

ALL-INDIA PARTY CENTRE

THE SEVENTH PARTY CONGRESS had formulated that 'strengthening and building the all-India party centre is the key to our organisational tasks.' Thorough reorganisation of the all-India party centre was considered to be the first guarantee for implementing the Organisational Report. It is stated in it 'The all-India party centre and the party centres in various states must be thoroughly reorganised so that they become real leading bodies imbued with a collective spirit and capable of fulfilling the many-sided tasks.'

After all is said and done, though there is some improvement regarding functioning, no basic change has been brought about in the discharge of the main responsibilities of the all-India party centre, i.e. building of an organisation capable of reacting quickly to events and leading the

PMs and masses into action, improving the quality of journals, building of the militant mass organisations, etc. Now let us go into greater details with regard to the all-India party centre.

The all-India party centre consists of the following organs, namely:

(a) The National Council, the highest body between two party congresses 'which lays down broad policies on general questions and reviews the work of Executive.'

(b) The Central Executive Committee which discharges the tasks of 'practical political leadership' subject to the broad policy decisions of the National Council and review of its decisions by the National Council.

(c) The Central Secretariat, which carries on 'routine jobs and implements the decisions of the National Council and CEC. It will not take the political decisions which are the function of the Executive. But in *urgent cases*, it can take political decisions and later get them endorsed by the CEC or the National Council.'

The functions of the Central Secretariat were further concretised thus: 'Firstly, to coordinate work of different departments; secondly, to attend to the urgent political and other general mass issues, like food problem, that may not wait for the CEC meeting; thirdly, other jobs that do not fall under the purview of any department.'

For discharging the several tasks of the mass fronts, of agitation and propaganda, of party education, etc. several departments were organised. In the past also there were subcommittees to discharge different functions of the all-India party centre. But those subcommittees could not take any independent decisions which could be sent to the lower committees. All their decisions had to be first endorsed by the Central Secretariat. In this type of functioning, there used to be a lot of delay in reaching the decisions of the subcommittees to lower party committees.

Hence a change was made and departments were organised, which could take independent decisions and were

directly responsible to the CEC and National Council. Of course, the Central Secretariat could intervene and halt implementation of such decisions, pending decision of the CEC and National Council, when it thinks that they are wrong and harmful. With this view, the Party Congress decided to organise the following departments for the efficient functioning of the party centre:

(1) Party Organisation, (2) Party Education, (3) Trade Unions, (4) Kisan and Agricultural Labour, (5) Students and Youth, (6) Women, (7) Peace and Solidarity Work, (8) Parliament, (9) Central Party Papers, (10) Publishing House, (11) Finance, (12) International, (13) Study on Economic and Other Problems Facing the Movement, and (14) Culture.

The organisation of departments for Muslim minority and tribals was left to the consideration of the National Council.

It was decided that these departments are to consist of competent comrades consisting members of the Secretariat, CEC, National Council and other capable comrades who are prepared to work in the PHQ. Departments have to be led by members of the Secretariat, CEC or National Council but they will be regular members of the respective departments. These departments have to submit regular reports to the CEC or the National Council when they meet.

The experience of the three years since the last Congress regarding the functioning of the National Council is satisfactory. It has fulfilled its role of 'laying down broad policies on general questions', of giving lead to the entire party at every crucial point. It has helped the pooling of experience on an all-India scale to 'arrive at balanced decisions' and helping relatively younger comrades to gain all-India experience.

It had 9 sessions during the last three years, met more frequently than enjoined by our Constitution, i.e. once in every six months. Attendance was also fairly good, generally about 70 per cent. There were National Council meetings with even 90 per cent attendance.

Though the functions of CEC and Central Secretariat were laid down clearly in the Constitution and Organisational Report, there was a bit of overlapping in the functioning of these two bodies. Though the CEC was assigned the role of 'practical political leader' and it was to meet once in two months according to the Constitution, it met only 15 times during the period under review.

In the beginning the Central Secretariat usurped the functions of the CEC to some extent, began to act like the old Polit Bureau. It was often taking decisions on political issues though it was to do so only in 'urgent cases'. Hence the CEC was reduced to the position of a stop-gap body to meet only when the Central Secretariat found the issue to be beyond its capacity or when the National Council could not be convened quickly. But this situation was corrected by the end of the Indo-Pak war in 1965. There was a discussion in the CEC and it was decided that the decision of the Bombay Congress regarding functions of the CEC and Central Secretariat should be implemented strictly. Since then matters improved. The CEC was meeting more often to take decisions on political and organisational questions. However, organisational problems and problems concerning the functioning of departments were never placed before the CEC for discussion and decision nor did the CEC members themselves care to raise this issue or ask for such reports.

In the beginning, immediately after the Seventh Congress, because of differences over approach to practical problems and personal habits and methods, there were stresses and strains inside the Central Secretariat. Since the middle of 1965, because of more political unification, personal understanding and adjustments to each other's habits and methods, the Central Secretariat was functioning more smoothly. Each Secretariat member is allowed to fulfil the general responsibilities assigned to him to the best of his abilities without interference from others. There is no collective assessment or check-up by the Secretariat.

Of the three tasks assigned to it in the Organisational

Report of the Bombay Congress, the first, i.e. of coordinating the work of the different departments, it had done the least. Only when some problems were brought to it, it tried to resolve them. The general practice is that of noninterference in the work of the departments.

Regarding the second task of attending to 'the urgent political and mass problems that cannot wait for the CEC meeting', the Central Secretariat made serious efforts to attend to these problems. Specially after the 1967 general election, when a new situation of defeat of the Congress in 8 states and of the formation of the noncongress ministries in these states faced us, the Central Secretariat had to take decisions quickly. It could not wait for the CEC to meet. It was impossible to convene quickly every time such a big body like the CEC of 26 members and permanent invitees and who are spread over such a vast country as ours. It must be said that in these matters the Central Secretariat acted in time and helped the state units to take proper decisions.

Regarding the third task of discharging the jobs that do not fall under the purview of any department, the Central Secretariat attended to these jobs whenever they came up.

Though the Central Secretariat had the abovestated achievements to its credit, it cannot be said that it successfully discharged all the three tasks given to it by the Bombay Congress mentioned above. There are a number of all-India issues which it could not attend to in time or that had gone by default. *On the whole, the Central Secretariat lacked sufficient dynamism, which was needed to take initiative to move the party in time so that it does not trail behind events.*

As regards functioning of the departments, they proved to be useful to the extent they functioned. The formation of the departments was not uniform. Some were formed mainly with those who function from the centre. Others were formed mainly with those who function from the states. There are still others which are formed with one

or two people. The departments of the first category proved useful and did function. The second and third categories did not function and they exist only in name. Now let us see what is the position of each department.

(a) *The TU Department* in the beginning was organised with four comrades—S. A. Dange, Satish Loomba, N. K. Krishnan and Indrajit Gupta. Later the need was felt for expanding it to 9 comrades with addition of K. G. Srivastava, Ranen Sen, Kumaran, Achuthan and Yusuf.

This department has been managing the affairs of the AITUC, problems of railway workers' movement and movement of the central government employees.

(b) *The Kisan Department* consists of 8 comrades—Dr. Z. A. Ahmad, Y. V. Krishna Rao, Bishwanath Mukherji, Bhogendra Jha, Teja Singh Swatantra, Sudam Deshmukh, P. Madhavan Pillai, Manali C. Kandaswamy. Except for Dr. Z. A. Ahmad, all are kisan leaders working in the states. This department conducted an all-India meeting of leading kisan cadres and produced some documents on kisan problems which gave guidance to workers on the kisan front. The one problem that this department was dealing with was that of the unprincipled manoeuvres of the CPM leadership to keep the AIKS as their pocket borrow. Having failed in their manoeuvres, they split away from the AIKS finally. An AIKS conference was held in January 1968 in Maharashtra for the proper building up of the organisation.

(c) *Department of Youth and Students* is functioning with following comrades: Sarada Mitra, P. K. Vasudevan Nair, Sukumar Gupta, Chandrappan, C. V. Narayan Rao.

This department has been managing the affairs of the AISF and All-India Youth Federation. It has also been holding meetings of leading cadres on the student and youth front whenever necessity arose.

(d) *The Department of Women* consists of: Vimla Farooqi, Hajrah Begum, Renu Chakravarty, Vimla Dang, Gita Mukherji, Sarla Sharma, Saraswathi Subbiah. It has

been meeting now and then, carrying on the work in a limited way. They are working in the National Federation of Indian Women, which had a successful conference recently in Lucknow.

(e) *Department of Peace, ISCUS and Afro-Asian Solidarity* consists of eight comrades: Romesh Chandra, Chitta Biswas, O. P. Paliwal, Litto Ghosh, Baren Ray, Perin Romesh Chandra, Dilshad Chari and Kalimullah. It has been functioning regularly. They are working in the Peace, ISCUS and Afro-Asian organisations and are building up these movements in their own modest way. They are having joint meetings of cadres of these organisations to discuss general problems concerning these movements.

(f) Activities of our *Party Parliamentary Group* are managed by office-bearers of the group concerned in both the houses of Parliament.

The National Council meeting in Calcutta in April 1967 appointed a committee of CEC members consisting of S. A. Dange, Bhupesh Gupta, Yogindra Sharma, P. K. Vasudevan Nair, Z. A. Ahmad, K. Damodaran and also Hiren Mukherji to take political decisions concerning problems that come up in Parliament. This committee is functioning regularly and dealing with problems that arise from time to time.

(g) *Department of Journals* is established with Bhupesh Gupta, Pauly Parakkal, D. P. Sinha, Munshi, Maozzem, T. Madhavan and Yogindra Sharma.

During the last three years, three conferences of party journalists were held. Exchange of experience took place and decisions to improve quality of the journals were taken. But very few of these decisions were implemented.

(h) *International Department* is run by Comrade Adhikari with one assistant. He is not even able to do full justice to it because he is burdened with other jobs. He is keeping contact with and replying to letters from brother parties, arranging sending of our delegations abroad and receiving delegations from brother parties.

(i) *Department for Study of Economic & Political Pro-*

blems was formed with Comrades Sardesai, Bhupesh Gupta, P. C. Joshi and Mohit Sen. But P. C. Joshi declined to work in the department. So it consists of three comrades.

This department is required to organise study of problems facing our movement and to help regular contact with property intellectuals and thus to remove the long-standing grievance of a large number of them that the party does not care for them and does not utilise their capacities. This department made plans to keep contact with intellectuals who are with our party, organise them and take work from them. Some efforts were made.

Comrade Mohit Sen went to some of the big cities and met property intellectuals. He took some work from them in connection with Marx centenary celebrations but not much was done in this field, because this was not pursued steadfastly.

Comrade Sardesai produced a number of booklets on topical subjects like Kashmir, devaluation, India's path forward, India and October Revolution, which rendered great help to the party.

Comrade Mohit Sen wrote a number of articles defending the Party Programme (also printed as a booklet) which helped the party cadres to beat back slanderous attacks of the CPM on our Programme.

Comrade Bhupesh Gupta wrote booklets on Vietnam, food, Commonwealth relations, which were topical subjects.

(j) *Department of Culture* was appointed with Comrades Sajjad Zaheer, Makhdoom Mohiuddin and Damodaran. This department also met and took some decisions but nothing came of them.

(k) *Department of Party Organisation* was appointed with Comrades Rajeswara Rao, Yogindra Sharma, M. N. Govindan Nair, Avtar Singh Malhotra, M. Farooqi. This department met after the Party Congress sometimes and took decisions to implement the Congress decisions but nothing came of it. Though importance of building up party organisation as a special task has been emphasised in the Organisational Report of the Bombay Congress, this department

has not applied its mind to this job seriously. The only thing it has done is to bring out the innerparty journal *Party Life* regularly. The main credit for this has to go to Comrade Farooqi, its editor. Of late this department is not meeting at all.

Reason for this is that the Central Secretariat members of the department could not devote more time for party building because their main energies are spent on general political and other jobs of the centre. Unless and until some comrades whose job is party building are set apart, neither this department can function effectively nor party building take place.

Keeping the importance of strengthening our party and realising the danger of Hindu communal reaction represented by Jana Sangh in the Hindi-speaking states, the organisation department tried to coordinate the activities of our party in these states. A meeting of the state secretaries in the Hindi states was organised at the end of 1965. A number of decisions were taken regarding production of Hindi and Urdu literature, increasing circulation and improving the quality of the central Hindi and Urdu journals, coordinating the propaganda and agitation work in the Hindi states, etc. A coordination committee with secretaries of the Hindi-speaking states with Comrade Yogindra Sharma as convenor was formed. This also met the same fate like so many other decisions that were taken.

(l) *Department of Party Education* was attempted to be organised with all those comrades set apart by the state secretariats for this job. Dr. Adhikari was given this responsibility. Some secretariats gave some names. A meeting was also held with these comrades, but nothing came out of this because the comrades who were appointed by the state secretariats were no fulltimes on this job. Only Dr. Adhikari produced a syllabus and attended a number of schools organised by the state secretariats.

The sum total of all that is said above is that we have failed to forge an effective all-India centre which is the

first guarantee for bringing about a basic shift in the building up of our party as a fighting vanguard of the working class capable of leading the people in all the twists and turns of this present unstable situation. All the tasks of building up of such an all-India party centre that were enunciated in the Organisational Report of the Bombay Congress still remain to be implemented. Now let us take up the problems that face the building up of all-India party centre.

As has been said earlier, what all-India party centre needs is political, practical and organisational dynamism. At present the centre is understaffed. *It needs sufficient number of energetic leading comrades to keep contact with the states to lead the campaigns directly, to build the party organisation as a special task and to lead the mass organisations. This team of leading comrades should shed off 'statism and parochialism' and cultivate 'all-India outlook'.*

It is an incontestable fact that 'parochialism, statism and absence of all-India outlook' noted in the Bombay Congress Organisational Report, have become a widespread disease in our party from top to bottom, which is having its own effect on the all-India party centre also. Without such an energetic team of leading comrades imbued with all-India outlook, neither this disease can be cured and eliminated nor the entire energies of our party channelled in a direction on all-India problems.

All the organs of the all-India party centre, i.e. National Council, CEC, the Central Secretariat and departments should discharge the functions assigned to them in the Bombay Congress Organisational Report.

(a) The present number of members of National Council are sufficient and there is no necessity for further increasing the number.

But, as it is seen generally some younger and capable energetic comrades are left out of the National Council and state councils at the time of elections to these bodies, a system of candidate membership should be introduced to

these bodies to find place for some of these comrades who are left out.

These candidate members should be up to 10 per cent of the number of regular members of the National Council and the state councils.

(b) The Central Secretariat should be more dynamic and should work with more team spirit in order that it can discharge its functions more effectively. In order that it can take initiative on urgent political problems that come up between two sessions of the CEC, it should set up an apparatus to collect, sift and study material relating to political, economic and social developments which will enable it to react to political events effectively and in time.

(c) There must be a provision for a comrade of the status of CEC member to act as PHQ-in-charge to assist the General Secretary in discharging routine functions of the all-India party centre.

(d) The different departments have to be directly responsible to the CEC and they will submit their work report to the CEC at its regular sessions.

These departments must be small and compact and must consist only of members of the CEC, National Council and other comrades who are prepared to devote their whole-time for the centre because these departments are part of the central apparatus. Experience is that if they consist of comrades who work in the states they will not function properly.

The head of every department must be a senior comrade who works wholtime for the centre.

In every department there must be one young and capable comrade to act as its secretary permanently stationed at the centre to keep track of the work and prepare the material for the meeting of the department.

The departments should plan and work out their programme of work over a period.

(e) The Department of Organisation must consist only of capable and experienced comrades who devote their entire time for this task of party building.

(f) The organisational departments at central and state levels must take immediate steps to organise People's Service Corps in all the states and for this purpose training camps have to be organised in all states within the next six months.

(g) The Department of Party Education and the Department of Study of Economic and Other Problems facing our movement can be merged into one department under the title of Department of Party Education and Study of Political and Economic problems because the tasks of these two departments can be effectively discharged only by drawing in party intellectuals for these jobs.

(h) The following departments are to be appointed:

- 1) Party Organisation.
- (2) Party Education and Study of Political and Economic Problems (this department will deal with the publication of books by PPH).
- (3) Trade Unions.
- (4) Kisan.
- (5) Agricultural Labour.
- (6) Tribal.
- (7) Students and Youth.
- (8) Women.
- (9) Peace and Solidarity Work.
- (10) Parliament.
- (11) Central Party Journals.
- (12) International Relations.
- (13) Literature and Culture.