The Maturing Revolt In India

Not only does the imperialist war intensify all the contradictions of capitalism; it greatly increases their rate of development. A clear indication of this is the spreading revolt of the Indian toilers, now on the verge of breaking out into open revolution. In the last war the wave of revolutions began in the imperialist nations first, then swept eastward to the colonies. But today the contradictions of decaying capitalism are so sharp, especially throughout the British Empire, that the very outbreak of the war already poses the problems of the rapidly maturing Indian revolution.

The hesitation that has characterized Britain's war participation is largely determined by the fear of the break-up of the Colonial Empire and the Indian revolution. India is the keystone to the British Empire. Revolution in India means not only a body-sack of Britain in the war; it marks the death-blow to the far-flung British Empire. The dependence of the Empire on India's colonial status is expressed by the fact that 99% of India's exports go to England, while 39% of her imports come from England. India's industrial development—textiles, communications, iron, steel, etc.—is almost exclusively in the hands of British capital. The fact that India is so overwhelmingly agricultural today is due to British Imperialist policy to check industrial development. Yet the Indian death rate is twice as high as that of England.

Politically, the Indian revolt means revolution throughout the entire East and Africa—a threat at the foundations of imperialism. This threat is a factor in strengthening the pressure of Hitler and Mussolini in the Balkans and the Near East. The United States also finds the menacing colonial revolution a powerful tool in achieving its own imperialist aims.

In the first world war England could afford to make paper promises of dominion status to the national bourgeoisie; these promises bridged the latter and enabled the imperialists to hold the workers in check. The decadence of British imperialism is clearly shown by the fact that today it does not even dare make such paper promises of dominion status AFTER the war. A significant symptom is the great concentration of troops in the Near East and the colonial area (greater concentration than on the English mainland). These troops are NOT merely arrayed for a possible attack on the Soviet Union.

The Indian melting-pot boils over with revolt—British imperialism trembles in fear.

March 21, 1940.

SUMMARY

In summary the gold policy has the following relation to the outcome of the present imperialist war:

1. In the struggle against Great Britain the United States hopes to make the Dollar the dress for the international medium of exchange. To replace the Pound. To dominate the world financial field.

2. Establishs its financial hegemony over decisive parts of the earth (not land imperialism but finance capital—the latest form and highest form of imperialism). This hegemony will be shared with lesser partners at the expense of the other imperialists, the weaker nations, and especially the impoverished masses.

3. Loans to obtain political concessions as a result.

4. Loans to buy war supplies to smash the proletarian revolution wherever it develops. The Finnish campaign for funds is a prelude and child's play to what is in store.

5. Use the Gold supply as an important weapon to reorganize and redivide the world to the needs of the American world empire.

6. The "free market" to be established by American imperialism is like the free public institutions in the South with its Jim Crowism. It will be free to American imperialism and its allies. It will be a closed door to others.

7. The armed might of American imperialism stands behind this policy ready to enforce it if necessary.

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INDIA AND THE INTER-IMPERIALIST ANTAGONISMS

Not only Downing Street, but all the imperialists, eye India with the utmost attention and lay plans accordingly. Hitler maneuvers in the Balkans and the Near East in order to get a foothold for intervention in India; Mussolini traces a map from Rome to Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland to India. American imperialism, intent on domination in the new imperialist redistribution of the world (a domination primarily at the expense of her greatest rival, England), estimates the possibilities of an Indian nationalist regime whose capital as well as its material and political support would come from the United States. The Indian Nationalist bourgeoisie has certainly added a new billion dollar gold bond and her recent twenty million dollar loan to Chiang-Kai-Shek.

Although Japanese imperialism is fully armed with the "protection" of China, it, too, wants to utilize Indian developments as a weapon against English interference in China. Nor are the Nipponese imperialists averse to a southward and westward extension of their empire. It should be recalled that they have long sponsored a Pan-Asianic policy in their own interest. Briefly, these are the points in which world imperialist policy depends on the situation in India. In addition the Stalinist clique, at the behest of the warped World State, intensifies its pressure on the Near East and works in India for nationalist, anti-British purposes; as an ally of German imperialism it seeks the defeat of Britain. Above all the Stalinist role is to head off the Indian SOCIAL revolution, a technique learned in the Chinese Revolution.

It is clear that the fate of the Indian revolution is inseparably bound up with the moves and plans of the imperialist powers. Several conclusions must be drawn:

1. Even the very first steps in the national revolution signal the approaching doom of British imperialism.

2. Every imperialist power maneuvers for control on the basis of a possible comprador bourgeoisie regime in India such control would be a vital weapon in deciding the new imperialist redistribution of the world.

3. Britain must move to crush EVERY revolt, even of a strictly nationalist character; this is especially true as the proletariat, in alliance with the peasantry, moves toward the social revolution.

4. All the other imperialists, but especially the United States, will aid and abet such bourgeois nationalist attempts in varying degrees; but ALL will fight with tooth and claw against the revolutionary strides of the proletariat and peasantry in their drive toward Soviet power.

5. Stalinism is a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy whose foreign policy is based on its internal role (a bureaucratic force resting on the October property relation), and conditioned by its bloc with German imperialism. Hence it will undertake political—perhaps even military—steps against British imperialism; but it will play a completely counter-revolutionary role in the attempt to smash the Indian social revolution.
The above considerations, whose economic details must be situated for lack of space, show that India is a vital link in the chain of world imperialism and that the course of the Indian revolution is inextricably linked to the problems of world imperialism and to the struggles of the world proletariat.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE

Revolutionary Marxists must be crystal-clear on the nature of the maturing Indian revolution; they must present a strategy that will create the possibilities of victory, and not a repetition of the Chinese catastrophe of 1925-27.

On March 19, police fired on a demonstration for Indian independence at Lahore and killed 21 workers, wounding 29 others. At the same time the Indian National Congress, holding a plenary session at Ramgarh, again went on record for a campaign of NON-VIOLENCE — but postponed all action until Gandhi has time the Indian National Congress, holding a plenary session at Ramgarh, again went on record for a campaign of NON-VIOLENCE — but postponed all action until Gandhi has time to attempt a deal with British imperialism.

These two simultaneous events vividly sum- marize the Indian political situation. On the one hand the workers are hesitantly moving toward revolutionary action that would be given tremendous impetus by a revolutionary leadership. But a majority of the Indian people are paralyzed by the fact that the whole scope of its reactionary role. Further, its threats against the British have meaning only in the degree that British imperialism sees no necessity to attempt a deal with British imperialism.

In the present epoch of decay capitalism, the struggle for the right of self-determination can free itself of British domination only so far as it subordinates itself to some rival imperialist power’s domination; thus it must maintain the economic, political, and social oppression of the masses of the Indian people in the whole scope of its reactionary role. Further, it must see the ability of the native bourgeoisie to hold the masses in leash. This cowardly bourgeoisie dreads even civil disobedience, for it knows that the struggle, once begun, will burst all confines, and the national bourgeoisie trembles in the face of a revolutionary mass movement as much as does British imperialism.

FOR A SOVIET SOCIALIST INDIA

The congress wants to free India from the grip of British policy and British ECONOMIC STRUCTURE, not only in the degree that British imperialism sees no necessity to maintain the economic, political, and social oppression of the masses of the Indian people in the whole scope of its reactionary role. Further, it must see the ability of the native bourgeoisie to hold the masses in leash. This cowardly bourgeoisie dreads even civil disobedience, for it knows that the struggle, once begun, will burst all confines, and the national bourgeoisie trembles in the face of a revolutionary mass movement as much as does British imperialism.

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THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND SOVIETS

History has already relegated to the past the aim of the national bourgeoisie: independence for itself alone. But the compradors also advocate the specific political oram of this ‘independence’. The Congress wants the constituent assembly as the MEANS of gaining independence. Here, again, the reactionary character of the bourgeoisie is revealed: the constituent assembly IN ITSELF will not rally the vast hordes of the exploited, it will not solve the problem of bread and butter for the millions. Only the social revolution can do this. The struggle for the assembly is progressive only to the extent that it becomes the basis for ACTION, not talk. Further, the workers-