
Document

Political Perspectives in India

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We print below an article by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India which was published, under the title "Present Political Situation and CP (M)", in New Age, of August 31, 1969. The subheads are ours.

THE recent significant developments—the removal of the arch-reactionary Morarji Desai from the Central Cabinet, the nationalisation of 14 major banks, the defeat of Sanjiva Reddy, the candidate of the combined reaction (the Syndicate inside the Congress, the Jana Sangh¹ and the Swatantra Party²) and the victory of V. V. Giri, the candidate supported by Left and democratic parties and big sections of Congressmen for the post of President of our country—has opened up a new stage in the political life of our country.

Political Polarisation

These developments have carried the political polarisation of forces that occurred in West Bengal and Kerala to the all-India plane. Combined reaction has received a severe blow on an all-India scale for the first time and a new vista has been opened up for the Left and democratic parties and democratic sections of Congressmen to give further blows to Right reaction and take the country forward along the road of progress, democracy and well-being of the people if they give up petty partisan considerations and forge a united front on the basis of a minimum programme and lead the masses forward. Such a bright future for our country and big opportunity to Left and democratic forces was never there in the last 22 years since the attainment of independence.

It is but natural that the CPI is happy over these developments because it had not only visualised such a process of political polarisation

¹The Jana Sangh is a party of Hindu communal reaction, intensely anti-Muslim and anti-Communist. Its main support comes from Hindu trading and landed interests.

²The Swatantra Party is the party of the former princes and Indian big business, though it has to be remembered that big business is also strongly represented in the Indian National Congress.

of forces in the country as a whole and inside the Congress, but also worked for it selflessly and steadfastly all these years. Our Party's Programme and political resolutions have kept such a perspective before the progressive forces and people of the country since long.

We will work much more vigorously and with confidence, strengthened by the recent developments, for forging unity of all the Left and democratic parties and forces in the struggle against Right reaction on specific all-India political and mass issues and for an all-in United Front on the basis of a common minimum democratic programme.

Correct Appraisal

In this connection, the Communist Party of India appreciates the stand taken by the Communist Party of India (Marxist)³ on these significant developments in our country in the recent resolution adopted by their Political Bureau in New Delhi.

The CPI (M) Polit Bureau resolution correctly appraises the victory of Giri in the presidential contest as a victory of democratic forces over the forces of extreme reaction. It says:

"The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) hails the victory of Sri V. V. Giri in the Presidential contest and views it as a political victory for the popular and democratic forces against the forces of extreme reaction in the country. The Presidential contest coming as it did in the wake of the deepening economic and political crisis and the consequent inner-party crisis inside the ruling Congress party, assumed added political importance as it involved important issues like nationalisation of banks, Congress alliance with reactionary parties, etc. It is now a proved fact that the dominant Congress wing headed by the Syndicate had unashamedly allied with the extreme reactionary non-Congress

³The CPI (M) broke away from the parent party in 1964.

parties such as Swatantra and Jana Sangh while the opposite wing led by the Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi had to rely on the non-Congress democratic parties and groups to beat back the offensive of the Syndicate. It is no longer a secret that if the group led by Smt. Gandhi sponsored the measure for nationalisation of all big banks in the country, the latter stood out as the staunch opponents of all such measures, vigorously advocating a further shift to the right, in the matter of both domestic and foreign policies of the Government".

It also correctly assesses the political polarisation within the Congress thus:

"The dominant section of the Congress leadership, having realised that its one-party monopoly rule has virtually ended and faced with the economic and political impasse it was caught in, has come to the definite conclusion that its political survival and power domination is ensured only if it forges alliance with the Swatantra and Jana Sangh and unleashes an offensive against the people and the rising mass struggles. This section has come to be popularly known as the 'Syndicate', the most aggressive representative of the monopolists and the extreme political reaction. The other section led by the Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi is sharply opposed to this line of alliance with the reactionary parties advocated by the Syndicate. Since, according to it, such a course would result in the alienation of the sympathy and support of the Muslim minorities and other oppressed sections like Scheduled Castes and Tribes, besides tarnishing the image of the Congress before the people and leading to further loss of popular support. It sponsors certain forward measures like nationalisation of banks to meet the situation and regain the lost image of the Congress party among the people. Notwithstanding the factional squabbles and group struggles among the Congress leaders, it is these two lines of alliance that are leading to a kind of polarisation inside the Congress".

More Than Tactics

It asks the democratic parties and groups to effectively intervene in this struggle against the combined Right reaction and offers the Prime Minister "critical support". It says:

"The democratic parties and groups while declaring their total, unequivocal and unconcealed opposition to the Syndicate and its reactionary political alliance with Swatantra and Jana Sangh are in duty bound to effectively intervene in the developing inner-party crisis of the Congress since the party in question is a ruling party at the Centre and in the majority of states and the differences and splits in it have a direct and immediate bearing on the destinies of the people, and lend critical support to every single progressive measure aimed at weakening the Syndicate and the vested interests it openly champions".

It warns all the "democratic-minded Congressmen" and the "Central Government headed by Smt. Indira Gandhi" against all opportunist moves for unity inside the Congress thus:

"The Polit Bureau warns all the democratic minded Congressmen who had boldly stood against the

Syndicate during the Presidential election to awaken to these conspiratorial moves of unity by their leaders and do everything in their power to scotch them. It also appeals to the entire people, including those who follow the Congress party, to be alert and watchful regarding the untidy machinations that are hatched behind their backs. It calls on the Central Government headed by Smt. Gandhi to seriously ponder over the political meaning of such opportunist moves and their dangerous consequences".

After all that they have said above, they reduce the present sharp differences inside the Congress to that of only "two conflicting tactical lines" of two sections of the bourgeoisie and landlords led by the big bourgeoisie. That is why they repeat their old formulation of "present Congress Government led by Smt. Indira Gandhi" being a "bourgeois-landlord government led by big bourgeoisie" even now. They halt at saying that it is "extremely hazardous at this stage to characterise these rival groups (inside the Congress) as representing monopolists and anti-monopolists".

These differences inside the Congress are no longer confined to differences in tactics, as the CPI (M) leadership alleges. As a matter of fact, even in the past, the differences inside the Congress leadership were also partly political though in an amorphous condition. If the central Congress government is firmly in the hands of the big bourgeoisie, as the CPI (M) leadership says, the bank nationalisation measure and the removal of Morarji would not have taken place at all. It is true that the "big bourgeoisie holds powerful influence" in the government as the Programme of the CPI states, but it is wrong to state that it is in the firm grip of the big bourgeoisie.

Differentiation Already Begun

It is, of course, wrong and harmful to make an over-estimation of the differences inside the Congress and say that a clear-cut differentiation between progressives and reactionaries has taken place representing the non-monopoly bourgeoisie and monopoly bourgeoisie. But it is utter blindness not to see that this differentiation has already started and the process will proceed at a rapid pace if the Left and democratic parties unite and play their proper role through the mobilisation of masses and hurl them against reaction into struggles.

The Central Secretariat of our Party in its resolution has correctly stated:

"that the events mentioned above signify a serious rift in the ranks of the bourgeoisie so that the emergence of a broad alliance of workers, peasants and others including a section of the bourgeoisie

against the monopolists is now within the range of realisability”.

The wrong political and programmatic understanding of the CPI (M) that the central Congress government is in the firm grip of the big bourgeoisie and that no split in the Congress can take place because of that, is responsible for their inability to anticipate and understand the recent significant events quickly and move to shape them in the progressive direction.

Their concept of people's democracy, according to which no such significant development can take place on an all-India scale unless their Party comes to occupy a decisive position on an all-India scale as in Kerala and West Bengal, has also clouded their understanding.

That is why their party was politically inactive during the whole course of the recent significant political developments. They did not organise any public meeting for mobilising the masses in support of bank nationalisation and for Giri in the presidential election. They were mainly engaged in explaining their new political positions which go against their programmatic positions and political understandings, to their own Party ranks.

National Democracy

On the other hand, it was the CPI which moved with initiative along with these events and held public meetings and demonstrations and mobilised the people on the above-stated progressive developments. The entire Party from top to bottom is inspired with the confidence that its programmatic concept of national democracy and its political understanding, which it has been propagating and working for, is coming true. This political confidence is impelling them to move forward.

The statement of the Central Secretariat of our Party reflects this mood of the Party in the following words:

“The Central Secretariat of the CPI considers this fight against Right reaction as the key task of the moment in the interest of the national democratic movement that will lead to the emergence of a national democratic front. The result of the fight that has already put Right reaction on the defensive for the time being, corroborates the analysis of the Indian situation and its development as formulated in the Party Programme adopted in 1964. The entire Party, therefore, can go forward with renewed conviction and enthusiasm to bring home to the people lessons that must be derived from the recent developments. The main lesson to be derived is the role the unity of the Left and democratic forces can play, in order to inflict a defeat on the reactionary forces”.

At the same time it warns:

“The present defeat of Right reaction must not make one underestimate its strength. Assisted by foreign imperialism, it is going to hit back at the democratic forces, including those Congressmen who brought about its defeat . . .”

Forge Unity

“The Central Secretariat appeals to other parties of the Left and Congressmen, who valiantly fought the reactionary combination, to come forward and carry on the fight together and pave the way for broader and stronger democratic unity through common mass movements on the most urgent issues of the people directed against imperialism, remnants of feudalism and the Indian monopolies”.

In this connection, we wholeheartedly welcome the appeal of the CPI (M) Polit Bureau for the unity of all democratic parties and groups. They say:

“The disunity among the democratic parties, on a number of questions connected with the people, is acting as a big hindrance in fully utilising the opportunities present before them for a rapid advance. The Political Bureau appeals to one and all democratic parties and groups for their wholehearted co-operation in overcoming these grave shortcomings and weaknesses and consolidating the united fronts that are in existence, and also come forward to plan and lead nationwide mass actions on the economic and political questions that our people are vitally interested in”.

But a great responsibility rests on CPI (M) as one of the major Left parties, as also on others, for removing the aspects of disunity among the left and democratic parties and uniting them. The leadership of the CPI (M) must give up its domineering attitude towards other parties of the front if the UF governments in Kerala and West Bengal, especially the former, have to function smoothly and act as the spearhead of the Indian democratic movement. It is not necessary to go into all the details here because they have been put publicly several times.

Resolved by History

The CPI (M) leadership has also to give up its hostility towards the CPI, which is not only causing immense harm to the democratic movement in general, but also to the communist movement in particular. After all, the three main points on which the split took place in the communist movement in our country in 1964 are to a large extent resolved by history. The CPI and the CPI (M) are today much nearer each other than at any other time in the past on political and practical problems facing the country, despite the still existing differences.

On ideological positions, the CPI (M) has shifted away from the Chinese leadership. There need not be any difficulty for the CPI and CPI (M) working together in close co-operation on political and practical problems that are facing the country and the democratic movement today.

As regards the first main point of difference, that is whether there was a revolutionary situation maturing in 1962 or at the time of the split in 1964, against which the so-called "revisionist clique" represented now by the CPI was a stumbling block, was resolved inside the CPI (M) in their Eighth Party Congress held in 1968. They had to tell their ranks after full six years that a revolutionary situation is not yet there and consequently they got the abuse that they are neo-revisionists and betrayers of the revolution from the Chinese leadership and there was a split in their party.

CPI (M) Positions

As regards the ideological controversy in the international communist movement, the leadership of the CPI (M) supported the dogmatic positions of the Maoist leadership till 1968, when they made their first demarcation on some issues of the international communist movement like Vietnam. Now in their recent document of May 1969 the statement of the CPI (M) Polit Bureau on the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of China, they totally repudiate the ideological and political positions of the Maoist leadership as being anti-Marxist-Leninist.

Of course, they try to square up their earlier positions with their present position. They say that the June 1963 open letter of the Chinese leadership was right and the present positions of the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party are wrong and they oppose them. This argument will not hold water because the present openly anti-Marxist-Leninist positions of Maoist leadership are only the nemesis of the concealed anti-Marxist-Leninist positions

in their 1963 June open letter which was the genesis of these policies.

Now the CPI (M) takes the funny position of criticising the present world conference document as being revisionist. According to them, all the 71 Parties which have signed the document, including the CPSU, are revisionist; and the Chinese and some other parties which support them are dogmatist. Perhaps the only truly Marxist-Leninist party left is the CPI (M)!

As regards the third point of controversy, national democracy versus people's democracy, the organisation of the national democratic front, progressive forces inside the Congress and split inside that organisation, the present important developments inside our country have shown which way the Left and democratic parties have to go.

Great Opportunity

The leadership of the CPI (M) is forced to fall in line with the CPI in practice over the questions of presidential election and giving critical support to Indira Gandhi and her group against the conspiracy of the Syndicate, aided by other reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party. If the Left and democratic parties unite and intervene, it is possible to help crystallisation of progressive trend inside the Congress and smash the conspiracy of the forces of Right reaction to capture the central government, paving the way for the formation of a national democratic front.

Never before during the last 22 years since independence were the Left and democratic parties offered such an opportune and favourable situation as today. Right reaction is put on the defensive with bank nationalisation and victory of V. V. Giri in the presidential contest.

We hope, in this situation, the CPI (M) leadership will give up its petty partisan considerations and hostility towards the CPI and join hands with other left and democratic parties in foiling the game of Right reaction and leading the people along the road of progress and well-being.