

Undoubtedly the election has registered a glorious advance of the forces that make for national democratic revolution and they certainly are politically ahead as we have seen earlier, of the forces of reaction which are however growing apace. But it has to be admitted that serious weaknesses and shortcomings of the left and democratic movement too have been once again underlined. We have to seriously take this into account when the bitter struggle for the national alternative to the Congress with the none too distant aim of replacing congress power on a national scale and at the centre is already on. But let us first look at some of our own weaknesses and lapses for our future guidance.

We have no reviews by the state councils at the time of preparing this document and we can only make certain broad tentative general observations. It is really for the state councils concerned to go into the details. However, let us start with our understanding of the pre-election political situation. In the Election Manifesto of the CPI it was stated:

All objective conditions for the overthrow of the hated congress rule and for carrying forward the national democratic revolution to completion are now maturing as never before. The need of the hour is to forge the unity of all left and democratic forces and provide the unprecedented mass awakening of the day with a purposeful and bold leadership. Vast masses of our people deeply feel that this intolerable congress misrule must be ended here and now. The fourth general election in February 1967 comes to them as a challenge. Will they display the requisite political consciousness and stride forward to vote the Congress out of power?

This appreciation of the situation has been borne out by the election results and we are proud that our party came out with this understanding. Not even the CPM, as its Election Manifesto would show, took this confident, fighting view of the coming election battles. Their main theme was still the strengthening of the democratic opposition. However we must admit that even we underestimated the possibilities. We thought the Congress could be defeated in Kerala and possibly in West Bengal at the hands of the democratic opposition. In fact, there was a lot of discussion in our National Council about the degree of maturity of the objective conditions and it was felt by some of us that we were overstating the actual reality. Earlier there was a gross tendency to underestimate the economic situation; but we soon arrived at firm conclusions at the Hyderabad National Council meeting in June 1966. This session of the National Council gave the needed orientation for the election battles—an orientation that was elaborated in the months that followed. In Tamilnad, the Hyderabad Reso-

lution was however met with resistance among a section of the leadership and this is perhaps one reason why the party there could not adjust to the tasks and responsibilities facing it.

Why this underestimation? It arose primarily from our inadequate contacts with the masses and with their day-to-day life. Our deficient understanding of the crisis in the national bourgeoisie was also responsible. We overestimated the capacity of the congress leadership. There was initially a tendency to underestimate the great potentialities of left unity as the debate in the *Party Life* would show.

We took the correct initiative for building a united front on a national scale based on a minimum programme. Initially, we won a measure of success also in as much as the meetings of the left parties held in Delhi in 1965 and 1966 issued certain positive statements in this regard. But we confined our initiative to discussions at the leadership level. We should have taken the issue of unity to the masses in a nationwide political campaign. The masses should have been moved for influencing the lukewarm or disruptive leaderships in the left parties in a better direction. Far from activating popular opinion in favour of unity and minimum programme, we did not take the masses into confidence in regard to the problems we were facing over the question of such unity.