

Congress Party Program

The following are excerpts from the Congress election manifesto...

Through three decades of freedom, the Indian National Congress has stood steadfast by the ideals that inspired the liberation struggle and to the principles that have activated the Indian Revolution. It has squarely faced the latest desperate attack made upon the people. Despite the continuing threat, the Congress with undiminished faith in the people calls upon all citizens to give it a clear and unequivocal mandate to carry the nation forward unitedly to peace, progress and prosperity through democracy, secularism and socialism, safeguarding the integrity of the nation.

In the 1971 elections, the people reiterated their faith in the Congress ideals of democracy, secularism and socialism... The privileges, to provide the basic requirements of the people speedily through dynamic rural programmes, to provide new employment avenues, to enlarge the role and efficiency of the public sector, to give proper scope to the private sector to play a national role without concentration of economic power, to control prices and ensure supplies of essential commodities, to launch a vigorous programme of child welfare, to expand and improve education and, for these purposes, to amend the Constitution suitably.

In 1973 and 1974 these parties, exploiting economic difficulties and the impact of global inflation stirred up discontent to bring about the dissolution of elected legislative assemblies. By resorting to force, duress and brutal violence duly elected governments were not allowed to function.

In this surcharged atmosphere certain opposition leaders went to the length of inciting the armed forces of mutiny and the police and government officials to rebel. Forces of disintegration were unleashed and communal passions were roused threatening the very unity and integrity of the country. No government could have stood by and allowed the country's stability and integrity to be so imperilled....The Constitution-makers, envisaging precisely such internal disorders, had provided for the declaration of an emergency under the Constitution. No option was left but to declare an emergency when such a situation did arise. This timely and necessary measure was ratified by Parliament. It saved the Republic from catastrophe and restored political stability.

...The new economic programme has contained and reversed inflation, and unparalleled achievement in the world...India is the only country where the price level today is lower than it was in October, 1974....

PRICES

We are maintaining closest vigil on prices. We are taking steps to bring them down in essential commodities. The public distribution system is being strengthened. We shall further expand programmes to reinforce the handloom industry and to bring high quality controlled cloth to the people...

The problem in liquidating poverty is mainly linked with population growth. It would be unwise to allow our planned development efforts to be wiped out by a population explosion. But, the Congress categorically states that there cannot and will not be any compulsion in the family planning movements. It will be a voluntary movement and it will be a people's movement.

The Congress will continue to give high priority to the growth and development of industries.... Efficient management in the economy, specially in the last two years, has led to a comfortable balance of payment, an excellent expert performance, a record accumulation of over Rs 2,500 crores in foreign exchange reserves, industrial peace, a large reservoir of technological and scientific man-power and business confidence.... To stimulate industrial production, the Congress will fully utilise existing capacities, create new capacities and improve productivity. It will take steps to bring sick mills which are otherwise viable back to health. It will also try to introduce modern and scientific methods of management in industries.

LAND REFORMS

The Congress is irrevocably committed to land reforms leading to peasant ownership. Such reforms are being put through rapidly in all states. Along with ownership....agricultural and rural credit procedures will be simplified so that farmers can get easier credit, supplies and services without undue difficulty. An Agricultural Development Bank of India will be established to meet credit requirements and to coordinate the work of cooperative institutions, rural banks, commercial banks in rural areas, farmers' service societies and extension agencies....

In the countryside, the Congress will see that benefits of development go down to the grassroots level by creating greater employment opportunities, extensive programmes will be launched for the small and marginal farmers, rural artisans. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the backward communities.... The Congress will endeavour to transfer modern technology to the undeveloped rural sector and to give preference to such technology as will help eradicate poverty and reduce the drudgery to which the rural population, especially women, are subjected...

In the field of foreign relations, the Congress will continue the policy of non-alignment, which has kept India out of military blocs, preserved its independence and integrity and has allowed it to judge international issues on their merits.... The Congress believes in peaceful co-existence, respect for the sovereignty of every nation and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. It seeks the friendship of all countries, particularly of India's immediate neighbours, and notes with satisfaction the recent success of India's efforts to normalise relations with its neighbours. The Congress calls for urgent measures to establish a new International Economic Order based on justice and equality. The inter-

national community must ensure the accelerated economic growth of developing countries. The developing countries, on their part, should also promote greater cooperation among themselves and strengthen the spirit of collective self-reliance. Congress rejects the doctrine of spheres of influence and balance of power. It is opposed to all forms of colonialism, imperialism, apartheid and racialism....

The Congress appeals to the people to return its candidates to the Lok Sabha in the 1977 elections with a massive majority so that it can:

i) uphold the ideals of secularism, protect the interests of the minorities and the right of every community to pursue its faith and way of life.

ii) preserve and consolidate democracy and put an end to all forms of violence and disorder so that people can live in peace and harmony.

iii) fight poverty, ignorance, disease and inequality and build a modern, prosperous, egalitarian and socialist party,

iv) abolish all kinds of discrimination between one human being and another and end all forms of exploitation.

v) develop and modernise agriculture and allied activities, expedite an integrated rural development programmes and bring about a total rural regeneration.

vi) promote the interests of the small and marginal farmers, agricultural workers, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and backward classes and communities,

vii) strengthen the diversity of the country's industrial base, enlarge the role of the public sector, give scope to the private sector to play its due role within the priorities of the Plan and without bringing about a concentration of economic wealth and power,

viii) take up a massive programme to expand opportunities for productive employment.

ix) protect the interests of the working class and give them their proper share in management and in the fruits of their labour,

x) keep prices in check and ensure essential commodities to the people at reasonable prices,

xi) provide primary education to all children and improve the scope of secondary and higher education, and

xii) expand health and medical facilities and welfare programmes for the people...

CPI Manifesto

Following is the text of the CPI election manifesto:

I MOMENTOUS CHOICE

The coming elections to the Lok Sabha are a crucial battle. Our motherland and our people have to make a momentous choice. At stake are issues which are decisive for national destiny and for our people's advance to fullfledged democracy leading to socialism.

At stake are the progressive objectives and policies of our nation. The inclusion of socialism in the preamble of the Constitution, the secular and democratic system, the anti-imperialist foreign policy of peace, nonalignment, friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist States — all these have been and are under constant attack from reaction. The people must give a clear mandate of reinforced support for these policies and against their opponents.

At stake are the parliamentary democratic system, the democratic rights of the masses, the cherished democratic norms and values. These face serious danger from reaction. The people must give a clear mandate to defeat this danger, defend democracy and give it stronger mass foundations.

At stake are the direction and content of our nation's economic policy. The people must give a clear mandate for self-reliance, for rapid implementation of the 20-point programme, for anti-monopoly measures, for planning of the economy tied to national needs and internal mass market and for closer ties with the socialist world. The people must give a clear mandate against the Imperialist

World Bank strategy of dependence on aid and export oriented economy, against the wholesale concessions by the Government to the monopolists, against policies and measures helping speculators and hoarders...

II NATION'S TRIALS — OUR RECORD

Six turbulent years have passed since the previous Lok Sabha election. The struggles of the masses have written the history of these years. Countless have been their sacrifices and militant actions for land, bread, jobs and the right to a better life....

The Communist Party of India along with other democratic parties and forces supported the declaration of the Emergency in 1975, which had been made unavoidable by the grave threat internal and external, of destabilisation. It backed the steps against smugglers and speculators, the 20-point programme with its anti-landlord thrust and certain, other declarations and actions which raised high hopes among the masses for a better life and democratic advance of the nation. Some legislations, which were enacted and measures taken by the Government in this direction were fully supported by the Communist Party of India and other democratic forces.

But, after the initial period of some achievements, the Emergency powers came to be more and more misused against the working class, peasantry, the common people and the democratic forces. Even our Parliamentary democratic system and institutions were sought to be weakened and undermined on one pretext or another from inside the ruling party.