ON THE WORK OF THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS

I. Background

ANY attempt at reviewing the Party Congress has to take into account, first of all, the background in which the Third Congress of our Party met. What were the main features of the situation in which we met at Madurai?

First, there had been a lessening of international tension, taking the world as a whole. But, at the same time, some serious international developments had recently taken place which vitally concern India: the recent military alliance between the USA and Pakistan had brought the cold war to our very doorstep. It marked not only an extension of U.S. war bases, but constitutes a threat to India's sovereignty. Since the transfer of power in August 1947, no single event had threatened India so directly as this U.S. move.

Secondly, internally, the Five-Year Plan had met with a fiasco. This was a major development, for it was a Plan by which the Indian ruling class had hoped to strengthen their own economy and stabilise their political position in the country.

The sharp deterioration in the economic situation in the country, the growing pauperisation of the peasant masses, the shrinking of the home market and mounting unemployment revealed the bankruptcy of the Plan and helped to bring home to the people the necessity of breaking the British grip on our economy and sweeping away feudal relics if the people have to be saved from utter ruin.

Thirdly, the few months before the Congress had seen very big mass actions all over the country: the hatred against the policies and methods of the Government had struck a level higher than at any time since 1947. And many of these struggles were directed not only against the

vested interests but also against the Government, and were spreading to areas which had long been recognised as the traditional strongholds of the Congress.

Fourthly, our Party had come to be regarded by the people as the most important opposition force in the country. By its bold leadership of the struggles of workers, peasants and other anti-imperialist classes and sections, by its efforts at building unity in action, by its selfless and determined championship of the cause of the people, whether inside the legislatures or in the arena of mass action, it has come to be looked upon as the spearhead of the democratic opposition to the ruling party, wielding greater influence than at any time before.

On this question of the leadership of the Party in the democratic opposition, some cobwebs have to be cleared from our understanding: some think that the leading opposition role with which the Party emerged from the General Elections two years back is the capital on which the Party still maintains itself.

There are others who sometimes think that the Party's standing in the country is, in the main, the result of the resounding achievements of the Socialist World—the great strides made by Communism—helping us to shine in a sort of reflected glory.

There are still others who believe that the rapid disillusionment with the Congress is almost automatically leading the masses on to the Red Flag.

But these ideas are incorrect in so far as they do not fully explain the position. Had the Party only thrived on the capital that it is part of a powerful international movement, or that its ranks are swelled just because the masses are breaking away from Congress, then the headway made by the Party should have been the same in every part of the country. But the reality is that the Party is strong only in areas or in sectors where it has been able to render solid, concrete service to the people.

Moreover, the Party does not live on its past capital alone, for during the last two years there have been occasions when even in its stronger bases, other elements have tried to isolate the Party.

The position of pre-eminence that the Party holds today in the democratic opposition has come to it and is retained by it because of its continuous efforts at standing by

the people and struggling with the masses and leading them in struggles for their own demands.

II. Difficulties and Shortcomings

Meeting in such a situation, what was the Party Congress expected to do?

It was expected to make an analysis of the international and national situations and find out the main tasks for the Party.

It should have been able to generalise on the basis of the experience of the last two years of struggles so that mistakes could be rectified, the successes consolidated and the entire Party armed with their lessons.

On the agrarian front, we should have been able to find out the reasons why we have not registered the progress which we should have, and also how to overcome the shortcomings on that important front.

We should have reviewed the progress achieved in building working-class unity.

The Congress should have been able to review our work on the Parliamentary front as also in the municipalities and panchayats, and to give the proper guidance so that the Party could make the maximum use of these fronts.

Lastly, and above all, the Party Congress should have been in a position to examine the weaknesses of the Party —political, ideological and organisational—and to take steps to overcome them.

Taking the background of the Congress as it was, it was perfectly natural to expect the Congress to tackle these problems and lay down the tasks emerging from them. But the paradox of the situation was that although we are today a Party leading the struggles of the masses, yet at our Party Congress—the highest organ of the Party—we could not go into detailed discussion of these problems of the mass movement as also of the Party organisation.

What was this due to?

This was due, first of all, to our not having a proper Party Centre which alone could have guided the work of the Party effectively and, on the basis of this guidance, generalised the lessons of the movements in which Party units participated.

This was due, secondly, to the inadequate political preparation for the Congress.

The Party Conferences in the Provinces were, in most cases, held practically on the eve of the Congress. The original decision to conclude Provincial Conferences at least two months before the Party Congress—so that the Central Committee could properly study them and assimilate the experiences from them—was not implemented, with the result that the Central leadership was not fully posted with developments in the Provinces; at the same time, it was not possible to postpone the Party Congress because the Party Centre, due to lack of personnel, had reached a critical stage and was on the point of total breakdown.

But notwithstanding this difficulty, the Central Committee too did not fulfil its own commitments. The Central Committee Resolutions on the Political Situation and Party Organisation, passed in March 1953, had been discussed thoroughly at various levels in the Party. The Central Committee could have re-drafted them in time. But even this job was not carried out until the eleventh hour.

With constant demands to fulfil engagements on the mass front, the priority of fulfilling this imperative Party job was often forgotten. Although in the Polit Bureau Resolution of August 1952, strengthening and developing the Party itself was accepted by all comrades as the key link in the chain even for the further development of the mass movement, this understanding has not yet been translated into practice, least of all in the preparations for the Party Congress.

This attitude of neglecting Party jobs, an attitude bordering on irresponsibility, is one of the appalling shortcomings that came to the forefront in the Party Congress, most strikingly in the political preparations for it.

To this may be added another failing which needs to be nailed down: an attitude of liberalism in solving differences inside the Party. On many important issues like the characterisation of Nehru's foreign policy, the role of the peace movement, the assessment of the Five-Year Plan, there had existed deviations—both of a Left and Right nature—inside the Party, but these had not so far been clinched and a firm line, binding on everyone, laid down. Differences were allowed to accumulate.

The result was that there was no escape from them

at the Party Congress: they had to be faced and thrashed out and, consequently, other issues had to give place to them and were edged out. Had we not adopted a liberal attitude towards these differences but faced them a long time back the decks would have been left clear at the Party Congress for taking up more immediate problems of the mass movement as also of the Party.

This brings us back once again to the question of a weak Party Centre. Even principled inner-Party struggle is not possible with a weak Centre. And it is the persistence of this weakness which permitted such deviations to continue for so long.

But despite these shortcomings, it cannot be gainsaid that the Congress will stand out as a landmark in the life of our Party. For a proper appraisal of the work done by the Party Congress, let us take up the main issues which were discussed and decided upon at Madurai.

III. Struggle for Peace and Freedom

IN the Political Resolution this time, we did not discuss the international situation in the abstract. We decided to deal with the international situation only in relation to the tasks that face us in our country.

The U.S.-Pak Pact had brought to the forefront the question of the relation between the peace movement and the national liberation movement which had for so long been argued out inside the Party.

Two dangers came up with this U.S.-Pak Pact: one was refusing to recognise this new U.S. menace; the other was seeing only this U.S. menace and making this the pivot of all our activities. Unless these two deviations were cleared, the moment an emergency situation arose, these two deviations would threaten to disrupt the Party and derail the mass movement.

Both these deviations revealed themselves in the Party Congress. One deviation held that U.S. imperialism was a threat to peace but constituted no serious and immediate threat to India's freedom. The other deviation, in practice, though not in words, wanted to make the U.S. threat the basis of our entire activity.

Thus the question: who is the main enemy? is not an academic question, for with it is bound up our entire line of action.

If U.S. imperialism is looked upon as the main enemy not only of peace but also of national freedom, then the tendency would increasingly be of lining up behind the Nehru Government on the plea of fighting the American threat.

If the U.S. constitutes a danger to peace only and in no way menaces our freedom, then the struggle against it and the struggle for peace loses all sense of urgency in relation to our country.

It became necessary at the Party Congress to be absolutely clear on this point. For, the way we understand this point will decide our basic attitude towards the Nehru Government itself. Very often we have taken an eclectic attitude towards the Nehru Government. We have stated that we support those acts that are good for the people and oppose those that are bad for the people. This, of course, is true but this is no line at all: it is like the proverbial curate's egg—good in parts. Such an attitude of pure eclecticism does not help at all.

As a matter of fact, there can be only two basic lines: co-operate with the Government but criticise specific acts; or, oppose the Government but support specific acts. Here it is not a question of different emphasis only. These are two different lines.

This is a complex question to decide and we cannot take a mechanical line on this issue.

In Western European countries where U.S. domination grows, the economic condition of the masses has worsened because of American intervention in economic affairs like foreign trade, the aggressive military alliance, and the arms programme enforced by America. In such a situation, the struggle for freedom, for a better life and the struggle for peace—the struggle for bringing relief to the masses, the struggle to maintain freedom and the struggle against the war danger—all converge into one single struggle against U.S. imperialism and its allies.

In such a situation, the slogan of a Government of Peace becomes a real slogan, for such a Government is also one which can bring some relief to the people.

Such, however, is not the case in our country. The present economic situation in our country is not due to the war drive of Indian monopolists. We cannot say that our peasantry is facing acute distress today because the

country's economy has been put on a war footing. The deterioration in the position of our masses is primarily due to the existence of the British stranglehold and feudal relics in our country though, of course, the war crisis aggravates it.

Feudalism and British stranglehold are maintained in our country not by a British Army of occupation as in the past but with the active support of the Nehru Government. It is obvious therefore that in our country the struggle for peace has its main edge directed against the American imperialists while the struggle for freedom has its main edge directed against the British. Both struggles have to be conducted simultaneously. At the same time, we have to see the relationship between the two.

For this, first of all, we have to find out what the *basic* struggle is. The basic struggle is that struggle on which, ultimately, depends the fate of our people and the solution of their problems. And the basic struggle in our case is the struggle against British domination and feudalism. This is what the Party Programme points out under the sub-headings, "National Independence of India" and "In the Field of Agriculture and the Peasant Problem."

So we have to find out where the Nehru Government stands in relation to British imperialism, where it stands in relation to feudalism, in order to determine our basic attitude towards it. And since the Government does not fight against them but protects them, our attitude towards the Government continues to be one of general opposition.

What, then, about the struggle for peace? There has been, so far, a very serious under-estimation inside the Party about the importance of the peace movement. The link between the struggle for peace and the struggle for freedom was sought to be discovered through a single slogan; as that was not found, the whole peace movement has been neglected by the Party.

The special significance of the peace movement today in our country has to be understood.

First, we have to bring home to our toiling masses that it is no ordinary war that the USA is desperately trying to launch; it is a war against countries where the working class is in power, because these countries are the most serious obstacles in the path of America's mastery of the world. Also the actual wars that are being waged today—Vietnam,

Malaya etc.—and the war that was waged in Korea are wars against the national freedom of the peoples of Asia and Africa whom it is our duty to support.

Secondly, we have to understand that the preparations for this war are being made at a time when the balance of forces has shifted against the imperialists; so, today, they can launch a war only by mobilising the entire capitalist world—unlike Hitler who could launch the attack on the Soviet Union by relying only on Europe. The USA, therefore, has to bring every country under its control in pursuance of its war plans. In the course of its war drive, the USA is desperately trying to bring every country under its heel. This includes India also. Hence the fight for peace is vital for our country no less than for other countries.

In this connection we have to guard against a wrong understanding about U.S. aims regarding India. It is sometimes said that having failed to get India, the USA has now grabbed Pakistan. This is an incorrect appraisal of U.S. objectives. They have grabbed Pakistan as a means, a stepping stone, to grabbing India. Holding Pakistan, U.S. imperialism points, as if, a pistol towards India and thereby intends to put pressure on and to blackmail the Indian Government into reversing its stand on foreign affairs and toeing the U.S. line.

What would be the upshot if the USA succeeded in its policy of blackmail towards India? In every country which has passed under the sway of the U.S. there has followed a colossal war burden and deterioration of the economic condition of the masses.

Thirdly, India is not like a Middle Eastern country where a reversal in policy can be brought about by a coup at the top. Here there is a powerful democratic movement, a powerful working class and an influential Communist movement. Such a country as ours can be grabbed by the USA only by a total suppression of the democratic movement. Success of American aims in relation to India would therefore mean loss of freedom, worsening of the economic situation and a brutal attack on the working class and democratic movement.

Keeping these dangers in view, any failure to mobilise the entire people for peace, for lessening of international tension by a pact of peace between the Great Powers and against the U.S. menace will be a serious crime against the

mass movement. While there should be no panic leading to the stand that the country must line up behind Nehru, we must on no account ignore these serious threats to the democratic movement, to the interests of our masses, to our freedom and sovereignty itself.

This way we have to see that the struggle for peace and the struggle for freedom, though not identical, are closely linked.

We have to win full freedom from the British but we have also to defend our existing freedom from the increasing menace of the U.S.

Unless we defend it from the U.S., we can never win complete freedom from the British.

Unless we can win complete freedom from the British, we cannot eliminate permanently the threat to our freedom because our backward economy prevents us from building up effective security.

When we speak of struggle for complete freedom from the British, we have to realise that it takes a concrete form in the struggle for a democratic government which will break with the Empire, confiscate British capital and give land to the peasants.

As for the Nehru Government, constitutionally it has got the power to take steps to confiscate British capital and abolish feudalism, but it does not exercise that power because it follows a policy of collaboration with feudalism and imperialism, as it represents certain classes. Failure to see this will lead us to the wrong conclusion that the Nehru Government is only a "victim" of British domination, not an ally, and in practice may lead to a tendency towards adopting a soft attitude towards the Nehru Government and weakening of mass struggles.

We have to guard against a sectarian deviation also: when the Nehru Government takes a good step for peace, some comrades get embarrassed and confused. We have to understand that apart from their class interests—their class does not want a world war—and the influence of British imperialism, there is also the growing strength of the democratic movement, of the peace sentiment of the masses which the Nehru Government cannot ignore or put down.

On such issues where the Government takes a positive step, we have to try to forge a united front even with the

Congress masses. When the Government declares against the atom bomb or in favour of negotiation between the Great Powers, for instance, we must welcome it wholeheartedly, without any 'buts' and 'ifs'.

This way, with an integrated and comprehensive understanding, we can avoid both deviations.

Essential for the struggle against the American threat also is the development of friendly relations between the peoples of India and Pakistan.

In the task of developing a powerful peace movement, the biggest negligence has been on the part of the trade union organisations and also, to a great extent, of the peasant organisations.

In the past, we faced two deviations—peace through national liberation, or national liberation through peace. This time these two deviations have come up in a different form—one deviation says the U.S. is only a threat to peace and not to our freedom; the other deviation says the U.S. is the only enemy we have to fight for both peace and national liberation. Both these deviations have been rejected at the Party Congress.

The struggle for peace and the struggle for national liberation are not identical or coextensive. All those who are in the struggle for freedom will join the struggle for peace, but many in the struggle for peace may not join the struggle for full freedom.

IV. Basic Feature of the National Situation

WHAT is the basic feature of the present national situation?

The formulation made by the Central Committee in its Resolution of March 1953 has been endorsed by the Party Congress. The formulation is: We are now in the midst of a deepening economic crisis and the initial stages of a political crisis.

First, we have to understand why it is necessary to find out the basic feature at all. If we go back in our Party history, we find that without an understanding of the basic feature of a situation, we have landed ourselves again and again into wrong positions.

For instance, take the situation in 1945-47. The tendency at that time on the part of the Central Committee was to say that "on the one hand" there was a big upsurge of the

people, "on the other hand" there was communal disruption. This sort of eclectic understanding leads to derailment—seizing a single phenomenon and, on the basis of that, rushing to generalisation.

Also there are comrades who, before the General Elections, said that the Party had been smashed up, the Party had lost influence among the masses; the same comrades, after our resounding electoral victories, rushed to the conclusion that now we were on the high road to victory, scoring success after success in one straight line; then when the UDF prospects dimmed with the inevitable withering away of temporary alliances of the election days, the same comrades again started making wise formulations that reaction was on the upswing.

Thus, seizing on an immediate development, they generalise on the basis of that, never caring to look at an entire period in a comprehensive manner. It is for these reasons that it is very necessary to have a correct understanding of the *basic* feature of the period, on the basis of the general overall situation.

With such an understanding of the basic feature alone can we fight both types of deviation. By taking this up, the Party Congress has armed us with a correct appreciation of the present situation.

Why is it that the basic feature of the present situation is characterised as the "initial stage" of a political crisis? That a political crisis is maturing in the country can no longer be denied in view of the happenings in Travancore-Cochin, Andhra, Hyderabad, the result of the municipal elections in U.P., the sharpening conflict in the Congress, the way some struggles, as in Calcutta, grew into mass political battles.

At the same time, we have to note that in contrast to 1945-46, though big struggles have broken out in this period, nearly all of them began as struggles for immediate demands which, on a number of occasions, grew into united anti-Government struggles; in a number of cases, the struggle of one section of the people developed into the struggle of the entire people of the area, yet, even now, such immense peasant struggles as Tebhaga have not grown. All these factors should be taken into account.

In this connection, two tendencies are likely to come up.

We may make the mistake of looking at the struggles

of today as ordinary economic struggles. We may tend to forget the economic and political situation in which they are taking place, the way they are rousing millions, the serious situation they are creating for the ruling classes, the way they are defeating the attempt to solve the crisis at the cost of the masses, and thus we may ignore the profound social and political significance of the economic struggles of today.

At the same time, we have to guard against rushing to the conclusion that today each struggle will develop into a "miniature civil war", will have to be carried forward and raised to a higher level and so on.

The Party Congress has warned against both these deviations.

Today, if the Party wants to get strong, it has to base itself, above all, on the economic and other immediate demands of the people. Even the struggles for such demands that have not succeeded have left their impress on the people. We must not think that because this is a period of the maturing of political crisis, such struggles for immediate economic demands of the people are not important.

On the contrary, their importance and the importance of day-to-day trade union and kisan sabha work grows. Every success today, no matter how small, defeats the attempt of the ruling class to throw burdens on the masses and also heightens people's confidence in their own strength. In this connection, we should read again what Lenin wrote about the significance of the struggles for economic demands even in the period of 1905.

In the present period, if we do not take up immediate economic demands, we shall remain where we are or even fall back. It is a question today of winning the confidence of the people and strengthening our links with them by taking up issues which affect them immediately.

At the same time, we must know that this by itself is not enough. Today is the time when the working class can be made conscious of its historic role—and so political education can and must be imparted to the working class masses.

On such issues as unemployment, political education can be imparted in a popular manner and on a mass scale, showing to the working class how the solution of the problems that face them depends on basic agrarian reform and

why, therefore, the working class must champion the demands of the peasantry.

This is important in another way. Without a growing number of cadres, it is not possible to sustain and take the movement forward. It is only mass political agitation that will enable us to draw such cadres from the working class. Also through such agitation the basis will be created for mass political action by the working class which is essential for extending and strengthening of the democratic movement.

The establishment of working-class hegemony is necessary not merely for the final success of the movement but for its strengthening and consolidation also. This is to be done in two ways—mass action by the working class and the building of a mass Party—which are closely inter-related.

And both demand the undertaking of mass political agitation on the widest scale, especially among the working class, and political education and strengthening of the Party which, specially because of the growing crisis, become tasks of decisive importance.

V. On to a Government of Democratic Unity

WE have to see in what direction the present struggles are moving. And in this context we have to understand the central slogan of the Government of Democratic Unity that the Party Congress has given.

The economic struggles of today have some distinct features.

First, in these struggles, the Government is coming out before the masses as being always on the side of the vested interests.

Second, some of the actions, like the anti-tax campaigns, are directly against Government measures and so bring the people face to face in struggle against the Government.

Third, these struggles are taking place at a time when the mass of the people has come to realise that the Government does not represent the majority of the people and when the need for basic changes and the need for a Government that will effect these changes becomes increasingly evident to the mass of the people.

It is these features that give the present struggles a new significance. They raise the question of political power

provided they are properly directed and firmly led. The key slogan giving a direction to these struggles is that of a Government of Democratic Unity.

In the State of Travancore-Cochin, where the crisis is acutest and the democratic movement and the Communist Party strong, this has already come to the forefront as the slogan of the day. In Andhra also a similar situation may develop.

The crisis, of course, will not mature in the same manner in all States. But as it matures, as the struggles of the people grow, as the people more and more realise both the necessity and the possibility of removing the Government from power, it will become possible to raise this as a practical slogan in State after State.

This perspective gives urgency to our work in the mass organisations. The present unevenness of the movement constitutes a serious weakness. Unless we develop the movement all over the country, we shall not be able to discharge our responsibility towards areas which are on the frontline today, nor shall we be able to carry forward the movement as a whole.

As a means of carrying forward this struggle, it is of utmost importance to evolve correct united front tactics. The last two years have provided rich experience in this sphere and all this came up for examination at the Party Congress.

But these successes, significant as they are, are extremely meagre compared to what has yet to be done. It was clear from our experiences that tendencies both of a liquidationist and sectarian character persist on this issue inside our Party.

For instance, there is the tendency of looking upon "Left unity"—unity of Left parties—as a necessary precondition to the building of broad democratic unity. This concept is wrong. Firstly, it leads to minimisation of the importance of work which has to be carried on directly by the Communist Party among masses who are still under Congress and other reactionary influence. Secondly, it ignores the fact that today, as the result of their own experience, vast numbers of people are adopting a critical attitude towards the Government or are prepared to participate in specific struggles on specific issues but are not yet prepared to accept our Programme or the programme of any Left party or even their leadership. Emphasis on Left

unity as a precondition or as a necessary step towards democratic unity would result in ignoring these masses and failure to evolve slogans and tactics to draw them into common activity and common organisation. This has actually happened in several areas and hampered mass mobilisation.

There is also the tendency to submerge the Party in various united front organisations which prevents the Party's independent mobilisation of the people under its own banner and its coming before them as their tribune and champion.

There is also the further tendency of not building united front agreements with other parties, of adopting a sectarian attitude towards them and towards the masses who follow them.

The experience on all these issues has been so variegated and complex that the Party Congress asked the new Central Committee to study concretely the situation in different Provinces and to rectify the mistakes that have manifested themselves.

At the same time the Congress called upon the entire Party to wage a firm struggle against sectarianism on this score, which is preventing the full unfolding of the mass movement. Eschewing of sectarianism does not merely mean the adoption of a friendly attitude towards the "Left parties"; the united front in today's context means the drawing in of the vast masses who are getting disillusioned with the Congress and also with the Socialist Party but are not yet prepared to subscribe to the entire Programme of our Party.

The drawing of these masses into the common movement through the evolving of concrete, immediate slogans and suitable forms of activities, the full utilisation of existing labour, tenancy and other laws for defending the interests of the masses, the organisation of more effective work in the legislatures and in the municipalities and panchayats so as to win the support of all honest and patriotic elements, irrespective of their political affiliations—all this must be looked upon as part of a comprehensive united front policy for the development of a broad mass movement.

Above all, it must be emphasised that the unity that has to be built is unity of the masses in action, unity of parties, organisations and individuals for mass action in

defence of the rights and demands of the people, unity for the waging of struggles on the widest scale in every sphere. It is only through such unity and such united action that the democratic front will be built.

The Congress also pointed out that in the trade union work conducted by Communists, the tendency to concentrate merely on "exposure" of reformist leaders without serious effort to activise the mass of workers and instil in them elementary trade union consciousness still persists and is the dominant deviation.

Due to the prevalence of a totally wrong understanding of the relation between the Party and trade unions, there have been many cases of "trade unions being reduced to Party groups and absence of democratic functioning". Only through determined struggle against all such tendencies can a mass working-class movement be built up and the capitalist offensive defeated.

VI. Correction of Bourgeois-Nationalist Deviation

A significant contribution made by the Party Congress towards unification in the understanding and practice of the Party lies in the correction of certain bourgeois-nationalist deviations that have manifested themselves in the Party.

On the issue of forms of struggle, the tendency had arisen in some places of acquiescing in the satyagraha form of struggle as a substitute for mass action.

There is a history behind this: After the General Elections, in Maharashtra, different parties started satyagraha for food and we also decided to participate, and this produced good results for mass mobilisation.

In Calcutta, different Left parties launched a satyagraha for food, but we kept out of the whole struggle on the ground that satyagraha is a Gandhian form of struggle; and since we could not go in for general strikes, we stayed away from it. This was a mistake, and was corrected.

Subsequently, at some places the deviation developed of looking upon satyagraha as the main form of struggle.

The Party Congress made it clear that satyagraha is a form of struggle which disrupts mass participation and brings only some pressure upon the enemy. In fact, it is a counterpart of terrorism, relying on the same principle of heroes leading passive masses and reducing the people to

the role of spectators. While in some backward areas, satyagraha may become necessary at the first stage, it should not be allowed to become a substitute for mass action.

Another deviation that was corrected at the Party Congress was the bourgeois-nationalist deviation in relation to Linguistic States.

The movement for Linguistic States is basically a democratic movement because one of the elements of democracy is that the common people must be able to participate in government, which multi-lingual States prevent.

Secondly, it is democratic because it attacks the feudalist strongholds which so long have retarded their formation.

Thirdly, democracy demands full flowering of culture which is possible in Linguistic States.

But in conducting this movement, we have sometimes committed mistakes of not firmly combating bourgeois-nationalist deviations and even allowing them to penetrate our ranks.

The Party Congress declared that in India today the unity of the toiling masses of all nationalities is the most important thing—far more important than the unity of all classes inside the same nationality. Whenever disputes arise between two Provinces regarding territorial claims, they are to be settled by the Party units concerned along with the Polit Bureau. No Party unit can be allowed to come out on its own demanding some areas from a neighbouring Province.

We should note that the demand for Linguistic States is a demand which unites all classes inside a nationality, including the feudal classes. We do not reject such a unity but we consider the unity of the toiling masses of different nationalities as the most precious thing which must not be violated at any cost.

It must also be remembered that the main obstacle in the way of formation of Linguistic States today is the continuation of such so-called Part 'B' States as Hyderabad, Travancore-Cochin, etc., and also of the multi-national artificial States like Bombay, Madras and Madhya Pradesh.

It is the breaking up of such States and the redrawing of State boundaries primarily on the basis of language that is therefore the main task in this sphere at the present stage—and not the solution of the problem of every "disputed" area or the undoing of every "injustice".

If this is not seen, attention is bound to be focused on these areas and the whole movement diverted into disruptive channels.

A third deviation which the Party Congress fought against was separatism. It came up on the question of a common language.

Our Party Programme provides for education in one's own mother tongue and opposes all attempts at imposing a common language by compulsion. This is necessary for the cultural advance of the entire people and the strengthening of democracy.

At the same time, we have to realise that the Communist Party stands for the unity of India, which is necessary both for the defence of freedom and for the rapid economic, political and social rebuilding of India. Also we want the people of different nationalities fighting for freedom and democracy to come closer to each other.

This demands the building of close relations between the nationalities that live in India and, therefore, raises the question of a language in which people of different nationalities can speak with each other.

It was decided at the Party Congress that no compulsory State language should be introduced, but Hindi is to be encouraged as the language for communication between Governments of different States and peoples of different States.

In this connection it was pointed out that in areas where Hindi is spoken, there the Party will have to emphasise the fact that in non-Hindi areas the national languages must not be suppressed but made the medium for education and for all work of the Government. There they will have to fight against chauvinism trying to suppress national languages.

At the same time, in areas where Hindi is not spoken, the Party, while upholding the right of national languages, must also encourage and popularise Hindi. There they will have to fight against separatism trying to undermine the unity of India.

In this way, the Party as a whole concretely upholds proletarian internationalism, warding off both chauvinism and separatism.

This was the only amendment the Congress introduced in the Party Programme, while ratifying it. It held that

every proposition made by it had been proved to be correct in practice and that by adhering to it the Party has won its present position.

VII. Need for a Strong Party Centre

On the question of Party organisation, the Congress noted the glaring shortcomings which persist in our organisation and functioning.

The most important point made in the discussion on the subject was the urgency of building of a strong and effective Party Centre.

The absence of a strong Party Centre has seriously affected the entire activity of the Party. The work of practically every Party unit has suffered because of the absence of a proper Party Centre. This weakness, it was emphatically asserted at the Congress, has to be immediately overcome.

With this is linked up the building of a mass Party without which the political goal which the Party has set before the democratic movement cannot materialise. The present membership of the Party—50,000 members and about 20,000 candidates—is too small for the task the Party faces.

In every Province, thousands more are eager to join the Party, but the Party units find it difficult to cope with the problem of enrolment, training and development. From this angle also, the questions of organisation and Party education have become key questions before the Party.

For such tasks to be undertaken on a big scale a strong Party Centre is an urgent necessity. In this way, the building up of a mass Party of the working class is intimately bound up with the building of the Party Centre.

Taking into account the immense expansion in the work of the Party and also the necessity of guiding the movement in every part of the country, the Congress elected a Central Committee of thirty-nine members, and the Central Committee elected a Polit Bureau of nine members all of whom would have their jobs planned out by the Polit Bureau itself and not by any lower committees. This is absolutely essential for the proper working of the Party Centre.

* * *

FROM the above review it becomes clear that despite serious shortcomings, the Party Congress did record certain very important achievements.

Firstly, on such issues as the question of peace and war and its relation to the struggle for national liberation; on the role of British and American imperialism; on the basic attitude towards the Nehru Government; on the question of the Five-Year Plan—on all such vital issues, the Party Congress set down the correct line, fighting wrong trends.

Secondly, the Party Congress made the basic generalisation about the present situation and armed the Party with the immediate perspective in which the struggles for the immediate demands of different sections of the people acquire tremendous significance.

Thirdly, the Party Congress corrected some serious deviations which betrayed the persistence of a bourgeois-nationalist trend inside the Party. This way, the Congress saved the Party from some of the dangerous pitfalls facing it.

Lastly, the Party Congress took the first step towards overcoming the organisational weakness of the Party by stressing the immediate need for the building of the Party Centre.

With these concrete achievements, the Party Congress marks a major step in the growth of our Party, making it conscious of its historic responsibilities in view of the significant position that India occupies in the present-day world—responsibilities which have become heavier because of the critical national situation and the threat to peace and our freedom.

The decisions of the Third Party Congress will no doubt arm every Party member with greater strength in effectively discharging these responsibilities.

TASKS BEFORE THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

(Abridged text of a speech moving the Political Resolution before the Third Party Congress.)

DURING the last two years, since our All-India Party Conference in October 1951, when we adopted our Party Programme, big shifts have taken place in the international situation. This period has seen big fiascos—political, economic and military—for the imperialists. Secondly, it is marked by tremendous advances made by the democratic forces. Thirdly, in all these developments, the working class and the Communist Parties have played a very important role.

Two years ago, even before the General Elections, our Party was looked upon by our people with love and respect. This was because of the fact that despite shortcomings the Party had all through stood by the masses and fought in defence of their interests. Not to recognise this is to be blind to reality.

It is this reality which announced itself in the General Elections, which clearly indicated that the masses were moving away from the Congress and taking to the path of struggle in defence of their interests, that they could not be misled by reaction. Moreover, inside the democratic camp itself, the Communist Party emerged as the leading force.

Since the General Elections, this crisis of the ruling class had deepened. Its hold on the masses has shrunk and continues to shrink. Its failure to provide relief to the people and, instead, placing new burdens on them, have increased the hatred of the masses towards it and made its regime more unstable.

War Danger

Turning to the international scene, it is clear that more and more the masses in every country are coming to realise that U.S. imperialism under the garb of anti-Communism is aiming at world domination. With the latest U.S. move for a war pact with Pakistan this is becoming clearer to our people also. But there is yet an underestimation as to the exact nature of the U.S. threat, and from this flows an under-estimation of the importance of the peace movement.

We have to bring home to our people that today no country is immune from the war danger. Among our people there is a tendency to look upon the cold war as a struggle between two blocs trying to destroy each other. And it is this attitude which Nehru has been exploiting by declaring that his Government stands for non-alignment with either of the two blocs.

The Indian people deeply desire peace and so, with their prevailing understanding of the cold war as a tug-of-war between two power blocs, they support Nehru's foreign policy of non-alignment. It is thus, by their support to Nehru's policy, that they express their urge for peace.

It is precisely this that we have to make clear to our people. We have to show to them that the issue that lies at the heart of the cold war is not ideology but the sovereignty and independence of every people. The U.S. drive for world mastery threatens every country and we have to make our people realise that India's sovereignty is also being threatened by the growing American menace which has now come to our doorstep with the U.S.-Pak Pact. So, an urgent task today is to mobilise our people to make them see the American threat.

We have also to make it clear to our people that war will bring increased burdens on the masses: the economic hardships that the people are facing will grow and will ruin our impoverished people.

To the toiling millions we have also to point out that the war that the U.S. is threatening to unleash is against the countries where the working class has won power. Are we not concerned in that war? That war, today, cannot be launched without bringing neighbouring countries into the orbit of the U.S. war camp and, of these, India is one.

This way too, we have to bring home to our people the enormity of the U.S. war menace.

By fighting this menace we defend the cause of peace. Also we defend our own freedom which will be seriously jeopardised if the Americans succeed in blackmailing the Indian Government to line up behind them.

It must be admitted that in our Party there has been a serious under-estimation of the peace movement. Above all, the trade unions and also the kisan sabhas have failed to take up the issue. Basically, this is due to our impermissible attitude towards the issue of war and peace and its vital relation to our country. This has to go.

Backward Economy

But this is not the only thing for us to do. We have to realise that the threat to our sovereignty today has become serious because of the backward character of our economy. The liquidation of that backwardness is our key task. The U.S. threat will grow more and more so long as our country remains economically backward.

Without liquidating feudalism and throwing off imperialist fetters we shall not be able to defend our sovereignty effectively. The new threat, therefore, also adds urgency to our national liberation tasks.

Therefore, we are faced with two important tasks—mobilising our people against the U.S. war menace, and, carrying forward the struggle for liberation from the British yoke and feudal bondage. Both the tasks are vitally important. *Of these two, the basic task, however, is the winning of national freedom from the British, for on it depends ultimately the successful realisation of every other task.*

Our basic attitude towards every party in the country, including the Government, is determined by its attitude towards British imperialism and feudalism. If we do not see this, we shall make big mistakes.

The question is raised as to which of the two tasks we should take up now. That is an incorrect approach to the problem. Such a question can arise only if the two tasks are opposed to each other. But we have to understand that they are not so. If world war breaks out, what happens to our freedom? Is it not seriously endangered?

The struggle for peace and the struggle for freedom

are not identical. The main edge of one is against America and of the other against the British. Nevertheless, the two struggles help each other. The struggle for peace contributes to the weakening of imperialism on a world scale—hence to the weakening of British imperialism also. The struggle for freedom helps the struggle for peace, for, by eliminating the British hold on India, we weaken U.S. imperialism as well.

At the same time, we should understand that the two movements are not co-extensive. The peace movement is broader than the struggle for liberation. All those who participate in the struggle for liberation must come into the peace movement. But all those in the peace movement may not agree to participate in the struggle for liberation.

Peace Movement

Now, what should be the slogans of the peace movement in India?

Firstly, they should be the same as the *slogans* of the world peace movement. At the same time, there should be some specific *tasks* of the Indian peace movement: in India, the struggle for peace must help to build up the solidarity of the colonial peoples. The sense of Asian solidarity which is the expression of the anti-imperialist urge, can deal a powerful blow against U.S. warmongers today. This was seen very clearly when Eisenhower's policy of making Asians fight Asians raised a storm all over India.

The campaign for peace, it should also be noted, is not the job of the peace organisations alone. The various mass organisations and the Party have independently to take up such slogans for peace and help to build up a powerful peace movement.

Nehru Government

The question next arises as to our attitude towards the Nehru Government, particularly in respect of its foreign policy. We wholeheartedly support all positive steps taken by the Nehru Government that help the cause of peace, but we can by no means give general support even to the foreign policy of the Nehru Government. Nehru's policy is one of silent acquiescence with regard to the acts of British imperialism.

When Nehru takes a positive step, it is the product of not merely his own class interest but also the result of the mass movement, the mass sentiment against aggressive imperialism. So, according of wholehearted support to such specific positive steps is correct.

At the same time, we have to understand that in 1947 power was transferred to a class that fears the people more than it hates imperialism. Constitutionally, the Nehru Government has the power to liquidate feudalism but because it is the Government of certain classes, it does not do that. It has the power to liquidate the British stranglehold, but it does not do so.

The imperialist hold and feudalism are maintained in India today not by means of the British army but by the active support of the present Indian Government. Hence our struggle for the liquidation of feudalism and imperialism takes the form of a struggle for the replacement of this Government by a Democratic Government.

This is the basic task for our people. The backwardness of Indian economy is rooted in the continuation of feudalism and British capital, and to overcome this backwardness involves the replacement of the Nehru Government. If this is not understood, we shall shout against imperialism in the abstract and look upon the Nehru Government not as a collaborator and active partner but as a victim.

What is the stage that the people's struggle has reached? What is its direction? What are its forms of organisation?

The key formulation that we have made is that not merely is there a deepening of the economic crisis, but there is also the initial stage of a political crisis. In fact, it is the deepening of the economic crisis that is at the root of the political crisis. Every section, every class, bases its activity on this deepening crisis—from the British imperialists and the Indian monopolists to the Communist Party of India.

Five-Year Plan

As our Programme says, Nehru plays between the two camps. This playing between camps implies that the Nehru Government is not an entirely puppet Government, but has a certain amount of freedom to manoeuvre. If that is true in the field of foreign affairs, it is equally true in the

economic field. In both spheres, the Government pursues a policy which, while being within the imperialist framework, is also one which serves the class interest of the Indian monopolists.

The Five-Year Plan should be correctly characterised as the product of collaboration. Through it the imperialists certainly wanted to maintain India as their colony. But it must also be remembered that through this very Plan the Indian monopolists wanted to stabilise their economy and strengthen their own political position also.

It is obvious today that the Plan has failed. Not only has it not helped the masses, not only has it meant more burdens for them, but it has failed in another sense too—while monopolists have reaped huge profits, their basic economic and political object has not been realised. Their economy is cracking, their political position has grown worse. Mounting unemployment, a growing crisis of the market, a rising wave of mass struggles proclaim the fiasco of the Five-Year Plan.

Maturing Crisis

In this connection, we must note that the struggles of today are not merely the result of the economic distress of the people, but are also due to the weakening of the political grip of the Congress over the people. Today it is the continuation of both these factors which is giving the present wave of mass struggles a very big momentum.

The process was found to be at work at the time of the General Elections but has accentuated in recent times. The West Bengal Bye-Election and the U.P. Municipal Elections are but two of the pointers.

The confidence of the people and their militancy too show certain directions of struggles. But many factors still hold back the growth of the mass movement—Congress influence, Socialist Party tactics, communal parties etc.

Bourgeois-nationalist Influence

In this context we have also to note the retarding influence of bourgeois nationalism on the mass movement in our country. For one thing, we often see its impress on the very form of the movement itself. At many places, the masses are led astray by the Gandhian technique of Satyagraha which acts as a brake on mass mobilisation.

Satyagraha tries to check all-out mass mobilisation and helps to dissipate the energy and the resources of the movement. Under exceptional circumstances, in a backward area, it may sometimes become necessary as a first step, but we have to note that this Gandhian form of movement acts as a positively retarding factor. Its use therefore has to be discouraged.

Bourgeois-nationalist influence also expresses itself on the issue of linguistic States. We regard the movement for linguistic States as part of the democratic movement.

But while struggling for linguistic States we have always to bear in mind that the overriding consideration in all cases must be the unity of the toiling masses and not the unity with the bourgeoisie inside each nationality. The unity of the toiling masses is the biggest asset of the Communist Party which must never be lost.

In fighting for the demand for linguistic States we try to mobilise all classes of each nationality, but we must never allow the bourgeoisie of each nationality to raise chauvinist claims on neighbouring nationalities and thereby destroy the unity of the toiling masses. Whenever there is a dispute, the Communist Party units have to discuss the matter and take a common stand. There can be no exception whatsoever to this rule.

Particularly, we have to realise that the working class at many places in India is of a mixed character, composed of elements from various nationalities. We must on no account allow disruption of the unity of the working class.

We have also to give up the bourgeois-nationalist way of understanding political struggle. The bourgeois approach to the political movement is to confine attention purely to such political issues like elections, ministerial crises etc. Little attention is paid by them to the immediate demands of the masses.

We have to realise that a decisive role in the present situation will be played by the struggle for immediate economic demands. We have to build up the struggle for the realisation of such demands on whose success will depend the growth of the political movement itself.

Concluding from the formulation that this is a period of maturing political crisis, we may tend to confine ourselves to purely "political issues". That would be wrong. We have to understand that without moving millions we

cannot defeat the policies of the Government. And millions cannot be moved without taking up their immediate economic demands.

Attack on Democratic Forms

The nature of the Government offensive against the people has to be properly understood. It is evident that the Government attacks civil liberties. But it also hoped that by means of universal franchise and the Constitution, it would be able to come to power by popular sanction and thereby create the illusion that it is a democratic government.

At the time of the General Elections, some hoped that, whatever ground the Congress lost, it would be communal reaction that would win. Nehru hoped that Congress, if it lost, would lose to the Socialists. But these hopes did not materialise. The Congress had to lose in the main to the democratic forces led by the Communist Party.

So, the Government has started the attack on the very democratic forms with which it had hoped to bluff the people: in PEPSU, Tripura, Travancore-Cochin, in Hyderabad, normal ministerial Government is withheld the moment it sees the danger. And now Government spokesmen like T. T. Krishnamachari openly say that even if the Communists win, they won't allow the formation of a Government in Travancore-Cochin in which there are Communists.

Against this offensive, we have to build up the people's counter-offensive in defence of democratic rights. Our Programme clearly states that the Constitution is a deception and through it the working class cannot come to power. So, it is not merely a question of only winning elections. We have to mobilise people for the defence of democratic liberties and democratic forms, for, by attacking these, the Government is trying to hamper the growing mass movement against itself.

Democratic Front

The democratic forces have to be mobilised, the Democratic Front built. The Democratic Front should be understood in terms of *a movement*—the building of a broad mass movement on the immediate issues. If we find that an agreement between parties will help mass participation

on a particular issue, the Communist Party will strive to get such an agreement.

But in view of the fact that newer and newer sections, including elements inside the Congress—much beyond the confines of even the Left parties—are splitting away and taking up an oppositional stand from issue to issue, we consider that the Democratic Front should not be rigidly circumscribed within the framework of a permanent organisation.

Our overriding consideration should be to ensure the maximum mass mobilisation under the Democratic Front, and whatever stands in the way of that—whether our own sectarian or dogmatic outlook or rigid organisational concepts—has to be given up.

Today the question of the United Front has to be raised in the context of a deepening economic crisis and a maturing political crisis. This brings on the agenda the question of replacing the present Government. The features of the present phase of the mass movement indicate that increasing sections of the masses are seeing through their own experience that this Government protects the vested interests and preserves a system that deprives them of their own basic needs and exploits them.

This way many of the economic struggles very soon get transformed into struggles against the Government. Further, many of the struggles of today—for example, struggles against unjust taxes, are struggles directly against the Government. Also, struggles of one section of the people often get transformed into struggles of the entire people. The people's upsurge is sometimes breaking out even where the mass movement is weak, as in Saurashtra, Rajasthan or U.P.

Government of Democratic Unity

The slogan which gives the general direction to all these various struggles is the slogan of the Government of Democratic Unity.

On the face of it, it may seem that such a Government can be formed on the basis of winning elections. But we have to understand that it can come only as the result of multi-pronged mass activity, in which elections, Parliamentary activity, as well as mass mobilisation and mass

action, have all to be geared up. Such a Government represents the fighting alliance of all classes.

A Government of Democratic Unity has to be the organ for the defence of the interests of the people. As a product of the mass movement it has to be the instrument of giving relief to the masses. By its very nature, it, in its turn, will also help to develop the mass movement.

The mass mobilisation for the achievement of this Government of Democratic Unity in a particular State must not be confined to that State alone. The mass mobilisation must extend to all the States so that it may act as a brake against the Congress ruling class, concentrating its attack in that particular State where such a Government of Democratic Unity is on the agenda.

This understanding of the slogan of a Government of Democratic Unity has always to be borne in mind. It can come into being only as a result of the widest mass mobilisation and mass struggles, it can function and give relief to the masses if the mass movement all the time actively backs it up.

Drawing its strength and sustenance from the mass movement, such a Government itself will help to further the mass movement so that the masses may win more relief and be strengthened.

It is with this perspective before us that we Communists have to work among our people and take them forward.

ON ALLIED INTEREST

PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Adopted by the Third Party Congress, Madurai, December 27, 1953 to January 4, 1954.

3 as.

STATEMENT OF POLICY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Adopted by the All-India Party Conference, October 1951.

2 as.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

As amended by the Third Party Congress, December 27, 1953 to January 4, 1954.

2 as.

POLITICAL RESOLUTION OF THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

3 as.

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