

WHO SABOTAGED COMMON DISCUSSIONS?

Let The Party Members Judge

Among the innumerable 'charges' being made through the bourgeois press every day by the spokesmen of the dogmatist splitters of our Party, is one that the Party leadership refused to allow an open, free and frank discussion on all controversial questions.

E M. S. Namboodiripad has also been repeating this 'charge' in his press conferences.

In order that all comrades and interested friends may judge for themselves what is the truth, we are publishing here the texts of three important documents:

1 A circular letter dated January 28 by Chairman S. A. Dange to all members of the Drafting Commission elected by the Central Executive Committee to prepare the documents for presentation to the National Council as drafts for the pre-Party Congress discussion.

2 Com. E. M. S. Namboodiripad's reply to this circular (dated January 30, 1964).

3 Com. S. A. Dange's reply to Com. E. M. S. Namboodiripad's letter (dated February 21, 1964).

The facts are as follows:

2 The Central Executive Committee at its meeting from January 12 to 17 adopted a resolution on the Seventh Congress of the CPI which named the documents for the pre-Congress discussions which should be placed before the next meeting of the National Council, and stated:

"These documents shall be drafted and prepared by the Drafting Commission composed of the Chairman of the Party Comrade S. A. Dange, members of the Central Secretariat, namely Comrades Bhupesh Gupta, M. N. Govindan Nair, Dr. Z. A. Ahmad, P. C. Joshi, Yogindra Sharma and Romesh Chandra, and Comrades E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Jyoti Basu, P. Ramamurthi, S. G. Sardesai, M. Basavapunniah and Bhowani Sen."

b It is quite obvious from the very composition of the Commission, that the majority in the CEC was making all possible efforts to associate representatives of the so-called 'left' and 'centre' with the preparation of the documents. That was the reason for associating with the Secretariat, six other members of the CEC, including four from the so-called 'left' and 'centre'.

c All these four members—Comrades E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Jyoti Basu, P. Ramamurthi and M. Basavapunniah—deliberately boycotted meetings of the Drafting Commission, thus refusing to discuss their points of difference with the Secretariat and other CEC members.

d It should be made clear that the practice, which has always been followed, on such a Drafting Commission is that if agreement is not reached, all members of the Drafting Commission, whether they are in a majority or a minority, are entitled to submit their documents to the National Council.

This was again and further made clear in S. A. Dange's letter of January 28, in which he specifically stated:

"It has been agreed that as has been the practice earlier, in case we are unable to arrive at unanimous documents, all documents prepared by members of the Commission will be placed before the National Council. We, however, hope that the discussions in the Commission will help to narrow down differences to the minimum."

There was thus not the slightest ground for any apprehension that 'decision' of any sort would be taken by the Drafting Commission by 'majority'.

e Com. E. M. S. Namboodiripad in his letter of January 30, gives as his 'reason' for boycotting the Drafting Commission, the non-inclusion of Com. Surjeet in the Commission. He raised the whole issue to one of excluding a member of the "composite Secretariat of April to October 1962".

At no time during the discussion in the CEC meeting was this 'agreement' made. In fact the CEC discussion closed with the hope that all

members would cooperate with the Drafting Commission.

In order to meet any further apprehensions, it was made clear personally to Com. E. M. S. Namboodiripad and others that the Secretariat members agreed to associate with the entire work of the Commission as 'invitees' (without being formal members) anyone whom Com. EMS and others would like to be so associated.

f With regard to Com. Surjeet's non-inclusion as a formal member of the Commission, Com. Dange's letter of Feb. 21 makes the position absolutely clear. Com. Surjeet had been suspended by the Punjab State Council from the State Executive for his behaviour in relation to Party funds and records, and it would have been a total violation of all Party forms, for him to be elected at just this time, as a full member of an important Party Commission.

The full texts of the three letters concerned are given here. Com. Namboodiripad was the only one of the boycottees who replied to Com. Dange's letter. The other three—Coms. Jyoti Basu, P. Ramamurthi and M. Basavapunniah did not reply, but when asked, verbally stated that they refused to attend.

These facts and the texts of these letters show clearly that all efforts were made by the Secretariat to ensure common discussions, but these were spurned by Com. E. M. S. and others. The truth is that certain comrades had made up their minds already to prevent under any excuse, united preparation for the Seventh Party Congress. The boycott of the Drafting Commission meetings was only another step in the splitting activities of the left sectarian dogmatist faction. Comrades E.M.S. and Jyoti Basu, by joining the boycott, only helped the dogmatist splitters.

Dange's Circular

January 28, 1964

DEAR Comrade,

The Drafting Commission which was elected by the Central Executive Committee to prepare the documents for pre-Congress discussion to be placed before the next meeting of the National Council in April, will meet in Delhi from February 14 to 21. These dates were agreed upon at the initial meeting of the Commission in Delhi on January 18.

During the week, we propose to hold a preliminary round of discussions, with a view to arrive at an understanding on points of agreement and disagreement, so that the first drafts may then be prepared for further discussion in March.

It has been agreed that as has been the practice earlier, in case we are unable to arrive at unanimous documents, all documents prepared by members of the Commission will be placed before the National Council. We, however, hope that the discussions in the Commission will help to narrow down differences to the minimum. The Commission discussions can be an important contribution towards Party unity, and we, therefore, hope you will do your best to attend these preliminary meetings in February.

With greetings,

Fraternally yours,
S. A. Dange
Chairman

E.M.S.'s Reply

Trivandrum
January 30, 1964

DEAR Comrade Dange,

I have received your letter of January 12 (28—Ed. NA) from which I learn your decision to hold the Commission meeting and your desire that I also attend the same.

You will remember that I myself had told you at the meeting of the CEC that I do not think any useful purpose will be served by my attending the meeting, since you are not able even to have an agreed Commission. I recall your self-justificatory remark that disagreement on the personnel of the Commission is due solely to the insistence made by us that Com. Surjeet should also be included in the Commission. I do not know what is wrong in that insistence, since Com. Surjeet was the only member of the composite Secretariat of April to October 1962 who has been left out from your list. (The other member of that Secretariat, Com. Sundarayya, himself did not want to be there and in his place comrade Basavapunniah was included). The deliberate refusal to include Com. Surjeet was therefore clear proof that you are not interested in getting the cooperation of those who are in disagreement with your point of view. I am afraid that this attitude of yours is likely to create obstacles in the way of functioning of the Commission.

I shall, however, be happy to cooperate with you if you give up this unjustifiable attitude.

With greetings,

Fraternally yours,
E. M. S. Namboodiripad

Dange's Reply

February 21, 1964

Com. E. M. S. Namboodiripad,
TRIVANDRUM.

DEAR Com. EMS,

Your letter dated January 30 declining to participate in the work of the Commission which was elected by the CEC.

The reason of your refusal to work on the Commission is, as you say, that Com. Surjeet has not been included in the Commission. You say that you are justified in insisting on his inclusion and that I am unjustified in refusing it.

The reason you mention for your insistence (and that of those who wanted the same) is that Surjeet is "the only member of the composite Secretariat of April to October, 1962 who has been left out from your list."

Your point is in a way correct. It shows that the CEC did want to have a composite commission of all trends of thought and so proposed you, Jyoti Basu and Sundarayya of the old composite Secretariat to be on the Commission. But then Sundarayya did not want to be there and he proposed and you all agreed with him that he should be replaced by Basavapunniah.

By that very change your proposition that the Commission should take the colour of the old composite Secretariat was given up by you.

But then why did you insist on Surjeet and why did I oppose? Not because he belonged to the composite Secretariat.

I objected because Com. Surjeet has been suspended by the Punjab State Council from the State Executive for having disrupted Party work by his wrong behaviour in relation to the Party funds and Party records after the November resolution. I need not go into the details of that here.

Your proposal was to repudiate and humiliate the Punjab Council which took that action, by appointing Comrade Surjeet on a higher Commission. I could certainly not agree with that and hence I opposed and hence you insisted.

You ask me to change my attitude. May I request you to do the same and not help disruptive activities under the guise of "neutrality" and so-called "composite unity"?

Greetings,

S. A. Dange