

Problems of the Revolution in India.

By Karl Radek.

I. Indian Capitalism and English Imperialism.

(Conclusion.)

In as far as this latter process is going on, it does not signify the emancipation of India from paying tribute to English imperialism, but the **growth of its dependence** and the increase of this tribute, with the sole difference that the trading profit is superseded by the industrial profit. The loans given by European capitalists to the United States of America during the capitalist youth of that country did not enslave America, but accelerated its independent development into the greatest capitalist power, for the proportion of these loans to the national income of the young capitalist country, with its enormous and growing home markets, was inconsiderable. Had English capitalism not suffered as it has indubitably done since the war, and had the extent of the English export of capital to India been in accordance with those fantastic imaginings and expectations which represent one of the bases of reformist perspectives with regard to India, then this would have meant the growth of India's independence of England, and not its weakening. In view of the existing interweaving of the interests of English imperialism and Indian feudalism, it would signify the **strengthening of that whole Asiatic-feudal-imperialist system which is throttling India, and not the weakening of this system.**

Finally, it must not be forgotten for a moment that Indian policy is not made by some abstract class of historical tendencies and subordinates itself to historical necessities, but by a **living English bourgeoisie in whose policy the gentlemen of the "Indian Office", and the Colonial military and civil bureaucracy, elements entirely at one with the ruling strata of the English bourgeoisie, play a much greater rôle than all the MacDonalds, even were we to assume that it has been proved — and we have no reason to do this — that these last are extremely anxious to improve the situation of the Indian people.** The Colonial bureaucrats and officers are fighting not only for their high salaries, not only for those 200 million roubles of savings which they send year for year to England. In their struggle against the policy of concessions they can refer to such facts as that for instance, that whilst Japan expends about 300 million roubles yearly (figures from 1926) for its fleet and army, India spends 600 million roubles annually for its direct and indirect "defence". 50 % of the total Indian state expenditure is for the immediate purposes of war. To this must be added the expenditure of a concealed military character, such as the payment of state debts and the building of railways, so that military expenditure, in the opinion of the English financial experts, amounts to 70 % of the Indian budget. Thus write the German reformists Schrader and Furtwängler in their book "Das werktätige Indien" (Working India), (Berlin, 1929, p. 80). **India pays not only for its chains, but to a considerable extent for the defence of British interests in the East.** India signifies the basis of English imperialism in the East, and English imperialism will protect this basis to the utmost of its power.

All the promises made by the English government, where these go beyond the extension of local self administration, or of the increased participation of the leaders of the Indian bourgeoisie in the administration of India, are pure swindle. The solution of Dominion Status for India, that is, the placing of India in the same position as Canada, Australia, and South America, is simply Utopian. The Conservative die-hards who admit this speak the truth, and the Liberals and the Labour Party people who maintain the contrary are either fools or hypocrites. The position of the English dominions is that of practically independent small countries in which chiefly English capital has built up the economy, in which the bourgeoisie is mainly English, and whose essential character is that of an extension of the British Empire. Where they have not been able to protect themselves (for instance Australia against Japan) they have agreed to certain restrictions of their independence with respect to their foreign policy, and have granted certain privileges to English imperialism, which has

however not interfered in any way in their internal affairs, nor lived at their expense. In proportion as the Australian and Canadian bourgeoisie have developed their own industries, they have resisted the attempts of English imperialism to find a means of escape from its economic difficulties at their expense. It was these attempts to league the Dominions more closely with the Motherland which shipwrecked Joe Chamberlain's policy, and which will shipwreck the policy of Beaverbrook and Mond, who are striving to renew Chamberlain's effort in the present acuter stage of the crisis of British imperialism. The Dominions, under the influence of the growth of the world power of the United States, have turned to the money market of New York, and in 1921 they helped the United States to force England to abandon the alliance with Japan. **The Dominions have developed towards complete independence.** Dominion Status for India would signify first of all an onset against the unbearable war burdens now crushing it, and a struggle for the replacement of English bureaucracy by Indian. Gandhi himself found himself obliged, in his ultimatum to the Viceroy, to demand inter alia a 50% reduction of the war expenditure and of the salaries of the higher English bureaucracy, and this although Gandhi is notoriously of the opinion that the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie render the maintenance of the connection with England necessary. The weakening of the rule of British imperialism in India would signify such a weakening of feudal imperialist positions in India that the next day would raise the question, if not immediately of the liquidation, at least of the bridling of the whole regime of feudal imperialist exploitation, the question of the transference of the bureaucratic administration of India, scantily covered with the figleaf of legislative institutions participated in by representatives of 3% of the population, at least into the hands of bourgeois democracy. **India as Dominion would signify that English imperialism makes the Indian people a present of nine tenths of the independence of India. It is possible to gain complete independence by fighting for it, but it is not possible to be given the half or nine tenths of independence as a present.**

This being the actual position, a fresh outbreak of opposition against English imperialism was inevitable, even on the part of the national reformist bourgeoisie of India, which strangled the revolution of 1922, and is ready to betray another hundred revolutions. That Indian bourgeoisie which betrayed the revolution of 1922, and broke off the struggle in its fear of that revolution, expects concessions from English imperialism; but it has not even been permitted to take part in the Simon Commission for the investigation of the situation in India. This is tantamount to telling it that it is the object, and not the subject, of English policy. It has not been allowed to secure a majority for the Indian National Congress representing the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie, in the conference of the "Round Table" which is to be assembled to confer on the question of India's new constitution. It has been told: **English imperialism is not going to alter its social basis in India; it has complete faith only in the feudal lords, the princes, the compradore bourgeoisie.** And finally, after MacDonald had commanded the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, on 31st October 1929, to dangle before the eyes of the Indian bourgeoisie the Fata Morgana of Dominion Status, he was obliged to declare in Parliament, when pressed against the wall by the Conservatives, that there is **no change impending in English policy in India.** The prophecy contained in the resolution of the Comintern has proved true in every respect:

"The independence of the country in relation to imperialism, being to the advantage of the whole colonial people, corresponds also to the interests of the national bourgeoisie, but is in irreconcilable contradiction to the whole nature of the imperialist system. Various native capitalists, it is true, are by their immediate interests to the great extent bound by numerous threads to imperialist capital. Imperialism is able directly to bribe a considerable portion of them (it may be even a greater portion than heretofore) and to create a definite Compradore position, a position of intermediary trader, subexploiter or observer over the enslaved population.

But the position of slave owner, of monopolist supreme exploiter, imperialism reserves for itself alone.

Independent rule, a future of 'free' people—this imperialism will never voluntarily yield to the national bourgeoisie. In this respect, the contradiction of interests between the national bourgeoisie of the colonial country and imperialism is objectively of a radical character. In this respect, imperialism demands capitulation on the part of the national bourgeoisie.

The native bourgeoisie, as the weaker side, again and again capitulates to imperialism. Its capitulation, however, is not final as long as the danger of class revolution on the part of the masses has not become immediate, acute and menacing."

This is how history actually puts the question to the Indian bourgeoisie—**capitulation or struggle.** It has not been able to capitulate immediately, not only because this would have signified the complete renunciation of the defence of its capitalist interests, but because it would have signified the loss of the leadership over the petty bourgeoisie of the cities and over the peasantry, and a direct surrender of the hegemony to the proletariat.

In our next article we shall deal with the inner class relationships in India, which are impetuously breaking down the confines of the national reformist struggle against imperialism. In this question too the resolution of the VI. World Congress foresaw all the difficulties facing the Indian communists, and laid down the correct tactical line to be adopted.