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UNITED ABOUT WHAT?

WHAT does the much discussed unity resolution passed this week at the Ahmedabad session of the AICC really mean? The session met under the shadows of international tension; never perhaps had world events loomed so large before the Congress as they did this week except in early 1942 when the Congress Working Committee met to consider the situation that might develop if the Japanese were to invade India; World events provided the background undoubtedly; they certainly underlay much of what Jawaharlal put before the Congress, though they failed to lift the discussions above the inconsequential trifles which usually excite men of the party.

More pressing was the necessity of repairing the party machine; The crevices that had appeared with the defection of an important and influential group under so tried a Congressman as Dr. Profulla Ghosh in West Bengal, the uneasy situation created by Acharya Kripalani opening up a Democratic Front, may well have been too much for President Tandon to tackle all by himself.

The need for strengthening the party organisation in view of the forthcoming elections is obvious enough but it would be wrong to regard the rumblings within the Congress in that narrow light. The need for internal consolidation has always been there. It has been reinforced by the necessity of fighting the elections but vaguely and inevitably, it also involves questions of ends and means. As Acharya Kripalani rightly stressed, unity is unmeaning unless there is a conscious realisation of the ends for which the Congress is to unite itself. These ends have not been defined afresh; they have been re-stated. While the resolution itself is prolix in the extreme and is worded loosely, that part of it which deals with the economic and social aims have been made precise. And if these are to be taken at their face value and really mean what they say, it may not be unwarranted to infer that the Congress is not only suffering from a searching of heart, it is not only finding it necessary to purify and re-orient itself, there is also a conscious reaching out for the aims it had deviated from—a desire to get back to the straight path. There is no mention of Ram Rajya; there is, instead, a call for greater self-reliance, increased productivity in agriculture and industry, the recognition that it will entail privation and austerity as also the direction that the burden should be cast on those most capable of bearing it.

To repeat, the economic objectives are those from which the Government have very definitely strayed away during the last two years. As is well-known, the industrial policy statement which purported to give concrete shape to some of them has long been a dead letter. The Government have withdrawn all along the line from economic development under the direct initiative of the State. They have withdrawn from direct State ventures in industry except in those few undertakings where they have already gone too far to be able to recede; thoughts of further adventures in this direction have been definitely abandoned.

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