

MARXIST CP'S PROGRAMME X'RAYED

The Communist Party (Marxist) has damned the Programme of the Communist Party of India as 'thoroughly revisionist', as laying the ideological foundations of 'class collaboration' and 'trailing behind the Congress'. We can safely leave it to the reader of our Party's Programme to decide for himself the truth of these abusive remarks. What needs examination, however, is whether the programme adopted by the Calcutta congress of the Marxist Communists late last year is as 'revolutionary' as it claims to be. We have to single out its fundamental formulations and analyse whether or not they are correct, that is, whether they correctly reflect existing reality and provide a true revolutionary perspective of action for the working class and the people.

In this context, we shall have to examine where these formulations differ from those of the CPI Programme and what the significance of these differences is. These differences are vital and of enormous practical significance requiring the maximum possible discussion and debate.

First, the question of independence. The CPI Programme hails the achievement of independence as opening a new epoch in the history of our people and as being of historic importance for all mankind.

The Marxist CP programme says 'political power was transferred in India to the leaders of the Congress party on August 15, 1947. Thus ended the political rule of the British in India and a state headed by the Indian big bourgeoisie was established.' These formulations are grudging acceptance of an inescapable reality, but they miss the tremendous significance of India becoming free, and are completely out of tune with the national mood which rightly rejoiced at the coming of independence. Perhaps the leadership of the Marxist CP is afraid that full-throated welcome of the fact of freedom would 'create

illusions', would give credit to the Congress leadership, etc. This is perhaps why they make no mention of the glorious saga of our freedom struggle. It is strange indeed that the programme of a 'truly revolutionary' party has not even a few words to spare for the sweeping revolutionary mass actions over decades that compelled the British to quit India. The role of the people has been more or less missed, though a single reference has been made to them.

Second, the programme of the CP (Marxist) makes no analysis whatever of the actual mechanics of the transfer of power in August 1947 beyond stating that the British imperialists hoped to make our freedom formal but their hopes were belied.

In contrast, the Programme of the CPI closely analyses the role of the three contending parties—the British imperialists, the national bourgeoisie and the revolutionary masses. It exposes the conspiracy of the British imperialists to make independence a formal affair. It criticises the dual role of the national bourgeoisie combating the imperialists and compromising with them, mobilising the masses and curbing their revolutionary movement. It hails the revolutionary elan of the masses but points to the lack of a truly revolutionary leadership which could have carried the revolution to the end.

Third, the question of the building of the economic base of freedom. The straight question is: is India's economy today resting on stronger, more independent foundations than in 1947?

To this question the programme of the CP (Marxist) gives the answer 'the most glaring fact of our economic life today is that the country's economy as a whole is in many respects precariously dependent on western assistance and particularly US assistance. Far from this dependence getting reduced, it is actually increasing year by year' (p. 10). This means that in 1964 India was more dependent on imperialism than in 1947. This is a palpably absurd formulation. The new industries that have arisen, the new trade patterns that have emerged, the new technical personnel that have been trained—all cry out against this formulation.

Without the strengthening of the economic base, India would never have been able to take a step forward and pursue an

independent foreign and home policy. The question of independent capitalist development would not arise at all. In order to be able to criticise the policies and the capitalist path pursued by the Congress, it is not in the least necessary to fly against facts and make out that India is 'precariously and increasingly dependent on imperialism'. Nor is this necessary to take note of and warn against the danger posed by allowing huge quantities of foreign private capital free entry and by going in for huge loans from the west, which the Congress government is doing.

While making all these criticisms and more, the CPI Programme categorically states that 'India, no longer linked and solely dependent on the world capitalist market, has been able to advance along the road of independent industrial growth.'

Fourth, the question of socialist aid. The programme of the CP (Marxist) recognises that socialist aid is disinterested, that it is of key importance but its basic approach is contained in the following formulation: 'With the emergence of the world socialist system, while utilising socialist aid for building certain heavy industries, it (the bourgeoisie) actually uses it as an extremely useful bargaining counter to strike more favourable deals with imperialist monopolists' (p. 5). If this is the significance of socialist aid, then neither the Indian people nor the socialist countries should be at all keen about it.

Why should they be particularly interested in the Indian bourgeoisie being able to strike better bargains with imperialism? Why should they be interested in increasing collaboration between the Indian and imperialist monopolists through more favourable deals for the former? This negative attitude to socialist aid would mean that the democratic movement should not actively campaign for the government to go in for it as much as possible. Here the 'ultra left' find themselves in the unenviable company of right reaction who also would like the significance and quantum of socialist aid to be lessened as much as possible.

In contrast, the CPI Programme correctly notes: 'socialist aid is distributed over vital sectors of our national economy and helps to fulfil many basic needs in the same. New branches of industry and projects which emerged as a result of socialist aid

go a long way to eliminate the legacy of the colonial past and reduce India's dependence on the capitalist world market for trained manpower, material and machinery.'

Fifth, developments in the agrarian sector in the post independence period. The programme of the CP (Marxist) agrees that the aim and direction of Congress policies in this sphere has been 'to transform the feudal landlords into capitalist landlords and develop a stratum of rich peasant.'

But what has been the result of the operation of these policies? While correctly pointing out that the bulk of the peasantry has not benefited, that landownership continues to be heavily concentrated, etc., this programme evades answering the question—has feudalism been strengthened or weakened during these 17 years? It evades answering the further question—have capitalist relations of production advanced in the countryside or not? This eloquent silence, combined with the sharp criticism of the agrarian reforms, is obviously intended to create the impression that feudalism and semi-feudalism still rule the roost, more or less to the same extent, as in the pre-independence days. Hence, the inclusion of the landlords (presumably including the feudal landlords, since no qualification is made) as part of the ruling power in this programme's formulation concerning Indian state power today.

This again is flying in the face of facts. The CPI Programme correctly notes that feudal production relations have been curbed, that capitalist relations have made significant inroads but that strong semi-feudal survivals remain while the bulk of the peasantry has not gained. An incorrect analysis of the existing pattern of class forces in the countryside obviously cannot lead to correct strategy and tactics on the peasant front. For a long time the CPI's work on this front has suffered heavily because of dogmatic refusal to see the new developments in the countryside. The CP (Marxist) programme refuses to give up this dogmatic approach.

Sixth, the question of the characterisation of the class content of the present Indian state. As mentioned earlier, this programme finds that in the Indian state power is shared by the bourgeoisie and landlords, in which the big bourgeoisie, increas-

ingly collaborating with foreign finance capital, exercises leadership.

This is radically different from the formulation in the CPI Programme which declares that the state in India is the organ of the class rule of the national bourgeoisie as a whole'. The big bourgeoisie exercises considerable influence in the formation of governmental power, while the national bourgeoisie compromises with the landlords.

If the formulation of the CP (Marxist) is correct, then the Indian state is the state power of right reaction. In essence it is scarcely different from the state power of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang China. The most reactionary forces—the collaborationist big bourgeoisie and the landlords—obviously exercise the decisive influence in such a state. In today's context such a state cannot be distinguished from a neo-colonialist state, akin to the regimes in South Korea, some of the former French African states, or Malaysia.

Yet, the Indian state refuses to behave as the CP (Marxist) programme dictates. It goes on with its policy of building an independent capitalist India. It follows a foreign policy of non-alignment, of anti-colonialism and of friendship with the Soviet Union and most other socialist countries. It takes measures to check imperialism from time to time as, for example, the recent dispute with the oil companies. At the same time, it exhibits all the reactionary features of a state engaged in building capitalism at the expense of the people, without taking decisive measures against imperialism but wooing it, by helping the growth of Indian monopolies and by compromising with the landlords.

An incorrect approach to so fundamental a question as the character of the Indian state disarms the working people, leaves them open to constant 'surprises' and hampers the full unfolding of the forces of the Indian revolution. The CPI has had such painful experience in the recent past. In the 1948 Party Congress resolution as well as in the 1951 programme, the Indian state was depicted as collaborationist, semi-colonial and as a regime of national betrayal. Life itself compelled a change in characterisation from the 1956 Palghat Congress onwards. Till

then propaganda, agitation and mass movements based on this erroneous understanding became increasingly unreal and narrow. Immense damage was done to the Party and a broad democratic movement could not be built. The CP (Marxist) still seems to want to move along the old grooves.

Seventh, foreign policy. There are two important points of difference between the Marxist CP programme and that of the CPI.

The CP (Marxist) is of the opinion that the government's foreign policy while continuing to be 'within the broad framework of non-alignment and opposition to world war... objectively facilitates the US designs of neo-colonialism and aggression and lead to India's isolation from the powerful currents of peace, democracy, freedom and socialism and as such is harmful to our interests' (p. 23).

The CPI holds that the government's foreign policy suffers from serious vacillations, especially marked in relation to the neo-colonialist drive and aggressive activities of the imperialists. But, basically, it is a 'policy of peace, non-alignment and anti-colonialism.'

It passes one's understanding how a foreign policy which is within the framework of non-alignment and opposition to world war can simultaneously objectively aid US imperialism in its aggression and neo-colonialism! Refusal to strongly oppose such US actions is one thing, but actually helping it is quite another. This only means that the CP (Marxist) actually sets very little store by non-alignment and opposition to world war, but for some reason does not say so openly. This only means that it refuses to see the anti-imperialist essence of non-alignment and opposition to the US drive for world war. It is no accident that the liberation of Goa is not even mentioned by this programme. Nor is it an accident that the firm friendship with the Soviet Union is conveniently ignored. The recent aggravation of the relations between India and the USA, the US-inspired Pakistani aggression, the condemnation of US bombing of North Vietnam—the CP (Marxist) programme's formulations on India's foreign policy clearly cannot explain these developments.

The other important point of difference relates to Chinese

aggression. For the CP (Marxist), it is still only 'a border dispute leading to a border war'. (p. 22). The tremendous crisis this aggression created, the test it imposed on India's foreign policy, the terrible damage it did to the democratic movement in India as well as to the cause of Afro-Asian solidarity and world peace, the chauvinism and sectarianism of the PRC leadership it exposed—all this does not seem to bother the CP (Marxist) leadership.

Eighth, the question of right reaction. The only reference to this menace in this programme is the cryptic formulation: 'reactionary and counter-revolutionary trends in the country have found concrete manifestation in the programme of the Swatantra party which is trying to unite all reactionary forces under its banner' (p. 48). This is in a sense quite logical. Since the leadership of CP (Marxist) is of the opinion that the present Indian state and government are already completely controlled by the right, are increasingly dependent on imperialism and facilitate its worldwide plans, the question of a right danger does not arise at all. To mention this menace itself would be revisionism. For the CP (Marxist) the powerful offensive of the monopoly groups, in alliance with the reactionary parties outside the ruling Congress party, as well as with rightwing elements in it, which seeks to subvert national policies, to destroy parliamentary democracy and to drag India into the imperialist camp, just does not exist.

This is a line of completely disarming the people, of failing to build a broad democratic united front at a time of grave danger. This is a line of refusing to fight against the tendency of the government to shift to the right. It objectively aids the forces of right reaction. It also lays the ideological basis for flirtation with parties of right reaction in the name of fighting the Congress.

Ninth, there is the difference in the two programmes with the CP (Marxist) upholding the strategic objective of people's democracy and the CPI that of national democracy.

In addition the CP (Marxist) holds, contrary to the view of the CPI, that the non-capitalist path is ruled out for India. This latter point is rather strange. The people's democratic state

power has the national bourgeoisie as one of its components, that is, it allows and advances a certain kind of capitalist growth to a certain extent. Simultaneously socialist, petty commodity and state capitalist relations of production also develop.

We have, thus, a transitional state based on a transitional economy with socialism as its next stage. This is nothing but the non-capitalist path, since it is neither socialist nor capitalist. The difference between national democracy and people's democracy, which are both state forms of the non-capitalist path, pertains to the question of leadership.

In national democracy, as the CPI visualises it in India, the exclusive leadership of the working class is not yet established, though the exclusive leadership of the bourgeoisie no longer exists. In people's democracy the working-class exercises exclusive leadership. It is not a matter here of one's subjective desires. Every Communist would like communism to come into being at once. But every Communist also knows that certain transitional revolutionary stages have to be gone through first. One such transitional stage for newly-independent countries like India is the completion of the national-democratic revolution. The question is, must such a revolution necessarily proceed exclusively under working-class leadership in the new period?

The 1960 Moscow Statement, by which the CP (Marxist) swears, had answered this question in the negative. In the new epoch with the world socialist system becoming the decisive force in determining social developments on a world scale and with the decisive weakening of imperialism, the completion of the national-democratic revolution does not necessarily depend on the establishment of working-class leadership. It can be completed even prior to the establishment of such leadership. This is a new possibility in the new epoch. Further, the CP (Marxist) blindly copies the pattern of the class alliance as it emerged in China during its national-democratic revolution. It equates the non-monopoly Indian bourgeoisie with the non-bureaucratic bourgeoisie of China. Yet, the former is far more powerful economically and politically than the latter was. It also overlooks the far greater independence of action and political influence displayed by the Indian petty bourgeoisie as com-

pared to its pre-revolutionary Chinese counterparts. It overlooks the fact that in China the middle-of-the-road forces were extremely weak and had displayed hardly any independent initiative. Above all, it overlooks the fact that in the new epoch the progressive potential of these forces have greatly increased.

Thus, insistence on working-class leadership as a *sine qua non* for the completion of the national-democratic revolution ignores the new possibilities in the new epoch and engenders a sectarian approach towards the allies of the working class. In fact it prevents the working class from playing its full role as the initiator and builder of the national-democratic front. This means that it militates against the creation of the necessary objective and subjective conditions for working-class leadership as the revolution advances towards socialism.

Tenth, one of the objectives of the CP (Marxist) will be to 'utilise all opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence a government pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people. The formation of such governments will give great fillip to the revolutionary movement of the working people and thus help the process of building the democratic front' (p. 49). This was obviously included to justify the concentration on the election campaign in Kerala by which E. M. S. Namboodiripad set great store.

This is completely out of tune with the entire spirit of the CP (Marxist) programme. How is it possible to visualise the real possibility of the formation of such governments in the practically neo colonialist, authoritarian set-up in the India of this programme's imagination? How can the people be given any relief at all without revolutionary seizure of power? Above all, will not the struggle for the formation of such governments, let alone their establishment, breed reformist illusions? What happens to all the warnings against revisionism?

This formulation however reveals the real state of mind of the leaders of the CP (Marxist). Tall talk of revolution, indulging in revolutionary phrase-mongering combined with the 'practical politics' of somehow forming governments in different states through any and every kind of electoral alliance. It is no accident that there is no analysis of the forces and parties

who must be united in order to achieve such governments and in order that such governments can really give some relief to the people as well as provide a fillip to the revolutionary movement.

Eleventh, with regard to the form of the revolution the CP (Marxist) programme simply asserts the existence of the possibility of peaceful transition, that is, the non-inevitability of civil war.

The CPI Programme on the other hand, not only asserts such a possibility, but also lays stress on the need for creating and strengthening the necessary conditions for the realisation of the possibility of peaceful transition. It also mentions the possibility of the transformation of Parliament into a genuine instrument of the people's will for effecting a fundamental transformation in the economic, social and state structure.

The programme of the CP (Marxist) is quite silent on these issues.

This is not an academic matter of including or not including some phrases. It is a matter of the attitude towards the defence of democracy, of preserving and extending the democratic liberties and institutions that the people have already won in India. It is a matter of building a broad alliance with this aim in view, of rallying all the democratic forces to defeat the offensive of right reaction against our nascent democracy. It is a matter of carrying forward this alliance to deepen, broaden and strengthen democracy in our country so that a peaceful transition can be effected.

The attitude of the CP (Marxist) leadership towards the question of the defence of democracy is, essentially a defeatist one. Otherwise they would not have failed to make some reference to it in the context of the possibility of peaceful transition.

Twelfth, the CP (Marxist) programme takes a definite stand on the question of the ideological struggle going on in the world communist movement. It pledges itself to 'fight the menace of modern revisionism which has presently engulfed the world communist movement and has become the main danger.'

If modern revisionism has indeed engulfed the world communist movement, then that movement has ceased to be communist and the splitting tactics of the leadership of the Communist Party of China are quite justified. It is no accident therefore that this programme makes no reference to the dogmatic offensive launched by the CPC leadership nor to the need for the creative development of the Marxism-Leninism. In this it stands in sharp contrast to the Programme of the CPI.

If we seek for any general trend in these points of important difference between the two programmes, we shall find that they represent a clear case of 'left' sectarian dogmatism. Instead of closely examining the new developments in the world and in India this programme sticks to certain old and outmoded viewpoints on the developments in India on the question of the completion of the national-democratic revolution.

Instead of striving to secure as many new allies for the working class as possible and going all out to develop all the possible forces of the Indian revolution, it prefers to try to go it alone or to go in for 'tricks' in order to bluff its way to power. Mao Tse-tung was quite right when he said that the dogmatists and 'left' sectarians were quite unable to develop the revolution as they were lazy bones, unable to think creatively and to work doggedly to win ever new sections of the masses!