

Factional Strife Boiling Over

The struggle between the two factions of India's reactionary ruling Congress Party, which is coming to a head again, has made reactionary Congress rule more wobbly than ever.

Last August, the group represented by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took the offensive against the group known as the "Syndicate" whose representatives are Congress Party President Nijalingappa and former Deputy Prime Minister Morarji Desai. The move toppled Desai from office and resulted in the election of V.V. Giri as President of India who is patronized by the Indira Gandhi group. Since then the in-fighting between these two factions had become more and more intense until it developed

into an open split in the Congress Working Committee, the party's policy-making body, on November 1.

On October 15, Indira Gandhi came out with a sudden announcement dismissing four ministers of the Central Government who belong to the "Syndicate." This not only curbed the "Syndicate's" influence in the Central Government but also put pressure on several more important government ministers associated with the Nijalingappa group. The Indira Gandhi group also demanded election of a new party president by the end of October, a move designed to remove Nijalingappa from his post and put a protege of Indira Gandhi in his place.

The "Syndicate" did not take this lying down. On October 31, Nijalingappa kicked out two of Indira Gandhi's men from the Congress Working Committee. An enraged Indira Gandhi retaliated by calling a meeting on November 1 of all Congress Working Committee members loyal to her to counter the Working Committee meeting of the Nijalingappa group, and decided to convene in New Delhi on November 22 the All-India Congress Committee, its central leading organ. The Indira Gandhi group gave it to understand that of the 700-odd members of the All-India Congress Committee it could be sure of the support of well over 400 and that this would be enough to oust Nijalingappa from office. The "Syndicate," in a resolution adopted at its own meeting, took the Indira Gandhi group to task for "discipline" and declared that the group had no authority to convene an All-India Congress Committee meeting.

The dog-fight between these two factions has spread from New Delhi to many states. As most of the Congress setups and governments at the state level are now in the hands of the "Syndicate," the Indira Gandhi faction must seize control of the states in order to defeat its adversary. Following the contest between the two factions last August, a resolution to "maintain unity" was adopted to keep up appearances.

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Immediately afterwards, however, almost all the bigwigs of the two groups personally carried their activities from New Delhi to the states where they strove to knock out their rivals. Indira Gandhi, taking the field herself, went barnstorming at a stretch in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal States where the infighting was most acute. She even went to Mysore, the home state of Nijalingappa, to incite some members of parliament who had grudges against him to demand that the president withdraw from the party. The two factions were locked in the scramble for power in other states too, and confusion reigned in New Delhi as well as in the various states.

The daily sharpening of the factional struggle inside the Congress Party is a reflection of the aggravating class contradictions in the country. Under the heavy blows from the Indian people's vigorous revolutionary armed struggle, Congress rule in the service of the big landlord and big capitalist classes in India is shakier than before. Indira Gandhi time and again cried out in alarm that the "Congress would end its life if a change was not to be made." Jagjivan Ram, Minister of Food and Agriculture, also said apprehensively that if the Congress failed in the "green revolution" (in reference to the so-called "agricultural revolution" which the reactionary Indian Government has put forward to deceive the people), a red revolution would ensue.

In these circumstances, the Indira Gandhi group, in an effort to maintain its increasingly shaky rule, put up the signboard of "socialism" and trumpeted about "nationalization" and the development of the "public sector" of the economy. This is actually to step up the development of bureaucrat-capitalism and to further deceive and benumb the people. Her new policy, however, was greeted by a strong rebuff from the "Syndicate" group, which speaks mainly for certain sections of the monopoly capitalists in India. The fight for power between these two factions will surely become more intense with the deepening of the political and economic crisis which today holds the Congress Party in a tight grip.