

**Draft Programme
of the Communist Party
of India**

COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLICATION

Two Annas

1957

204

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DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

The Communist Party of India has issued the following statement to the Press:

The Politburo meeting of the Communist Party of India held recently adopted, after long discussion, a fundamental programme for the Party, which enunciates anew its aims and objects. It also decided to radically reorientate its tactical line in view of the recent discussions among its members. The programme is being released to the ranks.

1. When the British imperialist rulers of India established the Government of the leadership of the National Congress, in Delhi, in August, 1947, and the hated British Viceroy and Governors departed from this country, the people of India were led to believe that foreign imperialist rule was at an end, that India had achieved independence and freedom, and that now the Government and the people could work out a happy life for the millions of our countrymen, with our resources of land and labour, our factories and workshops, our immense natural wealth and manpower. We could now set to work to gradually overcome our poverty and guarantee food, housing, clothing and the minimum decencies of life to everyone.

2. Four years of the Nehru Government in power has belied the hopes of the masses in every respect. Experience has led them to the conclusion that the Government of the National Congress that rose to power on the basis of the heroic struggles of the masses, was installed there by the consent of the British imperialists, because it was a Government already pledged to the protection and preservation of foreign British capital in India, to protection and preservation of the parasitic landlords and the wealth of the

Princes of India, who for centuries had supported the foreign invaders and jointly with them robbed our people and our country. Hence, in every sphere of the life of the masses, the Government has failed to carry out its promises to the people. Everyday life for the masses has worsened and life for the landlords and profiteers has become more and more enriched, at the expense of the people.

3. The five million workers manning our factories, railways, mines, shipyards, plantations, etc., are suffering from fall in real wages, rising prices, capitalist rationalisation and unemployment. Their struggles for better wages and conditions are drowned in blood by shooting and police terror. Their fighting trade union organisations are disrupted, divided and suppressed by the Government and its henchmen. Demanding increased production in the name of the people, the Government only imposes worsened conditions of labour on the working class, enabling the profiteers to increase their profits alone.

4. The millions of our peasants constituting eighty per cent of our people are ground down as before. Those who have land and can cultivate it, their fruits of labour are looted by the landlord and the moneylender, through exorbitant rents and interests, and by the manoeuvres of the capitalist market and taxes of the State. But three-fourths of the peasantry have practically no land of their own. Those who have no land and find no work live in conditions of perpetual pauperism. And those who do find work on the landlords' and sowcars' (moneylenders) estates, as agricultural labourers or poor tenants, have to work like serfs and slaves, hardly getting even a subsistence wage for the family. As a result, production of food and industrial raw materials is falling, leading to the worst food crisis in the country and starvation and deaths of millions. While the Government run by the landlords and profiteers shouts about abolition of landlordism, it only hatches schemes of compensation of millions of rupees to those oppressors of the people, to enable them thus to indirectly realise their rent through the State from the toil of the peasant. The struggles of the peasantry for land, for reduction of rent, interest and taxes are also drowned in blood, along with the struggles of the working class. Whole villages, talukas and districts are handed over to military and police occupation, because the

poor peasants and landless labourers have dared to ask for land, for reduction of rent and reduction of interest and for increased wages and the establishment of better conditions.

5. The middle-classes in the towns are faring no better. High cost of living, falling salaries, and unemployment are their lot too. The middle-class wage-earners in Government service and private offices, banks, insurance companies, in schools and colleges, are faced with the same problem of life, as the working class and the toiling peasantry.

6. Even the industrialists, manufacturers and traders are hit by the policies of this Government which is totally in the grip of monopoly financiers, landlords and princes and their foreign British advisers, working behind the screen. Allocation of capital issues, raw material, transport, import and export licences, etc., is carried out by the bureaucrats in the Government machinery in such a way as to hit the small industrialists and traders and benefit the big monopolists in league with the banks and syndicates of foreign firms.

7. The schemes of "re-construction", of building irrigation, hydro-electric stations, factories, etc., whether directly by the State or in partnership with private capital, are all foundering, except such as feed war purposes. They are turning out to be the means of looting the State budget by foreign firms of experts and supplies, by high-placed bureaucrats in charge, and big speculators on the Stock Exchange. The demand for nationalisation of industries, promoted by the looting of the people by blackmarketees, is used to swindle the State budget by making it acquire bankrupt or worn-out units or participate in bogus schemes, which invariably fail and are then sold out to the Government henchmen and private capitalists. The result is that industrialisation of the country—which is held at the mercy of the British and the Americans and who certainly are not interested in making India an industrial nation—is making no headway in the hands of this Government which is tied to the chariot-wheels of British capital.

8. And whatever industries exist, are continually finding themselves in a crisis. Because the growing poverty of the masses, especially the peasantry, does not give them an adequate market inside the country. Outside as well as inside the country, they come up against the competition of foreign

firms and other imperialist masters of the colonial world and thus find themselves in a deadlock.

9. On the top of all this comes the fact that this tottering Government in order to keep itself in saddle, faced with the rising discontent of the masses, suppresses all civil liberties of the people, outlaws political parties and groups, bans trade unions and other people's organisations, imprisons thousands of workers, peasants, students, men and women in prisons and concentration camps. The supreme ruler becomes the police official and the bureaucrat, helped by the local Congress leader and landlord in the whole countryside. No wonder that to maintain such a police State, the burden of taxes increases and more than fifty per cent of the State budget is spent on military and police, prisons and the bureaucracy and not for food and cloth, homes and education, health and sanitation for the people.

10. The people of India are gradually realising the meaning of this state of affairs and are coming to realise the necessity to change this Government of landlords and princes, this Government of financial sharks and speculators, this Government hanging on to the will of the British Commonwealth, the British imperialists. The disillusioned masses are slowly rising in struggle, no longer able to withstand this state of slow starvation and death. They are rising in struggles of the working class in towns and the resistance of the peasantry in the countryside.

11. In order to prevent this growing unity of the people, mainly the unity of the working class and its alliance with the peasantry, the unity of all classes that are interested in ending this Government of landlords and princes and big business, collaborating with the British imperialists, the present Government is utilising other means apart from police repression.

12. Knowing the desire of the people's masses to make our country completely independent of British imperialism, the Government has proclaimed India a Republic. But unwilling really to break away its ties with imperialism, it has shamelessly proclaimed the Republic to be a part of the Empire!

The membership of the British Empire is not only a formal matter, as is declared. While playing on the rivalries between England and America to its own advantage in cer-

tain circumstances, the Government of India essentially carries out the foreign policy of British imperialism. Though it speaks for peace and against the atomic bomb under pressure from the people, who do not want war and want peace, it has not hesitated to send help, even though nominally medical, to the American troops in Korea; it has allowed British imperialists to recruit Gurkhas and Sikhs for the suppression of the Malays' fight for independence; it has allowed landing bases for the French planes in India on their way to fight against the People's Republic of Viet Nam. The Indian Navy operates as part of the British Navy and under British Command and the keys to the military technique of the Defence Department of the Government are held and moved by British advisers. If the independence of the armed forces of a country is the sign of its sovereignty and independence, then the key part of our independence is still left in the hands of British imperialism.

13. The British imperialists before covering their rule with the mantle of the new Congress Government drowned the country in Hindu-Muslim strife and massacres and then divided the country into the two States of India and Pakistan. The imperialists thereby weakened the economy of India in agriculture and the economy of Pakistan in industry. They thus put both the States at loggerheads and undeclared war with each other and dependent on the so-called "neutral Third Party", the imperialists.

The division of the country enabled the Congress Government to drown the just demands of the people in a hysteria of Hindu-Muslim war. It enabled the Government to spend on armaments the money which could have been used to improve the conditions of the people. It enabled them to buy armaments from the British imperialists who desired nothing better than to sell their second-hand goods and services in exchange for their sterling debts to India and Pakistan, and to deprive our people of supplies of machinery and essential goods.

14. The division of the country and communal religious strife was used to drown the demands of the various nationalities of India for their free development, for the reconstitution of the former mixed British Provinces and the Princely States into autonomous linguistic provinces in a United India. In the name of a united country, the lan-

guage of one province, namely, Hindi, was declared an obligatory State language for all nationalities and States, to the detriment of their own national language. Vast areas and millions of people of one nationality are compelled to live under the rule of bureaucrats and governments dominated by another nationality. Large tribal areas, with their own economy and culture, are put at the mercy of the landlords and financial sharks of this or that alien group, thus actually sowing division and discord among the people.

15. In order, finally, to come forward as a Government of the people, after spending millions of the people's money on wrangling in Legislative Houses, the Government produced what it calls a democratic constitution and in terms of that constitution calls upon the people to elect a Government of their own choice and realise the fundamental rights given under the constitution. Thus the people are told that they can end the present rule of autocracy if they so desire and work their freedom through this "democratic" constitution of the free Republic of India.

16. While it is a fact that universal adult franchise now exists in the constitution of India and it can and will be used by the people, it is a deception of the people to say that elections alone under this constitution can end the landlord-capitalist rule in the country and the imperialist hold over its life. Adult franchise serves to gauge the maturity of the working class and the people and is formally an element of democracy but it cannot express the true will and the true interests of the exploited masses so long as the land is not the property of peasants but that of the landlords, so long as the power of landlords and capitalists holds the people in subjugation in fields and factories, so long as the power of capital over the Press and means of propaganda drugs the people with lies, so long as the power of money utilises religious and caste frictions and rivalries to divide and to weaken the people, so long as the bureaucrats and the police ban political parties, suppress civil liberties and even imprison without trial even the elected representatives of the legislatures for their political opinions and for their honest work.

17. It is also a deception of the people to say that under the new constitution the masses or the Government elected by them can work their way to freedom and happiness. The

constitution guarantees no rights to the people which are enforceable in any way or which are not subject to violation by the emergency autocratic decrees of the bureaucracy, which is irremovable and inviolable. The right to strike, to living wage, to work and rest for the working class and salaried employees is not guaranteed and made enforceable. The land of the landlords and the properties and incomes of the dethroned or enthroned princes are made inviolable. The landless peasant can have land, it appears, only if he can buy it or compensate the landlord for it. But to buy land and to pay compensation, capital is needed and tens of millions of poor peasants who live from hand to mouth have no capital. Therefore, the poor peasants have to stay without land and continue their existence in poverty. It is characteristic that by several treaties with Britain and America, the Government has made the property of foreign holders in our country sacred and inviolable, having provided them with such guarantees that even their profits cannot be touched and have to be let out of the country in the way they like. And this at the time when the Government refuses to guarantee the citizens from the club-law of the police officers and from the plunder on the part of the moneylenders and profiteers.

Thus, while the stranglehold of landlords, princes and imperialists on our economy, land and capital is guaranteed by this constitution, not a single item of the life and liberty of our masses is guaranteed, beyond stating them as pious illusory wishes. The constitution is not and cannot be called a true democratic constitution but is the constitution of a landlord-capitalist state, tied to foreign imperialist interests—mainly British.

18. It is quite natural that in view of the described terrible conditions dooming the people to poverty and lawlessness, the people's masses have lost their faith in the present Government, they are becoming deeply distrustful of it and begin to consider it their enemy who is protecting the landlords, moneylenders and other exploiters against the people. Moreover, the people's masses openly voice their discontent and revolt in several provinces against the inhuman regime of the present Government and are seeking out ways to substitute this Government by a new People's Government capable of expressing the will and interests of the people,

capable of protecting them against the oppression of landlords, capitalists, profiteers, moneylenders and foreign imperialists.

19. Faced with these facts, the Communist Party of India feels it its duty to come to the aid of the people and to outline the practical tasks, the practical programme which the Communist Party of India upholds and which should be put into effect by the working class of India if they wish to come out of the deadlock into which they have been forced by the present Government, if they wish to attain their freedom and happiness.

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 transformations in our country. But, our Party regards as quite mature the task of replacing the present anti-democratic and anti-popular Government by a new Government of People's Democracy, created on the basis of a coalition of all democratic anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces in the country, capable of effectively guaranteeing the rights of the people, of giving land to the peasants gratis, of protecting our national industries against the competition of foreign goods and of insuring the industrialisation of the country, of securing a higher standard of living to the working class, of ridding the people of unemployment and thus placing the country on the wide road of progress, cultural advancement and independence.

What are the practical tasks which, in the opinion of the Communist Party of India, should be carried out by the new People's Democratic Government?

The tasks are as follows.

IN THE FIELD OF STATE STRUCTURE

20. The sovereignty of the people, i.e., the concentration of power in the country in the hands of the people. The supreme power in the State must be vested entirely in the people's representatives who will be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time upon a demand by the

majority of electors, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single legislative chamber.

21. The restriction of the rights of the President of the Republic, in virtue of which the President and persons authorised by him will be deprived of the right to promulgate laws, which have not been passed by the legislature. The President shall be elected by the legislature.

22. Universal, equal and direct suffrage for all male and female citizens of India who have attained the age of eighteen years in all elections to the Legislative Assembly and to the various local government bodies, secret ballot, the right of every voter to be elected to any representative institution, payment to people's representatives, proportional representation of political parties in all elections.

23. Local government on a wide scale and with wide powers through People's Committees. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed from above (e.g., governors, magistrates, commissioners, etc.).

24. Inviolability of person and domicile; unhampered freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, strike and combination; freedom of movement and occupation.

25. Equal rights for all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, sex, race or nationality; equal pay for equal work, irrespective of sex.

26. The right of all nationalities to self-determination. The Republic of India will unite the peoples of the various nationalities of India not by force but by their voluntary consent to the creation of a common State.

27. Reconstitution of the present artificial provinces or States with the dissolution of princely States into the national States according to the principle of common language. The tribal area or areas where the population is specific composition and is distinguished by specific social conditions or constitutes a national minority will have complete regional autonomy and regional governments.

28. Introduction of progressive income-tax in industry, agriculture and trade and maximum relief in taxation for workers, peasants and artisans.

29. Right of the people to receive instruction in their own national language in schools; the use of the national language in all public and State institutions. The use of Hindi as an all-India State language will not be obligatory.

30. The right of all persons to sue any official before a People's Court.

31. Separation of the State from all religious institutions. The State to be a secular State.

32. Free and compulsory primary education for the children of both sexes upto the age of fourteen.

33. Replacement of the police by militia. Elimination of the mercenary army and other punitive forces and the establishment of a national army, navy and air force for the defence of India, closely linked with the people.

34. The establishment of the people's health service with a wide network of medical centres and hospitals all over the country, designed to liquidate the centres of cholera, malaria, and other epidemic diseases in the country.

IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE AND THE PEASANT PROBLEM

The agriculture and the peasant problem are of primary importance to the life of our country.

We cannot develop agriculture to any considerable extent and provide the country with food and raw materials because the impoverished peasant deprived of land is unable to purchase the most elementary agricultural implements and thus to improve his farming.

We cannot develop our national industries and industrialise our country to any considerable extent because the impoverished peasantry constituting 80 per cent of the population is unable to buy even a minimum quantity of manufactured goods.

We cannot make our State stable to any extent because the peasantry living in conditions of semi-starvation receive no support from the Government, hate it and refuse to support it.

We cannot improve the conditions of the working class to any considerable extent because hundreds of thousands of hungry people forced by poverty to leave the countryside for towns swarm the "labour market", lower "prices of labour", increase the army of unemployed, and thus make the improvement of the living standards of the working people impossible.

We cannot work our way out of cultural backwardness

because the peasantry living in the conditions of semi-starvation, constituting the overwhelming majority of the population, is deprived of any material means to give education to their children.

In order to get rid of all these evils and get our country out of cultural backwardness — it is necessary to create human conditions of existence for the peasants, it is necessary to take land from the landlords and to hand it over to the peasants.

To achieve this, it is necessary:

35. To hand over landlords' land without payment to the peasants and to legalise this reform in the form of a special land law.

36. To ensure a long-term and cheap credit for the peasants to enable them to purchase agricultural implements and the necessary seeds. To ensure long-term and cheap credit to small artisans to enable them to purchase raw materials, etc., and carry on their manufacture and trade.

37. To ensure Government assistance to the peasants in the improvement of old and the building of new irrigation systems.

38. To cancel debts of peasants and small artisans to moneylenders.

39. To ensure adequate wages and living condition to agricultural labourers.

IN THE FIELD OF INDUSTRY AND THE LABOUR PROBLEM

Our national industry suffers not only from an extremely low purchasing power of the peasants but also from the fact that it is exposed to competition on the part of foreign goods in the country. Foreign countries pursuing dumping policies flood the country with cheap goods whereas our manufacturers having no support on the part of the Government try to make good their losses which arise from foreign competition by increasing pressure on the working class, by worsening its conditions. But the industries cannot develop if the living conditions of the workers deteriorate, for a hungry and moneyless worker cannot be an adequate factor for the development of modern industry. This circumstance is another reason for the insufficient development of our national industry. To break through this

vicious circle, it is necessary to guard our national industry against the competition of foreign goods, to launch an all-out industrialisation of the country and to improve the conditions of the working class. The Communist Party of India considers that to achieve this, it is necessary:

40. To provide for the protection of the national industry against the competition of foreign goods in the country by promulgating appropriate laws;

41. To develop the national industry and to prepare conditions for the industrialisation of the country without sparing any efforts and resources of the State to achieve this end;

42. To improve radically the living and working conditions of workers by fixing a living wage, application of the eight-hour day and forty-four hour week in all industries and trades, introduction of a six-hour day in underground mines and other trades injurious to health, social insurance at the expense of the State and capitalist against every kind of disability and unemployment, by the establishment of labour exchanges working in association with the Trade Unions, by the establishment of industrial courts, by the recognition of the Trade Unions and the right to collective bargaining;

43. To introduce effective control of prices of goods of mass consumption.

44. The problem of the refugee population, mainly of the millions of the uprooted workers, peasants, artisans, middle-class employees, etc., must be resolved by their speedy rehabilitation by the State and specially by providing them with land, instruments of labour, employment and facilities for developing their life in their own national way.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA

In spite of the much-advertised statement that the British have left our country, it is a fact that a large number of factories and workshops, mines and plantations, shipping and banking of India are owned by the British capitalists who annually draw hundreds of millions of profits from them. With this power over our economic life and their ties and partnership with big capitalists in our country who are collaborating with them the British imperialists from behind the scene, and their collaborators, hamper the development of our industries and thus perpetuate our poverty.

We cannot be a strong and prosperous country until we are industrialised on a wide scale; but industrialised to such an extent we shall never be as long as British capital exists in India, for the profits of British enterprises are taken out of the country and we are unable to use them to expand our industries, as long as the big national capitalists, their collaborators, keep us tied to the Empire.

Moreover, one has to take into account numerous British advisers with whom our Navy, our Army, police and other punitive organs team.

To become a truly independent State, India has to break off with the Empire, to put an end to the domination of the British capital in the country's economy and to get rid of the British advisers.

Therefore, the Communist Party of India considers necessary:

45. The withdrawal of India from the British Commonwealth of Nations and the British Empire;
46. The confiscation and nationalisation of all factories, banks, plantations, shipping and mining owned by the British in India, whether in their own name or under the signboard of Indian companies;
47. Removal of British advisers in India from the posts held by them.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF INDIA

India needs peace and peaceful development. She is interested in peace and economic cooperation with all States. In this respect, Britain is not an exception if she only proves capable of carrying on economic co-operation with India on the basis of full equality. India is not interested in the spurious play between peace and war, between partisans of peace and advocates of aggressive war, carried on by the present Indian Government.

The chief enemy of peace and advocate of an aggressive war is now the United States of America, which has rallied round herself all aggressive countries. This camp of war is facing the camp of peace which includes such States as the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic and other countries of People's Democracy. Instead of joining hands with the partisans of peace against the aggressors and branding the United States of America as chief aggressor, the Indian

Government is carrying on a suspicious play between these two camps, and is flirting with the USA, thus facilitating the struggle of aggressors against peace-loving countries. What India needs is not play between peace and war, but a united front with peace-loving countries and friendship with them.

Still less is India interested in the wrangling in which the Indian Union and Pakistan are engaged and which is not counteracted on the part of the present Indian Government.

The unbalancing of the integral economy of India caused by the division of the country, the strife between Pakistan and India, which enables the reactionary ruling circles to divide the people, will be overcome by a firm alliance of friendship and mutual assistance between India and the State of Pakistan. Such a friendly alliance must include the State of Ceylon also.

The economy of Ceylon is dependent on and complementary to that of India. Quite a large section of its people are formed from Indian (mainly Tamilian) plantation and other workers who have migrated to Ceylon. The Ceylonese and Indian landlords and traders incite the Indian and Ceylonese workers against each other to gain their selfish ends. The absence of an alliance is utilised by the imperialists and their henchmen to sow discord among all these States and to sow hatred among their peoples, leading to the eviction of millions of people from their homelands. Only a firm alliance and friendship can defeat this game of imperialists and the reactionary ruling circles of these countries.

Therefore, the Communist Party of India considers it necessary to guarantee the following:

48. Honest and consistent policy of peace with all peace-loving States and united front with them against aggressors;
49. The policy of economic cooperation with all States capable of carrying on economic co-operation without any discrimination whatsoever, on the basis of full equality;
50. The policy of alliance and friendship with Pakistan and Ceylon.

* * *

The Communist Party of India puts this programme before the people of India, in order that they may have a clear picture of the objective they are fighting for.

Our Party calls upon the toiling millions, the working class, the peasantry, the toiling intelligentsia, the middle-classes as well as the national bourgeoisie interested in the freedom of the country and the development of prosperous life—to unite into a single democratic front in order to attain complete independence of our country, the emancipation of the peasants from the oppression of the feudals, improvement in the life of all working people, to bring about a major forward stride in our agriculture, a major forward stride in our national industry and secure the cultural advancement of our country.

The people of India led by its working class and its Communist Party, guided by the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, firmly allied with the million-headed peasantry of our land, will achieve this programme. The principles and the philosophy of Marxism and the leadership of the Communist Party have led nearly half of the humanity to Socialism, to freedom, to real democracy, at the head of which stands the Soviet Union. The peoples of Asia led by the great Chinese People's Democracy are now battling to free themselves from imperialism. India is the last biggest dependent semi-colonial country in Asia still left for the enslavers to rob and exploit. But the Communist Party believes that India too will soon take its place in the great nations of the world as a victorious People's Democracy and take the road of peace, prosperity and happiness.

FIRST PRINTED APRIL 1951

REPRINTED MAY 1951

REPRINTED JUNE 1951

Printed by Jayant Bhatt at the New Age Printing Press, 190-B, Khetwadi Main Road, Bombay 4 and published by him for the Communist Party of India, Raj Bhuvan, Sandhurst Road, Bombay 4.