INDIA AND THE REVISIONISTS

News of the Indian Revolution is being withheld from the "people back home". By a "judicious" press censorship the Anglo-American Imperialists hope to obliterate the dynamic reality of the tidal wave in the Asiatic sub-continent. But social phenomena have little respect for the wishful thinking of bourgeois censors: the Revolution in India sweeps on unabated.

September 8th in Bombay, one month after the start of the present "disobedience" campaign, witnessed the most widespread struggle against Britain yet encountered. On Friday, August 21st, 50,000 workers at the Tata munition works, largest steel mill in the British Empire, went on strike and demanded the release of Gandhi. This news, according to the liberal Louis Fisher, "has not been reported in the press anywhere."

Writing in the September 5, 1942 issue of the "Nation", Fischer gives a realistic picture. "The strike wave in India is spreading. The most disturbed areas are the vital mining and factory region of Behar, Madras, the United Provinces, the Central Province, and the Bombay Presidency. In many places the tearing up of rails has completely disrupted railroad traffic. Telegraph service is frequently discontinued and always quite unreliable. Riots and sabotage throughout India are on a much larger scale than the British government in India has anticipated, the semi-official daily Statesman of New Delhi admits. The civil disobedience movement, Indian nationalist circles in India believe, is only starting."

IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN REVOLUTION

The full import of the Indian Revolution is, as yet, evident only to a small minority. Too many regard it only as a secondary side-show, as an ineffectual sputtering somewhere in the backwoods. The bourgeoisie is attempting to implant the idea that this is but a temporary nightmare that will soon abate or pass away. Quite the contrary is true, however. The Indian Revolution is a turning point in the war. It can play as decisive a role toward ending the imperialist carnage, as the defeat of the Spanish Revolution played in making it possible. No matter how far the capitalist head-

fixers go in denying it, underlying the present conflict are two cross-currents: the military struggles **between** the imperialists for world domination, and the class struggle **against** the capitalists. The Indian Revolution, in this scheme, marks the high point, so far, of the the second current. It is part of a current that must soon overtake and immerse the other, purely inner-imperialist, current.

To fail to understand today the significance of the Indian Revolution will be even more fatal than the failure of the Socialists, Stalinists and Trotskyites to understand the role of the Spanish Revolution yesterday. The present movement is a pivot point around which the political destiny of all political tendencies will be forged. It is impossible to have a false position on India and a correct position on the war; the two are indissolubly related.

India is a testing ground for the Revolutionary Marxian program. Let us turn our attention therefore to the way in which the social-patriots and centrists meet this test.

STALINIST TREACHERY

The Stalinist position on India is deliberately blurred with demagogic phrases about Britain's "guilt" and the need for "intervention" and "mediation" by the United Nations.

The August 11th, 1942 issue of the "Daily Worker" has a classic article on this subject. The opening sentence defines the problem: "The Indian people . . . are confronted with the supreme task of defending **their** country against the imminent threat of Axis invasion . . . To defend India from Japanese-fascist enslavement is to defend the present and future national existence of India, is the only (!) way to ensure India's national liberation."

It would be hard to convince the 390 million Indians that India is "their" country. Not even the Indian bourgeoisie, who are hampered by so many restrictions that they are insignificant in the whole industrial and financial scheme of India,— not even these reactionaries would dare say that India is "their" country. Only the Stalinists could be so brazen. Of all the tendencies within the Indian Congress, only the Stalinists had the gumption to vote against the civil disobedience program. The 13 members of the Communist Party of India in the Congress shouted "shame" when the question came up for a vote.

"In this stirring call to action at the Bombay Congress Meeting, they (the Stalinists) called upon all the Parties and patriots of India to unite, NOT TO LET BRITAIN'S POLICY IN INDIA STAND IN THE WAY OF DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY, and to face the monstrous fascist invaders with a living wall of the united people of India." This position, says the Daily Worker, "besides being a clear cut repudiation of Gandhism, also goes beyond the approach of the Congress leadership to do nothing for defense until a National Government is granted." (Our emphasis).

We must not, in other words, permit the horrible conditions imposed by Britain to stop us from defending this same British imperialism and its enslavement. The Stalinist position is social-patriotism at its highest point, far to the right even of many of the Labor Party members in Britain who are clamoring for immediate independence.

The opposition to Gandhi is an opposition from the right. Not even in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 did the Stalinists sink so low; there at least they **supported** the left bourgeois, Wang-Chin-Wei. In the interest of winning the imperialist war, Stalinism is anxious to give up all revolution, in fact is willing to act as the hangman for world imperialism. The Stalinists are so blind they can not see the contradiction in this position: it is impossible to win the war (for the Soviet Union) without extending the world revolution. Failure of the Revolution can only mean the doom of the Soviet Union itself.

TROTSKYISM TAIL-ENDS AGAIN

The official Trotskyites, unlike the Stalinists, have no illusions on the need for winning the war for the United Nations. They realize also that the proletariat must be the driving force of the present revolution. But just as in Spain, Trotskyism is for the defense of the lesser capitalist evil.

"Gandhi's doctrine, that is, the program of the Indian bourgeoisie", says John G. Wright in the August 29th issue of the Militant, "runs counter to the basic and most profound interests of the peasants and workers . . . What Gandhi and his class propose to do for the Indian working class is simply to replace the exploitation of the imperialist British bourgeoisie with that of the native capitalists."

In this statement Wright is absolutely correct. He goes on to say that "The Indian work-

ers will not rally to a proposal that they merely change masters and remain slaves." This too is absolutely correct. The activity of the Indian masses in the past six weeks shows that they are already far beyond Gandhi's program of action; that they refuse to support such a narrow program in life itself. What they need is a leadership that will take them to the next stage of the struggle.

But what do the Trotskyites propose? It defies all imagination!

"As the struggle against British rule grows in intensity, the interests of the different classes must come into an ever sharper conflict with the program of Gandhi and his class. This is one of the reasons why we Trotskyists support the current struggle of independence UNDER GANDHI LEADERSHIP."

Gandhi is betraying the workers. He can not rally the workers. He represents a reactionary class. It is precisely because he is such an enemy of the working class, precisely because he will betray us and try to throttle the revolution — precisely because of this we must support him. On the same basis American workers ought to support Roosevelt and British workers Churchill and German workers Hitler, because "as the struggle against (Britain or Germany or America) grows in intensity, the interests of the different classes must come into an ever sharper conflict with the program of (Hitler, Churchill or Roosevelt) and their class. This is one of the reasons why the Trotskyites (ought to) support the current struggle under (Roosevelt or Churchill or Hitler)."

On the basis of similar arguments the Stalinists in 1936 offered a united front to the Italian fascists on the fascist program of 1919 "in order to expose" Mussolini.

This position of the Trotskyites is not at all surprising. In recent years they have taken to support of reactionary movements so long as they had a liberal cloak, in order to "expose them". Such support includes the Townsend Pension plan, Ham and Eggs, the Labor Party, the Spanish Loyalists ("with criticism"), the Chinese butchers (again support with "criticism"), and so on.

Trotskyism, shout though it may to the contrary, can not and does not conceive of a PROLETARIAN Revolution in this era. Through all its revolutionary phrases there is the yellow thread of support to bourgeois democracy. The same can be said of India. Their August 22nd paper, for instance, states that "1776 Showed the Way to India. The revolutionary British colonies in 1776 sounded the tocsin for the masses of Europe and the world oppressed by absolute monarchy and feudal tyrants; just so the revolutionary colonials in India in 1942 can sound the tocsin for the masses of Asia... Revolutionists in India will spurn the Atlantic Charter as another scrap of paper. They will find far better inspirations and guidance in the Declaration of Independence" . . .

These words speak for themselves. The Indian masses must have not an Indian October, but an Indian 1776; not a proletarian revolution (with its agrarian PHASE), but a pure and simple bourgeois revolution. That is the real meaning of the support to Gandhi.

REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

The Indian bourgeoisie are of a peculiar variety. Britain has held an iron hold over this small class of native exploiters. In 300 years British capitalism has milked the subcontinent of India out of approximately 200 billion dollars. Its present investment is conservatively estimated at somewhere close to 3 billion dollars. Ordinary profit for the British overlords run from 30% to 150% or more yearly. It is thus easy to understand why Britain does not permit the native capitalists, who are relatively small in number, to expand and take part of this enormous booty.

Political restrictions have stopped the native Indian bourgeois from re-investing his surplus in the more lucrative fields. Instead much of this capital has been turned inward into loans and mortgages in the countryside. Thus the alliance between the Indian prince (landlord) and the Indian bourgeois against the Indian peasant has a base in the economic realities of India. That explains for instance why Gandhi, who represents this bloc favors "civil disobedience" against the British, but is unalterably opposed to violence on the part of the natives. He is fearful that the masses will rise up and take the land, the factories and the banks. Such action would be fatal for the native Indian bourgeoisie.

What we are attempting to illustrate is that in India, more than almost anywhere else, the seizure of the land by the peasants would be fought immediately by the native bourgeoisie. Under Gandhi not a single task of the revolution can be carried out — not one. To gain anything, the masses must oppose Gandhism

(and its Nehru shades) right from the outset. To do otherwise is merely to foist illusions on the Indian workers and peasants, and worse, to dissipate their energy.

Already there are signs that the masses are becoming restless within the narrow confines of purely political strikes. The next stage calls for more positive revolutionary actions: seizure of the land, establishment of workers councils, peasant and soldiers councils, armed workers guards, and steps leading toward full assumption of power by a Workers and Peasants Council Government.

The bourgeoisie — both native and foreign — in India will use many different methods to sidetrack the Revolution. The American bourgeoisie, for instance, will attempt "mediation" — to check the Revolution and infiltrate with American capital. The British will continue to use force and to involve more bourgeois elements in their cabinets. The native bourgeois elements may go up to the point of calling for a constituent assembly or may rest content with just promises of future independence and a few minor concessions today, which is most likely. But underlying all these moves will be the attempt to get the Indian masses to support other bourgeois forces, other bourgeois ideologies, other bourgeois regimes.

There can be only two roads for India: proletarian revolution or capitalist reaction (in a number of different forms, including the Gandhist form). The native bourgeoisie — and particularly in India — can no longer play a "1776" role. They can only play a Kerenskyite role or worse. Just as Lenin upbraided Stalin and Kamenev for wishing to support (with criticism) 1917's Kerensky, so must those be upbraided and exposed who in any shape, form, or manner are willing to support the ascetic Indian "Kerensky".

The possibility of a 1776, or a 1789, in India, is long past. The social pattern today is ever so simple — either proletarian revolution or capitalist reaction. The Revolutionary Marxists take their side with the former. Any compromise, any attempt to reconcile the two, is a service to the enemy class.

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