

India

## NEW LEFT MAJORITY IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The left wing led by B.T. Ranadive has succeeded in establishing a majority in the central policy making body, the Secretariat, of the Communist Party of India and the "official" right wing has been reduced to a minority, at the recent meeting of the party's 110-member National Council held at Delhi in April 1962. In the new nine-member Secretariat the leftists have a majority of five with the "left centrist" general secretary, E.M.S. Namboodiripad of Kerala supporting them. Namboodiripad fills the post which was held by the "right centrist", Ajoy Ghosh till his untimely death early this year. The left wing consists of P. Sundaraya of Andhra, Hariskishan Singh Surjeet of Punjab, Jyoti Basu and Bhupesh Gupta of West Bengal.

The right wing of course has had the satisfaction of securing an important amendment in the party constitution and getting their nominee, S.A. Dange, elected as the first chairman of the CPI ostensibly as a check on the militant activities of the left wing.

But it is doubtful if the rightists can contain the leftists within a framework of a moderate line of supporting the bourgeois Nehru Government. Already a serious fractional struggle for the control of the provincial party units has been initiated by the two wings. In fact there is every indication of the rift developing to a breaking point. The right wing in the CPI has also begun a slanderous campaign against the Chinese CP in its attempt to discredit the left wing.

The right wing in the Secretariat consists of M.N. Govindan Nair, Namboodiripad's rival in Kerala, Z.A. Ahmed of Uttar Pradesh and Yogendra Sharma of Bihar in addition to Dange. The strength of the Central Executive has been raised from 25 to 30 to make room for the new members of the Secretariat and a few others — Gangadhar Adhikari of Bombay, Y.K. Vyas of Rajasthan and Ajtar Singh Malhotra of Punjab. In the Central Executive the rightists claim a small majority.

An earlier attempt to elect Dange as the party's general secretary was resisted by the left wing which, however agreed to an amendment of the party constitution as a matter of compromise. B.T. Ranadive, the theoretician the left wing and P.C. Joshi, the theoretician of the right wing have however, been dropped from the party's two policy-making bodies as a temporary truce.

How serious is the internal rift in the CPI? Bourgeois journalists have tried to minimise its significance by suggesting that it is just a make-believe to mislead non-communist public opinion. Obviously the internal conflicts in the CPI are not a make-believe. The differences dividing the two wings are so deeply rooted that they could not be resolved at the meeting of the National Council which lasted for 10 days.

The National Council in fact adopted several inconsequential resolutions on Algeria, rising prices etc. It also issued a call for the creation of a "democratic front" of all progressive forces including "democratic Congressmen" to fight the forces of "communal and rightist reaction" in the spirit of the Vijayawada thesis of the CPI.

But it avoided a decision on the crucial issues which are the main causes of the present rift. No post-mortem

report on the third general elections, explaining the electoral debacle of the CPI in some states was adopted. It has also scrupulously avoided evaluation of the controversial decisions of the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party regarding "destalinisation".

The new Secretariat has been authorised to draft suitable resolutions on these subjects for discussion at the next meeting of the National Council scheduled to meet in August. This meant virtually shelving the issues.

A debate on these questions would have brought to the open the differences on the strategy and tactics to be pursued by the Party in the coming period. The left wing has demanded a redefinition of the Party's attitude to the Congress Government headed by Nehru. There is also a controversy in the Party about the characterisation of the Indian revolution (whether it is still bourgeois democratic or socialist).

The right wing still affirms its faith in the parliamentary road to socialism (as embodied in the Amritsar thesis of the CPI) while the left wing stresses the need for irreconcilable class struggle against the bourgeois state.

The Sino-Soviet ideological polemics have no doubt had an impact on the ranks and the leadership of the CPI. Since the CPI was built up during the Stalin era, its leadership is sharply divided on the process of destalinisation set in motion in the Soviet Union. The CPI press has published in the recent months various reports on the 22nd Congress — including the reports made by Togliatti, Gomulka and Thorez. The party weekly "New Age" also recently published the full speech of the Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, attacking the old Cuban Stalinists such as Escalante.

There is a great deal of confusion among the party as even among the leaders on this question. While the right wing uncritically supports the Khrushchev line the left wing is critical about the methods adopted by Khrushchev in his struggle against his political opponents in the CPSU. The CPI is also divided on the India-China border dispute. But the attitude on the border dispute is in fact related to the differences the two wings maintain on the characterisation of the Nehru regime. The right led by Dange betrays a chauvinist degeneration in their support of New Delhi, and in its condemnation of the Chinese action as "aggression". The right argues that the CPI should support Nehru because of his policy of neutralism which fits into the Kremlin cold war strategy against the Western imperialists. The left wing maintains that the Nehru Government is exploiting the border dispute for the political objective of fighting Communism internally.

The CPI dominated by the right wing today characterises the Nehru Government as a "regime of the progressive bourgeoisie" fighting against "feudalism and remnants of imperialism". In pursuance of its "lesser of the two evils" theory it is also pledged to support the "progressive Congressmen" as represented by Menon, Malaviya, Nanda etc. as against "reactionary Congressmen" like Morarji Desai, S.K. Patil etc. and the "progressive" Congress as against the reactionary Swatantra Party, Jan Sangh etc.

The right wing still upholds the slogan of parliamentary

roads to socialism in India, and perpetuates the illusion that so long there is "parliamentary democracy" in India, there is the possibility of the working class seizing power by constitutional means. Hence its emphasis on electoral alliances with various parties in the provinces.

As against this, the leftist view is that the Nehru Government is "bourgeois" and therefore basically allied to world imperialism. Although the left-wing suffer from certain sectarian limitations it adopts a basically healthy class struggle approach. It rejects the parliamentary road

to socialism and concentrates its fire on the right wing for creating "illusions" around the personality of Nehru as the only "saviour of democracy" in India.

During the post-mortem discussions on the third general elections these differences inside the CPI have been sharply posed in various states. The left wing has accused the right of being the "liquidationists" of the party because of its opportunist electoral alliance with various opposition groups (like the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti in Maharashtra etc.).