

# THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE NEW MAN-EUVERS OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN INDIA

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## THE PSEUDO-SOCIALISM OF THE CONGRESS

**A**N all-Indian Congress Socialist Party\* has been organized in India. At its conference in Putna it adopted a program full of many promises.

Here is this program (re-translated from the Russian—*Ed.*):

1. The transfer of all power to the producing masses.

2. The development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the State.

3. The socialization of the commanding branches of industry, such as steel production, cotton, jute, railways, shipping, mines, banks and enterprises of social utility, with a view to the progressive socialization of all the means of production, distribution and exchange.

4. The State monopoly of foreign trade.

5. The organization of cooperative societies for production, distribution and credit in the non-socialized sector of economic life.

6. The elimination of the princes and landlords and all other exploiting classes.

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\* It was organized as part of the Indian National Congress, within the framework and on the platform of the National Congress.

7. The redistribution of the land for the benefit of the peasants.

8. The State to encourage and develop the cooperative and collective cultivation of the land, with a view to the full collectivization of the whole of agriculture in the country.

9. The annulment of the debts of the peasants and workers.

10. The emancipation of the adult producing population.

A first glance at this program makes it clear that Congress socialism is a forced tribute to the revolutionary process going on among the broad masses of workers, peasants and the petty-bourgeois strata of India.

Even in India, which is strictly isolated from the rest of the world by prison bars and the police-imperialist dictatorship of British imperialism, the news of the great victories being achieved by socialism in the Soviet Union is reaching the broad masses. All the surrounding circumstances make the masses particularly receptive to this.

During the last few years, India has passed through a period of big mass struggles. *The general textile strike* which ended recently, marks a serious step forward along the path of the class awakening and solidarity of the Indian proletariat. In the

course of the years 1930-33, the revolutionary peasant movements, which swept in a mighty wave over the whole country, from Burma to the Northwest frontier, from the Presidency of Bombay and the United Provinces to the feudal states of Cashmere and Alwar, set the Indian villages in motion. The petty-bourgeois masses of the towns, driven into an impasse by the capitulatory policy of the Indian National Congress, are striving towards a decisive struggle against imperialism. The Communist vanguard is beginning to rally together and win influence over the working class movement.

But at the same time imperialism is continuing its offensive against India, from which country it drained over 2,000,000,000 gold rupees and mountains of devaluated raw material during the years of the economic crisis. Many millions of peasant farms, crushed in the vice of imperialist exploitation and servitude to the landlords and money-lenders, have been finally ruined. Hundreds of thousands of peasant families have been driven off their plots of land. A narrow stratum of new compradore elements of the trading-usurer type has grown rich and improved its position out of the ruin of the peasants. This stratum has done its bit to increase the whole system of oppressive exploitation and dependence, the system headed and directed by British imperialism.

The offensive on the working class of India by British and Indian capital, whipped up by Japanese competition, is continuing. After the close of the textile strike, wages were again cut by 7 per cent. The British government is carrying through a bill on "conciliation courts" which deprive the workers not only of the right to strike, but even of the right to send their representatives into the arbitration bodies. No one who has been prosecuted can serve as a representative of the workers, and, in addition, the Anglo-imperialist arbitrators are given the right of removing all representatives of the workers of whom they do not approve.

After stopping its campaign of civil disobedience, the National Congress is "getting up steam" for participation in the "legislative councils"\* and for further compacts with imperialism. A number of groups, sharply conflicting among themselves, are taking shape among the upper ranks of the Congress.

All these things taken together are compelling those elements of the working class and the petty-bourgeois strata who are in process of becoming politically more active, to seek *their own* reply to the questions of the struggle; all these things are causing

them to strive to comprehend the process of the mass struggle, and to sum up its lessons.

It is to these very elements that the Congress Socialists are appealing. A mere acquaintance with the points of their program immediately suggests a cunning forgery, a desire to counterfeit revolutionary sentiments.

"All power to the producing masses". It is well-known that the utopian Fourier considered the industrial bourgeoisie to be a producing class. It is well-known that in the days after the October Revolution the Social-Democrats based the whole of their struggle against the proletarian revolution on frightening the masses at the destructive effects which would follow on the expropriation of the expropriators, the violent removal of such a "productive" element as —capital.

The Congress Socialists have most carefully removed all mention of the bourgeoisie from their program, and along with this they loudly announce for all to hear that their aim is "an Indian independent socialist State". In other words, they confuse the program of the bourgeois-democratic revolution with the program of the socialist revolution, without very skillfully saving the Indian bourgeoisie and "national" Indian capital from harm.

The Congress Socialists avoid speaking even of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasants. But this is natural. They are trying to make capital out of the influence of the victories of the Soviets without taking any obligations on themselves in respect to the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution in India.

The picture becomes quite clear when we further analyze these radical hieroglyphics. In reply to the publication of the program of the Congress Socialist Party, the "Congress Working Committee" (the executive body of the National Congress) condemned the class war as incompatible with the tactics of non-violence.\* The Secretaries of the Congress Socialist Party immediately hastened to give their explanation:

"The symbol of faith of the Congress is the achievement of *Purna Swaraj*\*\* (*By peaceful and lawful means.*) In our program adopted at Patna, there is nothing that contradicts this symbol of faith in any way. We are also striving to achieve independence and the very fact that we are in the ranks of the Congress shows the peaceful and lawful methods which we have adopted. We ask how the idea of the class war serves as a challenge to

\* The repudiation of violent methods, including strikes.

\*\* *Purna Swaraj*—the hypocritical and elastic formula of Gandhi, containing the demand for a scanty autonomy for India while actually preserving the domination of British imperialism.

\* The Provincial Legislative Councils have no legislative power and to the extent of one-third consist of persons appointed by the Governor under whom they exist.

the (Congress) symbol of faith. As for confiscation, our aim, as already stated, is the socialization of industry, trade, etc. The program as can be gathered from the resolution adopted in Patna, will be carried out by the Indian state after the achievement of political freedom. This, of course, will be brought about by legal means". (Re-translated from the Russian—*Ed.*)

In the election of the leading body of the Congress in Bombay, the Congress Socialists again emphasized their loyalty to Gandhite methods of non-violence.

The Congress Socialists are for "Purna Swaraj", i.e., for the Gandhite conception of the national liberation of India, in the spirit of a bargain with British imperialism, while preserving for the latter its dominating position in their enslaved country.

They are for peaceful and lawful methods of struggle! They do not want to go outside the framework of British imperialist "legality". Within the framework of this imperialist lawlessness and license, the Congress Socialists promise to bring about political freedom and the further introduction of socialism by "legal means".

For many years bourgeois-nationalism has exploited the humiliated and down-trodden state of the enslaved people of India, their patriarchal peasant belief in the success of revolt while on their knees, the unconscious trust of the masses in the bourgeois leaders and liberal landlords, in order to emasculate and destroy the mass anti-imperialist struggle, by betraying the struggling masses at every stage. The doctrine of non-violence served as a means to this end. The bourgeoisie laid the path to their political influence between fire and water, between revolution and imperialism, by constantly calling on the British financial oligarchy to: "Give way to us, otherwise these rebellious masses will take it by force". The Indian bourgeoisie concealed their conciliatory policy very cleverly and well by their defeatist speculation on the invincibility of the military-police colossus of British imperialism.

The actions of the workers and peasants and the mass anti-imperialist struggle in general, during the period 1930-34, made many breaches in the psychology of non-resistance. The deepening and sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism found its reflection on Indian soil in the deepening and sharpening of all the contradictions of the colonial regime. The expropriation of the peasant masses by British finance capital, the semi-feudal landlords and the moneylenders, has assumed enormous proportions. The offensive of British and Indian capital on the beggarly colonial standard of living of the Indian workers has sharpened the antagonisms between labor and capital. In the imagination of the masses,

awakened by the struggle and the severe worsening of their conditions, the tasks of the struggle for national liberation from the imperialist yoke have approached and become intertwined with a craving to smash ruthlessly the rotten agrarian system which is supported by the parasitism of foreign finance-capital and the semi-feudal monopoly of the Indian landlords over the land.

To assure support among the landlords for the claims of the National Congress, the "holy" Gandhi sent his assurances to the zemindars (landowners), which he decorated with the palm branches of "native socialism" as follows:

"Our socialism or Communism [!] must be based on non-violence and on the harmonious collaboration of labor and capital, of the landowner and the tenant. If an attempt is made to deprive you unjustly of your property, you will find me fighting on your side. As soon as you turn over a new page in the relations between the Zemindars and the ryots [peasants], you will find us on your side, eagerly guarding your private rights and property". (Re-translated from the Russian—*Ed.*)

Until now, Gandhism has fed the masses with the promises of national liberation and independence, and has at the same time tied the masses up with its tactics of non-violence.

The relationship between politics and economics has now changed somewhat. The results of the economic crisis and the lessons of the struggle have "settled" in the minds of the masses, and have introduced a new element into their psychology, raising the question in a revolutionary way of the relations between the anti-imperialist struggle for national liberation and the struggle of the working class against capitalism, and the struggle of the peasants against the rotten parasitic agrarian system.

This Congress pseudo-socialism hastens to help traditional Gandhism. It widens—the extent of the promises made! It promises not only independence but socialism as well, ready-made and all in order, with the "power of the producing masses", with the socialization of industry and the banks, and even the collectivization of agriculture, in a word, almost the same can be obtained by means of the universal means—"non-violence" as is in being on the other side of the Himalayas.

The anti-imperialist revolution together with the anti-feudal revolution and even a socialist coup are fused into a single—nebula in the sky! Why should the workers quarrel with the capitalists, why should the peasants raise their hands against the land-owners, why should the revolutionary struggle against imperialism be let loose in a plebian manner under the leadership of the proletarian vanguard, when all this can be conducted into legal and peaceful bounds!

All that needs to be done is to add a prayer for socialism to the prayer for independence.

It is with this that the Congress Socialists come to the masses. They calculate on the general "all-national" illusions of unity with the conciliatory bourgeoisie still being strong among the masses, and that all that is necessary is to *renovate* these illusions with a sprinkling of socialist balm.

And they play at opposition to Gandhi and Gandhism. One of the mouthpieces of the Congress pseudo-Socialists takes up a pose and declares:

"We are coming forward in an endeavor to save the country from the confusion of thought created by Gandhi's socialism." (*Bombay Chronicle*, August 11, 1934. Re-translated—Ed.)

In India, the gap between the level of the *spontaneous* process of the revolutionization of the masses of workers and peasants and the broad strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the *political* shaping of this growth of revolutionary tendencies is extremely great. Up to the present time, in spite of all the partial breaks in the front of "non-violence", the Indian bourgeoisie have been able to keep the mass movement within the bounds of their leadership. *But what is characteristic of the present stage of the anti-imperialist, workers' and peasants' movement is the striving of the masses of workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie ever more powerfully bursting to the forefront, to draw their own lessons from the bankruptcy of national reformist conciliation.* It is on these elements who have begun to grow active that the Congress Socialists are palming off their program, in the attempt to distract their attention from criticism of the methods of non-violence, from the basic question of struggle.

The question of the methods of struggle and organization of the masses are naturally brought to the forefront by the whole course of events. The last civil disobedience campaign died out in the individual civil disobedience of Gandhi, who alone had developed as far as using disobedience in the spirit of completely repudiating any idea of violence. The Swarajites cooperate with imperialism. All the Congress leaders are absorbed in plans for "winning" the legislative council. But along with this, the workers have behind them the experience of the general textile strike and the experience of the preceding clashes with imperialism and the employers; the peasants have behind them the experience of a series of uprisings; the rank and file of the petty bourgeoisie in the National Congress have been educated by the lessons of the struggle since the Lahore Session of the Congress in 1929\*.

The revision of the Congress leadership, and of the Congress programs and methods, arises out of the new situation. The Congress leadership has led a number of mass movements into an impasse; despite the heroic efforts of the masses in the struggle for independence, the Congress program has not absorbed a single grain of this revolutionary state of the masses; the Congress methods, which showed their bankruptcy in the campaign for civil disobedience, have evolved only further in the direction of sham constitutional collaboration with British imperialism. The conclusions from the lessons of the mass struggle differ irreconcilably from the orders, exhortations and doctrines of the Congress leaders.

The Congress Socialists pretend that they want to satisfy the rightful demands of the masses. They are against imitating the masses who are losing their obedient posture before Mahatma Gandhi's exhortations about the eternal character of capitalism and of the land-owning system, etc. Those exhortations, by the way, are termed by them "Gandhi Socialism"!

It is just for this very reason that the Congress Socialists come into the foreground with the demand for Purna Swaraj but with socialism—for the Congress, but with wide rank-and-file democracy—for non-violence, but with *sham socialist illusions!*

Possibly the advanced elements of the mass movement have not enough consciousness and organization to draw independent political conclusions in an organized fashion and to consolidate them organizationally and politically. This is what the Congress sham socialists are hoping for, imagining that flanking tactics are much more preferable than a head-on attack.

"2. The Elimination of the Princes, Landlords and all other Exploiting Classes or the Elimination of the Irreconcilables from the Working Class Movement."

One of the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, Jhabwala, explained in very great detail the practical views and intentions of the Congress Socialists.

First of all he set out his attitude to the "conciliation" bill:

"Conciliation is but an expedient in particular stages of all true labor movement, which is fundamentally based upon class consciousness.

"Strike is not to be engineered. If men voluntarily come out, the Union leaders may lead, but leaders themselves should never ask the men on their own initiative to down tools. I am against the last textile strike, not that the workers had no complaint, but because we were not prepared in the true sense of it to fight a strike. When our own house is not in order how can you give battle to others? That was purely why the strike collapsed. There was quite good smooth sailing for the men so far as the wage-cut was concerned; the

\* At this session the Congress hypocritically announced that its aim was the independence of India.

men would have won, but for the incorrigibles, irremediables, the impossibles in labor today.

"The Socialist Party may help a great deal in eradicating the irreconcilables from the ranks of Labor. Then the Congress must revive its relations with the mill-owners and other industrial companies by giving them a guarantee of consumption of manufactured goods on the strength of proper Swadeshi propaganda on the others' acceptance of a gradual socialization of all the industries."

It is difficult to believe that a person with such views was one of the Meerut prisoners who deservedly obtained authority in the ranks of the proletariat far beyond the confines of India.

The arguments of Jhabwala are arguments typical of an agent of capital in the working class movement. He gives his blessing to arbitration and conciliation, though without too widely advertising the participation of the British Secret Service, at the very time when this "conciliation" means conciliation with the continuation of the ever more impudent offensive of British and Indian capital. Jhabwala is copying Gandhi.

The "holy" Gandhi promises the landlords a warm defense of their property. The Mahatma speaks weightily and distinctly about the defense of their rights as landlords to exploit the peasants, and proclaims the *eternity* of landlord property as the unshakable foundation of Indian national life, at the very time when the ruin of the peasant farms by semi-feudal land-owners and usurers has reached unprecedented dimensions, when the further preservation of the semi-feudal agrarian system, which has become fused with imperialist exploitation, may be bought only at the price of the direct *expropriation* of hundreds of thousands and millions of peasant farms, at the price of the enslavement of the many millions of the peasant masses.

Gandhi prefers the expropriation and ruin of the peasants by the landlords and usurers to the expropriation of the landlords by the peasants.

There is nothing surprising in this. During the period of the economic crisis, new contacts have developed between the Indian bourgeoisie and the strata of *new landlords* who have come forward and who have seized quite large quantities of peasant land.

Jhabwala raises the question of the workers in exactly the same manner as Gandhi puts the question of the peasants. In a situation where the capitalists are making a frantic attack, strikes, in his opinion, can only be a spontaneous, unavoidable evil. The "true leaders" of the trade unions must not organize strikes. Jhabwala goes further in his warm efforts to hand over the *non-union* workers, bound hand and foot, to the onslaught of the imperialists and the Indian capitalists. He joins the voice of the

Congress Socialists to the united chorus of British imperialists and Indian employers who are demanding that the working class movement be purged of insidious agitators, irreconcilables, Communists. He offers the services of his party in the fulfillment of this task. And at the same time, instead of organizing the proletarian front of resistance against the onslaught of capital, he offers the workers the mediation of the National Congress. The National Congress must obtain the consent of the capitalist sharks to its "gradual socialization", in return for which the sharks must be guaranteed the sale of their goods by means of "swadeshi".

The entire tight-rope walk of the newly-hatched Congress Socialists is bounded by the framework of traditional Gandhism. The rope is stretched from Purna Swaraj and non-violence to swadeshi, to the demand for the consumption of goods of only local "national" production. The Congress Socialist acrobats are balancing on *this* rope with the "power of the producing masses", "socialization", "collectivization", and "planned economy" in their hands. The starving workers, who are thrown out of the factories in thousands so as to increase the productivity of "national industry", must turn into *commercial travelers for their exploiters* as part of their "national self-discipline". "Swadeshi", the doctrine of the consumption of only "national" cloths and national products, can no longer claim popularity in the old form of a commercial advertisement put out by the national capitalists.

Let us stick a socialist label on the "swadeshi", say Jhabwala and Co. This will help Indian capital in the struggle for the home market against dying Lancashire and Japanese dumping. The workers can be told that the capitalists will become kinder if the whole nation becomes one big commercial office for the sale of the manufactures of "their own" capitalists.

Thus, when we look more closely at the program of the Congress Socialist Party, all its mysterious contents become plain.

"Power to the producing masses" includes the participation of the "national capitalists" who have given a vague consent to a still more vague "socialization". "Planned economy" (this has to be mentioned after the victory of the Bolshevik Five-Year Plan), turns out to be "swadeshi" in the plan of the "socialist" reconciliation of capital and labor. The socialization of industry and the banks, not only of local capital but also of the financial capital of Great Britain, proves to be a *plan for buying out the imperialist "commanding heights"*, stretched over a whole number of generations, plus the buying out of the factories belonging to the local capitalists. The collectivization of agriculture without the previous confiscation of the irrigation works and the land belong-

ing to the imperialists, the princes and the land-owners, turns out to be a plan for *buying out the land* from the imperialists, princes and landlords.

The Congress Socialists are thirsting to load the workers and peasants of India with benefits just as the Russian Cadets wanted to pour blessings on the peasants of Tsarist Russia by proposing to buy out the land-owners' land at a "fair price".

However, this counter-revolutionary and niggardly phantasmagoria has *its own logic*, strange though it may seem. It is the logic of Purna Swaraj and non-violence. The achievement of almost independence within the bounds of a dominion constitution has been regarded by the Indian bourgeoisie throughout all the post-war years as their rightful possession. One of the heroes in the works of the prominent Russian satirist, Schedrin, claimed that truth is the product of legal proceedings. The Indian bourgeoisie has steadily tried to convince all and sundry that national liberation can only be the result of negotiations and commercial undertakings between them and British imperialism.

Gandhi and his inseparable pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the inspirer of the new Congress pseudo-Socialist Party, constantly called on the oppressed and enslaved India to give up any idea of violence, thus clearing a path for themselves *through the mass movement* to negotiations with the Viceroy and to the Round Table Conference. They could not and cannot at the present time give up the support of the masses. Should they do so their solicitations towards British imperialism would lose the force of political pressure. It would not be possible, were such the case, to bolster up the claims of the bourgeoisie with a certain amount of popular support. This would contradict the class interests of capital in a colonial country, and its strivings towards national independence. But the Indian bourgeoisie have carried on a policy of conciliation with imperialism with rare consistency and still carry it on as a counterpoise to the struggle for the revolutionary liberation of India. This policy *contrasts* the Indian bourgeoisie to the struggling masses.

The Indian bourgeoisie can only guarantee their political hegemony in the mass movement by artificially maintaining a definite proportion, a definite relationship between their class diplomatic-conciliatory activity and the mass movement, which is ever more flowing over the dam of their conciliatory policy. Hence, the peculiar national *masking* of the treacherous policy of conciliation systematically carried on by the elastic Purna Swaraj, which is treated both as "independence in general" and as "independence" within the framework of the British Empire. Hence the national specific bourgeois *method of emasculating* the revolutionary contents from the mass movement with the help of the doctrine of non-violence.

The vicious circle of the national-reformist capitulatory-conciliatory policy consists in the fact that the bourgeoisie of a colonial country cannot *give* anything worthwhile to the masses in the sense of satisfying their urgent demands. At the same time they do not dare and do not wish to suggest that the masses should take what is not given to them. Hence the necessity for the systematic *deception* of the masses, adapted on each occasion to the concrete political and economic situation. Hence the constant *fabrication of illusions*, which exploit the thirst for national emancipation that exists among the masses in a colonially enslaved country. The stronger and more stubborn the pressure of the rank and file, the more powerfully events drive forward towards a general differentiation of classes, then the more are the bourgeoisie forced to *re-write their promissory notes, supplemented by new deceptive promises*. In the promises of the Congress Socialists to "introduce socialism" by the Swaraj "buying-out" method, there is just as much political reality as in the Purna Swaraj which they claim can be carried on by non-violence.

In the introductory part of their basic resolution, adopted at Putna, the Congress Socialists made the following declaration:

"Taking into account that the introduction to the resolution of the Putna Congress regarding fundamental rights declares that in order to put an end to the exploitation of the masses, political liberty must include real economic freedom for the starving millions, in order that *the basis of the struggle for independence be widened*, in order to guarantee that after the achievement of Swaraj the masses will not remain the victims of exploitation, the Congress must adopt a program which is socialist in its direction and aims.

"The All-Indian committee of the Congress recommends to the Congress that it declare its aim to be a socialist state, and after winning power, to call together a constituent assembly (on the basis of granting the right to a vote to the whole adult population with the exception of those who resisted the struggle for freedom; representation must be organized according to occupation) so as to set up the constitution of the Indian state on the following political, social and economic principles." (Re-translated—Ed.)

This is followed by the program of the Congress Socialist Party.

In conclusion the resolution says:

"The All-Indian Committee of the Congress recommends the *method of organizing the masses on the basis of their economic interests as the only effective method of forming a mass movement*, the organization of 'Kissan' and 'Maxdoor Sanghas' (workers' and peasants' associations) by the Con-

gressites, and affiliation to similar associations where they already exist with a view to participating in the everyday struggle of the masses with a view to leading them in the possible struggle for their final aim." (*Hindu*, May 18, 1934. Re-translated—*Ed.*)

The workers and peasants are "important" for the Congress, state the Congress Socialists. They cannot do without them. A choice must be made—either let these mutinous forces take their own way, or else subject their struggle and their organization to the leadership of the National Congress. In the former case, the separation of the Congress from the masses is only of benefit to the irreconcilables, who have to be cleaned out of the working class movement. In the latter case, there are chances of isolating these irreconcilables, by surrounding the commanding heights of the Congress with a new chain of fortified positions in the trade unions, and peasant and student organizations. The pseudo-constitutional illusions regarding the achievement of independence by the methods of non-violence must be enlivened and expanded to the extent of pseudo-socialist illusions.

Along with the class awakening and consolidation of the proletariat and under the influence of the latter, there is to be observed in modern India, the political awakening of the petty-bourgeois strata, who are beginning to seek for positions of independent bourgeois democracy, independent of the guardianship of the national reformist bourgeoisie. The big influence which the terrorist groups have on urban petty-bourgeois circles, and on the students, teachers, etc., is in part an expression of this process. At the same time, the most politically active section of these strata are increasingly striving towards direct participation in the working class movement and in the movement of the peasants. These strata, to a much greater extent than others, are feeling the crisis of the national reformist policy of conciliation and capitulation as a crisis of their whole world outlook. No wonder the demand for Marxist literature in India has increased so tremendously in recent years.

The Congress Socialists act as errand boys for the national reformist bourgeoisie. They include in their program a mixed collection of the demands of the bourgeois democratic stage and the demands of the socialist stage of the national colonial revolution, in a way calculated in advance. They dress up bourgeois democratic demands in "socialist" clothes, and place the "redistribution of the land for the benefit of the peasants" side by side with all kinds of promises of "socialization", so as to *take the revolutionary sting out of all the demands*, whether bourgeois democratic or socialist.

Time and time again in India have bourgeois democratic illusions in a *national emancipation dress*

saved bourgeois national reformism. The terrorist movement of the petty-bourgeois elements demonstrates this with sufficient clearness. It has not yet broken away from its political dependence on bourgeois national reformism, and the bomb and the revolver, which serve as the weapon of terror of isolated individuals against the British invaders, are not directed by a movement which has in the slightest degree taken political shape in *opposition* to the National Congress.

In 1930-33, heavy *peasant* reserves came into action in India, which indicated that they are being awakened by the flames of insurrection against the imperialists, landlords and money-lenders. This repelled the petty-bourgeois youth still further away from the national reformist conciliators. While the national-liberation bourgeois-democratic illusions of the petty-bourgeois strata have hitherto been utilized by the Indian bourgeoisie constantly to *postpone* the struggle "for the sake of more certain victory", nowadays on the other hand, in addition to this, events have placed the utilization of bourgeois-democratic illusions in the *economic* sphere on the order of the day.

Up to the present time, the bourgeois politicians and manufacturers of illusions have called on the petty-bourgeois masses to restrain their revolutionary impatience for the sake of the victory of the "national cause". The time has now arrived for the assurances of the Congress Socialists to the effect that socialism will be won along with national freedom and the elimination of the princes and landlords, but a socialism better and more "national" than the Bolsheviks have secured! But—*wait*, wait for Purna Swaraj and don't resort to violence! The greater goal requires greater patience!

The deepening and sharpening of the mass struggle against the imperialists, land-owners and capitalists are rendering it essential for the Indian bourgeoisie to change its *methods of organization and mass work*, and to *depict this change as a change of policy*. The bourgeoisie can no longer maintain their political monopoly in the mass movement by the old methods, with the aid of the old organizational forms. Formerly the masses were sufficiently backward and undemanding to be satisfied by the organization of the Congress on, it might be said, feudal-patriarchal lines. This includes a handful of "recognized" leader-dictators, electing each other everywhere, with Gandhi at their head, the appointed committees of the Congress directing everything, and the unorganized populace merely invited from time to time to express a loud-sounding approval of Gandhi and Co.—at meetings and sessions of the Congress—and to present their backs to the "lathis" of the police during the conduct of campaigns.

Shouts can everywhere be heard now against the

dictatorship of Gandhi and the group of infallible leaders. The differentiation of classes has gone so deep that the struggle for influence over the workers and the peasants has to be conducted through special workers' organizations, the trade unions, and through peasant associations. In order to carry through the conciliatory policy of the bourgeoisie, and to subordinate the mass movement to it, what needs to be done is to penetrate deeper among the rank and file with more radical, almost socialist methods and forms of deceiving the masses. The Congress Socialists have good reason to reiterate the names of Purcell, Lansbury and the English Laborites at every step. The mass work of these gentlemanly pseudo-socialists fills them with envy. But alas! India is not England, but—an English colony. It is impossible to operate in India even with the memory of sops given from above. Only a mist of illusions will save the situation in this case. But even this is being scattered by the revolutionary monsoons which are gathering strength.

THE SHAM CONSTITUTIONAL MANEUVERS OF THE  
CONGRESS AROUND THE SLOGAN OF THE  
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

From their very first steps, the Congress Socialists established "decent" relations with the Swaraj Party, which openly demands collaboration with British imperialism on a pseudo-constitutional basis. The swarajites, without waiting for the other sections of the Congress, proclaimed the beginning of a constitutional era in India. Since there is a dispute between Baldwin and Churchill, and since they are engaged in a quarrel as to whether the British viceroy of India must be gracious or not, this means that there is a field for the Indian bourgeoisie, who are growing into compradores, to carry on constitutional activity—an almost parliamentary field.

The Congress Socialists sent their credentials for friendly contacts with the Swarajites, to Dr. Ansari and his friends:

"The Congress Socialists have no feelings of hostility for the Swaraj party. They cannot act against an organization recognized and included in the Congress. They merely think that the program of the Swaraj party can and must be improved in the sense of bringing it nearer to Socialism." (*Bombay Chronicle*, May 25, 1934. Re-translated—*Ed.*)

On the other hand:

"Appealing to the Socialists, Mahatma Gandhi said that if they wanted to get into contact with the masses and do work among the masses, they could do this not through the councils [provincial legislative councils without rights, to which the

Congressites are straining in hopes of getting sops from British imperialism—G. S.]. Let them operate among the masses. In England [again the gentlemanly example!—G. S.] not all good people and public men get into the House of Commons. First class people remain outside its doors and give help." (*Bombay Chronicle*, May 21, 1934. Re-translated—*Ed.*)

The All-Indian Congress Socialist Party, according to Gandhi, must play the part of one of the driving belts of the Congress, the leaders of which correspond more and more to the Swaraj party. The Congress Socialist Party must serve to provide contacts with the masses and to agitate among the masses.

The leaders of the Congress themselves, however, are not confident of the possibilities of the Congress Socialist Party obtaining such serious successes as to render more important, so to say, decisive maneuvers, unnecessary.

First of all, the Indian bourgeoisie, drawn along by their *compradore* wing, will not give way and allow the masses to participate in the legislative councils, to participate in the barter around the British imperialist project of a pseudo-constitution, around the "White Paper".

The Indian bourgeoisie are trying to turn to their own benefit the shifting of the textile industry nearer to the source of raw material and to colonial markets, a process which can be seen on a world scale. They are interested in getting profit out of "imperial co-operation", particularly out of the growth of the production of sugar cane and the replanning of crops in connection with the devastating results of the crisis. The questions of money circulation, of the reorganization of banking and tariffs, are all questions of capitalist life. And here again there are hopes of increased incomes and rights for native capital when official posts, parliamentary seats, subsidies, etc., are distributed, with certain pseudo, allegedly constitutional, concessions from imperialism.

The policy of the Congress has failed both at the top and at the bottom. The basic source of this failure is the fact that this policy *could not even to any noticeable extent restrain and weaken the British imperialist offensive on India during the period of the crisis.*

The confusion in the upper ranks of the Congress, the decline of Gandhi's authority, the unauthorized establishment of the Swaraj party, the split-away of a section of the Congress leaders under Malawia, who refused to accept Gandhi's compromise with the Mussulman bourgeoisie and landlords on the question of communal curias, the attempts of Bose to find refuge in the bosom of Italian fascism, the unauthorized formation of the Congress Socialist Party without Gandhi's blessing—all these reflect the clash



of various trends which cannot come to terms with each other as to the necessary *degree of concessions* to be made towards imperialism, on the one hand, and towards the mutinous masses, on the other.

Sufficient has been said about the crisis in the confidence of the rank and file in the Congress.

In just such complex and contradictory conditions, the Congress issued the slogan of the constituent assembly. It becomes necessary to take the line of "convening" a constituent assembly, because this slogan was intended to bribe the masses with its "revolutionary" appearance. At the same time, it makes it possible to *replace* the struggle *against* the British imperialist project of a *fake constitution* by the decorative and fruitless preparations for the calling of a constituent assembly, which is to receive constituent rights, no one knows how or whence.

The slogan of the constituent assembly came just at the right moment for the Congressmen, for the additional reason that it provided additional concealment for the capitulatory compradore entrance of the Congressmen into the legislative councils. It became possible to kill two birds with one stone, namely, to draw the sting of the revolutionary struggle against the slave pseudo-constitution, which is raising a wave of mass indignation at this imperialist mockery, and to conceal the compradore rear of the National Congress, which has become the vanguard of the Congress on the path that leads to the provincial legislative councils.

The followers of Roy, who have long been the purveyors of tactical tricks and acrobatics for the treacherous national reformists, were the first to set going the slogan of the constituent assembly. But it did not rise on Roy's yeast, as some limited sectarian elements in the Communist movement of India attempted to represent matters. The Royites, whom the same confused minds have tried to depict as the only and all-embracing menace, made their debut only as petty commercial travelers, offering the buyer a set of the latest samples. Things took an entirely different course when they got into the hands of the big wholesale firm which supplied their own regular brands of diluted products, when they got into the hands of the National Congress itself. The slogan of the constituent assembly became a means of political self-advertisement for the Congress.

The columns of the bourgeois press, which hitherto had been occupied with a profound analysis of the stops and commas in the speeches of the British county rulers and the influence of this on the fate of India, immediately plunged into a discourse on bourgeois revolutions. It is well known that in the history of bourgeois revolutions, constituent assemblies were usually the result of a revolutionary victory, the victory of a revolutionary uprising, and were convened by the revolutionary power to give

official form to the new government system. The bankrupts of the National Congress pretend that their aim is to convene a constituent assembly which would not only write a constitution according to the demands of the people, but would in a miraculous manner transform the entire State and social order.

They do not think it necessary to enter into explanations as to how it is possible, while the imperialist dictatorship remains and semi-feudal serfdom continues to exist in the villages, to conduct the elections to a representative body capable, if only to a distant degree, to represent the will of the people.

The Congress leaders in *their own circle* state without ceremony that the constituent assembly is simply the National Congress.

The most unceremonious of them brazenly offer the advice in the press that this home-made Congress assembly should be convened for such a time and place as will make it possible to calculate without a doubt on proceeding from this sham constituent assembly direct to a *new round table conference in London*. The latest Congress edition of the constituent assembly is simply a pedestal of papier mache for the glorification of a new pilgrimage to Canossa—that is, to London—to make their bows to the thoughtful, die-hard Baldwin.

Nevertheless, the National Congress would not be the National Congress if its new maneuvers in respect to the struggling masses did not contain a new maneuver towards *British imperialism*. Addressing themselves to Lord Willingdom and his cleverer masters in London, the Congressmen say approximately the following: "You attach no importance to our efforts which aim at quietening down masses who are becoming more radical, and you do not take into account that our maneuvers with socialism and the constituent assembly are taken against our will. But in India there are many millions of people whom you cannot bridle by participation in the legislative councils, and whom you cannot pacify with subtle arguments on constitutional rights. They have forced us to talk of the constituent assembly and socialism, but all the objective and subjective prerequisites are present for them to enter on the struggle seriously, *i.e.*, not in the national reformist manner, for the power of the people, against the pseudo-constitution of the imperialists, and to cleanse India of the rajahs, landowners, and money lenders. Give way to us, who are prepared to grovel in the legislative councils, otherwise they will throw off our leadership and use force over our heads to tear incomparably more from you."

The dual character of the *class position of the national reformist bourgeoisie in India determines the constant zigzags in their conduct, and gives a double meaning to every political step they take.*

The national reformist bourgeoisie are reaping

political capital out of the pseudo-constitutional illusions which they spread regarding the possibility of introducing the best constitution without winning power, and out of cramming this quackery and deceit into the masses. They are speculating on the emasculation of the mass movement, without which they are not in a position to maintain their hold on the leadership of this movement. But at the same time their *trump card* in the bargaining they undertake with imperialism, in enabling them to secure partial concessions, is this very revolutionary scope of the mass movement, the strength and stormy nature of the mass discontent, the fact that the masses are going beyond the framework of "lawful and peaceful means", away from the control of the national reformist leadership. However, this dumping of false illusions costs them the loss of their "all-national" authority.

The Indian bourgeoisie are feeling this now with special force. It is as if they had set out the cards for a game of patience, for fortune telling: (1) at the end of October—a session of the Congress; (2) before this, democratic elections with universal suffrage, for the leading bodies of the Congress; (3) participation in the elections for the legislative councils; (4) in prospect—the constituent assembly and a new round table conference. But it is impossible to angle even the most meagre pseudo-constitution from the legislative councils.

The Indian bourgeoisie and their various subsidiary detachments have so far been able to keep control of the anti-imperialist movement, over the struggle

of the workers and the peasants, by no means due to the exceptional brilliancy of their political talents, but because at critical moments they have always been aided by the difficulty of setting into motion the scattered and backward population of 350 millions on an all-Indian scale, by the lack of organization and the inadequate class consciousness of the workers and peasants who find difficulty in giving up their faith in the bourgeoisie *who have usurped the official representation of the national interests*, and by the fact that the proletarian vanguard lacks political shape and training in tactics.

But the weaknesses, mistakes, and sicknesses of the movement are being overcome by the deepening and sharpening of the mass struggle, the organization of the masses, the development of the political and organizational initiative of the Communist vanguard, primarily in the conduct of the tactics of the united front in the anti-imperialist struggle and in the struggle for the unity of the trade union movement.

The "socialist" and "constituent assembly" maneuverers of the Congress face the Communist Party of India not only with the task of exposing them, but also with the task of struggling for political and organizational initiative in the struggle against the onslaught of imperialism, in the struggle against the offensive of capital and the semi-feudal landlords, in the struggle against the treacherous conciliatory bourgeoisie. The separation of the struggle against national reformism from the struggle with imperialism is the most dangerous evil which helps the national reformist politicians to carry on their capitulatory game.