

ONE MORE QUESTION

Some comrades have objected to para 20 of the Draft Programme which states that the elected representatives of the people shall constitute "a single popular assembly, a single elected chamber". They want to know why we should not have two chambers as in the USSR—a Soviet of the Union and a Soviet of Nationalities — since like the USSR, we too are a multi-national country.

The Indian Republic will have to be a Federal Republic since India is a multi-national country. On that, there can be no dispute.

Nor are we opposed to two chambers as they exist in the USSR. What the Draft Programme opposes is the existence of a second chamber as it exists in capitalist countries, formed on a reactionary and restricted basis as a check on the popular chamber.

Nevertheless, we do not at this stage state the need of a second chamber because it will sidetrack attention from the tasks that face our entire people — the *common* anti-imperialist and anti-feudal tasks. Unlike Russia where before the revolution the national oppression was exercised by the Great Russian nation, in India the national oppression is exercised first and foremost not by a nation of the country but by the British. Unlike Russian Empire where Russian Tsardom was the main defender of feudalism, in India it is British imperialism that is the main defender of feudalism. Unlike Russia where one nation numerically, culturally and in every other respect was in a dominant position, occupied the bulk of the country and oppressed and dominated over the other nationalities, in India the nationalities are more evenly balanced.

The Draft Programme stresses the need for "reconstitution of present artificial provinces with the dissolution of princely states into national states according to the principle of common language". It also provides safeguards for the rights of nationalities, which we consider adequate to dispel all fears of domination by one nationality in India over another.

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DISCUSSION PAMPHLET
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ON
OUR PROGRAMME

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by
Prokash

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Discussion

We are publishing in pamphlet form discussion among Party members on our Draft Programme and Policy Statement with a view to clarify the points on which there is confusion and in order to arrive at a correct understanding of the tasks that face our Party and our movement. Comrades are requested to contribute to the discussion through questions, notes, comments and criticism and give their suggestions on what amendments should be introduced in the Draft Programme and Policy Statement.

The following is an article from a member of our Polit Buro. It should not be taken as a P.B. statement.

P.B.

Sectt. of CC, CPI

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ON OUR PROGRAMME

PROKASH

From our Party members and from friends and sympathisers of the Party, we have received many questions on our Draft Programme. The Programme has been widely discussed and commented upon.

This is quite natural and desirable. When after a long period of inner-Party controversy the Central Committee of the Party adopts a Programme and a Statement of Policy, every comrade wants to know what the implications of the documents are, what is specifically new about them, what understanding forms their basis.

I shall not attempt to answer here all the various questions that have been raised. I shall only indicate the main points of the understanding that forms the basis of our Programme.

THE STAGE AND TASKS OF OUR REVOLUTION

What is the nature and stage of our revolution? What are the immediate tasks it has to carry out? Which are the classes that can be united and which are the classes that have to be fought for the realisation of these tasks? These are some of the fundamental questions that have to be answered.

Our country, as our Draft Programme emphasises, is a *semi-colonial dependent* country. It points out, under the sub-heading 'In the field of agriculture and the peasant problem', that every one of the major issues that faces our people, is linked with the key issue of agrarian reform—transfer of land to the peasants and the liquidation of feudalism which is responsible for our shortage of food, shortage of raw materials, low level of industrial development and cultural backwardness.

The Draft Programme further points out that British capital controls our economy, throttles our industrial growth and keeps us tied to the Empire. Britishers, their allies and agents hold key positions in our armed forces.

A country with a backward semi-colonial economy

can never be really free. Even for feeding its people, it has to depend on foreign countries, among whom aggressive powers like America impose conditions whose acceptance amounts to bartering away our national independence itself.

Hence, the transfer of land to the peasants, the liquidation of feudalism, the confiscation of British capital, the expulsions of Britishers and their agents from the armed forces and the quitting of the Commonwealth — these are the tasks that have to be carried out in order that India may really be free, in order that she may take measures to build a happy and prosperous life for her people and take the next step forward.

Hence, our revolution at this stage is an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution. It is a People's Democratic Revolution of the first stage as in China.

Basic agrarian reform is the main core and content of this revolution.

Land will be handed over to the peasants and agricultural workers without payment. Peasant debts will be cancelled.

No compensation will be paid to princes, big landlords and jagirdars whose property will be confiscated. The small landlords who own only a few acres will be helped to rehabilitate themselves or compensated where necessary. The peasant who gets land will not have to make any payment for it. Those landlords who want to be cultivators will get their due share of land like all peasants.

As regards the capitalist landlords who, in certain parts of India, own thousands of acres of land, adequate land will be left to them to pursue capitalist farming. The rest will be distributed among peasants and agricultural workers.

The revolution will not harm the rich peasants. They too, to some extent suffer from feudal exploitation and from usury and will therefore gain from the revolution.

Agricultural workers will be given land wherever possible. Those who cannot be immediately provided with land of their own will get adequate wages and will be ensured human conditions of life.

OUR ENEMIES AND OUR FRIENDS

The classes that will suffer most from the revolution are therefore the imperialists, the princes and the big landlords. They are, therefore, the most determined enemies of the revolution. The revolution will not merely fight them but wipe out the very system on which they depend for their existence.

The classes that will have, in the main, to carry out the revolution are those who suffer the most under the present system and can therefore be its most determined opponents. These classes are the workers, the peasants, the impoverished middle classes — artisans, small traders, toiling intelligentsia, etc.

The main task of the revolution — basic agrarian reform — will have to be carried out through the action of the peasant masses themselves along the path of determined struggle for land and the defence of that struggle against the forces that seek to crush it. In order that this struggle may achieve victory, the peasantry will need the support of the working class — not merely through the leadership of the peasant struggles by the Party of the working class, but also — in the form of mass actions by the working class itself. It will be the combination of the struggles of the working class and the peasantry that will give the popular movement its sweep, its strength and its striking power. Hence, it is the unity of the working class and the peasantry that must form the firm basis of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal front.

Being the most revolutionary class in present society and because of the position it occupies in our economy — mining, industries, transport, etc. — the working class will have to play a *decisive* role in the development and victory of the revolution. It has to be the leader and organiser of the struggle for democracy and freedom.

Another class that stands to gain from the revolution is the class of the national bourgeoisie.

The term national bourgeoisie means the bourgeoisie of our own country — both big and small — that suffers from the penetration of foreign capital, from foreign

competition in the internal and external market and from the restriction of the home market caused by the prevalence of feudalism which impoverishes the peasantry and the working class. It means, mainly the industrial bourgeoisie and the commercial bourgeoisie connected with it.

As a class the national bourgeoisie has not gained what it hoped to gain from the transfer of power in August, 1947. Its grandiose plan for the industrialisation of the country has not materialised. In the period of deep crisis of imperialism in general and of the British Empire in particular, British finance capital cannot afford to loosen its grip on India and allow the Indian bourgeoisie any real development, any independent development. Its policy with regard to the release of the sterling balances and the various "plans" sponsored by it—the Colombo Plan is the most glaring instance—reveal this unmistakably. Further, the growing poverty of the peasants imposes severe check on the possibilities of industrialisation.

The national bourgeoisie expected to get capital goods from America and Britain to develop industries in our country. The imperialist powers have not fulfilled these hopes, they want to keep India economically backward and politically dependent—a source of raw materials, a market for their goods and a field of investment to reap huge profits by exploiting cheap labour. Tied to British imperialism, the Indian Government refuses to establish close trade relations with the Soviet Union and with other democratic countries and thus procure capital goods. Even with respect to food, it prefers to import the bulk from America and reject the offer of People's China for a million tons of foodgrains. The foreign policy of the present Indian Government — its tie-up with Britain and America — is thus an anti-national policy which perpetuates the backwardness of India and increases her dependence on imperialist powers. It harms the interests of the entire people including the national bourgeoisie.

For all these reasons, one has to realise that the contradiction between imperialism and feudalism on one hand and the national bourgeoisie on the other has not

vanished. The forces of revolution have to bear this in mind and have to act in such a way as to isolate the main enemies — feudalism and imperialism.

The question that would be naturally asked is whether this is possible, whether the big national bourgeoisie have not finally and irrevocably gone over to imperialism.

Certain sections of the big bourgeoisie—those closely linked with British capital and with feudalism—together with many big financiers and speculators are undoubtedly collaborating with imperialism and must be considered as enemies.

Many others, while not so closely linked with imperialists and feudals are nevertheless supporting the present Government in its anti-popular and anti-democratic policies. All these have to be fought and their misdeeds and crimes exposed. It is not possible however at this stage to say which sections among the national bourgeoisie have *finally* gone over to imperialism and have therefore to be *expropriated* because of their enmity to the people's liberation.

In China in 1927 almost the entire national bourgeoisie supported Chiang Kai-shek and seemed to have gone over finally to the camp of counter-revolution. As the Japanese and later the American imperialists intensified their attack on all sections of the Chinese people including the national bourgeoisie, as the reactionary Chiang Kai-shek clique betrayed the national interests and revealed its treacherous character, and above all, as the popular forces led by the great and glorious Chinese Communist Party gathered strength and scored mighty victories, deep crisis began to develop in the bourgeois camp itself. The "four families" stood revealed as the agency of foreign imperialists, as traitors to the nation and sworn enemies of China's independence.

The growing strength of the popular forces and their relentless struggle against feudalism and imperialism, the policies of the imperialists and their allies, and the correct tactics adopted by the Communist Party enabled the revolutionary forces to isolate and single out the main enemies and their agents, and win over or neutralise many sections in the bourgeois camp itself.

Hence, it is wrong to look upon the entire national bourgeoisie or even the entire big bourgeoisie as a counter-revolutionary class that has finally joined hand with imperialism. Part of it has undoubtedly become counter-revolutionary but which particular elements have finally gone over to imperialism — this question cannot be answered today. The growth of the popular movement alone will answer the question, will compel each class and each section to take a clear-cut stand, will show who stands where, who stands with the people and who stands with people's enemies. Naturally those who will retain closest relation with imperialism and feudalism will be the enemies of the revolution. Others will vacillate and their vacillations grow as the revolution gathers strength.

It is dogmatic to assert beforehand that as the democratic revolution approaches victory, all propertied classes will close their ranks and face the people as a unified counter-revolutionary force. It can also happen—and the history of colonial revolutionary movement shows, it does happen — that the strength of the popular movement and the fact that the blow is directed against imperialism, feudalism and their allies—these factors disintegrate the camp of the propertied classes and lead to the winning over or neutralisation of many sections and elements of the national bourgeoisie.

In a backward country, like India, the national bourgeoisie has to play an important role even after the victory over imperialism and feudalism. We shall be faced with gigantic problems of reconstruction, we shall have to provide our people with the necessities of life, many of which will have to be produced for some period by private capitalists. Certain branches of production will have to be taken over by the State in the interest of the people as a whole, certain other branches will have to be run by private capitalists under State guidance.

Hence, in our Programme, we urge the need to provide protection to national industries and the need to help development of national industries by the People's Democratic State (points 40, 41 in our Programme).

Hence, we do not also advocate at this stage of our

revolution, the nationalisation, *i.e.*, confiscation by the State of all key industries, as one of the items of our Programme. We stand for the confiscation of the properties of British imperialists, feudals and national traitors.

All this does not mean that we cease to defend the interests of workers against national capitalists, cease to fight against the big bourgeoisie, cease to expose their anti-popular and anti-national activities — shameless deals with imperialists that facilitate their plan to penetrate our economy and keep us backward and dependent, refusal to abolish landlordism without compensation, restriction of production with a view to reap fabulous profits on a shrinking market, resort to black-marketing and speculation, refusal to grant adequate wages to workers, evasion of income-tax and shady deals and dishonest methods. To abandon this fight or to weaken it would mean treachery to the classes that are the main forces of the revolution — workers, peasants and the petty bourgeoisie. It would disrupt the alliance of the oppressed on the basis of whose strength imperialism and feudalism are to be fought, and the vacillations of the bourgeoisie are to be overcome. While waging the fight, we also stress that the Programme we are placing before the people today is one that corresponds to the interest of all anti-imperialist classes and sections, of all who want to make India free, strong and prosperous. As such, it corresponds to the real interest of the national bourgeoisie also. We also warn the big bourgeoisie that they will meet the same fate, as the "four families" in China, if they do not line up with the people against the imperialists and the feudals. We expose the big bourgeois collaborators, not merely as exploiters of the people, but, as those who are betraying the nation to foreign imperialists.

As Communists, we stand for the abolition of all forms of exploitation of man by man, of all class distinction. But we know that our country is far from Communism yet, far from Socialism even. Hence, without renouncing our ultimate goal for a moment, we place before our people, those which we consider to be the immediate tasks, the tasks without carrying out which we

cannot take even one step forward. And we fight against the present government not because it is not introducing Socialism but because guided by the selfish interests of landlords, princes, imperialists and financiers linked with them, it is refusing to carry out even what it pledged itself to do — make our country free and independent, develop our industries to meet the needs of the people, improve the lot of the peasant masses by the liquidation of landlordism and ensure human conditions of life for all.

CONDITIONS FOR SOCIALISM

The Draft Programme states—

“In the present stage of our development the Communist Party is not demanding the establishment of Socialism in our country. In view of the backwardness of the economic development of India and of the weakness of the mass organisations of workers, peasants, and toiling intelligentsia, our Party does not find it possible at present to carry out Socialist transformation in our country.”

Here, two factors have been pointed out as impediments to the immediate establishment of Socialism — (1) the backwardness of the economic development of India, and (2) weakness of mass organisations of workers, peasants and toiling intelligentsia. Both are equally important.

In his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin stated:

“The degree of economic development of Russia (an objective condition) and the degree of class consciousness and organisation of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably connected with the objective condition) make the immediate complete emancipation of the working class impossible.” (*Selected Works, Moscow Edition, Vol. I, p. 352*)

The question may be asked: what has organisation and consciousness to do with the possibility of establishment of Socialism? Further, could India have established Socialism even if she had strong organisation of workers and peasants?

Socialism cannot be established immediately in a country with a backward economy. This is indisputable. Nevertheless, what *socialist measures* can be carried out in a country, to what extent *steps towards Socialism* can be taken — the answer to this depends not only on the nature of the country's economy but also on the stage of consciousness and organisation of the masses.

Even in an advanced capitalist country the rapidity with which the victorious People's Democracy will be able to carry out socialist transformation will depend on the consciousness and organisation of the working class, its capacity to master the technique of administration and management, its capacity to organise production efficiently.

This is even more true in a backward colonial country.

Nationalisation of land, which though itself not a socialist measure, is a big step towards Socialism and towards the organisation of collective farming, cannot be carried out today and should not be attempted, not because our economy is backward, but because the peasant masses are not conscious of its need and cannot be organised on its basis.

Thus the establishment of Socialism depends on both the factors mentioned in the Draft Programme. Neither exists in India today.

This does not mean that the People's Democratic State will not adopt any socialist measure. There will have to be a sector of the social economy owned by the State, a sector which will be of a socialist nature. This sector will consist of the properties of imperialists, feudals and national traitors to start with, and will gradually extend its scope depending on the needs of the people, and the growth of organisation and consciousness of the working class and other toiling masses and their unity.

*CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT INDIAN
GOVERNMENT*

The Nehru government cannot be called a government of the national bourgeoisie. Its policy in relation to the key problems facing the people, its attitude towards feudalism, British capital and the British Empire reveals clearly that it is a government of princes, landlords and the reactionary big bourgeoisie that is collaborating with imperialism. It is, therefore, a government whose real character has to be exposed before the people, it is a government which has to be replaced by a government representing the alliance of the anti-imperialist and democratic classes.

The government is carrying out a number of half-hearted agrarian reforms, which, while leaving the vast masses of peasants in the same impoverished state as before, gives some scope to the rich peasant to acquire land. This it does in order to create a base in the countryside in face of the growing hatred of the peasant masses. In this, the government has acquired some success and the rich peasant to a certain extent supports the government. The landlord-capitalist government represented by Nehru has thus a social base to some extent in the rich peasants.

The present government is a *dependent* government as our Draft Programme points out. It cannot, however, be called a puppet government. A puppet government is one which has no social base in the country and which is maintained in power by foreign bayonets alone. Such is the character of the present Chiang Kai-shek "Government", the "Governments" of Bao Dai and Syngman Rhee. Such is not the character of the Nehru government. A hard battle has to be waged to expose and isolate it.

The present State can, with every justification, be called a *police* State, a State in which all the fundamental rights which the citizens of a democratic country should have—the right of speech, press, association and strike, inviolability of person—all these rights have been

rendered illusory by vesting unlimited powers in the police and bureaucracy to silence and crush democratic opposition to the government, powers that cannot be challenged even in courts of law constituted by this very government, powers that have been used and are being used in defence of vested interests and against the people.

As regards the internal policy of the government, its reactionary and counter-revolutionary character stands revealed before all. There is confusion however as regards its foreign policy which many of our countrymen consider to be a genuine policy of peace.

*"PEACE" POLICY OF THE NEHRU
GOVERNMENT*

The policy of the Nehru government is not a policy of peace. It is a policy of manoeuvre between the camp of Peace and the bloc of warmongers.

We support every step taken even by the present government which hampers the plans of the warmongers. But we do not delude the people regarding the basic policy of the present government, we do not create the illusion that its policy is a policy of peace.

No government which does not fight for and defend national independence and sovereignty can pursue a real peace policy. A government that remains in the British Commonwealth, which is the partner of American imperialists in aggressive war, a government that keeps British imperialists and their agents in key positions in its armed forces, a government that refuses to carry out those measures — agrarian reforms, etc., — which alone can make India really free and independent — such a government cannot pursue a genuine peace policy. A government that agrees to obtain food from the aggressive American imperialists—the chief instigator of world war — on terms which enable them to have a powerful grip on our country — such a government cannot pursue a policy of peace.

Peace like freedom is indivisible. A policy of peace is a policy of active struggle against all aggressive wars, no matter where it is being waged.

The Government of India has not opposed the colonial wars that are being waged by the imperialists in Malaya, Viet Nam, Philippines and Burma. Indian big business and landlords have invested crores of rupees in Malaya, Burma and even in Viet Nam and the Nehru government acts as their champion against the liberation movement of the people. Nehru denounced the Malayan patriots as bandits and terrorists and thus helped the British enslavers of the Malayan people. Nehru has permitted the British to recruit Gurkha troops in their war against the Malayan people. Nehru government allows the French imperialists transport facilities to wage war against Viet Nameese people. Nehru government ships arms to Burma where the people are fighting for national freedom. Nehru government sanctioned the aggression of America against the Korean people.

All this shows that the present Indian Government, like every other reactionary government, is not averse to measures of war to uphold imperialist rule against the people fighting for freedom.

At the same time, the Nehru government because of its political, military and economic weakness and because of the pressure of the masses who hate war and the colonial enslavers, fears the consequences of a *world war* at this stage. It advocates a policy of caution and "go slow", when it thinks that the warmongers are going "too far". It sanctions American aggression in Korea but wants the Americans not to take a step that might lead to war with China. It opposes the use of the Atom Bomb but does not even protest against the indiscriminate bombing of Korean cities and villages, that have reduced the country to shambles, on the pretext that it does not know the facts. It refuses to brand People's China as aggressor and also refuses to brand America as aggressor, that is illegally occupying Chinese territory. Such are the concrete manifestations of the policy of play between war and peace. It is not a policy in the interest of the Indian people. It must, therefore, be combated and a genuine policy of peace insisted upon.

The foreign policy of the government, the tie-up with Anglo-American imperialists, does not help the

cause of peace. It also, as we have pointed out, perpetuates our backwardness and keeps us dependent on imperialist powers. It is therefore a policy which is anti-national.

We shall not, of course, in our work in the Peace movement, insist on our characterisation of the Nehru government's policy being accepted by others. The principle that must guide us on the peace platform is the principle of maximum possible unity of all forces, sections and elements that stand against war. This very principle however demands that other sections and elements do not insist on the acceptance by us of their estimation of the government's foreign policy.

While the government's foreign policy as a whole is a policy of manoeuvre, it does not necessarily follow that all specific acts in pursuance of that policy are to be condemned. On the contrary, some of these acts, as we have pointed out, hamper the plans of the warmongers. Such acts we support wholeheartedly. Simultaneously, we put forward concrete proposals, the implementation of which is necessary for a consistent policy of peace.

The foreign policy of the government must be a policy of joining hands with countries and forces that are upholding the cause of peace and of independence of all nations. There can be no neutrality in the battle between peace and war. The so-called policy of neutrality is not an independent policy at all. An independent foreign policy is one that guards and strengthens the independence of our own country and of all countries in the world, a policy of cooperation on the basis of equality between all countries that want to preserve peace.

Thus our fight for democracy and freedom, for land and bread, for peace — all merge in one single struggle — the struggle to rid our country of the shackles that hold us down and build a happy and prosperous life for our people, the struggle for fraternal relation between a strong and prosperous India and all other countries to banish the menace of war, the struggle for the freedom of mankind from all forms of bondage and slavery.