INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bulletin of the Provisional International Contact Commission

Volume 4, No. 12

10 cents

May 1943

Contents

Supplement

THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

Affiliates

Central Committee of the Red Front of Greater Germany.
Revolutionary Workers League of the U.S.
Leninist League, Scotland.

Labor Donated

Issued by the R. W. L. for the International Contact Commission.

Mail address of publishers

DEMOS PRESS
708 N. Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Revolution on the Indian Horizon.

India, a vast sub-continent of 350 million people, possesses many interesting problems. The main interest aroused by all these problems is that they are presenting themselves for immediate solution. Upon their solution depends the welfare not only of the millions of inhabitants of India, but 400 million more in China and scores of other millions in the near east as well as the Indies. And to the north of India the vast stretches of the USSR will also be shaken to their foundations by the Indian events. And India is on the verge of a revolutionary situation. Let us consider this from a purely scientific standpoint.

What are the marks of a revolutionary situation? All the revolutions of past history, commencing particularly with the bourgeois revolutions at the time of the reformation and coming down to recent times have shown that three objective conditions are prerequisite to revolution.

Revolutionary Situation.

The first is an all-embracing economic and political crisis affecting both the exploiters and the exploited. This is already seen, beyond any question of doubt, in India. Not only is there the general dislocation due to the war, but in addition, Japanese imperialists are at the very gates of India, or more properly within it, because Burma is really nothing but a geographical division of India. The first condition of a revolutionary situation is therefore present. Not only do the exploited not wish to continue with the old rule, but the exploiters are unable to continue ruling as before. There is political crisis everywhere. The British imperialists find themselves unable to continue with the old policies of Churchill and the Governor General Amery. They have been obliged to call in a “left” stooge, Stafford Cripps. Between Amery and Cripps a conflict arises as to the best method of keeping India in subjection. Lewis Johnson appears for American imperialism, and between Johnson and Cripps, despite all their bonied words, another conflict rages under the surface. The would-be “junior partner” of British imperialism, the Indian bourgeoisie, is in a state of crisis. This is expressed in a three sided conflict between Gandhi, Nehru, and Bose. The centrist and reformist supports of imperialism find themselves in a state of ideological crisis. Conflicts of policy arise within and between the Stalinists, the Royists, and the Trotskyites. This governmental crisis spreads itself to the Muslim League and the Mahasabha. Nowhere in any section of the ruling class or its hangers on, is there a sense of political security. nowhere is there such a working unity as would permit the old rule to continue. The first objective precondition of revolution has matured in India.

The second prerequisite of a revolutionary situation is the more than usual increase in the needs and misery of the exploited masses. Even before the war this condition was growing. Even before the war the masses of
The proletarians and peasants were experiencing the effects of the decay of capitalism in their own bodies. And to this general and increasing misery has been super-added the dislocating effects of war economy, conscription, etcetera. Even before the war, and for a very long period, the artisan class formerly so important in the Indian economy was being declassed and shoved back upon the already over-crowded agricultural economy. No positive figures are available on this phenomenon since the war, but it certainly may be taken to be true that this condition has been accelerated, and in addition to all this the toiling masses of India are confronted with military dictatorship within and military attack without. The second condition is therefore fully present.

The third prerequisite for a revolutionary situation is the more than usual increase in the activity of the masses as a result of the two foregoing conditions. This is already present, although not to the same extent as the two preceding conditions, and for reasons that we shall touch upon later in connection with another circumstance. However, three incidents may be mentioned to show the existence of this third prerequisite. First is the fact that, despite the Stalinists and Boyists, the city proletariat, particularly of Bombay, has conducted militant strike struggles since the beginning of the war. The second is the growing strength of the Kisan Sangh (peasants' committee). The composition of these will be noticed later, but suffice it to say at the present moment these committees are growing both in number and in action. This is particularly true of the province of Bengal. The third, and one of the most important and symbolic features in the following: Chakravorti Rajagopalachari, is one of the leaders of the extreme right wing in the Indian National Congress. At a recent meeting of the working committee of that body he made a motion to accept the proposal of the Muslim League with regard to the partition of India. This was defeated, one of the main opponents being Nehru. Then Rajagopalachari got off the train at Bombay he was met by thousands staging a black flag demonstration against him. In other words it was a spontaneous expression of disapproval in the form of a demonstration by large city masses. It is further significant that Nehru, who was also present, became irritated and tore some of the banners from the hands of the demonstrators. The third prerequisite of revolution is therefore rapidly maturing both in the cities and on the countryside.

A Marxist Party Needed.

But the history of all previous revolutionary situations shows that in addition to what may be called the objective preconditions, there must also be present what may be called for the purpose of this article, a subjective precondition. Thus it is the existence of a revolutionary party with a scientific program and mass influence sufficient to unite the various revolutionary factors in an onlooker on the ruling classes. This does not yet exist in India. It will probably be more proper to say that the elements for it undoubtedly exist in India in scattered form, but have not been united. And since a revolutionary will to power can only be expressed by a revolutionary political organization, it is true to say that this precondition does not exist. The creation of such an organization in the shortest possible time is the prime necessity for a successful Indian revolution. Before we consider the steps to be taken to form such a party it is necessary that we examine the broad social conditions existing in India. This must be done for two reasons. First to determine what would constitute a scientific program for the Indian revolution. Because merely to get together certain people who swear allegiance to the word "revolution" or even "proletarian revolution," without a definite and detailed program, means the formation of a swamp, and not a revolutionary political party. And secondly it is only in the consideration of the specific conditions of India that it is possible to gather together a unified proletarian political force, and to discern what obstacles, objective and subjective, there are in the way of such establishment. We therefore turn in the next paragraphs to a general analysis of Indian social forces, returning at the end to an evaluation of the potential forces for a revolutionary party of the Indian proletariat.

The class structure of India is as follows: at the very top is to be found the English finance capitalists, ruling through their bureaucratic agents in India, centered at New Delhi. English capital, at the time of the East Indian Company, seized upon Indian economy and endeavored, from that time on to make Indian economy serve as a feeder of raw materials. It made use of its political power to disrupt any possibility of Indian competition. It destroyed Indian handi-crafts by factory competition, as so brilliantly described by Marx. In order to bring the products of the plantation-tobacco, cotton, British capital, of course, had to develop railways. But it strove by all means, including primarily its tariff powers, and its control over native rulers, to prevent formation of Indian industries, and therefore of an Indian industrial bourgeoisie. It has succeeded in this fairly well. This is shown by the fact that in the whole vast country there is only one significant steel work, that of Tata brothers at Jhansi and within the past few years Tata Brothers have also been compelled, by the economic crisis to permit the infiltration of English finance capital into their enterprise. The only other significant Indian bourgeoisie are to be found in the textile industry. The predominance of English capital is shown to some extent by the following: in Sir W. Visvesvarya's work entitled "Reconstructing India" he gives 50 million pounds as being registered as Indian capital and 47 million pounds registered as English capital. He also calls attention to the fact that much of the capital registered as Indian is only so in appearance, having been registered by English capitalists in India. But even taking the above figures as absolute, the proportion of English capital to Indian is seen to be 7 to 1.
English imperialism has one single aim. That is to hold India as a colony, at all costs. Before the threatened invasion of India the policy of Churchill and Amery was dominant, that is a policy of brute force. But with the Japanese at the gates of India, and with Britain assailed on other fronts, this policy threatened to lead to the immediate triumph of Japan. Therefore, Cripps was trotted out. The policy of Cripps was to line up the Indian bourgeoisie for the "defence" of India against Japanese imperialism, and to promise them something after the war. It is significant that even in England's extremity he did not dare to over promise dominion status, much less independence. The promise was dominant, if at all important sections of Indian life were in favor of this. Cripps, the lawyer for the labor bureaucracy, was therefore willing office boy for the imperialists, maneuvered so as to get support from the Indian bourgeoisie and at the same time declare no definite promise could be made because the Muslims and the princes would not agree to dominion status for India. He was not able to get a complete declaration of support. Nehru and his followers balked because they were to be excluded from any control over "defence", but at the same time Nehru declared that the Indian National Congress would go ahead with a fight against the Japanese imperialism. So that Cripps obtained much of what he went to India for. At the same time Nehru's refusal to completely capitulate was undoubtedly due to Louis Johnson, special American envoy to India. From Johnson's point of view the Indian bourgeoisie was to maneuver so as to save India from the Japanese and to permit such a form of Indian government as would break English political monopoly.

Immediately under the English finance capitalists come the Indian princes, the rulers of the so-called native states. For all purposes whatever these are nothing but viceroyalties for English imperialism. At the court of each one is a British resident whose word is law. Since 1857, the time of the Sepoy rebellion, there has not been a murmur from the princes. In return for their holding down the Indian masses under truly servile conditions the British allow the princes a tremendous amount of luxury and the possession of enormous strips of land. They play no independent role in politics whatsoever.
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in China, and the result has been the same. Nationalistic in the petty-bourgeois sense to the core, having no reliance upon any mass upheaval of the Indian people, Cripps inevitably became the tool of Japanese imperialism with its domineering slogan “Asia for the Asians.” A triple example of Gandhi, who in his examination of the social and economic structure of India, has constantly demonstrated that the only role in any section of the colonized bourgeoisie can be to support one or another imperialism, but never to act as an independent force.

Before leaving the subject of the Indian bourgeoisie a short word as to the role of the Liberal Federation and its best known representative, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. This gentleman broke into print most brilliantly just before Cripps went to India. His Federation is the product of a split from the Indian National Congress about 1929. A section of the Indian bourgeoisie found even Gandhi too strong for their Anglicism and formed the Liberal Federation. When these veritable lickspittles of British imperialism have to address Churchill with a request that something be done one can understand the pressure brought to bear upon them and the forces that are boiling beneath the Indian bourgeoisie.

The Peasantry.

The peasantry forms the vast majority of the Indian population. In 1921, it comprised 597 million out of 319 million population. In order to understand the peculiar problems in India it is necessary to know the land system of India. Inherited from the feudal past, British imperialism, for reasons of its own, retained the system of governmental ownership of land. There are two forms of payment of taxes, which roughly is the same as rent. In one form, and the most predominant, the land is leased to large landlords known as zamindars, who, in turn, lease and sub-lease it to the actual peasants known as ryotwars. In another form the land is leased directly to the ryotwars by the state. In either instance the burden upon the ultimate tiller of the soil is tremendously heavy. The break up of the artizan class, which has been forced upon the land, has added to the pressure upon the poorer peasantry. In addition, the development of capitalism in agriculture, and the break up of the former natural economy in favor of a market economy, has resulted in pauperization of the vast masses of the peasantry. Contrary to bourgeois writers, the poverty of the Indian masses is not due to natural, but to social conditions. In 1911 the density per square mile of the population of the various countries was as follows: India 137, England 650, Germany 332, France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute and natural condition. Dr. H. H. Mann, director of agriculture in Germany 332; France 134, Belgium 666, Japan 400. It can thus be seen that the so-called “over population” of India is a relative and social rather than an absolute...
What are the conditions of these workers? An inquiry was made by the Bombay labor office in the first quarter of the century into the budgets of 5763 working class families in Bombay. The inquiry revealed the following interesting facts: 1. 56% of the income went for food. 2. Even so the general condition is that of the maximum of radios allowed by the famine code, but less that the diet prescribed in the Bombay Gaol Manual. It is very significant that the Indian proletariat is worse off than the inhabitant of the goal and just the same in standard of living a famine stricken oren. 3. 97% of these families were found living in overcrowded single rooms, in many cases two or more than one family to a room. The existence of corners of rooms for families is a well established fact. 4. It was also found that 47% were in debt.

In the same period the profits of the Bombay mill owners, English and Indian, amounted to 155 million rupees as compared with total salaries and wages of 78 million. When one takes into consideration the large salaries allowed to English and Indian managers, the rate of exploitation of the Indian proletariat is seen to be staggering.

A large proportion of this proletariat is concentrated in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and other cities, it has a militant tradition, and has engaged many times in violent conflict both with the bourgeoisie and the government.

STALINISM

The forces endeavoring to lead the proletariat are as follows: The Stalinists, known as the Communist Party of India. This party formed in 1925 deserves no special mention. It has followed every turn of the Stalinist bureaucracy and, although still influential, is rapidly losing the support of the disillusioned Indian proletariat. Particularly is this the case since its volte face after the Nazi invasion of the USSR. Formerly it had proclaimed the fight of Britain to be an imperialist conflict; since June 20, 1941, the imperialist character has become a progressive war, not only with regard to the Soviet Union, but with regard to English imperialism. Such startling changes have been a little too much for the "naive" Indian worker.

Expelled from the Stalinists because of his belief in the revolutionary potentialities of the Indian bourgeoisie, M.N. Roy has gone more and more steadily to the right until now he has formed an Indian People's Party, which endeavors to base itself upon the Indian Labor bureaucracy, and is even more pro-war and more ready to English imperialism than even the Indian bourgeoisie. This group has connections with the Labor bureaucracy, but no mass roots.

THE TRACTORS

One of the main obstacles to the formation of an Indian Marxist Party comes from the centrists, the so-called Bolshevik-Leninist Party. But their programmatic documents as published in the American "4th International",

organ of the Comintern and the "New International" organ of the Schachtmanites reveal the centrist nature of the party. In the first place they do not clearly bring out the necessity of the immediate seizure of the land by the peasantry. In this connection they pose as their main slogans for India a constituent assembly. By this they now play into the hands of Nehru and the American imperialists. The slogan of immediate action must be the formation of workers' soviets and peasants' committees and the immediate steps toward the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship. These errors are rooted in the international attitude of this centrist group. One section apparently is with the Comintern in holding to the erroneous view that Stalinism as such should be supported until victory against the Nazis is assured. Another section is apparently with Schachtman in being for revolutionary defeatism in the Soviet Union as well as elsewhere. When either or both of these theories are transplanted to Indian soil they must result in centrist in India as well. One cannot be a centrist internationally and a revolutionist nationally.

NEED A NEW PARTY

Scattered in all the organizations mentioned above, as well as isolated and unconnected, are the elements of a real Marxist Party in India. The logic of events drives towards the unification of these elements, but a principle of clarification, not reform, is essential. There can be a successful Indian revolution if there is a party. There must be a party if there is to be an Indian revolution. In the complicated situation which we have described in the foregoing pages a telling blow has been dealt to the ultra lefts who deny the necessity of a party. The will to power of the Indian proletariat cannot succeed by being expressed spontaneously. Particularly is this true in the welter of conflicting classes, ideologies, and parties in India. Only a party, a mass war combined with a city war can lead to a successful Indian revolution. Such a revolution, a social revolution with an agrarian first phase, can only be led by a Marxist proletarian. The logic of events will through an organization which has a real revolutionary program and is disciplined. This can only be a party, a Marxist Party.

Only two questions remain. The first is, given a party, can there be a successful Indian revolution? One realized, of course, that Marxism is not an insurance policy and that no one can guarantee the success of revolution in India at any particular time. But the objective preconditions are there, and these objective preconditions cry out that if the English and princes and bourgeoisie are driven into the sea, and the Japanese imperialists kept out, the Indian revolution can be established and extended. This can only be done through a proletarian dictatorship. The reason for this is that an agrarian phase of the social revolution will inevitably meet the resistance of the Indian bourgeoisie, whose money is directly tied up in the exploitation of the peasantry. To crush this resistance the political and economic power of the Indian bourgeoisie must be smashed. Whatever name it is called by this means the dictatorship of the proletariat.
The only other question is the practical question - how is an Indian Marxist Party to be formed? It must be formed from the elements present in India, but it must also have the assistance of the international revolutionary proletariat. This will be done. When this question is answered in the affirmative the means for its solution can be worked out comparatively easily even under the difficult conditions of war time.

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Many readers of Living Marxism will, of course, question the two main theses of this article. Can India proceed to the proletarian revolution based on its present economic level? The Revolutionary Workers League answers this question in the affirmative. The Indian revolution will go through a "nationalist" phase but there will be only one revolution, a social (proletarian) revolution. If the revolution is arrested at the nationalist (bourgeois) phase, then it can only retrogress, it can not solve even one of the problems of the bourgeois revolution.

Whatever "independent" action a country like India can take in present times is conditioned only by the struggle amongst the imperialists. Shrewd colonial politicians can achieve a SIMULACRE of independent action by utilizing this friction amongst the great powers. But under modern imperialism the colonial nations, in the last analysis, can be and must be only puppets for the imperialists. Any thought of developing an independent and modern home economy is a mere daydream. Imperialism will develop the colonial areas but only up to a point. In other words, it is IMPOSSIBLE for colonial areas - such as India - to progress under capitalist relations even one step further today. A political revolution in India will change not one whit the deciding factor of imperialist domination regardless of which imperialist will dominate and Imperialism will never permit any further development (to any large degree) of the potentialities of Indian economy. Only a proletarian revolution - world wide in content, although it is national in the sense that it must often occur in one national area at a time - only a social revolution that destroys capitalism will change all this.

This question will no doubt be argued. Can such an undeveloped country, with such a small "Army" fight imperialism? No - not as an isolated unit. The Soviet Union maintained itself; after the October Revolution, despite the onslaught of world imperialism. With the aid of the workers of all countries a proletarian revolution even in the most backward country is assured of success, provided it has a Marxist leadership.

Finally the question of the Party. This point has been discussed by the ultra-lefts for years. The bourgeois apparatus is tremendously well-knit. Besides its army it has a raft of trained professional politicians, millions of propagandists who go by the names of school-teachers, newspaper editors, priests, rabbis, radio announcers, and so forth. It has thousands of professional clubs - American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution,