

DANGE UNMASKED

**REPUDIATE
THE
REVISIONISTS!**

4 WINDSOR PLACE, NEW DELHI-1

DANGE UNMASKED

PRICE : Re. 1.

**REPUDIATE
THE
REVISIONISTS!**

4, WINDSOR PLACE, NEW DELHI-1

DANGE
UNMASKED

REPUDIATE
THE
REVISIONISTS!

WINDSOR PLACE, NEW DELHI-1

FOREWORD

We are printing here Dange's Letters written in 1924 to the then British Government offering his services as an agent and other connected material from the files preserved in the National Archives (now with the Home Ministry) as also all our statements in this connection including the appeal by 32 members of the National Council to the Party members to reject the leadership of Dange and his group and defend the unity, honour and integrity of the Communist Party. We have also included in this collection three notes—one by Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, who was also co-accused in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, and the others by two Communist members of Parliament, Comrades Umanath and K. Anandan Nambiar. All the three, along with a number of others had examined the files and given their impression in their notes. Also included is a letter which Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad wrote to the Secretariat of the National Council of the C.P.I. on the same subject.

The principal object of our publishing this material is to make it available to Party members and the general mass of people so that they can carefully go through them and arrive at their own independent conclusions. Dange and his group which control the majority in the National Council have persistently refused to discuss this question, come to some decision on it and then place that decision before the entire Party and the people. The reasons for this are not very difficult to see. Dange, in desperation, has deliberately pushed into the forefront the long-standing and acute ideological, political and organisational problems facing the Party in order to cloud the issue which has today put him in the dock. As for Dange's political followers in the National Council, their outlook has become totally partisan and faction-ridden and they

are afraid of even defending their political-organisational line without Dange at their head. Hence their clumsy attempt to burke the issue and raise the bogey of split and disruption of the Party for which Dange and his group bear the prime responsibility, particularly during the last two years when they have been systematically preparing for it.

However, we do not here propose to take all the ideological-political-organisational issues and differences and the consequent inner-Party crisis that has arisen. We will deal with them separately.

The Dange group which commands a majority in the National Council unashamedly argues that there is no *prima facie* case against Dange. The existence in the National Archives of the four letters which Dange has written is a fact. That a volume of correspondence, reports of the then Bombay, U.P. and Central Governments during the years 1922-27 dealing with the political and personal assessment of Dange and his four letters, etc., exist in several files in the National Archives is another fact. All this material including the letters has been part of the Government records with proper index files printed in the Government Press, Simla, for the period 1922-27. Nobody who has seen these files so far, even including those who have raised the question of "discrepancies", etc., have been bold enough to assert that these letters and the connected records have been planted in the Archives in the recent past. What else can a *prima facie* case be than that the Dange Letters exist in the records? A *prima facie* case is nothing but a case "at first sight" or "based on the first impression." It is for Dange and his defenders to prove that the Letters are not genuine but forged. But to deny the existence of a *prima facie* case is either to evince ignorance of what a *prima facie* case is or a deliberate and dishonest attempt to evade facts. It is important to note in this connection that unlike the Secretariat Statement of March 13, 1964, the resolution of the Dange group dares not categorically assert that the letters are forged. Many of those who have been supporting Dange, even on this

issue, admit in private that the letters are genuine but they were written forty years ago. Some among them also try to find excuses for his writing them then.

Dange and his defenders have been busy trotting out all sorts of flimsy excuses to deceive the gullible and to make out that the letters are not genuine and that they were forged and planted by the British. For this, they rely heavily on the so-called "discrepancies" among which they have chosen as the central and key one the discrepancy in the spelling of Dange's first name—in the first two letters it is signed with "d" as 'Shripad' and in the other two with "t" as 'Shripat'. According to them this is a vital difference since 'Shripad' is a brahmin name and 'Shripat' a non-brahmin name. We have been told by various authorities that there is no substance in this contention. Apart from that, it is not very difficult for any impartial and unbiassed observer to get at the truth of the matter. From the files it can be found out that the prosecution in filing the plaint had written "King Emperor vs Shripat Amrit Dange." Similarly in the case of Nalini Das Gupta his real and original name was Nalini Kumar Das Gupta. But the prosecution in filing the plaint had written "King Emperor Vs Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta." These are facts on record. It is for Dange to explain why he did not challenge the prosecution for this inaccuracy in his name—such a glaring mistake which straightaway downgrades Dange from a brahmin to a non-brahmin. Similarly in the case of Nalini Das Gupta it is not for us to explain why he was reconciled to the change in his name from "Kumar" to "Bhushan" and why he signed the records in connection with the case with the name of Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta. Evidently Dange was trying to conform to the prosecution version of "Shripat" in two of his letters written to the British Viceroy while in the earlier two he had signed as "Shripad". It is again not for us to give an explanation as to whether the prosecution was led to believe that "t" and "d" could be substituted for each other, or whether they were ignorant of the fact that "d" alone was correct and "t" transformed the name into a non-brahmin's or whether Dange himself was reconciled

to the use of either "d" or "t" without reading the grave meaning that he is now reading into it.

Dange as late as in 1962 clandestinely purchased shares for Rs. 30,000 in the company owning "Patriot" and got his name hidden under the pseudonym of "S. Amrat". Note, it is not even "Amrit" as usual, but "Amrat". When caught redhanded he offers silly explanations. Is it surprising that he is capable of resorting to any trick that suits his purpose?

In any case, it is futile to rely on this so-called discrepancy of "d" and "t" to straightaway refute these letters and claim that they had been forged and planted. Four full letters written and signed in his own hand amply demonstrate their genuineness. Are we to naively believe that a forger who is expected to be doubly careful in forging any document committed this error of signing the name with "t" instead of "d"? Any clumsy attempt whether by Dange or his followers to escape from this sordid episode of the letters offering his service to British imperialism, cannot succeed in the face of the voluminous records of the Government during the period 1922-27 dealing with the assessment of Dange and also with his letters.

The very learned apologists of Dange, Smt. Renu Chakravarti and Sri Homi Daji, who are at great pains to whitewash the whole episode and to call the letters forgeries, argue that the general tenor of the handwriting of the other letters (other than that of May 24, 1924) appears to be *prima facie* different from Dange's handwriting. This is totally untrue and completely untenable. While these two tacitly admit that the May 24th letter is in Dange's handwriting, Dange and the Secretariat deny all the letters. Dange does not admit that he wrote even the May 24 letter for transfer to Bombay Jails. And the Secretariat has rubberstamped this assertion of Dange's in its statement of March 13, 1964. Are we not to conclude from this that Dange and the Secretariat are mortally afraid of admitting the genuineness of the first letter because that will be

ample evidence of the genuineness of the other three letters? Is it not strange that when all the convicted in the conspiracy case wrote letters demanding transfer to jails of their respective states and all of them are preserved in the records in their originals, only Dange pleads that he has not written any such letter and the one in the files regarding his transfer is a forged one? Let Dange and his defenders approach the Home Department to get photostat copies of all the four letters and place them before all Party members and the public and let them judge. As far as we are concerned, we have taken scrupulous care to compare the handwriting of Dange in those letters and are fully convinced that the formation of the letters of the alphabet and all other peculiarities and nuances of the hand conform cent per cent to Dange's handwriting.

Another "big discrepancy" Dange & Co. is making out is as regards the estimation of Dange by the then British Government. They seize upon some stray remarks. They, for instance, quote a remark of T. Sloan, "The desire for release on the part of these two prisoners does not appear to be activated by any motive of genuine repentance" and another remark of his that ".....in view of his past activities, it is extremely doubtful if it would serve any useful purpose..." A third remark that is quoted is of D. Petrie that M. N. Roy had been disconcerted by the results of the Cawnpore case and the Government would be merely playing into his hands if it condoned the conduct of men who lent themselves to Roy. From these stray remarks, the apologists of Dange are trying to build the case that Dange was considered by the then British Government as a "big conspirator", a "selfless patriot" and a "great revolutionary". It is rather a poor attempt.

All the records of 1922-27 containing a number of reports from the Bombay Government, the Central Intelligence, the Central Home Department and the Chief of Central Intelligence go to amply explode this myth. To cite only a few examples, the Bombay Government's Home Department writes its opinion to Mr. Crerar, Home Secretary, that no action is necessary,

that Dange's writings contain very little of anti-British and if carefully followed he will be a very good source of information. Mr. Kaye, then Director of Central Intelligence, observes that Dange in his letters to Roy while promising assistance to further his revolutionary activities "shies at the illegal part" of the activities, that he covers his shying at illegal activities by fine phrases which is only a confession of his personal cowardice, that of late Dange is getting nervous, that from all reports he (Kaye) concludes that Dange is only a "worm" and he is "not worth the powder and shot" and that no action need be taken against him, it is enough if he is called by someone and given a "severe official talking", that will frighten him and that "Dange is not the stuff of which revolutionaries are made." These and similar remarks are not made on any casual observation by some officers. On the contrary, this assessment of Dange was based on a series of reports from different sources of the Government and it was on the basis of these reports that Kaye as Director of Central Intelligence and other Home Department officials evaluated Dange. To conclude, the overwhelming evidence on record goes to debunk the story of Dange and his apologists that Dange was considered a "staunch revolutionary." These are nothing but the desperate attempts of a drowning man to clutch at any straw to save himself.

Strangely enough, Smt. Renu Chakravarti, in an article in NEW AGE Weekly, goes to the length of citing a book written by Mr. Kaye in 1926 and another compiled by the Intelligence Bureau of the Home Department in 1933. Is it not elementary knowledge that the officers who wrote these books would not reveal their spy, but on the contrary, would try to present a glowing picture of him? Is it Smt. Chakravarti's contention that these officers, quite contrary to their earlier assessment and voluminous records, suddenly made a *volte face* and saw a "fiery revolutionary" in Dange? The answer should be obvious to any unbiassed person. So much for the so-called "discrepancies."

Dange and his friends have been asserting that these

documents were forged by the British Government in 1924. It always is the case that forgeries are made to be used. May we ask Dange and his friends: how is it that the British Government continued to rule India for full twenty-three years after that and yet did not once use the letters to discredit Dange and thus disrupt the C. P. I.? May we also ask why the Government of independent India which has these files in their possession for seventeen years by now did not once use them against the C. P. I. or to discredit Dange? It is not difficult to find the reasons. These were not forgeries, nor were they meant to be used as such. These were genuine letters offering services to British imperialism and the powers-that-be have been systematically using them in the manner most suited for their purpose. Funnily, the Secretariat statement of March 13, 1964, cites the instance of the forged "Zinoviev Letter" and tries to draw a comparison between that and the Dange Letters. But how does the Secretariat explain the fact that the "Zinoviev Letter" was forged with a specific purpose and used for that specific purpose of overthrowing the Labour Government of Britain and defeating the Labour Party in the General Elections that ensued, while the Dange Letters were "forged", forgotten and left behind in the files for the Government of India to keep them in the Archives?

May we also ask Dange and his group who are not tired of repeating the story of forgery why this forgery was directed only against Dange among all the accused in spite of the fact that according to the official assessment a comrade like Muzaffar Ahmad, accused in the Conspiracy Case, was considered recalcitrant and a stubborn revolutionary.

Another excuse that is being trotted out by some is that Dange was after all young when he wrote these letters and that later he has had a big record. Those were the days when, inspired by the Great October Revolution, Communist Parties were taking shape in many countries, when dedicated young men and women were coming forward to build proletarian parties in their own countries. They were fully aware of the

great hardships they would have to face, they were all ready to make the supreme sacrifice for their cause. They marched forward baring their chests to imperialist bullets and embracing the gallows with cheerful faces. For a young man at that stage to show cowardice was to prove that he is not made of the stuff of which revolutionaries are made. It is impossible for such a person to grow into a staunch revolutionary. One can sympathetically understand if at any time after this sordid surrender, Dange had confided to the Party and requested for pardon. Not only did he not do any such thing but even now he shamelessly asserts they are forgeries.

Dange's later record proves he did not grow into a revolutionary. This will be clear if his life in the forty years since then is examined. We will examine this record of forty years in full in our subsequent writings. For the present let us take only some important aspects. Those who try to make out that these have been years of only "suffering" and "sacrifice" in the cause of the working class movement are falsifiers of history. All the talk about the seventeen years he spent in jail after 1924 cannot prove anything. The ruling classes have never been known to be foolish enough to unmask their own agents by leaving them out when other leaders of the Communist Party are arrested. There have been even cases in the history of the international movement where the ruling classes have ordered the torture of their own agents along with others to avoid suspicion. Also, these agents are placed amongst other leaders in jail so as to collect information and sow disruption wherever possible.

Dange at the time of the Meerut Conspiracy Case played just this role of disruption and was expelled from the Party then by the comrades who were implicated in the Case. From 1928 to 1936 he was not even a primary member of the C. P. I. That he was among the last to be released in 1943 is cited to show that he was a patriot and nationalist and that he was opposed to the People's War line of the Party. This also is a travesty of truth. Apart from the fact that several detenus from Punjab like Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet

and others were released in 1944, much later than Dange, those who were in the Deoli Detention Camp still remember that Dange was among the most vocal in pledging and canvassing support to the war efforts of the British. It is futile, hence, for Dange and the Secretariat to tell us or anybody else about the number of years he has spent in jail or about his patriotism and nationalism. We shall return on another occasion to what role he played during the 1950 crisis in the Party and since then, particularly in building the AITUC as virtually a personal estate of his.

Finally, Dange and the Secretariat are trying to confuse issues by saying that those who have raised charges against him are violating forms and discipline and breaking the unity of the Party. Many of us who have raised these charges against Dange have been in the Party for more than two decades, some for even three and four decades. Not in all these years has anyone of us been guilty of the charge of indiscipline and violation of forms. What about Dange himself? Not once but many times he has violated all discipline and forms, not once but many times have leading bodies castigated him for this. He was once expelled from the Party for such crimes but even after his readmission into the Party he has continued to be the same. To cite only a few instances, after the National Council had decided that the state units of the Party should not fight each other on the question of border disputes, Dange openly came out against the Gujarat unit of the Party and even led a satyagraha against Karnatak on the question of Belgaum. At the meeting of the Central Executive Committee in Calcutta during September 1959, he was censured for violating Party decisions. His reply to that was to organise a public meeting in Bombay to declare that the Party was always making mistakes while he alone had always been correct. He was sharply pulled up and publicly censured for this at the later National Council meeting in Meerut but he has persisted even after that in his theme song of disruption.

It is not we but Dange and several others around him

who have a record of violation of discipline and forms, by issuing press statements against the Party policy, organising leakages of inner-party discussion in the Secretariat and Central Executive Committee, etc. Even today we would not have come out openly if it had been only a question of the political line of the Party. We have had to come out because the integrity of the Party was in question, because the Chairman of the Party was seen to be a person who had offered his services to imperialism, because a leading body like the Secretariat tried to shield him and harbour him in the leadership, and because no concern was being shown for convening meetings of the Central Executive and the National Council. In such a situation no honest Communist can remain passive in the name of discipline and forms. Discipline and forms are meant for building the Party as a revolutionary party, not for destroying it. We believe we have done the right thing and we are confident we will have the support in this of all honest Communists.

Dange and his like are busy bragging and prattling that they alone are observing party norms and forms while their opponents are discarding all discipline. Obviously enough they raise the question as to why Comrade P. Ramamurti and I did not raise this Dange letters issue in the Central Executive Committee of January 1964, when we were in possession of the copies of these letters, and why we had come out in the open without raising it inside the Party Committee. They go further to slander us as having organised the publication of these letters through the notorious anti-Communist weekly CURRENT. Let us say a few words about it.

May we ask these gentlemen: what sort of Party norm and form is it, according to you, to have organised a country-wide campaign through the press and party organisation still under their control that the Dange letters are nothing but a forgery by the British imperialists? Why has the rump of the National Council, after our protest and walk-out, passed a

resolution appointing a commission of enquiry? Why did it not dare to pronounce its verdict of forgery on these letters? Does the resolution of the so-called National Council on the Dange letters entitle any party member to propagate that these letters are forged, etc., when the Commission, packed mostly with Dangeites, has not begun its enquiry? Are we not to understand that this enquiry commission is devised as an eyewash to hoodwink the party members and the public? In that case it is outright cheating and dishonesty. If the contents of the resolution and the appointment of the commission are genuinely motivated, it would be gross indiscipline to propagate the lie that the Dange letters are a forgery—a verdict the National Council has not pronounced.

Then coming to the issue why we did not raise the issue of the Dange letters in the Central Executive Committee meeting of January 1964, we have nothing to add to what is clearly stated by us in the National Council meeting on April 10, 1964. It is our firm opinion that it would have been highly irresponsible to raise the issue of these letters without verifying their existence or otherwise in the files of the National Archives and without ascertaining the authenticity of these documents. Merely coming into possession of any papers implying serious charges involving party members and leaders does not entitle any comrade to formally raise it in the Central Executive Committee. That would tantamount to slandering colleagues if the letters happen to be somebody's invention. We were completely correct in not raising it at the January Central Executive Committee meeting and patiently trying to get at the truth before we raised it.

It is a dirty slander to say that we have tried to utilise CURRENT to get these letters published. It is natural for people like Dange and his accomplices to indulge in this type of wild accusations, because it has been their age-old practice to use anti-party weeklies and dailies such as LINK, MAINSTREAM, PATRIOT and the like to maliciously malign their inner-party opponents and organise leakages of inner-

party discussions, often distorting the positions taken by many of us. We have no need to resort to this heinous method of getting it published through CURRENT as a number of weeklies in different languages published by comrades sharing our political opinions, with a total circulation of more than seventy-five thousand have been at our disposal to get the letters printed and published. In fact the publication of the letters by CURRENT did not allow us adequate time and effort to get them verified in the National Archives. It was full ten days after the publication of these letters in CURRENT that we had to hurriedly get at the records of the National Archives on March 16, 17 and 19, 1964. This crude attempt to make capital out of the hostility of our party members to the notoriously anti-Communist CURRENT does neither save Dange nor convince any honest party member about our alleged complicity with it.

It is ridiculous for Dange and the Secretariat to ask us why we had gone to the public through the press, without first raising it in the Central Executive Committee or the National Council. It is for them to answer : why did the Secretariat rush into public with a statement even without caring to know about the existence and nature of these letters in the Archives ? Why was it so audacious as to not only call them forgery without the least attempt at verification but also slanderously implicate their political opponents in the Party ? Why did not Dange or the Secretariat exhibit the elementary Party sense of calling an emergent meeting of the Central Executive Committee and the National Council to tackle this for full 20 days after the publication of the letters in CURRENT ? They have no answer to these. The real grouse of Dange & Co. is that our public statement foiled their attempts through their 'influential' friends to hush up the records if possible. Let nobody be deceived by these tricks of Dange and his group. Perhaps they would have succeeded in their game if we had not gone to the open press on March 26, and made it a hundred times more difficult if not impossible to hush them up.

The question may well be asked as to why after knowing so much about him, we agreed to have him as the Chairman of the Party in April 1962. We do not know whether it is known widely, but it is on record that for full three days, some thirty of us in the National Council resisted the proposal and only when it became clear that the alternatives were either accepting Dange as Chairman or breaking the Party that we accepted the proposal with great reluctance. We would certainly self-critically examine whether this was correct in the light of later developments, but that is not the point here.

Within seven months of being elected as Chairman, Dange brought the Party to the brink of a split not because of the political line alone but because of the unheard of practice of issuing a statement, on his own, contrary to the decisions of the Secretariat and behind the back of the General Secretary who was in Delhi and available for discussions. Since then he has behaved as the leader of a faction which has the Party machine in its hands and if today the Party is facing a serious crisis it is he and his yes-men who are solely responsible for it. It is they who are splitting the Party and all the mud they throw on us cannot stick.

Finally, the question of the Dange Letters is not something which concerns only the Communist Party. It concerns morality in the whole political life of the country. It is necessary that in such a situation the Home Department allows photostat copies of these letters to be taken and the issue be judged by Party members and the people.

Before concluding these introductory observations of ours, we have to say a few words on the so-called "Commission of Enquiry" that Dange and his hangers-on in the National Council have set up. This can be called neither an impartial and agreed body for enquiring into the matter nor a body representing the National Council. It is a Commission filled mostly with Dange's political-organisational accomplices with maybe one or two exceptions. It is futile to expect any

justice from such a body, the members of which by and large, have already taken up the position that there is no *prima facie* case, that the letters are more or less not genuine and who were party to the summary suspension of about half the Central Executive Committee and one-third of the National Council. We hope that all honest members of the Communist Party will see through the game of Dange and his group and put these disruptors and splitters in their proper place and boldly march forward to extricate the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement from the clumsy conspiracies of Dange and his associates.

4, Windsor Place,
New Delhi,
April 25, 1964.

M. BASAVAPUNNIAH

THE LETTERS

I

Cawnpore Distr. Jail
24th May, 1924

To
The District Magistrate,
Cawnpore,
Submitted
for orders.

Sir,

I, Shripad Amrit Dange, hereby, beg to put before you the following petition for favourable consideration. I have been sentenced by the Session Judge Cawnpore to four years rigorous imprisonment. I do not belong to United Provinces and have been brought here, under warrant, from Bombay. I wish to be returned to the Bombay Presidency for following reasons.

The climate of this province is not suited to my health. This province is too hot for me now and will be too cold later on — such is not the case in Bombay or Poona City, where I have passed the greater part of my life.

I do not know the language of this province and it causes me much inconvenience in my conduct towards officials, high and low. It is difficult for me to make myself understood, for example, to the warders or convict overseers appointed to be with me. And moreover, it is some consolation to hear ones own language spoken about to hear “suffolk people talking Suffolk.”

My family relations and my friends are in Bombay. The Jail rules allow interview at fixed period. But, if I am kept in this province, myself will not get the advantage or my family relations will be able to take advantage of this rule, as this place is too far away and my relations, being not rich, cannot afford to spend much money on the journey every time.

They are also trying to file an appeal on my behalf and want to make arrangement under my instructions, from

Bombay. If you would kindly transfer me from here to the Poona Central Jail (Yarrowada Jail) or Bombay they can facilitate arrangements of Appeal by interviewing me, with the permission of the authorities very easily without loss of much time and money, to which they will be put by my being far away from their place. Taking these things into consideration, will you be pleased to concede to my request and oblige.

Your Obedient Servant,
Shripad Amrit Dange

Sentence under
Section 121 A. I. P. C.
No. 1333, Dated 26.5.24.

Forwarded to the District Magistrate Cawnpore for favour of disposal.

XVIII
197
7917
26.5.24.

W. S. Willimore
Lieut. Col. I.M.S.
Superintendent Jail
Cawnpore
26.5.1924

II

File No. 421-Poll (Home Deptt.) — 1924

To
The District Magistrate,
Cawnpore.

Sir,

We, the undersigned, beg to inform you that we are willing to give an undertaking to Government not to commit any more offences, for which we are at present convicted and we shall be thankful to Government if they will deign to consider our request favourably and release us as soon as possible, as we are undergoing suffering which we cannot sustain. We shall be personally thankful to you if you will arrange with Government for our petition being granted.

We are,
Your Obedt. Servants,
Shripad Amrit Dange
Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta.

2

District Jail,
Cawnpore
7th July 1924.
No. 1707, dated 8.7.24

Forwarded to the District Magistrate Cawnpore for favour of disposal. Prisoners were transferred to Sitapore and Gorakhpore on 7.7.24.

W. S. Willimore
Lieut. Col. I.M.S.
Superintendent Jail
Cawnpore.

Forwarded this in original with a covering docket to Commr. Keeping copy for file.

J. Crerar
8.7.24

III

From

J. R. W. Bennett, Esqr., I.C.S., M.L.C.,
Secretary to Government, United Provinces

To

The Secretary to the Government of India,
Home Department (Political)

Subject: Dated Allahabad the 19th September 1924.
Petition from two prisoners in the Bolshevik
Conspiracy Case praying for their release.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of the
Judl. Government of India, Home Department (Political),
(Criminal) letter No. D. 2556-Poll., dated the 9/11th August,
Department 1924 communicating the orders passed on the petition
mentioned above.

3

2. I am now to forward for the information of the Government of India a separate petition from one of the two prisoners viz. Shripat Amrit Dange, dated the 28th July, 1924, that from the other prisoner Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta having already been submitted with this Government letter No. 4013 dated the 7th August, 1924.

File No. 421-Poll (Home Dept.) — 1924.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most Obedient Servant,
Sd./-
for Deputy Secretary.

C/O The Superintendent
District Jail,
Sitapur (U. P. of A. O.)

From

Shripat Amrit Dange,
Prisoner,
(4 years R. I. under Sec. 121 A. I.P.C.
In the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case of Cawnpore)

To

His Excellency the Governor General in Council.

Your Excellency,

I am one of the four in the Bolshevik Conspiracy case of Cawnpore. I beg to put forward for your Excellency's consideration a prayer for the remission of my sentence for following reasons.

In submitting my prayer I have to refer to certain fact, which your Excellency may not be cognisant of; but Your

Excellency can verify their truth by referring to Col. C. Kaye, Director Central Intelligence Bureau or to the persons mentioned hereinafter.

When the above referred case was proceeding in the Lower Court Mr. Ross Alstron, the learned Counsel for prosecution happened to have a side talk with me, during the course of which he remarked, Government is not very particular about the punishment of the individual accused. The case is instituted only to prove to a doubting public the truth of Government's statements, made from time to time as to the existence of Bolshevik Conspiracy in India. I think the learned Counsel is not likely to have misrepresented Your Excellency's Government's policy, as he was in too close a touch with Government's officials to have mistaken Government's intentions. As the position of Your Excellency has been vindicated by the verdict of the Court, Your Excellency may not mind remitting my sentence and granting my prayer.

I might also refer to another incident. Exactly one year back, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, of Bombay Mr. Stewart was having a conversation with me, in his office, regarding my relations with M. N. Roy and an anticipated visit to me of certain persons from abroad. During the course of the conversation the Honourable officer let drop a hint in the following words, the full import of which I failed to catch at that moment. Mr. Stewart said, "you hold an exceptionally influential position in certain circles here and abroad. Government would be glad if this position would be of some use to them." I think I still hold that position. Rather it has been enhanced by the prosecution. If your Excellency is pleased to think that I should use that position for the good of Your Excellency's Government and the country, I should be glad to do so, if I am given the opportunity by Your Excellency granting my prayer for release.

I am given the punishment of four years' rigorous imprisonment in order that those years may bring a salutary change in my attitude towards the King Emperor's sovereignty in India. I beg to inform Your Excellency that those years are unnecessary, as I have never been positively disloyal towards His Majesty in my writings or speeches nor do I intend to be so in future.

Hoping this respectful undertaking will satisfy and move Your Excellency to grant my prayer and awaiting anxiously a reply.

I beg to remain,
Your Excellency's
Most Obedient Servant,
Shripat Amrit Dange.

Endorsement No. 1048, dated 31.7.1924.

Forwarded in original to I. G. Prisons U. P. for disposal.

Sd./- W. P. Cook
Col. I.M.S.

Superintendent Jail.

Seal of I. G. Prisons 13070

Dated 1.8.1924.

FROM HOME DEPTT. POLITICAL

File No. 278/25 of 1925 Page 2 (Corres).

INSPR. GEN.
PRISONS, U. P.

Received
20 Nov. 1924

Regr. No. 19573

SEAL

From

Shripat Amrit Dange, Esqr.
Distr. Jail,
Sitapur (U.P.).

To

His Excellency,
The Governor-General-in-Council.

No. 2157
of Sitapur Jail
the 19-11-24

Submitted in
original to the
Inspector General
of Prisons, U. P.,
Lucknow
in continuation
of this office
endorsement
No. 1048
D/31-7-24

Your Excellency,

Pending my appeal before the Hon. High Court, Your Excellency's Government were not prepared to take into consideration my petition, dated 26th July, 1924, re. remission of my sentence, in what is known as the Bolshevik Conspiracy Case of Cawnpore. The decision of the Government was conveyed to me in their communication No. 5718/VI — 1376 D/ Nainital 11-10-24 forwarded with the endorsement No. 22594/E 37 of 24 D/21-10-24, of the Inspector General of Police, U.P.

My appeal having now been dismissed, I beg to bring the same petition to Your Excellency's notice for consideration and await favour.

I beg to remain,
Your Obedt. Servant,
Shripat Amrit Dange

16th November 1924

The I.P.I. letter referred to is put up in original, return requested. They were both written before the receipt of the information given in Secretary of State's telegram, which apparently means that Jotin Mitter's departure for India is indefinitely postponed—probably abandoned. The letter suggesting "counter-action" has not yet been received; but I should suppose that it suggests the use of Regulation IV against Roy's agents in India: a mere refusal of passports could not be characterised as "counter-action". If Roy is, as the Secretary of State's telegram says, relying on correspondence to secure the attendance of the "Indian Communist Party's" representative at Berlin, it is unlikely that he will get them, for a number of letters from him, inviting representatives, has lately been intercepted and has not reached the address. It is, I think, pretty evident that Roy's communications with India are not working smoothly and some, at least, of the agents whom he believes to be in India are not there in fact; his information is, in some respects, out of date and inaccurate owing, I think, to the insecurity of his post to India. Dange seems to be losing heart, as a conspirator—his paper, the "Socialist" has been more moderate lately and I have seen correspondence showing that the communists in Lahore and Calcutta are complaining that he has failed them. Roy does not know him personally; only by reputation, chiefly of Dange's own making—my own information is that Dange is not the stuff of which revolutionaries are made. I do not think he will go to Berlin, even if an invitation reaches him; and Singaravelu (of Madras) has already once definitely refused to go. I think the odds are pretty strongly against Roy getting an Indian contingent for the "Special World Congress" from India, sent ad hoc, and that his invitation will share the fate of those to the Moscow Conference, when Roy himself was the sole Indian representative....

C. Kaye
7/2/23.

1) Note by C. Kaye, 27.7.1923

I think that the views of the Government of Bombay should be accepted. I have collected all the data bearing on the question of the prosecution, under the ordinary law, of the three internees, and hope to submit a detailed note, on this, in a few days. In all three cases, I think there is a strong 'moral' case, but a weak legal one: and this also applies to Dange (and to Singaravelu). The alternative is action by 'Regulation' which is of course equally distasteful to the Government of India as to the Government of Bombay. Personally, I do not think that Dange's position as "in a way public man" would make any difference to the reception by the Indian public of his internment, but all information about him reaches the same conclusion—that he is, personally, a mere worm: and this does support the belief that he is not worth powder and shot. Even the most insignificant insects, however, are often dangerous foci of infection and I think that a perusal of Dange's latest letter to Roy, which is reproduced in my current weekly report (now being printed) will show that he is decidedly infectious. The letter unmistakably acknowledges assistance, either in kind or money, from Roy, and exposes the intention of the writer to continue to work in furtherance of Roy's programme though Dange shies at the "illegal" part—a defection which he covers in fine phrases, but which is, in fact, a confession of personal cowardice. I think that a severe official talking to, by someone in authority—not a police authority—would probably frighten Dange effectively: he is quite obviously very nervous already. It should, I think, be pointed out to him that other members of Roy's Party have been interned under Regulation, and that he was only not been similarly dealt with because he is such a miserable specimen that he is not worth it, but that, if he continues to play with fire in the way that he is doing now, the only possible result will be that he will burn his own fingers badly, and will force

Government summarily to shut down his activities if he can't summon up enough commonsense to shut them down himself.

2) 4.8.1923

Mr. Kaye writes a note in which he says, "the warning proposed to be administered to Dange" should be done only after the case against the two people at Madras is completed.

3) Bombay Government Home Department writes to Mr. Crerar, its opinion as to whether any action should be taken against Dange, in which it says:

- No action necessary.
- His writings contain 'very little of anti-British'.
- If carefully followed, he will be a good source of information.

FROM PRINTED FILE

D.O. Letter from A. Montgomery, Esq., CIE, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, to the Hon'ble Mr. J. Crerar, CSI, CIE, Secretary to the Government, Home Department.

No. S.D. 113 dated Bombay the 25th Jany. 1924.

Your Demi Official No. 3412-D (Political) of the 15th inst.

The Government of Bombay have no objection to the inclusion of Dange among the accused provided there is a water tight case against him. They do not think that it would be advisable to prosecute him merely to show up the conspiracy. They still think as indicated in my D.O. letter No. S.D. 1243, dated the 16th July 1923, that he is more useful to us than dangerous. I am particularly hopeful that if he is left alone, something further may come up in the negotiations referred to in the letter from the Commissioner of Police, Bombay No. D. 1125 dated 3rd Nov. last, a copy of which was endorsed direct to the Director Intelligence Bureau. I enclose a copy for ready reference. Would you let me know your views again before you definitely decide to take action against him?

FROM PRINTED FILE

D.I.B.

I do not think that there is any legal case against Velayudhan—the best one that we could make, would be very slender. I think there is a strong case against Dange; and, in any event, it would be impossible to leave his name out; it would necessarily figure conspicuously in the trial and the fact that he himself was not included would certainly lead to the presumption that this was done deliberately, with an ulterior purpose. The report forwarded by the Govt. of Bombay, was summarised in para 4 of my Weekly Report dated 14th November 1923.

C. Kaye—31.1.24.

FROM FILE 278

Home Dept. Political

F. 278/1925 Poll

Letter from U.P. Govt. No. 69 d/6.1.1925

S.A. Dange, one of the four men convicted in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case prays that now his appeal has been dismissed his petition for remission of sentence may be considered. In July 1924, while the appeal was still pending, Dange and N.B. Das submitted a joint petition praying for release as they would not commit any more offences. This was regarded as an assurance of no value and it was considered, as the appeal was then pending, that the petitions should be rejected but H.E. considered that a reply should be sent simply saying that the Govt. of India was not prepared, in view of the fact that an appeal was pending, to take the petition into consideration. The petitioners were informed accordingly. Through the local Govt. Dange submitted a separate appeal in Sept. 1924, praying for the remission of his sentence and hinting at a willingness on his part to act as an agent for Govt. if it is thought he could be usefully so employed. It was decided, however to adhere to the previous decision not to consider the matter, until the disposal of the appeal. On the 10th Nov. 1924 the Allahabad High Court passed judgement on appeal,

upholding all convictions and sentences. Dange has now returned to the charge for his prayer for release to be ascertained. If this is to be examined it raises the general question of clemency to the convicted Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspirators as there are no prima facie grounds for treating Dange specially. Actually only two out of the four have appealed for mercy, i.e. Dange & N.B. Das. We may, in the first instance, invite the views of the D.I.B. It may be noted that it may possibly be considered politic to consider the appeal.

May we have D.I.B's views on the matter.

Sd/- (H.D. Hodge)

(Additional Deputy Secretary Govt. of India)

SEAL

INTELLIGENCE BUREAU

Rd. 20.1.1925

Dy. No. 879

HOME DEPARTMENT

FROM HOME (POLITICAL) FILE

No. 278/25 of 1925

Mr. Petrie who succeeded Mr. Kaye as Director of Central Intelligence recommends to the Government of India to reject the mercy petition for six reasons, the important of which are mentioned as :

—If released the revolutionaries will be encouraged thinking if they are arrested they will be released tomorrow.

—Secondly, the conviction in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case has convinced liberal opinion of the existence of a Bolshevik conspiracy in India. In this context, if we release Dange, those sections will feel that the Government itself considers that all this is not serious as it was made out to be.

—So the D.I.B. says 'clemency should not be granted now' and adds that, 'if after Dange undergoes half the sentence, and if the circumstances are favourable then and if his conduct in jail also was good, I will not be the person to oppose clemency, if Dange makes a petition for clemency then.

This note of Petrie to the Home Secretary is dated 28.1.1925.

—On 13.2.1925 Mr. Crerar expresses his agreement with the D.I.B. Accordingly the mercy petition is again rejected.

NOTE

—MUZAFFAR AHMAD

I have been knowing Shripat (both Shripat and Shripad are correct) Amrit Dange's handwriting for the last 42 years, that is since 1922. From that year I have been in corresponding terms with him. I was prosecuted both in the "Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, 1924" and the "Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case, 1929-1933" and was convicted and sentenced to different terms of imprisonment in both the cases. In both the cases S. A. Dange along with others was my co-accused. We lived together in the Kanpur District Jail for nearly five months and were then transferred to different jails. In connection with the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case, Dange and I lived together in the Meerut District Jail, Dehra Dun District Jail and Allahabad Central Jail for about four years and eight months. On account of this living together for such a long time I had the fullest opportunity of seeing him write. In this connection I want to make it clear that though during pendency of the Meerut trial after a certain period S.A. Dange was expelled from the Party (C.P.I.) for his anti-Party disruptive activities carried on outside through his wife and friends, yet he lived with us in the jails. So none can challenge my claim of being very well acquainted with S.A. Dange's handwriting.

After the research scholars discovered his letters written from jails in 1924 in the National Archives of India in which he prayed for mercy of the British Government of India and offered his services to that Government, the Central Secretariat of the C.P.I. issued a statement saying that the letters are forged ones. This made several of our comrades visit the archives. They came away convinced about the genuineness of the letters. I too went to the Home Ministry (where the files by then had been taken) with Comrades P. Sundarayya, M.L.A. (Andhra), A.K. Gopalan, M.P., N. Prasada Rao, Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri, L.K. Oak and Shiv Kumar Mishra. All inspected the letters and found them in Dange's handwriting. From my 42 years' acquaintance with Shripat Dange's handwriting I am

declaring with full responsibility that the letters written by him from Sitapur District Jail are in his own handwriting. The letter signed jointly by Dange and Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta on the 7th July, 1924, from the Cawnpore District Jail praying for mercy and promising to give undertaking is also in Dange's handwriting. Nalini's real name was Nalini Kumar Das Gupta (in brief Nalini Gupta). But out of ignorance the prosecution made it Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta. So when signing the joint petition with Dange he hesitated, out of habit perhaps, wrote "K" after the word Nalini. This it seems he corrected by turning "K" into "Bh". This is the reason of the thickness of "Bh". It is also to be remembered that while in Berlin, Nalini was referred to as Kumar and he actually signed his name as Kumar.

I found some of my letters in the file. Most of them were written from Rae-Bareilly District Jail. They are either on the subject of better treatment or on the subject of my transfer to the Alipore Central Jail, Calcutta. These letters are surely in my handwriting and not forged or planted by anybody.

When Lt. Col. Willimore, the Superintendent of the Kanpur District Jail, refused to forward our application to the Government for better treatment, all of us went on hunger strike in protest. On the 7th July, 1924, when we were transferred to four different jails we were on hunger-strike. But Dange and Nalini broke it immediately. Before leaving Kanpur Jail, on the 7th July, Dange and Nalini wrote their joint petition and managed with the help of jail officials to keep it a close secret from two of us. Lt. Col. Willimore, of course, willingly forwarded this application.

The four accused convicted and sentenced to four years R.I. each were Shripat Amrit Dange, Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta, Shaukat Usmani alias Maola Bukhsh and Muzaffar Ahmad.

One may enquire what happened to Dange's expulsion from the Party during the pendency of Meerut trial? Well, I was released from imprisonment on June 24, 1936. On my coming out I found Dange was already in the Party. He was released from the Hyderabad (Sind) Jail in 1935. I was told that he surrendered to the Party and was readmitted.

Here I have stated some facts for the understanding of our Party members and friends. I shall write in detail on the Dange affair after going back to Calcutta.

New Delhi.
15th April, 1964.

NOTES TO SECRETARIAT AND CEC

—R. UMANATH, M. P.

4 Ashoka Road,
New Delhi-1.
20.3.1964

To

The Secretariat, National Council
of the Communist Party of India, New Delhi.

Dear Comrades,

I am enclosing herewith a letter to the Central Executive of our party. Question of the individual apart, since it involves the security of the entire Party and revolutionary mass movement of our country, I request you to place this letter before an urgent meeting of the Central Executive. In the meantime, I request you to circulate the same to all CEC members for their perusal.

Yours fraternally,
R. Umanath

To

The Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of India,
New Delhi

Dear Comrades,

I am one of those who dismissed the story of "Dange Letters" that appeared in the CURRENT as some American-inspired stuff. On the morning of the 9th of this month, I left Tiruchirapalli by State Transport express bus for Madras to catch the de luxe for New Delhi. When the bus halted at Villupuram for half an hour, I found the CURRENT poster and the CURRENT itself displayed in a shop containing these allegations. Instantly, I dismissed it as some cock-and-bull story and some cooked-up slander about Com. Dange, by the CURRENT which is an anti-Communist paper. I did not care to read it and so I did not even purchase a copy.

But on coming to New Delhi I chanced to read the said issue of the CURRENT (the relevant article) in full. The reference numbers, the officers' names and the assertion that they are in the National Archives, for the first time, shook my earlier conviction. When I read the Secretariat statement which appeared in the PATRIOT, three or four points emerged which made matters worse.

It was obvious from the Secretariat statement that when they issued the statement, they had not even looked into the said file to verify as to what actually was there in the file. Anyway my conscience was urging me to see the files with my own eyes before coming to any conclusions. For a long time I had a mind to register myself at the Archives for the purpose of research in the national movement and of our Party's role in the same. I decided to enrol and register myself at the National Archives.

In the course of my research, I saw the files in question and the connected records in the National Archives with my

own eyes in the original. What I saw was most shocking and a shock which I did not experience in my political or personal life before.

(1) The three letters published in the CURRENT are word for word found in the file. I saw a fourth letter also by Com. Dange appealing for mercy after rejection of the High Court appeal.

(2) All the four letters are in Com. Dange's own handwriting.

(3) I saw also Com. Muzaffar Ahmad's letters to the Government for transfer, on the injustice done by the Government in the matter of fixing lawyers, and the reasons which impelled him to go on hunger-strike. My hair stood on end as I read Com. Muzaffar's letters, inspired and deeply moved by the sacred revolutionary spirit displayed by him in the thick and thin of tortuous jail life.

(4) All the detailed references given by CURRENT about various endorsements at various official levels, are found to be true. I found them jotted down on the original petition itself with connected seals, initials and signatures.

(5) I found cross references to this mercy petition of Com. Dange in various other correspondence and different files.

(6) There is enough and conclusive material to show that the Government assessed Com. Dange :

- (a) As not of much significance.
- (b) That the release would prejudice the political purpose for which the prosecution was conducted.
- (c) Release, when the appeal was pending, would prejudice the case.

(7) The Official note to Viceroy in Council on the first joint undertaking by Com. Dange and Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta remarked that since the appeal in the High Court has been filed by them, the repentance could not be taken to be genuine. And the remarks go on to state that the other two prisoners Muzaffar Ahmad and Shaukat Usmani are recalcitrant, and are even now on hunger-strike, etc.

In this letter I have given only certain pointed references. From all the mass of materials, documents, cross references and quite a number of other reports that I saw in the files in the National Archives, I am deeply convinced that :

(1) The said letters under no stretch of imagination could be said to be forged or planted.

(2) They are genuine and original and in Com. Dange's own hand-writing.

(3) Its genuineness is impossible of contradiction or challenge.

Yours fraternally,
R. Umanath

NOTE TO NATIONAL COUNCIL

—K. ANANDAN NAMBIAR, M.P.

17, Windsor Place,
New Delhi,
8th April, 1964

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Dear Comrades,

Yesterday evening I visited the Home Ministry's office and inspected the concerned files containing Dange's alleged letters along with Com. Dinen Bhattacharyya and two other MPs.

From my careful scrutiny of all four letters of Dange and the cross references that are in the files, I am convinced that all the four letters are in his own handwriting and are genuine. I compared the handwriting of Dange and his signatures with recent ones and found it correct. I have absolutely no doubt then about the genuineness of the letters.

The so-called discrepancy that in two letters he signed as "Shripat" instead of "Shripad" is not of vital character as he generally does not write his full name except on very rare occasions and therefore the use of "t" or "d" could normally occur. On this so-called discrepancy, it will be most unfair to dismiss the whole files and the connected references as false. High Government officials right from the Viceroy down to the Jail Superintendent, have referred to "Dange's mercy petition" in all their letters, notes, discussions ever since his mercy petition of 26th July, 1924. To say the whole thing as concocted for the reason that "t" was used instead of "d" in the signature is fantastic.

Another so-called discrepancy that exists is the reference of Dange's letter of 26th July, 1924 by the Government as of "28th July". On scrutiny, I found that the "26 July" was so written as if it could read as "28th" from a little distance because of a thin loop around "6". This is how the typist placed the date as "28th". This is only a trivial matter which cannot contribute at all even remotely to a dispute about the authenticity of the letter.

As additional proof, I am enclosing herewith a copy of the office note which I copied from File 278 for your information which further adds to the veracity of the letter (Home Department Political No. F. 278/1925 Poli-dated 8.1.1925-typed, corrected and signed by H. D. Hodge, I.C.S., Additional Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, bearing the seal of Intelligence Bureau). Several such references are available in Files 278 and 421.

However, in order to settle this matter finally and to derive correct conclusion about the conduct of Dange, my submission is that this matter warrants a thorough enquiry by a batch of honest gentlemen of any party, or no party, who will not be influenced by either side, so that our Party Members and people may know the truth behind it.

Yours Comradely,
K. Anandan Nambiar

STATEMENT

—*Secretariat of the National Council,*
March 13, 1964

The English weekly CURRENT of Bombay in its issue of 7th March, 1964, has published a story that it has got hold of a bunch of letters alleged to have been written by Comrades S. A. Dange and Nalini Gupta, after their conviction to four years' imprisonment in the year 1924 in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case. The CURRENT says that the alleged letters were found by some research scholars who went to the National Archives of the Government of India.

On enquiry, the Secretariat has found that typed copies of these letters are being surreptitiously circulated by some people, obviously with a view to attack the character of the Chairman of the Communist Party of India, spread vile slanders against him in order to disrupt the Communist Party and the mass movement led by it.

These vile fabrications have been produced with all the paraphernalia of so-called genuineness. They were very conveniently "discovered" in the National Archives, where the Home Department files were made available for "research" in the history of the Communist Party. It is even said that the Home Department obligingly allowed copies of the document to be made and taken out in the interest of "historical truth".

The real truth is that no such letters were ever written.

The contents of these fabrications, apart from an innocuous one relating to a request for transfer from one jail to another, purport to show Comrade Dange as offering his services to the then British Government in exchange for his release from prison. In short, the slanderous suggestion is

being circulated that the Chairman of the Communist Party was given his release on the undertaking to become a British agent.

There have been instances of astounding forgeries in history done by the ruling classes to destroy their enemies. The Communist and labour movements of the whole world have been victims of such vile attacks of slander and character assassination of leading personalities. This one against one of the most popular veterans of the labour and Communist movement in our country is of the same kind.

We cannot say when these alleged letters were forged, and if they have been planted in the Archives, when and by whom. It is a fact that just in this very period, when the Kanpur case was launched against the Indian Communists, the British Tory Government was using all its vile apparatus to malign the Soviet Government, the Communist Party and all the progressive forces who supported them. The case itself was launched at the instance of the Tory reactionaries in order to prevent the recognition of the Soviet Government for which the British people were pressing. The case was intended to show that the Soviet Government and the Communist International were trying to overthrow the British Government through its "agents" and hence it was wrong to have any relations with it.

When the Labour Government was installed in England in 1924, the Foreign Office manned by Lord Curzon's stooges forged the well-known "Zinoviev Letter" which led to the overthrow of the Labour Ministry and its defeat in the elections. Even the other day, George Brown, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, complained that the Tory lie factory of "forgeries beginning with the Zinoviev letter of 1924 and the Gestapo smear of 1945" is continuing to work even today.

The timing of the publication of these forgeries shows that a very deep game is being played by various forces against the Party and the masses.

Vile slander of this kind was first spread by the Chinese leadership through the Peking Radio that the Indian Party is a Dange clique and has become the agent of the Government in getting people arrested.

Certain disruptors who support and circulate this Chinese lie against our Party have joined hands with certain reactionaries in India in alliance with Anglo-American intelligence agents to explode this slanderous time-bomb against the Party as a whole and Comrade Dange personally. It is meant to weaken and destroy those forces who are defending the people's interests and organising the greatest movement of the masses today under the leadership of the Party with Comrade Dange as Chairman. It is a clever move to kill several birds with one stone.

These forgeries thus serve the game of all reactionary and disruptive forces, each one with its own special interest to serve, and all of whom together are trying to destroy the Party and the mass movement led by it.

The slander-mongers of the CURRENT and those who help it have tried to suggest that Comrade Dange secured his release before the expiry of the term of imprisonment. This is another lie. The facts on record are as follows: four accused were sentenced in the Kanpur Case in 1924 May—Comrades Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, Usmani and Nalini Gupta. Out of them, both Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmad alone were released prematurely, that is in 1925, on grounds of illness. Comrades Dange and Comrades Usmani served their sentences in full, deducting the usual remission that is earned under jail rules and were released in 1927.

The subsequent history of Comrade Dange and his various imprisonments in the cause of the Party and the working class completely belie all the insinuations made by

these forgeries of the reactionary forces. After Kanpur, Comrade Dange served seven years in the Meerut case. There also, he along with Muzaffar Ahmad and Usmani got specially larger sentences than the others as these three were declared to be "habitual conspirators" from the Kanpur Case. Muzaffar Ahmad was given larger sentence because he had not served full term in the Kanpur case. Comrade Dange was arrested on the outbreak of the war in 1939, convicted for publishing anti-war pamphlets and then detained in the Deoli Camp, altogether for four years. Though the Party had been legalised in 1941 and other Communist detenus had been freed, Comrade Dange continued to be detained and was released only in 1943. He has so far spent about 17 years in prison since 1924, of them nearly 14 years under the British Government and the rest under the Congress Government.

Whatever the slandermongers may do, the toiling masses of India will not forget this record of sacrifices, years of imprisonments suffered in the struggle against the British imperialists and now the rule of the monopolists in free India. Those who are trying to use these forgeries, whosoever made them or planted them, are only serving the interests of the imperialists and the reactionaries. And those who are trying to use them in the ideological or political organizational controversies inside the Party are only becoming the handmaids of reaction with a view to disrupt and split the Party and smash the mass movement. The slanderous attack on Comrade Dange as Chairman of the Party and one of the most popular, respected old leaders of the Party and the working class, serves the far-reaching aims of reaction on a national and international scale.

All decent-minded people, the whole Party, must combat and repulse this sinister and vile manoeuvre.

STATEMENT

*Secretariat of the National Council,
April 1, 1964*

The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of India is deeply concerned at the serious threat to disrupt and split the Party which has been openly and publicly made in a concerted and pre-planned manner by certain members of the Central Executive Committee and the National Council.

Several of the State Committees of the Party have adopted resolutions calling for immediate action to save the unity of the Party and to discipline the splitters.

The Central Secretariat has decided to convene an emergent meeting of the National Council on April 10 to deal with this grave inner-Party situation. Party members and supporters can be confident that the highest organ of our Party will take all necessary steps to foil the attempts at disruption and split and to vindicate the honour and integrity of the Party.

The entire Party is fully aware of the splitting activities being carried out today on an international plane at the behests of the leadership of the Communist Party of China, who have given the call for split in open and radio broadcasts. In some Parties, the Chinese leadership have already succeeded in their objective and have split them.

The Communist Party of India has been a special target of the leadership of the Communist Party of China. As long ago as March 1963, the Chinese leadership came out with its attack on the Party in the article titled "Mirror For Revisionists". The Party was denounced as an agent of Nehru and of imperialism. This attack was followed by the foul and pernicious slanders against our Party made by the Chairman of the Indonesian Communist Party in October 1963. And again in its latest call for disruption issued on February 4, 1964, the Chinese leadership has once more launched a special assault on our Party.

Each of these attacks, particularly that of February 4, is an open call for the establishment of a rival "Communist Party" of India.

The present phase of the inner-Party situation cannot be divorced from this context. For several months now, certain leading members of our Party have been actively campaigning against the Party's policies and slandering the Party's leadership. Party members are fully aware of these activities.

With the new line of open split of every Communist Party decided upon by the Chinese leadership and given expression to in their February 4 article, the supporters inside our own Party of the ideological positions of the Chinese leadership have evidently now decided to split the Indian Party also.

To that end they are now carrying on public agitation against the accepted line of the Party, organising press conferences for vilifying and denouncing the Party leadership, holding open meetings and conferences of Party members of their point of view on an all-India scale to chalk out the political and organizational tasks and future line of action of their "rival group". They have resorted to the totally unprecedented step of setting up a rival candidate to the official Party candidate in the Rajya Sabha election in Andhra Pradesh. Indeed, as some of them have admitted in press statements, they have been functioning as a separate party for some time past.

The campaign of slander launched recently against Comrade S.A. Dange is only the highpoint of these splitting and disruptive activities—the excuse which is being made for the line of split and disruption.

The Central Secretariat of the Party has already made its position clear in regard to the letters alleged to have been written by Comrade Dange to the British authorities forty years ago. The entire public record of Comrade Dange for the last forty years, the positions of trust he has held all along inside our

Party, his seventeen years in prison, including thirteen years in British jails, and the great working class movement he has built, are testimony enough of his political integrity and his devotion to the cause of our Party. The vast masses of the Indian working people, who know Comrade Dange's record, naturally treat these slanders against him with the contempt and revulsion they deserve.

No circumstances whatsoever can justify the public and open slander campaign launched by certain members of the Central Executive Committee and the National Council during the last few days against the Party and its Chairman. If there were the slightest genuine ground for their apprehensions regarding the authenticity of the alleged "letters" it was open to these members to discuss the question with the Secretariat and call for an immediate meeting of the National Council, where they could put forward any appropriate proposals. The very fact that they did not do this, but instead rushed to the press in an organised manner through a series of statements is proof of their derermination to split and disrupt the Party.

This is a moment when the entire Party is engaged in the biggest national mass campaigns in the entire history of our Party, when millions are taking part in these campaigns under the banner of our Party. Disruptive and splitting activities, slanders against our Party's Chairman at this time amount to nothing less than stabbing the mass movement in the back and betraying the struggles of the working people.

The Central Secretariat will place before the coming meeting of the National Council a detailed report on the splitting activities of certain leading Party members and will recommend drastic steps against them.

The Party can and must answer the challenge of the splitters. The unity and integrity of the Party is in peril. All Party members and units should rise to the occasion to take strong steps to save the Party from split and disintegration.

STATEMENT

—Secretariat of the National Council,
April 3, 1964

A Conference of certain members of the National Council and State Councils of the Communist Party of India coming from various parts of the country is being held in Delhi from yesterday.

A separate Programme has been published by the sponsors of the conference. Political and organizational reports are being placed before the conference. The ideological issues are being discussed. The sponsors, in their press statements, have admitted functioning for a long while as virtually a separate party.

This conference comes after the entire apparatus of a separate, rival party has been set up by the splitters—with a chain of newspapers, committees at all levels from a so-called Central Committee downwards, and the setting up of a rival candidate in the Rajya Sabha elections.

In view of this, we have no alternative but to characterise this conference as a conference of seceders from the Party, a conference to set up a new rival Communist Party. What was so long functioning as a faction, virtually a party within the Party, has now proclaimed itself as an open conference of seceders and splitters. Every participant in this conference is by the very act of his participation proclaiming his secession from the Communist Party of India.

The central leadership of the Communist Party has again and again appealed to the leaders of the splitters to give up the road of disruption and split, wind up their rival centres and newspapers, and agree to abide by the discipline of the Party.

In the interests of unity, the Party leadership has given every opportunity to the splitters to retrace their steps and has

taken no severe disciplinary measures against them. It has urged them to shut down their rival "party" which till now they have been functioning within the Communist Party of India.

Far from responding to the Party's appeals, the splitters are now holding this open foundation Conference of their party of split and disruption.

Even at this late stage, we appeal to those who seriously desire the unity of the Party to see that the conference of the splitters is disbanded here and now.

LETTER TO NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

—M. BASAVAPUNNIAH

Dear Comrades,

I am herewith sending you all available material concerning Dange's letters, the Central Secretariat's statement and the relevant press comments for your information. As far as Dange's letters and connected correspondence between different officials of that period are concerned a copy of it reached us as early as three months ago. But I thought it would not be correct and prudent on my part to talk about them without ascertaining the authenticity of this material. Yet, I had shown them to several members of our C.E.C. and promised to find out the truth or otherwise of it. Since then I have been seriously attempting to verify the truth of the existence of these letters in the National Archives from sources which cannot be questioned. In the meantime, the notorious anti-Communist weekly CURRENT got hold of the material probably from the same source which also posted it to us—and published them in its issue dated March 7, 1964. The Central Secretariat, under Dange's guidance, came out with a statement on March 13, 1964, denouncing the whole thing as forgery. I was away from Delhi from February 24 and was again there only for a day on March 10 on my way to Calcutta. I returned from Calcutta in the night of March 15. The CURRENT publication, the Secretariat statement denouncing it and the adverse reactions in political circles upset me very much, as the whole affair involved the entire Communist Party and its future. Under these circumstances there was no course left for me except to go to the National Archives and find out the truth. On March 16, I together with Comrade P. Ramamurti and another non-party M.P. went to the National Archives, obtained permission for research into the history of the Communist movement during the period from 1921 to

1933, as the records are available only up to that year. We spent more than three hours and examined the concerned files. After a thorough study and scrutiny of the files, we found to our dismay and surprise that every word and letter published in the weekly CURRENT regarding Dange's letters is absolutely true. It is evident that it is not Dange's letters that are forged and planted in the National Archives. On the contrary, the statement of Dange to which the Central Secretariat has affixed its stamp stands out as deliberate bluff. On March 17 Comrade Ramamurti once again went through the files for further details. On March 19, I together with Comrade Umanath, M.P., went to the National Archives and studied the records for more than four hours to probe the matter still more deeply. We found that all the four letters of Dange mentioned in the information document—three in file No. 421 of the year 1924 and one in file No. 278 of the year 1925—and all other connected observations by the Director of Central Intelligence, Home Secretary, etc., are cent per cent authentic. Comrade Umanath, on his own, has written a letter to the Secretariat on March 20, stating what he had seen in the Archives and demanding an emergent meeting of the Central Executive Committee to thrash out the issue. We are enclosing herewith a copy of his letter, too, in this information document.

We wish to pursue our research and find out whether the then British Government had utilised these letters in any manner in the subsequent period, if so in what manner, etc. But to our surprise, we learn that the Home Ministry is evincing special interest in these files and trying to put all obstacles and make them inaccessible even to Members of Parliament, many of whom have applied for permission to go through these records. In fact these are records thrown open to research long ago and by now several people have had the opportunity to go through them. Yet it is strange that the Government at this stage, instead of defending the integrity of the National Archives and admitting the truth of the existence of these letters against

the charge of Dange that they are forged and planted, is trying to play politics over this matter. Maybe they wish to further disrupt our Party by shutting these files from the people interested in seeing them, and thus keeping the Party in doubts regarding the existence of these letters in the Archives.

The situation is quite serious. Dange and the Central Secretariat through their press statement have totally denied the letters and denounced them as forged and planted in the Archives. The existence of Dange's letters is a fact which scores of people by now can affirm. The Home Ministry is trying to deny access to these files and keep the public guessing.* The statement of the Secretariat has convinced nobody and the revolutionary prestige and integrity of our Party is in jeopardy. The CURRENT published these letters on March 7 and by now full twenty days are over. The Secretariat issued the statement on March 13 and now fourteen days have passed by. Till now no meeting of either the C.E.C. or the National Council has been called by the Secretariat and any sense of urgency is totally lacking. In view of this, we are compelled to come out with a statement to save the prestige and honour of the Party. Hope you will appreciate the extraordinary step we have taken and do all you can do to set matters right.

With greetings

New Delhi
25th March, 1964.

Yours fraternally,
M. Basavapunniah

STATEMENT

—M. BASVAPUNNIAH, P. RAMAMURTI
At Press Conference, March 26, 1964.

It is by now widely known that the English weekly CURRENT of Bombay, in its issue of March 7, 1964, has

* Later, towards the end of the first week of April, the Home Ministry took charge of the files and allowed their inspection by members of Parliament and others.

published some letters alleged to have been written by S.A. Dange, Chairman of the Communist Party of India, to the then Government of India giving an undertaking and also offering his services. The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of India has issued a press statement on March 13, 1964, denouncing these as forged and planted in the National Archives by imperialists, Indian reactionaries and all sorts of anti-Communists. Though no prominent English daily of our country has published either the alleged letters of Dange or the statement of the Central Secretariat denouncing it, HINDUSTAN TIMES of Delhi has made scathing editorial comments on the Central Secretariat statement in its issue of March 17, 1964; The STATSEMAN in its Delhi Edition on March 21 also published a write-up on its front page on this affair. The whole issue has assumed serious significance and has become a subject of public discussion in the different political circles of the country. Members of the Communist Party and its well-wishers are very much perturbed, and confused. In fact the problem is no more confined to the Party Chairman S.A. Dange but in a way involves the entire Party.

We are fully aware that the enemies of the Communist Party do not hesitate to indulge in any foul conspiracy including forgery to discredit, disrupt and destroy the Communist movement. The notorious "Zinoviev Letter", the scandalous Reichstag Trial and the like are there before us. Equally well-known to us are the nefarious methods of reactionary Governments who indulge in planting spies and purchasing some weaklings in the Communist Parties to sabotage and disrupt them. The Communist movement could survive and forge ahead victoriously despite these vile conspiracies of the reactionaries because basing on the solid ground of Marxism-Leninism it could systematically disprove and expose these as outrageous fabrications. Similarly it could from time to time, through its revolutionary vigilance, successfully unearth the

enemy agents and purge the Communist Parties of all such despicable elements.

But the perfunctory and laboured statement of the Central Secretariat on the grave and categorical allegations made in the issue of CURRENT on S.A. Dange is neither convincing nor can it dispel apprehensions created in the minds of the public, particularly in the face of such details about the letters and their reported existence in the National Archives of India. The leadership of the Communist Party of India, built and nurtured by fearless heroes and best patriots of the anti-imperialist struggle, must feel genuinely concerned about the threat to its revolutionary organisation. One would expect that S.A. Dange himself would have asked the Central Executive Committee and National Council of our Party to go into the whole matter and offered to clear himself after thorough investigation. It is highly regrettable that he has not chosen to do this.

Still more it was the responsibility of the Central Secretariat to have placed the matter in the hands of the Central Executive Committee or the National Council. Instead, the Secretariat with no attempt whatsoever to investigate the whole matter simply came out with a long-winded explanation and a cheap denunciation which convinced nobody. The Secretariat through its hurried and hasty statement has done distinct disservice to the Party by committing the whole Party to this.

We deem it our bounden duty in the genuine interest of the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement of the working class in India that this question cannot be left in the manner the Secretariat statement sought to do. To say that these letters are 'forged' and 'p'anted' in the National Archives of India is nothing but an open accusation against the National Archives charging it as a "den of forgery and conspiracy", a challenge to the authorities in charge of the Archives,

to the Government that is controlling it, and the scores of research scholars who might have gone through these documents in the National Archives, some of whom might even possess copies of this material. It would be a calamity to the entire Party, in case the concerned authorities or other competent people accept this challenge to prove the genuineness of the alleged letters and their existence in the Archives. This course may be chosen by them at any time, as they think it opportune. Naturally, under these circumstances, we have no option left except to probe into the matter deeply.

After full enquiry, thorough investigation and a careful check-up of all available material on this issue, we are firmly convinced that the matter is of a very serious and grave character and it is highly impermissible for any honest political party to demagogically dismiss the letters as forged and planted in the National Archives by some enemies of Communism. We are further convinced that the three letters said to be written from jail in 1924—one asking for transfer to a jail in Bombay or Poona, the second jointly with Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta giving an undertaking that they would not commit the offence for which they had been convicted and asking for release and the third offering his services to the then British Government if released, are all in S.A. Dange's own handwriting, beyond any shadow of doubt. It did not end with this. There was also a fourth letter which was sent to the Governor-General in Dange's own hand-writing, requesting Government to reconsider his earlier letter pleading for his release and offering his services, after the High Court had dismissed the appeal.

In face of these facts not only has S.A. Dange, the Chairman of the Party, grossly abused the trust placed in him by the Party but he has also deliberately implicated the whole Secretariat which in turn, through its statement, compromised the entire Party before the public. In the Central Secretariat statement there is an insinuation that "those who are trying to use them

in the ideological or political, organisational controversies inside the Party are only becoming the handmaids of the reactionaries with a view to disrupt and split the Party and smash the mass movement.' Instead of feeling genuinely concerned about the integrity of the Party organisation, the Central Secretariat acts in a most partisan and factional manner, and we understand that in furtherance of its narrow aims, it intends to maliciously accuse a section of the Party with forging such letters, and even planting them in the National Archives. This attempt on its part is all the more preposterous.

That the damaging allegations against S.A. Dange should never be mixed up with the political-ideological controversies inside the Party is an elementary obligation for one and all concerned. This is a grave matter concerning the security, integrity and prestige of the revolutionary organisation of our Party, and one should react to it genuinely.

We appeal to the people and all Communists and their well-wishers not to treat the Secretariat statement as the last word on the question and thus judge the whole Party. We also appeal to all Communists not to falter and relax in their determination to lead the day-to-day struggles of the peoples in defence of their interests, due to likely confusion and frustration caused by this sad episode. We pledge to place all the facts and a full report before the Central Executive Committee and the National Council to thoroughly investigate the question and punish the guilty. We are confident that all genuine and honest members of the Communist Party of India will stand up to defend the interests and integrity of the Communist Party of India, against all threats whether they emanate from reactionary forces outside or their hirelings hidden inside the Party.

M. Basavapunniah, M. P.,
Member, Central Executive Committee.

P. Ramamurti, M. P.,
Member, Central Executive Committee.

4, Ashoka Road, New Delhi
March 26, 1964.

LETTER TO THE SECRETARIAT

—E.M.S. NAMBOODIRIPAD

Trivandrum,

29th March 1964.

The Central Secretariat,
Communist Party of India,
New Delhi.

Dear Comrades,

I understand that a special urgent meeting of the Secretariat is being held, presumably to discuss the situation that has arisen following the 'Current' report on the alleged letters by Com. Dange to the Viceroy, your statement characterising two of these letters as forgeries, the Basavapunniah-Ramamurthy statement that they are satisfied about the genuineness of all the letters, Com. Sundarayya's press conference in Hyderabad etc.

I do not know whether the Secretariat meeting will be followed by special meetings of the CEC and the National Council. Nor do I know whether you will go to these meetings with the idea of trying to salvage what remains of the Party, or to further intensify the inner-Party conflict.

An "Express News Service" message with the dateline, New Delhi, March 27, says "prominent leaders of the Rightist faction of the Communist Party met here today at the Party headquarters for five hours to discuss the situation arising out of Mr. M. Basavapunniah's public attack on the Party Chairman, Mr. S.A. Dange. It is expected that Mr. Basavapunniah will be expelled from the party for committing breach of discipline." I do not know whether this is correct reporting, but from the trend of discussions here (in the State Executive and the State Council), I am apprehensive that this may be the line taken by some among you. But the brief talk which I had with Com. Yogi during my recent visit to Delhi, followed by an equally brief talk with Comrade Bhupesh, gives me the hope that things may not be taken to such a pass.

In the light of those talks, I have today sent a telegram to Comrade Bhupesh recalling my talk to both of them and ex-

pressing my willingness to fly to Delhi immediately if my presence there at the present moment will help. While confirming that telegram, I would request you to seriously ponder over the immediate cause of the present crisis.

As I had told Com. Yogi and Com. Bhupesh I think it was totally incorrect on the part of the Secretariat to have issued the March 13th statement. After all, as the statement itself admits the existence of a file in the National Archives is not in doubt. Nor is it disputed that the file contains three letters, allegedly written by Com. Dange. One of these three, it is explicitly admitted in the statement, had actually been written by him. (A careful reading of the Secretariat statement shows it does not admit the genuineness of even this letter—*Editor*). How then could you rush to the conclusion that the others are forgeries? Did you get them examined and satisfied yourselves about the explanation offered by Com. Dange that the British forged two letters and put them along with a genuine letter? Obviously not.

The minimum that you should have done under the circumstances was to convene a meeting of the CEC, place all the facts before it and to suggest that a CEC Commission should go to the National Archives, examine the documents and report on them to the CEC. You, however, thought it necessary to dispense with this normal elementary precaution and blindly accepted Comrade Dange's explanation.

The present position is extremely difficult: here are two members of the CEC who claim to have examined the documents and satisfied themselves that they are not forged but genuine. Here, on the other hand, is the Secretariat which, even without examining the documents, has given a verdict in favour of the theory of forgery. The Party as a whole has to satisfy itself as to which of these is correct.

Involved in this question is the equally serious question as to who—yourselves, or Comrades Basavapunniah and Ramamurthy—have done incalculable damage to the Party. The charge against both is extremely serious. If the letters are genuine and not forged as is claimed by Com. Basavapunniah and Com.

Ramamurthy, then the Secretariat (the top-most executive organ of the Party) is guilty of shielding a person who reached the highest post in the party by posing himself to be a revolutionary while, as early as 40 years ago, he had offered his services to the British government. If, on the other hand, the letters are not genuine but forged, then Comrades Basavapunniah and Ramamurthy are guilty of having made a careless, prejudiced and subjective examination of the documents and drawn hasty conclusions in order to slander the Chairman of the Party. In either case, the comrades who are found guilty deserve to be given the most merciless, exemplary punishment.

I, therefore, earnestly plead with you to be above all consideration of Com. Dange's prestige, or the prestige of the other members of the Secretariat, or of Comrades Basavapunniah and Ramamurthy. The question now is the prestige and safety of the Party as a whole. The minimum that you should be prepared now is to offer to the CEC and the National Council when they meet that, before any other question is considered, a Special Commission representing all the political trends in these leading organs should go to the National Archives, examine the documents and come back with a report as to who is telling the truth. Only after a decision on this is taken can other questions be discussed. For, it is obvious, if the letters are genuine and not forged, then the whole Secretariat will have to go; the Party will have to decide what punishment to be inflicted on them for blindly supporting a person who should have no place in a revolutionary Party.

I do not want to add anything more, since I still have some hope that, at least at this late hour, you will rise above subjective and factional considerations. If, however, you fail to do that (I should plainly tell you that my experience of the last year and a half makes me rather pessimistic), I shall consider myself free to come out in public against your behaviour.

With greetings,

Yours comradely,
E.M.S. Namboodiripad

STATEMENT

—NINE MEMBERS OF THE CEC,
April, 6, 1964

Comrades A.K. Gopalan, Jyoti Basu, P. Ramamurti, M. Basavapunniah, P. Sundarayya, Promode Das Gupta, Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri, Harekrishna Konar, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, members of the Executive Committee of the National Council of the Communist Party of India have issued the following statement :

The Secretariat of the National Council of the Communist Party of India has been coming out with a spate of insulting, irresponsible and provocative statements against those members in the Party, who do not agree with the Secretariat on political and organisational questions. Hence it is not possible for us to keep silent.

Faced with the publication in the *CURRENT* of 7-3-1964 of the letters that the Chairman of the Party, S.A. Dange, is reported to have written to the British Viceroy, the Secretariat shirked its elementary duty of investigating into those letters. Instead, it came out with the story of forgery and planting of the letters. It went further and linked, without any foundation whatever, those in the Party who are opposed to the Secretariat's political line, with publication and circulation of the letters and called them names.

After this, some members of the Central Executive examined the relevant files. Many members of Parliament have also gone through these records in this period. Some leading newspapers have commented that the Secretariat's story does not carry conviction. It should be known to the Secretariat that its assertion of forgery is widely disbelieved.

In these circumstances, one would expect that the Secretariat, if it was interested in safeguarding the revolutionary honour and prestige of the Party, would take some tangible steps to investigate into the files of the National Archives

situated within a couple of miles from the office of the Communist Party of India. But for reasons best known to itself, this is exactly what the Secretariat shuns like the plague.

After all this, the Secretariat had no alternative to calling emergent meetings of the National Council and its Executive. However, without waiting for their deliberations, the Secretariat again rushes to the press in the name of the Party, hurls abuses and charges against the so-called Left, calls them splitters and alleges that they are acting in furtherance of the call of the Communist Party of China to split the Party.

All these are crude attempts to burke the very serious and inconvenient issues concerning the Chairman, S.A. Dange. The letters that he is reported to have written to the Viceroy or the acquiring by him, under an assumed name, of shares of the value of Rs. 30,000/- in the company publishing *PATRIOT* have nothing to do with inner-Party controversy on the political line. It is not known what funds were used for this investment. As is known the *PATRIOT* is used against the so-called Left. Equally worthy of note is the fact that the Central Executive Committee of the Party, some years back, had directed that no member of the Party should have anything to do with the *LINK*, a sister paper run by the same people who publish the *PATRIOT*.

As for attempts at splitting the Party, it is precisely most of the members of the present Secretariat and foremost among them S.A. Dange, who have been, over years, throwing to winds all norms of the Communist Party, rushing to the press in denunciation of Party's policies and meeting in groups to sabotage the Party's policies. Instead of directing their attack against the so-called Left, let them explain how the entire proceedings of even the meetings of the Secretariat were finding their way into the press. It is they that sought to split the Party by the illegal organisational measures they resorted to in West Bengal, Punjab and other States, taking advantage of Government's repression against the militant section of the Party.

The informal meeting of some comrades now taking place has been necessitated precisely because of these activities of the Secretariat, which have led to an unprecedented crisis in the Party. We are seriously considering how to get the Party out of this critical situation.

Evidently, the Secretariat and the Chairman S.A. Dange realise that they do not represent the majority of the Party members, who by their own experience have come to realise that the present Secretariat is dragging the Party with its glorious traditions of struggle to the path of class collaboration. Hence, they seem to be bent upon splitting the Party.

They forget that they are only the Secretariat and cannot arrogate to themselves the powers of pronouncing judgment—because that is the exclusive prerogative of the National Council. It is noteworthy that some members of the Secretariat have refused to attend its meetings and associate themselves with these statements.

We are confident that Party members would see through these attempts at shirking the real issues and no one would be fooled by them.

LETTER TO NATIONAL COUNCIL

*TWELVE CEC MEMBERS,
April 10, 1964*

Dear Comrades,

We, the members who walked out of the CEC meeting yesterday afternoon consider it our duty to explain to the National Council the circumstances which forced us to take this step.

It is universally acknowledged that the present meeting of the National Council has to tackle an extremely serious situation, unprecedented in the history of our Party.

That the Chairman of the Party is one who according to the disclosures of the National Archives is alleged to have written to the Viceroy, offering his services to the British Government is no ordinary thing. It will be easily understood that such serious disclosure, unless immediately disproved, would create a crisis in any Party in any situation at any time. For if this is proved true, then the highest post in the Party is occupied by one, who should have no place in the revolutionary movement, but who has succeeded in coming to the top of the Party by keeping the Party in the dark about his relations with the British rulers.

Many of those who had seen the letters and the connected papers are convinced that they are genuine and are not forged.

Is it not clear that the most important task before the National Council is to deal with this question of the alleged letters, set up an agreed enquiry committee to go into the genuineness or otherwise of the letters?

Instead of that, the Secretariat which did not care to look into the letters came out with a statement and called them forgeries. In the subsequent statement instead of correcting its ways, it arrogated to itself all the powers of the CEC and the National Council. It persisted in treating this to be a secondary matter and placed before the CEC the agenda with the following points in order of priority.

- (1) Resolution on the disruptive and anti-Party activities of certain leading Party members ;
- (2) Consideration of the alleged "Dange Letters" ;
- (3) Tasks of the mass movement.

A question has been raised that in judging the conduct of those who went to the press on these letters it is material and important to decide whether they were really spreading a

slander against the Party Chairman or exposing a serious unknown fact affecting the honour and prestige of the entire Party.

But, most of the Secretariat members had evidently made up their minds that the only factor which prevents the unity of the Party is what they call the disruptive and anti-Party activities of a section in the CEC and the National Council. They pretend as if they themselves have been behaving in the most correct manner. We for our part cannot accept this position. We are of opinion that the responsibility for bringing about the present deplorable state of affairs in the Party rests on the shoulders of the Secretariat.

Some of us have repeatedly put our case before the National Council, the case that, ever since the November (1962) meeting of the National Council, the Secretariat and those who support them in the National Council and in the provinces have been functioning not on behalf of the Party as a whole but of a particular faction. (Com. Bhupesh Gupta, however, has a different view on these.) It is obvious that both points of view should be thoroughly discussed within the National Council. This the Secretariat was not prepared to do. According to the Secretariat the very fact that it makes the assertion that those who oppose their points of view are disruptors and splitters is enough proof. Anyhow, the question of split and unity of the Party is too great an issue for the Party and the people to be discussed in this perfunctory and casual manner.

This refusal to listen to the voice of reason went to the extent of turning down the proposal made by Com. Bhupesh Gupta that the whole inner-Party situation, including items (1) and (2) of the Secretariat's draft agenda be taken as a whole and thoroughly discussed. They further turned down the proposal made by Bhupesh and Jyoti Basu that an effort be made to explore the possibilities of agreement on the agenda and procedure. They insisted on using the slender majority they have in the CEC and the National Council to impose on us a procedure according to which serious inner-Party questions

which will decide the future of the Party are to be decided at a time when certain serious suspicions aroused against the Chairman have not been cleared and under his chairmanship.

What is more, the Chairman refused to relinquish the chair even when his conduct was to be discussed. On the other hand he made an extremely provocative speech even going to the extent of shouting, "I will not vacate, you get out".

Under these circumstances there is no alternative for us but to refrain from participating in the meeting.

Sd/- E.M.S. Namboodiripad

A.K. Gopalan

P. Ramamurti

M.R. Venkataraman

P. Sundarayya

M. Basavapunniah

Jyoti Basu

Harekrishna Konar

Promode Das Gupta

Harkishan Singh Surjeet

Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri

Bhupesh Gupta

STATEMENT

THIRTY TWO MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

April 11, 1964

After the National Council adjourned yesterday, Coms. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Jyoti Basu and Bhupesh Gupta met the Secretariat members this morning to explore every avenue of taking the Party out of the present crisis.

They pointed out that in order to create a proper atmosphere for a frank, full and dispassionate discussion of the present crisis, the minimum requirement would be (a) that the

Chairman should step down when the letters in the Archives are discussed; and (b) the letters in the Archives and the press statements of some of the CEC members should be taken up for discussion together.

They further pointed out that a question of "splitting activities" can and should be taken up for a full and thorough discussion in a special meeting of the Council after full preparation and collection of relevant facts. It was pointed out that some of us, particularly Com. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, had repeatedly raised the question of the disruptive and splitting activities of the Secretariat and their supporters for the last one-and-a-half years. These questions had been brushed aside and not even cursorily discussed. All these have to be discussed in their entirety in order to find a proper solution to the whole problem.

But the Secretariat would not budge from their stand and the Chairman insisted that he should be in the chair even when his question was being discussed, and the so-called splitting activities of some of the CEC members should take precedence over everything else.

It is obvious that the Secretariat which came out with a statement denying the authenticity of Dange letters in the Archives even without looking at them, was bent upon further continuing their disruptive and splitting activities which they embarked upon since November 1962. They do not realise or they shut their eyes to the very serious damage that has been done to the prestige of the revolutionary Party by the disclosure of the letters in the Archives. For if the letters are genuine it means that the highest post in the Party is being occupied by one who had offered his services to the British Government. Hence they do not seem to be interested in taking effective steps to have the entire thing investigated and take the appropriate measures on the findings of the investigation in order to safeguard the prestige and honour of the Party. This made it impossible for us to participate in the meeting.

The present Secretariat and their supporters alone are responsible for the present situation. We know that they are unrepresentative of the real feelings of the vast majority of the Party members.

We are sure that the mass of Party members and units will repudiate Dange and his followers. We are confident that the vast majority of the party members and public will support our principled stand and rally to uphold the honour and prestige and the revolutionary traditions of the Communist movement in India.

Andhra

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. P. Sundarayya | 2. M. Basavapunniah |
| 3. T. Nagi Reddy | 5. M. Hanumantha Rao |
| 5. D. Venkateswara Rao | 6. N. Prasada Rao |
| 7. G. Bapanayya | |

Kerala

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 8. E.M.S. Namboodiripad | 9. A.K. Gopalan |
| 10. A.V. Kunhambu | 11. C.H. Kanaran |
| 12. E.K. Nayanar | 13. V.S. Achuthanandan |
| 14. E.K. Imbichi Bawa | |

W. Bengal

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 15. Promode Das Gupta | 16. Muzaffar Ahmad |
| 17. Jyoti Basu | 18. Abdul Halim |
| 19. Hare Krishna Konar | 20. Saroj Mukherjee |

Tamilnad

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 21. P. Ramamurti | 22. M.R. Venkataraman |
| 23. N. Sankariah | 24. K. Ramani |

Punjab

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 25. Harkishan Singh Surjeet | 26. Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri |
| 27. Dalip Singh Tapiala | 28. Dr. Bhag Singh |

Uttar Pradesh

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 29. Sheo Kumar Misra | 30. R.N. Upadhyaya |
|----------------------|--------------------|

Rajasthan

31. Mohan Punamiya

J & K

32. R.P. Saraf

(It should be noted that apart from these 32, out of the six NC, members who are still in prison, five are widely known for their opposition to Dange's revisionist political line and disruptive organisational methods. Similarly, comrades Vajubhai Shukla from Gujarat and U. Ramam from Andhra who have been associating with these 32 could not be present at the NC meeting due to their illness. Another ten or so have practically remained confused and neutralised by these developments—*Editor*)

STATEMENT

—32 MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.
April 12, 1964,

We heard from Comrade Bhupesh Gupta that after our coming out of the meeting of the National Council yesterday, the remaining members discussed the question of the agenda of the meeting and adopted a resolution this morning and adjourned the meeting at Comrade Bhupesh Gupta's suggestion.

We have since learned its contents. The main points of the resolution are :-

- (1) Since the National Council has not yet heard from S. A. Dange and the Secretariat on the one hand and from those who hold that the letters are genuine on the other, the question of a *prima facie* case does not arise and hence he need not vacate the chair on that account. But he should stand down for other reasons.
- (2) The Chairman has declined to preside ; and
- (3) The question of the letters and that of the "splitting activities" of some National Council members should be taken up together. In the latter question are also added the statements of the Secretariat as well as the walk-out by us from the National Council meeting yesterday and our subsequent statements.

The fact that after our walk-out Dange had to vacate the chair, the very thing that he and the Secretariat doggedly refused to do for three days—both in the CEC and the National Council shows the utter bankruptcy of the Secretariat to deal with the present serious situation.

We certainly appreciate the efforts that are made by some members of the Council, who are anxious to find a way out of the present situation.

But, we are of the opinion that the present resolution does not reveal a sufficient realisation of the real issues and their gravity. Although the bankruptcy of the Secretariat is patent for all to see, it still wishes to cling to its position.

First, the Dange letters are the most serious issue before the entire Party. Many of us who have seen these letters and the connected papers are convinced that they are genuine and not forged. The resolution seeks to commit us to the position that no *prima facie* case exists.

Secondly, while the letters can be considered and discussed along with the statements issued by the Secretariat as well as other members of the National Council together, it is wrong to club with them, the question of what the Secretariat terms "splitting activities" of some members of the National Council.

This only shows that the seriousness of the Dange letters is sought to be minimised, and drowned in a general discussion of charges and counter-charges.

We are convinced that if the Party is to be unified and brought out of the present crisis, the cloud hanging around Dange must first be cleared through a probe by an agreed committee. Having done that, the entire inner-Party organisational question should be discussed in a calm atmosphere. The aim of such a discussion should be to find ways of ensuring fuller and freer inner-Party discussion on all issues of political and ideological controversy.

This is exactly what the resolution seeks to avoid. The very fact that our walk-out and subsequent statement—which arose as a result of the adamant attitude of the Chairman, have been added to the agenda shows the intention of those who insisted on the addition.

This resolution does not, therefore, provide any basis for reconsidering our stand.

New Delhi,
12-4-1964.

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. P. Sundarayya | 2. M. Basavapunniah |
| 3. T. Nagi Reddy | 4. M. Hanumantha Rao |
| 5. D. Venkateswara Rao | 6. N. Prasada Rao |
| 7. G. Bapanayya | 8. E.M.S. Namboodiripad |
| 9. A.K. Gopalan | 10. A.V. Kunhambu |
| 11. C.H. Kanaran | 12. E.K. Nayanar |
| 13. V.S. Achuthanandan | 14. E.K. Imbichibava |
| 15. Promode Das Gupta | 16. Muzaffar Ahmad |
| 17. Jyoti Basu | 18. Abdul Halim |
| 19. H.K. Konar | 20. Saroj Mukerjee |
| 21. P. Ramamurti | 22. M.R. Venkataraman |
| 23. N. Sankariah | 24. K. Ramani |
| 25. H.S. Surjeet | 26. Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri |
| 27. D.S. Tapiala | 28. Dr. Bhag Singh |
| 29. Sheo Kumar Misra | 30. R.N. Upadhyaya |
| 31. Mohan Punamiya | 32. R.N. Saraf. |

APPEAL TO REPUDIATE DANGE AND HIS GROUP

*—THIRTY TWOMEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL
COUNCIL*

April 14, 1964

We, the members of the National Council who walked out of the meeting on 11.4.1964, have been exchanging our views on how to carry forward the struggle against the anti-Party factional activities being carried on by the Secretariat headed by S. A. Dange.

This exchange of views revealed the fact that we are united not only against the factionalism and anti-Party organisational methods resorted to by them, but also against their political line of tailing behind the bourgeoisie through general united front with the Congress.

It may be mentioned in this connection that three years ago, at the Sixth Congress held at Vijayawada, the line of Congress-Communist unity as the general political tactical line of the Party was advanced. This, however, was stoutly opposed by the delegates and rejected by the Congress in the resolution which was finally adopted. The comrades who had championed that nakedly reformist political line had to accept defeat at the Congress. They, however, tried to push that line in their practical activities even after the Party Congress.

The crisis which arose in the country in October-November 1962, the declaration of Emergency and the arrests of a large number of comrades became a god-send for the champions of this line of class-collaboration who, under the new circumstances, got a majority in the National Council. They used this opportunity to launch a political and organisational offensive against those who resisted the reformist line of Congress-Communist unity.

This, naturally, roused the indignation of ordinary Party members. Larger and larger numbers of them began to express their protest against it. But, far from seeing the gap that was forming between the mass of Party members and themselves, the leaders of the National Council and their supporters at lower levels began to use the weapon of disciplinary measures against those who protested against their activities. Furthermore, they adopted the most reprehensible tactics of denouncing those who opposed the reformist line of general united front with the Congress as followers of the Peking line, thus joining the chorus of rabid anti-Communism. It was as a part of this tactics that they raised the bogey of "anti-Party groups" functioning at various levels and disrupting the unity of the Party.

We have been trying to put a stop to this. We, of course, had our own differences concerning the estimation of the economic and political situation in the country as well as in our approach to the problem of how to offer resistance to the reformist politics and factional organisational methods of the Secretariat headed by Dange. Despite these differences, however, we were united in our understanding that the inner-Party problem posed under the circumstances can be solved only through an appeal to the Party membership as a whole, culminating in the convening of a Party Congress.

We, therefore, made several proposals for organising inner-Party discussion, for the creation of the necessary conditions in which a Party Congress can be convened and for the postponement of all other inner-Party organisational questions till the Congress is convened and takes appropriate decisions. The Secretariat and the majority of the National Council however refused to help this process. They, on the other hand, insisted on so using their majority in the National Council and in various State Councils to prevent the expression of the *genuine* will of the majority of the Party members.

They refused to have an agreed Commission to prepare the draft documents which should form the basis of pre-Congress inner-Party discussion.

They refused to have an agreed method of scrutinising the membership with the result that large numbers of members have been denied their right of participation in pre-Congress discussions and in the conferences which would culminate in the Party Congress.

Above all, they started the process of taking disciplinary actions against some of the most effective opponents of their line with a view to prevent them from participating in the pre-Congress discussions and from getting elected as delegates to the Congress.

The proposed expulsion of seven members of the Central

Executive Committee which they broadcast to the press even before the National Council had met was only the culmination of these efforts and at preventing the convening of a genuine Party Congress. This had been preceded by disbanding the elected West Bengal Council and imposing an illegal Provincial Organising Committee; by holding an illegal conference in Punjab and replacing the properly elected leadership; by expulsions and other forms of disciplinary action against several Party members, including members of the National Council and Central Executive Committee in Tamilnad and Punjab and threats of similar action in several other provinces. As a matter of fact, the period that intervened between the public censure administered to Comrade A. K. Gopalan in October last and the proposed expulsion of seven CEC members at the recent meeting of the National Council, witnessed a spate of disciplinary actions all over the country. It is also no secret that the entire machinery at the disposal of Dange's followers has been kept ready for large-scale expulsions after the National Council meeting.

It was against this background that the existence of the incriminating letters, alleged to have been written by Dange in 1924 was publicly revealed in the columns of the "Current". This, too, was used by the Secretariat in order to carry on a campaign against those in the Party who oppose their political-organisational line. The members of the Secretariat, even without visiting the Archives, declared the letters as 'forged' and even joined the "Current" in its assertion that it was the "Left" in the Communist Party that had helped in the revelation of the story. When this attack on them was answered by some leaders of the CPI by a public statement that according to them the letters are genuine, the Secretariat went to the extent of calling them "neo-Trotskyites" and "splitters". The responsibility for initiating the public controversy around the Dange letters, therefore, rests squarely on the Secretariat.

A review of this whole controversy would show to any impartial observer that the Secretariat and its supporters have become so factional that they are prepared to renounce every

norm enjoined upon the Communist Party. For, the existence of the letters in the National Archives is not in dispute. The only basis on which it had been declared "forged" is the assertion of Dange.

Under these circumstances, the normal practice in the Communist Party would demand of its leadership that Dange is removed from all responsible posts pending the enquiry. However, considering the present inner-Party situation we suggested that he should first be asked to vacate the chair when the two leading bodies of the Party—the CEC and the National Council—consider the question.

Even this was stoutly resisted by Dange and his followers. It is obvious that they are prepared to renounce all principles if their observance weakens their faction. It was against this that we protested when we walked out.

Having reviewed the situation for two days, we have now come to the unanimous conclusion that our struggle against this factional approach of the followers of Danges is an integral part of our struggle against their anti-Party factional method of preparing for and convening the Party Congress as well as against their reformist political line. Our call to the majority of the Party members and units to repudiate Dange and his group is, therefore, a call to repudiate the reformist political line of general united front with the Congress, to repudiate the line of factional preparation for a fake Party Congress, to repudiate their efforts at whitewashing the suspicious conduct of Dange in relation to his alleged letters whose existence in the National Archives is not in dispute.

We do have our differences among ourselves.

Even among the comrades of the "Left", who met here from the 2nd to the 9th of April, there are differences on ideological questions. They, however, are united on the draft programme which they have provisionally accepted.

Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad, who did not participate in these meetings, and who had written his own document covering the ideological and political questions, differs on certain questions of the draft programme.

Despite these differences, however, we are all agreed on the necessity to resist the reformist political line, the anti-Party factional methods and the shameless effort to whitewash Dange's alleged conduct in having offered his services to the British.

We are conscious that unity on this alone would not be a sufficient basis for real unity of will and action. We, therefore, propose to have further exchange of views on the ideological and political questions that divide us. We propose to associate the entire Party membership in these discussions. With this idea in view, we have decided to circulate among Party members and sympathisers the following documents: (i) The Draft Programme which was provisionally accepted by the meeting of the "Left" comrades; (2) Comrade EMS's Draft on the Party Programme; (3) the Draft on ideological questions prepared by Comrades M. Basavapunniah and others (4) another draft on the above prepared by Comrade Jyoti Basu and others. We may subsequently circulate EMS's critique on the first as well as the critique of Comrade EMS's draft by the other comrades.

We are confident that these discussions and the active political and mass work we propose to carry on jointly will enable us to rally the large mass of Party members and sympathisers not only in offering effective resistance to the policies and practices of Dange and his followers, but also to make the necessary political and organisational preparations for convening the Seventh Congress of the Party. We, however, want to add that, if even at this stage the Dange group renounces its anti-Party organisational methods and creates, in consultation with us, the machinery that ensures full and unfettered inner-Party discussions and representation to all genuine members, we would be prepared to give our support and cooperation for its success. It is obvious that if they are honest about the unity of the Party about which they talk so loud when resorting to disciplinary

actions, they would have to recognise that, divided as the Party is from top to bottom, the success of a Party Congress depends on agreement between the various sections in the National Council on at least the machinery which will conduct inner-Party discussions and prepare for the Party Congress. It was their resistance to this reasonable stand of ours that led to this crisis. We, therefore, appeal to all those comrades in the National Council and outside, who are pained at the developments which took place at the recent meeting of the National Council, to put their full weight in favour of the following proposals which we are making :

1. The enquiry regarding the Dange letters should be conducted through a machinery created by agreement between them and us. We would like to take this opportunity to repudiate the charge made by Dange that any of us is opposed to examination by experts. We are of opinion that the enquiry should be thorough, it should be conducted by a body which certainly utilises the services of experts but which consists of persons who are competent to examine all aspects of the case. We also insist 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.

2. The question of the so-called "disruptive and splitting activities" should be dealt with more comprehensively and in a thorough manner. The Dange group should realise that they are very much in the dock. This being so, all disciplinary actions arising out of the so-called "disruptive and splitting activities" should be held over till the inner-Party discussion, which culminates in the Party Congress, is over. All disciplinary actions taken on this account during the last year-and-a-half should be immediately cancelled.

3. Arrangements should be made for a fresh scrutiny of Party membership in those cases where disputes have arisen in relation to it. And all those members who were in the lists at

the time of Vijayawada Party Congress should be allowed to renew their membership.

4. A commission with agreed personnel should be appointed to examine the documents that have already been prepared by us and the documents that may be prepared by other comrades and to decide whether any of them can form the basis of inner-Party discussion, and, if not, how one document or more documents can be prepared for the same.

It is also obvious that, if the above steps are to be taken, then the method of functioning the Party Centre, running the Party organs, etc., will have to be reviewed and necessary changes made in them.

In making the above proposals, we have not much hope that the Secretariat and its followers would accept them. Their whole conduct during the last year-and-a-half has shown that they would stoop to anything in their resistance to the observance of democratic practices in the functioning of the Party. We are nevertheless offering the above proposals with the hope that those who are earnest about the unity of the Party would ponder over them and force the Secretariat and its followers to accept them. We are sure that all those who are genuinely interested in the unity of the Party would agree with us that only through the acceptance and implementation of the above proposals can inner-Party democracy be assured and split in the Party averted.

While thus appealing to all sincere advocates of Party unity to force the Secretariat and its supporters to reverse their present policies and practices, we wish to declare that, if the Secretariat and its supporters persist in their attitude, we will have to appeal to the entire Party membership to join us in convening the Seventh Congress which will be a Congress of struggle against the reformism, factionalism and the renunciation of revolutionary traditions, which are the characteristics of S.A. Dange and his group.

We have decided to organise an inner-Party and mass campaign on the above lines. We have decided that we will con-

vene a meeting of the representatives of party members from all over India after two months in order to review our activities during the period and to chalk out further programmes.

We are confident that increasingly vast masses of Party members will lend their support to us in these endeavours and thus contribute to the emergence of a still stronger Communist Party of India, which has been built up by great sacrifices of innumerable martyrs and glorious struggles of our people and uphold the banner of Marxism—Leninism.

4, Windsor Place

New Delhi.

April 14, 1964.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. P. Sundarayya | 2. M. Basavapunniah |
| 3. T. Nagi Reddy | 4. M. Hanumanta Rao |
| 5. D. Venkateswara Rao | 6. N. Prasada Rao |
| 7. G. Bapanayya | 8. E.M.S. Namboodiripad |
| 9. A. K. Gopalan | 10. A. V. Kunhambu |
| 11. C. H. Kanaran | 11. E. K. Nayanar |
| 12. V. S. Achuthanandan | 14. E. K. Imbichibava |
| 15. Promode Das Gupta | 16. Muzaffar Ahmad |
| 17. Jyoti Basu | 18. Abdul Halim |
| 19. H. K. Konar | 20. Saroj Mukerjee |
| 21. P. Ramamurti | 22. M. R. Venkataraman |
| 23. N. Sankariah | 24. K. Ramani |
| 25. H. S. Surjeet | 26. Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri |
| 27. D. S. Tapiala | 28. Dr. Bhag Singh |
| 29. Sheo Kumar Misra | 30. R. N. Upadhyaya |
| 31. Mohan Punamiya | 32. R. P. Saraff. |

STATEMENT

—*M. BASAVAPUNNIAH, P. RAMAMURTI*
April 16, 1964

The Dange group has come out with a long resolution on 15.4.64, which is supposed to be a reply to the statement of the 32 members who had earlier walked out of the National Council. By that resolution, they have decided to suspend us from the membership of the Communist Party of India. They do not realise that their writ no longer runs among the mass of Party members and units throughout the country.

Out of the National Council of 110, six members are still

in jail, and 96 attended the meeting on the 10th and 11th. It is noteworthy that the Dange group could muster less than 50 members when this resolution was passed, some more members having absented themselves on the 15th. Even then, they dared not record positive votes and abstentions! Serious actions against one-third of the National Council and about half of the CEC is passed by less than 50 per cent of the members of the National Council. Such a thing is unheard of in any party in the world.

The resolution once again burkes the issue of the Dange letters and the grave crisis that has arisen because of their refusal to defend the integrity of the Party. It seeks to submerge the real issue in a string of lies, distortions and half-truths.

They falsify the happenings at the last Vijayawada Congress and seek to make out that we threatened to walk out of the Congress. Inadvertently, however, they admit that the differences in the Party are not of recent origin, but were serious even at Vijayawada.

Having worked out a factional majority, they sought to conduct the elections to the National Council and Executive also in a factional way. Not willing to be a party to this factional game, we only said that we would not serve on these bodies and wanted to leave them entirely in their hands, so that they could work out their line without any hindrance and the results would reveal to the Party comrades their real face.

However, the mass of delegates would not allow them to run away with their factional methods and ultimately they had to agree to a unanimous and agreed election.

It is well known that the deep differences that existed then were political which were embodied in the different draft programmes as well as draft political resolutions, and the differences related essentially to the attitude to the ruling class, the Congress Party and the Congress Government. Equally known is also that the Dange group, in its anxiety to swing the Party to a line of general support to the Congress Party and Government, pooh-poohed the rapid intrusion of foreign private capital, particular-

ly from the U.S., and the collaboration agreements, and called them "investments in Baby Johnson Powder" !

The Dange group had to retreat on this also, for the Congress unanimously adopted the late Comrade Ajoy's Report, after all the basic amendments moved by us were incorporated as the basis of redrafting the political resolution of the Congress.

The election tactics on the basis of the Vijayawada Resolution were worked out at the subsequent meeting of the National Council at Bangalore and Delhi and whatever electoral adjustments were sought to be made by us were done under the direction of the National Council.

It is known, however, that the followers of Dange in certain States, in the name of fighting Right reaction gave general support to the Congress Party and as a result the Party suffered serious reverses. Subsequently, the Dange group has deliberately sabotaged the review of the elections and drawing lessons from experience.

After November 1962 when large-scale arrests took place throughout the country, the Dange group went headlong on this path of general support to the Congress and Government.

In Madras, they supported in all the by-elections the Congress irrespective of the party to which the opponents belonged or even against independents.

In Kerala, they proposed a united front with the Congress in the by-elections to defeat the PSP. It could not be carried out because of the stiff opposition of the ranks.

In Madras, they supported the Congress candidate in the Mayoral election as against a well-known trade unionist, who is even now a member of the Executive of the AITUC, and the Chairman of the Civil Liberties Union.

In the municipal elections in Madras they sought a general

united front with the Congress Party. Although because of our fight in the CEC, the Dange group had to reiterate the Bangalore National Council Resolution, they surreptitiously connived at their henchmen in Tamilnad carrying out the line of united front with the Congress.

In the Punjab, in the elections to the panchayats, they entered into united front with Congress, and in the bargain got routed.

Any number of such instances could be given that they have been, in fact, seeking to give general support to the Congress and its Government as a whole, contrary to the Vijayawada Resolution, and not seeking unity with only the democratic elements in the Congress.

Actually, as a result of this line, the discontent of the masses is allowed to be channelised towards the policies of communal and Right reaction, which was revealed fully in the Amroha and Rajkot by-elections to Parliament.

As for mass struggles against the anti-people's policies of the Government, the workers know how Dange tried to sabotage the Bombay general strike of last year, the Goa dock-workers' strike and the Barauni workers' struggles. If later he had given the call for some struggles, it is only because he found that his attempts at sabotaging the struggles were already being rebuffed and his real face was being exposed.

The Dange group could not carry through their line without the stiffest opposition from the Party ranks. Hence they resorted to the most reprehensible methods, unworthy of any decent and honest politician, let alone Communists.

As is known, after the death of Comrade Ajoy, the proposal that Dange should be the Chairman of the Party was stiffly resisted by a large section of the National Council. It was Dange and his group that threatened to split the Party if he were not made the Chairman. After three days, we

accepted him as Chairman only after he gave assurances about his behaviour. But no sooner was an agreed Secretariat formed than did Dange and his group start their old factional game of meeting in groups even from among the Secretariat members, briefing in secret the press against their own colleagues, and even giving statements behind the back of the then General Secretary.

After November, 1962, taking advantage of the arrests, they illegally scrapped elected State Councils in West Bengal and Punjab and imposed their own henchmen.

As a result of these and similar despicable methods, they have gerrymandered Party membership rolls. The membership at the time of the Vijayawada Congress was more than 1,70,000. According to the Secretariat the membership for 1962, enrolled before June 1963, was only 1,37,000. Apart from the fall of about 33,000, it is known that their henchmen had enrolled thousands of new members in different States. Thus the gerrymandering of our 50,000 members, i.e. nearly a third in the rolls had taken place in this period.

Why have they rejected our demand that all those that were on the rolls at the time of Vijayawada Congress should be allowed to renew their membership? Is it not obvious that they have done so because they are afraid of this real membership, and want to conduct not a genuine Congress, but a fake Congress?

As usual, when faced with an attack on their political line, they seek to find shelter in labelling their opponents "pro-Peking" and shouting that they are acting at the behest of the Chinese Communist Party. This trick has become too hackneyed and will not work.

As already shown, the struggle that we have been carrying on against the political line and the factional methods of the Dange group has been a long one. We do not take orders from any outside party. It is because we have been convinced that

the political line and the factional methods of the Dange group would liquidate the CPI as a revolutionary Party that we have been fighting them for years, long before any ideological differences in the international Communist movement came to the surface.

On the other hand, within two days of the publication of the Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU dated July 14, 1963, which contained an unwarranted attack against those who were opposed to the political line of the Dange group, the Secretariat came out shamelessly endorsing the letter of the CPSU. Why did they not protest against the unwarranted attack against us, calling us an anti-Party group of splitters and disruptors, at a time when most of us were in jail? Why did the Secretariat not protest against this gross interference in the affairs of our Party by the CPSU? It is for them to explain whether they are acting under the orders of some outside party to split the Indian Party.

As for the charge of acting as spies, we have made it clear more than once that we have not made that charge. However, we have maintained that the political responsibility for the governmental repression rests squarely on the Dange group. Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad had made this position categorically clear in his document as early as February 1963.

It is known that the Chairman stiffly resisted the demand for a resolution condemning the arrests of leading TU and Party workers in Maharashtra in the meeting of the Working Committee and the General Council of the AITUC held in the third week of November 1962. For full four months the National Council under Dange's leadership refused to launch a campaign for release. Some of the memoranda submitted by the Dange group to the State and Central Governments are unworthy of any Communist.

In Maharashtra itself, to this day Dange has not raised his voice against the scandalous state of the continued detention of B. T. Ranadive and other leaders. The names of the

political opponents of the Dange group were given out to the press in many states and they were slandered as opposing the defence of the country. All these people were later arrested.

How can any one prevent large numbers of Party members, and the public, in these circumstances, from entertaining deep suspicions that the Government is keeping in jail the firmest political opponents of Dange only to oblige him?

The statement that there is not even a *prima facie* case, as regards the Dange letters, is the most amazingly shameful performance of this body of Dange supporters. The existence of these letters and their contents have been made known to every member of the National Council. Detailed notes as regards the entire notings in the Government departments on these letters as well as corroborative evidence of the talk that Dange had with the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bombay, referred to in the letters were all circulated to the National Council members by two MPs—Nambiar and Umanath.

Most of the people who had seen these files—not only Party members—but independents as well believe them to be genuine. Is it not clear that in these circumstances, it is for Dange to prove positively that the letters are forged? What can be said of a body that in the face of all this evidence declares that a *prima facie* case has not been made out merely because Dange, the accused, asserts it to be so? They have sold their conscience for their factional ends. In these circumstances the proposed enquiry by a body composed mostly of the henchmen of Dange will not deceive anyone.

The resolution shows that the Dange group is bent upon its factional methods and imposing its reformist line on the Party, if it could.

We hope that all those interested in the unity of the Party will force Dange and company even now to retrace their steps and accept the reasonable proposals we have made for inner-Party discussion, democratically convening the Congress

and for an impartial enquiry into the Dange letters. The Dange group should realise that their writ will not run in the Party. We are confident that not only will the big majority of Party members and units repudiate Dange and his group decisively but in a short time make this known to the world,

New Delhi,
16.4.1964.

P. Ramamurti
M. Basavapunniah

"DANGE COUNCIL" ON "DANGE LETTERS"

Resolution

The National Council of the Communist Party of India has given preliminary consideration to the question of the alleged letters in the National Archives.

It has heard an exhaustive explanation of Com. Dange on the subject. Com. Dange has categorically reaffirmed his denial that he ever wrote such letters. The Council has also heard several members on this question including some of those who have personally examined the documents concerned.

The National Council however considers it necessary to go on record that those members of the Council who had earlier made public statements or otherwise expressed themselves to the effect that the alleged Dange letters are genuine were absent from the meeting when this question was discussed. These members did not return to the meeting, having walked out of it two days earlier.

Though the National Council had their press statements and documents before, their non-participation naturally denied the National Council the opportunity of hearing their views and their case on the subject in person. For this however the responsibility rests with these members themselves.

On the basis of these alleged letters which relate to the years 1924-25, some people have contended that Com. Dange has been a British agent. Even those who think that the letters are genuine have not produced any convincing evidence at all to prove this contention.

Their entire case in regard to this charge is sought to be substantiated by these letters and inferences from certain observations and remarks of British officials in connection therewith. All this does not make even a prima facie case in favour of this charge.

The National Council cannot but recall the fact that Comrade Dange not only served the full term of his sentence in the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case but was later arrested and tried again in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

He was held in custody as undertrial prisoner for nearly four years and was awarded by the Trial Court 12 years' rigorous imprisonment. This sentence, however, was reduced to three years by the High Court, along with that of Comrades Muzaffar Ahmad and Shaukat Usmani. This was the highest sentence given to any Meerut case prisoner on appeal.

During the second world war, Comrade Dange was arrested in 1939 and 1940 and was in continued detention from the later year till 1943. He continued to be in detention even when almost all the Communist detenus in the country were released. All this, together with Com. Dange's record of work and active service to the cause of the working class and national liberation movement would refute the charge that he has been a British agent.

The public records of Com. Dange's political activity in the years that followed his release from the Cawnpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case would on the contrary show him to be a staunch anti-imperialist fighter. The National Council repudiates this charge as slanderous.

From the reports which have been made to the National Council by members who examined the documents, it does appear that there exist a number of glaring inconsistencies and discrepancies in these "letters", such as the wrong spelling of Comrade Dange's name and signature, the general tenor of handwriting and also discrepancies regarding the stationary, ink, etc., used.

It has to be noted that in the copies of the letters circulated by Comrade M. Basavapunniah the difference in the spelling of Comrade Dange's name has been suppressed.

Similarly in the notings given in the papers circulated by Comrade Basavapunniah there are some vital words and sentences which are not faithful to the papers in original file.

From the reports that have been made to the Council by its members, the Council has come to the conclusion that not even a prima facie case has been made out that the letters are genuine.

Nevertheless, in order to make a more extensive examination of all relevant and available materials and documents, including the circumstances as to how these letters were found and then distributed to the outside world and by whom the National Council decides to set up a committee which shall submit its report within a month.

The Committee will consist of Comrades S. V. Ghate, G. Adhikari, C. Rajeshwar Rao, Bhupesh Gupta, Achutha Menon, Sohan Singh Josh and Hiren Mukherjee.

—From *New Age*, April 19, 1964

Already On Sale

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

PRICE : 50 nP.

Next
Publication

**NOTE
FOR THE
PARTY PROGRAMME**

by

E.M.S. NAMBOODIRIPAD

Book your orders with .
DESRAJ CHADDA,
4, Windsor Place,
New Delhi-1