

# **Crisis of British Rule in India and the New Stage in the Liberation Struggle of Her Peoples**

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The upheavals which took place in India after the Second World War represent one of the clearest indications of the post-war sharpening of the crisis of the Colonial system of imperialism. India belongs to the category of the more industrially developed colonies, with a national big bourgeoisie in India has its long history. India is a clear example of the fact that after the Second World War the national big bourgeoisie has become the main support of imperialism in the most developed colonies. Here we see that in those colonies where the proletariat is emerging as an independent political force and where a well organised big bourgeoisie has entered into a compromise with imperialism, complete liberation from the rule of imperialism is impossible without a struggle against this bourgeoisie.

The objective conditions for the anti-imperialist revolution in India were already created long ago. Already before the First World War, the organised national movement, directed against British rule, re-presented a political force. After the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which had a tremendous influence on India, the national movement assumed a mass character. India marched ahead of other colonial and dependent countries in the struggle for its liberation. In 1920, at the Third Congress of the Comintern, V.I. Lenin, speaking of the awakening of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, said:

“British India is at the head of these countries, and there revolution is maturing in proportion to the growth of the industrial and railways proletariat, on the one hand, and to the increase in the brutal terrorism of the British—who are more frequently resorting to massacres (Amritsar), public floggings, etc., on the other. “(V.I. Lenin, Thesis of report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Part to the Third Congress of the Comintern, selected works, Moscow, Volume X, p. 731)

In his work on the Foundations of Leninism, J.V Stalin in 1924, wrote that in India the imperialist chain may break earlier than in other countries.

These observations of Lenin and Stalin were completely in conformity with the objective situation that had developed in India immediately after the October Revolution; if at the present time British imperialism retains India in colonial dependence, through in a new and concealed form, then this can be explained by the

distinctive features of the Indian national liberation movement and by the distinctive features of British policy in India.

India's exploitation by British imperialism was carried out not through local and formally independent government as in the semi-colonies like China, Iran, Egypt, etc., but through governments which in fact were wholly independent on imperialism. India was directly ruled by British officials.

In spite of the fact that already since the second half of the nineteenth century, India had firmly embarked on the path of capitalist development and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie assumed a sharp character, the bourgeoisie was nevertheless dissatisfied with the existing form of British rule. This contributed to creating illusions about the unity of interests of all classes of Indian society in the struggle against British imperialism, till the October Revolution and even till the thirties of the twentieth century, only the feudal princes, the semi-feudal landlords and the comprador sections of the bourgeoisie openly supported British rule., nevertheless feared the mass anti-imperialist and anti-feudal movement. It utilized the mass movement to extract political and economic concessions from the British ruling classes; but when this movement assumed an active character and began to broach upon the interests of the bourgeoisie, it invariably betrayed it.

The Indian bourgeoisie created its class organisations considerably earlier than the proletariat. Therefore, headed by the bourgeoisie and the liberal landlords, the All-India National Congress captured the leadership of the national liberation movement. Though in the struggle against the rule of British imperialism, the bourgeoisie was nothing but a most unreliable and vacillating member, always ready for compromise and for betrayal, the Congress under its leadership virtually monopolised the leadership of the entire movement till the thirties of this century.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, in the period of the upsurge of the national liberation movement of India, to which the Russian Revolution of 1905 had given an impetus there appeared sharp contradictions within the national movement between the Right wing comprising of the bourgeoisie and the landlords and the left wing comprising of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia., result of this was the split in the National Congress and the expulsion of democratic elements from it; the Right wing of the Congress came to a compromise with British imperialism on the basis of the constitutional reforms of 1909.

After the First World War and the October Revolution these contradictions were further aggravated. The broadest masses of the workers and peasants of India rose in struggle. Already by 1919 the masses in the most important provinces had entered the movement. However, the bourgeoisie was able to retain leadership in its hands. This

to a considerable extent can be explained by the advent to leadership of Gandhi. Gandhism was the most powerful weapon in the hands of the bourgeois-landlord leadership of the National Congress, which made it possible for it to hold back the masses in obedience and to utilise the growing mass movement in its own interests.

Gandhi preached class peace, the inviolability of private property and of existing social relationships. Thus he was the representative of the interests of the Indian big bourgeoisie and the liberal landlords. By skilfully playing upon the anti-imperialist sentiments of the broad masses, by utilising their political immaturity and down-trodden existence, their religious and social prejudices and their native patriarchal faith in the possibility of liberating themselves peacefully from the yoke of a foreign nation, he created those peculiar forms of participation of the political struggles which were advantageous to the bourgeoisie.

Therefore, immediately the movement began assuming form which was dangerous for the bourgeoisie, it was able to utilise Gandhism so that betraying and decapitating the movement, it could retain at the same time its influence to a certain extent. In the period of the 1919-1922 movement, the membership of the National Congress rose to ten millions. The bourgeoisie betrayed the 1919-1922 movement-its (bourgeoisie's) major section heading the National Congress came to an agreement with British imperialism. In his speech to the students of the University of the Toilers of the East in 1925, J.V. Stalin characterised the political situation in India and the tasks of the Indian Communists in the following manner:

“The fundamental and new feature in the conditions of existence of such colonies as India is not only that the national bourgeoisie has split into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but, primarily, that the compromising section of this bourgeoisie has already managed in the main to come to an agreement with imperialism. Dreading revolution more than imperialism, concerned more about its moneybags than about the interests of its own country, this section of the bourgeoisie the wealthiest and the most influential section is completely going over to the camp of the irreconcilable enemies of the revolution, having entered into a bloc with imperialism against the working and peasants of its own country. The victory of the revolution cannot be achieved unless this bloc is broken. But in order to break this bloc fire must be concentrated on the compromising national bourgeoisie; its treachery must be exposed, the toiling masses must be emancipated from its influence, and the conditions necessary for the hegemony of the proletariat must be systematically prepared. In other words, it is a question of preparing the proletariat of such colonies as India for the role of leader in the liberation movement, and of dislodging, step by step, the bourgeoisie and its spokesmen from this honorable position. The task is to create a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc and to ensure the hegemony of the

proletariat within this bloc.” (J.V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1947, p. 217)

However, the task of dislodging the bourgeoisie from the leadership of the national liberation movement and of freeing the broad masses of peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie from its influence was not accomplished in the period owing to the weakness of the Communist groups and the absence of unity in the working class movement and also as a consequence of the clever demagogy of the bourgeoisie leaders. In the period of the World economic crisis, the position of the Indian bourgeoisie strengthened noticeably, the contradiction between it and British imperialism became aggravated and the representatives of that wing of the Indian big bourgeoisie which masked itself under “Left” phases of the toilers to the side of the Congress and to utilise the mass movement as an instrument of pressure on the British imperialists, they widely employed anti-imperialist demagogy. Even in 1933 when a united Communist party was created and further the split in the trade unions was eliminated and the unity of the trade union movement was achieved, the task of dislodging the bourgeoisie from the leadership of the national movement was not accomplished.

Since 1935, the Communist Party of India followed the tactics of a United National Front and actively participated in the work of the National Congress. These tactics enabled the Indian communists to extend their influence among the workers, peasants, students, youth and a section of the intelligentsia. However, in carrying out the tactics of a United Front, the Indian Communists committed Right opportunist and nationalistic mistakes, which were expressed in the refusal to criticize Gandhi, Nehru and other bourgeois leaders of the National Congress and the refusal to expose their anti-popular leanings.

As a result of this the Communists were not able to fulfill the task of dislodging the bourgeoisie from the leadership of the national movement.

British imperialist policy in India is characterised by a great flexibility, by a skilful utilisation of the different contradictions and historical survivals (religion, princely states, castes, etc.) that are peculiar to Indian society. By carrying out this policy in practice in a planned manner and in particular by setting Hindus and Muslims against each other, British imperialism managed to succeed in the formation of separate Hindu and Muslim political organisations (the Hindu Mahasabha and the League), which became an important weapon for the realisation of the British policy. Profiting from the opportunism and the repeated treachery of the leaders of the National Congress, their connection with the Hindu landlords and moneylenders, their fear of the working class and the peasant movement and their incapacity not merely to solve the agrarian and national questions but even to put forward a more or less radical

programme for their solution, the leaders of the Muslim intelligentsia and peasantry. Thus, it turned out that considerable democratic strata of the Muslims were not only divorced from but even set in opposition to the struggle of the great masses of the population of India.

As a result of all this, when the British imperialists were no longer able to rule India in the old way, they carried out the partition of India and created two dominions there, having ensured for themselves through this, new possibilities of playing upon the contradictions between the newly formed states, of setting them one against the other and thus retaining their political domination in a new form.

These were the basic reasons why though there existed in India all the objective prerequisites for the complete overthrow of the oppression of an alien imperialism, in spite of the long history of her national liberation movement, the considerable solidarity of her working class and the existence of a Communist Party, India was not able to liberate herself from colonial dependence.

Before the Second World War, India saw a new rise in the national liberation movement. This ascent was in the initial stage of its development but even at this stage it differed considerably in many of its aspects from the rise in 1919-22 and the rise at the beginning of the thirties.

The main features of the pre-war rise in the national liberation movement were the followings:

1. The working class of India, though its individual sections remained under the influence of national reformism, emerged as an independent political force, and put forward a most consistent programme of struggle for the liberation of India from British rule and from the feudal survivals and was thus the foremost detachment, the vanguard of the entire national liberation movement. The Communist Party played a leading role in the main organisations of the working class and also in a number of peasant unions.

The rise in the working class movement was expressed in the great sweep of the strike movement, in the organised character of the strikes, their duration and in the fact that political demands were also set forth alongside economic demands.

2. The peasant movement was on the ascent. In the thirties peasant unions (kisan sabhas) began to be formed in India; although at the beginning of the war they comprised altogether of nearly half a million members, they nevertheless enjoyed influence in the advanced regions of India and particularly in East Bengal, in Andhra, in Bihar, in the United Provinces, in Kerala and in East Punjab. The peasant

movement marched under the slogans of reduction of rent, abolition of usury, reduction in land and water taxes. The more progressive peasant organisations led by the Communists demanded the abolition of landlordism. Millions of peasants participated in the meetings, in the peasant marches and the strikes of tenants that were organised by the peasant's unions.

The peasantry actively supported the anti-imperialist slogans that were advanced by the National Congress at that time. One must take into account the fact that both in the period of the pre-war upsurge and at the present time the majority of the peasants are still under the influence of the reactionary ideology of Gandhism.

3. The movement against the feudal-landlord oppression and the remnants of serfdom embraced not only the population of the provinces of British India but also the majority of the princely states. There had been a movement in the princely states even earlier but then it bore a scattered and spontaneous character. Inl (Praja Mandals, Praja Parishads) were formed in the princely states. These organisations had a very mixed social composition and in the majority of cases bourgeois and landlord elements, connected with the Indian National Congress stood at their head. The National Congress which till the pre-war upsurge had unceasingly pursued the line of refusing to organise the struggle in the princely states, after this movement began developing spontaneously, contrived to seize the leadership of this movement into its own hands, in order to impede its growing over into a revolutionary upsurge. In certain princely states the movement reached the stage of peasant uprisings (in the princely states of Orissa). The organisations of the subject people of the princely states were amalgamated on an all-India scale, by the creation of the so-called States People's Conference the leading role of which belonged to the leaders of the National Congress – thus predetermining the reformist character of the movement.

The people of the princely states who had earlier kept aloof from the India-wide national liberation movement and objectively played the role of a reserve of British imperialism in India, have now been converted into an active participant in the anti-imperialist struggle.

The help rendered to the princes by the British authorities in India contributed to the merging of the anti-feudal movement in the princely states with the anti-imperialist movement in India as a whole. However, the proletariat did not succeed even then in dislodging the bourgeois-landlord elements from the leadership of the movement.

In order to retain its authority among the masses, the leadership of the National Congress increased its pressure on British imperialism by putting forward more resolute demands than before (the immediate granting of independence, refusal to support British in future war, etc.). The objective sharpening of the contradiction

between the Indian bourgeoisie and British imperialism also operated in this very direction.

In the period of the world economic crisis, owing to certain distinctive features of its manifestation in India, the position of Indian capital, not only did not weaken but became more strengthened; the textile industry, the main base of Indian capital grew; at the time of the crisis new branches of industry – sugar and cement where also Indian capital predominated – developed powerfully. In this connection, the position of the bourgeoisie, which had no rights in the political life of India became even more unbearable for it than before.

The promotion to the leading positions in the Congress of those representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie who were capable of widely resorting to Left phrases (Nehru and other “Lefts”) was a result not only of a change in the composition of the Congress but also an expression of the sharpening of the contradiction between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie and an attempt on the part of the latter to utilise the mass movement. After the suppression of the movement in the beginning of the thirties, the National Congress was converted once again into a small organisation, comprising of some hundred thousand members and the fall in its influence created for the bourgeoisie the menace of masses freeing themselves from under its influence. The “Left” leaders of the type of Nehru were promoted in order to strengthen this influence.

Before the Second World War, when there was an upsurge in the national liberation movement, the Congress, through the manoeuvres of its leadership, once again extended its influence amongst the masses. The mistakes of the Communists in pursuing the tactics of the united Front also contributed in a considerable measure to this. The membership of the Congress rose to nearly six million. All parties and groups supporting the demand for complete independence – from Communists to Gandhites included – became members of the Congress. However, the leadership of the Congress continued to remain in the hands of Gandhi and his adherents, i.e., the representatives of the Indian big bourgeoisie and the liberal landlords. Therefore, the National Congress never played the role of “general staff” of the national liberation movement, although it appeared as such in the eyes of the broad strata of the petty-bourgeois masses and even of a section of the working class which still retained illusions about the unity of the interests of all Indians in the struggle against British imperialism. The leadership of the National Congress, in spite of the very radical sounding speeches of Nehru, in spite of the declarations at the sessions of the Congress, attempted as before to utilise its influence amongst the masses not for the aims of liberating India from British imperialism and the oppression of feudal survivals, but for bargaining with British imperialism for terms of agreement more profitable to the Indian big bourgeoisie.

However, British imperialism did not meet the demands of the Indians bourgeoisie even halfway – not even to the extent of creating a basis for an agreement. The international situation did not yet compel it to do this and the influence of the National Congress and of Gandhi on the masses gave some guarantee that the anti-imperialist movement would not assume a revolutionary character. In the pre-war period, the policy of setting Muslims against Hindus, which was directed towards the splitting of the national liberation movement was intensified.

In order to extend its mass base, the Muslim League declared as its aim the struggle for the complete independence of India; with this it drew over to its side a considerable section of the Muslim intelligentsia and peasantry. On the other hand, it strengthened its position in the Punjab and in Bengal by forming an alliance with two openly pro-British reactionary parties of these provinces and in particular, with the Right wing of the Bengal “Krishak Praja Party” headed by Fazlul Huq and the Unionist Party in the Punjab, headed by Sikender Hayat Khan.

In the period of the Second World War, the struggle against British rule in India did not cease. Till the attack of Hitler Germany on the USSR, the alignment of forces in India was essentially no different from the pre-war one. It was not merely a question of the National Congress refusing to render active assistance to the war efforts of Britain, but what was much more important was that till June 1941, an anti-war mass movement was going on in India, in which workers and artisans, students and peasants participated actively. This movement was expressed in the form of strikes, in various conferences of protest against drawing India into the war and also in the form of strike actions against the rise in prices, etc.

Till June 1941, there was virtually no change even in the composition of the National Congress. The Communists continued to participate in it and supported the anti-war line of the National Congress. In this period, the Congress strove to bring pressure on British imperialism without unleashing a mass struggle; it was the Communists who strove to raise the masses to launch a struggle for the independence of India. Naturally, therefore, the attempts of the British ruling circles to disrupt the national liberation movement and to weaken it became intensified.

Towards the end of 1939 and in the beginning of 1940, the leading circles of the Muslim League under the direct instigation of the British ruling circles put forward the slogan of the partition of India into two states – Muslim Pakistan and Hindu Hindustan.

It was only after the attack on the USSR by Hitler Germany, after the entry of the USSR into the war that significant changes took place in the alignment of forces within India.



The Communist Party of India declared that in order to defeat the bloc of fascist aggressors it would completely support the war efforts of the allies in the struggle against fascism, would call upon the Indian workers to increase their war production, without, however, ceasing the struggle against British imperialism for the liberation of India. The Communists completely supported during this period the demands of the National Congress for the promulgation of a declaration with respect to granting complete independence to India and the immediate creation in India of a government responsible to the Indian legislative organs and composed of Indian political leaders. The Communist Party of India demanded India's participation in the intensification of the struggle against the fascist bloc, the opening of the Second Front and the fulfilment of all the obligations of the British Government with regard to trade supplies to the USSR. They advanced the slogan of converting the war into a people's war.

The Indian bourgeoisie utilised widely the war situation and readily fulfilled the war orders and took part in the different links of the colonial administration connected with the allotment of orders and of other forms of "regulation" of economy. The landlords made a fortune out of speculation in grain during wartime.

At the same time the political representatives of the bourgeoisie and the liberal landlords attempted to utilise as before the war difficulties in order to bargain for concessions from the British Government and for being allowed to share power in India. In spite of the resolutions adopted by the National Congress on the question of war, in which sympathy was expressed for the countries struggling against the fascist aggressors and in particular towards the Soviet Union and China, the National Congress declared that it would just as before not support the war efforts of British unless a "National" Government responsible to the legislative organs of India was formed immediately, i.e. it continued the policy of extorting concessions in favour of the Indian bourgeoisie. All the resolutions about sympathy towards the forces fighting against fascism were only a screen to conceal the narrow, class, bourgeois nationalist position of the Congress.

The first serious attempt of the British Government to reach an open political agreement with the Indian bourgeoisie, in order to draw it over to its side, was made in March 1942 when Cripps (one of the members of Churchill's Cabinet and at the same time a representative of the Labourite top strata) was sent for negotiations with leaders of the Indian political parties. However, the programme stated in the draft declaration of the British War Cabinet, communicated by Cripps, was not adopted by the National Congress mainly because the British ruling circles had not agreed to the creation during the period of war itself of a responsible Government in India. The National Congress did not wish to content itself with mere declarations of promised

concessions in the future and demanded immediate concrete steps directed towards drawing in the Indian bourgeoisie into the administration of the country.

Outwardly the Cripps mission aggravated the relationships between the British Government and the National Congress. Based on the mass movement, the National Congress as yet made attempts to extort concessions from the British Government in the interests of the propertied classes of India. It was precisely with this aim that the session of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay, in the beginning of August 1942, adopted a resolution threatening the British Government that if in the immediate future a “National” Government was not set up in India, the Congress would begin a campaign of mass civil disobedience.

The declaration of the British authorities about the Congress being prepared with a plan for organising diversion and sabotage of war measures on a mass scale does not in any way correspond to reality. The leadership of the Congress would never agree to raising the masses in struggle against the British Government not only in the period of the war but also in times of peace. But the attempts to utilise the war difficulties of the British to bargain for concessions for the propertied classes of India, which was the basis of the policy of the National Congress in the period of the war contributed against its own will to the growth of the anti-imperialist movement and also to the retention of the authority of the National Congress among the broad masses; whereas the demands of the National Congress for the formation of a National Government and for declaring India as an independent country won the support of the masses, the British ruling circles were seriously disturbed by the development of events. Therefore, the British authorities arrested the leaders of the Congress in August 1942. The British Government knew for a certainty that these arrests would provoke a wave of indignation in India, bringing behind it spontaneous protest actions and contribute to the unleashing of an anti-British movement. On the other hand, contrary to the sentiments of the British authorities it was well known to the Government that the National Congress had made no preparations whatsoever for an active struggle against British rule and that the actions would bear an unorganized, local character and, therefore, it would not be very difficult to crush them. The calculations of the British ruling circles were to a considerable extent justified.

The leadership of the National Congress which was in prison did not sympathise with the mass movement of protest; those leaders of the National Congress who were at liberty, also made no attempts to lend it. The charge against the Indian Communists that was put forward by the leaders of the National Congress in 1945 and later that they had disrupted the 1942 movement and through this impeded the liberation of India from British rule was a slander directed towards discrediting the Communist Party. The 1942 movement could not grow over into a general popular uprising because it was deprived of leadership and bore a scattered character. Already, at the

end of 1943, and in the beginning of 1944, the majority of the leading workers of the Congress were set free from imprisonment under various pretexts and in the spring of 1944 Gandhi also was set free. Although the then Secretary of State for India, Amery, declared that Gandhi was set free owing to illness and that the British Government did not wish to go a single step further than the Cripps proposals, still there is no doubt that the British Government and the leaders of the National Congress intended to resume negotiations.

Towards the end of 1944, the anti-British movement once again began to intensify in India. Attempts were made to reach an agreement between the Muslim League and the National Congress on the basis of mutual concessions. Certain leaders of the National Congress and in particular Rajagopalchari urged that the Congress should agree in principle to the formation of Pakistan on the condition that a plebiscite would be held in those parts of the provinces which would be subject to the division. Under pressure from the ordinary members of the National Congress and the Muslim League, Gandhi (after his release) and Jinnah conducted negotiations in order to reach an agreement. However, as was to be expected, this agreement did not come about. It must be noted that all the progressive elements, both in the League and within the National Congress, genuinely strove to attain an agreement between these two organisations in order to unite their forces in the struggle against British imperialism. But neither the leadership of the Muslim League headed by Jinnah nor the majority of the leading Congressmen headed by Patel wanted this agreement.

In spite of the fact that the mass sections against British domination were crushed, the political situation towards the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945 had become so aggravated that the Government expected new outbreak of the anti-imperialist movement. The then Viceroy of India, Lord Wavell, went to England in order to work out measures for the solution of the "Indian crisis". We came back from England when Germany had already capitulated. As a result of his negotiations with the British Government, the leaders of the National Congress who were still in prison were released and once again negotiations began between them and the British Government where measures were adopted which precluded an agreement between the Congress and the League. It was precisely this task which was pursued by the conference in Simla in June 1945.

The Labour victory in the British elections was rewarded by the Congress leadership as a favourable factor to reach an agreement with the British Government although any special hope about the Labourites granting any concessions immediately were not expected by even the Right-wing leaders of the Congress.

All these facts prove that a formal bargain between the British Government and the Indian bourgeoisie was not yet complete till the termination of the war, that the British

Government even at this period hoped to get off with only insignificant concessions. At the same time the mass working class and peasant movement in India did not as yet assume a sweep sufficient enough to frighten the Indian bourgeoisie and make it more compliant. Therefore, the declaration of the Labour Government of September 19, 1945, which was a complete repetition of the terms communicated through Cripps, found a very cold reception from the leaders of the Congress. The Congress leaders, for example Abul Kalam Azad, the then President of the Congress sharply criticised the decision of the Labourite Government to conduct elections to the central and provincial legislative assemblies in the period between November 1945 and April 1946, without removing the laws and ordinances of the war period. However, in September 1945, there took place events in India which accelerated the compromise between the British Government and the Indian bourgeoisie. The international situation in general and in particular the situation developing in South-East Asia after the capitulation of Japan contributed in a still greater measure to this.

Mass anti-British actions began in India in September 1945, the trial of the soldiers of the so-called Indian National Army who had surrendered after the defeat of the Japanese in Burma served as a direct cause of this. A section of the officers and soldiers of this army, who were from among the soldiers and officers of the British Indian Army organised with Japanese aid by Subhas Chandra Bose and who had been taken captive by the Japanese in Singapore were brought before a Military court on a charge of treason. Many of them were threatened with death sentences. This trial invoked a movement of protest. The cause of this was not only the popularity of Bose but also the growth of anti-British sentiments. Simultaneously with this there developed a movement of protest against the use of Indian troops for the suppression of the national liberation movement in Indonesia and in Indo-China. In Calcutta the movement commenced by the students was supported by a section of the workers. At the same time there were strikes of municipal workers there. As a result of this, matters reached the stage of armed clashes with the police. Barricades were erected in some areas of the city. For some days the city was without light and water. The British authorities did not succeed in crushing the movement by police force and British and American troops were called out. The movement was suppressed but it flared up in other towns and in particular in Bombay and in Delhi. During October and November 1945, the actions against the trial of Bose's army and against the use of Indian troops in Indonesia and Indo-China flared up several times in many towns of India.

The elections to the legislative assemblies which were to a considerable extent intended by the British Government to distract the attention of the masses from the direct struggle against British rule in India and also to foment Hindu-Muslim differences did not yield the results which the British Government expected. Though

the Muslim League came out with very sharp anti-Hindu slogans in the mass in Calcutta, Bombay, etc., Hindus and Muslims acted jointly.

Hoping to draw the masses to its side, the Congress entered the elections with an outwardly radical programme. It declared that it would fight for complete independence and not consent to Dominion Status; while objecting to partitioning the country into Hindustan and Pakistan, the Congress at the same time declared that India was to be a federation of political units. It promised to carry out the nationalisation of the main branches of industry and in the first place of those enterprises belonging to British capital and land reform with payment of compensation to the landlords and the capitalists.

The Communist Party of India took part in the elections with its own consistently democratic programme. It demanded the complete independence of India. It declared that it would fight for the granting of the right of self-determination to the point of secession to all national regions and including those where the Muslims comprised the majority of the population. The Communists put forward the demand of nationalisation of the main branches of industry without any compensation, the introduction of workers' control and the complete abolition of landlordism and usury. The Communist Party put forward its candidates in the industrial centres and also in some agricultural districts of the Madras and Bengal provinces. In order to defeat the candidates put forward by the Communists, the Congress made a bloc with the ultra-reactionary landlords and openly pro-British groups – for example with the Justice Party in Madras province and the Non-Brahmin Party in Bombay province. In certain areas, the Congress supported the candidatures of those landlords who had earlier stood against it.

This set-up of fighting forces anticipated the alignment of class forces which came into being in India immediately after its partition.

The Congress won a victory in the elections in all the provinces with a Hindu majority and also in Assam and in the North-West Frontier Province.

In the beginning of 1945, the political situation in India became still more acute. Anti-Government actions took place in the army and in the navy – the strike of airmen and staff personnel of the aerodromes, the revolt of the naval ratings, embracing the entire Indian Navy and the unrest among the Jubbulpore garrison. The workers rendered active support to the sailors by organising solidarity strikes. In Bombay, more than 300,000 workers and students took part in these strikes. These actions created alarm in the British ruling circles and of the National Congress which feared the drawing in of the army in an active struggle against British imperialism. Therefore, the leaders of the Congress in conjunction with the leaders of the Muslim League did everything

possible to disrupt the uprising of the sailors and compelled them to surrender to the Government.

Gandhi, Patel and Nehru took upon themselves the role of intermediaries in the negotiations between the Government and the sailors in revolt. It was the usual betrayal of the national liberation movement of the masses on the part of Gandhi and his companions – in – arms which made it possible for the British imperialists to retain power in their own hands through new manoeuvres and to prevent the downfall of their rule in India. It made it possible for the Indian bourgeoisie to once again take the initiative into its own hands and enter into a bargain to get concessions from the British Government.

A characteristic feature of the mass actions of the autumn of 1945 and the spring of 1946 was that the workers, the peasants and the sailors came forward not completely under the flag of the Communist Party, but that for the most part still under the slogans of the National Congress and the Muslim League. Although at this period the bourgeoisie had already entered into a bloc with even those feudal landlord groups which had formerly been against the Congress, still the masses and in particular the peasantry and partially even the workers had faith in the leadership of the National Congress and the Muslim League.

Thus, illusions about the unity of interests of all classes of Indian society in the struggle against the British had not vanished. This enabled the Congress to hinder the extension and deepening of the mass movement.

The mass actions of the spring of 1945 left a powerful influence upon the British ruling circles and the Indian bourgeoisie. Besides, these actions had commenced in such an international situation that they created a threat both to British domination in India and to the class interests of the Indian bourgeoisie. As a result of the defeat of the Hitlerite bloc and the decisive role played by the Soviet Union in this defeat, the victory of People's Democracy in the countries of Eastern Europe, the development of the national liberation movement in the British colonies occupied by the Japanese (Burma, Malaya), the anti-imperialist movement in the Middle East countries (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iran and also as a result of the relative strengthening of the USA, which enriched itself during the war, Britain's position in the world was shaken very violently after the Second World War. Even in India, unfavourable conditions were created for the British. Under these circumstances a development of the broad liberation movement in India would have inevitably brought about the complete collapse of British rule there and a loss of the authority of the compromising bourgeoisie. Then an agreement with the National Congress would not have been able to throw the movement backwards and the retention of British positions in India would have been impossible as the mass movement would have passed out of the

control of the bourgeoisie. It was precisely this which the British ruling circles feared. This explains why in the spring of 1946 the British Government adopted the decision to send a representative Cabinet Mission to India. In March 1946, the Prime Minister of Britain, Attlee, declared in his speech that the anti-British movement in India had assumed an extremely serious character, that it was intimately bound up with the movements for independence in other countries of South-East Asia and that this movement had began to embrace the army. He declared, therefore, that the British Government could not but reckon with this and was prepared to grant India independence although he was convinced that it was more profitable both for Britain and India to retain equal members of the “British Commonwealth of Nations”.

This speech of Attlee signified that the British ruling circles were unable to rule India in the old way and that to retain India in their hands, they had been compelled to come to a compromise with her well-off classes and to allow them to administer, the country. Thus having made them interested in the retention of political and economic ties with Britain, they turned them into open allies in the struggle against the mass democratic movements.

Though this statement of Attlee was in general received with satisfaction among Congress circles, still the National Congress, seeing the anxiety of the British Government, wanted to utilise the situation in order to extract the maximum concessions for the Indian bourgeoisie from the British ruling circles. In particular, at this period the Congress opposed still more resolutely the partitioning of India and hoped that it would succeed in achieving from Britain the granting of Dominion status for India without its preliminary partition. The British ruling circles did not grant this concession. They feared that after having gained power in India, the National Congress would establish links with the USA and that in a united India the mass movement would be able to assume more menacing dimensions than in a partitioned India. Therefore, in the course of its negotiations with the leaders of the Congress and the League the British Cabinet Mission headed by Pethwick-Lawrence in actual practice sought not to reach an agreement between them but to incite the Muslim League to take up an irreconcilable attitude and it supported the demand for the creation of Pakistan.

In its declaration promulgated on May 16, 1946, the British Government put forward a plan for the creation of Dominion with provinces grouped in it into three zones – two Muslim and one Hindu. In other words, while not acceding initially to the creation of Pakistan as a separate Dominion, the British ruling circles proposed to create Pakistan and Hindustan as autonomous parts of a single Indian Dominion and according to the plan, the Central Government of this Dominion was to possess exceedingly limited powers. This proposal did not correspond to the interests of the Indian big bourgeoisie which wanted to enjoy power over the whole of India and it

understood that the British scheme did not ensure this possibility for it. The National Congress accepted the Mission's Plan as the basis for the working out of a new constitution and refused initially to participate in a Provisional government.

The leadership of the Muslim League initially accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan and the proposal to participate in the Provisional Government. But through a number of manoeuvres the Viceroy succeeded in making the Muslim League not only refuse participation in the Provisional Government but also in the work of the Constituent Assembly and declare that it was going to begin a struggle for Pakistan.

This stand adopted by the Muslim League suited the British ruling circles. The aggravation of differences between the Muslims and Hindus gave the British new possibilities of manoeuvring and created favourable conditions for bringing pressure on the leadership of the National Congress. When the possibility of an agreement between the Congress and the League had already become nil, the British ruling circles proposed to the Congress and to its representative Nehru the formation of a Provisional government and this time the Congress accepted this proposal.

This was a decisive step towards a complete agreement with the British government. However, even after the formation of the Nehru Government, the Indian bourgeoisie still wanted to obtain more than was granted to it by the British ruling circles, i.e., it aimed at securing power over the whole of India and strove to play upon international contradictions. The position occupied by the Nehru Government in UNO towards the end of 1946 is characteristic in this respect. Not only did the Indian delegation attempt to play upon the contradictions between Britain and USA within the Anglo-American bloc of aggressors which had already been formed, but sometimes on individual questions it came out in general against the line of this bloc.

The political situation in India continued to remain very tense. The strike movement of the workers and the students increased. In some regions and particularly in the princely states (Hyderabad, Travancore) there began mass actions of the workers and peasants, which sometimes gave rise to clashes with police and troops. In order to weaken this movement the British ruling circles, supported by the reactionary bourgeois-landlord elements, resorted to their traditional method – the method of fomenting the differences between Hindus and Muslims. With this, they hoped to frighten the Indian bourgeoisie still more.

On August 16, 1946, the leadership of the Muslim League began its campaign of so-called direct action for the attainment of the demand of partition of India. In Calcutta, on that very day, with the connivance of the Muslim League – Suhrawardy – bloody clashes took place between Muslim and Hindus which was the beginning of bloody programs and massacres.



This bloody carnage assumed particularly fierce forms in Bihar and in the Punjab. At the same time, the British Government attempted through negotiations to secure the consent of the Congress for the partitioning of India and for granting complete autonomy to the princess. The representatives of the League and Congress were summoned to London in November 1946, to accomplish this.

The year 1946 was marked by a sharp aggravation of the class struggle in Indian industry. With the going over of industry from production of war materials to peacetime production, there began mass dismissals of workers. Wishing to preserve the high rate of profit, the Indian bourgeoisie began its attack upon the working class by reducing wages and intensifying workload through methods of capitalist rationalisation of production.

The position of the working class worsened sharply. India lived through years of famine, prices of prime necessities rose rapidly and, therefore, in spite of the dearness allowances, the real wages of the workers fell sharply. As an answer to the attack of the capitalists, the workers organised strikes – not only workers of big industrial centres like Bombay and Calcutta but workers of the princely states and of the less important industrial centres were also drawn into the movement.

In the first six months of 1946, 1,115 strikes took place in which more than half-a-million workers participated. The strike movement became still more intensified in the second half of 1946. In June, a general strike of the railway workers was being prepared for and it was averted by the fact that a part of the demands of the workers were granted; in July, there was a strike of one hundred thousand postal and telegraph employees; as a mark of solidarity with them, a 24 hour strike was declared in which 300,000 workers of Bombay and several hundred thousand workers of Calcutta took part. Note: V. V. Balabushevich, (Academic Notes of the Pacific Institute, Vol. II, p. 21)

The growth of the working class and peasant movement created anxiety in Indian bourgeois circles and in the leadership of the National Congress. After his return from London in December 1946, Nehru at the first Session of the Constituent Assembly came forth with the proposal to adopt a republican constitution for India and to pay no heed to the fact that the Muslim League and the princess were boycotting the Constituent Assembly. Nevertheless, at this very session, the Congress lowered its tone very sharply both in respect to the Muslim League and the princess. The leadership of the National Congress reached an agreement with the princess and gave up its former demand for election of all representatives from the states and consented to 50 per cent nominated by the princess. In order to reach an agreement with the Muslim League, the leadership of the National Congress adopted the method of voting

in the Constituent Assembly that was recommended by the British Government in London and which had been earlier rejected by the Congress.

Thus, towards the end of 1945, the perquisites were created for a complete agreement between the Indian big bourgeoisie, represented by the National Congress, and British imperialism and for its open going over into the camp of reaction and imperialism. Thus, there was formed a reactionary bloc of the feudal princess, landlords, the big bourgeoisie and foreign imperialists. The policy of repression against the working class and peasant movement, which is pursued by the Nehru government, the persecution of the Communist Party and the change in the tone of the Congress press in relation to the British government confirmed this.

The first official expression of the deal between the British ruling circles and the Indian bourgeoisie and landlords was Attlee's declaration in the House of Commons on February 20 1947, about Britain's "withdrawal" from India in June 1948, and the transfer of power to the Indian's. In this declaration, it was clearly indicated that power would be transferred not to a united central Indian Government but to a number of local governments. Still the National Congress received this declaration with complete satisfaction. In the spring of 1947, Nehru declared that while continuing the struggle for the independence of India, the former anti-British slogans must be discarded since they were outworn.

The newly appointed Indian Viceroy, Mountbatten, was received with benevolence by the leadership of the National Congress. At the conference of Asian countries in April 1947, the leaders of the National Congress, including Nehru came out with openly pro-British speeches and directed the edge of their criticism against imperialism "in general". This also confirms the fact that an agreement had taken place between the British ruling circles and the Indian bourgeoisie even before the partition of India and before the disappointment with which the leaders of the Congress received the decision of the British Government on the partition of India was only a mask to screen the betrayal of the National Congress and its deal with the British Government from the masses. In order to deceive its rank-and file members, the Muslim League also protested against the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. In actual fact, Jinnah and other League leaders were completely satisfied with the new British plan. The fact that this plan was welcomed in India as a step towards granting her independence and that no mass protest movement arose in India against this new manoeuvre of the imperialists, proof that the broad masses still had faith in the National congress and its leaders, Gandhi and Nehru for one cannot look upon the bloody clashes between the Hindus and the Muslims, which took place in the provinces of the Punjab and Bengal at the time of partition and which were premeditatedly provoked by the British ruling circles and the local reactionary as a protest movement. In June 1947, the Communist Party of India also was not able to

give a correct evaluation of the Mountbatten Plan and characterised it not as an imperialist manoeuvre but as a certain step forward. It did not immediately understand the treachery of the leadership of the National Congress and the counterposed its Right to its Left wing as though the latter was a progressive one. Therefore, it called upon the masses to rally around Nehru and assist him to get rid of Patel. All this shows the illusions about the unity of national interests and the influence of the Congress were still strong not only among the backward peasantry and the petty bourgeois masses, but also among a certain section of the working class and that the Right opportunist mistakes had not been overcome within a Communist Party.

It was only in December 1947, that the Communist Party of India gave a correct estimate of the Mountbatten Plan as a new imperialist manoeuvre and characterised the Nehru Government as a whole as a Government of the Indian big bourgeoisie, which had entered into an agreement with British imperialism and formed an alliance with the Indian princess and landlords.

The acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan was the greatest treachery on the part of Gandhi and the entire leadership of the National Congress. All the same, the masses did not come out against this treacherous act which reveals particularly clearly the baneful influence of Gandhi and his associates in the leadership of the National Congress on the development of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of India. Gandhi's utilisation of religious prejudices of the peasant masses, his playing upon their downtrodden and backward conditions, upon their being accustomed to implicit obedience to the Congress and to its leaders and in particular to Gandhi himself (whom the backward masses considered to be a saint) fettered the activity of the masses, demoralised them and once again made them victims of the treachery of the bourgeoisie and landlords. Also the demagoguery of Nehru, to a considerable extent, helped the Congress to dupe the vigilance of even the politically more experienced Indian working class.

After the partition of India and the creation there of two Dominions – the Indian Union with a Government led by the National Congress and the Pakistan with a Muslim League Government – the process of the emancipation of the masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the landlords developed within a more rapid speed. This was particularly so in respect to the Indian Union.

The formation of the Governments of the Indian Union and Pakistan was not a rare judicial act. Politically it signified that the Indian landlords and the big bourgeoisie, represented by the National Congress, as well as the Muslim landlords and bourgeoisie, whose interests were represented by the Muslim League, had openly gone over to the camp of imperialism and reaction. This does not mean that in the first days after the formation of these Dominions in India and particularly in Pakistan,

there were no illusions among the masses that now India had become an independent country, the Congress and League would implement all the reforms that they had earlier promised and that the conditions of the masses would improve. However, even the first steps of the Governments of the new Dominions gave a big blow to these illusions. The reactionary character of the Government of the Indian Union was expressed even in the first stages in the fierce repression against the working class movement, in the sabotage of the introduction of land reform and in the repression against the peasantry; in the virtual refusal to nationalise industry, in the policy of strengthening feudal and semi-feudal princely states, and in its resistance to the attempts of the people of the princely states, and in particular the peasantry, to introduce a democratic regime in the princely states; in the refusal to reorganise the administrative and political divisions of India in conformity with the distribution of her nationalities.

Instead of the policy of abolishing the princely states, the Government of the Indian Union began to pursue a policy of compromise with the princess on the basis of drawing in the bourgeois-landlord elements into the administration of the States. With the assistance of the Indian Union Government, and particularly of its acting Prime Minister Patel, certain small princely states were amalgamated and big unions of states were created. In these amalgamated the princess formed an upper house of all the legislative institutions and from among these were chosen the common rulers of the unions of the states. It was in this way that the unions of the princely states were formed; Rajasthan from all the princely states of Rajputana; Saurashtra – the union of all the states of Kathiawar; Madhyabharat in Central India, etc. Certain princely states including even big ones (Baroda and Kolhapur) were merged with provinces with the consent of the princess.

The Pakistan Government did not carry out even such insignificant “reforms” in those princely states which had joined Pakistan.

The formation of the big unions of princely states and the inclusion of parts of the princely states in the provinces pursued the aim not of weakening but of consolidating the positions of the princess and of creating reactionary blocs of princess, landlords and the bourgeoisie in these princely states and also of preventing the princely states from becoming transformed into centres of peasant movement. The reforms introduced by the Government of India in the princely states did not in any measure affect the very powerful survivals of feudalism which were dominant in these princely states. The peasants continued to remain as before the tenants of the princess and landlords, deprived of all rights and victims of the exploitation of the moneylenders.

The Government of the Indian Union and Pakistan not only did not want to fight for the complete independence of India but attempted in every way to strengthen the ties

of India with Britain. Although the National Congress proclaimed the struggle for complete independence as its basic aim, nevertheless, in 1949 it declared openly that henceforth India would remain in the British empire; it was only in order to dupe the masses that an “independent” Republic was proclaimed with the British King as a symbol of the “unity of the Commonwealth of Nations”.

The economic links of India with Britain strengthened considerably in the course of 1948-49. The position of British capital in the economy of India which was partially weakened during the Second World War began to be won back by it. India’s dependence on Britain is manifested particularly clearly in the fact that just as before India cannot create her machine-building industry and that position belongs to British capital on whom depends the supply of equipment to enterprises in India.

The penetration of American capital into India has increased considerably. Already, at the time of the Second World War the share of the USA in Indian imports was more than 25 per cent. After the war and in particular after the partition of India, American capital began to penetrate into Indian industry. By utilising the financial difficulties of the Indian Government, the monopoly combinations of the USA (for example, the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development) demanded, as a condition for the granting of credits, that the constitution of the Indian Union guarantee immunity to foreign capital investments in case of nationalisation of certain branches of industry; the Government of the Indian capitalists and landlords agreed to these demands.

The economic influence of the USA in Pakistan also increased. In April 1949, a treaty was concluded between Pakistan and the Mac Arthur administration in Japan on the supply of equipment from Japan for enterprises in Pakistan. However, neither Britain nor the USA gave up the policy of hampering the industrial development of India. The former American Ambassador to India, Grady, openly declared this in a gathering of industrialists in Delhi and at the Conference of the Economic Commission of UNO in Ootacamund in 1948. The dependence of the Indian union on Britain found a clear expression in the act of devaluation of the Indian rupee following the devaluation of the pound, dictated by the USA.

Both the Indian Dominions are very greatly dependent upon Britain and the USA in political and military-strategic respects. As before, the governors of certain provinces, a number of leading officials in the State apparatus of India and Pakistan and instructors in the armies are British. The dependence of the foreign policy of India and Pakistan on the Anglo-American bloc of the instigators of war found its expression in the non-official agreements which were concluded between these Dominions and Britain at the Empire Conferences in October 1948. At this conference, it was decided that in the first place, Liaquat Ali Khan and Nehru would take measures so that Pakistan and the Indian Union would remain within the British empire. In order to

facilitate Nehru's securing consent of the Indian Constituent Assembly to this, it was decided that in future the British empire was to be called the Commonwealth of Nations without any mention of Britain, India and Pakistan declared that they would support Western Union and the North Atlantic bloc. Moreover Pakistan and the Indian Union pledged to assist Britain in crushing the people's movement in Malaya and in Burma. The dependence of the Indian Union and of Pakistan on the Anglo-American bloc increased after the Conference of Prime Ministers of the "Commonwealth of Nations" which took place in London in April 1949. In order to raise the declining authority of the Nehru Government among the masses the British Government agreed to proclaim India as a "Sovereign Republic within the Commonwealth of Nations" and recognise the British King not as head of a State but only as a "symbol of the unity of the Commonwealth of Nations".

However, this does not signify the absence of contradictions between Britain and the USA in India. The penetration of the USA in the economy of India disturbs the British imperialists greatly and while Britain has succeeded in making the Nehru-Patel Government its agent, rather influential circles linked with the Hindu Mahasabha have oriented themselves towards the USA and have demanded India's separation from Britain, etc., her leaving the "Commonwealth of Nations". The Indian Government has become the main agent of Anglo-American imperialism in South-East Asia. Thus, the Governments of the Indian Union and Pakistan, while continuing the old line of British policy, directed towards supporting and preserving remnants of feudal relations in India, in their foreign policy they have completely entered the Anglo-American bloc of the instigators of a new war.

The National Congress has openly become a party of the reactionary bloc of the Indian big bourgeoisie and landlords. In spite of the assassination of Gandhi, which was perpetrated by representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha with the connivance of the Indian authorities, Gandhism continues to remain just as before the most important ideological weapon of the Indian bourgeoisie in order to retain the masses under its influence. Moreover, after the partition of India, the reactionary nature of Gandhism has only been strengthened. The leaders of the Congress are implementing the so-called testament of Gandhi, in which he proposed to convert the Congress into a general organisation and to divide its members into two groups – the ordinary members without any rights and the leaders in whose hands is concentrated the entire power within the Congress organisation. All the active democratic elements have already been expelled or are being expelled from the Congress in conformity with Gandhi's testament.

The attempts to utilise the authority of Gandhi for a "defence of democracy" in India are extremely harmful and dangerous. Gandhi has never headed the armed struggle against imperialism and has never come out against traitors from among the Indians.

On the contrary, he has always been the principal traitor of the mass national liberation movement. The struggle against Gandhism – the ideology of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie of India – is impossible without a struggle against the authority of Gandhi, against the Gandhi cult, without an exposure of all the activities of Gandhi who has constantly betrayed the popular movement and by this rendered tremendous services to the British enslavers of India.

As a result of the agreement between the wealthy classes of India and British imperialism, no solution has been found for even a single one of the problems of the national liberation movement. India and Pakistan continue to remain colonies as before – their feudal divisions have not been liquidated, and the national question has not been solved within the Indian Dominion, the land reforms that have been carried out are not liquidating the feudal survivals which continue to be dominant in the Indian countryside, the agrarian question and the question of the indebtedness of peasants to the moneylenders has not been solved; Indian industry continues to remain in the hands of British capital or in the hands of the Indian big bourgeoisie dependent upon it. American capital is penetrating more and more in industry and as before strangles the industrial development of India. The condition of the working class has worsened strongly. It is, therefore, after its partition, that a mass movement directed against the bloc of foreign imperialists, the big bourgeoisie, the princes and the landlords is becoming more powerful.

After the division of India into Pakistan and the Indian Union the fomenting of Hindu-Muslim difference by Anglo-American imperialism mainly continued in the form of provoking collisions between the two Dominions in Kashmir, the conflicts provoked by the links of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the prince of Junagadh with Pakistan, the question of the settlement of the refugees, etc., are characteristic. But all the same, immediately after the pogroms and massacres, which raged at the time of the demarcation of the boundaries of the two Dominions subsided, the Hindu-Muslim conflicts were relegated to a second place. It is true that the reactionary religious communal organisations (e.g. the Muslim National Guard in Pakistan and the Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Sevak Sangh in the Indian Union, as well as the Sikh communal organisation of the Akalis) continue the all policy of fomenting religious differences and there is no doubt that secret agents of British and American imperialisms are active in their ranks. On the other hand the national question has become one of the most important questions of the political life of India and Pakistan.

We have already said that the Indian Government has refused to carry into practice its national programme i.e. it has refused to create linguistic provinces. Both in the Indian Union as well as in Pakistan, the old administrative, political division has in the main, been preserved. Thus, the most elementary demands of the various nationalities of India have not been satisfied. However, the Indian Union Government and the

National Congress have openly declared that they consider the formation of linguistic provinces as inopportune and they are not mentioned at all in the Indian constitution.

The creation of the autonomous linguistic provinces would have strengthened the position of the democratic elements in some of these provinces. Thus, for example, the secession of the national provinces of Kerala and Andhra from the Madras province would have completely altered the correlation of forces in the provinces in favour of the democratic elements since the main support of the Congress in the Madras province is the Tamil bourgeoisie and the landlord elements of the backward nationalities. After the demarcation of the Madras province on the basis of nationalities into the provinces of Andhra and Kerala, the base of the Congress would have been sharply narrowed down and it would have had to rely only upon the landlords. Exactly the same thing would take place as a result of the demarcation of the Central provinces and the Bombay province on the basis of nationality. However, the movement for the creation of linguistic provinces has very deep roots and the National Congress has no power of restraining it, while the demand of this movement is the unification of all the national territories of the peoples of India within the bounds of a single administrative unit, it is natural for this movement to be directed also against the feudal princes. Thus, the demand for the creation of a united democratic Kerala presupposes the liquidation of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. The formation of a united Karnatak is impossible without the liquidation of the princely states of Mysore and Hyderabad; the creation of the provinces of united Andhra and united Maharashtra is also impossible without the liquidation of Hyderabad.

In the national liberation movement various elements are taking part from workers and peasants to the intelligentsia and the middle national bourgeoisie. The movement bears particularly sharp forms where there exist already developed nations, where the divisions of their territories by the old administrative boundaries if interlinked with elements of national oppression and the most unbearable forms of the domination of feudal elements as well as friction between the propertied upper strata of the various nationalities. Therefore, this movement is distinguished by greatest acuteness in the bounds of the national regions of Andhra, Maharashtra, Kerala and Karnatak. It is much weaker in Tamilnad and in Gujarat.

The movement of the various nationalities bears an anti-feudal character and, therefore, the most important driving force is the peasantry, which is fighting under the leadership of the working class. It is only the Communist Party of India which has put forward the slogan of a consistently democratic solution of the national question, i.e., the right of all the nationalities of India to self-determination, including the right to secession and the formation of independent states. But even bourgeois elements, which fight only for the implementation of the former national programme of the Congress, i.e., for the creation of linguistic provinces, without broaching upon as far



as possible the interests of the princes and the landlords are also participating in the movement. The national bourgeoisie of the peoples mentioned above is very weak and is an extremely unreliable ally in the struggle of the peoples of India for the liquidation of the survivals of its feudal divisions and for national self-determination.

As a result of the development of the movement for self-determination of the various nationalities, there has taken place a sharp weakening and in places even a disintegration of the Congress organisations and a sharp sifting of these organisations to the right. Thus, in the Andhra districts, the national organisation of the Andhra Mahasabha began to grow rapidly and according to certain figures, its membership reached 700,000 in 1948. This organisation has in the main a peasant composition. The intelligentsia plays a big role in it. The Communist organisation of the Andhra districts and the trade unions play a leading role in the peasant movement in the parts of Hyderabad which are in revolt against the Nizam. In the Andhra districts, the Congress has been converted into a landlord's organisation has been virtually merged with the Justice Party of the landlords.

In the national region of Maharashtra, a broad national organisation – the “Maharashtra Conference” – has been formed. This organisation has not broken its connections with the Congress formally but it has advanced demands which are directed against the national policy of the Indian Government. It demanded the creation of a United Maharashtra, including the region of the Central Provinces of the Bombay Province (including Bombay City) and of the princely states of Hyderabad which are inhabited by the Maharashtrians. The leadership of this organisation is less democratic than the leadership of the Andhra Mahasabha, but considerably more progressive than the leadership of the Congress organisation of Maharashtra and Bombay. The Communists are taking part in the work of this organisation and are attempting to revolutionise it. They support energetically the demands for the creation of a United Democratic Maharashtra including the City of Bombay.

In Kerala, a significant section of the Congressites has broken off from the Congress organisation and formed an independent organisation, the “Kerala Socialist Party”. This organisation was not connected with the Socialist Party of India and it has come out jointly with the Communists against the Governments of the princely states of Travancore and Cochin and against the Congress organisations of the Kerala province. The Communist Party of India and the Socialist Party of Kerala have advanced the demand for a union of the Malayali territories of the princely state of Travancore, of the entire state of Cochin of the Malabar district and a part of the district of south Kanara within the bounds of the union of Kerala.

Although in general the national movement of the peoples of the Indian Union is progressive, since it is directed against the reactionary Government of the Indian

Union and the Governments of the princes nevertheless, reactionary elements are attempting to utilise it in their own interests. For example, one of the bourgeois leaders of the princely state of Mysore put forward the demand for the creation of a United Karnatak under the aegis of the Maharaja of Mysore. The prince of Cochin put forward similar idea about the formation of a United Kerala under the aegis of the princely families of Cochin and Travancore. The big bourgeoisie of Travancore demands the inclusion of even the Tamil districts of this princely state into Kerala. Even members of the Hindu Mahasabha and other organisations are taking part in the movement for a United Maharashtra.

The national movement in Pakistan is of no less significance than in the Indian Union. Of particular serious political significance is the struggle of the Red Shirts organisation in alliance with the tribes of the Frontier regions for the creation of an independent Pathanistan. This movement is receiving the secret support of the Government of Afghanistan. The Bengali problem also is of serious importance. East Bengal is separated from the Western part of Pakistan by a distance of 1,500 kilometres. There exist no economic, cultural nor historical links between these two parts of Pakistan. The attempt of the Pakistan Government to strengthen these ties through propaganda of Pan-Islamism and the introduction of Urdu as the state language has only given rise to sharpening of the relations between the Pakistan Government and East Bengal. Even within the Muslim League organisation, West Bengal constitutes a powerful opposition to the policy of the Central Government of Pakistan. In Bengal a movement has begun for her unification. However, at present, it has not assumed such an acute character, as the Pathan movement or the movement in South India because the representatives of the Muslim League who head it in the East Bengal demand her unification within the bounds of Pakistan and in West Bengal the Bengali nationalities are demanding the unification of Bengal within the boundaries of the Indian Union.

The most characteristic and distinctive feature of post-war India is the tremendous growth and intensification of the peasant movement.

The last years were years of almost uninterrupted famine, the condition of the peasantry worsened sharply and the process of their being rendered landless has been accelerated. The position of the peasantry in the princely states in particular has deteriorated. It is precisely in view of this that in the princely states and in particular in the particular states in the south of India as well as in Kashmir the peasant movement has assumed the widest sweep and as a rule it is in these revisions that higher forms of peasant movement prevail. The fact of the peasant question in the south of India and in Kashmir being linked with the national question contributed to the broad sweep of the peasant movement and of the democratic movement in general. In Kerala, the agrarian question cannot be solved without the abolition of the princely

states of Travancore and Cochin and of the land relations dominating there since these princely states embrace more than 70 per cent of this national territory. At the same time, the union of the Malayali people within the boundaries of a united national democratic state cannot be accomplished within the abolition of these princely states. In Kerala, the peasant movement directed against the remnants of feudalism is closely interlinked with the national movement which also bears an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist character. In the south India, the big bourgeoisie, in the main the Gujarati and also the local and in particular the Tamil bourgeoisie, is often closely linked with the princes and is not interested in the solution of the national question and in changes in the existing administrative and political division. The peasantry represents the motivating force of the national movement in Kerala and more and more the working class is winning a leading role in it. Such is also the situation in Andhra.

The Hyderabad question is not merely the question of the relations of the princely state of Hyderabad with the Indian Union. The Hyderabad question is above all the question of the abolition of feudal relationships in the countryside and of the feudal division of the national territories of a number of peoples of South India. Hyderabad is a multi-national princely state. Fifty per cent of her population is Telugu or Andhra, 25 per cent Marathi and 15 per cent Kannada. The inhabitants of Hindustan, who represent the ruling nationality in this state, constitute not more than ten per cent of its entire population and live in the main in the towns; the landlord-feudal elements of the other nationalities of Hyderabad, who have accepted Islam are also counted among them. The anti-feudal peasant movement in Hyderabad, which has assumed particularly sharp forms in Telengana, is at the same time a national movement. The demand of the popular masses is not merely for the abolition of the Nizam's power but also for the abolition of the princely state of Hyderabad as an administrative unit and the unification of different national territories of this princely state with the territories of the corresponding nationalities of the Indian Union.

The Congress in the princely state of Hyderabad represents a section of the big bourgeoisie and a section of landlords of this princely state; it only fights for the restriction of the rights of the Nizam and for the entry of the princely state into the Indian union. The more democratic organisations of this princely state, for example, the Andhra Mahasabha, the Maharashtra Conference, which are numerically much stronger and more influential among the masses than the state Congress, demand the abolition of feudal land relationships and the complete liquidation of the princely state.

The particularly sharp form of the peasant and the national movement in Telengana is explained by the fact that the process of the peasants being deprived of land has proceeded more rapidly in this region of Hyderabad than in the remaining parts of this princely state, as a result of which there the movement has assumed the form of a

peasant uprising. The peasants in revolt have captured the land of the landlords and in 3,000 villages with a total population of more than five million, they have created committees of people's power and armed detachments for self-defence. It was on the territory of Telengana, in the districts of Nalgonda, Warangal and Karimnagar that a people's power was created for the first time in the history of as a result of the revolutionary organised movement of the masses. In Telengana, it was the communists who stood at the head of the peasant and the national movement. Thus, the alliance of the working class with the peasantry has been established here with the leading role of the working class.

The joining of Hyderabad to the Indian Union could not substantially alter the set-up of class forces which existed in the south of India after its partition. In spite of the efforts of the Indian authorities, they did not succeed in liquidating the uprising in Telengana even till the middle of 1949. In order to disrupt the ranks of the people in revolt, they went in for a partial liquidation of landlordism; nevertheless, even after this the uprising was not crushed. But the peasant movement has not embraced only the south of India. The struggle for the reduction of rents and for the liquidation of indebtedness to the usurers also assumed wide dimensions in Bengal, Bihar, Punjab and in the northern part of the Bombay province (Gujarat). The peasant movement is developing in different forms in all the provinces of the Indian Union and in Pakistan.

The demands of the peasant movement and its level are not uniform in the different regions of India. Thus, in West Bengal, the main demand is the reduction in rents and taxes to one-third of the income of the peasants (that is why the movement bears the name of the "Tebhaga"); the movement in the United provinces and in Bihar bears approximately the same character. In Gujarat and in Assam the sharecroppers from the backward and most exploited tribes (Bhills, etc.) are playing a big role in the movement. In East Pakistan, the peasant movement bears an organised and very sharp character. There the peasants are fighting for the complete liquidation of landlordism, by capturing land of the Hindu landlords who have run away from Pakistan.

The working class is as yet in 1948-49 far from fulfilling the task of emancipating the peasant masses from the influence of the treacherous national bourgeoisie and the landlords in all the regions of India. This task has been fulfilled to a greater extent in the south of India and in East Pakistan and to a lesser extent in the northern provinces of the Indian Union, where the Congressites and the Socialists still retained quite strong positions in the leadership of the peasant organisations. A great weakness of the peasant movement in these years was the inadequate organisation of the agricultural workers and semi-proletarian elements in the countryside. In spite of the disruptive policy of Congressites and of the Socialists, the peasant movement in India is growing and the present stage of the national liberation struggle can be correctly characterised as agrarian.

After the partition of India, the working class movement assumed a very broad sweep. In 1947, more than ten million working days (according to official figures) were lost as a result of strikes. Not only the workers, but even employees of banks, state institutions, post and telegraphs, etc, took an active part in the working class movement. The railway workers who have been on strike more than once after the partition of India have displayed special activity. The strike movement was led by the All-India Trade Union Congress which had a membership of above 800,000 in 1949. In spite of government repression and the banning of strikes on the railway and in a number of branches of industry, the strike movement has not ceased. The plantation workers of Assam, who have been mainly recruited from the backward tribes of Central India's highlands, have also been drawn into the strike movement.

Mass trade unions of the agricultural workers have been created for the first time in India and have been special development in the south of India. Workers of not only the big industrial centres but also of the less important ones have displayed great activity. In 1947-48 the textile workers of Coimbatore who were on strike for many months displayed particular staunchness and heroism. The workers of the industry for the extraction and manufacture of coir in Travancore were transformed, thanks to their organisation, into the advanced detachment of the struggle not only for an improvement in the conditions of the working class, but also for the democratisation of the structure this princely state. The heroic struggle of the workers of Punnapra and Vayalar arouse the whole of India. The Indian Communists have achieved great successes in organising the workers also in other princely states.

In 1947 and 1948, many strikes took place in the princely states of Indore, Bhopal, etc. The working class movement was led by the Communist Party of India whose influence is growing ceaselessly not only among workers but also amongst employees, peasants and students. The Communist Party of India, which in 1942 comprised of a total of 2,000 members, increased its membership to 16,000 in 1943 and towards the beginning of 1948 to 90,000. The working class and its vanguard the Communist Party have become the leading force in the national liberation movement. The Communist Party heads the struggle of the working class and the peasantry in the national movement and the struggle of the democratic strata of the intelligentsia. In Pakistan, there has been formed a separate trade centre. The dockers of Karachi and the railway workers of Pakistan in particular of East Bengal, have participated actively in the strike movement. In 1948, the communist organisations in Pakistan, one of which even existed in such a backward province as the North-West Frontier have been united into the Communist Party of Pakistan.

The democratic movement is engulfing even the princely state of Nepal which has joined neither India nor Pakistan. This princely state, which was till a short time ago a feudal reserve and a base for the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers was an obedient

weapon of the imperialists in order to crush the people's liberation movement which has been stripped from its century-old slumber. A mass organisation called the "Congress of the State of Nepal" has been created in this State. It has put forward the demand for "the overthrow of the autocratic Government of the Maharana and the expulsion out of the princely state of those Americans who were penetrating there". In a few industrial centres of the State trade unions have been formed and strikes have taken place for the first time in the history of this State. Communist organisations were created in this State. The development of Nepal has assumed such dimensions that the Maharana was forced to utilise a part of the Gurkha battalions from the Indian Union in order to suppress the movement.

The democratic movement in India is embracing altogether new regions which had not taken part in the movement earlier and new elements that had earlier been politically passive. It is necessary to note that the untouchables of whom a considerable section followed Gandhi or even Dr. Ambedkar (the British protégé who claims to the title of the leader of the untouchables) are being drawn in more and more into the working class and peasant movement and the influence of the Communist Party is increasing among them. Nevertheless, the dispersed character of the working class movement and unsystematic planless methods of work have not completely been liquidated. Till now there existed small groups who had influence in industrial localities and among workers of different enterprises, who pursued a disruptive policy and were after directly linked with the agents of the reactionary bourgeoisie – the Trotskyites.

The reactionary leaders of the National Congress were able to bring about a split in the trade union movement though the All-India Trade Union Congress is the only fighting and trade class organisation of the workers and enjoys authority among them, still a section of the backward strata of the workers was drawn in by the leaders of the Congress in the so-called National Congress of Trade Unions, working under the control of the Vice-Premier and Minister for Internal Affairs in India, Patel. This organisation serves as a weapon in the hands of the reactionary bourgeoisie and many honest deluded workers have joined it because the policy of the leadership of the Congress is still far from exposed in the eyes of the more backward strata of the working class.

In 1948, the Socialists formed their trade union organisation the Hind Mazdur Sabha and in 1949 the liberal trade union leaders. Mrinal Kanti rose and this group created the United Congress of Trade Unions. All these trade union organisations are aimed at splitting the working class and strengthening the influence of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the Indian proletariat. This disruptive activity of the Indian bourgeoisie is directed by the leaders of the American federation of Labour and the British General Council of Trade Unions.

The unity of the peasant movement has been won to an even lesser. In India there are two peasant unions (Kisan sabhas). The Communists direct one of these and in the other it is the various petty-bourgeoisie elements have often come out against the Communist and are linked with the National Congress that enjoy influence.

The influence of these elements is still stronger among the democratic strata of the intelligentsia. The Socialist Party has been transformed into a direct agent of the reactionary bourgeoisie. Its leaders are conducting a furious baiting of the Communist and specialise in anti-Soviet speeches. Another organisation influential among the intelligentsia is the Forward Bloc, which represent an extremely amorphous group and very heterogeneous groups have entered it. In certain provinces (Bombay, Central Provinces) the Forward Bloc organisation has sometimes come forward jointly with the Communist; in other provinces and in particular in Bengal, where the adherents of Subhas Chandra Bose predominate in this organisation, the Forward Bloc like the Socialist Party comes out as the advanced detachment of the bourgeoisie in the struggle against the working class movement.

There is a yet no unity in the student movement too. Along with the All-India Student's Federation which is led by elements close to the Communists, a student organisation led by Congressites is also operating. On an All-India scale there exists no youth organisation, unifying all strata of democratic youth (working class, peasant, student etc). A revolutionary youth organisation of this type exists only in Andhra Desha, where it is called the Andhra Yuvak Sabha. This organisation takes active part in the working class, peasant and national movement of the Andhra people.

In spite of difficulties and fierce persecutions, the influence of the Communist Party is growing rapidly and its organisation is being strengthened. The terror and persecution in respect of the active workers of the working class, peasant and student movement testify to the weakness of the Government of the Indian Union.

Towards the end of February, 1949, the Minister for Internal Affairs, the reactionary Patel, addressing a joint conference of the Chambers of Commerce of Madras declared: "The workers are not under the influence of those persons who would be able to guide them correctly." He admitted through this the failure of the attempts of the National Congress to split the Indian working class. Patel repeated the very same thing in May 1949 speaking at the session of the National Trade Union Congress. This proves that the policy of splitting the working class had yielded no success. The Indian bourgeoisie also did not succeed in the attempts to crush the peasant movement. In those areas of Telengana in revolt that have been occupied by the Indian troops, they have not succeeded in returning the land to the landlords. Moreover, the punitive expeditions have not liquidated the uprising but only altered its localisation.

The recent events in India show that after its partition, the struggle of the Indian people has entered a new phase. The distinctive features of this phase or stage are the following:

In India, as well as in Pakistan, there has been formed finally a reactionary bloc of the big bourgeoisie, landlords and princes, which has concluded an alliance with British and American imperialism. This bloc is interested in the retention of existing relationships both within India and Pakistan as well as the relations of these countries with Britain and USA.

At present the struggle against imperialism and for the liberation of India and Pakistan is impossible without a struggle not only against the Indian feudal princes and landlords but also against the Indian big bourgeoisie. Without the abolition of the princely states and landlordism and without the nationalisation of large industry, not only that belonging to foreign capital but also to the 'national' bourgeoisie, i.e., without the struggle for People's Democracy, the complete liberation of India is impossible.

It is the Indian working class headed by the Communist Parties of India and Pakistan which constitutes the leading force in the struggle for the complete liberation of India from the rule of foreign imperialism and for a liquidation of all the remnants of feudalism and the economic positions of the big bourgeoisie. The active struggle of the peasantry, passing over to an uprising in places and headed by the working class, against all survivals of feudalism and against the bourgeoisie landlord Governments of the Indian Union and Pakistan which are attempting to preserve them – is the most characteristic feature of the new stage and as a result of this it can be termed as an agrarian stage with complete justification.

The national question has not been solved in India and in Pakistan, even in the form of creating national autonomous provinces. It is, therefore, that the middle and petty-bourgeoisie of those nationalities of India which are suffering most from the feudal survivals and the domination of monopoly capital which exists in the main the Gujarati and Marwari hands, can be a wavering ally of the democratic camp. The progressive role of these national bourgeois strata is extremely relative and short-lived and on no account must it be overestimated.

The new stage in the people's liberation struggle in India is an expression of the sharpening of the crisis of the colonial system of imperialism after the Second World War. The distinctive features of this new stage in India are to a considerable extent analogous to the distinctive features of the new stage and development of the liberation movement in other colonial and semi-colonial countries. In China, Burma, Indonesia, Indo China and Philippines, as well as in India, not only the feudalists but



even the big bourgeoisie has at this stage gone over even more openly to the camp of imperialism.

In the struggle against the forces of reaction there is emerging at present a People's Democratic Front. The task of struggle for complete liberation of these countries from colonial dependence is closely linked with the struggle for People's Democracy in India. In March 1948, at its Second Congress, the Communist Party elaborated such a programme of struggle for People's Democracy in India.

1. A complete break with the British empire and the severance of ties with the aggressive Anglo-American bloc and the establishment of close ties with the democratic countries in the world, in the first place with the USSR, which is fighting against the instigators of a new war.
2. Democratisation of the political structure of India. Recognition of the right of all nations to self determination and the conversion of India into a voluntary alliance of national, People's Democratic Republics. The liquidation of the princely states and protection of the rights of authorities and backward tribes.
3. Establishment of friendly relations between the Indian Union and Pakistan.
4. The abolition of landlordism without any compensation and land to the peasants and agricultural workers.
5. Nationalisation of the main branches of industry; establishment of eight-hour working day and a minimum wage for all workers and employees.

The programme is supported by the broadest strata of the population and the Communist Party has all objective conditions for rallying all the democratic strata of the population of India for a struggle for its realisation for the struggle against British and American imperialism and their Indian allies – the big bourgeoisie, the landlords and the feudal princes. The world-historic victory of the Chinese People, and the formation of the People's Republic of China, the uprising in Burma and Malaya, the struggle of the peoples of Viet Nam and Indonesia, the strengthening of the democratic anti-imperialist camp headed by the Soviet Union are causing alarm among the native and foreign exploiters of the Indian Popular Masses and are strengthening the determination of the fighters for People's Democracy in India.