

VIII

7th CONGRESS



New
Communist Party
of the Netherlands

Decision on party building (summary)

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Introduction

Party building encompasses all facets of building the communist party: the building of branches and their ability to engage in more and better activities, the formation of party members who are well-educated and steeled in practical experience, but it also includes issues such as building the party's ability to take the lead in the labour movement, strengthening the functioning of the party's leading organs, and developing the party's revolutionary strategy.

Party building is necessary so that the NCPN, as the vanguard of the revolutionary labour movement in the Netherlands, can better lead the struggle of the working class and other oppressed strata of the population.¹ This means the struggle for improvements in the standard of living and the acquisition of political and social rights, but also, by extension, the struggle – when revolutionary conditions arise – for the overthrow of bourgeois power and the construction of socialism-communism.

In all the above aspects of party building, we still have a long way to go. The NCPN is still weak and the international communist movement – of which the NCPN is an integral part – is still in a very difficult period. The labour movement and the communist movement are still recovering from the decline that took place at the end of the last century. A decline that was very drastic, but temporary in nature. Because the contradictions of capitalism constantly create the possibility and the necessity for socialism. On the one hand, people see the enormous progress in technology, science and the possibilities of production. But on the other hand, people see that they have to make do with less and less, that it is harder and harder to make ends meet, while wealth is accumulating in the hands of a small minority. People's livelihoods are increasingly under threat. More and more working-class people are looking for an alternative, trying to find ways to resist the disastrous consequences of capitalism for the working class, but also specifically for the environment, for women and for minorities. Because of the growing contradictions of capitalism, more people from the working class are finding our party and our youth movement, the CJB. This has already expressed itself recently in the strengthening of the party and CJB with new members.

This means not only that material conditions are ripe for taking certain important steps in party building, but also that material conditions *demand* that we take steps in party building. To stand still is to go backwards. With the present document we are outlining the guidelines for the steps we must take in the next few years until the next Party Congress in building the communist party of the Netherlands, the NCPN.

First, the main bottlenecks in party building are identified and the historical background is sketched to give an insight into the causes of our weaknesses. It then goes on to discuss the steps that need to be taken in the coming years to strengthen the party ideologically, politically and organisationally.

The main bottlenecks in party building

1. **The main bottleneck is the weak political-ideological unity in the party...**
2. **Lack of democratic centralism and working as a collective...**
3. **Defective functioning of the national organs...**
4. **Branches that do not or barely function...**
5. **Insufficient collective responsibility for and guidance of Manifest...**
6. **Inactive members...**

¹ By 'other oppressed strata of the population', we mean sections of the petty bourgeoisie, such as the self-employed and relatively small farmers, who, in imperialism, suffer from the competition and pressure of the large monopolies.

Historical context and origin of our weaknesses

In order to overcome these weaknesses, it is important that we as a party understand why we are facing them. It is not a simple matter of incapable members of leading organs or unwillingness. The NCPN, like the labour movement worldwide, is still recovering from the decline that took place at the end of the last century. Many sister organisations are facing similar problems. It is therefore important to understand the historical context and the origins of the NCPN's weaknesses. Especially as our organisation grows with new members who have not experienced the complex history of our party. The study of our history is therefore an important task in the coming period. Here we will only briefly touch on certain aspects of party history that are relevant to party building.

The rise of an opportunist current in the communist movement

The decline of the communist movement at the end of the last century was related to the counterrevolutions in the USSR and other countries that built up socialism in the 20th century. But the decline had started years before the counterrevolutions. The root cause lies mainly in wrong attitudes and ways of working, which became influential and even dominant in many communist parties and the labour movement in the course of the post-war period.

This opportunistic movement is often called Eurocommunism. With Eurocommunism, the revolutionary strategy of communist parties was gradually replaced by a reformist strategy. The result of Eurocommunism was that several communist parties formed alliances with social democratic and other bourgeois parties, and participated in bourgeois governments. They ceased to be revolutionary parties and were completely transformed into social democratic parties, dissolved or marginalised.

The causes of the appearance of this reformist current in the international communist movement in general, and in the CPN in particular, is a question that we, as a party, must study even more closely in the future. It has to do, among other things, with complex post-war social and economic developments, the development of the strategy of communist parties, as well as developments in socialist countries. Specifically for the CPN, we can briefly state that at the 26th Congress on 20-22 January 1978 it was decided to form a new party programme. This was the starting point for questioning the principles of the party. A draft programme on a Eurocommunist line was ready in 1981. It dismissed Marxism-Leninism as 'rigid' and 'dogmatic'. It rejected democratic centralism and embraced 'plurality'.

The struggle against reformism and revisionism in the CPN and the foundation of the NCPN ²

Within the CPN, the Horizontal Consultation of Communists (HOC) was formed in 1982 as an organised opposition to the reformist trend. The HOC published, among other things, Manifest, first as a bulletin and later as a newspaper. At an extraordinary congress in February 1984, however, the new reformist party programme was ratified, and with it the CPN formally distanced itself from Marxism-Leninism and democratic centralism. That year, part of the HOC founded the Union of Communists in the Netherlands (VCN), initially as an organisation within the CPN. After the 29th party congress on 1-3 March 1985 it was announced that the VCN would be founded as a separate political party. This happened on 2-3 November 1985.

However, there were great internal divisions in the VCN. The situation was greatly complicated by the developments in the USSR and the other socialist countries. There, revisionism had gained the upper hand in the ruling communist parties, capitalist relations were being reintroduced, and ultimately, with the

² Revisionism is the unjustified discarding or revising of a strategy or certain principles, positions and assessments. This is often done under the pretext that they are outdated or no longer relevant, when in fact this is not the case. The opposite of revisionism is dogmatism. This is the adherence to strategies that no longer apply because material conditions have changed. Both revisionism and dogmatism are characteristics of opportunism, and they often go hand in hand. As Communists, we fight both revisionism and dogmatism. We constantly try to test theory against, and to enrich it with, the practical experience that we study scientifically.

counterrevolutions, a restoration of the dictatorship of capital took place. Contradictions and confusion increased throughout the international communist movement. After the CPN dissolved itself on 15 June 1991 to merge with GroenLinks, the NCPN was founded in November 1992 as a merger of the VCN and various groups from the CPN who disagreed with the liquidation of the party.

Hence the NCPN was founded in an extremely difficult period. The counterrevolutions had just taken place and the international communist and workers' movement was in a very deep crisis. Within the NCPN there was great division, with a great deal of confusion (many remnants of Eurocommunism, but also sectarian and other wrong views and ways of working etc.). Therefore, the NCPN has not been able to form a complete party programme so far.

In these difficult circumstances of the movement's decline, it is invaluable that we as the NCPN, despite our weaknesses and shortcomings, have ensured in our 30 years of existence that the working class in the Netherlands has retained its communist party. This is invaluable, because it means that the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the historical practical experience of the struggles of the Dutch labour movement are being passed on to new generations of communists.

We must collectively study the history of the NCPN and CPN more closely and learn from it. To make progress in party building, it is important to understand the characteristics of Eurocommunism, because Eurocommunism created a lot of confusion that still has effects today.

Some aspects of Eurocommunism

- Eurocommunism advocated a parliamentary road to socialism. The communist party, together with other 'leftist' or 'progressive' parties (i.e. social democratic and other bourgeois parties), should obtain a majority in the bourgeois parliament in order to form a government within the framework of capitalism. It was assumed that such a government could use the bourgeois state to develop reforms towards socialism.
- From this strategy, communist parties thus sought political alliances with social-democratic, Christian-democratic and other bourgeois parties. The struggle for the unity of the working class and other oppressed strata of the population against capitalism gave way to the 'unity of the left' against 'right-wing policies' and for a 'left-wing government'. The ideological struggle against opportunism and social democracy weakened. The Marxist approach to political forces based on class analysis gave way to bourgeois theories and associated terminology. For example, analyses in terms of 'left' and 'right' parties and movements, in which political forces are analysed as a spectrum, independent of the class interests that their proposals represent.
- The state was seen as a neutral power, above the classes, which – with pressure 'from below' – could be used by the working class for socialist construction. The Marxist conception of the state as an oppressive mechanism of the ruling class was discarded. The same applies to the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. that the working class develop its own organs of power under revolutionary conditions.
- This course also gradually led to the abandonment of democratic centralism and other practices that are characteristic of a revolutionary organisation.
- Eurocommunism was accompanied by a negative attitude towards the USSR and real socialism.
- National circumstances were magnified and used as a pretext for a reformist strategy. It was considered impossible to forge unity on strategy in the international communist movement.
- Imperialism was no longer understood in a Leninist way, as the highest and final stage of capitalism, as monopoly capitalism. Instead, it was understood as a synonym for aggressive US foreign policy.

- Gradually, the theory was developed that all social strata and classes, with the exception of foreign monopolies, are allies of the working class, thus including (domestic) monopoly capital. Exploitation by the national bourgeoisie was justified and communist parties started to support the foreign policy and other choices of the national bourgeoisie, thinking that this would strengthen the struggle against 'imperialism' (the US). The ability to understand the contradictions within imperialism (between imperialist powers) in a Leninist way was diminishing.
- Many Eurocommunist parties supported the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) and later the EU. The EU was seen as a neutral body, above the classes, that could be transformed into a union working to the advantage of the working class if only 'left-wing parties' would get the majority.
- Eurocommunism was accompanied by liquidationism, or the position that the revolutionary party of the working class was not needed. The communist party had to dissolve ('liquidate') itself in order to merge into a 'broad', 'leftist' party, which is what happened to the CPN.

In essence, Eurocommunism was a revival of the old social democratic view that it is possible to overthrow capitalism through reform, without a revolutionary overthrow of capitalist property and the bourgeois state.

Although it is clear that the NCPN rejects Eurocommunism in general, there are still many remnants of this current in the workers' movement. Politics is still often analysed in terms of a left-right spectrum, there are illusions about social democracy, there is confusion about imperialism, etc. In order to take steps in party building and to strengthen political-ideological unity within the party on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, it is important to understand these remnants, and to overcome them through education and discussion.

Steps in party building

With all the foregoing in mind, the Congress states that the following points, which will be further elaborated in the following chapters, should be taken up in the coming years in order to make steps in party building.

1. Strengthening ideological work. This means education in theory, studying and discussing developments in order to collectively elaborate positions, thus forging political-ideological unity.
2. Drawing up a party programme, to serve as a common basis for our politics and strategy, i.e. for the practice of each member in the workplace, in the movement etc.
3. Improving our organisation and working methods, acting collectively on the basis of democratic centralism.
4. Improving the functioning of the leading organs of the party.
5. Activation of inactive branches and members, and improvement of coordination between branches and leading organs.
6. Strengthening of our party newspaper, Manifest.

1. Ideological work

The importance of ideological work

The ideological work permeates the activity of the whole NCPN, of every communist. Without revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary practice. The ideological work includes:

- Education in the theory of scientific socialism.
- Study of current developments and elaboration of the party's positions and strategy.
- Ideological issues that we want to communicate externally (propaganda).

With ideological work, we strengthen theory by studying practice collectively, and we strengthen our practice by acting on the basis of the scientific theory of communism. The Congress sets a general agenda for long-term ideological work. That is, the Congress documents provide guidance for education activities, but also for the issues we need to study as a party, as well as for the work of the Manifest editorial board and our propaganda to the outside world.

The agenda for ideological work set out below aims, among other things, to ensure that we collectively have a good understanding of certain basic issues and basic concepts of Marxism-Leninism. There are many basic issues about which there is still much confusion even within the Party, due to the lack of education on the one hand and the abundance of distortions in bourgeois and opportunist literature on the other. The strengthening of the ideological work is also an important step in the run-up to the formation of the party programme.

Agenda for ideological work: issues requiring education and study

a) Capitalism

Education is needed to collectively form a better understanding of the capitalist system and its laws of development. Study is needed in how capitalist relations manifest themselves today.

The process of exploitation and the cause of economic crises deserve special attention, both for internal education and our propaganda to the outside world. There are many bourgeois theories that confuse these issues to justify capitalism. For example, that capitalists would get rich by working hard or having a good idea ('gap in the market'), that the working class would no longer exist, that we would live in a 'post-industrial society', that the last crisis was only caused by the outbreak of the corona virus etc.

Another specific issue is that 'neoliberalism' or 'right-wing policies' are often identified as the cause of the policy of dismantling social achievements and privatisations in recent decades. The cause is thus falsely attributed to a specific variant in which capitalism can be managed. This approach obscures the real cause, which lies in the fundamental properties and laws of the capitalist system itself. Moreover, it perpetuates illusions about Keynesian policies and state intervention as a means of solving capitalism's problems. And thus also about the role of social democracy and the possibility of future political alliances between the NCPN and other 'left parties', as a precursor to participation in a 'left government' within capitalism.

More generally, it is important to school in the Marxist approach to political relations and developments, based on class analysis. This contrasts with bourgeois approaches, such as political analyses in terms of a left-right spectrum (a legacy from Eurocommunism) or in terms of conspiracy thinking.

Furthermore, it is important to study closely the current developments that capitalism is undergoing. This includes developments in the capitalist economy and superstructure; both internationally and specifically for the Netherlands. Studying current international and domestic relations on the basis of dialectical materialism and Marxist political economy is also a prerequisite for forming a party programme, as material reality is the basis for our theory and strategy. More specifically, study is required of the position of Dutch capital in the international imperialist system, the composition of Dutch capital, its objectives, the contradictions in the interests of different sectors of capital, how these interests determine the policies of governments, and their consequences for the working class.

In addition, the study of capitalism also includes study of developments in the working class and labour movement. This is not just about working conditions and level of income, but about all kinds of developments that affect the ability of working people to secure the means they need to live: increasing work pressure, dismantling social security, competition, employment policies, robotisation, etc... There are (increasingly fewer) sections of the working class that can make ends meet comfortably, but there are large layers of the working class that have to struggle to make ends meet (more than half a million Dutch households live in poverty).

b) Imperialism and current international relations

An important task for the party is education in imperialism and study to form a better understanding of international relations today. Central to this should be understanding imperialism in a Leninist way, as monopoly capitalism, as a stage in the development of capitalism. This is important because there are many bourgeois and opportunist theories that disorient the anti-imperialist movement and that serve as starting points for reformist theories.

Imperialism is, for instance, often understood as the aggressive foreign policy of the US and some countries in north-western Europe. Consequently, countries with opposing interests are often mistakenly seen as anti-imperialist. This is a simplistic approach that ignores the economic basis (monopoly capitalism) and other important aspects of imperialism.

There are also views on international relations that are outdated, because they rely, for example, on the assumption of a strong socialist bloc or on the assumption of a colonial system, whereas the strong socialist bloc is largely gone and the colonial system has been dismantled (despite there being remnants of it, such as the Dutch colonies in the Caribbean).

A good understanding of imperialism is also important to understand the nature of imperialist interventions and wars.

c) Socialism and communism

It is important to improve our understanding of socialism and communism as a society formation characterised by social ownership, central planning, workers' power, etc. Socialism is nothing but immature communism, or communism under construction, in which remnants of capitalism still exist. Thus, socialism is not a socioeconomic system distinct from communism. It is a system that answers the material contradictions and problems of capitalism, and thus not an 'idealistic dream' but a material necessity.

Of importance is countering the distortions of these concepts by bourgeois and opportunist theories, equating, for example, social property with (capitalist) state property, or equating central planning with macroeconomic policies or economic planning in general. Social democratic or Keynesian measures are thus sometimes wrongly interpreted as 'steps towards building socialism'...

Socialism and communism are often drawn apart by reformist forces. Socialism is thereby outlined as a separate socioeconomic system, where the economy is based on commodity production and not subject to the laws of the communist relations of production. In this way, capitalism is disguised as socialism. This is done in the context of reformist strategies characterised by endlessly deferring the construction of socialism-communism (sometimes expressed this way by the communist movement precisely to emphasise the connectedness of these concepts).

To improve our understanding of socialism, we must study the history of socialist construction in the 20th century and draw lessons from it, critically and scientifically, without demonising or idealising, from the point of view of the working class. In doing so, it is important to present an ideological front in the face of anti-communist slander and distortions from bourgeois historiography.

d) Fight against opportunism and the influence of bourgeois ideology in the movement and the party

Fighting against opportunism, against influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology in the labour movement and in the party, is a fundamental task for a communist party.

Special attention requires the struggle against the ideological intervention of the bourgeoisie in the social movement. Reactionary theories about women and minorities are produced. Reactionary views are also spread about the growing ecological problems (including climate change), denying, for instance, these problems or the role of humanity (capitalism) in these problems. Such views are often spread by fascistoid

organisations, but not exclusively by them. We need to properly understand, criticise and combat these theories and the class interests they express.

Within the social movement (especially emancipation movements, but also in the environmental movement and trade union movement), there is great influence of certain reactionary theories inspired from postmodern or other bourgeois approaches that present themselves as 'progressive' (postcolonialism, postmodern approaches, intersectionality, etc.). These reactionary approaches work their way into the demands, organisational forms and forms of struggle that the movements adopt. They have a disorientating effect and they block the movement's orientation on a class-oriented line and its real connection to the labour movement and the struggle for a different society.

Important preliminary work has already been done in recent years to better understand these issues and arm ourselves against bourgeois views. This must continue. We must carefully study the historical development and class character of these issues, formulate topical demands that express the interests of (discriminated groups within) the working class, and criticise the influence of bourgeois ideology both at the theoretical level and in terms of the orientation of the struggle...

e) Strategy and the study of the history revolutionary labour movement

Leading up to the formation of a party programme, the ideological work on the question of strategy needs to be strengthened. An important stepping stone for this is to study the history of the international and Dutch communist movement, especially the CPN, HOC, VCN, NCPN and the predecessors of the present CJB.

It is important to study, understand and draw lessons from the historical development in the strategy of the international and Dutch communist movement. Part of this is to study the developments in the programmes of the CPN, the Communist International, the CPSU and other influential communist parties, as well as, of course, the programmes of our sister organisations today. Opportunist currents, such as euro-communism, '21st century socialism' etc., are a very important part of studying the history of strategy and it is particularly important to comprehend these currents.

There is also a need for a somewhat comprehensive interpretation of the history of the trade union movement (especially specifically the Dutch trade union movement). In particular, the struggle between the two lines – reformism and the revolutionary or class-oriented line – and its expression in the trade union movement today. This is important for strengthening our work in the trade union movement

2. Party programme

The NCPN aims to draft a party programme and adopt it at the next party congress. With this document, the 7th Congress is laying the foundations...

The function of a party programme

The communist party's programme is an exposition of the party's revolutionary **strategy** for the socialist revolution; for the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism. Thus, the party programme is not about tactical issues, which depend on short-term developments. Those issues are elaborated in decisions and statements of the CC or Party conferences, as well as articles of Manifest. Nor does it contain a list of specific demands or policy proposals; it does not serve as an election programme.

The party programme started in 1999 (of which only the first chapter has been formally adopted) does not fit the above description. It covers the principles and development of Marxism-Leninism very extensively, but not the strategy. As a result, it has more of a philosophical and educative character and does not provide sufficient guidance for action. This is due to the historical context in which that party programme was formed, in which many principles were still under discussion and establishing the principles required great attention. Obviously,

the party programme will also have to name what the principles of the party are, but it serves primarily as an exposition of the party's revolutionary strategy.

A party programme has an internal and an external function. Externally, it is important to make ourselves known: this is the party we are. For example, to people interested in membership and to sister organisations abroad. Even more important is the internal function, the unity of the party on a particular political-ideological and strategic basis. For the NCPN, it is not only the result (= the party programme) that matters, but above all the activity of drafting and establishing it. This is a process in which we collectively come to better understand a set of issues and thereby strengthen the political-ideological unity of the party.

What should be in the party programme?

Overall, the party programme should include the following to set out the party's strategy:

1. The goal, principles and character of the NCPN.
2. Current international and domestic relations, and the material conditions for socialism.
3. The tasks of the NCPN now and in the future.

1. The goal, principles and character of the NCPN

The party programme should first mention the goal, principles and character of the NCPN. This is succinctly set out in the introduction (or introductory chapters) to the programme. It is not about expounding at length the whole Marxist-Leninist theory, but about succinctly naming the principles on which our strategy and political work as a party is based. So the introduction contains, among other things, the following, which we will obviously have to elaborate on when forming the party programme.

- That the NCPN is the revolutionary party of the working class and is its vanguard.
- That the party's goal is the overthrow of capitalism through socialist revolution and the building of socialism-communism.
- That the NCPN bases itself on Marxism-Leninism as the "guide for our action"; that it bases itself on dialectical materialism, Marxist political economy and revolutionary strategy for the class struggle.
- The origins and brief history of the NCPN (including CPN, HOC, VCN etc.).
- That the party is part of the international communist movement and upholds the values of proletarian internationalism and international solidarity.
- That the party is committed to strengthening the labour movement, the class-oriented elements in the trade union movement and the struggle to improve the standard of living of the working class.
- The party supports any progressive struggle, i.e. any struggle that is in the interest of the working class because it is what advances society as a whole, such as struggle against imperialist wars and interventions and for peace, struggle around climate/environment, emancipation of women and minorities from the working class, anti-racism, anti-fascism, etc.
- That the party stands up for the interests and rights of working-class youth and other oppressed sections of the population.

2. Current international and domestic relations, and the material conditions for socialism

After the introduction setting out the goal, principles and character of the party, the general nature of current international and domestic relations must be named. After all, current relations determine the strategy the party must shape to change them.

Capitalist relations of production and imperialism shape contemporary international and domestic relations. Capitalism is characterised by its basic contradiction, i.e. the contradiction between socialisation of production and private appropriation of the results of production. Imperialism is the final stage of capitalism, in which the basic contradiction of capitalism becomes more intense. The main feature of imperialism is the dominance of monopolies in production, which is primarily an expression of the further socialisation of production and the

intensification of the basic contradiction of capitalism. In addition, capitalism in its imperialist stage is characterised by finance capital (i.e. industrial capital and bank capital increasingly merging), the special significance of capital exports, as well as the formation of monopoly links that divide and redistribute the world among themselves, as the territorial division of the world between capitalist countries is completed.

The elaboration of these relations goes hand in hand with the elaboration of **the material conditions for socialism**. Indeed, it is the development of capitalism that makes socialism possible and necessary. The development of productive forces, technology and science, mean that the material conditions for building the socialist economy, an economy that is scientifically centrally planned, are much more mature and favourable today, compared to the period when socialism was built in the 20th century.

In other words, it is an outline of the current phase the world and the Netherlands are in. More specifically:

- What the international imperialist system looks like today.
- What the prevailing relations of production are in the Netherlands.
- What is the position of the Netherlands in the imperialist system, to which imperialist affiliations the Dutch bourgeoisie is currently affiliated (EU, NATO), and special attention should also be paid to the contemporary possession of colonies in the Caribbean as a remnant of the colonial system.
- The possibility and necessity of socialism in the Netherlands.

Current conditions are also strongly characterised by very negative correlation of forces for the working class.³ This negative correlation of forces is due to the temporary decline of the labour and communist movement internationally as a result of the counterrevolutions, but also especially due to the prevalence of opportunism.

3. The NCPN's tasks now and in the future

The third part is about the tasks of the NCPN. This part really concerns the party's strategy: what should we do to free people from capitalist exploitation and build communism? Among other things, this concerns the interrelated points below.

- First, the **tasks of the party in the present, non-revolutionary conditions**. The party programme must provide guidance for our political work in the workplace and in the trade union movement, on the basis of which we can, on the one hand, strengthen the trade union movement on a class-oriented basis, and also strengthen the party. It should also provide guidance for our work in neighbourhoods, action committees, emancipation movements and other mass organisations. It also concerns the attitude of communists towards the bourgeois state, including the function of council work and parliamentary work in the framework of our strategy, as well as the position on government participation within capitalism.
- Secondly, it concerns the **party's tasks under revolutionary conditions**. It is, of course, impossible to predict what factors will lead to such circumstances, so this cannot be more than certain general guidelines. For example, naming what revolutionary conditions are, the role of the party in the revolution, and tasks under such conditions (such as winning over the masses, forming fronts and forming organs of workers' power etc.).

³ By correlation of forces in this case, we mean the relationship between the strength of the working class and its allies, versus the strength of the capitalist class. The correlation of forces improves for the working class as the labour movement strengthens. That strengthening includes, among other things, the working-class movement becoming more massive, the level of organisation increasing, the working-class movement having a more class-oriented orientation, and the strengthening of the alliance with other oppressed sections of the population (self-employed, poor peasants, etc.). But also that the party becomes stronger, that political-ideological unity in the party improves and the party's ties with the working class improve. Improving the correlation of forces can manifest itself in gaining rights for the people. The complete reversal of the correlation of forces in favour of the working class happens when the working class takes power and socialises the means of production. Submission to a negative correlation of forces is often a starting point for opportunism. In the name of a negative correlation of forces, revolution is said to be impossible, other 'tactics' are needed etc. But the correlation of forces, however negative, does not remain stable. For capitalism itself is not stable, but a system whose internal contradictions sharpen.

- Third, it concerns **the tasks of the party in the first period of socialist construction**. This concerns first of all the guidelines for forming the socialist economy. Which sectors must and can be immediately socialised? In which sectors must the conditions for this first be created? What are the first steps in various key sectors, such as industry, utilities, transport, public transit, commerce and agriculture? What are the guidelines for (ownership relations in) sectors such as education, care, culture, sports and media? But it is also about the principles on which socialist democracy (dictatorship of the proletariat) is organised. What is the role of the party in socialism? Is there still class struggle in socialism?

These are all sorts of very practical questions under different circumstances, but to set out these tasks properly, there are a series of theoretical questions that also need to be answered in the party programme. Below we name some of these that are of great importance. They are all interrelated.

Theoretical issues regarding the party's strategy

A. The political content of the revolution

First, the political nature of the revolution in the Netherlands must be determined. This is a core part of the strategy. The content or nature of the revolution is determined by the contradiction it seeks to resolve.

The socialist revolution aims to overthrow bourgeois power and establish working-class power. It resolves the basic contradiction of capitalism, i.e. the contradiction between the socialisation of production and the private appropriation of its results. That contradiction is resolved with the socialist revolution through the socialisation of the means of production and more generally the construction of socialist relations in the economy by workers' power.

This contrasts with other strategies, where an 'anti-imperialist', 'anti-monopoly', 'democratic', 'patriotic' or other revolution within capitalism is deemed necessary first. Such upheavals do not aim directly at the conquest of power by the working class or the resolution of the antithesis of capitalism. They focus on gaining national liberation, democratisation or some other improvement within the framework of capitalism. Such strategies have in the past been developed primarily by parties in colonies, in countries where the bourgeois revolutions were not yet completed and pre-capitalist relations still dominated (which were often maintained by the imperialist colonial 'mother countries'). However, they were also adopted by communist parties in capitalist countries on the assumption that either the material conditions for socialism would not yet exist or the international correlation of forces would allow a parliamentary path. Through various stages or phases, such revolutions were then supposed to evolve into socialism.

The question of the political nature of revolution thus concerns the question of how we try to achieve socialism. This has major implications for how communists go about their day-to-day political work, e.g. in the trade unions.

In general, we have been arguing for years that the NCPN is a revolutionary party pursuing communism, and that the Dutch working class also needs such a party. That the NCPN is a revolutionary party primarily means that it advocates the revolutionary path to socialism, in contrast to reformist strategies. This fundamental premise must be further developed in the course of forming a party programme.

In doing so, we must keep in mind that there were (and still are) different views within the international communist movement on what determines the character of the revolution. This outline of the party programme puts the relations of production at the centre. So that a country is a capitalist country, in the phase of imperialism, is thus seen as determining the content of the revolution. After all, current relations determine the fundamental social contradictions that the revolution needs to resolve. Others, however, see the correlation of forces as determining the content revolution, which often means that the socialist revolution is considered impossible due to the negative correlation of forces. However, the correlation of forces is contingent. They can and will be completely reversed sooner or later by objective (i.e. not party-created) developments.

B. The issue of power

The communist party's goal is for the working class to seize power, where the communist party will play an important role in the course of socialist construction. However, a very important political issue is whether the communist party has anything to do in a government within capitalism.

Many communist parties in which Eurocommunism prevailed participated in governments within the framework of capitalism or aspired to do so. They focused on forming a 'leftist', 'progressive', 'anti-monopoly' or 'anti-imperialist' government, whose goal is not to abolish capitalism and build socialism. They focused on breaking with 'right-wing policies' and 'dependence on other countries'; and on expanding democracy, gaining national sovereignty and social gains. They assumed that these goals were realisable within capitalism and could lead to socialism through various intermediate stages. In other words, these parties were thus under the illusion that a parliamentary path to socialism would be possible.

The question of power is closely related to the question of the state. These parties had the illusion that the working class could use the bourgeois state to form its own power, or that the communist party could take steps towards socialist revolution through participation in a bourgeois government.

The NCPN rejects reformism and illusions about the parliamentary road to socialism. In principle, therefore, the NCPN rules out government participation under capitalism. Indeed, history has shown time and again that the bourgeois state apparatus and bourgeois organs of power cannot serve the working class in the overthrow of capitalism. In the course of the class struggle, the working class forms its own struggle organisations. When revolutionary conditions arrive, it forms its own organs of power, which, in the event of a successful revolution, form themselves into democratic organs of socialist state power of the working class. In other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which – as Lenin pointed out – "is a thousand times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic."

The question of power, the question of the state and the question of government participation within capitalism are fundamental strategic questions. It is extremely important to study them well and formulate a clear position on them in the party programme, so that the party is always able to make the right analyses and take the right positions. Even under complex circumstances, such as threat of war, rise of fascism or when the party is invited to participate in a 'left' coalition government etc.

The issue of government participation is sometimes confused with participation in the bourgeois parliament and elections. This is a different issue. The NCPN participates in elections to the best of its ability (for now, only at the municipal level) and sees the bourgeois representative bodies as a useful platform to promote the interests and demands of the workers and other oppressed sections of the population, press for improvements and expose bourgeois policies. However, seats are never an end in themselves for the NCPN.

C. Front formation and alliance policy

Another important issue is front formation and alliance policy. For the NCPN, it is clear that the working class is the driving force for the revolution. This is an important and fundamental premise for the communist party. However, there are also other sections of the population, such as parts of the petty bourgeoisie, who are suffering under the yoke of the big monopolies. Moreover, various movements linked to the struggle against capitalism are developing within the working class (such as emancipation movements of women and minorities from the working class, as well as the environmental movement). In recent years, the NCPN has had some experience with the 'platform for work in businesses and class consciousness' as a form of forming a front around work in businesses and trade union work, and with various action committees.

There are several issues that need to be explored to find the right foundations for alliance politics. What is the position of different sections of the petty bourgeoisie and peasants in the Netherlands? Which classes and social strata have an interest in fighting imperialism and/or capitalism? At what points can alliances be formed, what are the conditions for this and where do these possibilities end? These are questions that need to be

asked from a Leninist alliance policy perspective. Questions that focus on alliances between social strata and classes, within the framework of the mass movement.

This Leninist approach contrasts with reformist positions, where the aim of front formation and alliance politics is not to unite the working class and oppressed strata in the struggle against capitalism, but to unite so-called 'left' parties against the 'right', as a precursor to participation in bourgeois government by the communist party. It is already clear that the NCPN is not oriented towards such reformist alliance politics. The 6th Congress already prioritised forming front and alliances "at the basis, in neighbourhoods and businesses". At this point, discussions should continue on the basis of analyses of contradictions in reality. In order to crystallise our positions and arrive at general principles for the party programme, as this is an important part of strategy in both current conditions and revolutionary conditions.

D. Lessons from socialism built in the 20th century

It is also important that certain lessons from socialist construction in the 20th century be incorporated into the party programme. Steps are already being taken to study that history collectively in the party and draw lessons from both the positive and negative experiences, and in particular the causes for the counter-revolution in the USSR...

3. Democratic centralism

Democratic centralism is essential for the content and the organisational capacity to act of the party. It is very important for party building and also relates to all the following points (improving the functioning of the party leadership, branches and Manifest).

What is democratic centralism?

Democratic centralism is the organising principle of a communist party and its youth organisation. The main purpose of this organisational principle is to ensure the ideological, political and organisational unity of the party. It helps ensure that the local/individual meets the general/collective. It ensures that the political work of the individual member or organ becomes a collective issue for the party, and vice versa that the party line guides the activity of the individual. It helps ensure that local and individual views and practice are based on the general experience, and that general policy and strategy is enriched by local and individual practice (dialectic between theory and practice).

That means that internal discussion takes place freely, taking all members seriously and mobilising their knowledge and insights to contribute to collectively shaping the line. This is how qualitative and widely supported decisions emerge. Once a decision is taken, everyone is bound to implement it. Decisions are thus implemented collectively. Externally, we act as a unit. Dissenting views or criticism from individual members or bodies is expressed only internally. The essence of democratic centralism is therefore that after internal freedom of discussion, decisions are taken and implemented collectively.

The implementation of decisions is then critically evaluated by members, in order to correct weaknesses and errors in the implementation or in the decision itself. Democratic centralism thus requires the discipline of members who consciously contribute to collectively forming, implementing, criticising and correcting decisions. Control, criticism and self-criticism help ensure that experiences are made collective, that mistakes, weaknesses and strengths are identified and incorporated into the line and positions. Fractions are not allowed.

In practical terms, democratic centralism translates into a set of concrete organisational rules, originally worked out by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. These rules are used by communist parties worldwide.

- All executive bodies are elected. Any member of an organ can be recalled at any time by the organ through which they were elected.

- The functioning and actions of all organs take place under the central direction of the CC, the highest executive organ between the Congresses.
- The decisions of higher organs are compulsorily implemented by the lower organs and individual members. Even those who disagree with a decision contribute to the implementation of the decision taken by the majority or by the higher organ.
- Each member exercises control over the realisation of decisions taken and criticises decisions taken and their implementation, the party's activity and the actions of other organs or members.

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4. Functioning of party leadership

To take steps forward in party building, it is important to strengthen the party leadership. Election of new comrades in the CC after the Congress can contribute to this, but it is also important that the working methods of the CC and the PB of the CC improve structurally. Acting collectively should be the guiding principle, in line with democratic centralism. Individual tasks are embedded in the collective agenda and activities. Below we list a number of starting points.

- 1. Work of party leadership should focus on implementation of congressional decisions...**
- 2. The CC should provide ideological, political and organisational leadership ...**
- 3. Decisions in the CC should be taken collectively...**
- 4. There should be consistent monitoring of the implementation of decisions.**

...

5. Branches

Branches are a very important part of the party organisation, in which all NCPN members must be organised. They are the collective where members discuss the social reality in which they live, analysing and assessing it from the communist worldview. It is a place where theory and practice meet.

The local action of the sections will differ from each other to the extent that circumstances differ. However, activities should always fall within the political line of the party. The Communist Party acts as one organisation. As much as possible, party sections should base their activities on the priorities and positions set out in the Congress resolutions, and contribute with their activity to the implementation of the decisions of the Congress and the CC.

Relation of branches and CC

The interaction between the branches and the national leadership is based on democratic centralism. The CC leads the entire organisation on the basis of the Congress decisions and directs the party branches. In the branch, the political assessment of reality by the party leadership is shared with the branch and the implementation of the decisions of the party leadership is taken up by the members and applied to the concrete situation and possibilities of the branch. Local actions or activities are elaborations of party decisions and are supported by the CC, both ideologically and practically. What concrete form that support takes depends on the capabilities and capacities of the CC. Branches should be well informed about the decisions taken, the goals and priorities set, so that the general line also guides the actions of the branches and individual members.

The branches must be involved in the discussions held collectively to contribute to strengthening our positions. The concrete practice of implementing decisions provides the breeding ground for feedback to the party leadership to strengthen and improve decisions.

It follows from the above that good contact is between branch leadership and CC is of great importance, so that branches know what is going on nationally, and the CC knows what is going on in the branches.

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Active branches

Departments that are inactive need to be activated, something that has already been taken up in the run-up to the Congress. This is a difficult task as there is a lack of middle cadres and CC members are often already overloaded with tasks. Nevertheless, this is a high priority. Indeed, activation of branches is necessary for the functioning of the party on the basis of democratic centralism, where all party members are involved in forming positions and implementing decisions. Activation of branches is also necessary so that the party becomes more visible by organising actions and meetings, guiding members to become active in the movement, etc.

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The party branch holds meetings, which all party members from a region join. Consistently attending the branch meetings is a right but also a duty of every member. It is also a minimum requirement for membership. According to the statutes, branch meetings must take place at least four times a year (i.e. once every three months), but it is desirable for branches to strive to meet more frequently.

The branch leadership tries to prepare a political introduction for the branch meetings, to provide direction for discussing political reality, including by explaining Congress or PB decisions about the political reality. The activity of members (in the workplace or in mass organisations) is discussed at branch meetings. In addition, the party branch can look at how it can contribute to the activities undertaken by the respective CJB branch.

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Relation NCPN-branch – CJB-branch

Both for party branches that are yet to be activated and those that are already active, it is good if the secretary of the local CJB branch has contact with the secretary of the local NCPN branch. In this way, youth organisation and party can support each other at the local level, and in time the flow from youth organisation to party can take place organically. This way, local activities can also be set up more broadly and the visibility of NCPN and CJB is increased. Moreover, experiences are gained and exchanged that strengthen both organisations.

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Forming cadres

To grow the party, it is essential to expand the party cadre. An important prerequisite for forming cadres is, of course, education in theory and guidance in practical action. Older 'seasoned' comrades are employed for this purpose. Participating in committees within the party is also an important way of education members to become cadres. This too should be encouraged. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that people take up positions when they are ready, also to protect the communist character of the party.

6. Manifest

In the steps we are taking for party building, Manifest has an important function, as it serves as the main vehicle for communicating and popularising party positions to members and sympathisers of the NCPN and

CJB. The function of Manifest, as well as the steps to be taken to strengthen Manifest in terms of content and organisation, are identified here.

Functions of Manifesto and other party media

Manifest, and related party website and social media, and internally the party bulletin, have important functions.

- Manifest has an important ideological function. It offers a communist view of developments. It also gives readers insight into revolutionary theory, the dialectical-materialist method of analysis, Marxist political economy, class struggle. It informs readers of the developments and positions of the international communist movement.
- Manifest has an agitating and organising function, motivating people to get involved in the struggle, to join actions and events of the NCPN and CJB or mass organisations in which we work.
- Manifest is our face to the outside world. It informs sympathisers of the NCPN's views and vision.
- Inwardly, Manifest ensures that all members are aware of the positions being worked out by the CC and the activity of the party as a whole. It promotes political-ideological and organisational unity.

Of course, the extent to which Manifest succeeds in this function depends on material conditions. Having enough skilled comrades for the editorial board, who also have sufficient time for their editorial tasks, is often the main bottleneck. As is, of course, the political level of the editors and the party in general.

Strengthening Manifesto and other party media

... It is of the utmost importance that Manifest continues to be published as a physical newspaper. The physical newspaper is an indispensable weapon in the struggle. Not only to read for yourself, but also to use at actions and events...

1. ... The editors should meet structurally, collectively determine and draft the content, under the direction of the editor-in-chief (a member of the CC). Importantly, more comrades should get involved in writing and translating texts, language correction and formatting...
2. ... strengthening the content of Manifest...
3. Important for maintaining the quality of Manifest is attention to language correction. This primarily so that the paper does not appear 'sloppy'. But there is also a political reason that we as communists consider this important: after all, language is the most important tool of thought. Young comrades will also have to be involved in language correction.
4. Better linking of Manifest on paper with the websites and social media. Digital communication tools should be used more intensively to inform and agitate on current developments...

...

6. The form and design of Manifest will be considered...

All the above points aim to ensure the continuity of the newspaper and improve its quality (political-content, design, linguistic). The newspaper's continuity and quality are interrelated. For continuity, you need enough people who can execute plans and that makes delivering quality even more difficult, so there is a tendency to 'cut back' on that. But continuity and quality are inseparable and are the basis for the survival of an inspiring communist newspaper. A communist newspaper must be exemplary in all aspects wherever possible. That is the only way we are not going to accept that things can also go down a notch because it is all so difficult to achieve. Such an approach requires endurance and perseverance. This is the only way to attract qualities from outside. People who want to participate in such challenges. Not appearing sloppy is negative. Inspiring and attractive are positive qualifications, which attract the right people and strengthen those skills in the party.

...

Moreover, not only are we growing, but comrades are also developing more and more activity in the social movement (labour movement, but also anti-racism etc.), where step by step we are also starting to gain positions. As we do more in practice, we must also raise the bar for ideological work more and more. In other words, we will have to develop deeper dialectical-materialist studies and be able to refute bourgeois views for every issue we are practically working on. Similarly, Manifest will have to raise the bar for its content.

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