

# The Indian Movement

In India the policy of British imperialism, which tried to retard the development of native industry, evoked great dissatisfaction among the Indian bourgeoisie. The class consolidation of the latter which replaced its former division into religious sects and castes, and which was expressed in the fusion of the Indian National Congress (organ of the Indian bourgeoisie) with the Muslim League effected in 1916, confronted British imperialists with a national united front in the country. Fear of the revolutionary movement during the War compelled British imperialism to make concessions to the native bourgeoisie which found expression, in the economic sphere, in insignificant parliamentary reforms introduced in 1919. Nevertheless, a strong ferment, expressing itself in a series of revolutionary outbreaks against British imperialism, was produced among the masses of the Indian people as a result of the ruinous consequences of the imperialist war (famine and epidemics, 1918), the catastrophic deterioration of the position of wide sections of the working population, the influence of the October revolution in Russia and of a series of insurrections in various colonial countries (as, for example, the struggle of the Turkish people for independence). This first great anti-imperialist movement in India (1919-1922) ended in the betrayal of the cause of the national revolution by the Indian bourgeoisie, which in the main was caused by terror before the rising wave of peasant insurrections, and a by the workers' strikes against native employers. The collapse of the national-revolutionary movement and the gradual decline of bourgeois nationalism enabled British Imperialism once more to return to a policy of hindering the industrial development of India. The recent measures of British imperialism in India show that the objective contradictions between British colonial monopoly and the tendencies in the direction of the independent economic development of India are becoming more accentuated from year to year, and are leading to a new revolutionary crisis.

The real threat to British domination comes, not from the bourgeois camp, but from the growing mass movement of the Indian workers, which is developing in the form of large-scale strikes; at the same time the accentuation of the crisis in the village bears witness to the maturing of an agrarian revolution. All these phenomena are leading to a radical transformation of the whole political situation in India.

The basic tasks of the Indian Communists consist in struggle against British imperialism for the emancipation of the country, for the destruction of all relics of feudalism, for the agrarian revolution and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in the form of a soviet republic. These tasks can be

successfully carried out only when there is a powerful Communist Party which will be able to place itself at the head of the wide masses of the working class, peasantry and all the toilers, and to lead them in the struggle against the feudal-imperialist bloc.

\_\_\_The strike movement of the Indian proletariat now taking place, its independence from bourgeois nationalism, the all-Indian character of this movement, its distribution over almost all the branches of industry, the frequent and protracted strikes, the stubbornness and great resoluteness with which the workers have carried them on, the emergence of leaders from the strikes from the midst of the workers themselves—all these things denote a turning point in the history of the struggle of the Indian proletariat and prove that in India the pre-conditions have matured which are essential for the creation of a mass Communist Party. The union of all Communist groups and individual Communists scattered throughout the country into a single, independent and centralized Party represents the first task of Indian Communists. While rejecting the principle of the building of the Party on a two-class basis, the Communists must utilize the connections of the existing workers' and peasants' parties with the toiling masses for strengthening *their own party*, bearing in mind that the hegemony of the proletariat cannot be realized without the existence of a consolidated, steadfast Communist Party armed with the theory of Marxism. The agitational work of the Communist Party must be bound up with the struggle for the immediate demands of the workers, at the same time explaining to them the general aims which the Communist Party sets out to achieve and the methods which it applies for their realization. It is essential to establish nuclei in the various industrial and other enterprises, and these must take an active part in the Labour Movement, in the organization and conduct of strikes and political demonstrations. The Communist organizations must from the very beginning devote special attention to the training of leading party cadres from the ranks of the *workers*.

In the *trade unions*, the Indian Communists must mercilessly expose the nationalist-reformist leaders and carry on a decisive struggle for the conversion of the trade unions into genuine class organizations of the proletariat and for the replacement of the present reformist leadership by consistent revolutionary representatives from the mass of the workers. It is especially necessary to expose the method so much favoured by Indian reformists of deciding conflicts by means of petition to the representatives of British imperialism, as well as to "impartial" courts for adjudication between workers and employers. In this struggle, it is necessary to

push forward the demands for trade union democracy, for putting the trade union apparatus into the hands of the workers, etc. The levers for party work in the trade unions must be the Communist fractions as well as groups founded by the Communists and sympathizing with them. It is necessary to utilize the present strike wave in order to organize the *unorganized* workers. The miners and engineering

workers, the coolies working on the plantations and agricultural labourers in general, represent the least organized sections of the Indian proletariat and the Communists need to devote the necessary attention to them.

The Communists must unmask the national reformism of the Indian National Congress and oppose all the phrases of the Swarajists, Gandhists, etc., about passive resistance, with the irreconcilable slogan of struggle for the emancipation of the country and the expulsion of the imperialists.

In relation to the *peasantry* and peasant organizations the Indian Communists are faced above all with the task of acquainting the widest strata of the peasantry with the general demands of the party in the agrarian question, for which purpose the party must work out an agrarian programme of action. Through workers connected with the village, as well as directly, the Communists must stimulate the struggle of the peasantry for partial demands, and in the process of struggle organize peasant unions. It is essential to pay particular attention to make sure that the newly-created peasant organizations do not fall under the influence of exploiting strata in the village. It is necessary to give to the existing peasant organizations a concise programme of concrete demands and to support the activities of the peasants through demonstrations of workers in the towns.

It must be remembered that under no circumstances can the Communists relinquish their right to open criticism of the opportunist and reformist tactics of the leadership.

*Extract from 'Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies'.*