

## ASPECTS OF CPI PROGRAMME

### I. FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE

One of the outstanding merits of the new Programme of the CPI is the manner in which it has clinched various controversies that have raged in the Party for almost two decades. Simultaneously, through accurate analysis and the creative application of Marxism, it answers the questions that have been agitating the politically conscious elements among our people, providing them with a clear path of advance. It goes on to give us sure guidelines for further research and creative development.

The first chapter, which deals with the struggle of our people for freedom and the qualitative change that came in August 1947, has three main themes.

First, the characterisation of our independence. For quite some time the CPI held to the view that what had been achieved in 1947 was a fake 'freedom', that the British imperialists continued to rule as before though indirectly, through their puppets. India was equated with the Egypt of 1936 and the satellite regimes established in South Korea and South Vietnam.

The result of this totally erroneous understanding was the development of a full-fledged 'left' sectarian political line which called for the immediate revolutionary overthrow of the 'government of national betrayal', leading to isolation from the masses and costly adventurist mistakes. Far from overthrowing the government of the national bourgeoisie, it actually aided the consolidation of the hegemony of this class over the Indian people as well as the strengthening of various reactionary elements.

Another erroneous trend also manifested itself, though of an opposite character. This trend did not understand the new stage

of the Indian revolution as a result of the winning of freedom and continued to advocate the line of a general national united front, which was appropriate in the conditions of British imperialist rule, for the winning of independence. The new position and role of the national bourgeoisie as the new ruling class was missed.

The Programme rejects both these wrong trends. It emphasises the historic importance of the fact that India became free from imperialist rule on August 15, 1947. It hails it as opening a new epoch for our people and as a historic event for all mankind. It also points out that one stage of India's revolution was over with the attainment of national independence from imperialism.

Contrary to this unequivocal and unambiguous stand is the one adopted in the rival Communist Party programme which still clings to the old, wrong concept of a mere 'transfer of power'. It refuses to acknowledge the defeat of imperialism and consequently refuses to share the deep joy of our people that after almost two centuries they now live in a free country.

Emotions apart, all the developments since 1947 go to confirm the thesis that a new Indian state was born on August 15 of that year and that a qualitative class transformation took place in the ruling power.

Second, how was this freedom won? The imperialists advance the thesis that step by step they enlightened the 'ignorant heathens', taught them democracy, trained them to be responsible and when the time was ripe magnanimously 'conferred' freedom on them. The dominant leadership of the Congress spreads the myth that the Indian people did not so much struggle for freedom as come to it through the mystical power of Gandhiji and his doctrine of non-violence.

Gandhiji's magic morally awoke the Indian people, taught them to be non-violent and converted the British imperialists by changing their hearts, such is its theory. Some inveterate 'left' sectarians believe that the Congress-led national movement was a big hoax, that its only function was to retard the revolutionary movement and to compromise with as well as come to the rescue of British imperialism.

The Programme demolishes all these myths. It points to the long, bitter struggle that our people waged in various forms and on a national scale, beginning with the 1857 war of independence and culminating in the unprecedented postwar militant mass upsurge including the glorious revolt of the naval ratings and other sections of the Indian armed forces. While acknowledging the great role of the Congress-led mass national struggles of the 1920s, 1930s and in 1942, it also points to the armed actions and struggles of the young revolutionaries, to the heroic mass actions and uprisings of the workers and peasants and to the armed struggle of the INA.

Our people fought and bled for their freedom. While this struggle had its specific features, it also partook of features common to all great revolutionary and liberation movements. It was the mighty river of freedom into which many tributaries converged. Its heritage is the common possession of all who love India and its people. Above all, it confirmed the great truth enunciated by Marxism that without deep, militant mass struggles, whether armed or unarmed, no people can win through to liberation.

The Programme does not forget to point to the international connections of our freedom struggle, especially in the postwar period. It accurately acknowledges the great help rendered to our fighting people by the glorious 1917 October Socialist Revolution, by the defeat of fascism in which the Soviet Union played the leading part and by the rout of colonialism in extensive areas of the world through the mass anti-imperialist upsurge in Asia and Africa, especially that of China. Just as our freedom struggle reinforced the movement for emancipation of the peoples throughout the world, so also was it helped by this movement. Militant, anti-imperialist internationalism is part and parcel of our heritage of the freedom fight.

Those who preach chauvinism, sneer at Afro-Asian solidarity and belittle the friendship with socialist countries have to be fought back not merely in the cause of India's advance today but also in the name of our sacred battle to make the imperialists quit our land.

Third, what were the different positions of the main contending parties and historical figures at the time of climax in August 1947? And what was the outcome?

The British imperialists, confronted with the mass upsurge in India and the collapse of colonialism elsewhere, decided to compromise and stage a strategic retreat with the intention of returning to the attack again. No heinous manoeuvre was too despicable for them. Utilising the weakness of the platform of the Congress leadership which failed to provide a firm and clear ideological basis of complete national independence, secularism and social progress, they used the barbarous weapon of communalism, of Hindu-Muslim killings to disrupt the national upsurge and partition the country.

Millions died in this imperialist-provoked fratricidal strife and the country itself was carved up. India and Pakistan were set against each other, especially through the skilful manipulation of the Kashmir issue following the invasion by the Pakistani forces. The imperialists further instigated their feudal princely allies to try to carve out 'independent' kingdoms for themselves and remain as their strategic strongholds to browbeat the independent Indian government. In Kashmir, Hyderabad and Travancore-Cochin particularly, this strategy of imperialism was most nakedly manifested.

They further hoped that the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi immediately after independence would sow confusion and disrupt the forces of national liberation.

Through these means the imperialists aimed at reducing India to the position of a satellite state, despite formal freedom.

Ranged against them were the mighty forces of the Indian people determined to smash the imperialists and go forward to the completion of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution and build a new India. They were determined to implement the platform put forward by the Congress of an independent national economy, of land reforms, certain fundamental rights and well-being for the working people and a parliamentary democracy. The people swept forward against the imperialists in the mightiest upsurge in all of India's history, displaying

marvels of militancy and tenacity. An important feature of this upsurge was the mass movement for the abolition of princely states, especially in Hyderabad, Travancore and Kashmir.

The CPI played a leading role in the great Punnapra-Vayalar and Telengana struggles and was a significant force in the state's people's movement in general. Somewhat later the CPI-led liberation struggle of the people of the former French territories in India ended in victory, despite the vacillations of the Government of India.

The national bourgeoisie, which had headed the independence movement, as represented by the Congress leadership vacillated and compromised at this crucial juncture. Not only did it fail to give correct leadership to this revolutionary upsurge but it feared that the national-liberation movement might get out of its control. At the same time it felt confident that on the basis of getting hold of state power it could consolidate its class positions vis-a-vis both imperialism and the people. Hence it accepted the terms of settlement advanced by the British imperialists, some of which were patently aimed at serving imperialist interests and weakening independence. Once again its dual role came to the fore.

This was the complicated balance of forces in 1947, as set out in the Programme. It will not do to forget the aims and strategy pursued by the British imperialists. It will not do to forget the mass revolutionary heroism displayed by the workers, peasants and urban middle strata. It will not do to forget the compromising role of the national bourgeoisie as well as its continued determination to carry on the struggle against imperialism on the basis of using its new-won state power.

Our 'left' friends see only the compromise of the national bourgeoisie and refuse to differentiate between the differing objectives of imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, i.e., the antagonism within the compromise. They are thus at a loss to explain the developments in post-independent India except in terms of ever greater victories for imperialism and ever increasing dependence of our economy which are palpably absurd.

The right deviation completely misses the compromising role of the national bourgeois leadership, especially its fear of the

mass revolutionary upsurge. Hence, it is unable to explain why the Congress leaders accepted the Mountbatten Award, despite the high-tide of the independence movement and the great confidence the masses had in them. It is also unable to explain why the freedom that India won has failed to redeem the promise of our long struggle for a better life of our people and social justice.

The mass upsurge and the continuing oppositional role of the national bourgeoisie combined to defeat the manoeuvres of imperialism. India's independence was established and the basis laid for its further strengthening. India did not become a satellite state of imperialism but went on to become a sovereign republic on January 26, 1950 with a parliamentary democratic system.

The compromising role of the national bourgeoisie, its settlement with imperialism as well as its fear of the mass revolutionary movement meant that the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution still remains to be completed. The people wanted to go forward to this culmination of their freedom struggle and open up the path to socialism. The dominant Congress leadership pursued the policy of building India as an independent capitalist state in compromise with imperialism and feudalism. As a result, a conflict developed between the left forces in the national-liberation movement and the dominant leadership of the Congress on the issue of the path of advance for independent India.

The democratic mass upsurge continued after 1947 while the dominant Congress leadership drove out the radical elements from the ruling party and commenced to split the united mass organisation of the workers, the AITUC. The dominant Congress leadership thus split the national united front and moved forward to attempt to consolidate the class position of the national bourgeoisie. A new stage had opened in the Indian revolution. And that, too, in a new epoch when the world balance of forces has tilted in favour of socialism, when the world capitalism has entered upon a new stage of its general crisis.