

sterilization program that Youth Congress representatives have endorsed, saying that the population question cannot be separated from general economic development.

Gandhi Responds

Mrs. Gandhi herself has placed the right wing of the party on alert by a two-pronged strategy that strengthens the CPI efforts. In her first campaign speech, Gandhi addressed foreign policy, an area in which the Congress and the Communists have no disagreements: "Detente cannot be if it is confined to one continent alone. It must be expanded to other areas deeply affected by tension and conflict...Our first priority is the question of world peace, which is tied to the resolution of the North-South dialogue." She then added "all our influence will be directed toward resolving world problems, bilateral and multilateral."

In a meeting with chief ministers of all states, she ordered a halt to all acts of coercion in the so-called family planning drive, especially compulsory sterilization. "Any act of compulsion or harassment will be dealt with severely," she warned. Then, she demanded strict implementation of the 20-point program with an eye on essential commodities' prices which have begun to rise after a 12-month period of zero inflation. The same day, finance ministry officials announced that bonuses of a minimum of \$8 will be paid to all workers in industrial units showing a profit. This decision falls short

of the 8 percent cost of living demand of the major trade unions, the Congress based Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) and the Communist-linked All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), but it is a gesture aimed at the very states where the Congress party base has collaborated most closely with the CPI.

Opposition Parties

The Indian Parliament's Lower House that Mrs. Gandhi dissolved last week had the following composition: Congress — 355; Communist Party of India-Marxist — 26; Communist Party of India — 24; Jan Sangh — 16; Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam — 12; Congress-O — 11; Independents — 28.

The issues Indira Gandhi posed for economic debate to determine India's development strategy have found no echo in the anti-Communist Opposition parties. The day new elections were announced, the government released Morarji Desai, a former finance minister who leads the Congress-O, the far rightwing that in 1969 split from Gandhi's party. Desai immediately joined "socialist" Jayaprakash Narayan, leader of the undifferentiated Opposition, in meetings to determine a common strategy. On Jan. 20, the two men, both in their seventies, emerged from the meetings to announce a joint electoral front of the rightist Jan Sangh party, the Congress-O, the Bharatiya Lok Dal and the Socialist Party. This coalition, the Janata Front, has since picked up the support of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) on "civil liberties" issues.

The Janata Front has received front page coverage from the *New York Times* which on Jan. 21 cited the charges made by an aide of the ailing Narayan that Indira Gandhi has "murdered democracy in India." The Times reported these charges as the lead item in its international news coverage. "All that has happened shows that the choice is nothing less than democracy and a fascist-type of dictatorship," he charged.

Narayan's Ford Foundation links have not gone unnoticed in the press, while his present proposal for economic "decentralization" and "ruralization" of India is not only unfeasible but in a country as diverse and complex as India, a call for outright chaos. Morarji Desai, the other stalwart of the Opposition is hated by urban and rural populations alike for his association with the policies of the International Monetary Fund during his tenure as finance minister in the 1960s. Desai is favorable to the U.S. multinationals, and has repeatedly attacked India's state sector as a source of industrial waste.

Despite the remarkably warm reception it has received in the western press, bad omens have already appeared in the horizon for the Janata Front. The Hindu revivalist Jan Sangh announced yesterday that it may not participate in the elections if all party members are not released from jail by the government. The Jan Sangh's militia, the Rastriya Sevak Sangh (RSS), remains banned for its violent activities. The loss of the Jan Sangh to the Janata Front would be significant, for it is the largest anti-Communist opposition party, and the only one which has used its significant militias to

Who Is Jayaprakash Narayan?

Jayaprakash Narayan, the leader of the Opposition coalition or Janata Front, is 76 years old. He made headlines in 1974 for leading the mass demonstrations against the Gandhi government which culminated in his call for the Indian army to mutiny. This, a destabilization operation against Gandhi, was part of World Bank pressures on the government to forego development in favor of foreign exchange earnings to pay the foreign debt. The campaign included total disruption of the economy through strikes incited by Narayan's followers, all brought to an end by the state of emergency in June, 1975.

Narayan and hundreds of other subversive politicians were arrested. Mrs. Gandhi accurately charged that they represented the internal arm of a larger "conspiracy" against India similar to that which the CIA ran against the Chilean government of the late Salvador Allende. The major portion of Narayan's funds came through the "Gandhi Peace Foundation," a "cultural center" that receives its money from the Ford Foundation. Calling for his release from prison immediately after his arrest was Willy Brandt and that section of the Second International under Brandt, controlled by U.S. intelligence agencies. Along with Socialist Party leader George Fernandes, Narayan has been charged by the Communist Party of India with direct connections to the CIA.