

IV. CLASS CHARACTER OF INDIAN STATE POWER

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

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

sent the conclusion of long collective discussion. It holds that the present Indian state is the organ of the class rule of the national bourgeoisie as a whole. The term national bourgeoisie covers all sections of the capitalist class in India. It includes all strata of the bourgeoisie—big, middle and small; monopoly as well as non-monopoly. It covers both the urban and the rural bourgeois groups. It is this heterogeneous class which is in power and which upholds the capitalist path of development for the Indian economy.

This formulation of the Programme is opposed to certain other appraisals. For example, there is the view that the Indian state is a bourgeois-landlord state. Such a view would imply a sharing of power between the bourgeoisie and the feudal and semi-feudal landlords. This consequently would mean that the basic policy of the Indian state would be aimed at preserving and extending feudal and semi-feudal relations of production.

It would certainly be wrong to so describe the basic policy of the Indian state. As a matter of fact, since independence, there has been a substantial curbing of feudalism, a conversion of feudal landlords into capitalist landlords and a development of capitalism in the countryside. No class, certainly not the feudal landlords, would simultaneously share power in the state and allow that state to considerably diminish its economic base and social-political influence.

The Programme also points out that the national bourgeoisie compromises with the landlords and admits them in the ministries, especially at the level of the different states. The landlords, through this compromise, can exert influence on the policies of the state as a whole, especially in the field of agrarian relations.

Another controversy clinched by the Programme is whether the big or the monopoly bourgeoisie dominates the state or, at least, plays the leading role in it. The Programme gives an unequivocal answer in the negative. It cannot be said, at the present time, that the Indian state is a state of the monopoly bourgeoisie or led by it. But this section of the bourgeoisie exerts considerable influence in the formation and exercise of govern-

mental power, while being a component part of the ruling class as a whole.

The fact that the state power is in the hands of the national bourgeoisie as a whole and that its monopoly section has not established hegemony or domination over it—although this is its undoubted aim—has important bearings for the working class as it strives to build the national democratic front. Apart from its significance, the truth of the present formulation is borne out again by the basic policies pursued since independence. Monopoly capital or concentration of economic power has grown, as it must, in the course of capitalist development and since the monopolists are part of the ruling class.

Simultaneously, however, certain developments have taken place contrary to the desire of the monopolists with their policy of collaboration with the western imperialists. The public sector has developed in the field of industry and trade and finance, not merely in the field of transport and power. It has developed largely through collaboration with the socialist countries, with whom trade relations have also expanded considerably. It cannot be precluded that, under heavy mass pressure, there will be further extension of the state sector more directly in the fields which are the exclusive preserve of the monopolists.

The non-monopoly bourgeoisie has also grown in this period in the field of industry, apart from trade and commerce. It has expanded both quantitatively and qualitatively, partially assisted by the public sector and socialist aid. At the same time, all its needs have been far from met and its conflict with the monopoly bourgeoisie has begun to sharpen.

Thus, the state power in India today is that of a heterogeneous bourgeoisie. The enemy of the national-democratic revolution i.e., the monopoly bourgeoisie, is an important part of the class in power. So also is the vacillating ally of the working class in this stage of the revolution i.e., the non-monopoly national bourgeoisie. This is a specific feature of the Indian situation to which the Programme of the CPI draws attention.

The form of state power is another important question into which the Programme goes. This again is a highly specific feature of the Indian scene which any serious revolutionary

has to take note of. The form of the class rule of the national bourgeoisie is that of a parliamentary democracy.

The working class is far from indifferent to the question of the form of state power. An authoritarian, fascist or semi-fascist, militarist regime could also be the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. But such a form of state power places far bigger obstacles and difficulties in the way of the working class as it goes ahead to mobilise the forces of the national-democratic revolution. The existence of a parliamentary democracy and civil liberties makes the fulfilment of this task somewhat less difficult.

The right to organise unions, to hold meetings and demonstrations, to go on strike, to publish papers, to send representatives to the assemblies and Parliament, to intervene in matters of policy, to mobilise to change policies in favour of the people—all these are part and parcel of the advantages of parliamentary democracy for the mass revolutionary movement. It is for these reasons that the CPI Programme considers that the present form of state power represents a historic advance for the people of India. It considers that new possibilities exist for popular intervention in matters of state policy. It considers that the fundamental rights and directives of state policy set out in the Constitution can be made the platform and instrument of the struggles of the people enlarging democracy and defending their interests.

The CPI Programme rejects the view that the system of parliamentary democracy is a mere hoax, that it only serves to create illusions among the people. It rejects the view that the downfall of this system and the advent of one or another form of fascism is inevitable and indeed to be welcomed since it will 'polarise' forces and 'heighten' mass consciousness. It regards the existence of parliamentary democracy as a victory of the people, as a vantage point for further advance. It regards the defence and extension of democracy as both feasible and essential.

Simultaneously, the Programme draws pointed attention to the serious limitations of this system of state power and to the dangers inherent in its bourgeois class content. There are draco-

nian laws on the statute book. The DIR poses a serious menace to all democratic sections of the people. The overthrow of the Communist-led Ministry in Kerala demonstrates the scant respect for democratic norms on the part of the ruling class whenever there is any threat to its monopoly of power.

The powers of the Union centre are so enormous as to make genuine federalism impossible in India today. Real democratic decentralisation is prevented by the narrow rights given to organs of local self-government. Regional imbalances, lack of a whole-hearted acceptance of the principle of linguistic states, caste discrimination, the depredations encouraged against the tribal peoples, the difficulties faced by the religious minorities, are all indications of the incomplete and partial nature of the democracy that exists.

Then there is the bureaucracy, the top officers of the army and judiciary are all drawn from the higher social strata, out of touch with and hostile to the democratic aspirations of the people. They are organised in a system that is quite unsuited even for the limited development efforts pursued by the ruling class, to say nothing of any extension of democracy and progress towards socialism.

Above all, the very fact of the existence of capitalism and of a monopoly bourgeoisie heavily weights the entire system against the democratic movement. The power of money—expressed in the control of press, buildings etc., and in the tremendous spread of corruption—is an inherent restricting and menacing factor. This is particularly so in the underdeveloped conditions of India.

Thus, the duty of the working class and the entire democratic movement consists not only in the defence of such rights as exist but also in removing the limitations and fetters, in extending democracy and making it real for the vast majority. This is an integral part of the struggle to win a national democratic state in India.

Apart from noting the limitations, the Programme points to the fact that there is a developing conflict within the system of the present state power itself. As the monopoly groups get increasingly differentiated from the rest of the bourgeoisie a struggle grows to get exclusive control of the various levers of power.

The monopoly groups, backed by the foreign imperialists begin to undermine the existing liberties and the parliamentary system as a whole.

The working class and democratic movement have to intervene actively in this struggle. It is in their interests to sharpen this conflict and aid the differentiation, defending the parliamentary democracy that now exists from the onslaughts of the right. Such intervention has as its most effective form extra-parliamentary mass struggle.

But the working class and the democratic movement discharge this duty not as the camp follower of the non-monopoly bourgeoisie. It advances its own platform, it seeks to break the very economic base of right reaction; it wants to qualitatively change the democracy of today into the national democracy to tomorrow. Defence of what exists and radical structural change are inextricably combined in the strategic perspective that the Party Programme places before the nation in connection with the problem of the content and form of the present Indian state. To realise this perspective the Programme rightly attaches great importance to proper use of the parliamentary forum. But it places the main emphasis on the extra-parliamentary mobilisation of mass struggle.