

MASS ARREST OF LEFT COMMUNIST LEADERS IN WEST BENGAL

CALCUTTA, Oct. 31 -- The West Bengal government suddenly swooped down on the Left Communist party [pro-Chinese] in the early morning hours yesterday and arrested nearly half the newly elected state committee, including its secretary, in an apparent attempt to disorganise the All-India Congress of the organisation which starts here today.

Those arrested, numbering more than 23, include the most important organisers and public figures of the party in this state. They also include nearly forty per cent of the West Bengal delegation to the party congress. It is significant that almost all of them are spokesmen of the more radical wing of the party who had won a decisive victory over the moderates and the centrists at the recently held state conference. [See page 24.] Political circles here feel that the government's latest action is also aimed at weakening the voice of the "extremists" at the party congress.

Criticising the arrests, a spokesman of the Central Executive Committee of the Left CPI said that these arrests reflected the government's panic at the growing influence and strength of their party, particularly at a time when the bankruptcy of the government's policy was being increasingly exposed before the masses. He declared also that the party congress would be held as usual and "the congress would follow the correct path to build up a Marxist-Leninist party in India."