

AMRITSAR CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY *

The Special Congress of our Party held at Amritsar attracted considerable attention. Its proceedings were prominently published, its decisions widely commented upon.

This is not surprising. Whether one likes the Communist Party or not, one can no longer afford to ignore it. It is the Party that leads the Government in the State of Kerala, the Party that constitutes the major opposition in the Union Parliament and in the States of West Bengal and Andhra. It is the biggest single force in the working class. Above all, it is the Party whose influence is daily growing and which millions of people in all parts of the country are coming to regard as the Party of the future.

Comments on the Congress

On the eve of the Congress, the *Times of India*, which has never been known to harbour friendly sentiments towards us, wrote in an evidently gloomy strain:

"After fifteen years of its existence, the Communist Party has emerged as a great political force in the country... There has been accession to its strength, both in terms of card membership and its popular support".

* *New Age*, May 18, 1958.

Comments on the Congress have been of varied nature — some friendly, some not so friendly, some frankly hostile. What has evoked most wide-spread comments — in which curiosity and misgivings seem to be mixed — is the declaration in the Preamble of the Constitution that the Communist Party strives to achieve Socialism by peaceful means and that in Socialist India the right of political organisation will be enjoyed even by those who are opposed to the Government so long as they abide by the Constitution of the country.

Our friends welcome these declarations. The common theme in the chorus raised by our opponents — from Sri Dhebar, Sri Shriman Narayan to the press of the vested interests — is that these declarations should not be believed, that Communists "have not changed" and should not, therefore, be trusted.

The very fact that such warnings are coming from those who, for the last ten years, have broken every pledge they gave to the people shows that they are perturbed by the growing popularity of our Party. They find that anti-communism no longer sways the people in the same way as it did before. They ask people not to trust us because they realise that more and more people are placing their trust in us. The frantic nature of their exhortations is an index of their desperation.

Neither Creed Nor Tactic — But a Serious Policy

A question which has been posed by many is: Have you, Communists, adopted peaceful means as a creed or as a tactic, i. e., a manoeuvre?

Our frank reply to such a question is: It is neither.

To accept non-violence as a creed means to assert that we are certain that under no conditions and at no stage in the development of the struggle for Socialism, the ruling classes will resort to arms with a view to thwart the will of the majority of the people; that, in all situations they will observe democratic conventions and respect the democratic verdict of the people. Only those who have

unbounded faith in the bona fides of the bourgeoisie and landlords can make such an assertion.

As for peaceful methods being just a "tactic", everyone knows that ours is not a party that says one thing and means another. Communists have never hesitated to express their views in the clearest terms.

What then is the position?

Do we say that since the ruling classes have not been known to surrender peacefully, therefore, violence and civil war are inevitable?

No. We consider that in the present historical condition, the possibility exists in many countries of achieving Socialism peacefully and of defeating attempts of the ruling classes to force civil war on the people. The possibility exists of parties and elements who stand for Socialism securing a majority in Parliament and overcoming the resistance of reaction by means of mass action. And we shall try our utmost to make this possibility a reality in our country.

In other words, peaceful methods for us are neither a creed nor a tactic. It is a policy — a seriously meant policy.

Who Practises Democracy?

As for the contention that Communists are "totalitarian" and would destroy democracy if they come to power, we need not go very far to refute it. Recent experience in our own country shows who merely profess democracy and who practise it. In Kerala, the Communist-led Ministry had, only a few weeks ago, to rely on a one-vote majority in the Assembly. Yet it never failed to accord full democratic liberties to the opposition parties. And in Orissa, a Congress Ministry, when it found its precarious majority dwindling, did not hesitate to put some of the members of the opposition in the State Legislative Assembly in prison so that its regime might continue.

In States ruled by Congress Ministries, blatant use

is made of the States machinery to ensure the success of the ruling party in by-elections. In Kerala, even in the crucial by-election to be held at Devicolum, the Communist Party in the State has decided that no Minister will participate in the campaign.

No Socialism without People's Power

To some gentlemen like Sri Shriman Narayan, all this means nothing. They demand that in order to "prove" that we are serious about peaceful methods and about democracy, we must eschew Marxism-Leninism.

What does this demand mean? It means that we should give up that philosophy which has enabled our Party to acquire its present position. It means that we should cease to be Communists and declare our faith in Sarvodaya.

One of the fundamental teachings of Marxism-Leninism is that Socialism can be established only through a revolution, i.e., conquest of power by the working people led by the working class. During the last ten years, this lesson has been driven home to the people of our country — the lesson that the bourgeoisie and landlords cannot establish Socialism, that there can be no Socialism unless the working people wield state power. To eschew Marxism-Leninism means, therefore, to eschew Socialism itself.

Proletarian Internationalism

Some of our critics have taken exception to our reassertion of proletarian internationalism. They tell us: "This shows your extraterritorial loyalty."

What, however, are the facts? No Communist Party desires to interfere in the affairs of the Party of another country. Every Communist Party is sovereign and independent in the sense that it determines its line of action on the basis of its own understanding of the situation in its country. At the same time, no genuine Communist

can subscribe to the so-called theory of "national Communism."

The bond that unites the Communist parties of all countries has nothing mysterious about it. We Communists have a common ideology — Marxism-Leninism. We have a common objective — the establishment of Socialism and Communism. We have many common tasks — the defence of peace, freedom for all peoples, defence of the gains of Socialism. Common ideology, common objectives, many common tasks — it is these that constitute the foundation of the unity of the international Communist movement. It is not surprising, therefore, that Communists of all countries build relations of fraternal cooperation and strive to learn from each other's experience.

We regard the spirit and concept of proletarian internationalism as one of the most precious assets that the Communist movement has given to humanity.

It is not an ordinary thing, for instance, that when every other party in France demands the suppression of the Algerian patriots, it is the French Communist Party alone that boldly and unreservedly supports the Algerian struggle for freedom. By acting thus, the Communists of France do not betray their "extraterritorial loyalty." They reveal themselves as the best sons and daughters of the French people — genuine patriots, as well as genuine internationalists. This is true about every Communist Party.

Despite all that our calumniators say, we are, therefore, not going to abandon proletarian internationalism. On the contrary we shall strive to constantly strengthen it.

Apart from the Preamble, our Party Constitution which was the product of extensive discussion at all levels of the Party and which was adopted at the Congress makes important changes in the structure and rules of the Party. These changes have been made with a view to broaden the leadership of the Party at all levels, to strengthen inner-party democracy as well as centralism and to facilitate our growth into a mass party.

Firm adherence to the Constitution — in letter as

well as in spirit — will undoubtedly help to consolidate the unity of the Party and enhance its effectiveness. It is a powerful instrument to overcome the defects and weaknesses of our organisation.

Our National Tasks

But a good Constitution alone is not enough to enable us to grow into a mass party. What is also needed is a correct understanding of the nature of our political tasks.

The Preamble to the Constitution defines the realisation of Socialism and Communism as the objective of the Party. It also states:

"In furtherance of these aims and taking into account the immediate tasks confronting our people, the Communist Party of India strives to unite and lead all patriotic and democratic forces in the country in the struggle for defence and consolidation of national freedom, eliminating the power of monopoly capital, removing the grip of foreign capital, strengthening of national economy, all-sided expansion of democracy and liquidation of feudal survivals and the evil heritage of foreign rule in the economic, cultural and social sphere."

These are genuine national tasks. Hence it is that it is on their basis alone that the broadest popular unity, real national unity, can be forged.

Basis of Popular Unity

During the days of British rule, our people's urge was for independence, the driving out of the British army of occupation. Therefore, the final slogan that emerged was: Quit India, the slogan that forged the broadest popular unity.

After the achievement of independence, our people desire the strengthening of their hard-won freedom. They desire that India should have a proud and honoured place in the comity of nations. They desire that the task

of national reconstruction is carried out speedily and all obstacles in its path are swept away. The increasing popularity of the ideas of Socialism reflects the growing consciousness of the people that all-sided national advance is possible only on the basis of radical reforms.

Genuine national unity can be forged only on the basis of policies which give expression to these national aspirations.

India's present foreign policy has the backing of the overwhelming majority of the people and is able to unite them precisely because it is in conformity with our national interests. Our policy of peace, our condemnation of colonialism, our opposition to the war pacts that threaten the sovereignty and independence of our country, our solidarity with the peoples of Asia and Africa — all these are acclaimed by our people. Our efforts to strengthen our friendship with the countries of the Socialist world and build relations of economic cooperation with them find such wide support among all patriotic sections because they help us to strengthen our own freedom and develop our national economy.

There can be no doubt that as long as our foreign policy reflects national urge and serves our true interests, there will be national unity behind that policy.

Discord and Disunity — Who is Responsible?

It should be noted that on certain internal issues also, broad popular unity gets forged — almost spontaneously. Thus, when Life Insurance was nationalised, when the Constitution was amended to make compensation subject to the final decision of the Legislatures, when the aims and objects of the Second Five Year Plan were formulated, there was almost nation-wide unanimity.

All this proves that only national policies can forge national unity. There can be no national unity on the basis of policies which hamper the carrying out of national tasks. And, if today, despite the exhortations of Sri Nehru, there is lack of unity in the country, the reason

has to be sought in the policies of the Government itself, policies which in vital respects are anti-popular, undemocratic and fail to reflect national aspirations and national needs.

It follows, therefore, that the forging of popular unity is impossible without determined struggles against those policies of the Government which retard the carrying out of national tasks. Those who charge us with being responsible for discord and disunity in the country seek to conceal this truth and keep the masses away from such struggle.

The Struggle for Correct Policies

The understanding given in the Preamble to the Constitution about the general tasks of the Party in the present phase of our revolution has been sought to be concretised in the Political Resolution adopted by the Special Congress.

At the very outset, it is necessary to state that this resolution does not formulate a new tactical line — a line different from the line adopted by the Party at the Palghat Congress two years ago. Life has vindicated the correctness of that line. And since the basic features of the situation, the basic policies of the Government, the basic tasks and role of the Party continue to be the same as at Palghat, we propose no departure from that line in any important respect.

For example, at Palghat and in the subsequent period we stressed the paramount importance of struggle for correct policies and in defence of the immediate interests of the people. That task not merely continues but has acquired added significance. Many of the policies pursued by the Government, policies against whose consequences Palghat warned, have not only jeopardised the targets of the plan but have inflicted colossal misery on the people. No wonder, therefore, that mass radicalisation expresses itself in massive growth of discontent, in struggles, in the desire to further weaken the Congress monopoly of power.

The fact that the Communist Party heads the Government in the State of Kerala does not in any way mean that the struggle against anti-popular policies and measures of the Government and determined resistance to them has lost its importance. On the contrary, the Kerala Government itself is a powerful instrument to wage this struggle, to demonstrate the correctness of the alternative policies put forward by our Party, in the interest of national reconstruction, to unite the people on their basis, to accelerate the process of radicalisation all over the country and to strengthen the battle for progressive policies on a national scale.

We are striving and we shall continue to strive, in alliance with all democratic forces, to carry forward the process initiated in Kerala and create further breaches in the Congress monopoly of power — through the establishment of popular democratic Governments wherever possible. There can be no doubt that every success in this struggle will strengthen the forces of democracy and Socialism in our national-political life both inside and outside the Congress, and facilitate the triumph of policies on whose basis genuine popular unity can be forged and the whole nation taken forward.

While the basic line of the Party as worked out at Palghat retains its validity, it would be incorrect to think that no change has taken place during the last two years. Changes have taken place and the new Political Resolution, passed at Amritsar, taking note of these changes, carries forward the understanding given at Palghat and formulates several new tasks, while underlining certain old tasks.

Intensify Movement for Peace

Emphasising the big victories won by the forces of peace and the growth of Afro-Asian solidarity as a powerful factor which deepens the crisis of the imperialist system, the Resolution draws pointed attention of the Party to the neglect of the struggle for peace.

It must be frankly admitted that the war danger is

underestimated in our Party and there is the tendency to forget imperialism altogether. We are so engrossed with internal issues that the threat of imperialism hardly finds a place in our agitation and propaganda. Members of the Central Committee themselves have set a bad example in this respect by not taking up such issues as the Cairo Conference, the threat of nuclear war, the war in Algeria, the threat in Indonesia, in the campaigns they conduct in the States — issues on which very broad unity exists.

There is the tendency to take our foreign policy for granted, to ignore the weaknesses from which it sometimes suffers and to minimise the activity of those who seek to modify and reverse it. There is the failure to demarcate ourselves from the petty-bourgeois left parties who scoff at the struggle for peace. There is insufficient understanding that mass activities are essential to consolidate and carry forward the foreign policy.

All Party units must see to it that these tendencies are combatted and the Party plays its rightful role in the most decisive struggle of today — the struggle on whose success depends the fate of every people, including our own.

Features of the New Situation

First, inside our country, the period since Palghat has witnessed many developments — the most significant of which is the growth of mass radicalisation and militancy. One of the most striking manifestations of this is the big swing towards our Party — more pronounced than at any period in the history of our country. The masses in increasing number are turning towards our Party not merely in States where the Party was already strong — Kerala, Andhra and West Bengal, but also in other States like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The working class is getting more united, better organised and has won a number of demands.

Secondly, the influence of the Congress is waning and it is in the throes of a deep crisis. This is seen in

the poor public interest in the Pragjyotishpur Session of the Congress, in the spectacular defeat of Sri C. B. Gupta in U. P. and, above all, in the conflicts inside every Pradesh Congress Committee. The gravity of the crisis is such that it has become the most common topic among Congressmen as well as others.

Pandit Nehru said recently that there was something "out of tune." What he failed to state, however, is that the Congress is out of tune with the people. It is increasingly failing to reflect the popular urges, popular aspirations. Naturally, when a party finds itself out of tune with the people, the scramble for the spoils of office grows ever more intense and degeneration sets in.

The present crisis in the Congress is no ordinary crisis. A product of subservience to the vested interests, it cannot be resolved by pep-talks or by expatiation on the virtues of discipline. Pandit Nehru's declaration about his impending resignation — though temporarily — which was later withdrawn is symptomatic of the depth of the crisis.

Thirdly, it is necessary to note that it is not the left and democratic parties alone who are gaining ground. A disturbing phenomenon is that at places where our Party and left forces have not yet become a powerful mass force, communal and separatist forces are gathering strength. The political and ideological vacuum created by the waning influence of the Congress is being used by parties like the Ganatantra Parishad, the DMK, the Akalis and Jan Sangh in a number of areas to buttress their own position, to divert mass discontent into disruptive and reactionary channels.

Fourthly, the political scene is dominated by the crisis of the plan — which in essence is a crisis of bourgeois policies.

Fifthly, this crisis has given the opportunity to extreme reactionary elements in our country, some of whom are directly linked with imperialists, to launch an attack on the progressive features of the Plan.

This is one of the most sinister and menacing developments of this period — any underestimation of which would be fatal for the democratic movement. That is why

the Political Resolution deals with it at some length. It states:

"These people have been carrying on vicious attacks against the public sector, demanding still greater concessions to the monopolists both Indian and foreign. They are openly advocating almost an open-door policy for penetration of foreign capital, particularly from the USA, while striving to sabotage trade with the USSR and other Socialist countries. They demand the curtailment of social service measures under the Plan, while trying to blackmail the Government to change its fiscal and economic measures still more to their advantage and to the detriment of the common people. They demand modification of the existing labour laws to suit their interests. These people openly express their hostility to radical land reforms.

"The present crisis of the Second Five Year Plan which has resulted from the policies and methods of the Government, is being exploited by these reactionary elements not only to sabotage the good features of the Plan, but also to strengthen their position and secure changes in the political and economic life of the country in an anti-national and anti-democratic direction..."

It says further:

"The anti-national line of these forces could be seen in the utterances and activities of the former Finance Minister, T. T. Krishnamachari, then the Report of the Birla Mission, the recent resolution of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The line advocated by them spells disaster to the nation and its future. It would reduce our country to the position of dependence on the imperialists abroad and monopolists at home, add to the privations and miseries of the people, and facilitate suppression of democratic rights and liberties. So they are endeavouring to turn back the wheel of Indian history.

"These reactionary forces hold a strong position in our economic life. They have powerful supporters and representatives not only outside but also inside the Congress leadership and Congress Governments. They have close links with many higher officials in all spheres.

They control many of the largest newspapers in the country. Their capacity for mischief should not, therefore, be minimised."

Sixthly, as a result of all these developments there has been a marked growth of the conflicts inside the Congress, conflicts not just over the spoils of office but over policies. Democratic elements inside the Congress and following it, have grown more vocal, more assertive.

Seventhly, in this background Kerala is playing an ever more important role. The measures taken by the Kerala Government are being sympathetically watched by millions of people in all States.

In this complex and fast-developing situation, how will the Communist Party act so that it can fulfil its role as the unifier and vanguard of the democratic forces?

Our Attitude to the Plan

The immediate struggle before our Party and before the whole country is the struggle to ensure that the aims and targets of the Plan are all realised.

There are people who say that our Party wants the Plan to fail so that the Government gets discredited. This mischievous propaganda is on a par with the stupid canard that Communists want war to promote revolution.

We know and we have stated many a time that the Plan is inadequate. We do not at all harbour the illusion that the Plan will lead to Socialism. Nevertheless, we also know that the attainment of the aims and objectives of the Plan will strengthen national economy and national independence and that if the Plan were to fail, it would mean intensification of mass misery.

Hence we are serious when we say that we stand for the fulfilment of all those targets of the Plan which are in the interest of the people. We do not subscribe to the view that because it is a bourgeois Government that has formulated the Plan, therefore, it is a matter

of no concern to us, to workers and peasants, whether the Plan succeeds or not.

The peasantry will do everything possible here and now, to increase the production of food, while continuing and intensifying the struggle for agrarian reforms.

The working class, while fighting for its immediate demands, desires in its own interest, and in the interests of national economy that factory production is increased, that nationalisation is extended and that nationalised industries are run in an efficient and exemplary manner.

The people in all parts of the country want more factories, more workshops, better irrigation facilities, more hospitals, schools, libraries and so on.

Need for Popular Intervention

All this will not, however, come of itself or by mere reliance on the promises of the Government. The aims and objects of the Plan cannot be realised without popular intervention on a nation-wide scale.

The people will have to battle against the extreme reactionaries, both inside and outside the Congress, who want to cut the targets of the Plan, who openly advocate outrageous concessions to foreign capital, who oppose the extension of the State sector, who sabotage agrarian reforms, who plead that a "suitable climate" should be created for foreign capital by "modification" of our foreign policy.

We shall ruthlessly expose and fight these forces, their friends and representatives inside the Government as well as outside, as enemies of the nation. We shall give them no quarter, for their success would imperil the freedom of our country and destroy democracy. These anti-national forces must at all costs be struck down and defeated in our onward march to India's cherished destiny.

But this struggle itself cannot be waged with success if we fail to see that these forces lack an independent

mass base. The landlord and big business interests who openly advocate anti-national policies, could have been isolated and smashed long ago but for the support they derive from their friends and allies inside the Congress and in the Government and but for those compromising reactionary and anti-people policies which bring grist to their mill.

Government and Land Reforms

In his address to the Pragjyotishpur Session of the National Congress, Sri Dhebar said:

"Let us take the problem of land. Have we been able to abolish the fear of eviction from the mind of the tenants? The farmer, wrinkled and worried, is eagerly waiting for the title to the land on which he and perhaps his old father have spent a life-time of toil, sweat and tears."

After giving this revealing picture of the situation as it exists in the year 1958, he declared solemnly that "what is needed is close touch with the tiller," that land reforms should be completed "before the end of the Second Five Year Plan" and finally that "land reform is the first step from which starts the process of revival of our rural economy."

"The first step",— which however, according to the admission of the Congress President, has not been taken ten years after the Congress has enjoyed undisputed power!

Hence it is not enough to show how landlords sabotage agrarian reforms. That sabotage is there and has to be fought. But they are able to sabotage because they are powerfully entrenched inside the Congress and in the Government, particularly the State Governments, they are able to sabotage because agrarian reforms are delayed and loop-holes are left in them which facilitate the sabotage.

Same is true about the policies of the Government in relation to big business.

Two-Sided Battle

Therefore, when we speak about the struggle for the implementation of the Plan, we have inevitably to wage a two-sided battle: against those who are openly attacking and trying to sabotage the Plan and against those who, by their policies, are putting the Plan in jeopardy and facilitating its sabotage.

These struggles are interrelated. The struggle to defeat the plans of right reaction exposes and isolates the avowed enemies of the nation as well as their allies in the Government and facilitates the broadening of the struggle for correct policies. Also every success in the struggle for correct policies weakens the very basis on which right reaction thrives.

Only by waging both these struggles in a sustained and vigorous manner will the Party succeed in uniting the patriotic and democratic forces in the country. This is the understanding that the Political Resolution gives, an understanding which must be made the basis of our political activity.

The Political Resolution also draws attention to certain major weaknesses in the Party's work.

Weaknesses in Mass Work

Our national-political campaigns are extremely weak. Even State-wide campaigns are rare. Although we have become a major national force, effective political intervention is still lacking. Even the campaigns we conduct are mostly uncoordinated and lack a sustained character. The initiative on political issues has yet to be wrested from the bourgeoisie.

Further, we have not yet been able to organise sustained and all-sided mass work. This, to a considerable extent, is due to inadequate appreciation of the new urges and aspirations that have grown among our people and that move them.

The desire for education, for libraries, for cultural upliftment and facilities for sports, for social welfare

and so on is no longer confined only to middle classes. They move workers and peasants also. To ignore these urges or to adopt a contemptuous attitude towards them reveals a narrow sectarian outlook — an outlook which hampers the Party from strengthening its links with the people.

Important in this context is our role in such bodies as municipalities, panchayats and cooperatives. Many a time we minimise the importance of such work which makes people who have voted for us lose confidence in us. The masses are hard taskmasters. They judge us by the same standard they judge the Congress by. In Kerala, it is worth remembering that our work in municipalities, district boards and panchayats played an important part in strengthening the Party among the people.

Gravest Shortcoming — Weakness of Kisan Movement

But the most serious of all weaknesses is the weakness of our work among the peasantry and agricultural workers. As the Resolution points out, this weakness of the organised peasant movement constitutes the greatest weakness of the democratic movement as a whole.

The neglect of work among the peasantry due to which the Kisan Sabhas and agricultural workers' associations have failed to grow in a period of general mass radicalisation and despite the growing influence of the Party among the peasantry is due to many reasons.

But undoubtedly one of the most important of them is the wrong and reformist concept of the Democratic Front which has gradually crept into our Party — the concept that fails to recognise that the Democratic Front must, above all, be based on the alliance of the working class and the peasantry and that, therefore, the task of building up of a mass peasant movement is one of the most important tasks confronting the Communist Party.

As long as this task is neglected, the battle for policies cannot register decisive success, the unevenness in the influence of the Party cannot be overcome, even our electoral prospects cannot materially improve. Therefore, serious efforts must be made by every State unit of the Party to turn the face of the Party towards the peasantry and to take up work among the peasantry as the most important part of its mass activity. As for the Central leadership of our Party, it has to take the initiative in working out the mass line of the Party on the agrarian front and ensure that the line is implemented.

Build United Movement

What is the perspective facing us in India today?

Conditions are becoming increasingly favourable for the development of a powerful united mass movement and also for winning many demands of the people. For years, for instance, the Government had turned down the demand for a Second Pay Commission. Yet, within a few months after the second general elections, when the demand was raised, backed by the threat of a general strike of post and telegraph workers and broad mass support, the Government had to agree to the demand. In every State, recent months have witnessed successful struggles on many issues.

In these struggles, as well as in the struggle for correct policies, our Party shall strive to unite all democratic forces in the country, including those in the Congress. Possibilities of such unity are growing. There are many spheres of common activity in the service of the people in which all patriotic elements can come together.

At the same time, we have to remember that democratic masses who follow the left parties and have already taken an advanced position have to play a special role in initiating many struggles and activities, in conducting them with vigour and determination. The unity of the left forces — left parties and progressive individuals — continues to be an important weapon to build

broad democratic unity. Our Party, therefore, will intensify efforts to forge such unity.

The period ahead is not only one of partial struggles but of sharpening conflict over policies. The crisis of the Plan and the crisis in the Congress are both manifestations of a deeper crisis — the crisis of bourgeois policies which we analysed in our Palghat resolution. As the crisis matures, sharp and swift changes in the situation may take place. Reaction in its effort to solve the crisis at the cost of the people and in its own way, may resort to desperate measures — scrapping of the progressive features of the Plan, attempt to suppress democracy, attempt to reverse foreign policy with a view to secure imperialist aid.

It would be sheer illusion, therefore, to think that peaceful path means a path of smooth advance, free from crises, free from conflicts, free from determined battle to defend democracy.

Mass Party — the Decisive Factor

In such a context, national advance is possible only if our Party is able to carry out the three-fold tasks that confront it — (1) the forging of broad democratic unity; (2) the undertaking of intense mass activity and the building up of powerful mass organisations, especially of workers and peasants; (3) and, above all, the rearing of a mass Communist Party.

Of these three closely interrelated tasks, the key and decisive one at the present moment is undoubtedly the mass Party, for on our success in building such a Party will depend the unity and effectiveness of the entire democratic movement. The main purpose of the Amritsar Congress, apart from the adoption of the Constitution, was to focus attention on the shortcomings and defects in Party organisation and to evolve ways and means to overcome them speedily.

Certain decisions in this connection have been taken by the Special Congress, decisions embodied in the Resolution on Organisation which was printed in last

week's *New Age*. It is the duty and responsibility of all units of the Party, but above all, of the Central leadership of the Party, the National Council, the Central Executive Committee and the Central Secretariat to ensure that these decisions are loyally implemented.

Essential for this is the strengthening of the unity of the Party — ideological unity on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and its application to the specific conditions of our country, political unity on the basis of the Resolution adopted in the Congress and its further development, organisational unity on the basis of the new Constitution of the Party and establishment of a comradesly and fraternal atmosphere in all units of the Party.

For an Effective Party Centre

The organisational problem has many aspects. It was not possible for the Congress to discuss all of them. But one aspect that came up sharply during the discussion is the dearth of effective leadership at all levels and also of effective cadres.

Our movement has grown. Our responsibilities have grown. But our leadership, especially the Central leadership and the leadership in the majority of States, has not grown correspondingly in maturity, capacity and effectiveness. Our methods of work — absence of specialised study, of individual responsibility on the basis of collective decisions and regular check-up — have intensified this weakness while neglect of the key task of Party education has meant acute paucity of cadres.

Further, there is lack of ideological clarity on many issues, lack of common understanding on many problems, lack of that unity of will and action which distinguishes a Communist Party and constitutes the main basis of its strength.

Besides this, there are other serious weaknesses as well. Our effective strength, except in the States of Ke-

rala, Andhra and West Bengal, is still small. The weakness of the Party is especially marked in the Hindi-speaking areas where live nearly 40 per cent of our people.

No ground, therefore, exists for complacency. We are stronger than ever before. But our strength even today is meagre in relation to the tasks that the Party has to carry out.

The most important task for the overcoming of these weaknesses is the creation of an effective all-India Party Centre which will act as the national-political Centre of the Party. By electing the National Council and forming the Central Executive Committee and the Central Secretariat and by laying down precise rules for their functioning, Amritsar has taken a major step in the direction of building such a Centre.

Combat Individualism, Establish Discipline

The building of a mass Communist Party is no easy task. It will entail hard and persistent work. It will demand the overcoming of the divergence between words and deeds, between decisions and their implementation, between Communist principles and day-to-day practice. Above all, it will demand the ideological remoulding of the Party and its being inspired by consciousness of its historic mission.

All this must inevitably be a long and continuous process. But a beginning has to be made here and now. And that beginning must take the form of combatting of individualism and establishment of discipline in the Party. This has to start from the top — from the Central and State leaderships of the Party. In this, as in every other matter, it is they who have to take the initiative and set an example.

We are undoubtedly the most disciplined Party in the country. This is admitted by everyone — especially our opponents. But we cannot rest content with that. We are, as every Party member knows, far from being as disciplined as a Communist Party should be.

For discharging our tasks, we have to become, in our own consciousness, what we have already become in the consciousness of vast sections of our people. Many of the shortcomings in our work are due to lack of this consciousness.

Tremendous responsibilities rest on the shoulders of our Party. With fissiparous and disruptive tendencies growing in the country, alongside with mass radicalisation, it is to our Party that people are increasingly looking for the maintenance and strengthening of the unity of the democratic movement and of the country.

With the growing difficulties of the Plan, the mounting burdens on the people, attacks on their standards of life and democratic liberties and rampant corruption in every sphere, it is from us that lead is expected for genuine national policies and for struggle against the evils that beset our economy, our political and social life.

With the Congress regime getting discredited, it is on Kerala that popular hopes and aspirations get more and more centred, to demonstrate how a people's Government can tackle people's problems in a people's way.

Above all, with the crisis of the present Congress leadership deepening, the need for a new alternative national leadership which will unite all that is best in our country and of which our Party will be an important constituent is becoming a historic necessity.

That is why the building up of our Party as a mass Communist Party has become a task of such decisive importance. This is precisely what the Political Resolution of the Amritsar Congress emphasises in its concluding section:

"The fulfilment of these democratic tasks and the cause of national advance depend on the emergence of the Communist Party as a mass political force — a Party which will unite and rally the popular masses by its initiative in every sphere of national life and by its resolute leadership of the mass struggles.

"The Special Congress of the Communist Party of

India calls upon every unit and Party member and all friends of the Party to exert their best endeavour to build up such a mass Communist Party, all the time expanding to ever new areas and acquiring new strength from the people. The members of the Party must come out as the staunchest defenders of the interests of the people and the country. They must prove by their selfless work, initiative and sacrifice that the Communist Party is the most uncompromising fighter for world peace and defender of our national independence, the builder of the unity of the entire nation and the organiser of the masses in their onward march towards Socialism and a joyous and prosperous life."