

The fourth general election has been the first one after the split of the party in 1964. The election results stand out as the completest repudiation of the theory of split. Nothing has damaged the communist and left movement in the country more than the split. The split has helped the Congress and other reactionary parties; it has seriously limited the gains of the working people and their cause in the election battles; it has made it possible for the Swatantra Party to undo the gain of the communist movement in the past three general elections and attain the status of the first opposition party in Parliament. All these today are no longer a matter of debate. They are writ large on the election scoreboard. People are rightly cursing us—both the communist parties—on this score. Their curse, however, is born of affection and love.

The basic negative side of the split was particularly aggravated by the election strategy of the CPM in relation to the CPI. Instead of trying to minimise the harmful effects of split even in relation to the election battles, the CPM leadership took the line of bringing down our party in as many places as possible and thus proving to the people here and the international communist movement outside that it is the CPM and not the CPI which represents the main body of Indian communist movement and of what was once a united communist party. Except for reasons of local expediency the need for the two communist parties joining in the election was not accepted as a question of principle. Exaggeration of their own strength beyond all proportions was a built-in feature of this disruptive strategy. Without exaggerating their strength, seats could not be claimed and without entering such claims against us even where our

party happened to be stronger and thus contesting those seats, there was no question of reducing our position. This is how they viewed the problem.

Like the split, this electoral strategy too stands discredited and exposed. And what is more, the penalty for this has had to be paid by the CPM. For example, the CPM has secured 4 per cent or more of the polled votes which is necessary for recognition (for symbol) only in four states, namely Kerala, Andhra, Tamilnad and West Bengal. Whereas the CPI is now represented in 13 out of 16 states which went to the poll, the CPM was represented only in 9. Only in three states, the CPM has a larger number of seats in the assembly than our party. The table below would show how the CPM stands in respect of its mass following:

VOTING PATTERN OF COMMUNIST PARTY (MARXIST)

State		Votes Polled	Percentage	Seats Contested	Seats Won
Andhra	LS	1,003,485	7.39	11	—
	AS	1,071,252	7.79	84	9
Assam	LS	—	—	—	—
	AS	61,165	1.97	13	—
Gujarat	—	—	—	—	—
	AS	—	—	—	—
Haryana	LS	25,479	0.83	2	—
	AS	10,839	0.50	7	—
J & K	—	—	—	—	—
Kerala	LS	1,540,027	24.56	9	9
	AS	1,476,456	23.50	59	52
MP	LS	—	—	—	—
	AS	24,981	0.26	10	—
Madras	LS	1,057,542	6.85	5	4
	AS	623,114	4.09	22	11
Maharashtra	LS	—	—	—	—
	AS	126,330	0.92	11	1
Mysore	LS	123,313	1.60	2	—
	AS	65,993	0.90	9	—
Orissa	LS	—	—	—	—
	AS	46,577	1.17	10	1
Punjab	LS	81,008	1.88	2	—
	AS	138,857	3.27	12	3
Rajasthan	LS	168,516	2.43	3	—
	AS	77,912	1.15	21	—

State		Votes Polled	Percentage	Seats Contested	Seats Won
Uttar Pradesh	LS	260,332	1.20	5	1
	AS	254,704	1.19	56	1
West Bengal	LS	2,012,162	15.66	16	5
	AS	2,351,732	18.20	135	43
Tripura	LS	183,175	40.66	2	—
	AS	93,739	21.62	16	2
Manipur	AS	2,093	0.67	5	—
Himachal	—	—	—	—	—
Chandigarh	LS	1,580	3.20	1	—
Dadra-Haveli	LS	4,248	19.00	1	—
Delhi	—	—	—	—	—
Pondicherry	—	—	—	—	—
Andaman-Nico.	—	—	—	—	—
Laccadives	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	LS	6,405,520	4.28	61	19
	AS	6,607,235	4.64	495	126

Now coming to the larger question of the impact of the split in elections the following figures may first be noted. In Lok Sabha:

Party	Votes	Percentage	Seats
CPI	7,053,217	4.85	23
CPM	6,502,614	4.47	19
Total	13,555,831	9.32	42

Even after the split of the party the aggregate vote of the two parties is the same as that of Swatantra Party (9.33 per cent) and higher than the Jana Sangh poll (8.59 per cent). In seats again the communists are on par with the first opposition parties. It is not necessary to labour the point that but for the split the communist poll would have been much higher and the CPI easily the recognised opposition in Parliament with a comfortable lead over the Swatantra Party.

The split and the strategy of the CPM are again responsible for the stagnation of the communist poll (in percentage it has fallen) compared to 1962 election. The greatest damage has been done in Andhra Pradesh where the party used to be the strongest of all opposition parties even in terms of seats. With 1,551,223 votes the CPI has won only one Lok

Sabha seat which is perhaps rare in India's parliamentary election. And for its 1,003,485 votes, the CPM has won no seat at all. Andhra's communist movement still gave us 2.5 million votes but only one seat. With 2.5 million votes the CPI won 7 Lok Sabha seats in 1962. For 1,027,643 votes the CPI has won only 10 seats in the assembly and CPM 9 seats for 1,071,252 votes. More than 70 deposits have been forfeited by the two parties together. There has been a decline in the percentage of the communist poll by 4.26 per cent.

In West Bengal 21 seats have been lost to the Congress by the CPI and the CPM simply because of their mutual contests. But that is not the only negative side. In the third general election, the CPI (symbol) won 49 seats with 24.96 per cent votes. This time, the poll is as follows:

<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Seats</i>
CPI	1,039,790	8.05	16
CPM	2,351,732	18.20	43

The increase in percentage and in seats is negligible despite definite rise in votes. If the two parties had come together in the election, there would have come into existence an overall united front.

It will be seen from the results that the gains of both the CPI and the CPM have been relatively small compared to that of some other opposition parties. The responsibility for limiting these gains rests with the CPM which openly put their objective (of thriving on the defeats of our party) above the interests of the communist movement.

The split and disunity cost the communist movement several seats in Bihar, UP and other places. Andhra and West Bengal alone accounted for more than one-half of the total assembly seats we held before the split. The losses there, therefore, are not easy to make up elsewhere.

The CPM leaders are trying to put the blame on our party by citing comparative figures for the two parties where they have done better. It is not our contention that we did not overestimate our strength or contest where we should not have. But the difference between them and us did not

lie in the assessment of strength. The difference lay in political approach, in the attitude towards each other.

Even in their public utterances, the CPM leaders from its general secretary downward left it in no doubt that the one objective of the CPM in the elections was to defeat the 'revisionists' and it is no secret now that some of their top leaders attached more importance to defeating the CPI than defeating the Congress. In West Bengal, Andhra and some other places, the entire propaganda was carried in this spirit. It is not accidental either that they did not accept the 'sitting principle', but on the contrary demanded, for example, all our sitting Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal and, in fact, contested them. That was their guiding line in Andhra also.

It is not necessary to go into individual cases. In many cases we were up against this line of hostility towards us and of disruption of the united election fight. But the evil effects of this line were not confined merely to our mutual relations or claims. They affected adversely the entire left and democratic camp.

For example, the CPM first underestimated and then derided the role of the Bangla Congress. It offered the latter only 34 seats, while claiming for itself over four times as many. The CPM's attitude created difficulties for building an overall left unity in West Bengal and other places and encouraged the anti-unity elements in other parties who took advantage of the split in the communist movement. Thus the communist movement and through it the working class could not play its full part in bringing about the left and democratic unity as a result of the CPM's special line in relation to the CPI. It damped the enthusiasm of the masses in many places. Some working class constituencies were lost to the Congress because of the mutual contests between the two parties.

It is not surprising that the congress people are saying that their party has been saved in Andhra because of the split of the CPI and mutual contests between the CPI and the CPM. It should be a matter of concern for all that when the whole country rose against the Congress in the election,

one of its strongest left and communist bases so miserably failed mainly due to the line and behaviour of those who are supposed to be 'true Marxist-Leninists'.