

# THE STRUGGLE FOR INDIAN STATE INDEPENDENCE

## A CONDITION OF SUCCESS OF THE ENGLISH PROLETARIAT

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THE present situation and the lessons of the last election in England make it necessary once more to consider the Indian problem in the light of its significance for the struggle for proletarian dictatorship in England.

The English proletariat has been trained for several decades in the spirit of liberalism, of the invincibility of the British Empire and the traditions connected with it, of the infallibility of British "democracy" and the stability of wages, the concessions gained by the proletariat.

The aristocracy of labour, which grew out of the super-profit of British imperialism, energetically assisted in enforcing these "imperialist" traditions among the broad masses of workers. The relative increase in wages, and later the growing number of votes and additional seats for the Labour Party in Parliament, only helped to consolidate the liberal traditions and illusions spread by the reformists among the working class, and to increase their belief that the whole development of England gradually leads to the ever-increasing welfare of the workers and the final peaceful transition to "socialism."

Despite the fact that in the post-war period the English bourgeoisie led an attack upon various sections of the working class, and the army of unemployed became a permanent feature, the bourgeoisie was able during the first years that followed the war to grant insignificant concessions (social insurance and so on), "concessions which certainly delay the revolutionary movement . . . and create something in the nature of 'social peace'." (Lenin.)

On the basis of these concessions and the development of new branches of industry (chemical and others) the influence of the labour aristocracy has grown, especially the influence of those sections of bureaucracy which are directly connected with the bourgeois apparatus in all its forms. Mondism and the Labour Government, which represents this ideology in State form, has grown up on this basis.

In recent years the position has changed radically: British imperialism is not only no longer in a position to grant separate, insignificant con-

cessions, but is compelled to take back those which the working class forced it to grant in previous years; the standard of living of the English proletariat has begun to fall *absolutely*. This trend of development is a devastating blow to all the prevailing ideas of the English proletariat. That which he was accustomed to look upon as stable and secure—the sacredness of his penny—has now become unstable.

Faith in the parliamentary road of "development" is beginning to waver, and if perhaps it is not true at the present moment to state that the parliamentary system is already discredited in the eyes of the majority of the proletariat, there is not the slightest doubt that the experience of the Labour Party has shown to a considerable section of the working class the bourgeois anti-proletarian character of Parliament and the danger, the falsity of all illusions connected with it.

The crisis which is growing inside the British Empire has hastened the open transition of part of the privileged upper strata of the proletariat to the side of the Conservative Party and has also increased the rate at which the broad masses of workers are becoming radicalised. This two-sided development did not begin with the fall of the Labour Government. It made itself manifest in a wave of spontaneous strikes, which took place in spite of, and to some extent even against, the trade union leadership in 1930 and 1931. It could be seen in the wave of spontaneous mass demonstrations and, finally, in the elections themselves.

The crisis which has begun in the British Empire raises all the questions facing the workers in a different way. One might say that all values have now *begun* to be re-estimated, and the process is going on. The Labour Party taught the English proletariat that English development should go forward along the lines of the denial of the class struggle and the conversion of the British Empire into "a family of friendly peoples" under the protection of Great Britain. The working class is now discovering on the experience of class struggle that there is not and

cannot be class peace. A broad basis is being created for the growth of the Communist Party and the destruction of all liberal-imperialist traditions among the English proletariat.

There is a revaluation of ideas in England; there is a rearrangement of class forces. The English bourgeoisie is trying to use the unstable situation, the search of the toiling masses for new ways of development and struggle, for its own purposes; for this reason it has launched its programme for a way out of the crisis: (1) protectionism, (2) consolidation of the British Empire and the introduction of a system of preferential tariffs inside the Empire, (3) economies and sacrifices by the toilers in the interests of the "nation." This, of course, in actual fact means increased exploitation and terror against the workers and colonial peoples, tariff warfare and, finally, war against the U.S.S.R. and a new division of the world.

The British bourgeoisie rapidly manoeuvres to put this programme through Parliament and draws over to its side both the petty bourgeoisie and the labour aristocracy. And, of course, it will not hesitate to put through its aims by means of open fascist dictatorship, should all other means fail.

The Conservative bourgeoisie does its best to make its programme palatable with promises to "maintain" the present wages level, and safeguard savings, etc., and by holding out hopes of a new era of industrial boom and the end of unemployment. The British Empire safeguarded by tariffs and with the help of temporary sacrifices will go forward to the new stage of prosperity—this is the way out advocated by the Conservatives and supported by the Liberals and Labourites.

The elections clearly show that in order to organise the resistance of the proletariat, to smash the opportunists and finish with illusions, there must be a proletarian programme for a revolutionary way out of the crisis to sharply oppose the bourgeois programme of "saving" the British Empire, and that around this proletarian programme and in connection with it there must be waged a day-to-day struggle for "not a penny off," for the partial demands of the proletariat.

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"English reaction in England is rooted in the enslavement of Ireland," wrote Marx. Now we can say that "English reaction in England" has its roots mainly in the enslavement of India. The enslavement of India and the spreading of the Great Power, imperialist traditions and opinions among the English proletariat is the corner-stone of the British Empire. Destroy this stone and

the whole capitalist system in England will fall to the ground.

One of the most important tasks of the English Communist Party is to estimate correctly and explain properly to the broad masses of the proletariat the essence of the Indian problem.

The backward sections of the English working class are still led by the nose by the Conservative bourgeoisie who declare that the loss of India would mean the downfall, the degradation and degeneration of the toiling masses of England. Imperialist traditions are still so strong in the ranks of the English proletariat that many class-conscious workers and Communist Party supporters consider that the demand for Indian independence isolates the English Communist Party from the working class masses. Actually this amounts to the fact that the Communist Party raises this question of Indian State independence in a very weak way and does not explain the meaning of the Indian revolution for the victory of the English proletariat. It is this weakness of our Party which the Conservative bourgeoisie makes use of when they energetically try to cultivate reactionary, imperialist feelings current among the backward sections of the working class and, in this way, reinforce their domination over the proletariat as a whole in order to safeguard the capitalist system. As long as the English proletariat, willingly or unwillingly, supports the bourgeoisie in exploiting India and the other colonies, it will be compelled to support the capitalist system in England and thus remain in the position of slaves, relentlessly exploited by capitalism. It was in this sense that Marx said that there can be no free nation that oppresses other peoples. And there is no way out of this except that which has been constantly shown by the Comintern since its inception and confirmed by the experience of the U.S.S.R.; the constant day-to-day support of the struggle of all oppressed nations for their complete independence.

At the parliamentary elections the English Young Communists came out with a platform which said nothing at all about India. The election address of the Communist Party unfortunately substituted the clearly-defined demand for complete State independence of India by the slogan of emancipation of India, and even this took the form of a nebulous statement to the effect that an emancipated Socialist England would mean emancipated India.

The English Young Communists made a serious mistake, the roots of which can be found not so much in the subjective attitude of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League as in the insufficient understanding and

underestimation of the Indian problem which is spread throughout the ranks of the Communist Party itself.

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The English proletariat fears hunger, and that the isolation of England would bring about a further drop in their standard of living. The bourgeoisie is constantly making this assertion and does its utmost to train the proletariat in the spirit of loyalty to the interests of the usurious British Empire. The whole programme of the National bloc is built upon this. The Communist Party will be able to overcome this attitude of the backward workers and free them from the influence of the bourgeoisie and its agents in the labour movement only when it ceases to remain silent on "national" questions and, having launched the most energetic campaign, will offer its own programme in sharp, clear opposition to that of the bourgeoisie. This programme must fight for an independent workers' and peasants' India and for a Soviet England.

Is it possible for England to maintain or, rather, to restore its position as one of the world's workshops under the *capitalist* system? No, it is not possible. The whole history of the last few years testifies to this. All the centrifugal tendencies in the dominions and the growing intensity of class struggle and the revolutionary movement in the colonies prove this. The uneven development of capitalism, which has led to the situation where England is more and more compelled to give way on the world market, points to this.

British imperialism hopes, under cover of protectionism and the monopoly of State power in its colonial possessions, to put its house in order and scrape out of the crisis. In this connection it will be cruelly disappointed, for protectionism cannot save it, either from the competition of more powerful countries, the increase of the class struggle of the proletariat, or from the growing resistance in the colonies. Under capitalism there is no way out for England. A continuation of the capitalist system means further downfall, the impoverishment of the proletariat, increased exploitation, the development of fascism and warfare, including war in the colonies.

*The only way out of the crisis which will lead to the restoration of England and its return to the position of one of the world's industrial workshops can be found only as a result of the proletarian revolution and the institution of a system of Socialist, Soviet republics, co-operating among themselves and planning world economy on the basis of the estimate of all economic conditions and in the interests of the toiling masses of the*

*world. Thus only the revolutionary proletariat and its programme for a way out of the crisis truly represents the interests of the broad masses of the English population.*

The reactionary nature of British imperialism can be seen from the results of its policy in India. Some Liberals write that in the interests of English industry and trade all measures should be taken to raise the purchasing power of the Indian market, to improve the position of the Indian peasants, and in general to help the "development" of productive forces and destroy all feudal survivals. And yet in India just the opposite occurs. British imperialism has led to a state of affairs where the national income per capita of the population is equal approximately to two pounds sterling annually, and where agriculture is in total degradation: for instance, the yield of rice per acre of land is equal to 8½ cwts., whereas in Japan it is equal to 21-22 cwts.; the yield of cotton is one-third of that in the United States, and so on.

The peasants are strangled by the yoke of the moneylender, the landlord and the native prince, who are supported by British imperialism and the Indian capitalists. The survivals of the caste system and feudalism, illiteracy, disease, religious enmity, etc., all this is intensified by British imperialism and is a result of its domination. The Indian people are suffocated by slavery, poverty and famine—and not only do the Indian workers and peasants suffer as a result of this, but *the workers of England and other industrially advanced countries suffer as well.*

Thus, to take the direct result of the domination and policy of British imperialism in the colonies, every worker in England will readily understand, especially if it is explained to him in facts, that the existence of the capitalist system in England not only fails to improve the erstwhile favourable material position of the workers of England, or even to maintain that level, but, *on the contrary*, leads to the impoverishment and degradation not only of the toilers of India, but also of the workers of England. The maintenance of the capitalist system and the exploiting system known as the "British Empire" will signify the *enslavement* of the English proletariat combined with the *constant worsening* of their material and legal position.

The programme of the Conservative bourgeoisie means starvation to the broad masses of the proletariat. The only way out is to *destroy* capitalism in England, to give assistance to the heroic struggle of the population of India for national and social liberation, and to create the conditions in India for the free development of the land

*under the leadership of the Indian proletariat. Only on these lines can true co-operation grow up between England and India* and new prosperity begin, a new era of life in both countries, which together with other Soviet countries will guarantee unprecedented progress and the development of both nations and the whole of mankind.

The line which the English Communist Party must take up is the struggle for Soviet England and an independent workers' and peasants' India, which will guarantee the voluntary alliance and collaboration of both countries with all other Soviet countries. The correctness of this plan is confirmed by the whole trend of development of the class struggle in England and India, and is shown by the experience of the Soviet Union.

Russia was previously the "people's gaol," many of whose nationalities were in a position of colonial enslavement. The proletarian revolution converted this "people's gaol" into a free, voluntary, fraternal alliance of equal independent Soviet republics, all of which are struggling to build up the Socialist system. The basis of this voluntary, militant unity is the Soviet system, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the guidance of the Communist Party. The Bolshevik solution to the national question which guarantees independence and free development for all nations dwelling upon the territory of old Tsarist Russia has created true mutual confidence and voluntary unity of purpose among the toiling masses of all these republics in the struggle for Socialism, for the defence of the U.S.S.R. from the onslaught of world imperialism.

Inside the Soviet Union the Bolshevik policy of the Communist Party ensured not only the cultural growth of the backward national States, but also brought about an enormous, universal, development of productive forces; moreover, several of these republics are being converted into first-class industrial republics. This growth in its turn has brought about an enormous development of the productive forces of the whole Soviet Union, which again has opened up the possibility of a constant rise in the material welfare of the whole population.

Thus Soviet practice confirms the correctness of the policy of the Communist International, which, in fighting for the right to self-determination of nations to the extent of separation from the metropolis, declares that the emancipated workers, and the peasant masses led by them, in their fight for Socialism, will find forms of co-operating and collaborating for the struggle against imperialism and for *ensuring* the fraternal, universal reconstruction of the world on a new Socialist basis.

Having won its independence, the workers' and peasants' Soviet Government of India will, of a surety, enter into collaboration with all the Soviet republics, including Soviet England; the programme of the Indian Communist Party and the activities, demonstrations, etc., of the Indian workers are proof enough of this.

The correct solution to the national question in Russia brought about increased friendship and collaboration among all the separate republics, on the basis of the Soviet Government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Communist Party of England must convince the English workers to follow the example of Russia and fight for the complete State independence of India. *This is the only road* which will safeguard and strengthen co-operation, between the workers' and peasants' Soviet India and Soviet England, built on the basis of the struggle for Socialism throughout the world. This includes also economic co-operation between these two countries. The toiling masses of India have commenced the struggle for their emancipation. The Indian proletariat is building its Communist Party, and fights for the hegemony in the general people's movement. History will show in which country the revolution will more quickly smash imperialism. In India (which is more likely) or in England. The task consists in mobilising all forces for the struggle in both countries. The victory in either would rapidly spread to the other.

The support given by the English proletariat to the Indian revolution cannot merely take the form of expressions of solidarity and sympathy towards the oppressed Indian proletariat. The protest of the English workers against the terror waged against the toiling masses of India is only an elementary duty, like the condemnation by class-conscious workers of any strikebreaker in any strike.

*The support given by the English proletariat to the Indian revolution means direct struggle of the British workers for the overthrow of the capitalist system at home—in England—and for the creation of a Soviet Socialist republic. This is the crux of the question.*

The might of the English bourgeoisie lies in its colonial domination. From the super-exploitation of the colonial peoples the English bourgeoisie gave the crumbs and bribed the aristocracy of labour; participation in the colonial apparatus of oppression was the prize with which it bought over considerable sections of the petty bourgeoisie, etc. Under cover of the gospel of the "civilising" rôle of the white races, the

English bourgeoisie is corrupting the proletariat, and, as a result, the toiling masses, in supporting the British colonial empire, at the same time "consolidate" the capitalist system in England, i.e., they tighten the noose of capitalist exploitation and slavery *around their own necks*.

Therefore the overthrow of the bourgeois system in England must be indissolubly connected with the most relentless struggle on the part of the proletariat against the domination of the English bourgeoisie in India. *The overthrow of imperialist domination and the independence of India will aim a mortal blow at the capitalist system in England.*

It is therefore quite obvious why the struggle for Indian independence means the most direct struggle for the institution of the Socialist system in England. The slogan of "Indian State independence" therefore expresses the *most direct vital* interests of the English workers. The strength of the Conservatives lies in the circumstance that they, together with the Labourites, are making use of the fact that the Communist Party is neither clear in the way it fights for Indian independence, nor fights sufficiently extensively or constantly, and that the Communist Party fails to make this struggle part of the day-to-day fight of the workers; and the Conservatives, together with the Labourites, are now striving to strengthen their influence among the working class and to isolate the Communist Party, by playing upon the "imperialist" traditions of the backward sections of the proletariat. This is going on at a time when the *strength* of our party depends exactly upon the extent to which we are able to raise the question of State independence for India in a *clear-cut, explicit* form. If our Communist Party will carry on extensive agitation and explain clearly the meaning of the slogan of Indian independence, it will increase its influence a thousand-fold and muster the broad masses of the proletariat around its banner; whereas if we remain silent on this question or raise it in a "timid" fashion, it will objectively only tend to bring grist to the mill of the Conservatives and result in the isolation of the Communist Party.

The slogan of "complete State independence for India" is the most important strategic slogan of the day not only for England, but for the whole world proletariat in its struggle to overthrow the capitalist system throughout the world.

The colonial theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1921 mentioned that it was the duty of Communist parties of imperialist countries to help *in deed* the oppressed nations of the world and to fight for their emancipation. To express sympathy in words towards

the colonies, and to wage no practical warfare in deed, to offer no assistance to the colonial peoples, is a form of the worst kind of opportunism and a sign of the influence of the Second International, which has been sharply condemned and branded in all the decisions of the Comintern.

There is yet another side to this question. As a result of the national oppression of the toiling masses in the colonies, they have become imbued with a spirit of hatred and suspicion towards not only the white people in general, but also to some extent to the workers of "white" nations, to the workers of the metropolis. This justifiable lack of confidence is made use of by the national bourgeoisie and the imperialists in order to split the united front of the oppressed nations and the world proletariat. Moreover, it is used by the national bourgeoisie under cover of phrases about "national unity" to subject the workers of their own colonial country to their own influence, and thus isolate them from the world Communist movement.

Thus, the very fact that the Communists of imperialist countries frequently fail to carry on practical work for the independence of colonial nations, not only fortifies the capitalist régime at home, but also consolidates the position of the treacherous national bourgeoisie in the colonies.

In order to overcome this situation and to gain the confidence, friendship and alliance of the toiling masses of the colonies, the working class, and especially the Communist Party in the metropolis, *must wage a constant, systematic struggle for the independence of the colonial peoples, and prove in actual deed* their determination to fight to the death for the independence of the colonies.

In this connection attention should be paid to unmasking the so-called "civilising" rôle of the metropolis in the colonies and the propaganda carried on by the bourgeoisie to the effect that "white" peoples are higher than all others in intellectual and other respects.

The lying nature of the gospel of the "civilising" rôle of the white races is clear from thousands of concrete facts which depict the poverty, degradation, exploitation which reigns in the colonies as a result of the rule of "civilised" exploiters and which, in their turn, lead to the impoverishment of the toiling masses in the metropolis.

The fable about the "higher" rôle of the white races who are called upon to enlighten the "savage" peoples is being spread, incidentally, by the Japanese (true, yellow-skinned) imperialism among their own workers, in speaking about their civilising rôle in China, Manchuria and Korea.

The practical activities of the Communist Party, therefore, must also include the most

energetic struggle against all prejudices of this kind which are to be found among the backward sections of the English proletariat.

The Labour Party entirely supports the English bourgeoisie and side by side with the latter operates a policy which enslaves and exploits the Indian people. The Labour Party, together with the so-called Independent Labour Party, and equally with the Conservatives, is trying to maintain the feudal-landlord system of the native princes, landlords and moneylenders in India. Together with the Conservatives the Labour Party is responsible for the caste survivals, and the Hindu-Moslim strife; together they are trying to suppress the Indian revolution and come to an agreement with the native exploiters.

The "Round Table" Conference, staged by the English bourgeoisie jointly with the Labour Party, aims at mustering together all the forces of reaction against the rising tide of the workers' and peasants' revolution in India. All the bartering for concessions which is taking place between the imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie is simply haggling over the share of profits which each is to gain by their joint exploitation of the Indian people.

The "Round Table" Conference is directed not only against the Indian revolution, it is directed *also against* the English proletariat. For the concentration of forces against the Indian revolution is *at the same time* the concentration of forces against the English proletariat, *preparation for the further increase of enslavement and exploitation of the workers of Great Britain.*

The most essential, urgent task of the moment is to unmask the imperialist policy of the Labour Party and the General Council of Trade Unions. The Labour Party during its term of office waged constant terror in the colonies and sent military expeditions (Burma, North-West Frontier Province, etc.), to enslave the Indian people, and during 1930, hurled over 50,000 Indians into gaol. Thousands shot, millions dead from famine, etc.—these are examples of the activities of the Labour Party. The Labour Party added to its policy of enslavement other measures (following the example of the British bourgeoisie) directed towards forming its own agency of British imperialism inside the Indian labour movement: for instance the Joshi, Shiva-Rao, Giri, Chaman-Lal group and others from the so-called Trade Union Federation.

The most active rôle in operating this policy was carried on, and is still being carried on by

the Independent Labour Party, under cover of "radical" phrases; and now by means of its alleged "independence" it is not only trying to fool and disorganise the English workers, but, in declaring in words its sympathy for the Indian people and their right to national self-determination, it is trying to help disorganise the Indian revolutionary movement. The Independent Labour Party, in wholeheartedly supporting the Labour Government, sought to assist in the creation of left-reformist, pseudo-Socialist, anti-revolutionary organisations in India like the Punjab Socialist Party. With its half-hearted support of Nehru, Gandhi, Roy and other national reformists, it sought to help amalgamate the national-reformists with the Joshi-Giri group into a reactionary bloc inside the trade union movement against the revolutionary proletariat. The Independent Labour Party is trying to disorganise *from inside* and to smash the revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses of India.

The rôle of the "left" opposition which the Independent Labour Party is trying to play in England at present has been assumed not only to disorganise the revolutionary struggle of the English proletariat and to isolate the Communist Party, but also to help the national-reformists to disorganise the Indian proletariat.

An integral part of the general struggle of the Communist Party of England for winning the *majority* of the English proletariat and for overthrowing the capitalist system is to fight against and unmask the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party.

There can be unity between the English proletariat and India only along the lines advocated by the Communist Party, i.e., along the lines of unity with the revolutionary proletariat of India in the struggle against the landlord-bourgeois bloc (and the National Congress). Therefore it is the duty of the English proletariat and its vanguard, the Communist Party, to help isolate the Indian bourgeoisie and its organ, the National Congress, and to bring about the hegemony of the proletariat in the liberation movement of the Indian people.

All that has been written above goes to prove why the platform of action of the Communist Party of India expresses not only the interests of India, but of the English proletariat as well and is one of the fundamental documents upon the basis of which the Communist movement in England will be able to consolidate its ranks, develop and win power.