

REPLY FROM COMRADE P. SUNDARAYYA AND NINE OTHER
COMRADES TO THE LETTER FROM THE CENTRAL
SECRETARIAT DATED 31 MAY 1964

We have received your letter of May 29th, drawing our attention to the important question of Party unity, and informing us that you "are deeply anxious to be able to

place before the coming meeting of the National Council, a proposal that the suspension resolution against (us) be immediately rescinded." You ask us to do certain things in order to enable you to do this.

Let us at the very outset state that the question of Party unity is dear to us as it is to tens of thousands of Party members and hundreds of thousands of sympathisers and friends of the Party. As a matter of fact, each of us individually and many of us collectively have been doing our best to see that the trend towards disruption is arrested, that all the different problems of ideology, current policy and organisation facing the Party are so dealt with as to preserve and further strengthen its unity. We would, therefore, have no hesitation in welcoming and supporting all efforts which are conducive to Party unity.

We, however, regret that the way in which you propose to solve the problem of Party unity will not lead us anywhere. For, the threat to Party unity arose precisely out of the policies and practices adopted by you and some of your colleagues. It is inconceivable how Party unity can be restored without your abandoning these practices and policies. From your letter it is clear that you are not making the least effort in this direction. On the other hand, you are dictating terms to us. This is putting the cart before the horse.

The proceedings of our Central Executive and Secretariat have been leaked to the bourgeois press in a distorted form in order to damn us before the public as alien agents. This campaign intensified particularly after 1959. Those who indulged in such nefarious practices cannot but know that it would lead to disruption of the Party itself. And yet they continued with it despite the widespread discontent and anger against them throughout the Party.

The CEC directed all Party branches to sever all connections with the *Link* because of its slander campaign against a section of the Party and attempt at disrupting the unity of the Party. Despite that S. A. Dange and

many of his colleagues have kept the closest relations with those who conduct that paper. Furthermore, Dange had invested Rs. 30,000 in the *Patriot*, a daily started by the same group of people, which carried on the same tirade with greater intensity. What is still worse, it has been revealed by Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali in a leaflet that these two papers were started by S. A. Dange, among others.

The National Council in its meeting of April 1962, came to the unanimous conclusion that the unity of the Party can be preserved and further strengthened only if all of us agree to work unitedly in order to solve current problems, and simultaneously to organise innerparty discussion on questions of ideology and policy on which serious differences had arisen. It was with this objective that a composite leadership was evolved at that meeting. We are of opinion that the spirit with which we started functioning from that meeting of the National Council is the essential prerequisite for keeping the Party united.

Unfortunately, however, very soon you abandoned this spirit. Ever since the latter half of October 1962, you have been using the majority which you happened to have in the National Council in order to crush the minority. In doing this, you took advantage of the emergency in the country. You took a series of organisational measures which, instead of strengthening the unity of the Party, sowed the seeds of disruption and slowly but surely led to serious rifts in the Party from top to bottom. Simultaneously you abandoned the political line of the Vijayawada Party Congress, which can be proved from your activities and various writings in the Party press.

We need not here recount all the disruptive steps taken by you and some of your followers during the last year and a half, since we have explained some of them elsewhere. We would only point out here that the present organisational position of the Party, which is on the verge of final and irrevocable split is to be traced directly to the fact that you renounced the spirit of joint work and of

organised innerparty discussion.

We may also remind you that we have repeatedly warned you against the consequences of the course which you have been pursuing. For instance, as early as January-February 1963, E. M. S. Namboodiripad had drawn your attention to the growing danger to the unity of the Party and the necessity for taking measures to stop the growing disruption. 17 others had also warned you against the trend in October 1963: they too made an earnest request to you to take certain minimum practical steps to avert the danger. Subsequently, in January 1964, those of us who were attending the then meeting of the CEC made concrete proposals for organising the Seventh Party Congress and making it a Congress of unity. All these warnings given by us however went unheeded; the concrete proposals made by us were rejected.

In the meanwhile, you have been carrying on a persistent slander campaign for discrediting us. You went to the extent of denouncing us as "antiparty splitters", "neo-Trotskyites carrying out the orders of Peking", etc. You and your followers went on merrily with a spate of disciplinary measures. We and many other comrades were suspended in every state. In violation of the spirit and letter of the Party Constitution, Party Committees and Councils that dared to question your methods and politics were arbitrarily and summarily dissolved. Never before have so many disciplinary actions been taken against individual members of the Party and elected committees. The suspension of the 32 members of the National Council was nothing but a logical outcome of this process.

You will remember how we repeatedly requested the Central Executive Committee and National Council to deal separately with the question of letters and to see that the Chairman vacates the chair while the letters are discussed. We agreed to discuss the question of so-called 'splitting activities' after we get time and notice to prepare our documents on the subject. But our reasonable stand

was turned down and hence we could not participate in the meeting. In fact, strange as it may seem, since the revelation of the letters, the question of 'splitting activities' seems to have acquired supreme importance to you and the discovery was made that we were 'neo-Trotskyites'! Were such diversionary tactics made to unify the Party?

We, who have for the last one month and more been campaigning on the damage caused to the Party by these actions of yours, are convinced that the majority of Party members in the country as a whole are opposed to the attitude adopted by you. You yourself would admit—if you are not totally blind to what is actually taking place in the Party ranks—that the majority which you still have in the National Council has no relation to the position which you occupy in the Party ranks. Such a discrepancy between the views of the majority of the Party members and views of the majority in the National Council is the most important factor to be taken into account when the question of Party unity is considered.

You may challenge this and claim that you have behind you not only a majority of the National Council but a majority of the Party membership as well. But, in view of the fact that you have had to suspend no less than one-third of the members of the National Council and a large number of leading comrades in the committees below, in view of the fact also that you have had to dissolve several elected committees in all states and nominate rival committees, the least that you have to do is to refrain from asserting your right as the majority in the Party till the claims made by us on the one hand and by you on the other are tested by a properly convened Party Congress. It was to this end that we made certain proposals in the statement which we and 22 others issued on April 14.

Three of the four proposals made by us—cancellation of all disciplinary actions taken on the ground of "disruptive and splitting activities" during the last year and a half; fresh scrutiny of Party membership in those cases

where disputes have arisen; and the appointment of a commission with agreed personnel to prepare documents for the Party Congress—are all related to the convening of a properly prepared and fully representative Party Congress. Nobody who takes a reasonable and responsible attitude to innerparty problems can reject these proposals. Yet you and your colleagues saw fit to reject them.

Surprisingly enough you do not make any reference to these realities of the situation. And yet you want us and the entire Party to believe that you are making a great “concession” by offering to us that the suspension resolution against us will be rescinded on certain conditions. Was your intimation to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha that A. K. Gopalan has been removed from the leadership of the Communist Group in Lok Sabha motivated by this concern for unity? Our reply to this offer and the conditions laid down therefore are as follows:

(a) The suspension resolution adopted by you against the 32 National Council members is only an episode in the process started by you—the process of taking action against those who are not in agreement with your political line and organisational methods. The question is: Are you prepared to reverse this process, to cancel all disciplinary actions taken on the ground of “disruptive and splitting activities” during the last year and a half: are you prepared to bring back the spirit of joint work and organised innerparty discussion which animated us in our work from April to October 1962?

(b) If you are prepared to reverse the process and to restore the rights of individual Party members and elected committees who were arbitrarily deprived of their rights by you at the Centre and other committees in the states, districts and localities then the problem of “rival” committees posed by you would not arise at all. They will all stand dissolved.

(c) We should also mention here that the problem of

“rival committees” is not a one-sided affair; wherever your people are in a minority—this happens to be the position in a majority of districts in some of the major provinces—your people have formed and are functioning committees rival to the properly elected ones.

(d) Nor would the question of our “willingness to abide by Party discipline at all levels” arise if the above-mentioned approach to Party organisation is taken. For our defiance of the decision of certain Party bodies was the consequence of the arbitrary manner in which you used your majority of the National Council in order to crush the minority. The moment you stop this and begin to function in the spirit of the 1962 April National Council meeting, we would not hesitate to abide by the decisions of Party bodies. It will not be out of place to point out here that we have been abiding by Party discipline for long despite your disruptive activities.

The proposal we made in the statement of 32 National Council members regarding the need for an agreed machinery for enquiring into the “Dange letters” is not strictly and directly connected with the preparation for the Party Congress. It is, however, equally, if not more, important in relation to the question of Party unity. After all, here is a problem involving the reliability and integrity of a comrade holding the highest post in the Party. Unfortunately for him and for all of us, the National Archives contains a letter allegedly written by him—a letter which if really written by him should debar him from membership of the Party, not to speak of leading post. Unfortunately again, the majority of the National Council with that comrade himself as Chairman has taken the extraordinary step of instituting an enquiry into the letters with a prior declaration that there is no prima facie case against him. We cannot accept this position and want to make it clear that according to us the very fact that the letter is kept in the Archives indicates a prima facie case against him; it is

necessary for him to prove that it is a forgery. We, therefore, reiterate that "the personnel of the enquiry body and the methods of the enquiry should not be dictated by Dange and his followers but should be acceptable to all sections in the National Council".

We have made this suggestion despite the fact that according to those of us who had seen the letters, together with all the connected papers and cross references as well as the earlier correspondence between the governments of Bombay and India, these letters are genuine and not forged.

After we left the National Council, S. A. Dange made a speech on the letters and his financial and speculative transactions, including the investment of Rs. 30,000 in the *Patriot* under a different name. It has now been revealed by Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali that S. A. Dange along with some others was responsible for the starting and running of the *Link* and *Patriot*. A CEC resolution debars a Party member from having anything to do with *Link*. You will agree that such activities bring the Party into disrepute and contempt. Hence a probe by an agreed committee is immediately necessary.

We should, before concluding, refer to the suggestion that we have made in the statement of the 32 that "the method of functioning the Party Centre, running the Party organs, etc. will have to be reviewed and necessary changes made in them." We had not elaborated the point in that statement. We would, however, make it clear now that, in view of the fact that the most important job between now and the date of the Seventh Party Congress is the preparation of the Party Congress, the Secretariat as such including the posts of the Chairman and General Secretary should be abolished for the duration. All the jobs of political and organisational guidance of the Party (which under the present circumstances will have to be reduced at the moment) will have to be done by the CEC through some mechanism evolved by agreement.

We are confident that, if you are sincere and earnest about the need for Party unity, you will not hesitate to accept the above proposals. We, therefore, earnestly request you not to allow personal prestige on your part to stand in the way of accepting these proposals, and thus pave the way for us all jointly preparing for the Party Congress.

P. SUNDARAYYA

M. BASAVAPUNNIAH

E. M. S. NAMBOODIRIPAD

A. K. GOPALAN

PROMODE DASGUPTA

JYOTI BASU

HAREKRISHNA KONAR

P. RAMAMURTI

HARKISHEN SINGH SURJEET

JAGJIT SINGH LYALPURI

LETTER OF THE CENTRAL SECRETARIAT TO

COM. P. SUNDARAYYA AND OTHER COMRADES, 3 JUNE 1964

We have received with great regret and concern your letter dated May 31, rejecting our earnest appeal for Party unity sent to you on May 29.

We had made this appeal in the light of the new situation in the country following the death of Pandit Nehru. We had underlined the grave dangers which exist today for the country and the urgency for united action by the democratic forces to fight these dangers. It was in this light that our unity appeal was issued.

It is amazing that your reply has not one word to say about the problems facing our people today following the passing away of the Prime Minister. It is evident that your attitude springs from a complete failure to see the