

India

The Situation in India

By V. Basak

II.—What is the Struggle of the Communists for the Hegemony of the Proletariat?

(Continued.)

The platform of action of the C.P. of India gave a correct Bolshevik analysis of the character and the driving forces of the Indian revolution and the leading role of the proletariat.

However, the working class led by the Communist Party can only win and carry out its leadership by participating in the struggle, showing to the masses in practice that the Communists are the only force capable of leading the revolutionary people to victory.

The attention of the toiling masses at present is focussed on the solution of revolutionary democratic tasks. The workers, peasants and petty-bourgeoisie are burning with justified hatred towards the imperialists. They come into constant conflict with the reactionary forces of the old semi-feudal caste society. In conflict with the officials, police, government, landlords, and usurers while defending their own everyday interests, the consciousness of the workers and toilers and their determination to organise themselves and to struggle is being roused. In the struggle for democratic demands the mass revolutionary movement is growing, the class consciousness of the workers is increasing and the proletariat is becoming more and more an independent class force. Here in the struggle for their interests, the toiling masses see in practice the treacherous policy of the national reformists. They see themselves that in order to obtain independence, land, bread and power it is necessary to throw overboard the Gandhist policy of non-violence and passive resistance, the policy which meant to defend the interests of the exploiters.

Therefore the tasks of the Communists are to enter and take the lead in all these democratic movements, to lead every movement of dissatisfaction with the existing order, no matter what questions brought them into being, and to go everywhere with Communist agitation, putting forward proposals and slogans on every occasion, constantly explaining and showing in practice that the path of National Reformism is the path of defeat and slavery. Only then, when the workers and peasants and the semi-proletariat of the towns and villages will see that in the struggle for their everyday economic demands, in the demonstrations against terror and arrests, in every mass action, whether started by students, small toilers, peasants or workers, in the struggle against the caste system, etc., the Communists are in the forefront and fight consistently to the end, only then will the toiling masses, and not only the peasants and workers, be convinced that the Communists are the real leaders of the people who can be trusted and with whom they can march to the end in the struggle for independence, land and power.

On this path, the masses will learn that the Communist Party is the only consistent leader of the oppressed masses. This means sacrifices by the proletarian vanguard. Thousands of Chinese Communists gave up their lives in the dungeons of the imperialists, generals and the Kuomintang traitors, and on this path they won the hegemony, the leadership in the struggle of the workers and peasants, and gained their confidence.

The development of the Chinese Communist Party went along three channels which mutually intertwined and supplemented each other. The Chinese Communist Party came on to the mass arena in big economic strikes in Hongkong, the Peking-Mukden railway, etc. On the basis of the strike movement, the anti-imperialist movement grew up and developed, with the famous Shanghai strike of 1925, and the Northern march which in turn led to the rise of millions of peasants which developed into the agrarian revolution. The Chinese Communists carried on a heroic struggle, simultaneously building up their independent party, exposing at first the inconsistency of the Kuomintang, exposing its incorrect views, and later, when the Kuomintang had joined the camp of counter-revolution, developed a merciless struggle against it as the traitor of national freedom and the interests of the people. The result is now known. A powerful Communist Party has grown up, the Red Army and the Soviet districts have been formed. The Communist Party is recognised as the leader of the masses of the Chinese people.

The essence of the Chinese, and especially the Russian experiment, is precisely the fact that the formation of a mass Communist Party and the conversion of the working class into an independent class force, the leader of the toiling masses, took place and can only successfully take place when the C.P. participates in and correctly leads all the democratic movements and especially the national movement for independence. However, in the Indian Communist movement unclarity still exists, there are two deviations. One of the deviations is that some Communists see only the necessity of forming an underground Communist Party, contrasting this task to the task of winning over the masses and participating in democratic movements.

The comrades who take such a line fall into sectarianism and the abandonment of work in the mass organisations led by the national reformists. They do not see the difference between the leaders and the rank and file, isolate themselves from the movement for independence, they do not understand the necessity to cooperate with such democratic strata which are able to march together with the working class, even for a portion of the path, in the struggle against the imperialists. At the same time they display a failure to understand the necessity to utilise legal and semi-legal forms of mass movement.

The second deviation is the very reverse. It is the failure to understand the task of immediate formation of an underground Communist Party. The comrades who fall into this mistake often work energetically in the trade unions, recognise the importance to participate in democratic movements, especially the independence movement, to attract the democratic strata of the petty-bourgeoisie, utilise the legal forms of the movement. However, their practical refusal to form an underground Communist Party leads to the refusal to separate the proletariat into an independent class force, nourishes the lack of faith in the working class, leads, as a matter of fact, to a repudiation of revolution. And this makes the struggle for the hegemony of the proletariat more difficult and leads in fact to a position when some Communists, not seeing the active workers, become frightened because of the difficulties and the enormous tasks and begin to slow down the struggle against national-reformism, especially its "left" varieties, thus making it easier for the bourgeoisie to force the masses to keep their positions. Some Communists, instead of recognising their mistakes, begin to accuse the toiling masses of inconsistency, backwardness, of not wanting to fight, stating that the masses are responsible for the weakness of the Communists. These views are not correct and are an echo of Roy's propaganda which claims that "independence is an abstract conception" (leaflet, 1932) to the masses, and that the time has not yet come for a revolutionary struggle. The views of the supporters of Roy represent treachery of the people and must be rejected. Every Communist must remember that at present it is the Communists and not the working masses who are to blame for the weakness of the Communist movement and we must seek for the roots of our lagging behind and slow growth in our ranks.

Both of these deviations are extremely harmful and must be eliminated. Bolshevik policy demands exactly the combination of both tasks of the formation of an underground Communist Party and participation and leadership of the mass, revolutionary democratic movement; the failure to understand this explains the roots of the disagreements and personal disputes which take place in a number of Communist organisations.

We should remember that the formation of an independent C.P. and the establishment of the hegemony of the proletariat can only be carried out when the Communists carry on a struggle against national reformism and its influence in the ranks of the working class, which is the influence of the treacherous bourgeoisie and when the Communists simultaneously expose the petty-bourgeois revolutionary terrorists, the workers' and peasants' parties, etc., as tendencies and influences of the ruined petty-bourgeoisie who put forward various "socialist" slogans, etc., and in practice take the position of capitalists and drag at the tail of the bourgeoisie. The growth of the Communist Party, the establishment of the hegemony of the proletariat and the preparation of the people's revolution demand a consistent struggle against these two trends, against bourgeois reformism and petty bourgeois "radicalism." Only along this path, while exposing the confusion of petty bourgeois revolutionism is it possible to draw the petty bourgeoisie along with the proletariat. The struggle on two fronts, for the Marxist policy of the Communist Party is the chief guarantee for the victory of the revolution.

The existence of these two deviations, when the weakness of the

Communist Party is so great, and the workers' and peasants' movement so big, have led to the fact that some Communists have begun mechanically to separate the economic and political struggles and concentrate all their attention on the economic struggle and have forgotten to agrarian and independence movements. A theory has appeared even in the press that in view of the weakness of the Communist Party, the task of Communists is to concentrate all their attention to the working class and abandon the work among the peasants and in reality abandon for a time the independence movement. These comrades work **only** in trade unions. Such a point of view is not correct, especially at the present period of treachery of the National Congress and the growing discontent of the toiling masses with the existing situation. The task of strengthening the positions of the Communists in the working class is the **most important and immediate task**. To participate in the trade unions and develop the economic strike struggle of the working class is at the present time a very important, **if not the most important**, link of all the mass work of the Communists, and very little has been done so far. However, the task of strengthening the contacts of Communists in the working class and converting the proletariat into the leading force cannot be solved if we do not participate in the political struggle, the anti-imperialist and agrarian movements, the struggle against the constitution, taxes and rent and if we do not put forward political slogans. Communists must come forward on these questions and not leave the monopoly to the disorganisers of the struggle, to the "left" Congressites. A correct Bolshevik understanding of the everyday trade union work of the Communist Party has nothing in common with the rejection of the political struggle, the struggle for independence, the formation of a mass underground Communist Party. Because this rejection is a **relic of economism**, as preached by Joshi, Giri, Ruikar and leads to the conversion of the proletariat into a spineless appendage of the bourgeoisie and helps to preserve the domination of imperialism. In order to ensure the unity of the proletariat and strengthen its ranks and in order to win the leadership, Communists must defeat both the economists Joshi, Giri and Co., the agents of British imperialism and the national reformists, and especially the "left" reformists who are trying to bring the proletariat to a position of a tool in the hands of the anti-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

The Present Situation and the Struggle of the Toiling Masses

During the last few months the factory owners have made a new attack on the wages of the workers. In the textile industry in Bombay, Ahmedabad and other towns, wage-cuts have been made of 10-30 per cent., the workers have been put from two to three and four looms. On the railways, workers are still being dismissed, wages are being cut and the trade unions are still not recognised. The working class is developing its resistance. Strikes are increasing. The slogan of the general strike has become a slogan of action in Bombay. The national-reformists have been forced to recognise it.

The growing wave of the economic struggle requires that the Communists should **rapidly** correct their weaknesses and mistakes.

The weakness of past strikes in 1932-33 shows that we Communists have not yet learned properly to build mass trade union organisations, we do not know how to work in the factories, we do not organise and attract active workers, we do not carry on everyday organised preparatory work, we do not take the initiative in the struggle for the unity of the working class, we do not apply the tactic of the united front, we do not carry on work among the workers in the reformist trade unions.

It is not enough to publish a few leaflets and hold a number of meetings. We cannot limit ourselves to calls for a general strike. We cannot limit ourselves to calls for a general textile strike. The workers are serious about strikes and do not strike simply because we make a call. We must carry on careful everyday preparatory minute work and call for a strike when the conditions are mature. We must remember that a slogan may pass through three stages of its development: first as a slogan of propaganda, then as a slogan of agitation, and finally as a slogan of action. This means that when the Party adopts the slogan of a strike as corresponding to the concrete conditions of the movement and begins to carry on wide agitational and organisational preparations, it then calls for the actual strike only when it thinks the moment is most suitable for the strike. This is the correct and serious line of the Communist Party. At the same time it must be explained to the workers that the accusation of

the "Left" national-reformists against the Communists of "ultra radicalism" is nothing but an attempt to conceal the national-reformists' abandonment of general slogans, refusal to defend the interests of the workers, because they are conducting the policy of agents of the bourgeoisie who are trying to **restrict**, to limit the struggle of the toilers. Following the advice of the open letter of the three parties to the Indian Communists, the Communists must begin to form factory committees, trade union branches, start functioning elected trade union management committees and mass recruiting of workers, simultaneously forming Communist fractions everywhere. On the basis of everyday work, adopting the tactic of the united front and avoiding as much as possible **unprepared** scattered action, it is necessary to carry on preparations for a general strike of textile workers, at the same time organising the workers of Ahmedabad, Sholapur and other centres, developing strikes in other branches of industry, and in this way preparing for the general strike. From general strikes in various industrial centres, in various industries to a general strike, that is our line.

In this connection we should realise that it was a mistake for some representatives of the revolutionary trade union movement to participate in negotiations with the Anglo-Indian government on the question of carrying out the decisions of the Wheatley Commission. To spread illusions instead of organising the mass struggle of the toilers means to fall into the trap of the reformists.

A serious mistake of many Communists still remains the existing confusion in regards to the role of the Party and the trade unions. This confusion leads to the inability to lead the struggle for the unity of the proletariat, to organise the masses, and hinders the exposure of the national-reformists.

(To be continued.)

Trade Union Movement

A Congress of Surrender to Fascism

By J. R. Campbell (London)

Two questions dominated the **British Trades Union Congress at Brighton**—the question of fascism and the question of war.

There can be no reasonable doubt as to what the attitude of the bureaucracy was towards the advance of fascism. They see the crisis of capitalism deepening and are firmly convinced that unless this development of the crisis can be arrested a fascist victory in Britain is quite probable. As they say quite plainly in their report on dictatorship:—

"The one factor common to these countries (where fascism is in power) and ourselves—is economic depression and unemployment. These no doubt tend to create a position favourable to fascism. If economic conditions were to deteriorate to a further great extent it is impossible to say what might happen."

"Its (fascism's) only chance of success here is that people whose faith in parliamentary government has been weakened by the apparent inability to remove our economic ills, particularly if unemployment becomes much worse, may, in despair, be ready to accept desperate remedies."

We will find this idea expressed still more concretely in the speeches of Citrine. Its meaning is perfectly clear. It is that the more the capitalist crisis develops, the weaker the working-class movement becomes and the stronger the fascists become.

Therefore at Brighton the reformist union leaders placed their hopes of successful defence against fascism not in the building of the united front of the working class, but in the coming of a trade revival.

That is why they hailed Roosevelt and hoped that his inflation and trustification plan would succeed in giving a stimulus to "world recovery."

Of course in the **Roosevelt resolution** they made demagogic demands upon the British government:—

"Congress further trusts that the present British government will pursue a similar policy by taking immediate steps to initiate useful schemes of public works, financed by the use of national credit; to enact a maximum working week of 40 hours without reductions of wages; to prohibit child labour under 16 years of age and to raise the school-leaving age to 16.

"Further, that the government will set an example to