

CPI Foundation Day Challenges and Tasks Before the Party

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The date 26th December 1925 is engraved in the history of not only the Communist movement of India, but it is also intractably linked to our journey from a British colony to an independent nation and a democratic republic. On this day, some of the most committed and spirited revolutionaries of the motherland gathered in the city of Kanpur (then Cawnpore) and gave a solid foundation for the communist movement in the country. The foundational conference of the Communist Party of India in 1925 marked the coming together of various Communist groups and individuals from all over the country with a common goal.

Appeal of communism was growing the world over in the wake of the Russian Revolution and its remarkable achievement of establishing a workers' state. The Russian Revolution had considerable influence on India. The policy of the Communist International (Comintern) towards colonies attracted many communists who wanted their country free from the British colonialism and free from exploitation. Inspired by the great philosophy of Marxism, the high ideals of Russian Revolution and influenced by the egalitarian work of social reformers in the country, the young Communist Party soon became a major force fighting for national liberation and for the establishment of the Socialist society.

The British were aware of the threats posed to them by communists and tried their best to kill the communist movement in its infancy itself. Various conspiracy cases were launched against communist leaders and workers to suppress and shut off the revolutionary flame spreading among the

Indian people. The British, however, could not succeed on the face of the grit and determination shown by our predecessors. Communists bravely fought the British and organized the workers and peasants of the country on the basis of a revolutionary agenda.

Supreme sacrifices made by communists while fighting the British and local sources of exploitation and discrimination like Zamindars and monarchs are part of the golden history of our freedom movement. Participation of the communists in the struggle for independence radicalized its agenda. The communists made and realized the far reaching demands for the people of the country. From demanding complete independence to abolition of landlordism, communist involvement made the agenda of the future republic more egalitarian and pro-people.

Coming from this great legacy and strength, the Communist movement seems weakened today in terms of electoral outcomes. When our party and the organized Communist movement are reaching its centenary in two years, it is high time when we ponder over this question and reemerge as a renewed, revitalized and reinvigorated force.

Factors contributing to the electoral decline must be eliminated and weeded out and emerging issues concerning the people must be addressed. Before that, we must stay clear that relevance of the Communist ideology is increasing in the world. Decades of neo-liberal policies have sharply divided people into haves and have-nots. Concentration of wealth is at an unprecedented scale today and the anxieties created by neo-liberal individualism have grappled generations. The climate crisis, essentially a product of capitalism with its failure to understand the dialectics of nature, is threatening lives and livelihoods of the people all over the world. In places where the Left has engaged with these issues meaningfully, their

support bases have grown exponentially, notable in Latin America. Thus, it is factually wrong to say that the Left has declined.

In India, every other party professes by socialism of one or the other kind to connect with the sympathy the people have for socialist ideas. It is identifiable that there exists a mismatch in the influence Left wields on various sections of the society and its electoral outcomes. There are several reasons for this, out of which the increasing role of money and muscle power in determining electoral outcomes is crucial. Electioneering has become an unimaginably expensive affair with thousands of crores being spent by bourgeois political parties. This effectively gives the corporate control over electioneering at the cost of a parties like us.

Polarization in the society is at an alarming level and the mainstream media has the infamy of abetting this. The level playing field is thus being distorted at the level of information also. The voter is being fed with communal, fascist and divisive agenda concealing their material interests. The common people are reeling under price rise and unemployment and other issues of livelihood due to the disastrous neo liberal economic policies. The struggles of the people on these issues remain behind the curtain, due to the corporate owned media. The First Past the Post System is discriminatory. The horse-trading and misuse of central agencies to destabilize and destroy the democratic process of election itself is rampant.

The absence of a comprehensive electoral reforms confirms the warning given by Dr. Ambedkar that in politics we will have one man one vote but in social and economic life we will not have one man one value. The question of equality and social justice continues to remain.

In this context, the CPI and other Left parties should rework their strategy to win the confidence of people in electoral battles too. We see large participation when we raise the demands of the people, this should reflect in electoral outcomes as well. For that, we need to engage with fundamental issues of Indian society while raising issues of contemporary importance. Our struggles must remain sensitive to the reality of caste, class and gender in our society and try to break the structures of inequality, discrimination and patriarchy.

Sustained mass movements on these issues and making prudent electoral choices will result in Left getting an electoral outcome commensurate to its influence in society. It must be recalled that even when the Left is at its electoral low, Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself singled out communism as a 'dangerous ideology'. The agenda of the Communists and that of the RSS runs diametrically opposite to each other and only the Communists can give an ideological alternative to the RSS. The Prime Minister, an RSS Pracharak, is aware of this fact and spares no chance to abuse communists.

It is an irony that RSS which was founded in the same year 1925 as CPI, has captured the political power through its political wing BJP. The BJP-RSS combine is aggressive to implement its communal fascist agenda of Hindu Rashtra backed by corporate houses. Corporate communal fascism is threatening very unity and diversities of the country.

It is thus clear that a sustained political, ideological and societal challenge to the RSS' nefarious design to subvert the Constitution and Secular fabric can come only from the Communists. We must take up the challenge by strengthening our party at all levels. Party should strive for consolidating its existing bases and expanding to newer areas. Party should continue a systematic ideological education to politicalise and

enlighten various sections of the toiling masses. A strong CPI and a strong Left will be vital for intensifying the fight to save the Republic.

The 24th Congress of our Party has rightly called upon to strengthen the CPI, to consolidate Left unity, to build a broader alliance of democratic and progressive forces to remove RSS-BJP from power and intensify the mass struggles on the issues of livelihood and move forward our radical agenda of social transformation towards Socialism.