade Stalin in his latest work and elaborated in the reports of the historic Congress of the Commu-

nist Party of the Soviet Union. As explained by Com. Malenkov, the task of fighting against the warmongers and of preserving Peace is the key task before the entire progressive humanity, a task which is inseparably linked with the fight for defence and extension of national freedom.

It was under these conditions that the plenum was convened.

I. PRESERVATION OF PEACE

The Plenum held that the task of fighting for Peace is the key task before the Communist Party of India no less than the Communist Parties of other countries.

It would be wrong to think that because of the growing crisis in the capitalist world and because of the growing conflict between imperialist Powers, the danger of a world war, the danger of a counter revolutionery war by imperialist States against the USSR and Peoples' Democratic States has receded. The fact is, as made clear in Comrade Malenkov's report, that the danger of world war continues and must be fought.

It is also wrong to state as was stated in the CROSSROADS version of the article "*Stalin Illumines the path*" by Com. Ajoy Ghosh that even with imperialism remaining strong, world war is "fully preventible". The term "fully preventible" can only mean that there can be a *guarantee* against such war even if imperialism remains. Such a formulation would lead to minimisation of the danger of war and, therefore minimisation of the importance of the struggle for peace.

In order to play its due role in the struggle for Peace, in order to become a bulwark of Peace and freedom, India must free herself. And freedom means freedom from the shackles of British rule. A dependent and backward India, an India which is linked with the British Empire, can get easily dragged into war. It also becomes an arena of Anglo-American rivalry both of whom want to keep India backward and dependent. Hence it is necessary to intensify the struggle for severance of links with the Commonwealth and for confiscation of British capital. These must no longer remain abstract and general slogans but must be vigorously popularised and concretised in each area in relation to specific industries. Quit Commonwealth must be made a key slogan in political demonstrations. Also more opposition must be roused against participation in

Commonwealth Conferences, the forthcoming coronation, ruination of India's industries by British imports, etc. All this helps the cause of peace.

At the same time it is wrong to think that by doing this, alone, we make our contribution to the cause of world Peace. Such an understanding amounts to repudiation of the Peace movement itself. Quit Commonwealth cannot be the *key* slogan of the Peace movement even in India. The key slogans of the Peace movement are Five Power Peace Pact, cessation of war in Korea, etc. We have also to take up such specific questions as recruitment of Gurkha troops on Indian soil, transit facilities to them and use of Indian aerodromes and ports by French imperialists for war in Viet Nam.

It must not be forgotten that the main instigator and organiser of world war is American imperialism, that this imperialism is not only threatening war against the Soviet Union and democratic States, not only enslaving one country after another but is also penetrating into our own country, striving to convert India into a war base and threatening our national sovereignty. Hence the struggle for Peace, as well as the struggle for defence of national sovereignty demands vigorous exposure of and determined opposition to American penetration into our country. This struggle has to be waged here and now, not *after* we have liquidated British rule.

In recent months the Peace movement has made big advances and has secured the support of people from many walks of life. It should be noted, however, that *Party units* and mass organisations have done very little in the struggle for Peace. They have not gone into action even on such issues as germ war in Korea, massacre of war prisoners. This is the key reason why the Peace movement has remained weak. This must be remedied immediately.

II. INDO-SOVIET AND INDIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP

Inseparably connected with the tasks of preserving world Peace is the task of ceaselessly working for the forging of fraternal relations, and close contact between the Indian people on the one hand and the peoples of the Soviet Union, China and other Socialist and Peoples Democratic States on the other. For, one of the main instruments of the warmongers in

their aggressive designs of drawing the Indian people into the aggressive bloc is to spread lies and slanders against these Socialist and Peoples' Democratic States. It is, therefore, the task of the Communist Party and other democratic parties in India to consciously organise a broad movement for popularising the achievements of the Socialist and Peoples' Democratic States as well as their peaceful intentions. Further strengthening of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Association, India-China Friendship Association etc. through the formation of the units of these organisations in factories, villages, towns, etc., is therefore, of urgent importance.

III. FOR FOOD AND FAMINE RELIEF

India is to-day faced with an acute crisis of the production and distribution of food. Chronic famine has seized vast areas of the land; tens of thousands of people are unable to purchase rations even at the very low quantum that is offered in ration shops. It is, therefore, the task of the Communist Party together with other democratic parties and elements to organise a broad movement for the securing of an adequate quantity of foodgrains at prices that are within the reach of the common people; the Party should come out with the demand that the Government should make proper arrangements to see that food grains are supplied to all sections of the people at rates that are within their reach; in the case of those areas and regions where famine has reached menacing proportions, the Government should be asked to give free rations to the people. It should be borne in mind that the struggle against famine, the struggle for adequate food at fair prices has become a struggle of all-national importance.

IV. URGENT RELIEF FOR PEASANTRY

As part and parcel of the struggle for food and against famine, should also be launched struggles for urgent relief to the peasantry from the exorbitant burdens that have been imposed on them by way of rent, interest and taxes. For at the root of the present crisis in food production lies the fact that the overwhelming majority of peasants are so rackrented, so overburdened, with debts and taxes that they cannot afford to carry on profitable cultivation. It is to cover up this crucial factor in the agrarian situation that the Congress is indulging in the demagogic talks of "Abolition of landlordism" and gigantic

plans of increasing agricultural production. The only effective answer to this demagogic talk indulged in by the Congress is to mobilise the entire peasantry for stoppage of evictions, drastic reduction in rent, reduction in the interest and tax burdens and other forms of urgent relief for the peasantry.

V. FOR EMPLOYMENT, AGAINST WAGE-CUTS

The Party should also launch a mass campaign against the growing unemployment and against the efforts of the employers to transfer the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of the workers. For, the intense crisis that has already affected all the small and medium industries and has started affecting the big organised industries as well, is as menacing a factor in the country's present economic situation as the crisis in agriculture and food production. While it is a crisis affecting the industries as a whole and where therefore the employers are as much interested in solving the crisis as the employees, the employers are averse to adopt a policy of demanding those urgent steps which alone will save the industry; their effort on the other hand is to see that their own skin is somehow saved by resorting to a policy of wage-cuts, increasing workload and other forms of attacking the workers. The Party will, therefore, have to come out both as a champion of the defence of the interests of the employees as well as the fighter in the cause of protecting the national industries. This it can do only if it combines the struggle against retrenchment, wage-cut, increase in workload and other forms of attack on the Working Class with a nation-wide campaign for the reversal of the present policy of the Government of helping the foreign imperialists and Indian monopolists and ruining the medium and small industrialists. The entire Working Class has to be mobilised not only in defence of its own specific interests, but also in defence of the interests of the industry as a whole.

VI. EXPOSURE OF THE GOVT'S FIVE YEAR PLAN

The struggle for food, famine relief, agrarian reforms and unemployment is inseparably connected with the task of exposing the Govt's Five Year Plan as the Indian Monopolists' way out of the crisis, a way of solving the crisis at the expense of the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, traders, industrialists etc. A sharp struggle should be waged against the idea

sought to be spread among the people that this plan will solve the food shortage and that it will pave the way for the further industrialisation of the country; people should be made aware of the reality that, far from solving, the plan will intensify, the food crisis; that, far from facilitating, the plan will put obstacles in the way of industrialisation.

In carrying on this campaign of exposing the Plan, care should, of course, be taken to see that it does not become abstract or negative: such specific projects as help the people in a particular area (like irrigation projects) should be taken full advantage of; demands for the inclusion of such projects in the plan (As Koyna, NandiKonda, Ganga Barrage etc.) should be supported; corruption, nepotism etc. in the implementation of these projects should be exposed and sought to be removed.

While doing all this, however, it should never be forgotten that the plan as a whole is an anti-people, Monopolists' plan and that mobilising the people against this plan is part and parcel of the struggle for food, famine relief, agrarian reform and employment.

VII. FOR INDO-PAK FRIENDSHIP

A vital question that is of great importance in the struggle for food and for employment is the campaign for free and equal trade relations with Pakistan. For, the partition of India into the Indian Union and Pakistan, the prolonged state of tension between the two new States, the reduction in the mutual exchange of Indian and Pakistani products to the mutual interests of the peoples of both of these States—these are some of the very important factors which have led to the intensification of the agricultural and industrial crisis of the two countries. These factors which lie behind the present shortage of food grains and raw materials in India are sought to be further intensified by the slogan of "Economic Sanctions against Pakistan" advocated by reactionary communal interests. A systematic campaign against this slogan and for the improvement in the economic relations between the two States is therefore of the utmost importance.

VIII. FORMATION OF LINGUISTIC STATES

The Government of India's recent declaration regarding the formation of Andhra State is one of the significant victories

of the democratic movement during the post-election period. It shows the great possibilities that have been opened out for the attainment of the long-cherished goal of the peoples of various linguistic areas for the formation of their respective Linguistic States. It has also encouraged the peoples of these and other areas to further strengthen their movement for the formation of Linguistic States. The Party should come out wholeheartedly in support of this demand and strive to make it as irresistible as was the Andhra Movement.

IX. OTHER TASKS

Apart from the above tasks of international and national importance, the Party has also to seriously take up such questions as the demands of the refugees, those of scheduled castes and other oppressed minorities, etc. For, these are the sections of the people which the reactionaries of all sorts (including the Congress and its Government) are striving to make use of, in their disruptive game of dividing the democratic movement. Hence, the Party together with other left and democratic parties and elements, should take the initiative in winning these sections of the people away from the reactionary communal leadership and to draw them into the democratic movement.

The Party should also take up such questions as the defence of Civil Liberties; not only should the introduction of new repressive legislation be opposed, but, a broad campaign should be built up for the withdrawal of the already existing repressive legislations.

The Party should, furthermore, take full and effective part in all activities of an ameliorative or social service character. For, these are the activities through which thousands of people who are anxious to serve the masses can be drawn into the democratic movement. These are some of the most effective vehicles through which a sense of self-confidence can be created in the common people.

X. RE-ORGANISATION AND STRENGTHENING OF THE PARTY.

None of the above tasks can, however, be fulfilled if the Party itself is not properly organised. The tasks of ideologically tempering and steeling every single Party Member

and sympathiser, the tasks of restoring and further strengthening of the sense of organisational unity and iron discipline of the Party, is the key task. Furthermore, it is a task which should be taken up as an independent task, not as a task which will come by itself. Indifference to this task will cost the Party and the Democratic Movement dear. Attention of comrades is drawn in this connection to the article "**Some of our Main weaknesses.**"

It is necessary here to dispose of an argument usually advanced against the immediate taking up of this task. It is argued in certain circles that this task cannot be undertaken at present because the Party is not yet completely unified politically. The fact is that already sufficient **basis** for political unification of the Party has been availed in the documents of the Central Committee and in the policy articles which have appeared in the LPPD, New Times, Cross Roads and New Age. The task is to **carry forward** this unification. Failure to see this would mean that unless and until every minute detail of day-to-day tactics is worked out to the satisfaction of every single party member, individual Party Members should be completely free to speak and act as they like-the "Principle" which has nothing to do with the Lenin-Stalin principle of party organisation. For, as Lenin and Stalin have repeatedly made it clear, the struggle for a correct political and tactical line is itself to be carried within the framework of a well-organised, disciplined Party organisation.

This task of restoring and further strengthening the unity and discipline of the Party is inseparably connected with a systematic and principled inner-party struggle, struggle against wrong ideologies, incorrect tactics and non-proletarian forms of organisation and personal behaviour. It should never be forgotten that real and lasting unity of the Party can be brought about, real proletarian discipline enforced, only on the basis of systematic and principled inner-Party struggle, which, as Comrade Stalin has emphasised again and again, is the basic law of development of the Communist Party.

Extremely important in this connection is the need for the conscious development of the process of criticism and self-criticism, particularly criticism from below. Heavy responsibility lies in this connection on the shoulders of Party lea-

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dership at all levels, above all of the Central leadership of the Party, in consciously organising systematic criticism and self-criticism. Not only should the ranks be formally allowed to express their opinions; not only should they be encouraged to freely and fearlessly express their views, suggestions, complaints and criticisms; the leadership should also take careful note of every such view, suggestion, complaint and criticism made by the ranks and make use of them in improving the policy, tactics and style of work of the leadership.

ORGANISATIONAL DECISIONS OF THE EXTENDED PLENUM

Such in brief are the conclusions arrived at by the extended Plenum. There will be further elaborated in the two documents which the PB is now preparing—the Political Resolution and Organisational Resolution. These documents will naturally be subjected to further discussion and criticism in the forthcoming Conferences of the Party organisations at all levels which are to be organised in preparation for the Party Congress, which the Plenum decided should be held sometime in September-October. In the meanwhile, the following organisational decisions were taken by the Plenum in order to restore Party forms, bring about planned and disciplined functioning at all levels of the Party organisations and in order to properly prepare for the Party Congress itself:

(a) It decided that every District Committee should immediately undertake a scrutinisation of existing membership rolls. Those Party members who do not carry out their obligations as laid down in the Party Constitution (like regular payment of Party dues, attendance at meeting of Party units, acceptance and implementation of the decisions of higher Committees as well as the majority in one's own unit, keeping of Party secrets, refraining from loose talks or gossip about inner-Party matters outside one's unit, working in a mass organisation under Party's guidance, paying the dues of the mass organisation, fulfilling quotas, submitting reports of work done to one's unit, etc.) should be given time to correct their mistakes and to start functioning as disciplined Party members. Those who refuse or are for various reasons unable to correct themselves should after being given sufficient opportunities to do so, be removed from the

Membership lists. This scrutinisation and revision of Party membership lists should be completed in three months, special care being taken to see that this process of scrutinisation becomes an occasion to activate the overwhelming majority if not the entire membership of the Party.

(b) Together with this scrutinisation of existing membership should also be launched a big drive for the enrolment of militants and sympathisers, first as candidates and then as members. While it should be insisted that those who are admitted as candidates or Party members should be such as can stand the test of criteria for Party membership laid down in the Party Constitution, and while vigilance should be exercised that the Party is not swamped with unreliable elements, a firm struggle should be waged against all sectarian tendencies in the matter of admitting new members. Enrolment of militants and sympathisers into the Communist Party will alone enable the Party to transform the enormous political influence which it has gained during the recent months into a real striking force. Special attention must be paid to the task of enrolling workers and toiling peasants into the Party and educating them.

(c) One of the means through which existing and potential membership is to be activated is the introduction of the system of taking, fulfilling and checking the fulfilment of quotas, member by member and unit by unit. Quotas regarding enrolment of members in mass organisations, collection of funds for the mass organisations and the Party, sale of literature and other forms of mass activity and of Party building should be a regular feature of Party work.

(d) Leading Committees of the Party at all levels, above all the CC and PB as well as Provincial Committees should put an end to their present planless, chaotic methods of functioning. Regular meetings of the CC, PB, Provincial Committees and their Secretariats should be organised: systematic discussion of political and organisational problems through which the collective leadership of units is evolved should be consciously developed; members of the CC and PB should devote their attention to the work of the Central Committee and Polit Bureau and not remain mere provincial leaders; so should members of the Provincial Committees and their Secretariats function as provincial leaders and not remain just district leaders. Problems of mass organisations at the Central and

Provincial level should not be tackled by one individual member of Central or Provincial Committee, but should be tackled by the entire PB or PC Secretariat together with the all-India or Provincial Fraction of the mass organisation concerned. At every meeting of the CC and PC, the PB and PC Secretariat should submit a report of the work done. Such a systematic functioning of the leading Party units has now become of key importance.

(e) Regarding the rights of Party members, firm principles and rules have been laid down and they are as follows ;

When taking disciplinary action against comrades, every unit must ensure that rights of Party Members are not infringed upon.

(i) When action is taken against a comrade by his own unit, the comrade should be allowed to attend the meeting where his conduct is discussed ;

(ii) When action is taken by a higher unit, the comrade concerned should be given opportunity to explain his conduct before the Unit or its Secretariat, either in writing or by personal appearance if he insists on it. The comrade, however, cannot demand that he should be present when his conduct is being discussed and decision on it is being taken ;

(iii) Party Committees are authorised to remove comrades from position held by them in case of serious reports against them as precautionary measure and pending enquiry ;

(iv) In case of published writings by Party members, when no reason exists to doubt their authenticity and authorship, if such writings harm the cause of the Party and the movement or go contrary to the Policy and Programme of the Party, Party Committees of a higher level are entitled to express their criticism and disapproval either in inner-Party documents or in the open Press even without getting prior explanation from the comrade concerned. Where, however, disciplinary action is taken for published writings, the comrade should be given opportunity to explain his conduct.

(f) While bringing about such a systematic and disciplined functioning of the Party at all levels, preparations should also be made for holding of the Third Party Congress, which will be held at the end of September or in the beginning of October. The PB will prepare a Political Resolution and an Organisational Resolution incorporating the main points which have

emerged out of the discussions that have been carried on since the publication of the PB Resolution of August last. These two Resolutions will form the basis of Local, District and Provincial Conferences, which will be held in the months of May and June. The PB and CC will study the reports of these Conferences and make a political Report after the Provincial Conferences are over. They will also try to prepare a broad Review of the development of the party since 1942. These documents will form the political basis of the Party Congress.

(g) The basis of representation at the Party Congress will be one delegate for every 200 members which a Province has on its rolls by April 30th, provided that every Province will have a minimum of three delegates.

(h) The Central Committee has set up a Committee of three Comrades, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Ranen Sen and Ramamurthi to study the proposals for amending the Constitution of the Party to be placed before the Party Congress. All Party Units are to be requested to send in their suggestions to the Central Headquarters for the consideration of the Committee.

Thus the Extended Plenum marked a definite phase in the evolution of a unified understanding on the concrete political and tactical questions as well as on the questions of organisation. The great merit in this effort at evolving a unified understanding consists in the fact that it was collective effort of the entire Party, beginning from the PB and CC at the top and ending with the lowest party units which actively participated in the discussions that preceded it. This is perhaps the first time when serious efforts are being made to see that Party Units at all levels play their due role in the evolution of Party policy. If the same efforts are made in the coming months when the entire Party will engage itself in the further discussion on and concretisation of the points emerging from this Plenum, the preparation for the Party Congress which are now being made can well become the basis for an unprecedented development of the Party's political and organisational work.