Comrade M Basavapunnaiah's speech introducing the Draft Programme at the founding 7th Congress of the Party in 1964.

The Central Organising Committee has entrusted me with the responsibility of introducing the Draft Programme and thus initiate the debate in the Party Congress. Before I go to the topic proper, permit me to make some preliminary general observations in connection with this report. It is by now a full six months that the Draft Programme was placed in your hands. During this period it has been under serious inner-Party discussion throughout the country. But we regret to state that we have failed so far in presenting you with a proper report accompanying the Draft Programme, explaining the various formulations and propositions made therein. Obviously, in the absence of such a report, different individual leading comrades of our Party were left with no option except to explain the document at the districts' and states' Party conferences in the manner they though fit to reflect the collective understanding of the Central Organising Committee. This method, naturally, had its drawbacks and shortcomings in presenting a uniform and united understanding of the Draft Programme. This, of course, is not meant to suggest that one or the other of such explanatory reports was either incorrect or defective. It is only to draw your attention to the fact that a centralised explanatory report is an absolute necessity, as that alone can unify the Party politically and ideologically around the programme. The explanatory report I am going to place before you is an endeavour in that direction to meet the need.

Even now we suffer from certain serious handicaps in preparing and submitting a full and proper report. It is so because, firstly, the Central Office has so far received practically no reports representing the discussions and decisions of the districts and states' Party conferences, to enable us to study and assimilate the material. Secondly the Central Organising Committee, due to other pressing political organisational work, could not find adequate time to collectively discuss and finalise the explanatory note I have prepared, to place it before the Party Congress. Thirdly we do not propose to once again repeat, what all has been stated in the two documents, i.e., "What Dange Programme Reveals" by Comrades M. Basavapunniah, P. Ramamurti and H.K. Surjeet, and "Our Views on EMS's Critique of Draft Programme" by Com. M. Basavapunniah. Both these pamphlets contain not only our criticism on the points we differ from and disagree with, but also a positive exposition of our stand on a number of propositions of our Draft Programme. They

do reflect the consensus of our COC and these are in your hands as part of Party Congress documents: The present report I propose to place before you attempts to avoid the repetition and deal with other aspects. Hence my report will acquire the character of a supplementary one, and all the above mentioned material together only can cover a good part of what an explanatory report for the Programme is expected to cover. I hope our delegate comrades would appreciate these difficulties and the consequent limitations that follow in the preparation and submission of this report to the Party Congress.

First of all, before going into the Programme proper, let me say a few words on the suggestion and proposal by Comrade EMS, that the adoption of the Programme be deferred to a future date, when after a thorough discussion on all the internal and international questions of controversy, we will be in a better position to produce a comparatively matured Draft Programme.

But the consensus of opinion, as expressed at the Tenali Convention and other district and state Party conferences, does not seem to agree with this proposal. There is an urgent demand for a Party Programme. The contention is not in the least that the present Draft Programme is wellnigh perfect, or that a comparatively better Programme Draft cannot be produced if we succeed in pooling our collective experience and understanding, after some more painstaking study and discussion. The necessity and urgency for the Programme, according to us, arises mainly in view of the extremely critical situation in which the Communist movement in India is placed at this juncture. Any delay in this regard with the hope of producing a better draft in the future might prove more harmful than the likely gains and advantages that may accrue from such a course. The delay, in practice, would disarm our forces, ideologically and politically, in the face of the concerted offensive launched by the revisionists with their own Programme, and other connected activities against the Communist movement in our country. As I have argued at length in defence of an immediate Party Programme in my “Comments on Com. EMS’s Critical Note on Programme Drafts” which is already in your hands, I do not think it necessary to repeat them here, all over again. But I would seek your permission to add one or two important points which have some significant bearing on the subject.

We cannot afford to be oblivious to the most vicious propaganda carried on day in and day out against us by the revisionist press on the one hand and the avowedly anti-Communist monopoly press on the other. They deliberately distort our entire political-ideological stand, and

indulge in the slander that we are “Peking agents” that we are intent upon taking the Party back to the “adventurist political-tactical line of 1948-50”, that we are advocates of “immediate and violent revolution”, and so on. Instead of frankly joining issues with us on all the key questions under debate, such as the class character of the present Indian State and its government, the capitalist path and its future, the stage, strategy and nature of our revolution and the like, they are purposefully intent upon derailing the whole debate with a view to misleading public opinion and thus isolating us. A sustained and determined fight has to be carried on against it. A Party Programme, where we clearly and unequivocally enunciate our stand on all the fundamental issues, if placed in the hands of our Party members and before the entire public, would be of immense help in shattering much of the mischievous and misleading propaganda of our enemies. Its significance in this regard cannot be underestimated. The Programmatic discussions and debates we have unleashed have already gained initial success in throwing our opponents on the defensive. This offensive has to be sustained.

The argument may be advanced, that the attempt to clinch the discussion on the Party Programme at this juncture, when there exist some vital differences amongst us who are united against Draft Programme, may contain the danger of fostering disunity amongst us instead of further unifying our Party. I feel the other way round, and am inclined to think that it is one of the necessary steps to achieving unity. To drive the point home, I shall be permitted to refer to some very valuable observations made by Lenin during the discussions on the Party Programme in 1899, which may prove enlightening to us. Lenin then said:

> *The objection may be raised, further, that the present moment is inopportune for the elaboration of a Programme because there are differences of opinion that give rise to polemics among the Social-Democrats themselves. I believe the contrary to be true – this is another argument in favour of the necessity for a programme. On the one hand, since the polemic has begun, it is to be hoped that in the discussion of the Draft Programme all views and all shades of views will be afforded expression, that the discussion will be comprehensive. The polemic indicates that the Russian Social-Democrats are showing a revived interest in extensive questions pertaining to the aims of our movement and to its immediate tasks and tactics; precisely such a revival is essential to a discussion of the Draft Programme. On the other hand, if the polemic is not to be fruitless, if it is not to degenerate into personal rivalry, if it is not to lead to a confusion of views, to a confounding of enemies and friends, it is absolutely essential that the question of the programme be introduced into the polemic. The polemic will be of benefit only if it makes*

clear in what the differences actually consist, how profound they are, whether they are differences of substance or differences on partial questions, whether or not these differences interfere with common work in the ranks of one and the same party. Only the introduction of the Programme question into the polemic, only a definite statement by the two polemising parties on their programmatic views, can provide an answer to all these questions, questions that insistently demand an answer. The elaboration of a common programme for the Party should not, of course, put an end to all polemics; it will firmly establish those basic views on the character, the aims, and the tasks of our movement which must serve as the banner of a fighting party, a party that remains consolidated and united despite partial differences of opinion among its members on partial questions. (Collected Works, Vol. IV, pp. 230-31.)

With appropriate modifications to suit our conditions, the contents of the above-quoted passage are sufficiently instructive. We may add that we have had a pretty long period of discussions on all these questions, besides the accumulated practical experience during the last nearly two decades. We also have before us different Programme drafts, different notes on the programmatic material, and on their basis, countrywide discussions in different units of the Party are going on for the last six months and more. In short, we cannot complain that there has not been adequate scope for discussions even though we do not rule out that further discussions and deeper study would enable us to sharpen our understanding on some of the questions involved therein. This gives us the necessary strength and the basis for the adoption of the Programme in which the major part of the controversial questions can be clinched while simultaneously attempting to iron out still existing differences amongst us.

Apart from what we have discussed so far, a general question is raised as to what a Marxist Party Programme should contain, i.e., its form, structure, content etc. I have attempted to meet this point in my ‘Comments on Com. EMS’s Critical Note’, without much elaboration. Since most of us are not very much conversant with this aspect of the Programme, it may be of interest to us to recall a short of precise statement made by Lenin, on what a Marxist Programme should cover. Summing up his comments on the Social Democratic Programme of 1899, he states:

These then, in our opinion, should be the component parts of a Programme of the Russian Social-Democratic working class party: (1) a statement on the basic character of the economic development of Russia; (2) a statement on the inevitable result of capitalism, the growth of poverty and the increasing indignation of the workers; (3) a statement on the class struggle of the proletariat as the basis of our movement; (4) a statement on the final aims of the Social-Democratic working class movement – on its

striving to win political power for the accomplishment of these aims – and on the international character of the movement; (5) a statement on the essentially political nature of the class struggle; (6) a statement to the effect that the Russian absolutism, which conditions the lack of rights and the oppression of the people and patronize the exploiters, is the chief hindrance to the working class movement, and that the winning of political liberty, essential in the interests of the entire social development, is, therefore, the most urgent political task of the party; (7) a statement to the effect that the party will support all parties and sections of the population that struggle against the autocracy and will combat the demagogic intrigues of our government; (8) the enumeration of the basic democratic demands; then (9) demands for the benefit of the working class; and (10) demands for the benefit of the peasantry, with an explanation of the general character of these demands. (Collected Works, Vol. IV, p. 253.)

A careful examination of our Draft Programme and its contents would show that, by and large, it goes a long way to satisfy the general criterion enunciated by Lenin. It contains: (1) a statement on how India achieved political independence and what its significance is, in the present day national and international developments and conditions; (2) a statement assessing the class character and nature of the new Indian State and government, describing it as a bourgeoisie-land State, with the big bourgeoisie leading it; (3) a statement on how the new state and government, firstly, is attempting to build the country's economy on capitalist lines in the background of the third stage of the general crisis of world capitalism, and secondly, how this building of modern capitalist economy is sought to be achieved in collaboration with foreign finance capital and with alliance of landlordism rather than by attacking and eliminating foreign capital and the abolishing of landlordism; (4) a sharp critique of the internal and external policies of the government, i.e., the concrete assessment of the agrarian, industrial and foreign policies during the last two decades; (5) an examination of state structure and democracy under the rule of the bourgeois-landlord government exposing how real democracy is denied to the mass of people and how as a result of all these policies the separatist and centrifugal tendencies are growing, instead of national integration and consolidation of the country on firm foundations; (6) a statement on the basic aims of the Communist Party of India and on the immediate objective of programme of People's Democracy, dealing in part with the demands of the workers, peasants, middle classes and others in the Democratic Front; (7) a precise definition of the stage and strategy of the Indian revolution, i.e., the disposition of the class forces and which of them stand opposed to the revolution and which can find their place in the revolutionary alliance; (8) a call for the building up of a strong Communist Party firmly based on Marxism-Leninism and internationalism, to carry the struggle for peace,

democracy and socialism as a part of the worldwide struggle for national and social emancipation. If on one issue or the other, we find these statements either inadequate or inaccurate, it is for the Party Congress to strengthen and straighten them.

Some Salient Points Concerning Our Draft Programme

One of the basic departures made and correction introduced, while drafting the present Programme, is to separate the tactical questions from that of the basic programmatic issues. I would like to draw your special attention to this aspect, with the hope of inviting some fruitful discussion on it, so that it might enable us to improve the Draft further. When we have embarked upon discussing and finalizing a serious document like the Party Programme, we should strive our utmost to see that it satisfies the minimum demands of a scientific programmatic document, which will have to remain valid for the entire period of the revolution i.e., until the democratic stage of the revolution is completed. It should cover the basic and fundamental questions, such as the class character of the present State and its government, the stage, strategy and the nature of the revolution, the role and tasks of the working class and its revolutionary party in the revolution, and so on and so forth. The Programme should in no case be burdened and mixed up with tactical questions, questions which will have to be discussed and decided from time to time, depending on the ebb and tide of the revolutionary movement, on the moves and counter-moves of the power that be, on rapidly changing internal and international developments, etc. If the programmatic and tactical issues are too much mixed up in the Programme, it loses its separate and independent identity and its relatively lasting character and gets reduced into some type of programme-cum political resolution which will have to be changed again and again, as day-to-day developments and shifts in the situation demand such rapid and quick orientation to changing events. That is why Lenin observes:

> *We believe that the Party Programme of the working class party is no place for indications [of the tactical line]. . . . The Programme should leave the question of means open, allowing the choice of means to the militant organisations and to Party Congresses that determine the tactics of the Party. Questions of tactics, however, can hardly be introduced into the Programme (with the exception of the most important questions, questions of principle, such as our attitude to other fighters against autocracy). Questions of tactics*

will be discussed by the Party newspaper as they arise and eventually decided at Party Congress. (Collected Works, Vol. IV, p. 238.)

This proposition of Lenin, besides its general validity has a specific meaning and significance to our discussions on the topic, because our Party, during its long existence and work, was accustomed to the method of adopting omnibus political resolutions, from time to time, in which programmatic and tactical questions are clumsily combined. Even the Party Programme of 1951 suffers seriously from this same error, apart from other shortcomings. For example, the manner in which we attempted to assess the economic policies of the government of India on the basis of the specific phase of the crisis in our economy in that particular period and the manner in which we tried to evaluate the foreign policy of the government basing ourselves on its particular manifestations at that specific stage of development – all this was raised to a fundamental programmatic level and incorporated in the Party Programme. I earnestly appeal to all the delegates assembled in our Congress to ponder over this point and see to it that the Programme we are about to adopt is not once again reduced into a somewhat Programme-cum-political resolution. Every effort must be made to overcome our past habit and to improve the draft in the indicated direction, rather than drift the other way as was usual with us in the past.

II

The second correction that is introduced in the Programme is the most vital one, regarding the nature and significance of the transfer of political power and the class character of the present Indian State and its government. This very important and basic correction is of a two-fold nature. It seeks, first of all, to extricate our Party from the faulty and dogmatic understanding that it was bogged in on this question for a long time during the post-independence period and which was reflected in all our political resolutions, such as the 1947 CC resolution on the Mountbatten Award, the theses of the Second Party Congress in 1948, the Left Deviation Report of 1950 and even the Party Programme of 1951. Since the Party Programme we are elaborating is to replace the 1951 Programme, a sharp break with all its defective sectarian and dogmatic aspects has become absolutely necessary. Simultaneously, it has to distinctly demarcate from the right-opportunist and revisionist understanding put across in the Draft Programme published by the

Dangeites – the class collaborationist understanding, which slowly and steadily developed during the 1956-62 period culminating in the present crassest form of revisionism.

What is the nature and origin of these mistakes? And what are the concrete and specific corrections introduced in the Programme Draft?

The fundamental defect, which was at the root of several of our mistakes in the immediate post-independence period, lies in our failure to assess the new correlation of class forces that emerged in the post-Second World War period. The defeat of fascism, mainly at the hands of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the establishment of people's democracies in a number of East European states, above all, the historic victory of the great Chinese Revolution – all leading to the formation of a mighty powerful socialist camp, the breadth and sweep of the national liberation struggles, have radically transformed the entire world political scene and tilted the balance of forces against the imperialists and in favour of peace, democracy and socialism. World imperialism as a whole and the British imperialists, who happened to be the biggest colony-owning power and whom our national liberation movement was directly facing, got extremely weakened – economically, politically and even militarily. The failure to correctly assess the class significance of this new big reality and consequently the failure to base our political and tactical line on the new class alignment of forces, in its turn, led us to dogmatically stick to the old pre-war assessment of forces and the theoretical-political generalizations made out of it.

Let us take the issue of transfer of political power. There has been an endless discussion as to what is the class meaning of this transfer of power, what is the character of the new state, whether independence is formal or real, whether the oppositional role of the Indian bourgeoisie to imperialism is over or not, and whether independent economic development under the bourgeoisie leadership is possible, or not, if so to what extent and so on and so forth. All these and similar other questions, we tried to answer with the yardstick of the 1920 Second Congress theses on National and Colonial questions of the Communist International or other subsequent theoretical and political documents made in its framework and on its basis, on the subject. The said thesis observes: "It is necessary constantly to explain and expose among the broadest masses of toilers of all countries and particularly of the backward countries, the deception systematically practiced by the imperialist powers in creating, under the guise of politically independent

states, states which are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily. Under modern international conditions there is no salvation for the dependent and weak nations except in a union of Soviet Republics."

Our attempt to apply this profound and rich theses, without taking due note of the radically altered "modern international conditions", to examine the question of transfer of political power by the British imperialists could not but land us in a series of mistaken conclusions. Obviously the "modern international conditions" in the post-Second World War period are far different from that of between 1920-30.

The characterization of the new Indian State as nothing more than "dominion status" in the political resolution on the Mountbatten Award, in describing the transfer of power as "a cunning retreat of imperialism for a counter-attack" in the Second Congress Theses, in calling it a change "from direct rule to indirect rule", in depicting the British imperialists as either junior or senior partner of the national bourgeoisie in the new state, in assessing the new Indian government in the 1951 Party Programme as a government tied to the chariot-wheels of British capital and hanging on to the will of the British Commonwealth (more or less as a puppet and satellite) and as a government that essentially carries out the foreign policy of British imperialism – all these sweeping, lopsided, oversimplified and wrong generalizations were the direct outcome of the above-stated erroneous appraisal of the world correlation of class forces. Though these big changes could not be fully assessed at the stage of the 1947-49 period, it was incumbent upon us to take due note of this development at least after the final victory of the historic Chinese Revolution and the developments immediately following it. And yet we were unable to do it. In short, all this resulted in such an overestimation of the strength of imperialism as to think that it possessed the time-old economic, political and military power, through which it could reduce our political independence to a formal and fake one at its sweet will, while seriously underplaying the great role and political significance of the world socialist camp, the rising tide of national liberation movement and the growth of powerful working class struggles in capitalist countries.

Class Revolution and Bourgeois Capitulation

No doubt, this was the biggest mistake our Party had committed and the Party Programme should clearly reflect the correction of this grave mistake. But is it right to trace all our errors to this single source if we have to really make a sharp break with all the defective

understanding on this question and orientate our thinking on correct Marxist-Leninist lines? I am of the opinion that there are some more serious mistakes which need careful examination and prompt correction. They are: the extreme underestimation of the class strength and mass influence of the bourgeoisie, and exaggeration of the maturity of the class revolution. The wrong concept of formal and fake independence emanated not only from the exaggerated strength of imperialism in the post-war world vis-à-vis our national liberation movement, but it was also based on a total underestimation of the political and organisational strength of the Indian bourgeoisie, its hold on the national liberation movement and its still existing potentialities of playing the role of opposition to imperialism, though in a new form, under new conditions, with state power in hand. Life and experience have clearly demonstrated how the bourgeois leadership on the one hand, in the first place, could come out as the most ferocious enemy of the revolutionary working class and democratic movement of the people, while at the same time, conflicting and bargaining hard with imperialism, though in the framework of compromise and economic collaboration with imperialism. It was not so simple and straight as was often described by us as “the capitulation and surrender of the national bourgeoisie”, “the final going over to imperialism”, and its agreeing to become a “junior partner” in the state with imperialism in the face of the growing threat of class revolution, etc.

The compromise and political settlement between imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie leadership did come about in a specific manner and under specific conditions. The British imperialists who came out of the Second World War much shattered, when faced with the mounting tide of national liberation struggle, could see the writing on the wall and thought it expedient to come to a settlement with the national bourgeoisie and agree to transfer political power while retaining as much hold – economic, political and diplomatic – as they could retain at the given moment. The bourgeois leadership of the national liberation struggle in its turn thought it was most advantageous for it to settle with the imperialists on the terms it could obtain and get the State power transferred into its hands. It was certainly a compromise with imperialism and the betrayal of our national liberation movement in certain vital respects. It was also true that the compromise implied continued collaboration with foreign finance capital. Similarly it was an undisputed fact that our bourgeoisie was always afraid of every militant mass movement and was the first to come out with a call to withdraw the movement, once it assumed the militant form as it might go out of its control. However, the key point of dispute to be settled is whether our

bourgeoisie effected its compromise with imperialism, mainly because of the favourable terms it could secure at that moment, in its own class interests? It is generally true, easy and simple also, to say that both these elements were operating and it was the cumulative result of both. But the matter is not as simple as that. If the emphasis is made on the imminent threat of growing class revolution the inevitable conclusion that emerges is, that the bourgeoisie has finally capitulated and gone over to imperialism, that the State power it has secured is merely forma and the government is a puppet or satellite of imperialism. It was precisely this type of mistake, the mistake of exaggerating the strength and growth of the class revolution and underestimating the strength of the bourgeoisie's hold on the situation, that so influenced our thinking as to come to the wrong assessment of the role of the bourgeoisie, the character of the new State, the significance of political independence and of the internal and international policies the government was pursuing.

I have devoted this much to analyse this mistake not merely from the point of objective self-critical study of our past but also because it is necessary to take the lesson seriously and not to fall a victim to such an error once again, in the future. Such a mistake contains in itself all the dangerous seeds which, if allowed to grow, can derail us on the stage, strategy and tactics of our revolutionary movement, into sectarian lines once again.

Economic Dependence and Political Independence

The third serious error that influenced our thinking in assessing the transfer of political power and the character of the new State, in my opinion, arose from laying undue emphasis on the economic factor than is due to it. While correctly citing the thesis of Lenin, that states which are economically, financially and militarily dependent on imperialism cannot retain their real political independence, in our polemics with our inner-Party opponents who were so exaggerating the political independence as to depict it as real and complete independence, we tended to underplay the significance of political independence. This underplaying also was done in the new international background when certain new possibilities had arisen for the newly-liberated states, even though under bourgeois leadership, to assert their political independence. The coming into existence of the powerful world socialist camp and the relative weakening of imperialism on a world scale are two

new aspects in the situation. The inadequate appreciation of this new phenomenon when coupled with laying undue emphasis on the economic factor to the point of belittling of political independence, would certainly lead us to the wrong conclusions. I, together with some other leading colleagues of mine, to a lesser or greater degree, had been guilty of this error in the past. This could be seen clearly from the discussion pamphlets written by us on the eve of our Fourth Party Congress at Palghat. When the late general secretary of our Party, Ajoy Ghosh, was insisting on introducing far reaching changes in the policy and programme of our Party, some of us very correctly felt that in the name of correcting certain shortcomings and errors in our understanding, dangerous seeds of reformism were being sown leading to revisionism on some basic propositions of Marxism-Leninism. This part of our apprehension proved correct and the entire course of the developments culminating in convening the Party Congress in defiance of the revisionist leadership of Dange and Company goes to corroborate it. But this is only one part of the picture. The other aspect of the problem is, did we at that stage try to fight against reformism basing ourselves on the correct application of Marxism-Leninism? While basing ourselves on the sound and fundamental proposition that the economic factor is ultimately the decisive factor in applying it, we reduced it, more or less, as the only factor, to the neglect of other very relevant factors, particularly the factor of newly achieved political independence, in the background of a totally new set of modern international condition. Consequently, we failed to explain the new phenomenon of political independence in the hands of the bourgeoisie leadership being utilised to strengthen its economic base in some measure or other. Thus the right reformist mistakes of our opponents could not be properly exposed and corrected by our Left sectarian approach. This mistake, besides others as pointed out earlier, has to be consciously understood and completely corrected.

The simple fact that in the ultimate analysis, the economic factor acts as the determining one, should in no case lead us to ignore the truth that political independence, in its turn, also, has got its impact in influencing the course of economic development. A very instructive and critical passage from Engels, I hope, would dispel all the confusion that prevailed on the issue.

> Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasis the main principles vis-à-vis our adversaries, who denied it and we had not always the time,

place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights.

He elucidates the point further:

> according to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this, neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis but the various elements of the superstructure, political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical reforms, and then even the reflexes of all these active struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into system of dogmas, also exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events, whose interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible) the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history one chose would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree. (Marx-Engels, Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 442)

The passages quoted are self-explanatory and do not need any elaborate explanation. The one important lesson to be learnt from this is, while fully grasping the significance of the economic factor as the ultimate deciding factor, and on its basis assessing the dangers inherent and implicit in the economic collaboration with and dependence on foreign finance capital by the Indian bourgeoisie, we should not permit ourselves to mechanically and dogmatically equate it to that of “political capitulation” and “final going over of the Indian bourgeoisie” to imperialism. The role of the new state power, and that too, in the new prevailing international conditions on the one hand, and the exact degree of the extent and maturity of the class revolution at home, on the other – both together have to be necessarily taken into account in discussing and deciding on the process and nature of compromise, collaboration and capitulation, its extent and degree. Instead of that, any

oversimplified equation of collaboration with and economic dependence on foreign finance capital with that of final capitulation and surrender of the native bourgeoisie to imperialism is fraught with grave risks in terms of our understanding and approach to the whole question.

In the Draft before us, we have attempted to discard all the mistaken notions of the former period as mentioned earlier and incorporate the new understanding derived on the basis of the new radically-alerted balance of class forces in the world. We have sharply broken from the 1948 thesis in the matter of the erroneous concept of the interlinking and intertwining of the two stages of the revolution, of putting the entire national bourgeoisie in the enemy camp, of excluding the rich peasantry from the democratic alliance, and of characterizing the political independence won in 1947 as fake, formal etc. We also sharply demarcate ourselves from the 1951 Programme in the matter of assessing the class character of the State and the government, of appraising the internal and external policies and of the class alliance envisaged for the revolution. You are all aware that our 1951 Programme and its contents were approvingly appreciated by Stalin and the then CPSU leadership. It certainly was an advance compared to the Second Congress Theses and it introduced some basic corrections in our Party's understanding, prevailing till that time. And yet, far from both sectarian as well as right reformist mistakes. Before I point out concretely what they were, let me make it absolutely clear that the entire responsibility for the 1951 Programme and its preparation was ours and it is totally wrong and impermissible to attribute it to CPSU leaders or Stalin, on the ground that their critical suggestions and approbation were there behind it. We should own our mistakes and acknowledge the help of others to the extent it was, rather than throw the blame on others and thus escape from drawing self-critical lessons from them. Fraternal criticisms and suggestions are always to be welcomed in the genuine spirit of proletarian internationalism and it would be a grave mistake either to deprecate them or blindly and uncritically accept them.

What are the mistakes and their character in the Programme of 1951? In brief, (1) the transfer of political power to the Indian bourgeoisie and its great significance, in the radically changed correlation of forces of the world arena was not at all appreciated and it was interpreted in the old pre-Second World War framework of class alignment; (2) the new possibilities to assert the national independence and in a certain measure utilise it to build the country's economy, though on capitalist lines, was altogether negated; (3) the relative strength and stability of the new regime was very much under-played describing it as a government

hanging to the will of British imperialists and as a tottering government, etc., while exaggerating the popular discontent, consciousness and upsurge; (4) the neutral foreign policy of the government was described as a play between the war camp of imperialism and peace camp of socialism objectively abetting the aggressive designs of US imperialists. Though partly it was correct and that too, in the years between 1948-51 when the attitude of the government on a number of issues such as US aggression in Korea was practically succumbing to imperialist pressure, the class interests of the Indian bourgeoisie for world peace to build itself up, the factor of political independence in the background of new international alignment of class forces and it enabled it to play between two camps and thus utilise the contradictions, etc., were taken into account. The description of post-independent India as a dependency on British and as essentially following the foreign policy of British imperialists added to the lopsided assessment of India's foreign policy in 1951 Programme; (5) the class strategy that was advocated, did not differ from the one advocated in the pre-independence of the revolution and thus the edge of the revolution was chiefly directed against British imperialism as in the period of British rule

On closer examination we find a curious combination of dogmatic and sectarian mistakes on the one hand and right opportunist deviations on the other in the 1951 Programme. The attempt in the present Draft Programme is to extricate our understanding from both these errors and place it on sound Marxist-Leninist class lines. Simultaneously, serious effort has been also made to sharply demarcate our stand on all the key questions under dispute from the right-reformists, who, in the name of the new epoch and the new possibilities, have drawn totally opportunist conclusions, out-and-out revisionist in character, in their Programme Draft.

How does our Draft define the character and nature of the present State power?

It describes the present Indian State as the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords, led by the big bourgeoisie. It further specifies that this big bourgeoisie leadership is compromising and collaborating with foreign finance capital and allying with the landlords in order to pursue the historically-outmoded capitalist path of development and perpetuate its narrow class rule and ruthless exploitation. The draft does also take due note of the fact that with the same object and aim in view, it seeks to utilise the aid from socialist countries for building certain heavy industrial projects and for better bargaining with the imperialists.

All this is, evidently to build themselves up primarily against the people and also against the foreign imperialist competitors to the extent possible.

The State is not, as sought to be made out by the revisionists, the organ of the non-monopoly section of the bourgeoisie in the main; i.e. the section which is objectively interested in the completion of the antiimperialist, anti-feudal tasks. On the contrary, the leading force in the State power is the big bourgeoisie. We should not be deceived by the highly deceptive and demagogic phrases indulged in by the revisionists of different hues who say “that the big bourgeoisie certainly occupies a very important place in the State”, that “it wields considerable influence”, that “it often wields considerable influence”, and yet it “has not won the decisive leadership in the State”, as all this is done with the sole intention of hiding the naked truth from the people that the big bourgeoisie and its political representatives are in the key leadership of the State and utilizing the State power to amass enormous wealth at the expense of the people. At the same time we also repudiate the slanderous accusation hurled at us that we, by characterizing the big bourgeoisie as the leading force in the State, have come to the conclusion that the State power has already come into the exclusive possession of the monopolists, that the State capital and monopoly capital have merged into one and it is already transformed into some type of State-monopoly-capitalism and the like. This is a deliberate distortion of our Draft and an utter falsehood. In our Draft Programme, we have specifically mentioned that the non-big bourgeoisie “are still sharing State power with the big bourgeoisie and entertain high hopes of advancing further under the same regime”. But we surely do hold that if the big bourgeois leadership in the State, with its narrow, selfish anti-national and anti-people policies, is allowed to continue, and not defeated in time, the danger of State-monopoly-capitalism, may be in its own specific and distorted form in India, stares us in the face. Precisely in order to avert this danger, we have to expose the real character of the State and the leading role of big business in it. Not to do so is tantamount to treachery to the working class, the democratic revolution and the people of India.

The State is not, as characterized by our revisionists, the organ of the bourgeois class as a whole in the main, in demarcation with and opposition to the class of landlords. On the contrary, the class of landlords is a firm ally of the leading bourgeois section and is sharing political power with it. We firmly disapprove of the sophistry indulged in by different revisionist exponents who try to draw the “subtle and nice”

distinction between feudal and semi-feudal landlordism on the one hand, and other types of landlordism on the other, who argue that “the backbone of feudalism has been broken”, that “big feudal and semi-feudal estates have disappeared with far-reaching consequences” and that “the landlords’ position is weakening in relation to the bourgeoisie” and because of all this, the State power is, by and large, free from the class of landlords, except when permitted by the grace of the bourgeoisie to occupy governmental posts, and that, too, at the level of the states and not at the Centre. Why do they resort to all this chicanery? It is again to cheat the workers and peasants in the country, telling them that, after all, the State power is not as bad as you think, that the reactionary landlord class is not sharing real power in the State, and if people cooperate with and rally behind the State and government, it will abolish landlordism one day as it had already “broken the backbone of the feudal and semi-feudal order” and carried out substantial land reform.

The Indian State is not the organ of the foreign imperialists as either junior or senior partner, with direct or indirect rule of theirs, not to speak of dismissing the political independence as formal and unreal, as was done earlier. How do we differ with our revisionists on this issue of national independence and political freedom? Here again, we do take note of the fact that by sheer virtue of its class character, by the main link-up of its trade, economy and finances with the world capitalist market, by its increasing reliance on imperialist aid in pushing through its five-year plans for capitalist development, by the growing economic collaboration between the Indian monopolists and foreign imperialists, and by the anti-people, antidemocratic and anti-Communist character of the leading bourgeois-landlord sections, the present Indian State surely becomes vulnerable to the direct and indirect influence of foreign finance capital which is a hundred times more powerful than its counterparts, can subject it to pressure and blackmail even to the point of endangering our national independence. We do not and cannot subscribe to the revisionist thesis which covertly and overtly argues “that this collaboration is not after all as dangerous as depicted by the Left”, “that it is the Indian capital that is growing faster and powerful in the process of collaboration”, that “the economic and industrial growth registered under the five-year plans is more and more strengthening our national independence despite the phenomenal growth of foreign finance capital in the country”, and that “the national bourgeoisie, though a weaker party, can face up to any challenge of foreign imperialist capital and defeat it by its skilful utilization of benevolent socialist aid.”

The revisionists charge us that while assessing the class character of the State and the government, we lose sight of and completely ignore the factor of the immense socialist aid and the role of the State and the government in taking such aid and its significance in the fight against imperialism. We totally repudiate this. We are quite aware of the big role played by socialist aid in launching some industrial and machine-making projects, in facilitating better deals with the imperialists for certain industrial projects and in that measure assist the industrialization of the country and the strengthening of our independence. Our criticism is that the monopoly bourgeois leadership of the State and the government, instead of utilizing this socialist aid to systematically uproot and finally eradicate the foreign finance capital from the country, is using it mainly for bargaining of favourable terms from the foreign finance capitalists, for pushing the bankrupt path of capitalist development and in the process amassing wealth at the expense of the people and finally, for buttressing its class rule against the working class and the democratic movement in the country. This blind and one-sided appraisal of the role of socialist aid to our country, while ignoring which class as the leading force in the State power, is utilizing this aid, in what manner, and to clean forget the fact that for every one agreement with the socialist countries for the building up of a project, then collaboration deals with foreign imperialists of different countries are being forged, thus putting our economy and the State in an extremely vulnerable position for imperialist pressure and blackmail is the biggest blunder the revisionists are committing in this regard. As a result of all this, the revisionists extol the bourgeoisie to the skies for taking this socialist aid and screen the dangerous path the bourgeoisie is pursuing, opening the floodgates of our country to the unlimited penetration of imperialist capital, with all the dangers accompanying it.

To sum up, the revisionist characterization of the class nature of the State in their draft Programme is such that the historical necessity to replace the present State by a State of different democratic classes through a revolution does not stand out. It is more a case for reshuffling and reorganizing the present State, a question of restricting or eliminating big business influence on it, an issue of permitting or not permitting the landlords to don the governmental posts at the level of states, a task of fighting for a shift of policies to the left and a question of reinforcing the state and the central government with the inclusion of some representatives in the name of the working class to assist the national bourgeoisie, both in leading the democratic front and in carrying out the tasks of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution: One is inevitably led to this conclusion because the revisionists refuse to clearly

and categorically state and reveal before the working class and the mass of our people, as to who stands in the way of completing the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal tasks of the revolution, whose political and State power today defends them and against whom the democratic revolution has to fight and defeat to win victory in the revolution. In the absence of this, the loud talk about anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, national democratic revolution reduces itself to reformist prattle and empty phrase mongering, to deceive themselves and the mass of the people.

* The birth centenary year of Comrade M. Basavapunniah began on December 14. M. Basavapunniah was one of the key leaders of the Communist Party. He played an important role in the development of the Communist movement in Andhra Pradesh and was one of the leaders of the Telangana peasants' armed struggle. He made a major contribution to the founding of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). He had a unique role in shaping the ideological viewpoint of the CPI(M). To mark the birth centenary, we are publishing MB's speech introducing the Draft Programme at the founding 7th Congress of the Party in 1964. This speech, unpublished so far, gives a glimpse of the political-ideological abilities of MB.