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**SOCIAL FORCES IN THE INDIAN
REVOLUTION**

**TROTSKYISM, LEFT FLANK OF THE
REFORMISTS**

SOCIAL FORCES IN THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

Now that the Japanese imperialists are in India (Burma is for all practical purposes a part of India); now that the "left" office boy of British Imperialism, Sir Stafford Cripps, has been rushed to India, everybody becomes absorbed in the subject. It is to the credit of the International Contact Commission that almost two years ago it raised the fundamental problems of Indian social development. In the article "Problems of the Indian Revolution" (International News, May 1940) these basic questions were posed and analyzed. Abstractly there is very little to add, but reality, and particularly revolution, is never abstract. The events of the past few weeks compel us to supplement the previous article, and to modify it in one important respect. Before proceeding to do this, however, it is necessary to call attention to the vital role of the Indian Revolution in world politics.

IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

Already in the previous article, reference was made to the importance of India. Since December 7, 1941, this has greatly increased. The China of Chang-Kai-Shek has become a part of the imperialist front of England and the U. S. In addition, the Chinese Revolution has

been so disintegrated by Stalinism since 1927, that it is more probable than otherwise that the revival of the Chinese Revolution will have to come from the outside.

When it is considered that China has a population of 400 million, and India of 319 million, the significance of the Indian revolution spreading to China, and embracing also the East Indies becomes quite apparent. In addition a successful revolution in India would put an end to the series of defeats suffered by the proletariat since 1923, would serve as a stimulus to the revolutionary movement everywhere, and would have an immediate effect in stirring the masses of the Soviet Union.

Thus, it can be seen that the question of the Indian Revolution is one that is of the greatest importance for the world revolution. In order to properly understand the forces in India, however, it is necessary to consider the Indian situation from the standpoint of world economy and politics. Any attempt to consider the problems of India only within national limits would be theoretically incorrect, and practically, could only lead to a disastrous outcome. We shall therefore first discuss the imperialist antagonisms.

India has become the center of a fight not

only between the Anglo-American imperialists on the one side and the Axis imperialists on the other, but also of another fight within each of the respective camps. For a long time before the war, India was the scene of a vast conflict between American and English imperialism. One instance of this readily suggests itself to the reader, in the price war between Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell. In this conflict, England, having the political power in its hands, had the inner track on the U. S.

The assault of German imperialism upon the British, and the menace of complete destruction of Britain as a world power, has led to a turn of the tide in favor of the U. S. For this reason, we find American imperialism moving quickly to secure a position for itself by means of dominion status, or even "independence." For some time past, American imperialism has been supporting the Nehru group in the National Indian Congress. To this there is now added the dispatch of a special mission to India under Henry Grady. At the same time, it is endeavoring to win over the Indian bourgeois nationalists by promising them more material support against Japanese invasion than can be given by Britain.

Confronted with the menace of conquest of India by Japan, England has to resort to desperate measures. But these desperate measures cannot go so far as the surrender of India. The direct drain of Indian economy in favor of Britain amounts to almost a billion dollars a year. In addition, the indirect drain, through the usual imperialist methods, amounts to very much more. English finance capital, therefore, cannot give up India without a struggle.

CRIPPS — SOCIALIST AGENT OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

In desperation, it resorts to the services of the "left," Sir Stafford Cripps. A personal friend of Nehru, a so-called radical in the Labor Party, Cripps can be much more effective in endeavoring to hoodwink the masses than could the too-well-known reactionary Churchill. In this connection it is significant that after the Atlantic conference which formulated the Eight Freedoms, Churchill distinctly stated that the application of these freedoms would cause no change in the status of India. So a "left winger," had to be tried to do the dirty work of the British bankers.

But even Cripps will go no further than promise changes after the war, together with the inclusion of certain members of the Congress into the government. More than this he cannot do, because as a millionaire lawyer representing his client the trade union bureaucracy, he realizes that the basis of the past bribery of the English labor aristocracy and bureaucracy has been the plundering of India. He will have to go further in words and also in job concessions than in the time of the last war, because all classes in India still vividly remember the post-war betrayal.

Nevertheless a definite limit is set for Cripps. He cannot even arrange for immediate dominion status. The formula that will be used for the refusal, will be that important elements of Indian social life are not agreed on independence or dominion status. These "important elements" will be a handful of Indian princes, and a few Moslem and Hindu stooges, connected with the Moslem League and the Hindu Mahasabha. Thereupon this unctuous representative of British finance capital and its "labor" pensioners, will declare that India is not yet ready for independence or immediate dominion status.

GERMAN-JAPANESE ANTAGONISM

But the conflict within the alliances is not confined solely to the Anglo-American antagonism. Asia, and particularly India, is the great prize of the present war, as we have long pointed out. The startling successes of Japan after December 7, have put her in a position of dominance temporarily. Germany has no desire to see this condition maintained. What Germany fears is an attempt by Japanese imperialism to consolidate its gains and strike some sort of bargain with America. Japanese imperialism has too weak a financial and industrial basis to consolidate its hold on Asia, but could act (because of its objective position, not its desires) as a viceroy for a stronger finance imperialism.

Probability, therefore, is that we shall see in the immediate period an endeavor by Germany to break through Russia, Turkey, or Egypt, or all three simultaneously, in a drive towards western India. The Nazi strategy calculates that if this could be done and a junction effected with the Japanese in India, then the superior resources of German imperialism would be decisive in the economic sphere.

Upon the basis of the above conflicts of

world imperialism, the internal forces of India must be studied. The class forces in India in the order of their rank are as follows. (1) The princes and other feudal elements; (2) the Indian possessors of potential capital; (3) the Indian bourgeoisie; (4) the upper petty bourgeoisie; (5) the lower petty bourgeoisie, particularly the peasantry; (6) the proletariat. We shall examine the role of each.

1. The princes play no independent role at all in India. They are completely subservient in all but name to British imperialism, and form the surest bulwark for it. Their sole policy is to maintain a completely parasitic existence under the protection of British guns. In their hands, however, are immense tracts of land and a great store of riches.

SOCIAL BASIS OF INDIAN "LIBERALISM"

2. We have made use of the term, "possessors of potential capital." This awkward phrase is used for lack of a simpler and shorter description. English industrial capital, from the time of the East Indian Company, seized upon control of all Indian economic life and completely dominated it. This is perhaps more true of India than any other colonial possession. As a result one finds that the Indian stockholders of industrial companies are nearly always minority stockholders, completely subject to the British majority. This condition pre-determines their political role.

The so-called Liberal Party, led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, is representative of this group. All they seek is an opportunity for expansion within the limits of British imperialism and a lessening of restriction to the extent that they could proceed to establish independent enterprises. Forced by the objective situation and the pressure beneath them, this group was compelled a few weeks ago to address the famous letter to Churchill. The very fact that this became necessary for such people, is proof of the extent to which India is boiling. The conditions of life of these people prevent them from making even pseudo-demands, and for all practical purposes they can be counted in the same category as the princes.

CLASS SIGNIFICANCE OF GHANDIISM

3. The Indian bourgeoisie is a peculiar class. As pointed out above, there is practically no large industrial bourgeoisie. Ghandi is a representative of this group. Like the first two categories, the main interest of this group is in preserving the status-quo, keeping the mass-

es in check, and advancing their own interests within the framework of British imperialism. A fuller analysis has been given in the International News, May 1940, and there is now very little to add.

The only significant addition that can be made, is the recent Gandhi plea to the British government not to carry out the scorched earth policy in case of invasion by Japan. The cloven hoof of the Indian bourgeoisie sticks out here very plainly. Gandhi is an integral part of the British imperialist machinery, and the crisis of British imperialism has so manifested itself in Gandhism that Gandhi has been obliged to retire in favor of the "left" Nehru.

The social motivation is two-fold. First, Gandhi (and when we speak of personalities we speak of them as symbolizing classes) is unable to pursue any other than a straight British imperialist policy; and second, he gives best assistance to British imperialism by holding his advocacy of "non-violence" in reserve until it can be used in an attempt to stem the revolutionary activity of the masses. Such has been his role throughout his entire history.

The form and substance of his wisdom at the present time is expressed in the contemptible slogan, "Do not stab Britain in the back," and by his declaration to the Gujarat council of the Indian National Congress, that although he believes in non-violence, it is not obligatory upon the members of the Indian National Congress!

GHANDI, NEHRU — AND BOSE

4. Economically there is no great difference between the Ghandis and the Nehrus. The followers of Nehru in general are the upper peasantry. Nehru and Gandhi have taken upon themselves a tacit division of labor, in that Nehru blusters about complete independence while Gandhi retires to the background. That Nehru will repeat his usual capitulation to Gandhi, as he did at the time of the Delhi Pact and before, goes without saying.

This is not so much due to personal characteristics of Nehru, as it is to his class basis. The congenital vacillation of Nehru is the embodiment of the social vacillations of the upper peasantry, which desires more room for the exploitation of the Indian masses, but is afraid to play with fire. From this group can be expected wordy denunciation and bluster, and then a rotten compromise with Cripps on

the basis of the inclusion of some members of this group in a new governmental set-up. The opposition to British rule, however, in this group will not disappear, as it is backed by American finance capital, which will attempt to bolster it up to a point of at least continuing the struggle for dominion status.

Breaking away from Gandhi and Nehru, but not on a personal basis, Bose has succumbed to a new version of the theory of the "lesser evil." Springing from the Bengal terrorist school, lacking the power of social analysis, and animated by a hatred of British imperialism emotional rather than reasoned, Bose has become the tool of German-Japanese imperialism. He represents in India roughly the same social forces as Wang-Chin-Wei in China. The Bose ideology is most dangerous and must be combatted by the Marxists, exposing its roots and fighting it in practice. It is the classic example of "imperialist defeatism," as opposed to revolutionary defeatism.

PEASANTRY NEED LEADERSHIP

5. The vast masses of peasantry, and that means the overwhelming majority of the Indian population (287 out of 319 million), is a classic example of the truth of the Marxist thesis that the peasantry cannot play an independent role. It must follow either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. To follow the bourgeoisie in India today, means to yoke itself to one of four imperialisms.

The peasantry, if it is to exist in the most literal physical sense, must have the land of the princes and feudal landowners. In addition it must have a government capable of satisfying its irrigation needs. Still further must it have a government which will supply it with the products of industry in return for the products of agriculture. Under present conditions of imperialist war, and aggravated capitalist decay, such a government could be none other than a proletarian dictatorship.

"All talk about a "workers' and peasants' state" or "democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry" is vain, for the basic reason that the peasantry is incapable of pursuing an independent role. This leads to the modification to which we referred earlier. Under the conditions of a revolutionary situation, the former slogan of the constituent assembly (as an **auxiliary** to the struggle for workers and peasants councils) now becomes a reactionary slogan capable only of meeting the political needs

of the Indian bourgeoisie and American finance capital.

WORKERS MUST LEAD

6. The proletariat. The leading role of the Indian revolution must and can only be taken by the Indian proletariat. Small though it is in numbers, it is nevertheless the only class that is capable of waging a struggle to the end against all forms of imperialism.

It has a telescoped task at the present time. It must organize and build its **own class party**, the Marxist party, which will enable the proletariat to act as an independent class, giving leadership to the vast Indian masses while opposing petty-bourgeois vacillations. And at the same time it must carry through a **SOCIAL REVOLUTION**, of which the tasks of colonial liberation and agrarian revolution are the first phase. Only in this way can it drive the British oppressors into the sea, seize the lands of the princes and feudalists, nationalize the land and take over the banks and industrial institutions.

To do this the Marxist Party must counterpose to the imperialist-dominated political set-ups to the call for a Constituent Assembly (which also has the support of the centrist Trotskyites)—the call for the building of Workers Soviets and Peasants Committees. This will be the dual power, which when the proletariat has won hegemony over the broad masses and has smashed the bourgeois political structure, will become the sole power in India, the proletarian dictatorship in alliance with the peasantry. Towards this goal of bringing control of the wealth of India into the hands of Indian toilers, they must build a Red Army, that will safeguard the achievements of the Indian Revolution against the imperialists of England, Wall Street, Germany and Japan at the same time it crushes the internal counter-revolution.

NEED MARXIST PARTY

It should be emphasized that this is not a broad, general perspective, but a matter of the immediate future. The pre-conditions for revolution set forth in the International News, May 1940, have matured. If these objective conditions are combined with the subjective condition of a Marxist Party, then there can be not only an Indian Revolution, but also a breakdown of the war front of the exploiters, and the beginning of what will later be the final conflict.