100 Years of Communist Party of India (CPI)

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Why in News?

The Communist Party of India (CPI) has completed its 100 years, and considers December 26, 1925, as its foundation date.

- **Origins of the CPI** – It was founded in ***1925 in Kanpur***, inspired by Marxist ideas and the Russian Revolution.
- Initially operated underground due to colonial repression, focusing on workers' rights and anti-imperialist struggles.
- **Inspired global events –** The French Revolution, Industrial Revolution, Karl Marx's theories, and the Russian Revolution led by Lenin.
- **Origin – Tashkent vs Kanpur**
  - **1920, Tashkent –** M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherji, and Evelyn Roy issued a manifesto under Comintern influence calling for a communist party in India.
  - **1925, Kanpur** – Indian communists from Lahore, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras convened in Kanpur, resolving to form the Communist Party of India.
  - **Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case (1923)** – Leaders S.V. Ghate, S.A. Dange, and Muzaffar Ahmad were jailed.
- **The 1964 Split –** Triggered by the Sino-Soviet ideological rift and India–China border clashes (1962).
- **2 factions –** CPI(M) views Tashkent 1920 as the true foundation, whereas CPI views Kanpur 1925 as the real foundation.
- **3 political strands in India -** Diasporic Revolutionaries & M.N. Roy, Indigenous Left Groups in India, Workers' & Peasants' Organisations.

Strand	Leaders	Base	Contributions
Diasporic (MN Roy)	M.N. Roy, Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Raja Mahendra Pratap	Abroad (US, Berlin, Kabul, USSR)	Global links, Comintern approval
Indigenous Left Groups	Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, Ghulam Hussain, Singaravelu Chettiar	Indian cities	Local coordination, rooted activism
Workers/ & Peasants	Lala Lajpat Rai (AITUC)	Trade unions, peasants	Mass-based, organised labour

- **Key leaders included** – M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherji, Raja Mahendra Pratap, Abdul Rab, S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, S.V. Ghate, and Singaravelu M. Chettiar, etc.

- **Communists' role in the freedom struggle –**
  - In 1925-28, the Communists were active in the formation of workers and peasant parties (WPPs).
  - In 1929, the Communist leaders were accused of organising a railway strike and charged under the **Meerut Conspiracy Case**.
  - In the 1930s, collaborated with the Congress Socialist Party (CSP, founded 1934) and other anti-imperialist forces.
  - After 1945, the Communists led crucial peasant struggles, such as the Tebhaga movement in Bengal, the Telangana struggle, etc.
- **Electoral Role –** In the 1950s, CPI became the principal opposition party in Lok Sabha elections (1951, 1957, 1962), briefly governed Kerala, and later ruled states through Left Front coalitions, but saw a sharp national decline after 2009.
- After independence (1947), CPI demanded adult suffrage, women's equality, land redistribution, and workers' rights.

References

1. Indian Express | 100 years of CPI
2. Britannica | CPI

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