

# Regarding the 1964 Programme Document of the CPI (M)

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## Preface

Makineni Basavapunniah played a critical role in formulating the programmes and tactical lines of the CPI and the CPI (M) in the period 1950 to 1985: starting with the Andhra Thesis in 1950 which was rejected by the CPI within a year of its presentation after the discussions of the CPI and the CPSU (b); the Programme and Tactical Line documents of 1951; the effective replacing of the 1951 party programme by that of the CPI (M) in 1964 and the final winding up of the Tactical Line which was published, after the death of P. Sundarayya in 1985 ('The Statement of Policy Reviewed', Marxist', Vol. III, No 3-4, April, 1986).

Parimal Dasgupta from 1951 onwards stood by the programme and tactical line of the CPI and that was the source of the collisions between him and the CPI in 1953 at the Third Congress of the CPI; he criticised, later, the Basavapunniah programmatic draft of 1964 which is given below. Subsequently Parimal Dasgupta entered into conflict with the CPI (ML) headed by Charu Mazumdar which followed the CPI and the CPI (M) in explicitly assailing the CPI programme of 1951 and, implicitly, rejecting the Tactical Line document of 1951.

In the immediate years after Stalin the future leadership of the CPI and the CPI (M) swiftly discarded the views of the CPI and the CPSU (b) as expressed in 1951 on the colonial character of the Indian society and state. The CPI Programme of 1951 had as its axis the understanding that India was the last biggest dependent semi-colonial country in Asia, that the Congress Party represented the princes, landlords, the collaborators of British imperialism, the reactionary big bourgeoisie. Foreign capital continued to dominate the Indian economy so that independence was not completely achieved. It was argued that the stage of the revolution was one of people's democracy which had an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic perspective. Only this path could lead to the liquidation of feudalism, the building up of industrialisation and political independence.

The consensus on the end of the existence of the colonial question in India was established in the immediate years after the death of Stalin. So far as Basavapunniah is concerned his political report of 1960 confirms his adherence to the unanimity on this. It omits reference to the semi-colonial dependence of India on British imperialism despite the continuing and expanding domination of the foreign capital in the country. (On Draft Political Report, 6th May 1960, in M. Basavapunniah, Selected Writings, Vol. 1, Prajasakti Book House, Hyderabad, 2015, pp. 11-41.) These views concurred with the views of the 20th Congress of the CPSU of 1956. Mikoyan as is known attacked the Institute of Orientalism for its emphasis on the impact of foreign capital in the colonial countries and advised them to study the independence of these countries. This presaged the accelerated distancing of the CPSU away from Lenin's views on imperialism and the colonial question. They were replaced by the views of Kautsky who had argued that the withdrawal of the imperialist countries from their colonies represented the end of their imperialism and the establishment of the political independence of the colonial countries. The new reformist consensus represented a re-acceptance of the theory of 'decolonisation' which had

been rejected in 1928 by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern which criticised the view that the imperialism assisted the development of industrialisation in the colonial world and weakened their dependency on imperialism thereby it 'decolonised' them. As early as 1926 it had been expressed by Stalin that while industry developed in colonies such as India it was an industry which was completely subordinated to imperialism so that the instruments and means of production were not produced but imported. Nearly nine decades after this analysis much the same holds true. Similarly the observation by the Sixth Congress of Comintern two years later that true industrialisation could only take place after a democratic revolution still holds. After the 20th Congress of the CPSU these understandings were turned on their head so that the semi-colonial and dependent countries where finance capital multiplied were regarded as independent. 'Decolonisation' theory became the norm so that recently Sitaram Yechury at the XIXth meeting of the Brezhnevite 'communist and workers parties' held in Moscow, which 'celebrated' the October Revolution, could say that the October Revolution opened the way for 'decolonisation'.

In this analysis, dated 9th September, 1964, Parimal Dasgupta refers to the Programme and the Statement of Policy of 1951 of the CPI. The latter statement was an open version of the Tactical Line document which was closed at that time. Parimal Dasgupta conducted a critique of the Draft Programme outlined by Basavapunnaiiah. Later this draft was reworked by the CPI (M) before it was published. The critique by Parimal Dasgupta applies equally to the final programme which was adopted by the party in 1964.

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***Note:***

The major documents of the CPI of 1951, The Programme, the Tactical Line, the Statement of Policy and the Draft Programme of the Communist Party of India, 21st April, 1964, which was penned by M. Basavapunnaiiah and which was subjected to criticism by Parimal Dasgupta may be found at 'Documents of the Indian Communist Movement' at:

<http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/archive/index.htm>. Other documents relating to the writing of the Programme of the Communist Party of India (M) of 1964 and the programme adopted in that year may be located in (ed.) Jyoti Basu, 'Documents of the Communist Movement in India', Volumes X-A and X-B, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1997.

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*[At the time of the founding conference of the CPI(M) a draft programme document was circulated in the name of Com. M. Basavapunnaiiah among the party leadership at the conference. This article by Parimal Dasgupta was serially published on 21 & 28 September and 5 October 1967 in Deshabrati – the weekly organ of the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries [AICCCR]. It was later republished in September 1979.]*

On behalf of the leadership of the so called left caucus in the Communist Party of India, a draft programme document, in the name of Com. Basavapunnaiiah (Com M.B.) has been circulated and will be discussed in the party conferences and Party Congress called by the left caucus.

(1) This Draft Programme has no Statement of Policy included with it and without such a Statement of Policy the practical implementation aspect of the programme of the creators of this Draft Programme remains unclear. Without an implementation policy, a true analysis of the Draft Programme is not possible. For a political party its programme is as important as its policy (for implementing the programme). Anyway in whatever form the Draft Programme has been presented, it needs to be looked into, debated and analysed.

(2) It needs to be kept in mind that in the background of the Indo-China border dispute, the resolution adopted by the then National Council of the Communist Party of India in February 1963 created a serious condition within the Party as the Party came to be largely perceived as serving the interest of the bourgeoisie. Moreover the Party's continued and growing shift towards a revisionist position got a clear and naked expression and the leadership stood exposed with the coming out of this resolution. It became clear that the party had got immersed in revisionism and thus had lost its revolutionary character. With appreciable alertness and foresight the party's general members and sections of leadership got together to announce a denouncement of the party leadership's strategy and tactics. It was thus required, in such situation for a true revolutionary communist party to be built up with true communist revolutionaries organising themselves with an appropriate party programme and policy for completing the unfinished capitalist transformation. We will analyse the given Draft Programme based on this understanding. Thus we have to analyse how the new Draft Programme meets up to or answers the question of this need (of forming a truly revolutionary communist party to complete the unfinished capitalist transformation).

The programme of any Communist Party is meant to decide the stage of revolution, analysis of the class character of the ruling class given the stage of revolution, correctly map the economic situation and its effects on the people and their reaction, frustration or anger based on the economic policy, decide on the enemies of revolution and those who can lead the revolution; also understand who could be the ally class, form a clear understanding of the formation of a wider political front of all pro-revolutionary forces and requisite policy and programmes for it, articulate clear strategy and tactics for the capture of power. It is based on these, that all programmes of Communist Parties must be analysed. Thus we will look at the Draft in discussion from these perspectives. The key challenge with all revolutionary activity is the question of capture of power. Thus at all stages of revolution, it is required of the working class and its party to formulate appropriate programmes and policies for the capture of power. Presently all communist cadres in the country are faced with this critical question and it is included in the party programme.

(3) Generally speaking, the Draft Programme in discussion does not meet up to the demands of a true Party Programme, requirements or expectations. Party Programmes are not meant to be filled up with extensive data on different matters; they are only required to support the Programme. Also, endless data is meaningless in a political programme document, if it does not help to establish or present certain facts on which such programmes are based. The data in the draft programme has been presented to criticise the Congress government, but it has not been used to arrive at any particular decision or understanding, stand or position. Thus the Draft Programme can, at best, be categorised as a critical essay. Further different opinions on one issue have been so positioned, that it is bound to create conflicting positions, analysis and decisions.

For this reason, the sharpness, clarity and progressive momentum of a political document is missing from this draft programme.

(4) In the introduction to the draft programme Com. M.B. has written: *“It is strange and sad to note that the Communist Party of India during its existence for four full decades till now, has for most of the time, remained and functioned without a Programme.”* This statement is a very formal way of expressing concern in a very bourgeois way; this is in no way a self-criticism. Presently for the leadership not to present a self-critique may not be a politically honest act. Whether the 1951 Party Programme was essentially correct or not, whether it was correct to have completely pushed it into oblivion and for this act of pushing it into oblivion, what trajectory the party took, all these need to be considered at the time of drawing up a new Draft Programme. At least where the proposed Programme is different from the 1951 Programme, where and how does it strengthen it – all these need to be clearly put forward for all party members; else it will never be clear to them. Com. MB has tried to put all the blame on the Dange faction for the rejection of the 1951 programme and for not drawing up a new programme. This is a dishonest attempt to wash off only one's own sins. In reality, the entire Party's leadership – from those who are currently identified as the right as well as the left within the party – together, in the name of revision, actually pushed the 1951 programme into the dustbin, even though the 1951 programme was at first hailed as a creative Marxist document. The purpose of this aforementioned revision and pushing into oblivion was to clear the passage of bourgeois parliamentary and revisionist thought and practice within the party. The core issue and analysis of the 1951 programme was as follows:

(i) The Congress government is a government of the reactionary big bourgeoisies and its class character is feudal and it is a collaborator with British imperialism.

(ii) The present aim and task of the Communist Party is to establish a People's Democratic Government.

(iii) The Party's aim should be to create a broad united mass political front of workers, peasants, pro-working class intellectuals and those sections of the national bourgeoisie who are dedicated to the independence and progressive betterment of the lives of the Indian people.

(iv) Stage of revolution – anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution.

In 1955, the then Central Committee of the Party officially amended portions of the 1951 programme and the amendments were more or less as follows:

(a) The analysis that the class character of the government as representing the big bourgeoisie, which kept links with imperialist forces, that is, “collaborators with imperialism, reactionary, big bourgeoisie's government”, was rejected.

(b) It was said about big bourgeoisie and their relation with the British capitalists that despite the former maintaining links with the latter, their contradiction was also sharpening and the growing sharpening and growing intensity of this contradiction was helping create fertile ground for democratic movements and struggles. Thus by showing that the primary contradiction was one

between Indian big bourgeoisie and imperialism, it created the possibility for allying with the big bourgeoisie in the wider anti-imperialist and pro-democracy struggles.

(c) It was said that the foreign policy of the Congress government had created a new dimension for itself by attacking the war mongering imperialists and taking a pro-peace position. Thus an atmosphere of overwhelming support and praise for the foreign policy was created.

(d) And most importantly, it must be pointed out that in the concluding part of the 1951 programme the aims and objectives of setting up of the mass democratic front, was, in the name of revision, deleted from the programme document.

Truly speaking, it were these revisions or changes which were responsible for creating grounds for revisionist politics to invade the party. To obscure this hard truth, Com. M.B. has presented hazy statements. By not referring to the 1951 programme, Com. M.B. has pretended to present a completely fresh new programme but surprisingly the core political demand of the 1951 programme of setting up a people's democratic government, is also the basis of his supposedly fresh new programme! Thus avoiding any discussions on the 1951 Programme is just not possible.

It is essential to unambiguously announce that the basic analysis and political call of the 1951 Programme mostly holds true for the present time also. But yes, after the transfer of power, the actions and effects of the economic policy of the ruling bourgeoisie class, the strengthening of the presence of imperialist capital in the Indian economy, the new conditions arising in the rural economy pursuant to the abolishment of the Zamindari system (the coming into effect of the Zamindari Abolition Act), the flow of international politics in the context of the 'mutual co-operation' between imperialism and the big bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries etc. are new developments which need to find place for discussion in the new programme. But these should complement the original position of the 1951 programme and should not be used to change the basic formulations of the 1951 programme. This should be the approach of any new party programme.

(5) The Draft Programme under discussion here needs to be critically analysed in its general formulation as well as positions on different important matters. Because all these constitute the pillars of the core political slogans. A clear understanding on these matters is important in ascertaining whether the political slogans will be able to take us to the desired destination with certainty.

India's current stage of revolution is democratic. But its character is different from the earlier bourgeois democratic revolution. This revolution, by attacking a section of the bourgeoisie, will attempt to resolve the current social contradiction. Every particular revolution's aim is to resolve the principal social contradiction of the time being by defeating the current system and ushering in a new system. Thus it is important to understand what is the nature of the principal contradiction of Indian society at present. The aforesaid contradiction can be stated as:

(i) Contradiction between the people and imperialism.

(ii) Monopoly and big capital versus the small, middle level capitalists and people at large.

(iii) Feudal forces – *Jotedar, Talukdar* (very big land holding class and their managers etc.) versus the Peasantry.

Amongst these principal contradictions some forms of latent contradiction and their mutual relationships will surface. Resolving the three main contradictions and unleashing new productive forces is the primary objective of revolution. The analysis in the party programme must dwell on these. For this reason the Draft Programme needs to be studied in details. The following matters have received special attention in the Draft Programme and we need to figure out which political position has been defended in the draft programme.

### **[A] Indian National Revolution and the Bourgeoisie**

In the first section of the Draft Programme, there is a discussion on the Indian national revolution and the bourgeoisie after the transfer of power. A special point of view emerges. In this discussion, the Indian revolution has been divided into two stages and it has been opined that the first stage got over with the establishment of bourgeoisie power and that the second stage has begun with the Indian people asserting their voice in defence of the sovereignty of the country and assisting in its consolidation. The Draft Programme is hazy on the second stage. But a sense emerges, from whatever hazily has been said, about the second stage that, it is (now) the duty of the people to assist in strengthening the independence and sovereignty of the country, thus helping to consolidate it. The discussion on this second phase is very hazy. But still the sense which comes out of the discussion on the second phase is that in this phase the duty of people to strengthen and consolidate the independence and sovereignty of the country by creating pressure on the ruling bourgeoisie class. This stance actually creates no clarity on the core direction or content of the Indian national revolution and the role of the bourgeoisie. The crux of the Indian national revolution was a capitalist revolution. The key issues of the revolution was the ending of imperialist exploitation and rule and the development of capitalist relations by the breaking down of feudal production relations, thereby helping develop capitalist production relations. In 1946 after the Indian big bourgeoisie compromised with imperialist capital and the subsequent transfer of power, the task of the revolution remained incomplete and it became the responsibility of the working class to complete this (revolutionary) task. The bourgeoisie has lost all power and credibility to lead the national democratic revolution. The key issue is the issue of the unfinished revolution (of Indian society). This is not an issue about stages of revolution. And the key issue is to establish a democratic India by defeating the forces of imperialism and feudalism. This should be the party's stand on Indian national revolution and this should be clearly articulated. It is based on this revolutionary duty and vision that the programme of a revolutionary party of the working class should be drawn up.

### **[B] The Relation Between the Indian Bourgeois Class and Imperialism After the Transfer of Power**

After the transfer of power, what has been the approach of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie (class) towards imperialist forces, what is the nature of their engagement with imperialist forces and whether the primary contradiction between Indian nationalism and imperialism has been

resolved (or not) and in that case what role the ruling bourgeoisie is adopting – all these are key issues which should be points of discussion for the unfinished Indian revolution. It is on this basis that a Communist Party calibrates its understanding, analysis and position on the bourgeoisie. In this regard it has been said in the Draft Programme, “Despite the increasing conflict between imperialism and feudalism on the one hand, and the people including the bourgeoisie, on the other, the bourgeoisie seeks to strengthen its position by not decisively attacking imperialism and feudalism to eliminate them, and they want to strengthen their position by attacking the people and compromising with and blatantly supporting imperialism and feudalism.” (para 15) In this regard, the Draft Programme also states, “Our bourgeoisie has committed to completely break with the past and do away with all the legacies of the colonial rule” [Para 20]. It has been further said that, “However, the contradictions between the Indian bourgeoisie and imperialism continue.” (para 70)

On the whole, on the issue of the relation of the Indian bourgeoisie with imperialism, after the transfer of power, the creators of the draft programme have the following to say:

- (i) The bourgeoisie continues to have its contradiction with imperialism.
- (ii) The bourgeoisie is not taking its attack on imperialism and feudalism to its finality; meaning it is attacking, but not fully.
- (iii) The bourgeoisie does not want to erase all its links with colonial rule; meaning it is erasing its links but only partially.

Thus one of the key components of the Draft Programme is, “the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and imperialism and feudalism continues.” It will be based on this understanding that the party’s attitude towards the bourgeoisie, strategies and tactics of struggle and leadership and class basis of the revolutionary front will be decided. The basis of the party’s earlier revisionist politics lies in this understanding and analysis. Based on the dual role theory of the bourgeoisie all earlier revisionist politics stressed that contradiction between the bourgeoisie and imperialism was primary and based on this, the desire for the inclusion of all the bourgeoisie in the front for democratic struggles is expressed. As a result, the above mentioned politics actually led the party to tail the bourgeoisie. Currently the Dange faction or the right faction’s political basis is this. The creators of the Draft Programme have kept alive this old political position.

The discovery of the dual role of the bourgeoisie is nothing new. Inner contradictions exist within the body of bourgeois economics. The contradictions between the different constituents of the bourgeoisie have often become primary; sometimes secondary. The analytical method of Marxian dialectics is to note, in a particular situation, which (contradiction) is primary and which is secondary and decide the policies on the basis of the primary contradiction. All social revolutions happen by targeting for the resolution of the primary contradiction. Thus in the current Indian conditions the key issue is to decide whether the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and imperialism is the primary social contradiction or not. The reality is that after the Transfer of Power, the amount of private British capital in Indian economy has increased from about rupees 200 *crores* to almost rupees 500 *crores*; American capital now has increased from about 11 *crores* to about 60 *crores* and the quantum of American aid is about 2531 *crores*; and

total foreign capital has gone up from about 255 *crores* to 570 *crores*. A lot of the Indian economic programmes have in many ways become dependent on American aid. Besides, the Indian big bourgeoisie and imperialist capital have jointly set up many businesses (in partnership). The facts prove that (at least) in economic matters the Indian ruling bourgeoisie class, instead of attacking and taking on imperialist capital, is actually helping it increase its presence. The bind of economics is the real bind. Unless you attack at this point, the opposition cannot be primary. Thus presently the primary relation between the Indian bourgeoisie ruling class and imperialism is not one of confrontation but of collaboration. Apart from this, in this perspective, one must note the primary developments and changes after the Second World War. The change is that human civilisation's balance has shifted towards socialism; imperialism and capitalism have been weakened in many ways; imperialism is in decay and (destruction), capitalism has entered a stage of deep crisis; and the Chinese revolution and the establishment of socialism in China has weakened imperialism greatly in South East Asia; and the bourgeoisie of the colonies who collaborated with imperialism, in the fear of losing their power, position, are scared of socialism. In these circumstances the new situation which has emerged in Asia is: the geographical spread of imperialism has reduced; imperialism for its own survival is dependent on a section of the national bourgeoisie; on the other side the collaborator national bourgeoisie (with imperialism) is becoming more and more dependent on the military strength and help of imperialist powers. In this situation the principal economic and military support providers, gradually, are becoming the drivers of the above mentioned set of ruling class. In this situation contradiction between the compromising bourgeoisie and imperialism cannot be the primary contradiction. Because of each other's mutual needs and opposition to socialism, collaboration is the key of this relation. Yes it is true that somewhere this co-operation or collaboration is naked, somewhere it is hidden behind many curtains. This is the new situation. Accordingly, in India, especially in the present circumstances, the ruling bourgeoisie continues its collaboration with imperialist forces and this is the crux of the present socio-political economic situation. Thus simply stating the dual character of the bourgeoisie is meaningless. The nature of this principal relation between the ruling bourgeoisie and imperialism needs to be understood and determined. This should be the most important aspect of any party Programme. Thus if the Party, instead of focusing on the principal nature of relationship between the ruling bourgeoisie and imperialism, focuses more on the secondary nature of this relation, then in effect, the party would actually again become lackeys of the bourgeoisie. The draft programme analysis on this core issue will lead the party towards such a situation. Actually the draft programme is a repetition of the old revisionist line. This analysis has to be rejected completely. Because, this analysis will not enable us to correctly identify and attack at the core of the contradiction in Indian social polity; it will only help perpetuate this contradiction.

### **[C] The National Economy in the Hands of the Bourgeoisie**

The next critical issue is, to determine the trajectory of the Indian economy in the hands of the ruling bourgeoisie, and take up a position for the working class and its party. Three principal things need to be looked into:

- (i) The nature of the country's economic development or progress;
- (ii) The nature of the economic policies of this ruling bourgeoisie;

(iii) The nature of the public sector under the control of the bourgeoisie.

What is the working class view on the three above matters should be a key component of any party programme. The 3rd and 4th sections of the Draft Programme discusses these points.

It is based on the nature of the economic policies of the ruling bourgeoisie class that the working class has to determine its position regarding the ruling bourgeoisie. When a particular class, without establishing socialism, tries to break the old economic shackles of society and devises strategies to usher in a progressive development oriented economic orientation, the working class inevitably should support such an initiative. For this reason, after the Transfer of Power, the trajectory of the economic development policies of the new ruling bourgeoisie needs to be studied with care. On this issue the Draft Programme has said: "After independence, the ruling bourgeoisie proceeded to develop the country's economy on the lines of capitalism, to further strengthen its class position in society." [Para 17] It has been further said: "The Government has resorted to economic planning in its efforts to build capitalism in India and three five-year plans by now have been designed and executed with the same objective. It must be made clear at the outset that this planning has nothing to do with socialist planning despite the loud talk of socialism indulged in by the leaders of the Congress Party. [Para 21].

The way in which this has been articulated, means, the ruling bourgeoisie class is developing capitalism in the country, but that is not enabling the development of socialism in the country. The natural consequence of this analysis would be, even if the bourgeoisie may be criticized on few of the process of development of capitalism in India, the working class, inevitably, should support the bourgeoisie in the development of capitalism, though that will not lead to the development of socialism by the bourgeoisie class. Thus politically providing critical support to the ruling bourgeoisie should be the strategy of the working class. Based on this strategy, at this stage, the ruling bourgeoisie should not be displaced from political power. The analysis that the bourgeoisie is developing capitalism in the country, would actually mean that India's unfinished capitalist transformation is on the road to fruition, led by the bourgeoisie ruling class. This analysis will change the entire political understanding and as a result, a programme (presently) supporting the bourgeoisie in completing the capitalist transformation will be taken up; and the thesis of the rightist initiative of a National Democratic revolution is also precisely this. The revisionist trend in the party was also based on this thesis. Thus the Draft Programme actually still reflects the old revisionist political position.

Though paragraph 17 of the Draft Programme discusses about the crises in capitalism, it does not dwell upon the nature and trajectory of the capitalist transformation as envisaged and being taken forward by the ruling Indian bourgeoisie. Actually, the capitalist path undertaken is not leading to the desired industrialisation. In a situation of worldwide socialist expansion and capitalist crises, by compromising with imperialism and depending on its support, the current ruling bourgeoisie is strengthening the presence of imperialist capital in the Indian economy, defending feudal relations of production by not bringing about the required basic land reforms i.e. by perpetuating the old agricultural relations, is ushering in a capitalism which is handicapped and constricted and whose development is based on the severe exploitation of the people. Some industries have been set up, but that is not industrialisation. In such a situation, the true

industrialisation of the Indian economy can only happen by throwing out the bourgeoisie from power and establishing a working class led new economic plan and programme. This should be one of the basic tenets of any new party programme.

With the above mentioned issue, closely intertwined is the issue of the economic policy of the ruling bourgeoisie. And the economic policy of the bourgeoisie is also the basis of their economic character. The character of bourgeois economics is competition, chaos and crisis. But still after the second world war, the ruling bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries concentrated all its efforts to establish a bourgeois economic basis. But their above mentioned economic path will strengthen monopoly capital and big bourgeoisie, and consequently there will be extreme exploitation of the working class and economic crisis will be the inevitable fall out of such a policy. Inflation, price rise, increasing tax burden on the people, extreme exploitation of the working class and an overall economic crisis will also be the inevitable fall-out of such a policy. So what should be the working class view of such policies? In the Party's past political positions, the view on the government's economic policy was as follows: (i) Conditional support of the policies (ii) Critical support (i.e. support with critique). In effect the party has supported the government's past policies and programmes, and has pulled in the working class to support the increase in bourgeois production and profits. Under Dange's leadership this was the stand of the Trade Union Front. The Draft Programme under discussion does not present any new or different view, analysis or position on this. Whether it was correct to have extended support to the earlier policies and programmes and what should be the party's view about the current policies or programmes, the Draft Programme does not take any clear position but actually has continued to hold on to the old analysis, thinking and stand. The new Draft Programme should actually discard the old position i.e. discard the policy of supporting the bourgeoisie's policy and programmes; it should adopt a stand to build up mass political struggle against such policies and programmes of the bourgeoisie. And it should clarify to each and every different political struggle that the ruling class's economic policies are completely incapable of resolving the country's economic crisis and will actually intensify the economic crisis. This should be the stand of the working class and its party towards the economic policies.

One aspect of the economic policy of the bourgeoisie is the setting up of the Public Sector. The working class needs to take up clear position on this aspect. In the earlier politics of the party, its stand was one of full support towards the public sector created by the government. The understanding was that the public sector would be, at a later point, controlled by the working class and help in building up socialism. Let us take a look at what the proposed Draft Programme has to say on this: "The state sector or the public sector as it is otherwise called can play a progressive role in an underdeveloped economy if it is promoted along anti-imperialist, anti-monopolist, democratic lines. It reduces economic dependence, creates and strengthens the capital base for industrialisation. It could be an instrument for weakening and eliminating the hold of foreign capital and also for restricting and curbing the growth of Indian monopolies. But the anti-people policies pursued by the Government under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie, during nearly two decades of rule and three five-year plans, and their practical results belie all such hopes. Increasing concentration of wealth and the rapid growth of Indian monopolies have become a pronounced phenomenon. Penetration of huge foreign monopoly capital in both the state and private sectors goes uninterrupted. The common people, workers, peasants and the middle classes, are subjected to ruthless exploitation and oppression in the name of financing

these plans for capitalist development. Thus, despite the flaunting of the state sector by Congress leaders as proof of their building socialism, the actual realities show that the state sector itself in India is an instrument of building capitalism and is nothing but state capitalism (*Patra 24*)”.

Even here the core issue has been avoided; the working class analysis of the government’s public sector policy has been kept vague and by putting in quite a few ifs and buts, the matter has been pushed towards other directions. The proponents of this Draft Programme have taken a position that the ruling bourgeoisie class, by setting up the public sector is developing capitalism, but not socialism. Objectively analysing the role of the Public Sector and academic discussion about its progressive character is unnecessary. The primary issue for discussion should be analysis of the character and trajectory of the Public sector as being planned and put into practice by the current Indian ruling class and therefore arrive at a position on it from a working class perspective. Post the Second World War, many underdeveloped economies under the leadership of their ruling bourgeoisie have developed Public Sector and India is one amongst them. This is a well thought out strategy of the weak bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries. The actual objective of setting up Public Sector is to generate the capital for such industries from the people but enjoy the cream themselves. One of the key aspect of the above mentioned Public sector policy has thus been a policy of nationalisation of industries, on a limited scale to mutually strengthen the bourgeoisie ruling class. But effectively it promises to protect imperialist, individual capital. Public sector is a ploy to strengthen and enhance the power of the big bourgeoisie. This is why public sector has actually strengthened big and monopoly capitalists in the Indian economy. Which of course has meant persistent and increasing exploitation of the Indian people. Therefore the party of the working class must stop supporting it and build up mass movements to unmask its true anti-people character. And also the party must give a call for the confiscation of imperialist capital and nationalisation of imperialist industry in very strong terms. This must be the new and strong call of the programme of the party and thus announce its rupture with the old revisionist position.

#### **[D] Rural Economy**

The result of the Zamindari Abolition Act of the Congress government and their land reforms policies should be the object of close scrutiny and coming to a clear position on this should constitute an important element of the political programme for any democratic revolution in India. The 5th part of the Draft Programme discusses these matters. It has been analysed that the Congress government has adopted a policy of replacing the feudal landlord with a capitalist landlord in rural India. That rural production relations are moving towards capitalist agricultural relation is a key element of rightist political position, the political analysis being that feudal relations are being demolished and replaced with capitalist relations. In the Draft Programme under discussion here, the thesis of contradiction between feudalism and the bourgeoisie has been defended. But the key objective of the current revolutionary strategy should be the destruction of feudal production relations and ushering in fundamental changes in land relations. In that case, the analysis that the current government is helping establish and expand capitalist relations cannot and should not find any mention in the Party’s draft political programme. Because, primarily, maintaining the old land relations is the policy objective of the current government. This is where the bourgeoisie is compromising with the feudal class. In the current situation, the ruling class can only change here and there the interests of the landlord and feudal

class, but it cannot bring about a primary or basic overall change in the land relations. Thus true land reform can only be brought about under the leadership of the working class.

The current government by its rural policies has, by giving huge compensation, uprooted the already dead *zamindari* system (landlord system), and helped channelize a huge quantum of land into the hands of *Jotedars-talukdars* (very big land holding class and their managers and fellow cohorts), thus increasing the number of landless peasantry. Further a section of the rich peasantry has been appeased and made powerful through different government led credit and support programmes. Thus a section of the *Jotedar-talukdar* and rich peasantry combined hold sway over agrarian relations and have become the power centres of reactionary forces in the countryside. The old land relations, however, have more or less remained intact. Thus the ensuing peasant struggles would face stiff resistance from at least one section of the rich peasantry. This is the new situation in rural India. Besides this, the workers of the numerous rural small scale industries are beginning to be transformed into a class-in-itself. They will be the allies of the peasantry. In this situation it will be critically important to stress on organising the agricultural workers and the newly formed rural working class and lay the basis of building a larger unity with the peasantry. This should be the axis of peasant struggle which should be properly reflected and drawn up in the Party's new political programme.

### **[E] Indian Government's Foreign Policy**

A government's foreign policy is related to that government's stand on other national governments. As politics is a more crystallised reflection of economics, similarly the foreign policy of a government effectively controls the economic relations with another country; and military help and relations further determines the nature of this above mentioned control of economic relations.

The Party in its political analysis has characterised the Government of India's internal policies as *regressive*, while terming its foreign policy as *progressive*. This analysis is based on the Party's understanding of the dual character of the Indian bourgeoisie. This analysis is however primarily based on a wrong and *apolitical* analysis. Because very simply a government's overall policies cannot have two self-contradictory aspects. The reason why India's foreign policy was characterized as progressive was because the Indian government then was not openly supporting war. On the basis of this analysis, the Party heaped praises on the government and gradually transformed themselves into lackeys of the bourgeoisie. What is the actual nature of the Indian government's so called anti-war position? The Indian bourgeoisie, because of a realisation of its inherent weakness, did not consider it prudent to take a pro-war, especially direct and open war position – this is the reality. This position is a reflection of their class interests. It may sometimes lead to staying away from open war or supporting such warmongers' but it does not mean that we should call this "a policy of peace". But it is clear that from the time of the Indo-China border conflicts, the government's earlier stance and outlook on foreign policy has changed. This is the new situation.

In the Draft Programme under discussion, the analysis about the government of India's foreign policy is as follows: "The foreign policy of any state and its Government, in the final analysis, is nothing but the projection of its internal policy and it reflects, in the main, the interests of the

class or classes that head the Government and the state in question. The foreign policy of the Government of India naturally reflects the dual character of our bourgeoisie, of opposition to as well as of compromise and conciliation with imperialism” (para 63). It has been further commented in the Draft Programme that, “the contradiction between the Indian bourgeoisie continues” (para 70). It has also been said that, “the Indian government’s foreign policy has not wavered outside the firmly accepted pillars of being anti-war and holding onto a position of non-alignment to any power bloc”. Presently, however, the Indian government’s stand on non-alignment is like an absurd announcement. It is very clear that the party’s draft programme clings on to and defends the party’s earlier political position on the Indian government’s foreign policy. Thus it is far removed from reality. And henceforth this analysis and viewpoint should be discarded.

### **[F] State Structure and Democracy During Congress Rule**

The Draft Programme on the one hand highlighted, that it was during the Congress rule, that the Indian Constitution came into existence, that through voting rights and through parliamentary processes the opportunity of mass struggles to find their voice was created, while on the other hand, it also pointed out the bureaucratisation of the state apparatus, usage of the state apparatus for furthering only bourgeois class interests, the misrepresentations of the constitutional rights and powers and the non-resolution of the language issue and minority problem. However, by taking this position one's attention is not drawn towards the real situation.

Presently the overall situation is: the nakedly aggressive and oppressive character of the State and state apparatus and complete constriction of democratic space. Truly speaking, at the time of intensification of economic crisis, the ruling bourgeoisie class cannot defend and sustain democratic rights and ruling mechanism gradually lapses into a naked oppressive mode.

That is why keeping alive the contradiction and frictions between different classes and nationalities, nakedly crushing democratic rights of people, arbitrarily changing the constitution to make it more and more undemocratic and unleashing naked police and military force to crush each and every democratic struggle becomes the mode of governance. And in such a situation the bourgeoisie feels so shaky that it feels that only this kind of aggressive and oppressive approach can assure continuance of their political power and position. The Draft Programme of the party must keep its eye firmly on this political reality and draw its conclusions based on an understanding of this reality. But the creators of this Draft Programme are still standing on the heap of old parliamentary and economic thoughts. Though it does not follow from this that we have to give a call for the boycott of Parliament at the moment; but it is our duty to all democratic struggles that we unravel the character and role of all government and legal institutions and throw light on the trajectory of bourgeois democracy – where it is currently headed vis a vis where it should have been – these are facets which a Draft Programme should unravel. This would be the desired change in perspective.

### **[G] Key Political Slogan**

The Draft Programme has accepted the 1951 Programme’s establishment of people’s democratic government line. This slogan is correct and will be the right approach in resolving the current

primary social contradiction of India. This is not the democracy as thought of earlier, but is a democracy of a new kind led by the working class. This is not socialism but the power of the bourgeoisie would be controlled and curbed in this.

But it is just not enough to have a correct political position (or slogan); its success would depend on the correctness of the complementary and allied theorisation, position and decisions. In this matter, based on the thought process and position which has been defended in the Draft Programme, the objective can never be achieved. Because the position and formulations in the Draft Programme actually leads in the reverse direction and away from the key political position. As a result, revolutionary work would lose momentum and an appropriate organisation would not be built. What is required is appropriate plans and programmes to complement and implement the key political position. If this does not happen then merely holding on to the principal political position would be akin to the religious chanting of 'mantras'. And this will not be anywhere near carrying out the revolutionary responsibility of the party. But carrying out this very responsibility should be the aim of the Draft Programme.

### **[H] Character of the Government and the Peoples' Democratic Front**

At every stage of revolution, analysing the character of the then government of the country, pinpointing enemies of the revolution as well as identifying classes or sections of classes favourable to revolution, so as to build fronts with such friendly forces is a critically important task and the party should have clarity on this. On this aspect the 1951 programme of the party could be considered as essentially correct.

In the Draft Programme under discussion, the analysis of the class character of the government in power is, as we have mentioned earlier also: "...led by the big bourgeoisie; this is a government of the bourgeois landlord combine". This analysis therefore is muted or hazy about the relationship between this government and imperialist forces. But this is a primary issue; a core issue at the present stage of revolution. If one keeps oneself muted or hazy or unclear on this, one will reduce the sharpness and momentum of one's offensive. In the minds of the creator of this Draft Programme there is incorrect understanding about the current relation of big and monopoly capital with imperialism or it could very well be that because of revisionist political thoughts submerging their minds they did not (or may be, could not) bring about enough clarity on this critical aspect. Thus in the party's new Draft Programme the real analysis of the current government's character should be as follows:

\* This government is a government of the bourgeois-landlord combine, under the leadership of the reactionary big bourgeoisie which cooperates and collaborates with imperialist forces.

\* Thus the struggle of the people against reactionary forces should be focused against the combined force of big and monopoly capital, imperialism and imperialist capital and their military interests, big landlords and their lackeys in rural India.

Lack of clarity about the revolutionary mass democratic front is created by the lack of clarity about the class character of the (current) government and certain other key political matters. And

this is reflected in the Draft Programme. Thus in the Party's new programme, the (mass) democratic front needs to be sharply defined with utmost clarity as follows:

This democratic front is to be a united front under the leadership of the working class for the workers, peasants, other working people including the intellectuals. Its objective should be the country's independence and sovereignty and for the continuous betterment of standard of living. It should fight tooth and nail against big and monopoly capital. And this front should be able to incorporate the national bourgeoisie in this fight of the people. Strong unity of workers and peasants would be the basis of this democratic front.

### **[I] The Strategy of Capture of Power by the Working Class**

The question of the strategy of capture of power by the working class is an important part of a party's Political Programme. In this regard the Draft Programme states:

“The Communist Party of India strives to achieve the establishment of People's Democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means. By developing a powerful mass revolutionary movement, by combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forms of struggle the working class and its allies will try their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and to bring about these transformations through peaceful means [Para 120]”

This is a reflection of the old bourgeois parliamentary politics. Choosing Parliamentary paths or other paths as per the prevailing objective conditions and utilising them as tactics to complement mass struggles and mass movements is one issue but articulating an original 'axiomatic' position on the issue of capture of power is another issue altogether. The ruling class and their spokespersons want to situate the politics of the Communist Party in binaries of peaceful path or violent path. A Communist Party should not fall into this trap of the bourgeoisie. Actually the bourgeois state is based on violence; the working class adopts appropriate strategies to defend itself against the attacks unleashed by the bourgeoisie. Thus a communist party does not depend on a pre-decided announcement or fixed strategic principle but in order to effectively counter the attacks of the ruling class, builds mass movements based on the strength of the masses, its consciousness. In this regard Lenin writes in *Partisan Warfare*: “Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by the fact that it does not bind the movement to any particular form of struggle^ It admits the most varied form of struggle, and it does not “concoct” them, but only generalizes, organizes and give conscious expression to these forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in course of movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and all doctrinaire recopies, Marxism demands on attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, with the development of the movement, with the growth of class consciousness of the masses, with the accentuation of economic and political crisis, is continually giving rise to new and more varied methods of defence and offence.... A Marxist stands by class struggle and not social peace.”

A communist party must decide on its strategy basing itself on this Leninist understanding. In this respect the Draft Programme viewpoint is un-Marxist. In this regard it will be extremely important to keenly observe with due importance the trajectory and strategy of attack of the present government on the ongoing mass movements and imperialist engineered military coups

in some countries of South East Asia. Anyway what would be enough for the time being for the Draft Programme of the Party to state is that the people would remove the reactionary government from power.

Distancing oneself from the Dange led rightist clique or discarding revisionist politics is one of Com. Basavapunniah's Draft Programme's main aims. Revisionism is not based on certain individuals or events. It is a thought process and is reflected through a political party's positions, stands and practices. The politics which weakens the working class, does not attack reactionary forces, converts the working class into a lackey of the bourgeoisie, sidetracks the primary issue to focus on the secondary issue, does not adopt appropriate strategy in the light of situations and instead of giving leadership by pre-empting the course of events with its understanding of class struggle merely tails behind events is, what is, the essence of revisionist politics. A revolutionary working class party has to carefully avoid these revisionist trends and tendencies to evolve and lead revolutionary working class policies and programmes. A communist party's (political) programme should completely reject such revisionist tendencies. It is just not enough to give a correct political slogan; the overall political thoughts, position have to be dismissive of all revisionist trends and tendencies; it must totally discard revisionism. It is not rightist or revisionist to not talk about revolution, but if their primary political thought and position does not augment revolution and (thus) does not resolve the primary social contradiction, then it reflects the right revisionist trend. Some of the major tenets of the Dange leadership's right revisionist politics is:

(i) The Congress government is bringing about capitalist development but that is not socialism; (ii) the ruling bourgeoisie is leading the country towards an independent capitalist development; (iii) by its land reforms programme the Congress government is developing capitalist agrarian relations in place of the semi-feudal relations; (iv) the Congress government's foreign policy is based on (universal) peace and nonalignment, (v) the rightists would by peaceful means, establish national democracy and socialism. The position of the rightists regarding national democracy is as follows:

“(a) It must be made clear at the outset that this planning has nothing to do with socialist planning despite the loud talk of socialism indulged in by the leaders of the Congress Party.” (Para 20).

(b) “The national bourgeoisie after getting the reins of power, have committed themselves on developing an independent capitalist path for the country” (Para 36).

(c) “Seventeen years of Congress rule has proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the aim and direction of its agrarian policies is not to smash the feudal and semi-feudal fetters on our land-relations and thus liberate the peasantry from age-old bondage, but to transform feudal landlords into capitalist landlords and to create a stratum of rich peasants, who can be depended upon to produce the necessary surplus of agricultural produce to meet the requirements of capitalist development and who can constitute the main political base of the ruling class in the countryside.” (Para 37)

(d) “The foreign policy spurred by the government of India is primarily based on the tenets of

peace, non-alignment and anti-imperialism”... ”this has from time to time floundered with errors and compromise, but still it has been able to hold on to its overall anti-imperialist non-aligned and peaceful position.” (Para 64)

(e) “The Communist Party of India will, by peaceful means, endeavour to establish a national democracy and take steps towards creating condition leading towards socialism. (Para 101).

Com. Basavapunnaiiah has more or less accepted and held on to these abovementioned positions of the Party. It is very clear that other than giving a different political slogan Com Basavapunnaiiah has kept the Draft Programme in principle bound to the same set of key political stands and positions as expounded by the Party (i.e. the Dange led CPI). As a result of this, politics has become shrouded in smoke-rings and has descended into individual attack and personality dismantling. Whatever it is, the fact of the matter is that if the right revisionist politics (of the Dange led CPI) is incapable of taking the attack to the root of India’s social contradictions, the same result awaits Com Basavapunnaiiah’s thoughts and positions. Lack of clarity and an erroneous understanding of the primary issues (social or political) will not help lead towards the key revolutionary aims and objectives.

Thus overall speaking Com Basavapunnaiiah’s Draft Programme’s main stress and analysis is erroneous, regressive, confusing, unclear and weak and is just a different version of the revisionist political position. Actually the old revisionist politics have been given a new set of clothes. Though expressed in a new language, the essence of the old revisionist political line has been kept intact. Thus through necessary debate, criticism and taking into consideration the proposed alternative position and principle, the Party’s Draft Programme needs to re-written. For true Marxists, this is the primary responsibility.

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*Translated from the Bengali by Avijit Wasu.*