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Section 1 The Problem

The main document on the basis of which any communist party works is the programme document which is considered as the basic document for the entire epoch of the revolution. It must explain to the people how the revolution, it works for is to arise, why it is inevitable, what its significance, nature, and powers are, and which problems it must solve. Moreover, for Marxists, it should be always prepared on the basis of the concrete application of the science of Marxism - Leninism to the concrete conditions of the country concerned¹.

But what was experienced in the Indian context, the two communist parties, namely, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) in 1964 came out with two different understandings about the concrete conditions of the country. It would be clearer from the two programmes that on a series of pivotal theoretical and ideological issues connected with the Indian revolution they differed from each other very significantly. These led to a very grave difference on strategical and tactical issues in the subsequent years of their division. These differences not only gave rise to the debatable discourses but also led to many complexities and heterogeneity for the left political movement in itself for the country.

On every basic question connected with the Indian revolution there are differences between the programmes adopted by the CPI and the CPI(M). The main focus of the present study being the 'agrarian reforms' and 'rural democracy' in their programmes, it is inevitably necessary to cite up some basic theoretical understandings of the nature of Indian state, the stages and tactics of revolution and the class assessment attached thereto, embodied in their respective party programmes; and then to find out the place and importance given to agrarian reforms and rural democracy in their programmes for their courses of action leading to the desired ultimate goal of socialism through revolution.

Section 2 Assessment of the Class Character of the Indian State

To the CPI, the party programme, which has been adopted in its Seventh Congress held in Bombay on December 1964 and amended in 1968 in its Eighth Congress held in Patna, has stated the present class character of the Indian State in the Post-independence era, thus -

"The State in India is the organ of the class rule of the national bourgeoisie as a whole, in which the big bourgeoisie holds powerful influence. This class rule has strong links with the landlords. These factors give rise to reactionary pulls on the state power"².

The CPI holds that the Indian state is the class rule of the entire Indian capitalist class - the monopoly bourgeoisie, the non-monopoly bourgeoisie and the rural bourgeoisie. In this state the big monopoly bourgeoisie wields powerful influence. Moreover, this class power has strong links with the landlords. The inherent limitations and defects of bourgeois rule in India are that there is an added factor of the powerful influence of the big bourgeoisie over it and its links with the landlords³.

The existing bourgeois state power where big bourgeoisie holds powerful influence and has links with the landlords cause reactionary pulls on the policies of the state.

This can be analysed in the following manner :- i) India is a class-state of the bourgeoisie as a whole. The whole of the bourgeoisie composed of, namely, monopoly and big bourgeoisie, non-monopoly bourgeoisie and rural bourgeoisie; ii) big bourgeoisie holds powerful influence in framing the policies of the state, but they are even today not the sole powerful or undisputed hegemonic force of the state; iii) bourgeoisie as a whole as a class has links with the landlords, and landlords are not sharing the state power; if they share then the feudal and semifeudal interests would remain fully protected and entrance of capitalism in agriculture be impossible; iv) the powerful influence over the state power by the big bourgeoisie (who are more, inclined to take the help of imperialists) and the links

of the landlords with the present bourgeois class as a whole exert reactionary pulls on the state power.

To the CPI(M), the party programme, which has been adopted in its Seventh Congress held in October-November 1964 in Calcutta and has been amended in its Ninth Congress held in June-July, 1972 in Madurai, has stated the class character of the Indian state, thus -

"The present Indian state is the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords, led by the big bourgeoisie, who are increasingly collaborating with foreign finance capital in pursuit of the capitalist path of development. This class character essentially determines the role and functions of the state in the life of the country"⁴.

The CPI(M) in its programme characterises the present Indian state as 'the organ of the class rule of bourgeoisie and landlords led by the big bourgeoisie'. The underlying idea is that every state in essence is a class state, and the existing Indian state is a class state of bourgeoisie and landlords. So the landlords have a share of power of the state and it is imperative to wrest the power from their hands if the anti-feudal revolution is to be led to completion. The bourgeoisie are also sharing the state power, among them the big bourgeoisie hold leadership of the state who are increasingly collaborating with the imperialist forces; so it is imperative to wrest the power from their hands if the anti-imperialist revolution is to

be led to completion⁵. And in order to make India a capitalist country, the big bourgeoisie are increasingly collaborating with foreign finance capital for their own interest. So this present Indian state is the instrument securing the interest of the big bourgeoisie and landlords. Their class interest determines the internal and external policies of the existing Indian state. Now the class character of the Indian state by the CPI(M) which has been stated in its party programme can be arranged in the following manner helpful for comparison with its counterpart :- i) the bourgeoisie and landlords are in power in this existing state; ii) this state is run under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie ; iii) in order to strengthen its position the big bourgeoisie has entered into an alliance with the landlords and has shared the state power with them; iv) the principal aim of the big bourgeoisie is to make India a capitalist country with the help of the imperialist monopoly capital to protect and consolidate its class rule over the state apparatus; and v) now the interests of the landlords and big bourgeoisie determine the internal and external policies of the existing Indian state.

Section 3 Assessment About India's Independence

Both the parties are of the same opinion that India's achievement of independence in 1947 marked the completion of one stage in her struggle.

For CPI "One stage of India's revolution was over with the attainment of national independence from imperialism"⁶.

For CPI(M)

"The first stage of Indian revolution ... chiefly directed against foreign imperialist rule came to an end"⁷.

One noticeable feature is that both the Communist parties accepted and placed the notion of India's independence in their respective party programmes. They again converged on one point that this stage was anti-imperialist and regeneration of democracy. Consequently the next stage of revolution to them is 'democratic'; but CPI thinks it as a 'national democratic' and the CPI(M) thinks it as a 'people's democratic' revolution. But class assessment differs widely.

Section 4 Acceptance of the Two Stages of Revolution

Arising from these differences of understanding of the nature and character of the Indian state, there are

differences as to how to win over allies and fight against enemies for the attainment of successive stages of revolutions. Both of them accepted the theory of the two stages of revolution as strategy, which again showed marked differences on the nature of the immediate democratic stage of revolution. They also accepted that this theory was practicable.

Both the CPI and the CPI(M) agree on the two stages of revolution considering India as a country having not completed bourgeois democratic revolution so far. They share the views of Lenin and Mao that any country having pre-capitalist syndrome dominant, the working class of that country must bear an active burden of completion of the unfinished bourgeois-democratic revolution; and only then, it is possible for a working class party to arrive at the next desired socialist stage of revolution.

Again both of them agree that working class participation in the unfinished bourgeois-democratic revolution is a historical necessity of today which makes this bourgeois-democratic revolution a category different from the orthodox bourgeois-democratic revolution that occurred in the long past in England, France and America where complete hegemony of the bourgeoisie was established. For India, CPI named it, in its programme, the 'National Democratic' revolution and the CPI(M) named it, in its programme, the 'People's Democratic' revolution. This

analysis of them can be understood as a continuation of Leninist and Maoist tradition in the Indian context.

But one significant difference between them is on the question of leadership in the democratic revolution, i.e., the first stage of revolution which the CPI has named the 'National Democratic' and the CPI(M) has named it as the People's Democratic revolution.

It is obvious that the CPI(M) continues to adhere to Mao's concept of absolute working-class leadership in the democratic revolution. Mao declared that in the New Democratic revolution which was a variant of bourgeois-democratic revolution, the dictatorship of the front composed of forces—the working class, the peasantry, the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia—must be established but the unquestionable leadership would certainly be preserved for the working class alone, so that the forward march for socialist revolution would be easier without any contradictory possibilities⁸. The programmatic position of the CPI(M) in this regard echoed the same view of Mao.

Indeed, Mao's plea is that the absolute leadership of the working class for the completion of the democratic revolution in the dependent countries has emerged as a historical fact only after the first imperialist World War and the Socialist Revolution in Russia (1917) in the era of decadent world imperialism. So the bourgeoisie of

today, in the ultimate analysis, is no longer a progressive force to whom the natural burden of leadership could not be entrusted⁹. Such leadership cannot be given to any class other than the most progressive and historically advanced working class. However, it can be said that the CPI(M) is more Maoist in its perception of the democratic revolution. This is reflected also in its acceptance of the Maoist concept of hegemony of the working class in this revolution.

On the other hand, the CPI, in its programme, does not follow Mao's concept of the absolute working-class leadership in this democratic stage of revolution. In its programme, it states, it does not like to set any precondition for the absolute leadership in the democratic revolution, nevertheless, it is not denying the active participation and sharing of the leadership of the front¹⁰. Its programme further argued that it would be an obstinacy to preserve the absolute leadership of the working class in the democratic revolution lest it would lose the opportunity of building a front for the completion of the unfinished democratic revolution. The programme of the CPI concluded that after the successful democratic revolution the balance of class forces and leadership would continuously shift in favour of the working class which ultimately would expedite the socialist revolution in the next stage¹¹.

It can be said that the programme of the CPI(M) in

this regard, i.e., on the question of leadership in the democratic revolution, is nothing but a continuation of the Chinese path where as the programme of the CPI does not go beyond a view expressed by Marx¹² on Germany in 1850 and another remark made Lenin on Russia on February revolution of 1917¹³.

4.1 CPI's National Democratic Revolution

For the CPI, the first stage or immediate stage is 'National Democratic Revolution'¹⁴ and for the CPI(M) it is the 'People's Democratic Revolution'¹⁵. These are embodied in their respective party programmes.

To the CPI

"In order to embark on the socialist road and begin the construction of a society, India has, however, to go through the stage of completing the anti-imperialist anti-feudal, democratic revolution"¹⁶.

Aims

Its aims are as follows :

"... in order to complete the national democratic revolution, wipe out all legacies of the former imperialist

rule, develop industry and agriculture rapidly, abolish unemployment, raise the income and standard of living of the masses, help their cultural advancement, democratic social life and take the country forward to a bright happy future"¹⁷. [Emphasis added].

In spite of having freedom the Indian people have not yet resolved their contradiction with imperialism and feudalism, have not yet won economic independence and completed the task of democratising their society and economy. As a result the national bourgeoisie has not yet exhausted its anti-imperialist and anti-feudal potential. The task at this stage therefore is not primarily to solve the contradiction between the working class and the capitalist class but that between the Indian people as a whole including the national bourgeoisie, and imperialism, feudalism and their ally-the monopoly bourgeoisie. So the basic aim of the present phase of the Indian revolution is to complete the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic revolution and prepare for the transition to socialism¹⁸.

"But this programme cannot be implemented unless the rule of the national bourgeoisie and the capitalist path which it is pursuing are ended and national democracy is established"¹⁹.

The programme of CPI is very emphatic in explaining the alternative path. "This alternative path will mean,

first and foremost the replacement of the Congress or any other form of anti-imperialist, antifeudal and anti-monopoly classes and forces capable and determined to carry out revolutionary changes, reversing the present process of development of capitalism. It would be a government of national democracy, directing country's development along the non capitalist path"²⁰.

The basic aims of the National Democratic government have been spelt out in the following manner in the programme :

First and foremost, the grip of foreign monopoly capital on our economy will be completely eliminated.

Second, a state sector, independent of foreign monopolies and functioning on a democratic basis, will be expanded and strengthened as a powerful lever for building a selfreliant national industry and economy.

Third, Indian monopoly combines who have concentrated in their hands economic power in industry, commerce, banking etc. will be broken up, and any tendency to development of monopoly will be effectively checked.

Fourth, the power of landlords and feudal remnants will be completely eliminated; radical agrarian reform in the interests of the peasantry will be carried out and the

grip of usurious, trading and bank capital on our agriculture will be removed"²¹.

The programme stated, "This will open up for our people a path of development which, through far-reaching reforms, unshackles the productive forces in industry and agriculture, ensure rapid economic growth, rising living standards of the masses and their active participation in production. This is an intervening stage of non-capitalist development because the government of national democracy purposefully directs the economy on such lines that the growth of capitalism, both in industry and agriculture, is progressively restricted and the prerequisites created for putting our country on the road to socialism"²².

Successful achievement of these specific aims will unfetter so far hidden potential productive forces in the national economy which will raise the living standard of the toiling people and abolish the burden of foreign, and national monopoly capital and inhuman oppression by the landlords over the peasantry"²³.

Alliance of Class Forces

About the forces composing the National Democratic revolution, CPI states in its programme.

First and foremost, the working class, which stands for the complete and consistent carrying out of this programme ...

Second, the broad mass of the cultivating peasants, including the rich peasants and the agricultural labourers ...

Third, the rising class of urban and rural intelligentsia ...

Finally, the national bourgeoisie, excluding its monopoly section, which is objectively interested in the accomplishment of the principal tasks of the anti-imperialist anti-feudal revolution ..."²⁴

The programme of the CPI pointed out that for the completion of the National Democratic revolution the working class, all strata of peasantry including the rich peasants, the agricultural labourers, the urban & rural intelligentsia & the national bourgeois will participate for their objective interest in this revolution. The programme further states—

"... in order to create the instrument for implementing the programme we will have to build a national democratic front, bringing together all the patriotic forces of the country, viz. the working class, the entire peasantry, including the rich peasants and agricultural labourers, the

intelligentsia and the nonmonopolist [sic] bourgeoisie. The worker-peasant alliance will be the basic and pivot of the front " ²⁵

The programme states, "such a front is not in existence today because the democratic masses are divided into a number of political parties, including the Congress party itself, while a section of the democratic masses is drawn in the united fronts struggling against the anti-people policies of the ruling class. The national democratic front will arise and take shape in the process of overcoming this division and uniting the broad democratic masses in the course of struggle. It will be consolidated in the course of countrywide united mass movements, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, against the reactionary anti-people policies, simultaneously isolating and defeating the forces of communalism and right reaction seeking to disrupt the same"²⁶.

It further stated, "the working class, forging the unity of its class organisations, will have to take the initiative in launching this national mass movement. Its struggles for the defence and betterment of its living standards, for democratic measures like the nationalisation of banks, oil monopolies and foreign trade, and for the expansion and democratisation of the state sector will form a vital part of this national movement"²⁷.

Forces Opposed to

The CPI programme has clearly stated about the enemies of its declared National democratic revolution. The forces opposed to the establishment of national democracy are "the growing power of monopoly groups which, in alliance with feudal elements and in collaboration with foreign monopoly capital are presenting an increasing threat to India's independent economic development itself"²⁸.

The programme pointed out that the main threat has been unleashed by the growing Indian monopoly houses in collusion with the foreign monopoly power and semi-feudal and landlord classes. These classes are out and out reactionary and not only have gripped the national economy but are also dangerous to the democracy and democratic forces in this stage.

"These dangerous features of economic development follow directly from the contradiction of capitalist path pursued by the national bourgeoisie - a path whose links with foreign monopoly capital and with feudal and semifeudal interests results in compromise with them"²⁹.

The programme of the CPI observed that, "Foreign monopoly investments have trebled since independence", "India's external trade is tied up with the world capitalist market and a very substantial share of her exports and

imports goes to the foreign monopolies", "the conditions on which so called economic aid from the imperialist powers is secured hit our national interests and serve the interest of imperialism"³⁰ and "so long as foreign private monopolists are allowed to maintain their entrenched positions in our economy in this manner and are given more concessions, India's progress towards a self-reliant economy is bound to be frustrated. Nor can the country's political life be made safe from the pressures interference and blackmail by the imperialists who function closely linked with the reactionary circles within the country"³¹.

"One of the most striking results of this path of capitalist development is the concentration of capital and economic power in the hands of a few big monopolists who seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the people and the broader sections of the national bourgeoisie to the detriment of the country's national economic development"³². Besides, "Heavy concessions have been made to monopolists even in respect of several industries originally scheduled for the public sector"³³.

In the Indian countryside "the survivals of semifeudal modes of exploitation combines with the growth of commercialisation of agriculture have produced a new set of reactionary vested interests. Landlords, usurious and wholesale dealers, often combined in the same person,

constitute the modern parasites holding up the progress of agriculture and supporting right reaction"³⁴.

Question of Leadership

The existing right reactionary forces - the imperialists, monopoly capitalists and feudal and semifeudal elements seek to undermine the limited parliamentary democracy achieved after independence. So, in order to make possible the National Democratic Revolution against the narrow interests of the right reaction by the National Democratic Front the question of leadership is stated thus--

"The national democratic state in the hands of the national democratic front will be a transitional stage, in which power will be jointly exercised by all those classes which are interested in eradicating imperialist interests, routine of the semifeudal elements and breaking the power of the monopolies. In this class alliance, the exclusive leadership of the working class is not yet established, though the exclusive leadership of the bourgeoisie no longer exists"³⁵.

In National Democratic Front (hereafter may be mentioned as - NDF) there is a four-class alliance - workers, peasants, urban middle strata and intelligentsia, and the non-monopoly national bourgeoisie; and the leadership of the National Democratic Front will belong to all firm anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly forces.

An exclusive leadership by the working class is not the precondition of this front. Of course the non-proletarian democratic classes, including the non-monopoly stratum of the national bourgeoisie have objective interests in the accomplishment of the principal tasks of anti-imperialist anti-feudal revolution. So the working class in Indian has to treat with its allies on an equal footing.

The struggle now is to implement the programme of completing the national democratic revolution. It is primarily directed against the stout resistance offered by the imperialists, the landlords and other semifeudal elements. Considering the class position of the NDF there will be struggle also within it as the implementation of the programme proceeds. The working class and its party, the Communist Party of India, will be the most consistent, far-sighted and self-less fighters for the implementation of the NDF programme both against the class enemies of the national-democratic revolution and also against the vacillation, drift and at times even outright opposition of its partners in the NDF. It is through this process that the balance within the NDF will shift in favour of the working class and the worker-peasant alliance. It is through this process that the way will be paved for the leadership of the working class in the state. And it is through this process that the transition to socialism commences and the next state (socialist stage) of the Indian revolution begins³⁶.

In this manner the CPI visualises the entire revolutionary transformation of the present-day Indian society into the future socialist India through the transitional stage of 'national democracy'.

4.2 CPI(M) 's People's Democratic Revolution

The CPI(M) had declared its resolve to struggle for People's Democracy as the central strategic objective in this existing stage.

"While adhering to the aim of building a socialist society, the Communist Party of India [-(Marxist)] taking into consideration the degree of economic development, the degree of the political-ideological maturity of the working class and its organisation, places before the people as the immediate objective the establishment of people's democracy based on the coalition of all genuine anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces headed by the working class"³⁷.

For this second stage of India's revolution i.e., People's Democratic Revolution (hereafter may be mentioned as PDF) the CPI(M) calls for "People's Democratic Front" which can "dislodge the bourgeois landlord Government headed by the big bourgeoisie"³⁸. It is the stage of people's democracy because after independence the bourgeoisie "does not carry forward the national democratic revolution to its completion. On the contrary ... as the social contradictions

intensify, it tends to compromise with imperialism and allies with domestic landlord reaction"³⁹. So the leadership of the working class can forge ahead the unfinished democratic revolution and to pass over to the final stage of socialist revolution.

So the CPI(M) holds,

"The nature of our revolution in the present stage of its development is essentially anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly and democratic"⁴⁰.

The basic tasks of the democratic revolution can not be completed except by waging decisive battle against the bourgeoisie and their political representatives in leading position inside the state. The People's Democratic Revolution is certainly based on its opposition to feudalism and imperialism. At the same time, however, it is also totally opposed to the big bourgeoisie (who are leading the state) and foreign monopoly capital⁴¹.

Aims

It aims at the

"... replacement of the present bourgeois-land-lord state and Government by a state of people's democracy, a government led by the working class on the basis of a firm worker-peasant alliance"⁴².

For specific two purposes mentioned there are two primary tasks. First, "the tasks of making such sweeping reforms in the social system, however, are inextricably bound up with the completion of agrarian revolution which in fact is the axis of the democratic revolution"⁴³.

Second,

"The second urgent task ... is the total eradication and summary expulsion of the foreign monopoly capital from our national economy ..."⁴⁴

At present the bourgeois-landlord government headed by the big bourgeoisie can not completely finish democratic revolution because the same will in turn hamper their own class interests. The monopoly and big bourgeoisie are, for their own class interests, increasingly collaborating with imperialist-finance capital for building India as a capitalist country. Regarding the 'monopoly bourgeoisie' and the 'big bourgeoisie' the programme seeks to mean, both are the categories of a same stratum. This view may be explicit from the statement of the programme of the CPI(M). "The present Indian state is the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords by the big bourgeoisie who are increasingly collaborating with the foreign finance capital ..."⁴⁵ Again on the same matter it reads "the bigger and monopoly section, after attainment of independence,

seeks to utilise its hold over the state power, ...
 [and] it is developing strong links with foreign monopolists and sharing power with landlords"⁴⁶. So the monopoly bourgeoisie constitute an apex part of the big bourgeoisie and both these sections are firmly opposed to the 'people's democratic front'. But the national bourgeoisie section is an active partner of People's democratic revolution. Again, the monopoly and big bourgeoisie are linked with foreign monopolists for financial and technological help. As the general market crisis of world capitalism deepens, the contradiction between foreign monopolists and them grows in all its intensity and the big bourgeoisie using its economic power and leading position in the state attempts to solve its crisis at the expense of its weak class-brethren in the country⁴⁷.

Again the feudal and semi-feudal interests are standing in the way of the development of the millions of peasantry and agricultural labourers and put them in perpetual poverty and bondage. So the people's democratic revolution is aimed at to wipe out these two most reactionary forces in this country.

Alliance of Class Forces

Forces for this People's Democratic Revolution are to be composed thus :

"The core and the basis of the people's democratic front is the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry"⁴⁸. The "middle peasants"⁴⁹, "rich peasants"⁵⁰, "urban as well as other middle classes",⁵¹ and the "national bourgeoisie"⁵² and a "unity of all patriotic and democratic forces"⁵³.

The programme of the CPI(M) declares that People's Democratic Front must rely mainly on the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry'. It is this alliance, indeed, that is the most powerful driving force of this stage of revolution. Not only this, it is the only force that can draw the other vacillating classes inside the front and stabilize them⁵⁴.

Again, the whole 'peasantry' is not a homogeneous class. Only the poor peasantry and the agricultural labourers are closely and firmly related with the working class. Seventy per cent of the rural population consist of these two sections, which are the worst exploited and, therefore, the nearest to the working class. The middle peasants, too, subjected, as they are, to intense exploitation at the hands of the usurers, the feudal elements the capitalist market and the capitalist landlords, become the reliable ally of the working class.

Regarding the rich peasants the party programme is somewhat critical because, it has been stated, it is they who have benefited the most under the land reform legislation

of the Congress Government. Their interests come into clash with those of the agricultural labourers; besides, they aim at becoming capitalist farmers. Even then, they are harassed by the government policies of price-increase and increase in taxation, as also by the ever-rising prices on industrial goods. Often they are not spared from the blows inflicted by the capitalist market and are compelled to oppose the governmental policies which help the monopolists and traders. It is, therefore, possible to bring this section, too, inside the front and retain it there.

A proper assessment of different strata inside the peasantry in respect of political importance shows that the main strength and support come from the agricultural labourers and poor peasantry. "This most oppressed and utterly pauperized section in the countryside is the closest to the working class"⁵⁵ in this struggle for People's Democratic Revolution.

Forces Opposed To

In people's Democratic Revolution, the CPI(M) programme has stated that the role of bourgeoisie is to be dealt with much caution which needs concrete understanding of their position and also the part played by them during the freedom movement and after. It stated -

"The Indian bourgeoisie as a class, coming as it is from an underdeveloped and newly liberated country as ours, has its conflicts and contradictions with imperialism and also with the feudal and semi-feudal agrarian order. But the bigger and monopoly section, after attainment of independence seeks to utilise its hold over the state power to resolve these conflicts and contradictions by compromise, pressure and bargain"⁵⁶.

The ruling bourgeoisie are not free from incapacibilities which are inherent in them because they have chosen "... to develop the country's economy on the line of capitalism ... [and this] capitalist path of development the Indian bourgeoisie has chosen in the period when the world capitalist system is fast disintegrating and has entered the third stage of the general crisis of capitalism"⁵⁷. The crisis of market is the stumbling-block before the Indian bourgeoisie in general and big and monopoly bourgeoisie in particular. Now what has been evident is that the dual character of the bourgeoisie since the years of freedom struggle (when mobilising the people against imperialism and compromising with imperialism) has taken a new shape after independence. Despite the growth of contradiction between imperialism and feudalism on the one hand and the people including the bourgeoisie on the other, the big bourgeoisie who head the present state of India do not decisively and fully oppose imperialism and feudalism. Rather -

"... it [the big bourgeoisie] seeks to utilise its hold over the state and the new opportunities to strengthen its position by attacking the people on the one hand and on the other, to resolve the conflicts and contradictions with imperialism and feudalism by pressure, bargain and compromise. In this process it is forging strong links with foreign monopolists and is sharing power with the landlords ... it [the big bourgeoisie] is anti-people and anti-Communists [sic] in character and is firmly opposed to the completion of the democratic, anti-imperialist tasks of the Indian revolution"⁵⁸.

Another statement from the 'Statement of Policy', a companion document of the CPI(M) party programme stated in this regard "The present party programme correctly characterising the present stage of Indian revolution as the second - agrarian - stage of the revolution which is directed not only against the landlords and imperialists but also against the Indian big bourgeoisie, has laid down that the big bourgeoisie has no place in the People's Democratic Front"⁵⁹.

Unhesitatingly the CPI(M)'s programme argued that the big bourgeoisie are the confirmed opponents of the democratic revolution because they are out to compromise with imperialism and feudalism. They have no place in this front, on the contrary they are the enemies of the front and it is against their state that the front has to fight its main battle⁶⁰.

The case of the national bourgeoisie, i.e., other than the big and monopoly bourgeoisie, has been dealt with in

the party programme. It is said,

"... the national bourgeoisie which are either having no links altogether with foreign monopolists or having no durable links, which are not by themselves monopolistic and suffer at their hands in a number of ways, are objectively interested in the accomplishment of the principal tasks of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution"⁶¹.

As for the section of the national bourgeoisie whose interests are not tied up with those of foreign monopoly capital and whose interests damaged by the monopolists, — their objective interests lie in completing the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution⁶².

"As the general crisis of the world capitalist system deepens, as the contradiction between foreign monopolists and them grows in all its intensity and as the big bourgeoisie using its economic power and leading position in the state attempts to solve its crisis at the expense of its weak class-brethren in country, this stratum of the bourgeoisie will be compelled to come into opposition with the state power and can find a place in the people's democratic front"⁶³.

As the general crisis of capitalism deepens, the contradictions between the foreign monopolists and these sections of the bourgeoisie will grow sharper. As the big bourgeoisie will try to pass the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of these sections, utilizing their

economic and political power for the purpose, these sections of the national bourgeoisie will have to stand up against the present régime and it will then be possible to find a place for them in the front.

Caution should be taken, the party programme stated, that national bourgeoisie "are still sharing state power along with the big bourgeoisie and entertain high hopes of advancing further under the same regime".⁶⁴ Though they are objectively progressive in character, due to their weak class position vis-a-vis Indian big and monopoly bourgeoisie and foreign imperialists, they exhibit instability and extreme vacillation between the imperialist and the big bourgeoisie on the one side and people's democratic front on the other. The party programme further indicates that,

"Owing to its dual nature, its participation in the revolution depends on a number of concrete conditions, on changes in the correlation of class forces, on the sharpness of the contradictions between imperialism, feudalism and the people on the depth of the contradictions between the bourgeois-landlord state led by the big bourgeoisie and the remaining sections of the national bourgeois class"⁶⁵.

So there are limitations of this national bourgeoisie in their participation in the People's Democratic revolution though they have contradictions with imperialism and big and monopoly capitalism.

Question of Leadership

On the question of leadership in the people's democratic front for people's Democratic Revolution the CPI(M)'s programme states—

"In the present era, the proletariat have to lead the democratic revolution as a necessary step in its forward march to the achievement of socialism. Hence it is not the old type of bourgeois - led democratic revolution but a new type of people's democratic revolution organised and led under the hegemony of the working class"⁶⁶.

The party programme unequivocally declares that the hegemony of the working class in the struggle for people's democratic revolution is the correct assessment for the present Indian condition.

Capitalist development in India is not of the type which took place in Western Europe and other advanced capitalist countries. Even though developing in the capitalist way Indian society still contains within itself strong elements of precapitalistic hang-overs. Unlike the advanced capitalist countries where capitalism grew over the ashes of pre-capitalist society, destroyed by the rising bourgeoisie, capitalism in India was superimposed on pre-capitalist society⁶⁷.

In India, the bourgeoisie and the landlords headed by the big bourgeoisie achieved power from the British

imperialists, and this ruling big bourgeoisie proceeded to develop the country's economy on the line of capitalism by making some sort of adjustment with feudalism and imperialism. Though there are contradictions among them, still they have no alternative but to swallow maladjustment with the imperialists and landlords because "... the capitalist path of development the Indian bourgeoisie has chosen when the world capitalist system is fast disintegrating and has entered the ... stage of general crisis of capitalism"⁶⁸.

The big bourgeoisie who occupy the leading position in the state resist and oppose the carrying out of radical and genuine agrarian reforms by abolishing feudal and semi-feudal relations in the vast countryside and also protect foreign monopoly capital and facilitate its further penetration unhindered. With their policies of compromise and collaboration with foreign monopolists and alliance with the landlord, they are vigorously pursuing the path of capitalist development which in turn is immensely facilitating the growth of monopoly capital in our country. So it is the duty to oppose feudal landlordism, foreign monopoly capitalism, big bourgeois rule and its policies of compromise and collaboration with foreign finance capital and alliance with native landlordism⁶⁹.

"It has thus fallen to the lot of the working class and its party to unite all the

progressive forces interested in destroying the precapitalist society and to consolidate the revolutionary forces within it so as to facilitate the most rapid completion of the democratic revolution and preparation of the ground for transition to socialism"⁷⁰.

So the immediate objective is the establishment of a people's democratic front "led by the working class on the basis of a firm worker peasant alliance"⁷¹ for the replacement of the present bourgeois landlord state and government. Among the peasantry the poor peasants and agricultural labourers constitute seventy per cent of the rural population the worst exploited and therefore the nearest to the working class in this front. These sections are the chief allies of the working class though the middle and the rich peasants, the urban middle class and intelligentsia and the national bourgeoisie are considered as the allied forces of this front.

Considering all the facts, working class hegemony and the people's democratic front is a historical necessity in this state of revolution. This has been further explained in the party programme, thus—

"The people's democratic front cannot successfully be built and the revolution cannot attain victory except under the leadership of the working class of India and its political party, the Communist Party of India [Marxist].

Historically no other class in modern society except the working class is destined to play this role and the entire experience of our time amply demonstrates this truth".⁷²

In the foregoing discussion on the question of leadership in the present phase of revolutionary movement, i.e., movement by the people's democratic front depends on the unquestionable hegemony of the working class with its closest ally the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers, and its broader alliance with the middle and rich peasants, middle class urban intelligentsia, national bourgeoisie and also the patriotic masses of India. In this manner the leadership question has been resolved in the programme of the CPI(M) for the people's democratic revolution.

Section 5 Means to be Pursued to Attain the Revolution :
CPI and CPI(M) 's Policy

Means of attaining their respective revolutions, namely, national democratic revolution for CPI and people's democratic revolution for CPI(M), are stated here side by side.

To the CPI, the national democratic revolution-

"... will be consolidated in the course of countrywide united mass movements, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, against the reactionary antipeople policies, simultaneously isolating

and defeating the forces of communalism and right reaction seeking to disrupt the same"⁷³.

The programme of the Communist Party of India has stated that it will strive to achieve the establishment of national democracy and create conditions for the advancement of the goal of socialism by peaceful means.

This peaceful means has been spelt out in this manner : By developing a powerful and stable majority in parliament, backed by such a movement, the working class and its allies will strive their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and transform parliament from an instrument serving the bourgeoisie into a genuine instrument of the people's will for effecting a fundamental transformation in the economic, social and state structure⁷⁴.

Though the programme is very clear about the peaceful means of organising mass movements and of winning the parliamentary battle for transition to national democratic stage, still a considerable amount of doubt seems to persist and this has made the party cautious as is apparent from the following statement :

"It needs to be always borne in mind that the ruling classes will not relinquish their power voluntarily. Experience shows that they defy the will of the people and seek to suppress it by lawless and violent methods. It is therefore necessary for the revolutionary forces to so orientate themselves and their work that they can

face up to all contingencies, to any twist and turns in the political life of the country"⁷⁵.

So it seems clear that in times of exigencies the revolutionary forces may have to face up the violent designs of the opponents with forces if necessary. For an ultimate analysis, the party and the NDF where the former is also a partner will lead the front even in the face of all sorts of extraparliamentary 'lawless and violent methods' of the enemies of the revolution.

To the CPI(M)-

"... it 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"⁷⁶.

CPI(M) in its party programme agrees to take the help of the existing advantages of parliamentary form of struggle combined with the extraparliamentary methods such as

organising mass movements for dislodging the present ruling classes and establishing a people's democratic state and government based on the firm alliance of the working class and peasantry with their allies. The significance of this peaceful means lies in that the party will obviously have to work out various interim slogans in order to meet the requirements of the rapidly changing political situation in the country. So it can participate in the parliament and in the state government. This active participation and sometime forming state governments will "... give great fillip to the revolutionary movement of the working people ... though not solve the economic and political problems of the nation in any fundamental manner ... such governments of a transitional character ... may give immediate relief to the people and thus strengthen the mass movement"⁷⁷ for the final take-over of power by dissolving the existing ruling classes.

Beside the peaceful means, the CPI(M) party programme makes the revolutionary forces cautious and vigilant against all sorts of untoward contingencies by the following words which are in term and essence same as the statement made by the CPI program.

"... it needs always to be borne in mind that the ruling classes never relinquish their power voluntarily. They seek to defy the will of the people and seek to reverse it by

lawlessness and violence. It is therefore necessary for the revolutionary forces to be vigilant and so orientate their work that they can face up to all contingencies, to any twist and turn in the political life of the country"⁸.

So it is spelt out there that the revolutionary forces will face up to all sorts of contingencies created by the existing ruling classes. Though the people's democratic front may follow the parliamentary means of struggle still the existing ruling classes may denounce that path and may refuse to relinquish the power voluntarily. Conscious worker peasant alliance by the working class with all its allies can play the active role in transforming the bourgeois --landlord state.

Section 6 Programme on Agrarian Question

So far this study centres round the basic proposition of the programmatic understanding of both the communist parties on the subjects namely, the class character of the Indian state, stages of revolution, forces helpful to and inimical to, and also the determination of leadership for leading the revolutionary movement to a success. Hereafter the study will delve into, on the basis of their respective understandings, two important subjects, namely, agrarian reforms and rural democracy dealt with in their respective party programmes.

CPI's Programme on Agrarian Reforms

The CPI stresses adequately the problem and importance of agriculture in its party programme, because-

"Agriculture constitutes the major sector of our national economy, accounting for 46.8 per cent of the national income. As such as 69.5 per cent of the total population derives its livelihood from agriculture ..."⁷⁹
 [Emphasis original].

From British rule when India got independence it was a backward and decaying agrarian system which, despite the growth of commodity production and money economy, that took place during the British regime, remained under the domination of feudal landlords and a variety of other semifeudal vested interests⁸⁰.

According to the CPI's programme, after independence in 1947, the ruling Indian bourgeoisie heads the government and leads the country's economy along the capitalist path.

"The national bourgeoisie having secured state power set itself the task of putting the country on the path of independent capitalist development"⁸¹.

This capitalist way of development needs reorganisation of agricultural sector of economy from the ditch of age-old backwardness under the shackles of feudal vested interests for growing industrial economic development for

steady supply of food and raw materials and also for free labour market and internal commodity market.

The Indian National Congress, i.e., the political wing of the national bourgeoisie inherited the government of independent India, its main aim has been examined in the party programme in the following manner :

"The main aim of Congress agrarian legislation has been to replace semi-feudal relations and forms of production in agriculture by capitalist relations and capitalist forms of production"⁸².

To pursue the general aim of capitalist path the national bourgeoisie has taken various legislative measures. The consequence of these measures has been as follows :

"(a) Feudal land relations have been curbed :

Statutory semifeudal landlordism has been abolished in the erstwhile zamindari areas. The major part of the area under cultivation is within the category of self-operated ownership holdings while the area under lease, which constituted the major area before land reform, is now confined to a small area. The curbing of the semifeudal land relations together with the independent capitalist development of the national economy has given an impetus to the growing commercialisation of agriculture, production

for the market and increasing replacement of tenants-at-will by wage labour.

(b) In spite of these changes, strong survival of semifeudal land relations continue to prevail.

(c) Capitalist relations of production has made significant inroads into the agrarian set-up.

(d) Interpenetration of the strong survivals of feudalism and growing capitalist relations of production are the dominant characters of socio-economic life in India's countryside.

Concentration of land in a few hands (10 per cent of the agricultural families possessing 58 per cent of land under cultivation) is a peculiar product of this interpenetration. Land so concentrated is partly cultivated by wage labour with improved techniques and partly sublet in disguised form. The majority of the tillers of the soil are without any landownership (agricultural workers and sharecroppers, etc.).

(e) The economy of the bulk of the self-cultivating peasantry has not improved ... on account of the continuation of semifeudal burdens and the exploitation of the producers through the market.

(f) The number of agricultural labourers has grown as a result of mass evictions in the course of the agrarian reforms ... and the general impoverishment of the peasantry.

(g) The survivals of semifeudal modes of exploitation combined with the growth of commercialisation of agriculture have produced a new set of reactionary vested interests. Landlords, usurers and wholesale dealers often combined in the same person, constitute the modern parasites, holding up the progress of agriculture and supporting right reaction.

... ..

The stronghold of commercial and financial interests over the rural market during the last several years has been tightened enormously. The price mechanism and market manipulations deprive the peasants of whatever little benefits they secure on account of land reform and technological development. The peasant is fleeced by commercial capital, both as a producer and as a consumer"⁸³.

It is evident from the above discussion on the consequence of the agrarian policies of the Congress rule, that the programme of CPI holds the view that agricultural sector is in the process of significant change from feudal landlordism to the capitalist direction. Changing agrarian relations under the Congress rule have substantially curbed

feudal vested interests through various legislative measures. These have gone hand-in-hand with conscious efforts to develop and foster a class of rich peasants and capitalist landlords who could become the backbone of the new capitalist agrarian set up. These rich peasants are helped considerably to grow more production, to adopt modern techniques, to grow cash crops as raw materials for industries and to build and to sustain credit institutions, etc.⁸⁴.

Again the major part of the area under cultivation is within the category of self-operated ownership holdings, while the area under lease, which constituted the major area before land reform, is now confined to a small area. The curbing of the semifeudal land relations together with the independent capitalist development of the national economy has given an impetus to the growing commercialisation of agriculture, production for the market and replacement of tenants-at-will by wage labour. Thereby capitalist relations of production have made significant inroads into the agrarian set up. These are regarded as the cardinal changes brought about by the policies of the Indian National Congress after independence⁸⁵.

But there are some inherent limitations in the capitalist path of development in agricultural sector by the national bourgeoisie. It is due to the contradictions of the capitalist path of development. Independent

capitalist path of development is apparently and basically opposed to the interests of imperialism and feudalism. Independent capitalist path of India's national bourgeoisie is opposed to the imperialist interest mainly on grounds that the national bourgeoisie opted for "economic independence and establishment of basic industries"⁸⁶. It wants to "mobilise capital resources and to expand the internal market"⁸⁷. Since this is against the interests of the feudal elements, the national bourgeoisie is against feudalism. At the same time, the CPI programme seeks to show that it is inevitable for the national bourgeoisie to "rely heavily on foreign monopoly capital"⁸⁸ and internally to compromise with "feudal landlords"⁸⁹. A contradiction within a contradiction, that is, the growth of "monopoly groups in the ranks of the Indian bourgeoisie"⁹⁰ by the end of Second World War and "concentration of capital and economic power in the hands of a few big monopolists"⁹¹ has come into conflict with the vital interest of the people and has harmed the interest of broad sections of the national bourgeoisie.

In spite of contradictions with the foreign monopoly capital and feudal interests, the ruling national bourgeoisie are obliged to go hand-in-hand with both of them. So the agrarian policy and approach to agrarian relations have resulted in a retention of strong survivals of semifeudal relations. Sharecropping, concealed leasing, and

concentration of land in a few hands are glaring features which exist with the growing capitalist relations of production as interpenetration or interpolation of both the factors. For example, the programme clearly cited,

"Concentration of land in a few hands (10 per cent of agricultural families possessing 58 per cent of land under cultivation) is a peculiar product of this interpenetration. Land so concentrated is partly cultivated by wage labour with improved techniques and partly sublet in disguised form"⁹².

Dichotomous policy in agrarian sector of the ruling bourgeoisie is explicit, because it pursued the aim of fostering capitalism in the country-side, not on the basis of an all-out offensive against the semifeudal vested interests but through a process of compromise with and concession to them. The Congress agrarian reforms did not bring about a radical transformation of the agrarian set-up in the interests of the mass of the peasantry. The main productive force in agriculture, the toiling peasant, was not set free from multifarious forms of semifeudal exploitation and he lives in abject poverty. A tremendous eviction offensive was launched against the peasantry in the name of resumption of lands by landlords for the purpose of self cultivation. On the other side, the huge compensation to landlords was thrust upon the peasantry. Subletting and share-cropping continue as classic examples of semifeudal exploitation. Moreover ceiling laws made by the Congress

government were reduced to a total farce⁹³.

The dominant character of socio-economic life in India's countryside is the inter-penetration of strong survivals of feudalism and growing capitalist relations of production. The survival of semifeudal modes of exploitation combined with the growth of the commercialisation of agriculture has produced a new set of reactionary vested interests. Landlords, usurers and wholesale dealers, often combined in the same person, constitute the modern parasites holding up the progress of agriculture and supporting right reaction. So it is said by the CPI in defining the class character of the Indian State that the national bourgeois "class rule has strong links with the landlords"⁹⁴ it also gives rise to reactionary pulls on the state power.

It should be noted that the stronghold of commercial and financial interests over the rural markets during the last several years has been tightened enormously. The price mechanism and market manipulation, sharp fluctuations in price and the fleecing of the bulk of the peasants both as producer and consumer also act as strong depressors of agricultural production⁹⁵.

The combined result of all these policies for the agrarian sector has been a very slow rate of growth in agricultural production. Besides, vagaries of the monsoon,

basic dependence on destiny still persist in this sector. Although, side by side, some irrigation projects and the programme like 'green revolution' have been launched to tackle the situation in pursuance of the capitalist path of development with an odd admixture of semifeudal production relation. All these have led to the accentuation of inequality in the agrarian sector. The CPI's programme summed up the conditions of agriculture during the Congress rule, thus,

"No wonder that in the totality the gains of agrarian legislation under Congress rule have been partial and limited, being confined mainly to the upper strata of the rural population, while a large section of the toiling peasantry still lives in conditions of gross poverty and subject to multifarious forms of semifeudal exploitation"⁹⁶.

So the solution of the agrarian problem, according to the CPI, is of utmost importance for the national regeneration of India. Without a radical agrarian reform and a conscious movement to increase productivity in agriculture, it is impossible to solve the food problem and accelerate the economic growth of the country. Hence a clear break has to be made with the past by recognising the vast agricultural sector⁹⁷. In order to achieve this aim the following measures must be carried out in this moment.

"First, elimination of all feudal and semifeudal survivals by breaking the

concentration of land through the imposition of real ceilings and the distribution of surplus land to the landless and land-hungry peasants;

Second, abundant state aid to the peasants for (a) expanding producers' and consumers' cooperatives, and for (b) using modern technique for the speedy development of production;

Third, nationalisation of banks⁹⁸ and other credit Institutions to ensure the supply of cheap long-term credit to the tillers;

Fourth, nationalisation of whole-sale trade in agricultural produce and the introduction of supply of price-support to ensure stable and remunerative prices for the peasant producers and the supply of all essential commodities to them at fair price; state trading in food-grains by taking over the whole-sale trade;

Fifth, adequate living wage to the agricultural workers⁹⁹.

It further pledged that it will bend all its energies for bringing about these radical transformations in the agrarian life of the country. Basing itself on agricultural labourers and poor peasantry the CPI claims to follow the policy of uniting all sections of the peasantry in their struggles, in putting the toiling millions of the countryside on the road to a new life of prosperity and freedom¹⁰⁰.

For agrarian reform in this present context of India, CPI thinks National Democratic Revolution is the only solution. The central slogan of this stage is for the National Democratic Revolution which aims to "... implement the Programme of National development in a non-capitalist way,

i.e. eliminating foreign monopoly, breaking Indian monopoly combines, carrying through agrarian reform, extending democracy to ensure the active participation of the working class in the economic and political life of the country. In this process the balance continuously shifts in favour of the working class and the worker-peasant alliance, paving the way for the leadership of the working class in the state, thereby creating the conditions for transition to socialism¹⁰¹ [emphasis added].

The central slogan will be raised by the National Democratic Front for replacement of the Congress by the forces composed of anti-imperialist, antifeudal and anti-monopoly classes by a government of national democracy determined to direct the country's development along the non-capitalist path¹⁰².

This National Democratic Front will be composed of working class, national bourgeoisie urban and rural intelligentsia and also "the broad masses of the cultivating peasants, including the rich peasants and the agricultural labourers. The completion of the radical agrarian reforms in the interest of the peasantry, as well as other democratic reforms given in the program, will unshackle the productive forces of the cultivating peasantry and enable fuller employment of the labour power of the landless peasants and agricultural workers, ensuring steady rise of

agricultural production and of the living standards of the rural masses"¹⁰³.

After successful launching of National Democratic Revolution by the National Democratic Front a National Democratic Government will emerge to implement some specific programmes including the following agrarian programme.

According to the CPI,

"The national democratic government will take the following effective measures for the radical reorganisation of agrarian economy and the solution of peasant problems :

a) Concentration of land will be broken by abolishing all forms of landlordism, by imposing effective ceilings on landholdings and by distributing surplus land to agricultural labourers and poor peasants free of cost. The interests of the small landholders will be fully protected.

b) All types of fallow land, other than those required for common village purposes, in the hands of the state will be distributed to agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Long-term development loans will be advanced for the reclamation of fallow land.

c) All land reform measures will be implemented with the help of popular committees composed of accredited

representatives of peasants and agricultural labourers. Financial and technical aid will be distributed similarly.

d) The still remaining unpaid portion of compensation to big zamindars and jagirdars will be stopped.

All progressive debts which the peasants and agricultural labourers owe to the landlords and usurers will be cancelled.

e) The present iniquitous system of land revenue shall be abolished and a new system of graded land tax based on income shall be introduced, exempting all uneconomic holdings from taxation.

f) All facilities will be provided to the cultivators of land so as to encourage them to produce enough food for people and raw materials for industries.

Multipurpose cooperatives shall be organised which will provide cheap credit, seed, manure, pesticides, etc. to the peasants, and remunerative prices assured for their products. Care shall be taken to prevent these cooperatives [from] becoming the instruments for the enrichment of the rich peasants and landlords.

Cheap irrigation facilities will be provided through the construction of irrigation dams and through providing cheap electricity on a wide scale.

Agro-industries and cold storages for the processing and preservation of such food products as milk, fruit, eggs, fish, potatoes, etc. will be started so that the income of cultivators is increased through these subsidiary occupations.

The cultivators will be assured of remunerative prices for their products.

g) Adequate wages and living conditions will be ensured to the agricultural labourers.

Wage Boards will be set up with representatives of agricultural labourers in order to implement relevant laws and settle disputes.

They will be encouraged and helped to set up, with necessary state aid, cooperative farming societies vested with government land.

They will be provided with free house sites and financial help to build houses.

The problem of under-employment of the agricultural labourers will be solved by starting rural industries and providing them with alternative jobs in the off-seasons.

h) State farms run on mechanized and modern lines like the Suratgarh farm in Rajasthan will be started where vast

tracts of land are available as models to the cultivators on how modern collective agriculture will increase income while reducing the load of hard labour from the backs of the cultivators.

The cultivators will be encouraged to form cooperative farming societies on a voluntary basis and carry on cultivation through the aid of machinery and other modern methods.

Effective measures of flood control will be undertaken"¹⁰⁴.

This is the agrarian programme of the CPI. The CPI places this agrarian programme with other programmes before the people of India and sets forth the principal urgent tasks of the day in order that the people have a clear picture of the objective of national democratic revolution they are fighting for.

In fine, the CPI's programme declares that this programme is "... a correct guide and a reliable compass for charting the revolutionary course to the victory of the national democratic front and the establishment of national democracy"¹⁰⁵ for the present stage and which will advance to the desired goal of socialism in near future.

CPI(M)'s Programme on Agrarian Reforms

The programme of the CPI(M) characterises the present stage of India's revolution as the second stage (agrarian)¹⁰⁶ which was to be directed against the landlords, imperialists and bourgeoisie headed by the big bourgeoisie. The first stage of Indian revolution according to the CPI(M) was the stage of general national united front directed against foreign imperialist rule which came to an end on 15th August 1947. The power was transferred to the Congress Party, the party of the bourgeoisie and landlords. Thus the programme states,

"The second stage of the Indian revolution demanded ... the complete abolition of feudal and semifeudal landlordism and the distribution of land to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants gratis ... Abolition of landlordism and a thorough-going agrarian revolution would have at once shattered the age-old shackles on our agricultural production, and enable it to take a major forward stride ..."¹⁰⁷

The second stage of India's revolution, according to CPI(M), is People's Democratic Revolution, in which abolition of feudal and semi-feudal landlordism is mainly to be accomplished. Because of the prevalence of precapitalist production relations in the vast agrarian sector India can not march forward to the desired goal of socialist revolution. So CPI(M) considers that this People's Democratic stage of revolution will do away with all the

legacies of pre-capitalist agrarian system and will prepare the peasantry and agricultural labourers to have a major stride along with all strata of working people towards the third stage of revolution, i.e., socialism.

The CPI(M) programme assessed the agrarian policies of the Congress Government i.e., landlord bourgeois government to conclude that several decades of its rule and a number of legislations have been adopted for the agrarian sector but these do not make any considerable change in the plight of the vast peasant and agricultural labourer sections. Following is the balance-sheet of the agrarian policies of the Congress government, according to the CPI(M), that after independence, the -

"... Congress rule with all its multitude of agrarian reform laws, land concentration remains intact and five per cent of the top households in the rural side possess as much as 37.29 per cent of the total land under cultivation whereas 70 per cent of the peasant families hardly possess 20 per cent of the land.

... ..

Moreover, with the present agrarian relations over a thousand crores of rupees find their way annually into the hands of the landlords and moneylenders by way of rent and interest which again is used not for productive purposes but for speculative trading and usurious money lending"¹⁰⁸.

If this monopoly of land is broken up and is distributed to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants and if this heavy debt burdens are abolished which are

pre-requisites for releasing the creative energy and labour enthusiasm of the millions of peasants, then these alone can form the foundation for a tremendous expansion of agricultural production and solve the problem of capital in agriculture.

The CPI(M) pointed to another aspect of the bourgeois-landlord government's agrarian policies in the following manner :

"The abolition of princely feudal states was carried out with the assurance of paying ... of several crores of rupees annually¹⁰⁹... The legislative measures for abolishing intermediaries such as zamindars, jagirdars, inamdars, etc., deliberately permits them to retain big landed estates ... and guarantee colossal amounts of compensation to be paid to them"¹¹⁰.

As a result, abolition of these intermediaries has not been followed by a free and automatic transfer of property rights to the actual peasants, rather colossal burden of compensation has been loaded on them. So the plight of the tenants has had no change.

"The tenancy laws enacted for the ryotwari areas provided first and foremost for the so-called right of resumption of land under the pretext of self-cultivating tenants ... with large number of loopholes deliberately left in the legislations on the one hand and their implementation by bureaucratic authorities dominated by the landlord element ..."¹¹¹.

Naturally, these have led to the eviction and uprooting of millions of cultivating tenants and throwing them

into the ranks of pauperised peasants and agricultural labourers. Again,

"Coming to the much-talked of legislations regarding ceiling on land holdings, these acts have been so framed as to enable the big landholders either to preserve their holdings untouched or to merily split them up through fictitious partition among their family members in such a manner as to make the ceiling law inapplicable to them. ... No wonder ... very little land has been acquired by applying these laws for distribution among the toiling peasantry"¹¹².

In order to increase agricultural production the Congress government enacted another law and wherever it is implemented it bore a very painful result to the poor peasants. The programme cited this, as following :

"Consolidation of land-holding is another measure which seeks to increase agricultural production ... Wherever it is implemented, the major gains have gone to the richer strata of land owning classes. They have been enabled to manoeuver and secure the best available lands and the best sites at the expense of the poor and middle peasants"¹¹³.

Again, land for distribution to the tiller of the soil is the law of the statute book, rather vested and surplus land and cultivable waste land has either been acquired by the influential persons on the landlords who imposed heavy taxes or levies collected from the cultivating peasants.

"Millions of acres of such lands are found in several states. Here again, several influential landlords in different states occupy them, depriving the deserving peasant from cultivating these lands. Wherever

the poor peasant doggedly stick [sic] on to the cultivation of these waste lands ... heavy penalties are levied and collected from them year after year"¹¹⁴.

The programme further referred to the plight of the agricultural labourers, who with either no land or with a small piece of land and whose main livelihood is derived from selling of their labour power, now are the single biggest section in the countryside.

"Thanks to the agrarian and other policies of the government their ranks have been swelled with millions of evicted tenants, ruined peasants and uprooted artisans. On all-India scale they form 30 to 35 per cent ... of the peasant households in our rural areas"¹¹⁵.

Their type of work has been assessed.

"From amongst them, thousands work as farm servants under landlords and rich peasants on annual basis ... [and] practically nothing effective has been done as far to improve their living conditions and protect them from the brutal exploitation of the landlords"¹¹⁶.
(emphasis added)

It is clear from the above quotations that the farm labourers are in direct feudal and semifeudal bondage. The programme further mentioned that other portions of the agricultural labourers are seasonally employed or under-employed and their scale of wages and other conditions of work prescribed from time to time by the ruling Congress

government and the wages actually paid are lower than with what a human being can barely lead his life. With much concern the programme states,

"without a radical change in their living conditions, it is unthinkable to change the face of our degraded rural life and unleash the productive forces in the agrarian sector"¹¹⁷.

The agricultural labourers are the worst exploited masses in India's countryside. They are employed somewhere as bonded servant and somewhere else as seasonally employed worker having no prospect of life under the bourgeois-landlord government.

The party takes note of some economic measures which have been taken in the avowed name of upliftment of the general rural people, but notes that actually all these measures in the ultimate analysis have helped and strengthened only the hands of the landlords and the rich peasants who formed the base of ruling class in the rural area. Measures of this kind are community development project, panchayat raj, extension schemes, etc.

"The bulk of the expenditure ... flows into the pocket of landlords and rich peasants. Large sums are advanced to them as taccavi loans. Special agricultural loans are granted to them for the purchase of tractors, pump-sets, oil-engines and for sinking tube wells. It is they who grab the lion's share of

the chemical manures and good quality seeds distributed by the government"¹¹⁸.

The outcome of these measures are absorbed by the landlords and the rich peasants due to their position of greatest strength in the village governance. Their influence on bureaucratic administration make them develop themselves and deprive the lower strata.

The condition and impact of money market which is entering into the rural areas aggravate, as a result,

"The peasant is fleeced both as a seller of agricultural produce and as a purchaser of industrial goods"¹¹⁹.

The rapid expansion of money economy in the rural areas helps forward trading and speculative hoarding of food grains and other agricultural commodities. Bank credits help the trading interests over agricultural produce in the hands of Indian and foreign monopolistic market which intensify the exploitation of the lower strata of the peasants because the latter are bound to sell their produce as distress sellers for purchasing industrial goods.

Moreover, cooperative credits, government loan, bank credit though not sufficient to boost agricultural production are absorbed by the landlords and rich peasants and also by the trading interests in turn adversely affecting poor peasants from whose hands land therefore passes out. The poor peasants are bound to take loan from the usurious

money-lenders whose rate of interest doubles the principal within a year and the loan trap is the worst of its kind running through generations reducing the peasants to a pauperised peasantry or to agricultural labourers. It can be placed thus categorically for better understanding :

- 1) Public Credit System : The existing government has initiated some schemes and projects although these are not sufficient, capital investment which can be termed as public credit through bank, cooperatives, panchayat, bloc panchayat samities and zila parishad. But these credits only help to extent and consolidate the rich peasants' and landlords' base of the ruling class in the rural side because they are directly administering the affairs of the ruling government; hence they are utilising these opportunities of monopolising the agricultural credits. Consistent with its class policies, the government has been giving the richer section of the peasants and landholders direct financial, technical and other aids almost to the exclusion of the lower strata of cultivators.
- 2) Public credit available to peasants is totally insufficient; again these insufficient credit is being monopolised by a handful of big landholders. So in the ultimate analysis poor peasants have no opportunity but to borrow usurious capital from the moneylenders, whose rate of interest doubles the principal within a year, and loan trap.

is the worst of its kind running through generations.

3) Dearth of public credit helps credit from usurious capital to spread its loan trap as an irremovable burden on the heads of the poor peasants. Due to the intensification of exploitation of the peasants through unequal exchange and violent fluctuations of price the peasant is fleeced both as a seller of agricultural produce and as a purchaser of industrial goods. Again, distress sale of the agricultural produce by the poor peasants brings price of the commodity down and is also the cause of peasants being pauperised. This compels, in the ultimate analysis, land-transfer from poor peasants to the upper sections of the peasantry.

4) For more production in agriculture in solving food problem and steady supply of raw materials for industries it is imperative to invest more capital in agriculture, but dearth of public credit investment leads to stagnation of agricultural production.

The programme states,

"This dearth of credit is leading not only to deterioration in agricultural production, but also to the passing of land out of the hands of the poor peasants. Government has consistently refused to scale down the burden of rural indebtedness"¹²⁰.

All these steps which are surely against the interests of the peasantry particularly the poor peasants and

agricultural labourers, culminate into bankruptcy of agrarian policies.

"The bankruptcy of these agrarian policies is revealed in the failure to solve the chronic food crisis ... The result has been that India continues to import heavily from the USA under PL 480 food grains and raw materials"¹²¹.

The programme of the CPI(M) takes a serious note of the agrarian policy of the ruling government which is responsible for shortage of food-grain in the country. Though India has a great potentiality for food production and there is a high degree of agrarian development possible in view of the vast area of cultivable land and irrigation potentials, besides, adequate forces of agricultural peasants and labourers, still the country hinges on perennial food crisis.

The CPI(M) in its party programme has assessed the agrarian policies of the existing ruling bourgeois-landlord government with an utter dissatisfaction. It states,

"In no field is the utter failure of the bourgeois-landlord government's policies so markedly revealed as in the case of agrarian question ... Congress rule has proved ... 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 the feudal land lords into capitalist landlords and develop a stratum of rich peasants"¹²².

Agrarian policies of the Congress government are not intended to smash the feudal and semi-feudal interests because the very landlords are also sharing the state power with the bourgeoisie as a whole but led by the big bourgeoisie. So it is not possible for this government to wage an all-out confrontation with the feudal landlords but to compromise; and for its contradiction with feudalism the bourgeoisie is wooing the rich peasants as its future alternative base in the rural economy. However, the rich peasants are now not so very strong as to be able to avoid the landlord interest. So any governmental decision of the existing government will never considerably jeopardise the interest of its power partner i.e. the landlord when no effective alternative support-base is built in this vacuum. The present government of India has its own contradiction. It is due to the fact of the share of power between the bourgeoisie and the landlords. Their respective nature, aims and ambitions are quite different. The bourgeoisie has an objective interest in spreading capitalist economy in the countryside by reorganising rural economy and mechanisation of cultivation. Obviously these measures are opposed to the interest of the feudal landlords. The feudal landlords like to see that they are fully allowed to mop up all surplus in the sphere of agriculture. This tussle is being continued at the cost of rural populace. The existing bourgeoisie, particularly the big bourgeoisie, which is

leading the Indian state, according to the CPI(M) programme, has consistently pursuing the policy of keeping peasants and agricultural labourers under the heaviest pressure of exploitation and oppression and at the same time has been inducing the feudal landlords to grow into capitalist landlords. In this policy the bourgeoisie hopes to succeed only by creating in the countryside a section of rich peasantry who would eagerly pursue capitalist agricultural enterprises and extend support to the government in the implementation of its policies. The CPI(M)'s programme refers to the dichotomous nature of the class which shows its instability in the pursuit of any democratic agrarian reform or in developing capitalism by overthrowing the feudal elements which are the historical obstacles to such revolution. So the programme mentions :

"They [Congress rulers] want to depend upon the landlord and rich peasant section to produce the surplus of agricultural products to meet the requirements of capitalist development. They also want to make these sections the main political base of the ruling class in the countryside"¹²⁹. [Emphasis added].

The fact is that the Indian bourgeoisie is not capable of transforming the total agrarian sector from feudal and semi-feudal strangleholds to capitalist relations of production. On the contrary, they have desperately built an alliance by sharing of power with the landlords for maintaining the status quo. So any radical land reforms are actually impossible for them to pursue. Only whatever

they aim at is to check any popular peasant movement which is initiated to fight the vested interest in Indian agriculture. For example, various land reform acts have enabled the landlords to divide their large estates among their close relations; sometime they sell a little portion of their estate and the remaining part is directly managed to cultivate by employing annually or perennially bonded labourers (servants), sometime employing hired labourers and by use of some mechanised appliances.

The rural economy is under the direct grip of landlords and rich peasants and also moneylenders because their ownership of maximum highest quality of land and its produce make them the reliable pillars of the pro-establishment sections in the countryside. The CPI(M) programme indicated that this unholy alliance of the bourgeoisie and the landlords and rich peasants stand against the interest of the agricultural labourers and poor peasantry.

The result is that the Congress rule since independence is guided to consolidate its hegemony over the political and economic affairs of the state. The agricultural economy remains under the power pressure of the landlords and rich peasants who constitute the power pillar of the ruling class in the countryside. So this rule can not develop agriculture to provide the country with adequate food and raw materials, and it can not afford to develop the national

industries and industrialise in a big way because the peasantry is unable to buy even a minimum quantity of manufactured goods.

For these faulty policies pursued in the agrarian sector the hundreds of thousands of hungry people forced by poverty to leave the countryside for towns swarm the labour-market and increase the number of unemployed and they lead their lives in an abject poverty. This culminates in moral degradation and cultural backwardness of the poor sections of the people in the country as a whole and they are being left behind from the privileged few. These sections of India's population are bound to seek their livelihood by following ignominious ways and some time in organised ways (violence such as, dacoity, robbery etc.) which are treated by the existing government as law and order problem from its view-point and without mitigating the problem at the root¹²⁴.

The condition of the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers and artisans during the last few decades of Congress rule is becoming bad to worse, because the bourgeois-landlord government has been practising all these years since independence a systematic denial of the legitimate rights of the people and a policy of letting the exploiting classes to flourish at the expense of the toiling millions of the country. In spite of the limited growth in production both

in agriculture and in industry the condition of the poorer sections - namely, the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers and workers has not been improved by any standard from their earlier position; besides, most of the increasing wealth has been concentrated in the hands of the patrons and partners of the existing bourgeois-landlord government under Congress rule. The condition of the whole peasantry during the existing Congress rule has been portrayed in the programme as :-

"Millions of our peasantry live in abject poverty and backwardness. Three-fourths of the peasantry have practically no land of their own and many millions live as paupers. The plunder of the peasantry through exorbitant rents and interests, through high taxes and manipulations of the capitalist market continues. Agricultural labourers and poor peasants have to work without any subsistence wage for the family. Want of employment, hunger indebtedness and destitution - in short, the ruination of our peasantry is what we see in the countryside today"¹²⁵.

Considering these facts the CPI(M)'s programme has given priority to the agrarian question; it is also vividly clear from another statement.

"Thus the agricultural and peasant problems are of primary importance to the life of our country and stand as the foremost national question"¹²⁶.

This stage of revolution is considered as the 'people's democratic revolution' which is specifically

directed to the agrarian revolution for changing the existing mode of production in agriculture which affects the life of major portions of India's population. Especially the 'people's democratic revolution' will perform two fundamental tasks in the sphere of economy. The first and foremost is the task of carrying out radical agrarian reforms in the interest of the peasantry so as to sweep away all the remnants of feudal and semifeudal fetters on production relations in agriculture. The second urgent task of the 'people's democratic revolution' is the total eradication and summary expulsion of foreign monopoly capital from the national economy and thus free the economic, political and social life of the people from all its disastrous influences¹²⁷.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that 'people's democratic revolution' is the pre-condition of any effective change in the agrarian system. And in that revolution the poor peasantry and the agricultural labourers come eagerly to the forefront to cooperate with the working class-led-movement, where the middle and rich peasants, the intelligentsia and also the national bourgeoisie will take part¹²⁸.

The demand of the time is stated to be the call for setting up a wide-ranging 'people's democratic front' under the guidance of the working class with the poor

peasantry and agricultural labourers as its closest ally against the policies of the bourgeois-landlord state so that monopoly capital may be uprooted and the feudal and semi-feudal fetters on agriculture may be smashed. The Programme claims that it correctly reads the minds of the people that disillusionment of and discontent with the policies and attempts of the bourgeois - landlord government grow rapidly. Material condition itself teaches them that there is no hope of emancipation from backwardness, poverty, hunger and exploitation under this government. It claims this awakening is seen in the growing attraction to the ideas of democracy and socialism among the toiling masses¹²⁹. Faced with this understanding the Communist Party of India (Marxist) feels, it is the duty to place before the people of India some practical tasks and programme as the only correct way out of the deadlock which they have been forced by the present bourgeois-landlord government¹³⁰.

In order to find a way out of the deadlock the 'people's democratic revolution' is a must. After the successful launching of 'people's democratic revolution' by the 'people's democratic front' the 'people's democratic government' will take place by replacing the bourgeois-landlord state. The working class constitutes the head of this government with a broad alliance with other sections which are mainly composed of the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers. Some other sections of the peasantry, the intelligentsia and the

national bourgeoisie are also expected to be partners of the people's democratic front. The people's democratic front is expected to adopt the following agrarian policies, which were earlier hindered by the bourgeois-landlord government. Following are the agrarian policies of the 'people's democratic government' :

"In the field of agriculture and the peasant problem :

- 1) Abolish landlordism without compensation and give land gratis to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants.
- 2) Cancel debts of peasants, agricultural labourers and small artisans to money lenders and landlords.
- 3) Ensure long-term and cheap credit for the peasants and artisans and fair prices for agricultural produce, assist the peasants to improve methods of farming by the use of improved seeds and modern implements and technique.
- 4) Provide guaranteed irrigation facilities.
- 5) Ensure adequate wages and living conditions to agricultural labourers.
- 6) Encourage cooperatives of peasants and artisans on a voluntary basis for farming and for agricultural services and other purposes¹³¹.

During the pre-split period the Communist Party of India had adopted at the All India Party Conference in October 1951 a 'Statement of Policy'. The CPI(M) reiterated this Statement of Policy at its Eighth Congress. In this Statement the policy of agrarian movement and leadership question of the movement and the role of the working class had been outlined in the following way :

"The working class, relying on agricultural workers and poor peasants, in firm alliance with the peasantry, together with the whole people, leads the battles in towns and rural areas to liberation, to land and bread, to work and peace". It further stated, "The leadership of the working class is not realised only through the party and its leadership of the peasant struggle but actually, in deeds, through the working class boldly championing the demands of the peasantry and coming to the assistance of the peasant struggles through its own action. The alliance must function in deed and fact, and not only in theory. The working class is the friend in action, that must help the fighting peasants and must ensure victory of the common enemy"¹³².

This comprehensive programme, of the 'people's democratic government' in agrarian section for the peasantry and agricultural labourers will herald the total banishment of feudal and semi-feudal land relations, concentration of land in a few hands, speculative trading of agricultural produce and fleecing out of the poor peasantry both as a producer and as a consumer by the capitalist market mechanism, usurious money lending, uncertainty in the life of the poor peasants, agricultural labourers and artisans. On the basis of a government led by the working class with a firm worker-peasant alliance and in solving the unfinished basic democratic tasks in this second stage of the Indian revolution,

it will pave the way for putting the country on the road towards socialism. The programmes of the 'people's democratic government' including the agrarian programme are the pre-requisites to the building of socialism-the desired goal. The 'people's democratic revolution' is meant for the abolition of the present agrarian relations of production. So 'people's democratic revolution' is synonymous to agrarian revolution. The agrarian revolution in this sense seeks to abolish feudal and semi-feudal land relations and also the concentration of land in few hands. The CPI(M) considers this stage of agrarian revolution as the most urgent and immediate task in the march of the country on to the socialist revolution.

Section 7

Programme on the Rural Democracy

Besides the radical agrarian reform in the democratic stage of revolution, the rural democracy or self-government as another important task of this stage which has been considered by both the communist parties of India seriously according to their respective line of thinking. However, these two tasks are corollaries, one without the other cannot be successful, because they together constitute the base and superstructure according to the Marxian sense. The concept of self government or rural democracy serves as the superstructure. The subject of 'rural democracy'

i.e., the democratic organisation of rural life is important in the views, policy formulation as well as policy persuasion of both the communist parties of India. Both these parties consider the vast sections of people residing in the rural areas as they have so far been subjected to the oppressions of the stronger sections or the upper-strata namely, landlords, rich peasants and bureaucratic circle of rural areas who constitute a minority among the rural people. The communist parties are keen to remodel the existing power structure of the rural area. They consider it necessary to ensure a thorough change of the oppressive instrument in the hands of the vested interests. They want instead a democratic institution which will serve the interest of the vast weaker sections and protect their interest vigilantly in any circumstances. Both the parties are dissatisfied with the existing policies of the ruling government in matters relating to rural democracy or self-government of the rural people. For them, basically, there is no change in the rural power structure which may be said to have extended the democratic content in rural government in India at all since independence. Both the communist parties deal with this subject very carefully in their respective party programmes. They have suggested measures in their own line of thinking so that these measures could improve the position of the lowest strata of village population, namely, the poor peasantry and the agricultural

labourers. These measures are not only to improve the economic position of these vast sections of the lowest strata but also to strengthen their role in finding a solution for India's basic economic weaknesses, such as, backwardness of the economy, lack of adequate industrialization, the problem of stagnant agriculture, the problem of food supply, the problem of poverty among the masses, etc. Thus the two parties project their respective democratic revolutions as having a pivotal relevance to the question of rural democracy. They consider that any measures which fail to release the initiative and vigour of the vastly large lower strata of village population, cannot also help solving the basic economic problem of the country.

Section 7.1

CPI's Programme on Rural Democracy

In the programme of the CPI, the question of rural democracy is treated very carefully. The following is the assessment of the CPI on the existing Indian condition under the Congress rule.

"Local organs of self-government which are supposed to draw the masses into direct administration of local affairs and development and thereby provide a democratic correction to bureaucratic centralization and which can be utilised to a certain extent in favour of the people by forging

broad democratic unity, are themselves made subject to the dictates of high officials with their control over revenues, advances and loans for the work of the panchayats and their constructive activities"¹³³.

Local organs of self-government are thus subjected to the domination of the agents of the ruling class in the countryside. Bureaucrats who are by nature elites or who become elites in course of time tend to act for the vested interests because they mostly come from the middle and upper strata of the rural and urban population and they can not hope to prosper in life except by protecting and serving the interests of the richer sections of the rural areas. While performing their work on revenue control, advances of loans and the work of the panchayats, these bureaucrats take the side of the richer sections. The Panchayats are not people's institutions so long as the vested class can have its own interest protected through them. Virtually, they become the main impediment to any pro-poor and pro-people democratic work as also to any scheme for the economic uplift of the masses.

These local self-governments are easy prey in the hands of rural vested interests who are close to the bourgeois government.

"The powers to remove and supersede elected bodies of local self-government are used at will in order to suppress the growth of democratic forces. The so-called

panchayatī raj of the people thus becomes an instrument of the bourgeoisie seeking to consolidate its power in the countryside"¹³⁴.

The so-called panchayatī system which can offer a bit of democratic advancement in this prevalent situation is under the continuous threat of suppression if it does not serve the interests of the bureaucrats and the counterpart of the bourgeoisie in the rural areas, the landlords and the rich peasants, i.e. the stronger sections of the rural people. Again, the programme of the CPI categorically states that the so-called panchayatī raj of the people now becomes an instrument of the bourgeoisie who is ruling the state seeking to consolidate its power over the whole of panchayatī system by using its rural partners, the landlords & the rich peasants. It marks the increasing penetration of bourgeois rule into the panchayatī system which is supposed to be the raj of the people or the democracy of the people rather than a raj of a minority, a privileged section (like landlords and rich peasant section) of the rural population.

Bureaucracy and judiciary are the two main agents of the ruling bourgeoisie which are highly centralised and purposefully motivated to serve the interest of the ruling classes in the name of independent judiciary and impartial bureaucracy in the name of democracy. The programme states about the role of bureaucracy in this regard.

"The administrative system being based on a highly centralised bureaucracy, power is concentrated at the top and exercised through privileged bureaucrats who are divorced from the masses and who obediently serve the interests of the exploiting classes"135.

The power of money and competition among the exploiting classes to influence the administrative organs for their private gain made corruption to permeate into the highest circles of administrative authority including the officials top to bottom, and this becomes "a serious danger to public life"136.

The judiciary which is shown by the bourgeoisie and their champions of ideology as independent of class character, according to the CPI programme it actually acts in favour of the vested interests. Thus it states, the existing bureaucracy-

"... is weighted against workers, peasants and other sections of the working people. The laws, procedures and the system of justice, though holding the rich and poor equal and alike in principle, eventually serve the interests of the exploiting classes and uphold their class rule"137.

The separation of judiciary from executive and legislative organs as propounded by the bourgeois ideologists and democrats is a principle that remains only in the statute book, and far from actual work. The judiciary is actually

subject to the influence and control of the executive, in other words, of the ruling class's representatives.

These are the limitations which prevail over the existing rural areas hindering the fuller implementation of rural democracy. Besides, the weaker sections particularly the backward communities most of whom reside in the rural areas are not provided ample chance of upliftment. A thimbleful fund is allocated for their well-being and the same is not properly used and mostly syphoned off to the bureaucratic lords of the area concerned. Hence such a fund proves fruitless in the real sense. Even the law for the abolition of untouchability remains yet to be enforced and fails to ensure the complete eradication of this evil¹³⁸. Barring the backward and minority people rural democracy in the real sense is impossible according to the programme of the CPI.

The CPI programme has assessed the role played by the existing ruling classes whose objective interest is to maintain their hegemony which is utterly contrary to the interest of the toiling people living both in the urban areas and the vast countryside. In the countryside the ruling national bourgeoisie has built strong links with the landlords which serve the interests of the national bourgeoisie in the central and provincial governments. Naturally the rule of the national bourgeoisie is to serve and protect the interests of the landlord class, its hegemony over the rural

economy and rural institutions instead of that for real transfer of power to the peasantry and agricultural labourers which constitute the majority of the rural populace.

To remove all these existing problems persisting because not alone the ruling national bourgeoisie, but the big bourgeoisie holds powerful influence and landlord class has link, it is necessary to place the slogan for National Democratic Revolution by forming National Democratic Government by replacing the present Congress regime which represents the interest of national bourgeoisie and its allies. One of the main slogans raised by the NDF for NDR is "... carrying through radical agrarian reform, extending democracy to ensure the active participation of working class in the economic and political life of the country. In this process the balance continuously shifts in favour of the working class and the worker peasant alliance ..."¹³⁹ The programme holds the view that after successful national democratic revolution and government at the hands of NDF will refashion the rural democracy in its true shape. This has been revealed in the programme document of the CPI.

"The national democratic government will put an end to the present bureaucratic set up ... in such a way as to make ... [it] subordinate and responsible to popularly-elected state organs at all levels"¹⁴⁰.

The bureaucracy at present is an effective tool at the hands of the ruling classes in the sphere of administration.

The programme sternly denounces the present bureaucratic set-up and says that the bureaucracy in collusion with the exploiting classes has put up one of the main impediments to establishing democracy at all levels. It is held that the bureaucracy and the common people have a wide gulf of difference of class interests. In a class divided society the total set up of bureaucracy is composed of persons mostly hailing from middle and the big propertied classes. Again they hope to thrive on the existing set-up and, therefore, in no case they oppose the prevailing conditions of society. Rather they faithfully serve state and government which firmly oppose the interests of the common people. Therefore, the bureaucracy will never be a friend of the toiling people in their forward march to oust the existing classes in power. The programme further declares,

"The principle of proportional representation will be adopted in all elections and the right to recall of elected representatives by the majority of electors will be established"¹⁴¹.

The principle of proportional representation and right to recall of elected representatives are the two salient features of democracy. If these two features are provided, enthusiastic mass participation will be possible; and such participation is expected to create enthusiasm and initiatives even among much neglected backward communities which may then

come forward to ward-off social, political and economical injustice and exploitation imposed by the advanced classes on them.

The programme further states,

"It will extend and strengthen elected local organs, enhance their powers and give them more resources to fulfil their responsibilities"¹⁴².

By this statement the programme pledges that the National Democratic Government will extend to local governments more power and resources to enable them to fulfil the needs and aspirations of the people. A democratically elected body without required power and resources is a travesty of the much declared democratic ideal. Particularly the fair access to resources should be assured to the common people and lower stratum of the rural folk. This has been blocked by the bourgeoisie and their contingents who monopolise all the resources and put the toiling people in a perpetual vicious circle of poverty and social and cultural backwardness.

The programme of the CPI puts stress first on the replacement of the existing unreal democratic set up of the ruling classes by a real democracy from the grassroot level where all common and backward people can find themselves in power. Secondly, the democratic bodies of all levels should

be endowed with adequate power and resources, that is, economic opportunities should be guaranteed without which democracy will be meaningless to them. Radical agrarian reform in the countryside and the non-capitalist path of economic development are the guarantee to supply adequate resources for the real well-being of the weaker sections of the country at the hands of the national democratic government after the National Democratic Revolution in this stage.

Besides, the programme upholds some general duties of the National Democratic Government which will considerably help the effective establishment of democracy at the grassroot level.

"It will correctly enforce ... [and] operate legislative and administrative measures, particularly, the right to work, living wage, free education, social security etc.

It will abolish social and economic oppression of one caste by another, as also all social and personal bans and prohibitions imposed by the so called upper castes on lower castes, specially the scheduled castes, in the name of custom, tradition or religion"¹⁴³.

The programme of the CPI expressed its concern for the landless peasants and agricultural labourers. The CPI thinks that "the struggles of the landless peasants and

agricultural labourers for fallow and surplus land, for minimum living wage, for setting up state farms and other rehabilitation schemes for scheduled caste and adivasi landless - all these struggles of the broad masses have a national significance"¹⁴⁴ [emphasis added].

The CPI is determined to fight for minimum wages of the agricultural labourers to raise their living standard from the existing stage of abject poverty. It is also determined to fight for distribution of fallow and surplus land for the landless peasants and to demand the rehabilitation of the scheduled caste and adivasi landless people. The programme encourages the establishment of state farms as a good start for socialist agriculture in the next socialist stage.

Steps for economic and social security, such as freedom from unemployment, guarantee of minimum living wage to every worker, free education to young children constitute the basic duties of the National Democratic Government at the hands of the National Democratic Front. Moreover, the programme thought it most urgent to eradicate the age-old practice of casteism. Casteism involves social difference between so-called upper castes and lower and backward castes and also economic privations which need complete prohibition. The Caste-ridden Indian society, particularly the rural society, puts up a great a hindrance to the unity of the

oppressed people in their fight with their common class enemies for their emancipation. So it is suicidal for the backward communities to let casteism play any role in their life. Religious bigotry, unscientific customs and prejudices of medieval age keep them divided in relation to their common enemy. Particularly the rural areas are the most fertile ground for past prejudices to breed, linger and flourish. The so called secular democratic Congress rule over the last few decades has done pretty little to eradicate these prejudices. The programme of the CPI seeks to fight these evils very vehemently.

The present state of Indian judiciary serves the interests of the ruling class and there is no scope for the attainment of real justice by the weaker sections of the population. Virtually they are denied real justice by the economically powerful sections of the existing society. Fair justice can be within the access of the weaker sections only if there is guarantee that in spite of their economic handicap, their cases will be taken up and fairly dealt with by the judiciary. In this connection, the programme states,

"It will ensure simpler, cheaper and speedier justice, which will be within the reach of the common man. The poorer sections of the population will be provided with free legal aid by the state"¹⁴⁵.

Under the existing rule, justice becomes a luxurious commodity for only the rich people to enjoy. They can exert influence on the judiciary and motivate adjudications in favour of their own interests. The Judiciary becomes the place of mockery of the rich people though it is held sometimes by the bourgeois press that it is fairly independent and a safeguard of the interest of everyone. However, there is little or no scope in the judiciary for weaker sections to expect security against their better-off adversaries. Judicial redress is a precious commodity which again involves a lengthy process. As a result, judicial redress can very scarcely be expected by the common and poor people. The programme declares it essential to provide with free legal aid from the state to the economically weaker people.

These above mentioned concepts of the programme of the CPI help to build up its notions of rural democracy. Democracy in the rural areas is the rural people's longfelt demand. Earlier British Colonial rule and existing Congress rule, i.e., the rule of the bourgeoisie completely disregarded the actual needs of the masses who reside in the countryside. The CPI tries to make this reality well understood by people, and voices the demands of real democracy at the grassroot level to make the masses free from domination of the bourgeoisie and their rural contingents.

However, the National Democratic Front is to be formed to raise these issues like rural democracy and ultimately to replace this existing ruling class by launching a successful National Democratic Revolution. Indeed, the programme of the CPI seeks to project democracy as an objective to be realised in the interest of so far neglected rural, common and weaker sections. The programme again firmly declares its belief that the socio-political and economic change for the benefit of the rural people (at the hands of ND Government) will advance the country towards socialism.

Section 7.2

CPI(M) 's Programme on Rural Democracy

Besides the task of agrarian reform, the establishment of rural democracy is another most important and concomitant task declared by the programme of the CPI(M) in this people's Democratic Revolutionary stage. The CPI(M), while organising and working for people's Democratic Revolution, has also definite plans for rural democracy. Rural democracy being an integral part of People's Democracy has been given much importance in the programme of the CPI(M).

It states,

"The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is opposed to the drive of the ruling classes for centralisation denying autonomy and is also opposed to all disruptionist secessionist movements"¹⁴⁶.

The CPI(M) in its programme accuses the existing ruling classes as they centralise power denying the actual dues of the rural people who constitute the largest percentage of the population. Centralisation tendency is natural for the ruling bourgeoisie.

The landlord class, in this respect, is in favour of diffusion of power so that they can enjoy power in their own area, because they possess immovable property and that does not need national market. So, regarding the centralisation of political power they have natural differences with the bourgeoisie. But their interests converge when they oppose the political consciousness and mass participation in the political process of the country because they fear the entry of conscious people into the arena of politics. Besides, the existing ruling classes reserve the right to overpower all the lower level bodies whenever they would need it in the interest of protecting the vested interests, this autocratic tendency and that of centralisation are, however, the two aspects of the same process. Again, whatever limited power and responsibilities are given to the local bodies in the name of extension of democracy to the grass-root level, the same is sought to be monopolised by the rural contingents of the bourgeois landlord classes. So the autonomy of the local bodies, the programme thinks, is the right approach in this context which can ensure mass participation. In

this way they expect to pursue their own class interests and only then the meaning of autonomy, i.e., the rightful authority over the local bodies by the majority of common and poor people, can be realised.

In the same statement the programme calls for opposition to any sort of disruptionist and secessionist movements. Mere disruption and secession are vague concepts which are not at all ways for redress of the age-long oppression of the common people, namely, the poor peasants and artisans and agricultural labourers in the countryside. The programme denounces the disruptionists and secessionists simply because they blur the real cause of existing malady created by the bourgeois-landlord government. So the programme thinks that an effective rural democracy will not and can not come through any disruptionist or secessionist movements.

While the programme is sincerely upholding the aim of autonomy of all the elected bodies from the grass-root level at the same time it claims to follow also another principle, i.e., "democratic centralism"¹⁴⁷ which apparently may be seen as contradictory. But, for the Marxists the concept of democratic centralism has a wide-ranging meaning¹⁴⁸. In short and in this context, 'centralism' means the successive lower bodies whether in party organisation or in government must follow the direction of the higher bodies, and in no case the particular body can refuse to follow the order of the immediately higher

body. Again, the word 'democratic' signifies that each and every organization howsoever small it may be, should be formed through election so that constituent electors can choose and hope to be elected therein. The programme of the CPI(M) pledges to follow this principle even in the case of the extension of rural democracy.

Measures for rural democracy have been enunciated in the following manner in the programme of the CPI(M) :

"The People's Democratic State, in the field of local administration shall ensure a wide network of local bodies from village upward, directly elected by the people and vested with power and responsibility and provided with adequate finance"¹⁴⁹.

The programme pledges that the party will ensure, after successful establishment of People's Democratic State, that local, i.e., village administration should be administered by the elected bodies of the concerned village people. These democratic bodies will be spread over all the villages of the country, so that all the people living in the countryside can enjoy the right of being governed by themselves. Again all these local bodies will be vested with adequate power and responsibility.

The programme of the CPI(M) declares that,

"The people are sovereign. All organs of state power shall be answerable to the

people. The supreme authority in exercising state power shall be the people's representatives elected on the basis of adult franchise and the principle of proportional representation, and subject to recall"¹⁵⁰.

By this statement the programme seeks to emphasise that absolute 'sovereignty' will be in the hands of the people. 'All organs of state power' from top to bottom will be answerable to the people. The people will exercise their power in the various legislative bodies through their elected representatives on the basis of adult franchise. The programme further states that the People's Democratic Government will ensure the 'Principle of proportional representation' of its front partners in all the legislative bodies on the basis of valid votes secured by the parties participating in the elections.

The scope of 'right to recall' is another important aspect of the Peoples' Democratic Government to make the people really sovereign and powerful, fully responsible and enthusiastic which are a far cry in the existing bourgeois - landlord government. This bourgeois-landlord government never hesitates to take recourse to unfair means in the time-bound election without giving any chance to the people to cast their votes in favour of favoured candidates and also without giving any chance to appraise the activities of these representatives and to terminate their tenure, if

needed, through the exercise of the right to recall.

Responsible membership of the constituent body will lay the foundation of democracy, because, here, the electors enjoy the right to recall whenever there arises any dissatisfaction with the performance of their representatives. Adequate power and responsibility of the village bodies make the granite foundation of rural democracy. The existing bourgeois-landlord government often run the election in the name of democratic power to the people and always seek to uphold and project this system by putting the high sounding adjective, i.e., the largest democracy in the world; and the same is trying to popularise through the indigenous and Western presses. However, the programme of the CPI(M) alleges the hollowness of the democracy preached by the existing bourgeois-landlord government.

The programme further states,

"The People's Democratic state shall strive to infuse in all ... social and political institutions the spirit of democracy. It extends democratic forms of initiative and control over every aspect of national life. A key role in this will be played by the trade unions, peasant and agricultural workers' associations and class and mass organisations of the working people"¹⁵¹. [Emphasis added]

To explain this above statement it may be said that political bodies of the rural areas will be composed of the

agricultural workers and the peasants. Their enthusiastic participation and leadership will usher in a new era of rural democracy because these classes and sections of the people constitute a majority in rural India. These village level bodies are expected also to cease to be the machine of oppression at the hands of the landlords, so called upper castes and the money lenders. Conscious organisations of agricultural labourers, artisans and peasants may therefore revolutionise rural democracy. What at present prevails is that the village panchayats are under the domination of the landlords, money lenders and upper castes because they have formed the rural contingents of the bourgeois-landlord government and they are helped by the judicial and administrative organs for this purpose. These panchayats are again elected sometimes once in a decade or more when they deem it fit not to face any further time-bound election. Thus they ignore the interests of the common people. Their sole motto is to keep the common people and peasants and agricultural labourers away from the panchayats, so that they can grab all the political, economic and social gains.

So the programme not only attaches importance to the active participation of the agricultural labourers but also sets this as a precondition for the elimination of the present bureaucracy. The programme reads that the People's Democratic State,

"... will take steps to make the legislature and executive machinery of the country continuously responsive to the

democratic wishes of the people, and will ensure that the masses and their organisations are drawn into active participation in the administration ... It works for the elimination of bureaucracy and bureaucratic practices in ... the administration"¹⁵²..

Responsible legislative and executive machineries constitute salient features of the concept of rural democracy in the CPI(M) 's programme. In the case of legislative bodies the participation of the agricultural workers and peasants must change the motive of these bodies and these bodies will cease to pursue reactionary aims. But in the case of bureaucracy which has a credit of its own to serve as a stooge the interest of its master from the legacies of the British colonial days and in the decades of Congress rule, i.e., the rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords under which it has thrived must be eliminated. The programme seeks to explain that the existing bureaucracy has been created by the ruling bourgeoisie and landlords, and in a partisan struggle this bureaucracy will take the side of their masters because they are also helped by allowing a share of exploitation over the common people. Besides, the bureaucrat can hope to thrive, achieve their gains and fulfil their personal ambitions. The ruling classes pamper corruption in them because they share the booty in different ways. So the programme suspects the integrity of the so called impartial administration in the present regime. Successful rural democracy can not

thrive with this corrupted bureaucracy remaining entrenched. What is essentially needed is the elimination of them and vigilant organisations of the agricultural labourers, artisans and peasants and their participation in day to day affairs of the village bodies. These alone will minimise the dependence on bureaucracy.

In the field of administering justice, the programme states,

"The appointment of judges will be subject to approval of ... people's organs at different levels"¹⁵³.

So the programme does not believe in the concept of an independent judiciary which is often acclaimed by bourgeois philosophers for its impartial stand. Rather the CPI(M) programme seeks to criticise this and hold that the judiciary at present is a pillar to protect the interests of the ruling bourgeois-landlord classes. Both the laws and the adjudicating process are made to suit the interest of the ruling classes. So these require a thorough change. Common people will be drawn into the process of making laws by ensuring their participation in the legislature at all levels and by allowing them to look after the process of adjudication is a duty and responsibility. So they should be given the authority of approval of the appointment of judges at different levels of judiciary. In the people's

Democratic state the people and their various organisations are not the passive recipients of justice but they have an active role to play in different ways.

There are also other measures which are vital for the effective implementation of rural democracy. Some of these mentioned in the programme are ; the first is the legal rights,

"Free legal aid ... for the people in order to make legal redress easily available to all citizens.

Right of persons to sue any official before a court of law shall be ensured"¹⁵⁴.

The judicial system run by the bourgeois landlord government is in no way beneficial to the common people, mostly to the rural people, those who are economically weaker. The programme entails the People's Democratic Government to provide full legal aid to the economically weaker people so that they can get judicial redress, and that must be less time-consuming than the existing lengthy adjudicating process. The programme expresses doubt not only about the impartiality of the existing judicial system as such, but also about its impartial stand in the case of the right of the economically weaker people. Law is said to be a commodity which can be bought by the rich and the weaker sections go to the wall in judicial battles. Again laws are made to suit the vital interests of the ruling classes in a class divided society. In India, according

to the programme, it is no exception. So the entire legal system is to be overhauled in order to turn it in favour of a economically weaker people.

Then about economic rights the programme holds;

"Right to work as fundamental right to every citizen shall be guaranteed; equal right for all citizens and equal pay for equal work irrespective of religion, caste, sex, race and nationality shall be ensured".

"Wide disparities in salaries and incomes will be abolished"¹⁵⁵.

Bourgeois-landlord government can do nothing, the programme of the CPI(M) seeks to assert, in regard to the 'right to work' of every citizen. 'Right to work' is fundamentally a part of the 'right to live'. Guarantee of the 'right to work' is absolutely against the interests of the bourgeois-landlord government, because the existing reservoir of unemployed persons is the chief source of cheap labour in the urban industries and various kinds of bonded labour and landless peasants in the countryside. Moreover, the programme pledges that the people's Democratic Government which will replace the existing bourgeois landlord government, shall ensure equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex, race, caste, religion, etc. Besides, it pledges to abolish the wide disparities of income and salaries which are sanctified by the existing bourgeois-landlord government. The amassing of wealth through the means of exploitation has also been guaranteed in the constitution of the existing ruling classes.

The programme of the CPI(M) stated that in the state of people's democratic stage the party will fight to "Ensure adequate wages and living conditions of agricultural labourers"¹⁵⁶ [Emphasis added]. Struggle for adequate wage is urgently required to improve their living conditions to get rid of old prejudices and ideas of subservience and superstition.

In its declared people's democratic stage it will "Encourage cooperatives of peasants and artisans on a voluntary basis for farming and for agricultural services of other purposes"¹⁵⁷. Cooperative farming will act as a good start in this stage for socialist agriculture in the socialist stage.

About the civil, social and cultural rights, the programme states :

"Full civil rights shall be guaranteed ..."¹⁵⁸
 "Abolition of social oppression of one caste by another and untouchability to be punished by law"¹⁵⁹.

"Removal of social inequalities and disabilities from which women suffer ..."¹⁶⁰

"The state shall take over education ... free and compulsory education up to secondary stage shall be guaranteed"¹⁶¹.

"The People's Democratic State and Government will undertake the important task of ... extending the new progressive people's culture which is anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and democratic in character ... [and also] help the people to get rid of caste and communal hatred and prejudices and ideas of subservience and superstitions"¹⁶².

Untouchability, proceeding from a relation of hatred of the upper castes towards the lower castes, is an age-long practice in the Indian society and it is more stringent in the rural society because of the feudal and semi-feudal economy. To the upper castes, due to their advantageous position in the stratified rural society, all the facilities in the existing bourgeois-landlord rule are easily accessible. Mainly, the economic and cultural supremacy is enjoyed by the upper castes. The programme of the CPI(M) is very critical of the existing caste system. Sometimes, this caste system is an obstacle to the unity of all the economically poor people on the basis of class line. The CPI(M) therefore, wants a complete ban on the practice of untouchability. The existing bourgeois landlord government has provided some articles in the constitution prohibiting the practice of untouchability but in practice, it pampers this system and gives it a base of life. These ruling classes help the landlords in the rural areas to maintain the ancestral grandeur and put the lower castes in perpetual negligence in the name of religious prescription due to their so called low birth. However, the bourgeoisie is reluctant to openly admit of this fact. Therefore, the programme concludes that only the people's Democratic Government can sincerely and completely banish the social disease of untouchability.

Removal of social inequalities which afflict the women-folk, for instance through the dowary system, is also the

motto of the People's Democratic Government. These inequalities can never be removed by the existing rulers.

Free and compulsory education to the young children and cultural upliftment are also important steps for the People's Democratic Govt. to take. These steps have been neglected wilfully by the bourgeois-landlord government.

About the political rights, the programme indicates :

"Secular character of the state shall be guaranteed ..."¹⁶³

"Universal, equal and direct suffrage for all citizens who have attained the age of 18 to be implemented in all elections ... [including those too] local self-government bodies"¹⁶⁴.

The programme upholds the view that the People's Democratic Government will secularise the state and its activities in view of the fact that communalism, is a basic malady of the Indian sub-continent due to the factors of religious bigotry and dogmatism of rival religious followers. Although secularism has been preached by the existing government, still it sometimes woos one sect against another for its narrow class interest. Complete segregation of religion from politics and complete curb on religious fundamentalism are essential aspects of the ideal of secularism. The People's Democratic Government pledges to maintain the secular character of the state in this way.

The programme of the CPI(M) considers it necessary to uphold the safeguards of the democratisation of national life and the life of the rural people in particular. It insists on the successful launching of the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist People's Democratic Revolution which, first and foremost, will carry out radical agrarian reforms in the interests of the whole of peasantry and agricultural labourers who constitute the majority in the countryside and thus sweep away feudalism and feudalistic (medieval or pre-capitalistic) backwardness governing rural life now.

"The task of making such sweeping reforms in the social system, however, as inextricably bound up with the completion of the agrarian revolution which in fact is the axis of the democratic revolution"¹⁶⁵.

Rural democracy, backed by agrarian reforms and vice versa, agrarian reforms under rural democracy, constituted a work which is complementary in nature. The CPI(M)'s party programme calls for the completion of this work within the periphery of People's Democratic Revolution.

From the foregoing discussion of the programmatic contents of both the communist parties of India, namely, the CPI and the CPI(M), regarding i) agrarian reforms' and ii) 'rural democracy' which constitute the main area of the present study, we find some common or similar issues on the one hand, and some notable differences on specific issues on the other. To be more explicit, their differences lie not in basically organisational but in strategical and

and tactical issues; although their ultimate aim is the same,¹⁶⁶ i.e., socialism and communism. Consequently there arises the necessity to study their divergences particularly on the questions of 'agrarian reforms' and 'rural democracy'.

On the strategical point of view, they have their differences on the analysis of the character of the existing Indian state, particularly on the place and share of landlords in the state power. Secondly, although both of them have accepted two stages of revolution, but the differences lie in the content of the immediate 'democratic revolution'. Whereas the CPI urges mainly, for a non-capitalist democratic path¹⁶⁷, the CPI(M) urges an out and out people's democracy for the completion of agrarian revolution.¹⁶⁸ Again they differ on the question of class leadership in their respective democratic revolutions although the combination of class forces necessary for this revolution, is basically the same. CPI(M) does not consider that feudal and semifeudal landlordism have been substantially curbed from the vast countryside during the Congress rule. It utters grave concern that the rural life is still under the dictates of the semi-feudal and landlord supremacy. Bonded labourer, subletting, share cropping, leaseing are some of the signs of semi-feudal land relations in the vast agricultural sector. Though it does not overlook the continuous penetrating of capitalist market economy and

capitalistic landlordism which take inroad into the agrarian sector still it thinks the dominant position of the rural life is dictated by the landlords. Therefore, it pledges for end of existing semi-feudal landlordism. The programme of the CPI(M) is more radical in the sense it directs its democratic revolution to revolutionarise the agrarian sector. Where as the CPI programme thinks agrarian sector is under the heavy pressure of capitalistic penetration and it has successful during the Congress rule, it cites the legislation like - Abolition of Zamindari Act, Land Ceiling Act and so on. Therefore, its main aim is not to concentrate all the energies for agrarian reform but to steer this democratic revolution on the non-capitalist path of economic development. But it does not minimise the task of agrarian reform in this stage. The programme of the CPI considers that landlords are not sharing the power with the national bourgeoisie but they have links with the bourgeoisie. The programme assesses the weakness of the landlords. Therefore it is necessary to wipe out the residual forces of semi-feudal landlords rule from the countryside during the 'national democratic revolution' and thereby solve the problem of poor peasants and agricultural labourers & food problem in this stage by forging alliance with and combined leadership of working class, the whole section of the peasantry, national bourgeoisie & the middle class urban intelligentsia.

On the issues of 'agrarian reforms' and 'rural democracy' in the programmes of the C.P.I and CPI(M) there are important similarities and differences too.

Similarities

Marked similarities are found in their respective programmes in the field of 'agrarian reforms'. These are demands like - abolition of landlordism, distribution of surplus land among the poor peasantry, protection of the interest of the poor peasantry, distribution of wasteland, cancellation of debts of the poor peasants and agricultural labourers owe to the landlords and moneylenders, guarantee of increase of wages to a desired level (because they think the existing wage is not enough), and decent living conditions for the agricultural labourers, fixing of price of agricultural produce, setting up of agricultural cooperatives, improvement of irrigation facilities; and so on. The programmes of CPI and CPI(M) hopefully assert that if all these are realised then the condition of the poor people living in the vast Indian countryside will have a major stride in their forward march for changing the existing mode of production in agricultural and end semi-feudal system and concentration of land.

The similarities in the two programmes regarding the extension of rural democracy include the demands such as, increasing the power of local bodies by decentralisation, ending of existing bureaucratic supremacy, implementation of rights like freedom from unemployment, decent living wage to all sections of workers, free education, social security,

ending of inequalities and oppression of people in the name of caste, sex, religion, etc., equal status for women, complete prohibition of untouchabilities, secular character of local administration, easy access of poor people to judicial redress, ensuring participation of common and poor people in the affairs of the local bodies, introduction of proportional representation and the right to recall of the elected representatives, etc. Both the parties call for unity of all the progressive forces interested in rapid completion of the democratic revolution and preparation of the ground for transition to socialism¹⁶⁹.

Dissimilarities

While studying the programmes of the CPI and the CPI(M) the main points of difference in agrarian question and rural democracy may be summarised here. The CPI(M) programme has emphasised the point that its declared people's democratic stage of revolution was nothing but an agrarian revolution against the bourgeois-landlord class rule whereas the CPI programme had emphasised on non-capitalist path in its declared national democratic revolution. The CPI programme also highlighted the issue of elimination of the residual features of the semi-feudal landlordism but it did not consider it as a dominant force in rural sector. It observed that capitalist penetration into rural economy sponsored by the national bourgeoisie had done havoc to change the

mode of production. Therefore, the programme of the CPI sought to assemble and mobilise all rural classes including the rural bourgeoisie to take part in its declared ensuing national democratic revolution. Naturally, it did not consider any radical peasant revolution to be essential as the CPI(M) vigorously did.

Another important point to note that the CPI(M) programme is categorical of its stand about the leadership of this peasant revolution resting with the working class who had heavily to depend on the agricultural labourers landless and poor peasants in the countryside. The CPI does not deny the role and importance of the other rural class forces which need to be mobilised against the remnants of those of feudalism and semi-feudalism. This mobilisation should include the national bourgeoisie and all patriotic people against the big and monopoly capitalists and their foreign collaborators. Therefore, in the mobilisation of rural forces the CPI and the CPI(M) moved in different directions. The CPI(M) wanted it for its agrarian revolution in the people's democratic stage, and the CPI wanted it for non-capitalist path of the Indian economy in the national democratic stage.

Differences on the question of 'rural democracy' lies in the fact that for the CPI, it is a part of National Democracy, and for the CPI(M), it is a part of people's Democracy. To the CPI, rural democracy is an instrument for changing the existing functioning of the rural bodies into an actual democratic orientation, to the CPI(M), it is an instrument for agrarian revolution and an actual

democratic orientation of the local bodies, therefore, there is a difference of opinion on the leadership question in the rural democratic front.

Another important case of dissimilarity lies in the fact that the CPI(M) programme rejects very strongly the possibility of any alliance with the Congress Party¹⁷⁰ where the CPI is interested to bring the progressive democratic section of the Congress party in its declared National democratic state¹⁷¹. Although both these parties share the view that the existing rate of wages for the agricultural labourers are much below expectation and these labourers are leading subhuman life under the existing class rule, still these two parties differ on the point of demand for wages for the agricultural labourers. The CPI demands minimum wages to live and the CPI(M) demands adequate wages to live, in their declared respective democratic revolution.

However, all these discussions centre round the programmatic positions of the CPI and CPI(M). Being communist parties as they claim to be, each of them denounces the other as having deviated from scientific Marxist principles. It is a paradox that their understandings of the Indian condition differ widely. Hence the necessity of an objective study of their actual practice.

Notes and References

1. Lenin, V.I. "Our Programme", Collected Works, Vol.4. Progress Publishers, Moscow : 1965, p.211, "To The Rural Poor", Collected Works, Vol.6. Progress Publishers, Moscow:1965, p.396; "Eighth Congress of the RCP(B), March 18-23, 1919. Speech Closing the Debate on the Party Programme, March 19" Collected Works, Vol.29, Progress Publishers, Moscow:1965, p.190-191.

Lenin made an elaborate discussion of the programme of the Communist Party on the occasion of the adoption of the programme for RSDLP in its Second Congress convened in secrecy in August 1903 first in Brussels and then in London, and criticism against Karl Kautsky, and also at the time of adoption of the programme for the RCP(B) in 1919.

Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol.III. "The Policy of the Chinese Communist Party" section IV under sub heading "Our General Programme" Pergamon Press, Oxford/New York:1967, p.229.

Mao Tse-tung, made an analysis of the programme of the Communist party of China in its Seventh Congress in May 14, 1945.

2. Programme of the Communist Party of India, Amended by the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of India. Patna:1968. Section VI under subheading "Bourgeoisie And The State", p.31.

This programme was first adopted in 1964, just after division of the party, in Bombay in its Seventh Congress as is said.

3. Communist Party of India, Party Education Series, Grade I Course. New Delhi:1972. p.38, N.Rajsekhar Reddi, Bharater Communist Partier Karmasuchi Ki ? [a Bengali pamphlet approved by the Central Committee of the CPI], Manisha, Calcutta:1974. p.17.

4. Communist Party of India (Marxist), Programme, Adopted at the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of India at Calcutta, October 31 to November 7, 1964. With the amendment by the 9th Congress in Madurai June 27 to July 2, 1972. [With another document Statement of Policy, Adopted at the All India Conference of the Communist Party of India 1951. Calcutta:November 1971], para 56, p.23.

This programme was circulated to all the party units, as early as April 1964, amended and endorsed by the Tenali Convention in June 1964, and finally adopted at the Party Congress held between October 31 and November 7, 1964. For this note see M. Basavapunnaiiah, On the Programme of the CPI(M) [and] E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Party Line on Current Tactics, Communist Party of India (Marxist), New Delhi: October 1985, Second Impression March 1986, p.13.

At that time (in 1964) in the programme the "Communist Party of India" was written, though soon after it, the Central Committee changed the name of the party to 'Communist Party of India (Marxist)' and later necessary change was made. This has been indicated in the 'Publishers' Note' of this programme.

5. Ranadive, B.T. "Character of the State", People's Democracy, March 27, 1966.
6. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., introductory section under subheading "Programme of the Communist Party of India". p.9.
7. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 3, p.2.
8. Mao Tse-tung, 'On the People's Democratic Dictatorship'. Selected Works. National Book Agency (P) Ltd, Calcutta, 1967, p.103.
9. _____, 'On New Democracy' Selected Works, op.cit., p.65.
10. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., p.48.
11. Ibid., p.49.
12. Marx, K. and Engels, F. Manifesto of the Communist Party, Progress, Moscow, 1977, pp.96-97.
13. Lenin, V.I. 'Two Tactics of Social Democracy in Democratic Revolution' see Marx, Engels and Lenin On Historical Materialism. Progress, Mosco, 1984, p.404.
14. Programme of the CPI, section VIII under subheading "National Democratic Revolution And The Path Forward". p.41.
15. Programme of the CPI(M), section VII under subheading "Programme of People's Democracy", p.32.
16. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section VIII under subheading "National Democratic Revolution And the Path Forward", p.42.

17. Ibid., p.41.
18. Communist Party of India, Party Education Series, Grade I Course. op.cit., p.23.
19. CPI Prog. op.cit., p.42.
20. Ibid., 43.
21. Idem.
22. Idem.
23. Reddi, N.Rajsekhar, op.cit., p.27.
24. CPI Prog. op.cit., p.44.
25. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section VIII under subheading "National Democratic Revolution And the Path Forward", pp.44-45.
26. Prog. of the CPI, op.cit., p.45.
27. Programme of the CPI, op.cit. p.45.
28. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., p.42.
29. Ibid., p.14.
30. Ibid., p.16.
31. Ibid., p.17.
32. Idem.
33. Ibid., p.18.
34. Ibid., p.29.
35. Ibid., pp.47-48.
36. Communist Party of India, Party Education Series, op.cit., p.49.
37. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 87, p.34.
38. Ranadive, B.T., "On Right-Revisionism", Selected Writings, Vol.II, National Book Centre, New Delhi:1985, p.43.
39. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 10, p.4, (para 10).
40. Ibid., p.42. (para 96).
41. Ranadive, op.cit., p.43.
42. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 87, p.34.
43. Ibid., para 97, p.42.
44. Ibid., para 97, p.43.
45. Ibid., para 56, p.23.

46. Ibid., para 105, p.45.
47. Ibid., para 106, p.46.
48. Ibid., para 101, p.44.
49. Ibid., para 102, p.44.
50. Ibid., para 103, p.44-45.
51. Ibid., para 104, p.45.
52. Ibid., para 105, p.46.
53. Ibid., para 110, p.48.
54. Ranadive, op.cit., p.49.
55. Ibid., p.45.
56. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 105.
57. Ibid., para 12, p.4.
58. Ibid., para 15, p.6.
59. Programme of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) / and / Statement of Policy. p.63. (This Statement of Policy was first adopted in 1951 when the party was united. Much later in its Seventh and Eighth Congresses the CPI(M) readopted it with necessary correction. See Note of the Statement of Policy).
60. Ranadive, op.cit., p.47.
61. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 106. p.46.
62. Ranadive, op.cit., p.47.
63. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 106, p.46.
64. Ibid., para 106, p.46.
65. Ibid., para 106., p.46.
66. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 96, p.42.
67. Ibid., para 86, p.33.
68. Ibid., para 12, p.4.
69. Ibid., para 98, p.43.
70. Ibid., para 86, p.33.
71. Ibid., para 87, p.34.
72. Ibid., para 100, p.44.
73. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section VIII under subheading "National Democratic Revolution And The Path Forward", p.45.
74. Ibid., section X under subheading "For Peaceful Path And Its Possibilities", p.61.

75. Ibid., pp.61-62.
76. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 113, p.49.
77. Ibid., para 112, pp.48-49.
78. Ibid., para 113, p.49.
79. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section V under subheading "Agrarian Question", pp.21-22. All accounts are placed here are probably based on the account of 1968, at the time of its adoption.
80. Ibid., p.22.
81. Ibid., p.22.
82. Ibid., pp.22-23.
83. Ibid., pp.27-29.
84. In this connection one could refer to the 'Green Revolution' during the Congress rule in 1960's.
85. Party Education Series, Grade I Course, op.cit., p.26.
86. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section II under subheading "Towards Independent Development". p.11.
87. Ibid., p.11.
88. Ibid., section III under subheading "Contradiction Of The Capitalist Path", p.15.
89. Ibid., p.14.
90. Ibid., section II under subheading "Towards Independent Development", p.10.
91. Ibid., section III under subheading "Contradiction Of The Capitalist Path", p.18.
92. Ibid., section V under subheading "Agrarian Question", p.28.
93. Party Education Series, Grade I Course, op.cit., p.28.
94. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section VI under subheading "Bourgeoisie And The State", p.31.
95. Party Education Series, Grade I Course, op.cit., pp.28-29.
96. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section V under subheading "Agrarian Question", p.23.
97. Ibid., p.30.
98. The programme of the CPI was adopted after amendments in 1968 now requires to be updated due to the fact that in July 19, 1969 fourteen large banks

were nationalised and in the next phase in April 15, 1980 another six banks were nationalised by the ruling Congress at the Centre.

99. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section V under subheading "Agrarian Question", pp.30-31.
100. Ibid., p.31.
101. Ibid., section VII under subheading "National Democratic Revolution And The Path Forward", p.49.
102. Ibid., p.43.
103. Ibid., pp.43-44.
104. Ibid., section IX under subheading "Programme of The National Democratic Government," pp.56-58.
105. Ibid., section XI, p.64.
106. Prog. of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 99, p.43.
107. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 8, p.3.
108. Ibid., para 45, p.17.
109. Princely states were statutorily abolished by an act of Parliament during the Congress rule headed by J.Nehru on the assurance of payment of heavy compensation and annual honorarium to the princes. This honorarium and the Privy Purse were abolished by the Congress headed by Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1969.
110. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 35, pp.13-14.
111. Ibid., para 36, p.14.
112. Ibid., para 37, p.14.
113. Ibid., para 38, p.15.
114. Ibid., para 39, p.15.
115. Ibid., para 40, p.15.
116. Ibid., para 40, p.15.
117. Ibid., para 40, p.16.
118. Ibid., para 40, p.16.
119. Ibid., para 42, p.17.
120. Ibid., para 43, p.17.
121. Ibid., para 44, p.17.
122. Ibid., para 34, p.13.
123. Idem.
124. Ibid., section III under subheading "Balance-sheet of Bourgeois Agrarian Policies," para 46, p.18.

125. Ibid., para 77, p.30.
126. Ibid., para 46, p.18.
127. Ibid., para 97, pp.42-43.
128. Ibid., para 85, p.33.
129. Ibid., para 83, p.32.
130. Ibid., para 87, p.33.
131. Ibid., para 89, pp.38-39.
132. Vide paragraphs 31 and 32 of the Statement of Policy appended to the Programme of the CPI(M), Ibid., p.69.
- 133.
- Programme of the CPI,
op.cit., section VI under subheading "Bourgeoisie
And The State", p.36.
134. Idem.
135. Idem.
136. Idem.
137. Ibid., p.37.
138. Ibid., p.36.
139. Ibid., section VIII under subheading "National Democratic Revolution And The Path Forward", p.49.
140. Ibid., section IX under subheading "Programme Of The National Democratic Government", p.51.
141. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section IX "Programme Of The National Democratic Government", p.52.
142. Ibid., p.52.
143. Ibid., p.51.
144. Ibid., p.45.
145. Ibid., p.52. Legal aid as a measure to help the weaker section in getting judicial redress has been incorporated in 1984-85 in a very limited way. The Supreme Court of India has taken initiatives in this regard.
146. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 88, p.34.

147. Ibid., para 88(1), p.35.
148. In Marxist literature it bears wide meaning. "Democratic Centralism implies combining democratisation (i.e. full power of the working people, their independent activity and initiative, elected ruling bodies and their accountability to the masses) with centralism, i.e. leadership from a single centre, subordination of the minority to the majority and strict discipline"
See - Dictionary of Scientific Communism, Progress, Moscow, 1984, pp.62-63.
149. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 88(8), p.36.
150. Ibid., para 88(2), p.35.
151. Ibid., para 88(9), p.36.
152. Ibid., para 88(9), pp.36-37.
153. Ibid., para 88(10), p.37.
154. Idem.
155. Ibid., para 88(13), p.37.
156. Ibid., para 89(5), p.39.
157. Idem.
158. Ibid., para 88(12), p.37.
159. Ibid., para 88(15), p.37.
160. Ibid., para 88(16), p.37.
161. Ibid., para 88(18), p.38.
162. Ibid., para 88(20), p.38.
163. Ibid., para 88(17), p.38.
164. Ibid., para 88(2), p.35. However the lowering of voting age to 18 from 21 was the continuous demand of the Communist Parties. Now, very recently the Congress Party which is in the power has lowered the voting age to 18 in 1988-89. So this statement requires to be updated.
165. Ibid., para 97, p.42.
166. 'Their ultimate goal being the same' means the CPI and the CPI(M) pledge for socialism as their goal which is embodied in their respective party programmes. Specific mention may be made in this connection that CPI declares its sole aim is to transform "... the existing social-political order and lay the foundations for building of socialism". Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section IX under subheading "Programme

Of The National Democratic Government", pp.49-50]. Similarly, the CPI(M) declares that "The Communist Party of India [Marxist] firmly adheres to its main aim of building socialism and communism" [Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 87, p.34].

167. Programme of the CPI, op.cit., section VIII under subheading 'National Democratic Revolution And the Path Forward', pp.42-43.
168. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 97, p.42.
169. op.cit., para 36, p.33 and Programme of the CPI, op.cit., p.45.
170. Programme of the CPI(M), op.cit., para 108, p.47.
171. Programme of the CPI., op.cit., p.45.