

## SPLIT IN COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, April 10 -- The Communist party of India [CPI] split yesterday when twelve top leaders walked out of the Central Executive Council meeting. This occurred after forty-five minutes of bitter wrangling.

The twelve included E.M.S.Namboodiripad, Bhupesh Gupta and Jyoti Basu. Leaders of the so-called "centrists" in the dispute between Moscow and Peking, which has torn the party, they joined the "pro-Chinese" wing when the chips were down.

The other nine, leaders of the "left" wing, were A.K.Gopalan (leader of the CPI group in the lower house of parliament), Promod Das Gupta, P. Sundarayya, M. Basavapunniah, P. Ramamurti, H.K.Konar, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Jagjeet Singh Layallpuri and M.R.Venkat Raman. They had been holding faction meetings the past few days despite orders of the Khrushchevist leadership banning such gatherings as "splitting activity."

Although the real issue was the differences now separating Peking and Moscow and how these affect party tasks and perspectives in India, the split occurred on an almost trivial matter. The meeting was started with S.A.Dange in the chair. As soon as the agenda for the National Council was proposed, Namboodiripad demanded that an alleged prison letter written by Dange forty years ago to the British Viceroy should be made point number one.

He was supported in this by the West Bengal leader Jyoti Basu, who also demanded that Dange should leave the chair while the question was being discussed. The majority argued that Dange should stay in the chair and sought to shout down the "leftists."

Despite interruptions from Namboodiripad, Dange suggested that a vote should be taken. The "leftists," however, said they would no longer participate if such "crucial things" were to be decided by a "narrow majority."

Bhupesh Gupta offered a compromise formula -- that both the letter and disciplinary issues should be taken together and that the meeting should be adjourned temporarily for personal talks over the situation. This was not acceptable to the "right" faction.

Harsh epithets were exchanged. Namboodiripad is said to have remarked that he would not like to remain in a party presided over by a "British spy."

Dange is said to have retorted: "Let him go out. What does he think of himself."

Finally Dange told the dissidents that "the disruptors can get out." That was the end of the joint meeting.

The remaining eighteen members of the Central Executive Committee continued their meeting and adopted the agenda which they had proposed for the National Council. This includes a resolution on the "disruptive and antiparty activities" of certain leading party members; consideration of the alleged Dange "letter"; and tasks facing the mass movement. They also decided to recommend expulsion of seven of the dissident Executive members "for their splitting activities."

It later became known that Bhupesh Gupta, leader of the Communist group in the Rajya Sabha [upper house of parliament], had resigned from the Central Secretariat, the highest policy-making body of the party. He is expected to eventually leave the party but to maintain leadership of the parliamentary group, which may now change its name. The resignation is to be considered by the National Council.

The "pro-Chinese" grouping undoubtedly had plans ready for their next step. This may be the immediate declaration of the formation of another Communist party in India.