

NEHRU IN KERALA

★ by E.M.S. NAMBOODIRIPAD

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Prime Minister Nehru said in his election speech in Kerala on the 18th that "Many of the Communist leaders suffer, perhaps, a crisis of conscience. Or, at any rate, they suffer from what they know as a pull in mind, which had nothing to do with nationalism, and exigencies of the situation." He was, of course, referring to the well-known fact that it took some time for our Party to come to a unanimous conclusion on the stand that it should take on the question of India-China border.

HE, however, did not even dream of the fact that the above characterisation of the state of mind of the Communist leaders exactly applies to his own party in relation to its stand on the elections in Kerala. He himself and some other leaders of the Congress seem to be suffering from that very "crisis of conscience" or at any rate "a pull in mind which has nothing to do with nationalism," which he stated is the position of our Party.

As is well known, the Congress in Kerala today is campaigning not only for its own candidates but the candidates of the PSP and Muslim League as well. The election offices of the Congress; venues of their election meetings, vehicles that are used by

their candidates and election workers, etc. fly not the flag of the Congress alone but the flags of the Congress, PSP and Muslim League; they all give three symbols of a pair of yoked bulls, hut and the ladder.

Yet Prime Minister Nehru made his speech at Ernakulam as if he were oblivious of all these facts. The ground on which his meeting was taking place did not fly the three flags together, but only the Congress flag. As for his own speech, he made it appear as if the contestants in this elections are the Communist Party on the one side and the Congress standing on its own legs on the other. According to the daily papers, he took up the question how the Congress (and not the United



WELCOME AT PALAM: Left to right KPS Menon, Nehru, Kozlov, Voroshilov, Rajendra Prasad, Furtseva.

Front or the alliance of the Congress-PSP-Muslim League) was opposing the Communist Party and its candidates in these elections and answered:

"We oppose them in these elections or elsewhere because I feel that the policies which they pursue and which they have in mind are not right—at least some of them. I do not think that the basic approach of the Communist Party of India is right and will not be conducive to the growth of India and advancement of the Indian people."

He did not answer the question whether it was just a matter of conflict of policies

between the Congress and Communist Parties or whether it was a matter of agreement with the PSP and the Muslim League, either on the questions of policy or on practice. It was just a couple of days ago that he made a reference at the Bangalore session of the Congress to the conflict of policies between the Congress and the PSP and firmly rejected the idea of a coalition between the Congress on the one hand and the PSP etc., on the other.

As for the Muslim League, he has made it repeatedly clear in the past that he cannot think of any alliance or

united front or agreement with it, since it stood on the plank of communalism.

And yet he flies from Bangalore to Ernakulam in order to participate in a campaign in which the Congress is fighting united with the PSP and the Muslim League and makes a speech in which he does not make any reference either to agreement or disagreement on policy matters between the Congress and these parties.

The Prime Minister would have been fair to himself, fair to his colleagues of the Con-

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gress in Kerala, fair to their allies of the PSP and the Muslim League in Kerala and fair to the people of Kerala, if he had explained to them where he stands—whether he endorses the policy of carrying on a united election campaign with the PSP and Muslim League and, if he does so, how he justifies it. But the way in which he has studiously avoided the whole question, does no good to a personality of such a high stature as our Prime Minister.

May we take it that he has been reduced to such a state of affairs because he is today suffering from what he himself calls "a crisis of conscience, or at any rate, a pull in mind which has nothing to do with nationalism"?

It is also interesting to note that the Presidential address which Sanjeeva Reddy delivered at Bangalore and the other documents of the Bangalore session do not make any direct reference to the existence of a united front in action between the Congress, PSP and the Muslim League.

They are obviously on the horns of a dilemma—they cannot openly admit the existence of and justify this actual alliance with the two parties with whom they have very little in common on the basis of policies; on the other hand, they know very well that it is necessary for them to have such an alliance if they are to try to keep the Communists out of power in Kerala.

Sanjeeva Reddy had obviously this alliance with the PSP and Muslim League in mind when he asserted that the results of the forthcoming elections in Kerala would teach the Communists a lesson which they will have to ponder over for several

years.

If all the political parties in the country are to take lessons from election defeats, the party that has to try to learn such lessons most is the Congress Party. For, taking the State of Kerala itself, the Congress has suffered continuous defeats in three successive general elections but the only lesson which it seems to have learned from these defeats is that, if it has to avoid similar defeats in future, it should arrive at agreements with parties with whom it has no agreement on policies. It is this that has created a veritable "crisis of conscience" for the entire Congress.

I am confident that even this election strategy is not going to prevent the electorate of Kerala from inflicting another electoral defeat on the Congress.

The reason for my confidence is that even if this policy of an alliance with the Muslim League and PSP does achieve immediate practical end of defeating the Communist Party, it does no good for the Congress; it will be as much a defeat of the Congress as a national organisation as a defeat of the Communist Party.

This shift among Congressmen, combined with similar shifts among the followers of other political parties, who are getting more and more disgusted with the opportunism of their leaders, is giving further accession of strength to the alliance of Communists and non-party democrats almost every day.

While expressing this confidence with regard to the results of the elections, may I remind all our friends outside Kerala that there is barely a week for polling to take place and that such of them who want really to help us should do so without a moment's delay?

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