

India's Pro-Moscow Stalinists Hold Congress

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The pro-Moscow Communist party of India held its tenth congress in Vijayawada, in the state of Andhra Pradesh, in early February. The gathering marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Communist party in India.

The CPI has become the biggest tendency in the organized working-class movement since the split in 1964 that led to the emergence of the CPI (Marxist). It has more than 16,000 branches—an increase of 4,000 since the ninth (Cochin) congress in 1971. It has units in more than 300 districts, which means in more than 80 percent of India's administrative districts. It has twenty-two state-level organizations covering all the states except Nagaland and Mizoram.

The CPI has thirty-six members in Parliament—twenty-four in the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and twelve in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House)—and 162 members in the state assemblies. Among the national parties recognized by the Election Commission, the CPI has the second-largest voting bloc in the electoral college for presidential elections. Only the ruling Congress party has a larger number of votes.

The CPI reports it has more than 3,000 full-time and about 40,000 part-time cadres. Its more than 3.55 lakh¹ members represent a 50 percent increase since the ninth congress. Five lakh persons attended its concluding rally.

The CPI thinks that socialist revolution is not on the agenda. Instead, it believes that the tasks confronting India are merely of a bourgeois-democratic, anti-imperialist, and antifeudal character. Moreover, it considers it to be the duty of the Indian working masses to assist the "antifeudal" and "antimonopoly" bourgeoisie in carrying out these tasks. It therefore calls for a broad popular-front-type regime and for a "National Democratic Revolution."

Within this political perspective, which in essence subordinates independent working-class action to the needs of the bourgeoisie, the tenth congress assessed the situation in India.

According to the CPI, the most important factor is the economic crisis in India, which is part of the overall crisis of capitalism. The CPI sees some ray of hope, however, in the further strengthening of industries in the state sector, and in trade relations with the Soviet-bloc countries.



CPI CHAIRMAN DANGE: Wants more popular-front governments like one in Kerala.

The CPI thinks that there are divisions in the bourgeoisie, with some elements supporting Gandhi's ruling Congress party and others openly supporting what the CPI calls the "fascist movement" of Jaya Prakash Narayan.² At the same time, it notes that the Gandhi regime is pursuing increasingly undemocratic policies.

The central issue, as the CPI sees it, is how to combine the struggle against the rightists with the struggle against the anti-working-class policies of the Gandhi regime itself. It has therefore called for the formation of a broad national-democratic front of workers, peasants, intellectuals, and the "non-monopoly" sections of the Indian bourgeoisie.

It calls for a leftist government of democratic unity, favoring Kerala-type coalition governments with the ruling Congress party in all states. Such coalitions are to be based on a definite minimum programme. The CPI thinks the situation is

2. Narayan is a leader of the struggle against government corruption and high food prices in the state of Bihar. See *Intercontinental Press*, December 2, 1974, p. 1598.—IP

ripe for this type of government, and that this has been shown by the leftward shift of the masses. Press reports and news releases by party spokesmen indicate that there was intense discussion at the congress on the question of setting up this sort of government.

The CPI rejects the concept of a "non-Congress" or "anti-Congress" front. It believes that the CPI(M) and the other left parties either underestimate or completely ignore the importance of the mass support for the Congress party and the anti-imperialist and antifeudal sections of the Congress party. It also believes that they ignore the polarization taking place within the Indian capitalist class. Therefore, in the CPI's view, they underestimate the threat posed by the rightist forces. The CPI thinks that the rightist threat cannot be defeated without the cooperation of the left, democratic, and centrist sections of the Congress party itself.

The CPI's current strategy of building class-collaborationist coalitions to defeat what it calls "right reaction" has evoked great interest in bourgeois circles. All the leading newspapers gave front-page coverage to the proceedings of the congress. The Congress party has begun to hold public discussions of the CPI strategy.

CPI Chairman S.A. Dange focused his keynote address on what he said were the two main dangers confronting India: imperialism and Jaya Prakash Narayan's "fascist movement" to subvert democracy. He said that freedom and democracy were being threatened by the "two sinister arms of the counter-revolutionary Pincers"—the imperialist threat from abroad and Narayan's "total revolution" from within.

Addressing the 1,600 delegates, he called on the CPI to work actively for the broadest mobilization of all left and democratic forces, particularly those within the ruling Congress party, to fight these twin threats.

The CPI has made Narayan's movement its prime target, surpassing even the Congress party in its attacks on this struggle. At the same time, it never clearly defines what it means by "right reaction" and "fascism." The CPI has also failed to make any concrete evaluation of the emerging prominence of middle-class and petty-bourgeois elements in mass movements such as the one in Bihar.

The congress adopted the international report, the political report, the political resolution, and the organizational report—all unanimously. The vote for the new Central Executive Committee was also unanimous.

The CPI's popular-front programme serves as a useful left cover for the Gandhi regime. It will lead the CPI to side more and more with the Congress party and to continue to betray developing mass struggles. □

1. One lakh equals 100,000 units.—IP