

### **III. Organisational Situation**

It is clear from the above that the ideological-political situation inside the National Council had become more serious than it was a year ago, at the Sixth Congress. The differences which divided the Council were now still more clear and sharp. To this was added the organisational situation inside the Council. The death of Comrade Ajoy Ghosh raised the question of the leadership that should now be set up. The majority of the Council favoured the election of Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad as the General Secretary. The Dange group would agree to it only on condition that Dange himself was elected Chairman of the Party. A section of the Council stiffly opposed the election of Dange as Chairman. They argued that because of Dange's past, his attitude towards the Party and the trade unions his continuous violation of Party forms, his refusal to submit to Party decisions and his disruptive activities, his election to the post of Chairman would mean the beginning of the liquidation of the Party as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. But Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad insisted on a unanimous election and the Council was anxious to prevent a possible split. A proposal was made for a composite Secretariat. In the end, the section which was totally opposed to Dange's election as Chairman agreed to it in order to give one more trial to a composite Secretariat.

Hence, the decision was taken to break the explicit provision of the Party constitution which provided only for one post of General Secretary. It was thought that the creation of a united leadership was far more important than the observance of certain provisions of the Party Constitution. A "composite Secretariat" with a Chairman and General Secretary was thus set up. For this purpose, the Central Executive Committee was expanded to include Comrades P. Sundarayya, Jyoti Basu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet who were also elected to the Secretariat. But in order to balance this, the Dange group insisted that three of their group should also be elected to the Executive and this was also agreed to. It would not be out of place to mention here that Dange, to get himself elected as Chairman, gave an assurance to the National Council that he would not interfere in the work of

the Secretariat and the General Secretary would continue to be the spokesman of the Party.

These arrangements worked satisfactorily for some months. The way in which the composite Secretariat tackled the problem of ideology and organisation created the hope that it would be able to unify the Party through collective inner-Party discussions. This hope, however, did not last long.

### **IV. The Fateful Meeting of the National Council**

(October-November 1962)

A couple of months before the October 1962 clashes on the India-China border, the National Council which was then meeting at Hyderabad had to take note of the deterioration on the border. It stated in a resolution:

"The armed forces of the two countries are so poised against each other that there is always danger of clashes taking place between them any moment. One incident has already taken place in which personnel on the Indian side were injured which has justifiably evoked resentment from the Indian people." (Later, Nehru denied in Parliament that any Indian personnel was wounded.)

The question inevitably arose: what should the Party do under these circumstances? Should it support the Government of India in its measures of defending the border? How does support to defence measures against a socialist country square with the basic line of proletarian internationalism? After a good deal of discussion, the Council decided to "support the policy of the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru of making all efforts to bring about a peaceful negotiated settlement of the border question even while taking necessary measures for the defence of the borders of the country."

The situation, however, did not remain what it was at the time when the above line was adopted. The first half of September saw a serious deterioration in the border situation. Tension began to mount. Reactionary anti-Communist elements utilised this mounting tension in order to isolate and attack the Communist Party. Still more clashes occurred on the border.