

Contrary to the slanders circulated by the rival Communist Party, this accurate and ruthless analysis of the compromising and reactionary features of independent capitalist development forms the basis of the CPI's strategic line of an alternative path—of a national-democratic, non-capitalist path.

The CPI not only has no illusions that what is being attempted to be built in India by the Congress leadership is not socialism but capitalism; it also is quite clear that capitalism offers no solution to the problems of our nation and our people.

III. AGRARIAN PROBLEM AND MEASURES TO SOLVE IT

The agrarian question is central to any discussion of the problems of India and the progress of the people's movement towards a national-democratic revolution. The Party Programme, therefore, not only attaches great importance to this question but clarifies in some detail the changes that have taken place in this sphere since the national bourgeoisie became the ruling class.

It is pretty nearly unanimously agreed that during the years of British rule, despite the growth of commodity economy and the linking of Indian agriculture to the imperialist world market, feudal landlordism and some forms of semi-feudal vested interests dominated the countryside. The result was not only terrible exploitation and abysmal poverty for the overwhelming majority of the peasants. It also resulted in the total stagnation of agricultural production, the severe restriction of the domestic market and a decisive obstacle to the independent development of Indian economy.

It was only natural, therefore, that the struggle against this agrarian system was an integral part of the people's struggle against imperialist rule, since the feudal landlords were the main social ally of the British rulers. This struggle manifested itself in sweeping mass peasant movements from the earliest

days of the consolidation of British rule. It found expression in the massive peasant response to the call of the anti-imperialist struggle, especially since the 1920s. One of its glorious episodes was the great Telengana armed struggle, led by the Communist Party.

The Communists of India are justifiably proud of the fact that they played the role of pioneers in building up the mass organisations of the peasants, together with other leftwing, radical elements in the national movement. As a result, the Kisan Sabha had a clear-cut, anti-feudal programme and advanced under the central slogans of 'land to the tiller' and 'abolish landlordism'. The impact of the organised peasant movement, as well as the pressure of the peasants in general, resulted in the adoption by the Congress in the 1930s of a fairly radical agrarian programme, especially at Faizpur in 1937. The thorough implementation of this programme would have meant the eradication of feudalism, the establishment of widespread peasant proprietorship and the opening up of a path of democratic development in the countryside.

In Marxist terminology such a programme could be called the American path of abolishing feudalism, to use a formulation of Lenin. This would not have established socialism in the countryside, but would have helped the growth of a democratic peasant economy, which could be led on to the path of socialism through cooperatives. Hence, Lenin highly appraised the progressive significance of the American path and contrasted it sharply to the Prussian or Junker path of developing capitalism through compromise with the feudal landlords, through retaining their feudal privileges and converting them into capitalist landlords.

What has happened since independence was won? The Party Programme categorically states that the national-bourgeois leadership of the Congress has failed to implement its own programme, has failed to redeem the hopes of a thorough-going anti-feudal revolution which had aroused the vast millions of our peasantry, which was essential for national regeneration. The overwhelming majority of the peasants have not received any land. The slogan 'land to the tiller' remains unimplemented.

The economy of the bulk of the self-cultivating peasantry has not improved and continues to be a deficit one. Semi-feudal burdens continue in the shape of share-cropping, various open and concealed forms of tenancy and in the still predominant role of usury. The number of landless peasants has increased, following the eviction offensive of the landlords and the general impoverishment of the peasant mass, swelling the ranks of the agricultural labourers.

This strata of the rural population is subjected to intense capitalist and semi-feudal exploitation and lives in abject poverty. The market for agricultural products is in the stranglehold of commercial and financial interests, whose grip has tightened enormously. Market manipulation and price instability are yet another form of robbing the bulk of the peasantry which the ruling class has failed to mitigate.

The combined result of this refusal to implement the national-democratic programme in the countryside has been the slow rate of growth of agricultural production, which seriously lags behind the other sectors of the economy. Food deficits and reliance on food imports, combined with the continued poverty of the toiling peasants, seriously hamper the growth of national economy as a whole and prevents its development in the direction of full independence.

It is quite evident that the agrarian policies of the national bourgeoisie are now in a state of crisis. It has clearly proved itself incapable of solving the agrarian problem of our country. The democratic revolution in the Indian countryside has yet to be consummated. Such is the basic approach of the Party Programme. This approach sharply demarcates it from the official pronouncements which claim that a veritable 'agricultural revolution' has taken place in the village. It is also sharply demarcated from the so-called technological approach which concentrates solely upon the problem of insufficient fertilisers, tractors and irrigation facilities.

These shortcomings do exist but they are themselves the product of the faulty and inequitable social structure in the rural areas. The main point is that the chief productive force in agriculture, the toiling peasant, has not been liberated. Any failure

to see this point or to minimise its importance would lead to an extremely serious right deviation.

At the same time, the Party Programme sharply differs from the views of the rival Communist Party which affirm that since independence, the national bourgeoisie has more or less strengthened and consolidated feudalism in the countryside. It demarcates itself also from the understanding that since what Lenin called the American path has not been followed, therefore, the Congress has solely followed the Prussian or Junker path.

Both these viewpoints minimise the extent of the change that has taken place in the countryside as a result of Congress policies. The main aim of these policies has been to replace semi-feudal production relations by capitalist relations of production. While following a policy of compromise with and concessions to semi-feudal interests, it has at the same time substantially curbed feudalism. The feudal and semi-feudal forces are far weaker today than they were in the days of British rule. It is to fly in the face of facts to declare that there has been any consolidation, let alone strengthening of these forces. Capitalist relations of production have developed significantly both in the shape of semi-feudal landlords turning into capitalist farmers as well through the growth of the rich peasant economy.

It would be quite wrong to imagine that this development is the result merely of the spontaneous action of social forces. It is basically due to the various land legislation measures of the Congress as well as its credit, marketing and irrigation policies. It is the conscious direction which the national bourgeoisie has succeeded in giving to developments in Indian agriculture. It is part and parcel of its main strategic aim of building an independent capitalist India in compromise with imperialism.

The curbing of feudalism and semi-feudalism, together with the development of capitalism, has led to the breaking of the total stagnation of Indian agriculture, which had lasted for centuries, and to a certain growth of its productive forces, however tardy and unsatisfactory it might be. The Indian village today is not what it was prior to independence.

Just as the CPI failed to recognise the fact of Indian independence for many years, it also refused to acknowledge this change of class relations in the countryside. The Party Programme makes a sharp break from this dogmatic, blinkered approach. It refuses to accept the formal logical poser—either feudalism has been stabilised or capitalism has grown, either rural reaction has been strengthened or rural democracy has triumphed. It bases itself on the firm ground of the objective, changing reality of rural India. This reality is that the dominant character of socio-economic life in India's countryside is 'the interpenetration of the strong survivals of feudalism and growing capitalist relations of production'.

This has produced a new set of reactionary vested interests. 'Landlords, usurers and wholesale dealers, often combined into the same person, constitute the modern parasites holding up the progress of agriculture and supporting right reaction'. It is to change this reality and to smash the modern parasites that the CPI will devote all its energies. To accomplish the national-democratic revolution a radical transformation in the Indian village is essential. All sections of the peasants, including the rich peasants, can and must be united to bring about this radical transformation. At the same time for the sake of this very peasant unity and to give invincible strength to the force of agrarian revolution, the CPI in the village will base itself on the poor peasants and agricultural labourers.

Such is the class line of the new Party Programme in the matter of the national-democratic revolution in the countryside. The crux of this revolution will be to smash all forms of landlordism, both semi-feudal and capitalist, and to distribute land free to the poor peasants and agricultural labourers, while fully protecting the interests of the small landholders.

In addition, the Programme works out a whole set of measures beneficial to all the toilers in the countryside and essential for a rapid step up in agricultural production. This includes the aspect of breaking the stranglehold of usurious and commercial capital over the peasants' produce.

The Party Programme puts forward an alternative path of agricultural development to what the national bourgeoisie has

been pursuing these seventeen years. This is the non-capitalist democratic path. This path would thoroughly eliminate all vestiges of feudalism and semi-feudalism, would abolish all forms of landlordism, break the grip of moneylenders and wholesale traders and completely change the present balance of class forces in the countryside.

In place of the present landlord domination, including the usurer and big trader it would be the toiling peasants and the agricultural labourers who would determine the direction of village life. This would be nothing less than a revolution in the Indian countryside. Such a revolution would not immediately destroy all capitalist production relations in agriculture, though capitalist landlordism would be abolished. It would institute a system of toiling peasant proprietorship and give the rightful dominant position to the overwhelming majority, i.e., the poor peasants and agricultural labourers.

Together with state aid to cooperative forms of production and consumption and nationalisation of wholesale trade as well as other measures to quickly raise agricultural productivity, this would constitute a peasant economy which would form a sound basis for the gradual transition to socialism.

IV. CLASS CHARACTER OF INDIAN STATE POWER

One of the crucial problems confronting the revolutionary movement in any country is the question of the class character of the state, the problem of which class or section of a class is in power. This is not an academic question though an answer to it requires deep study and analysis. A correct solution of this problem is essential for the proper orientation of the revolutionary movement, for a proper perspective for its advance and for a proper anticipation of basic trends of economic and political trends.

Hence, the CPI had long engaged in study and debate of this question and the present formulations of the Programme repre-