

The Impending Capitulation of the Indian Nationalist Bourgeoisie.

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The political situation in India during the past few weeks has been dominated by three main factors. Firstly, the steadily increasing extent and intensity of the revolutionary movement among the masses, sharpened by the rapidly growing economic distress of the workers, the peasantry and the urban middle class. Secondly, the "peace negotiations" between the prominent nationalist leaders and the Government in order to break the revolutionary movement. Thirdly, the war on the North-West Frontier, which, while stimulating the revolutionary struggle, is also a factor that is hastening the "peace negotiations".

Since the very beginning of the civil disobedience movement launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi, we have steadily maintained that the principal Congress leaders would, by the very nature of their political and economic programme and their class affiliations, be led to a compromise with the Imperialist Government, that is a betrayal of the movement of national independence which the National Congress declared to be its goal at the Lahore session in December 1929. The whole development of the movement during the past few weeks has confirmed our appreciation of the situation in almost every detail, and we are now nearing the end of the movement as far as the bourgeois nationalist leaders are concerned.

The outer aspect of the negotiations now in progress is that two respectable Indian gentlemen of the groups known as Liberals and Moderates, namely Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru

and Mr. M. Jayakar, "applied to" the Viceroy for "permission" to see Gandhi in prison. But the real truth is revealed by the semi-official Anglo-Indian organ, the "Pioneer", published in Allahabad, which in its issue of July 26th, published some interesting facts. Among the "notable" Indians that have been in London during the last three months is the Rt. Honble. Srinivasa Sastri, the only Indian member of the "Privy Council" (a proof of his absolute reliability as an imperialist lackey), who represented the British Government of India as Agent General in South Africa and who is now a member of the Imperialist Whitley Commission to enquire into labour conditions in India. This imperialist agent, after consultation with Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the I. L. P. Secretary of State for India in the imperialist Cabinet, sent a telegram to Gandhi in prison suggesting negotiations, and received a telegraphic answer from Gandhi which was regarded as "encouraging". He therefore again sent a long cable to Gandhi and received another reply which was "still more encouraging". Therefore the Rt. Honble. Mr. Sastri put himself in communication with Lord Irvin's well known agent, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who, on behalf of the Government, has been moving between Allahabad and Yerawada gaols and has brought together the Congress leaders for mutual consultation in Gandhi's "cell". How anxious the I. L. P. leaders in Great Britain are to bring about "peace" with the nationalist bourgeoisie and "prevent the threatening disaster" to the British Empire is shown by the fact that Fenner Brockway in the House of Commons on July 27th, according to Reuters report cabled

to India, suggested 'joint consultation between Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and moderate leaders, rather than separate interviews" between the Viceroy's Indian agents and the Nationalist leaders, and that his I. L. P. colleague, the Secretary of State for India, replied that "that was really a matter for the Government of India and he would see that the suggestion was conveyed to the proper quarter".

The suggestion was conveyed to the proper quarter and the result was that the two Nehrus and other Congress leaders were brought from Allahabad and elsewhere to visit Gandhi, after letters had been exchanged between the latter and the two Nehrus through the intermediary of the Viceroy's agents, who did not publish the contents of the letters but who kept informing Lord Irvin at every stage of the negotiations.

The Congress leaders after three interviews with the Viceroy's agents, addressed a letter to them which was forwarded to the Viceroy "with the permission" of the Congress leaders, as they declared in a statement made to Reuter's correspondent. The contents of this letter have not been published, but the "Daily Telegraph" of London alleges that the Congress leaders have made it a condition that the Labour Government and the Viceroy should give an assurance that they will stand for Dominion Status for India at the Round Table Conference, and amnesty for all political prisoners. The Congress leaders are undoubtedly anxious to come to a speedy compromise, and their desire to do so has been strengthened by the "real facts" of the situation (i. e. the social revolutionary development of the movement) as presented to them by the Government of India during their incarceration and their isolation from the masses. But the leaders are nevertheless well aware of the feeling of the masses, and it is the pressure of the latter that makes Patel, who is not in prison, speak of the "blunder of futile peace talks", while it also makes it impossible for the Congress leaders in prison to capitulate unconditionally. They are obliged to make such conditions as will at least enable them to win their followers over to an acceptance of a compromise.

When the Sapru negotiations began there was some apprehension expressed that Jawaharlal Nehru might offer resistance. But the right-wing Congress journal "Tribune", of Lahore, in its issue of August 1st, quotes with approval the following opinion expressed by the semi-official "Pioneer" of Allahabad. "There does not seem any ground for the opinion widely held that the young Nehru will prove an insurmountable obstacle to peace. **His previous conduct in moments of crisis and his support of his father and the Mahatma Gandhi** on the other hand, lend weight to the view that **Jawaharlal Nehru will bow before the riper judgement of the two elder Congress leaders**". Nevertheless it is quite unlikely that the Congress leaders will participate directly in the Round Table Conference in London on October 20th. The same Tej Bahadur Sapru who is conducting the negotiations with them is also very optimistic about the Conference, for he and others believe that the civil disobedience movement, even if it is not formally called off by the Congress leaders, will slowly fade away by October. This view is not confirmed by recent developments.

What is true is that the "non-violent" aspect of the Congress movement,—which is now confined mainly to the boycott of British goods and the breaking of forest laws,—is fast disappearing. There is a process of differentiation that is going on in the Congress camp itself, and there is no doubt that the official leaders will soon find themselves isolated. The youth have already given the alarm that these leaders are on the eve of a betrayal of the movement. The betrayal has not yet taken formal shape but has already begun, as is shown by the very acceptance of negotiations with such a well-known Government agent as Sapru and the authority given to the latter to forward a letter to the Viceroy. The exact conditions of the capitulation have not yet been agreed upon, but the tremendous danger of the revolutionary mass movement will compel both sides to find the form that is necessary to preserve imperialist interests on the one hand and be "inoffensive to national self-respect", on the other.