

## **Let Us Work Together to Serve the People\***

**E. M. S. Namboodiripad**

### **AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DELEGATES OF THE CONVENTION OF ALL INDIA SOCIALIST PARTY\***

Dear Comrades,

Being a Communist, and, what is more, a man who left the former Congress Socialist Party to join the Communist Party, I know that I am hated by your leaders, most of whom were my colleagues for full 6 years—from 1934 to 1940—when I continuously occupied the position of one of the four joint secretaries of the Congress Socialist Party.

I also know that having heard the stories of how I “betrayed” the Congress Socialist Party and its leader Jayaprakash, how I acted as an “agent” of the Communist Party inside the Congress Socialist Party, etc., most of you have also developed prejudices against me.

Yet, I make bold to address you as comrades, firstly because your Party and my Party are two major forces in our country which, if only they unite, can transform the entire political situation in favour of freedom, democracy, social progress and lasting Peace.

Furthermore, I find that more and more of you are beginning to see that it is the gulf separating our two parties that is today acting as the most effective single factor enabling the reactionary classes of India, headed by the Congress, to carry on their anti-people rule. I am sure that the All India Convention in which you are now assembled would most certainly address itself to the task of reviewing the disastrous policy pursued by your Party, the policy which helped in

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\*Letter dated 26.4.1952

several States the process of installing those very same Congress Governments which the overwhelming majority of voters rejected during the last general elections.

### **Your Leaders Are Blindly Anti-Communist**

Let me, at the very outset, make it perfectly clear that I am making this direct appeal to you because I am convinced of one thing: your leaders will not willingly give up this disastrous policy. For, blind anti-Communism has gone so deep into their minds that, unless you, the rank and file comrades of the Socialist Party, unequivocally tell them that you want to defeat the Congress in alliance with all the democratic forces in the country, including the Communist Party, they will offer one explanation or another for the fiasco suffered by their policy and continue on the same path of helping the Congress by fighting the Communists.

I may give you an example of this blind anti-Communism, an example drawn from my own personal experience. In the first National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party formed in October, 1934, at Bombay, there were four Joint Secretaries. One of these, Dr. Mohanlal Goutam, is today one of the acknowledged leaders of the Congress and what is more, connected with the most reactionary communal clique in the Congress (the Tandonites) which was too much even for a majority of the existing membership. A second of these, Mr. M. R. Masani, is today connected with one of the biggest monopolist groups of businessmen in India, the Tatas, and is one of the leaders of the reactionary group of American agents.

Furthermore, two other members of the first National Executive are today Congress Ministers, one of them a Chief Minister himself (Mr. Sampurnanand of U. P. and Mr. Naba Krishna Choudhry of Orissa).

I do not, however, find any Socialist waxing eloquent against the "betrayals" of these founders of the Congress Socialist Party; that is an honour reserved to me, who left the Congress Socialist Party to take my place among the people and not to climb my way up through business and ministerial intrigue.

Nor is this a solitary instance of the blind anti-Communism of your leaders. It is an indisputable fact that, in all their speeches and articles, they take an uncompromising stand against the Communists while they are not so categorical against the Congress. Even in the recent (Madras) resolution of the National Executive, they had declared that, while the policy of the Socialist Party is one of opposition to the Congress Ministry, the situation may be revised in case of a war or emergency; there are no such 'ifs' and 'buts' to their opposition to the Communists.

It is also significant that, in the speech which Com. Asoka Mehta made at Madras, explaining this resolution, he compared the Congress with a "leaky boat" and the Communists with a "crocodile". Just repair the boat, fill in the holes that make it leaky and it will be all right; but, as for the crocodile, there is no other alternative but to shoot it down! This would be understandable if spoken by a Nehru or a Rajaji, in fact, this is exactly what they are saying. But, Com. Asoka is saying this on behalf of you all!

I appeal to you to ponder seriously whether this is an outlook which helps the objective which you have in mind, whether you can smash reaction and go forward to Socialism without resolutely fighting and defeating the Congress. If you think, as I do, that this is a disastrous policy, which helps those very forces against which your Party and my Party are fighting, then you should say so to your leaders; you should ask them to change their policy.

### **The Story of the Congress Socialist Party**

The main argument advanced by your leaders against a change of policy is this: Communists are dishonest, their object in appealing for United Front is to worm their way into other parties and devour them; if you start working with them, they will disrupt your own party.

They tell you that this was exactly what happened in the years before the Second World War, when there was United Front between the Congress Socialists and the Communists.

Now, I am personally connected with this. For, as I have already remarked, I was one of the founder-members of the Congress Socialist Party and worked as one of its (all-India) joint secretaries for the first six years of its history. It was through the experience gathered in the Congress Socialist Party that I ultimately became a Communist. Since this is pointed out, as an example of Communist "dishonesty", I must offer a personal explanation as to why I did so.

The group of radical Congressmen in my province who formed the Congress Socialist Party in May, 1934 (just before the preparatory meeting held at Patna in order to explore the possibility of forming an all-India Congress Socialist Party) had set themselves the objective of working inside the Congress and building independent class organisations so that the anti-imperialist movement in the country may be strengthened.

They found that the Congress Socialist Party formed, in the form of a Preparatory Committee at Patna in May 1934 and as a regular organisation in October of the same year, was an organisation suited for this purpose. They also found in the Meerut Thesis of the Congress Socialist Party a very powerful instrument in strengthening the anti-imperialist movement.

### **We Are Absolutely Loyal**

It was to such a Congress Socialist Party that we, the Congress Socialists of Kerala, were loyal. It was our loyalty to such a Congress Socialist Party that made us leave that Party in 1940 to join the Communist Party.

The Meerut Thesis of the Congress Socialist Party had set before us three tasks : (1) Work inside the Congress in such a way as to turn it into a real anti-imperialist organisation; (2) develop trade unions, kisan sabhas and other mass organisations of the people in order that landlords, capitalists, etc., may be effectively fought; (3) work towards the coming together of the various groups of Indian Marxists in order to form a United Indian Party, basing itself on Marxism.

I can claim with justification that we, the Congress Socialists

of Kerala, have carried out these tasks far more effectively than your present-day leaders. And, if anybody is to be charged with betraying the Congress Socialist Party with its objectives and policies as they were formulated before Meerut and at Meerut, it is Jayaprakash, Asoka and Lohia and not we, who have to be so charged.

For, it was in Kerala and not in Bihar or Bombay, that the Congress Socialists could, through hard and patient work, win over the majority of Congressmen to a radical programme and organise really popular, militant and functioning Congress Committees; it was again in Kerala and not in Bihar or Bombay, that the Congress Socialists became the undisputed leaders of a network of powerful mass organisations embracing all the democratic classes and strata of people; it was finally in Kerala and not in Bihar or Bombay, that the Congress Socialist Party of 1934 remained till 1940, a United Party with no divisions or splits in it and, what is more, was the only Party known in the province as working with the basic principles of Marxism to guide them.

If I remember right, Com. Jayaprakash visited Kerala once in June-July 1934, then in April 1938 and again in October-November, 1938; Com. Asoka also visited us once in 1937 or so. Please ask them whether the Congress Socialists of Kerala did really succeed in making the Congress Socialist Party a real Party of the people, whether they have any other complaint against us than that we subsequently left the Party and joined the Communists. Please ask them why they themselves could not do in their own provinces what we could do in ours. They owe it to you that they answer this question: Why is it that they could not make the Congress Socialist Party a real party of the people in their own provinces which we, whom they, accuse of having betrayed the Congress Socialist Party, could do in ours?

It is because your leaders are unable to answer this question that they call us, the Congress Socialists of Kerala, and me particularly, "dishonest", "disloyal to the Party", "agent of Communists", etc.

It is “dishonesty”, “disloyalty”, etc. in their eyes to so work among the people as to be able to draw the majority of Congressmen in the struggle against the right-wing leadership of the Congress; to so build the mass organisations of workers, peasants, etc., as to draw ever larger masses of the people into the struggle against imperialism, feudalism and other reactionary forces.

You will perhaps ask me why we could not do all this and yet remain in the Congress Socialist Party, why we had to leave it and join the Communist Party. You will ask me whether this is not an act of “betrayal” on our part.

### **Why We Joined the Communist Party of India**

My answer is that, as we went on working inside the Congress Socialist Party of which we were as much the founders as Jayaprakash, Asoka, etc., we came to realise that the Congress Socialist Party as such cannot develop as a party that fights for the aims and objects for which it was founded. It had either to become a real party of the working class, a party that acts as the vanguard of the working class and as the effective leader of the peasantry; or it would degenerate into a mere petty-bourgeois mouthpiece of the “left-wing” bourgeoisie that dominates the Congress.

You should please realise that, by the time the Congress Socialist Party was formed, India had already had a number of revolutionary groups basing themselves on Socialist ideology and seeking to organise the working class. Over a decade had passed since the first generation of Indian Marxists—those like Comrades Dange and Muzaffar Ahmad—had started propagating the ideas of Socialism. Six years had also passed since the first All India Conference of the various groups of revolutionaries basing themselves on Socialist ideology and seeking to organise the working class—the well-known Workers’ & Peasants’ Conference—was held at Meerut. The leading delegates to this Conference had already gone through the tortuous proceedings of that notorious example of imperialist attack on the rising working class movement and

Socialist ideology of India—the Meerut Conspiracy case—and come out of jail. Above all, those founders of the Indian working class and Socialist movement had formed themselves into two main groups—that of the Communists and the Royists—apart from smaller groups and individuals.

It was, therefore, natural that anybody who takes Socialism seriously in 1934 and after should try to understand these pioneers of the Indian Socialist movement. For, you cannot just brush aside the 12-years-long history of a movement, a movement in building which dozens of ardent revolutionaries have given their all, a movement which you are trying to take forward, and pretend as if you are building from the beginning.

And, just because we took Socialism seriously, we wanted to understand these pioneers of the Indian working class and Socialist movement. We were, of course, firmly convinced that their approach to the Congress was wrong; that was why we accepted the basic thesis of the Congress Socialist Party that the Socialists should work within the Congress. But we had great admiration for the people who had braved all odds to propagate the ideas of Socialism and to help the working class in its struggles. We, therefore, listened to, and tried to understand the points of view of both the Royists as well as the “officials” (as the Communist Party of India was then called in Socialist circles) when they met us at Bombay in October 1934 and later. As a matter of fact, we invited a Royist—Maniben Kara—to preside over the first All-Kerala Labour Conference held at Calicut in May, 1934; we also invited Communists like Dange and Mirajkar for various Labour Conferences. Furthermore, we came in touch with Communists like Comrade Sundarayya, Ghate and the late Bharadwaj, with all of whom we had long and continuous discussions, just as we had discussions with Royists like Dr. Shetty, Karnik and others. Our attitude then was one of “listen to everybody, think independently and decide for yourself”.

This attitude taken by us was not at all liked by the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party. I still remember the May,

1934, All-Kerala Labour Conference for which we had invited Maniben Kara. Masani who had also come for the all-Kerala Socialist Conference being held at the same time was displeased at this. He did not like that we should be “corrupted” like that. I also remember the many occasions on which leaders like Masani, Asoka and Achyut criticised us for our “liberal” attitude towards the Royists and the Communists. Above all, I have to mention the Labour Conference of the Congress Socialist Party (1938 April) which was attended by the late Com. Krishna Pillai as sole delegate from Kerala. He was entitled, according to the provisions in the Constitution of the Congress Socialist Party, to exercise as many votes as Kerala was entitled to, provided he paid the dues of all the Kerala delegates. When however, he wanted to exercise this right, he was sought to be “dissuaded” from doing so, because, it was feared, he would vote, on several issues, against the right-wing policies of Masani and others.

We, however, stuck to our position because we were doing nothing else than implementing the declared policy of the Congress Socialist Party. That policy laid down in the Meerut Thesis was one of trying to unify all the various Socialist groups and elements into a single party of Indian Marxists. This cannot obviously be done unless you come into direct contact and work with those various Marxist groups and elements. To take up the attitude that the Congress Socialists are the only real Socialists in India and that others are either nobodies or downright rogues—as was actually done by Masani and others—would be going against the Meerut Thesis itself.

### **We Were in A Majority**

It should also be mentioned in this connection that we were not alone in the line that we took at that time. As a matter of fact, the majority of the Congress Socialists in the whole country were of that opinion. I will just mention some of the best known names of comrades who were in the Congress Socialist Party then—Karyanand Sharma, Kishori Prasanna

Sinha and others of Bihar; the late Panigrahi and others of Orissa; Biresw Mishra and others of Assam; Ramamurti, Jeevanandam and others of Tamilnad, etc. etc. I am here mentioning only those comrades who, like us, were all originally in the Congress and from the Congress came over to Socialism. I am deliberately leaving out those who had already become, or suspected to have become Communists—Comrades like Sajjad Zaheer, Dinker Mehta and others.

How is it that all these comrades who were like us and who can never be accused of being Communists trying to disrupt the Congress Socialist Party from within, came to join the Communist Party? The answer usually given is that they have become “agents of Moscow” “mortgaged their intellect and conscience to Russia”, etc. This, however, cannot stand the test of any logical explanation, because these are men who are respected in their respective provinces for their intelligence, selflessness and personal integrity. How is it possible that people who have spent their whole lives in courageous struggle against British imperialism and native reaction have debased themselves so much as to mortgage their intelligence and conscience to Russia?

May I also draw your attention to the fact that your own present leaders had regarded those comrades with great esteem so long as they were within the Congress Socialist Party and started denouncing them only when they joined the Communist Party? It, therefore, comes to this that, in the eyes of your leaders, anybody who remains in the Congress Socialist Party is a paragon of all virtues. While somebody who leaves it and joins the Communist Party loses all his virtues. Or, rather, your leaders call anybody, who does not mortgage his intellect to them, as people who have mortgaged themselves to Russia; they cannot agree that we who have decided to join the Communist Party after long deliberation, are as intelligent, selfless and of an independent disposition as they themselves.

Furthermore, may I mention the fact that Jayaprakash himself had agreed with us in those years? He, like us, had taken the Meerut Thesis seriously and taken the stand that it

is the job of the Congress Socialist Party to bring together the Communists and other Socialist groups into a single All-India Party of Marxists. Against the violent opposition of Masani, Asoka, Achyut, Lohia and others who were as violently anti-Communist as Sardar Patel himself and who formed themselves into a "Gandhian wing in the Congress Socialist Party", believing in *Ahimsa*, etc., Jayaprakash upheld the slogan of "unity of all Socialist groups". He had long and continuous discussions with the top leaders of the Communist Party and had started evolving formulas for the eventual merger of the Communist Party of India and the Congress Socialist Party into a single Party. Would you say that he had his "intellect and conscience mortgaged to Moscow" when he was doing all this and that he became a real patriot and Socialist only when he joined the "Gandhian wing in the Congress Socialist Party" and started attacking us as "agents of Moscow"? Again, if he is entitled to shift his position from that of a pro-Communist to that of an anti-Communist, are we not equally entitled to shift our position from that of pro-Communists to that of Communists?

You should also please remember that by the time we left the Congress Socialist Party and joined the Communist Party of India, those of our way of thinking formed the majority in the membership of the Congress Socialist Party. Whole provinces like Kerala, Tamilnad, Andhra, Orissa, Assam and large chunks of members of the Congress Socialist Party were against the policy of Jayaprakash, Masani etc.; there is no doubt that, if an all-India Conference of the Congress Socialist Party was held in 1939 or 1940 (as it was bound to be held according to the Party Constitution), the policy pursued by the top leadership of the Party would have been rejected; that is exactly why such a Conference was avoided in 1939 and in 1940.

### **The Slogan of "A United Party But No United Front"**

This leads me to one of the arguments, advanced by your leaders today: "No United Front of the Communist Party of India and the Socialist Party so long as the Communist Party

of India remains and functions as a separate party; but we can have a single party if the Communist Party and other parties (including the Socialist Party) dissolve themselves to form a single party."

The above story of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934-40 shows that your leaders were not prepared to work with the Communists in a single party. If they were prepared to do so, why did they get panicky in those years at the fact that contacts were being established between the Communists and their own ranks? Why should they have been displeased at the shift that was taking place inside the Congress Socialist Party, the shift from Socialism in general to pro-Communism? If they could not tolerate Congress Socialists like us turning towards Communism in those years, how can they tolerate the presence of thousands of Communists in a common Socialist Party? How is it possible for me to believe that they are sincere in demanding the formation of a single party in which all others should be merged when I know for a fact that they were the very people who stoutly resisted the proposal to develop the Congress Socialist Party itself into such a party?

I grant that there were sufficient grounds for them to have opposed the proposal to develop the Congress Socialist Party itself into a single all-India Party. For, the main section of the leadership of the CSP was pursuing a policy which can never be reconciled to the policy pursued by the Communist Party of India. For, while the main section of Congress Socialist Party leadership was orientating itself on the bourgeoisie, on the Indian National Congress, as its basis in the national movement, the Communist Party of India was basing itself on the working class; while the preservation of the unity of the National democratic movement led by the bourgeoisie and represented by the National Congress was supreme for the Congress Socialist Party leadership, it was the development of the working class as an independent force emerging as the leader of the national democratic movement that was vital for the Communist Party of India; while, therefore, the effort of the Congress Socialist Party was always directed at rallying the workers, peasants and

the middle-class under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, the Communist Party of India tried always to organise the workers, peasants and the middle-class independently of the bourgeoisie so that they can, in an organised way, forge unity with those sections of the bourgeoisie who were fighting imperialism and its native allies. It was impossible for these two major trends to remain in the same party: they had to fight each other; one had to overcome the other.

It was, therefore, utopian on our part—on the part of those of us who were slowly coming to accept the position of the Communist Party of India—to think that the Congress Socialist Party, as it was then constituted, can accommodate Communists and others to form a single Socialist Party. It was equally utopian on the part of Jayaprakash to think that he with his essentially bourgeois reformist outlook on life can lead a party of Indian Marxists. It took some time for us as well as Jayaprakash to realise this and, when we realised this, we went our respective ways—Jayaprakash to his anti-Communist colleagues and we to the Communist Party of India.

Is it not clear that this is bound to happen again if attempts are made to form a single party, since there obviously are fundamental differences between your party and ours? How can we put trust in people who, in one breath, oppose United Front in action even on issues on which there are no differences on the ground that there are fundamental differences, while, in another breath, they call for the formation of a United Party? Would you call that honest? Would you mind my saying frankly that this call for a United Party is just another way of refusing to forge United Front in action?

### **We Are Not Opposed to Single Party If....**

You know that Communists all over the world are forming united parties of the working class along with those Socialist Parties, or those groups inside Socialist Parties, with which there are more fundamental agreements than differences. Such, for example, are the (Communist-Socialist) Workers' Parties in Eastern Europe, as well as alliances between the Communist

Party of Italy and the Nenni Socialists. The extremely close relationships that have been established between the Communist Party of India and the Left Socialist Group in India are also of such a character. It is, therefore, correct for us to think of having one Party instead of a multiplicity of parties, provided there is such an amount of agreement as between those parties on fundamental questions that they can start the process of the merger of parties.

The question is: Does there exist today such an amount of agreement on fundamentals between our Party and yours that we can seriously suggest the dissolution of both and the formation of a new Party in which members of both join? An objective study of the position taken up by both parties will lead you to the conclusion that it will be dishonest to close our eyes to the fundamental differences that exist today between our two parties. For example—

(1) *Attitude to Internationalism*: Being a Party of the working class, our Party has its loyalty to the international working class movement. It considers that the working class in all the countries of the world have a common objective, common enemies to destroy and, therefore, have to pursue broad policies that are common. That is why the Communist Party of India was part of the Communist International so long as the latter existed; that is again why today, when there is no Communist International the Communist Party of India looks upon the brother Communist Parties as real comrades of the Indian Marxists. The C.P. of India, again, looks upon the solid achievements of the USSR, Eastern European People's Democracies and People's China in putting an end to the system of exploitation and in building a new social order, as the common heritage of the toiling people of the entire world.

This loyalty to the international working class movement is considered by your Party as treachery to India. It is "national", according to them, for their own Party to have its own international connections—connections with the Labour Party of Britain, the Socialist Party of France and similar reformist parties all over the world; but it is "anti-national"

on our part, so your leaders say, to have connections with the Communist Parties of the world including the most successful of them, the CPSU (B).

It is not my purpose here to go into the question as to which of these points of view is correct. That, if it becomes necessary, I will take up with you elsewhere. The point here is only to point out that there cannot be a common Party for those who are friendly to such parties as collaborate with Truman, Churchill & Co. as well as for those who are friendly with those who fight Truman, Churchill & Co. For, the decisive question today for anybody who is internationally-minded is: in which camp are you, in the camp of Peace, democracy and Socialism, or in the camp of war, fascism and imperialism? Your Party claims to belong to neither but the very fact that it is affiliated to the Socialist International which is itself part and parcel of the Marshall Plan, Atlantic Pact, Korean War, etc. goes to show that you are with the war bloc. And it is clear that either you have to convert us to your point of view or we have to convert you to ours before we can think of forming a common party.

(2) *Attitude to Democracy*: Similarly, our two Parties differ on the issue of democracy and dictatorship.

Being a party of the working class, our Party looks upon democracy as the extension of the rights of the toiling people and the restriction of the rights of the exploiters. For example, it is one of the highest acts of democracy for the people of India today to confiscate British capital, for the peasants to seize landlords' land and distribute it free to the landless and the land hungry, for the toiling and starving people to seize the hoarded stocks of food and cloth, and in various other ways for the common people to organise themselves and assert their rights. As a matter of fact, it is such actions of the common people, and the Committees of Action that they set up in the course of these actions, that developed into Soviets in Russia, to the People's Committees in Eastern Europe and China and to the Sanghams and Dalams in Telangana. These are *organs of the democratic action of the*

*people* because they are formed by the overwhelming majority of the people.

Your Party, however, looks upon these actions as “mob violence”. Soviet Democracy, which is the highest form of democracy in human history since it is democracy of the common people, is in their eyes, “totalitarianism”, because it is directed against a minority of exploiters. Bourgeois Parliamentary democracy, in which the millionaires enjoy all rights of exploitation and in which the workers and the peasants enjoy practically no rights is, to them, real form of democracy. They look with horror at the fact that peasants do not put reliance on the bourgeois democratic Parliament but organise their own revolutionary peasant committees and seize the land.

Now again, I am not arguing with you as to which of these approaches is correct. I only desire to point out that the differences between what you call “Democratic Socialism” and what we call “People’s Democracy” is the same that existed 35 years ago between Kautsky and Lenin—the difference between bourgeois Parliamentary Democracy and proletarian Soviet Democracy. Either you have to convert us to your point of view or we have to convert you to ours before we can think of having a common Party.

(3) *On the present situation in India:* Our two parties are also divided on various issues connected with the reading of the present-day economic and political situation in India.

While we think that India is a semi-colonial country with a dominantly feudal economy, you think that ours is an independent capitalist country; in other words, while we look upon the 1947 transfer of power as nothing but formal and the so-called “bloodless revolution in Indian States” as bogus, you look upon these two as the beginning of real democracy.

While, therefore, we consider it to be the main task of Indian revolution today to finally smash imperialism and feudalism, in which sections of the bourgeoisie may also participate, you oppose the building of such an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal United Front.

Again, while you propose nationalisation of all key and

large-scale industries *with compensation* to their owners, we propose confiscation *with no compensation* of British capital and effective control over other capital.

While we think it premature to think of forming governments that will "introduce Socialism", you think it "reformist" not to speak of "Socialism here and now". But while we think it proper and necessary not only to think of, but actually work for the formation of non-Congress Governments that will carry out a minimum programme to alleviate people's sufferings, you consider it a "betrayal of Socialism" to participate in such Governments.

There are any number of such differences as between our two Parties—differences of a fundamental as well as of a tactical nature. It will be dishonest to gloss over these differences, not to sharply bring out these differences, not to conduct discussions on them. It will be equally dishonest in the face of these differences, to propose the dissolution of the two parties in order to form a new Party.

It will, however, be correct and practicable to point out that, just as there are points of difference, there are also points of agreement. These are of course, related to urgent and not fundamental questions. They are nevertheless questions vital to the daily lives of the common people. For example, we agree that the Congress Government should be defeated; we agree that mass struggles have got to be organised against retrenchment, wage-cut, ejection of peasants, rise in prices of foodgrains, for civil liberties, etc. These, however, are hampered because we are not acting unitedly even on issues on which we are united. Why should this continue? Is not the discontinuance of this really the first step towards your own declared aim — dissolution of our two parties in order to form a new common Party?

### **Will You Lose from United Front?**

You may ask me what guarantee is there that what happened in 1934-40 will not repeat itself in 1952 and 1953 if you work unitedly with the Communists now?

My answer is a counter question: What guarantee is there that a large number of your members will not leave your Party to join the Communist Party of India, RSP, KSP, LSG and other left parties and groups if you do not have any united front with us?

Please consider what happened to your party during the last 12 years when you had no united front with us. You will then find that, except for the years 1942-45 when you got a whole generation of new recruits, the last 12 years have seen a far greater amount of desertion from your Party than in the 1936-40 period of Socialist-Communist United Front.

Please examine the list of Party Members you had in 1944-45. How many of them are with you today? How many have joined us, the RSP, KSP, LSG and other parties and groups? Why are you losing such a large number of your membership in the years when there was no united front and how does it fit in with the theory that it was United Front that did damage to you in 1936-40?

United Front or no United Front, we, the Congress Socialists of Kerala, would have found on our own that we should join the Communist Party because, with the utmost efforts made by Jayaprakash & Co., they could not have prevented us from coming into contact with the Communists. Nor can they today prevent your coming into contact with us, finding out what we stand for and comparing it with what your Party stands for. For, just as we were then anxious, so too are you today anxious, to learn all about the various trends in the Socialist movement. If Jayaprakash & Co. think that you can be "immunised" against the "dangerous thoughts" of Communism by refusing to have United Front with us, he is as mistaken as others who tried to "immunise" the entire people against the "dangerous thoughts" of Communism by putting a ban on Communist literature and on the Communist Party.

If we wanted only to get recruits for our Party from among you, that does not require any united action between your Party and ours. I am sure that, if we approach you individually

and argue with you patiently, an overwhelming majority of you will some day join us, because the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, the basis of all our activity is a mighty, all-conquering force which cannot but convince you. We want Socialist-Communist United Front not for this purpose, but because only if we pool all the resources at the disposal of your Party and ours can we successfully combat our common enemy—the Congress Government and its reactionary patrons in India and abroad.

### **Please Think of People's Needs**

I would earnestly appeal to you not to look at the question of United Front from the point of view of which of the Parties that constitute the United Front gains from it, but whether the United Front will help the common people in their struggle for a decent life and for full democracy. Can you fight the closure of mills, retrenchment, increase in the workload, enhancement in the prices of foodgrains, etc., without having a united trade union movement; can you fight the large-scale ejection of peasants, the sudden fall in the prices of agricultural produce, the atrocious system of grain procurement, etc., for irrigation, seeds, manures, etc, and for drastic reduction in rents without having a united kisan movement; can you fight for democratic education without having united organisations of students and teachers; can you get the Preventive Detention, Press and other repressive Acts repealed and full civil liberties restored without having a united campaign for civil liberties; can you force the Government to demand that all foreign troops should be withdrawn from Korea, Vietnam, Malaya, etc., without having a united peace movement; can you, finally, have non-Congress Governments at least in those States where the Congress is a minority in the Legislature without having a United Democratic Front inside and outside the Legislature—these, dear comrades, are the crucial considerations which alone should weigh with you in answering the question of whether to have or not to have United Front.

I am sure that if you look at the question of Socialist-Communist United Front from this point of view, you will see that what matters today is not that your Party and ours differ on many issues, but that the two parties together can unleash such a powerful mass movement as will deal a crushing blow to reaction.

May I also suggest to you that it is just because your leaders do not pursue such a policy of forging unity for struggle to secure people's demands, that your Party has lost the majority of its membership both when it officially pursues the policy of United Front with Communists as well as when it is nakedly anti-Communist.

It will be good for you, for us and for the people of India as a whole, if you realise, and try to make your leaders realise, that your Party can become stronger and stronger only if it takes up the people's problems and seeks solutions for them in co-operation with all other parties that are prepared to co-operate with you.

I appeal to you to take such a reasonable attitude which our common people expect of you.

*Bombay, April 26, 1952*

With warm greetings,  
E. M. S. Namboodiripad