

THIRD COMMUNIST PARTY FAILS TO UNITE INDIA'S "NAXALITES"

The announcement of the formation of a third Maoist Communist party in Calcutta on May Day has apparently not succeeded in uniting the numerous Maoist groups in India. The Maoists are known collectively as "Naxalites" after the peasant revolt in Naxalbari, Darjeeling district, in West Bengal in the spring of 1967. At that time the Maoists split from the Communist party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] to form their own organizations. (The CPI(M)) had described itself as Maoist when it broke from the pro-Moscow Communist party of India [CPI] in 1964, but has since become critical of Peking.)

The new party, called the Communist party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [CPI(M-L)], was reportedly founded at a secret congress in West Bengal April 22. Its existence was first made public at a May Day rally in Calcutta by Kanu Sanyal, a Naxalite peasant leader who had recently been released from prison. The general secretary of the party is Charu Mazumdar, the best-known Indian Maoist theoretician.

The nucleus of the new party was established a year and a half ago when the All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries was established. This organization called the April 22 meeting.

The CPI(M-L) professes an orthodox Maoist line. The May 6 Calcutta Statesman quoted the CPI(M-L)'s founding declaration: The "basic task" of the Indian revolutionary movement, the party said, "is to liberate the rural areas through revolutionary armed agrarian revolution and encircle the cities and, finally, to liberate the cities and thus complete the revolution throughout the country." This perspective of a rural agrarian revolt, the party said, is the "principal task of the People's Democratic Revolution, under the banner of the thought of Chairman Mao."

The CPI(M-L) listed the enemies of the revolution as follows: "U.S. imperialism, Soviet social imperialism, the comprador-bureaucrat big bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords." In placing the Kremlin bureaucracy of the Soviet workers state on the same plane as American imperialism and in making no mention of the capitalist class as a whole (because of the perspective of an alliance with the so-called national bourgeoisie), the Naxalites were clearly hewing to the Maoist schema.

Nevertheless, significant groups of professed Maoists refused to join the new party. The three centers of strength of the Naxalites are West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala, although they have

some following in Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab. The main Naxalite organizations in both Andhra Pradesh and Kerala have thus far kept their distance from the CPI(M-L).

The Andhra Pradesh Maoists are perhaps the largest of any of the Naxalite groups in India. The majority of the Andhra Maoists are led by Nagi Reddy, an expelled leader of the CPI(M). The May 8 Calcutta Statesman said that Reddy took some 9,000 of the 16,000 CPI(M) members in the state with him into the Maoist fold. The All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries had reportedly criticized Reddy for not fully supporting the revolt of Girijan tribesmen in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. A group estimated by the bourgeois press at about 1,500 split with Reddy on this issue.

Another reported difference is the CPI(M-L)'s insistence on boycotting all elections, a position which Reddy has not shared. Reddy formed a statewide party earlier this year called the Revolutionary Communist party, but there had still been speculation that he would join the West Bengal Maoists in a common party.

He did not take part, however, in the April 22 founding congress of the CPI(M-L). It has been reported that he intends to found an All-India Maoist party in competition with the West Bengal group. The May 11 Calcutta Statesman said:

"The Andhra Pradesh Naxalites, who have so far stayed out of the newly-formed Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) have now produced a secret blueprint for the formation of yet another Maoist party....

"The blueprint which has been circulated among the top-ranking functionaries of the extremist group led by the expelled Marxist leader, Mr Nagi Reddy, is indeed a disturbing document. The immediate programme spelt out in it is not new and faithfully follows the Maoist strategy of starting a revolution in the mountains gradually coming down to the plains, and ending with the encircling of major towns and their capture."

The Kerala group, estimated by the Statesman to have 4,000 members, also stayed out of the CPI(M-L). It has not made any move to fuse with the Andhra Naxalites either.

Even in West Bengal the CPI(M-L) has not succeeded in uniting all the Maoists that split from the CPI(M). The bourgeois press puts the CPI(M-L)'s strength at 4,500. Another tendency, in opposition to the Kanu Sanyal grouping, is organized

in West Bengal under the leadership of Parimal Das Gupta, a member of the All-India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries.

The May 8 Statesman reported that Das Gupta claims that among those who were members of the Coordination Committee when it was first set up, six supported his group, three had become inactive, while only four joined the CPI(M-L).

Das Gupta presents himself as the purest of all the Maoists. The May 8 Statesman described Das Gupta's criticisms of the CPI(M-L):

"Since the formation of the CPI-(M-L), this group of Naxalites have sought to clearly demarcate their theoretical position from that of the new party. They feel that in the Indian context, the CPI-(M-L) policies will gradually take the party along the path followed by the Cuban leader, Che Guevara, and not along the course set by China's Mao. This will have disastrous consequences.

"They do not approve of the CPI-(M-L)'s professed policy of complete nega-

tion of trade unions and other class organizations. Nor do they believe the leaders of the Communist Party of China do so, though they supported the Naxalite line, and the CPI(M-L) continues to swear by Mao. In the CPI(M-L)'s policies, therefore, they see serious deviations from Mao's principles and believe that these departures could have occurred only because of the induction of petit bourgeois elements into the movement.

"Their group wants, under the circumstances, to fight out these deviationists and re-establish Maoist principles."

Das Gupta has no immediate plans to found a fourth (or is it a fifth?) Communist party in India:

"They will prefer to maintain the old platform of the Coordination Committee for the time being and until the political and other relevant issues become crystal clear through debates..."

The CPI(M-L) has announced that it will hold its first full congress in October.