

# All India Worker's and Peasant's Party Political Resolution

This Resolution was presented to All India Workers' and Peasants' Party (AIWPP) formation in 1928. The 'Class Struggle' republishes it for study.

The political situation in the past year, while conforming generally to the lines described a year ago, has undergone important developments. The following are its main features:

- 1) Continuance of the firm policy of imperialism towards the bourgeois nationalist movement, and increasingly reactionary attitude towards the masses.
- 2) Consequent retreat of almost all parties of the bourgeois, including the Congress, in support of a timid liberal programme of constitutional demands, and communal reconciliations.
- 3) Considerable increase in the strength and militancy of the mass movement, workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie.
- 4) An effort on the part of a wing of the bourgeoisie to threaten imperialism with the mass movement, and at the same time to regain the control over the petty bourgeoisie and the masses which they are losing.

1. The provocative and apparently stupid policy of British Imperialism is indicated by the increasing difficulty of its position in the world. The approach of war, and the continued economic decline of Great Britain, render it imperative for imperialism to keep its political control and economic predominance in India undisturbed. But this is becoming increasingly difficult, as the shortage of an exportable surplus of British capital tends to deprive the British interests of an important weapon used in maintaining their economic leadership. Increasing recourse must therefore be had to the political weapon, and the British political dictatorship has been used to force through the rupee ratio, the all British commission on constitutional reforms, etc. and is expected to enforce the Reserve Bank bill in spite of the strenuous opposition of practically whole forces of the bourgeoisie.

At the same time the appointment of the Butler Committee and the statements of the leading loyalist Princes show that serious steps are being taken by imperialism to safeguard its position by strengthening hold on the States and increasing their military efficiency.

But the difficulties of British Imperialism also determine that its fundamental economic and political line of policy in India shall be maintained. It is British Imperialist policy to industrialise India in co-operation with Indian capital, though in such a way that

British predominance is maintained. The policy of concessions is still pursued, as is shown by the continued grant of tariffs to predominantly Indian firms and industries. Similarly the basic policy of compromise with the Indian bourgeoisie on the political field is to be maintained, and even concessions to be granted, provided that effective British control is absolutely secure. Thus the memorandum to the Simon Commission of the European Association suggests an increase in the nominated and government seats in the assembly, addition to the powers of the provincial legislatures, but no widening of the franchise, some concessions to the bourgeoisie—none to the masses—but increase in the power of British control at the centre. Further the respectful attitude of officials and of all responsible sections of the Anglo-Indian and British Imperialist press towards the Nehru Report, testifies to an anxiety to compromise. The unexpected aggressiveness of imperialism does not therefore imply a fundamental change in its policy towards the Indian bourgeoisie, but only a partial and probably temporary modification. The essential line of policy remains the same.

2. Before the firmness of the Government the bourgeoisie have again retreated. Their natural indignation and the pressure of the masses after the appointment of the Simon Commission drove them towards an uncompromising attitude, in the case of the Congress leaders to support of the Independence Resolution and the approval of hartals on the arrival of the Commission. But later, when the All Parties Conference was convened and the bourgeois left wing had to choose between the masses and their class they chose the latter. The attitude of the Government impressed many with the fact that nothing was to be gained by declamation threat. There was left no alternative but a united front of the bourgeoisie, on the basis of practical constitutional possibilities. All the bourgeois parties, under the same compulsion, dropped their political and communal differences and put forward a reasonable proposal for compromise with imperialism in the Nehru Report.

The Nehru Report, as accepted by the All Parties Conference, makes the following principal demands: (1) Complete responsibility for an Indian Parliament elected by universal suffrage, in regard to internal affairs, including finance, customs, taxation etc. (2) Rights of the individual of a bourgeois democratic type, including a special safeguard of private property rights, but including also some freedom for Trade Union organisation, etc,

In return it concedes: (1) Foreign affairs to be conducted on the same basis as those of the dominions. (2) Executive powers nominally vested in the king, acting through nominated Governor-General and Governors, (3) No discrimination against British financial, commercial and industrial interests. (4) The armed forces to be under the control of a committee consisting partly of ministers and partly of British officers. (5) Existing pay etc. of present civil and other officers to be guaranteed, their resignation voluntary. (6) Indian states remain under their present regime, but in relations with the Indian Government.

The masses thus enter into the programme hardly at all. In the states they are left at the mercy of the princes. In British India they are given the vote, personal rights, a certain

protection for trade unions, primary education, some vaguely-worded promises in regard to economic improvement, and security of tenure of land, the landlord system being otherwise retained.

The report is entirely a bourgeois-democratic scheme of a not very advanced type, and in relation to imperialism constitutes almost the minimum which the Indian bourgeoisie could demand. Its acceptance means a decisive retreat on the part of the Congress leaders from the position taken by them a year before, and represents a consolidation of the whole bourgeois class, on the basis of reconciliation of minor differences, the complete acceptance of imperialism, and a minimum programme of demands, into a single reactionary bloc, completely divorced from the masses.

The retreat of the bourgeoisie from its position of would be leader of the masses, is shown also by: (1) Its betrayal of the Bardoli peasants' resistance to increase of assessment. (2) Its practical neglect of and even opposition to the numerous mass workers' strikes which have occurred this year. (3) The half-hearted and formal opposition expressed to the extremely dangerous and reactionary Trade Disputes Bill. (4) The conduct of the Bengal Congress Council party in connection with the Bengal Tenancy Law Amendment Bill, in which on practically every issue they supported the zamindars against the cultivators, frequently voting with the Government.

3. While the bourgeoisie as a whole have been retreating, the masses, including a large section of the petty bourgeoisie, have been making noteworthy advance. The workers' movement, which has been rising slowly for some time, has reached a level of activity and militancy which has not been attained for six or seven years past. Most disputes have been characterised by (1) extreme obstinacy and prolongation; the resort by the capitalist to all devices of intimidation and deceit to break the workers' strength, which however has in most cases been maintained with remarkable courage and endurance. (2) the active participation of the state forces on the capitalist side; wholesale arrests, prohibition of meetings, forcible entry into workers' houses, beating, etc. (3) a consequent tendency in some cases for the workers to emancipate themselves from the ideology of the old-style bourgeois leaders, and to acquire class-consciousness and an attitude of struggle against both the employer and the state. The political consciousness of the leading sections of the workers has substantially increased. And at the same time the base of the movement is broadening; several disputes have occurred in previously unorganised industries.

The basic conditions which bring about this movement, viz trade depression and an employers' offensive, rising prices, and a gradual spread of knowledge of the workers' movement and of revolutionary ideas, continue to operate. In spite, therefore, of some setbacks and local demoralisation the progress of the movement is likely to go on without serious intermission for some time.

There has also been a less marked, but important, advance in the peasants' movement. Actual campaigns against landlords or Government have occurred or are threatened from Bombay, Madras, UP and Bengal; mostly defensive, but one or two

actually taking the offensive; while several workers' and peasants' conferences have been held in different provinces.

Some sections of the petty bourgeoisie have manifested increased activity, as is shown by the constant growth and activity of the youth-movement, the enthusiastic acceptance almost everywhere in the organisations, and in Congress meetings etc., of the slogan of Independence, and the tendency, given expression though not yet much realised in practice, to take up mass organisation.

In response to the growth of the mass movement especially of its leading section, the workers, the Government, in addition to its practical repressive measures, has taken serious steps. It has brought forward a Trade Disputes Bill, of which the most important proposals are to penalize heavily all strikes with a political complexion, and to prove strikes in railways and other services, thus cutting off from movement its largest and hitherto most active and best organised section. Further, by means of the Public Safety Bill, steps are taken to cut the feeble connection between the international revolutionary labour movement and the Indian workers. In addition increased efforts are being made through the IFTU and the British Trades Union Congress to support and strengthen the reactionary leaders of the unions.

4. The publication of the Nehru Report, which by its frankness and moderation revealed the true nature and aims of bourgeois nationalism, brought about a crisis within the Congress ranks. The hypocrisy of the bourgeois nationalist propaganda for some time past, especially of its support of complete independence, was very clearly shown. It was feared that the petty bourgeoisie, whose enthusiasm has been greatly roused by the slogan of independence, would withdraw support in disgust. At the same time the rapid rise of the workers' movement impressed many with its power and with its danger for the bourgeoisie. It was clearly seen to be emancipating itself from the control of the old type of moderate bourgeois labour leader.

Accordingly, the Independence for India League was launched, and rapidly found support among the bourgeois politicians, although its policy, not yet formulated in detail, must mean nothing short of mass revolution if taken seriously. There was even some talk of revolution and of socialism. The possibility arose of a serious breach in the ranks of the bourgeoisie if such wild talk were allowed to continue, even if only for purposes of demonstration, before the masses and the petty bourgeoisie, whose psychology it fitted so well. A halt was therefore called by the Bengal group, who published independently and in advance of the general body, a suggested programme, clearly with the object of forcing the hand of the All India League, and confining independence propaganda to harmless bourgeois lines.

The programme and manifesto published by the Bengal Independence for India League, while using phrases such as "economic emancipation", "removal of economic inequalities", and "rousing the masses", contains nothing totally unacceptable to the more moderate wing of the bourgeoisie. The section on political democracy contains nothing but the demand for complete independence and that on social democracy familiar items of social reform propaganda. The economic demands include for workers,

the eight hour day for factory workers, unemployment pay, sickness insurance pensions, etc., and control of the rate of interest on loans and supply of cheap credit by co-operative institutions. In connection with industry it is proposed to nationalise the key industries, railways, shipping, and air services, to introduce compulsory arbitration, profit sharing, and labour participation in management. Taxation on private capital, including inheritance duties are also proposed.

This is a programme not intended to rouse the revolutionary energy of the masses in pursuit of their economic demands, but is calculated to bring Indian industrialism into line with modern bourgeois practice, including its methods of keeping the workers under control. It is essentially a programme for the bourgeoisie, in which items are included not as demands by the workers, but as promises of what will be done for them by the bourgeoisie when bourgeois independence is established, so that the independent workers' movement may be held in check. In particular it has no revolutionary significance at all.

Even more reactionary is the programme in connection with the land, in which the chief items are annulment of agricultural indebtedness and abolition of landlordism, by indemnification. This item provides a very clear indication that the Independence League intends to break with the Congress, which in Bengal is notoriously influenced by land-owning interests but is on the contrary more in fundamental agreement with the general line Congress policy.

The unreal and hypocritical character of the programme is perhaps most definitely revealed by the fact that throughout there is not a word mentioned of the method by which the aims are to be achieved.

The programme is quite in line in its counter-revolutionary character with the usual propaganda of its leaders (cf. the Presidential Speech of Mr. S.C. Bose at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference, 1928, in which the class struggle is definitely opposed) and with their conduct in connection with labour disputes. In more than one strike the efforts of the Independence League leaders have been directed towards stopping the strikes in the interest of a national industry. Some leaders of the school do not hesitate to avow themselves Fascists.

Although The Bengal League represents a moderate wing in relation to some other sections, the nature of the League as a whole is fundamentally the same. This is shown by: (1) The personnel of the leading groups, the members of the All Parties Conference who signed the initial manifesto and the decision to make the League a wing of the National Congress only. No section or group which is loyal to Congress principles can really lead the masses. Congress aims are nationalist and opposed to class struggle. The mass movement can only grow by waging the class struggle. To confine the League membership to Congress members means in effect to exclude the masses. (2) The action of most of the members in supporting simultaneously the Independence League and the Nehru Report "except for Dominion Status". The whole Report depends upon Dominion Status, that is compromise with imperialism, as its basis, and its provisions are quite incompatible with any attainable independence. (3) The repeated hint that if

independence is advocated, Dominion Status may be granted as a compromise, (4) The failure of almost all the propagandists of the League to treat the matter seriously. They appear to think that a mere sentiment in favour of independence is sufficient qualification for membership of the League and the propaganda of this sentiment is its whole work. The practical revolutionary implications of independence are neglected almost entirely.

The Independence for India League is thus to be looked on as the resultant of different tendencies: (1) A hesitating and as yet confused move on the part of a section of the petty bourgeoisie towards revolutionary policy with perhaps on the part of some of the idea of exploiting the revolutionary mass movement for the attainment of independence for the middle classes. (2) An attempt by a section of the bourgeoisie to extort concessions from imperialism by threatening it with a movement for independence among the middle classes and the masses. (3) An attempt by a section of the bourgeoisie to regain that control over the mass movement and the petty bourgeoisie which the increasingly reactionary attitude of the bourgeois class as a whole, and of the bourgeois labour leaders is causing it to lose.

In conditions of rising mass movement, the Workers' and Peasants' Party has (1) to assist the growth of the movement to the utmost, (2) to clarify its very confused ideas, and (3) to improve its organisation especially that of the working class vanguard of the movement, and to widen and strengthen the Party.

For the first purpose it is necessary to establish united front with all organisations which tend to increase the momentum of the movement, whether of the workers, or of the peasants or of the petty bourgeoisie. But for the remaining purposes it is essential to insist more strongly than has been done previously upon the independent role of the Workers and Peasants' Party, as the only organisation which has a correct policy and can unite to lead all the mass revolutionary forces of the country. The party can be content no longer to act primarily as a section or wing of another organisation. It is the only genuine representative of the rising mass movement.

The developments of the past year bring the between the Workers' and Peasants' Party on the one hand and the National Congress with its independence wing on the other, to a new stage. The gradual divergence between the masses and the bourgeoisie, which had been making itself manifest for some years past, has sharpened decisively. The bourgeoisie as a whole has retreated, and that section which has not done so, maintains its advanced position more and more obviously for tactical reasons only. On the other hand the masses have advanced considerably. The appropriate expression of the old relations between the movements, was that the Workers' and Peasants' Party constituted itself a wing of the national movement, and worked as a section of the Congress.

This can no longer be the situation. The 'Workers and Peasants' Party is the representative of the advancing mass movement. The dominant leadership of the Congress associates itself with the retreating bourgeois bloc, whose representative organisations is the All Parties Conference. The two movements are separate, and their

leading organisation must do so also. The Workers' and Peasants' Party must henceforth play a definitely independent part.

For some time however the Congress will maintain its composite character, of a loose organisation, with indefinite creed, under bourgeois leadership, but with a petty bourgeois following including different social strata and different political tendencies, some of a potentially revolutionary nature. While this is the case, and while the Workers' and Peasants' Party remains relatively weak and unorganised in the country, it will be necessary to follow the traditional policy of forming fractions within Congress organisations, for the purpose of agitation, of exposing its reactionary leadership and of drawing the revolutionary sections towards the Workers' and Peasants' Party. This policy however is only temporary. The Workers' and Peasants' Party can have no intention of dominating or capturing the Congress: the function of its members within the Congress is a purely critical one. Party member cannot therefore be allowed to take office in Congress organisations. The object of the Workers' and Peasants' Party can only be to build up its own independent organisation, so that it can as soon as possible dispense with the necessity of agitation within the Congress.

The relation with the Independence League is of a different nature. Although not homogeneous in membership the Independence League has a definite policy and programme. It is in essence a bourgeois organisation whose policy is an insincere travesty of that of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, and whose object is in large part to prevent the independent growth of the mass movement. Workers' and Peasants' Party members cannot enter the Independence League as members, as to do so would be to attribute to it before the masses a seriousness and importance which it does not possess. The Workers' and Peasants' Party can only work with the Independence League in a united front on the basis of its propaganda for independence, which in spite of its frivolous character has objectively some value. But it is necessary continually to expose the League's faults of programme and policy and its fundamentally bourgeois, even fascist character and ultimately counter-revolutionary role.

As opposed to the policy of the Independence League, the Workers' and Peasants' Party must emphasise the following principal points.

1. It must expose the Nehru Report as a whole, and especially the pretence that it is possible to support simultaneously the report and independence. The allied conception that Dominion Status is a "step to independence" must also be exploded.
2. There must be left no doubt as to the meaning of independence; it involves the destruction of imperialist political and military control and economic penetration, and hence necessitates revolution.
3. The independence of the labour movement from bourgeois control must be insisted upon, and the necessity pursuing its class struggle against all exploiters.
4. The abolition of landlordism, in principle without compensation, must also be put forward, and the consequent necessity of the agrarian revolution.
5. In regard to the states, the policy of the Nehru Report, which is supported by the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia which was represented in the states' peoples conference,

must be opposed. It is in effect to leave the states under their present feudal regime, only advocating some formal change in the relations between the princes and the Government. The policy of the party must be to draw the population of the states into the struggle side by side with the masses of British India, for the total abolition of the states and the establishment of democratic government on the same basis as is advocated for the rest of the country. Only the creation of a mass movement in the states can neutralise or destroy them as a base for imperialism.

It is essential for the party also to develop its own activity in other ways. It must not depend upon the Congress and the bourgeois movement even to the extent that it has in the past for its campaigns and slogans, and must take its own completely independent initiative in all political matters. It is necessary for the party (1) to wage a far more intense campaign against the Trade Disputes Bill, in spite of the indifference of the bourgeois politicians. (2) Similarly a campaign of propaganda must be conducted against the war danger, and particularly against the war preparations against Soviet Russia. (3) The international nature of the revolutionary nationalist and working class movement must be emphasised in concrete manner, and examples from current politics brought before the masses, particularly the Workers. Of especial importance is the support of the Chinese workers and peasants against the white terror of the bourgeois nationalists in alliance with imperialism, and exposure of the part played by the Chinese bourgeoisie in the movement. In this matter the whole nationalist press and propaganda is definitely counter-revolutionary, and the class sympathy between the Indian and the Chinese bourgeoisie must be exposed.