

# OPEN LETTER TO THE INDIAN COMMUNISTS

**D**EAR Comrades,  
The revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses for their national and social liberation has reached a turning point. The national bourgeoisie, which has betrayed the revolutionary people, are trying their best to preserve their influence over the toiling masses, to ward off the approaching Indian revolution.

It depends to a great extent upon the efforts, the energetic and self-sacrificing struggle and correct policy of the Indian Communists, whether the treacherous bourgeoisie will maintain its influence and carry out its counter-revolutionary job successfully, or whether the working class, headed by the Communist Party of India, having isolated the national reformists, will lead the toiling masses of town and village to a victorious struggle for independence, land, and the workers' and peasants' power.

The objective conditions and the growth of the class consciousness of the Indian proletariat testify to the fact that the latter course has every chance of fulfilment, provided the Indian Communists overcome their lagging behind in the formation of a mass All-Indian Communist Party; provided they, on the basis of the platform of action published by them, and the experience of the past years, energetically and jointly undertake the formation of the Communist Party and

organise the struggle of workers and peasants, not in words but in deeds.

## I. THE CORRELATION OF CLASS FORCES.

The Indian bourgeoisie which is trying to preserve its influence over the masses, and which did not break off its negotiations with British imperialism at the end of the Second Round Table Conference, is continuing its policy of counter-revolutionary compromise with British imperialism and betrayal of the revolutionary people. British imperialism, making use of counter-revolutionary national reformism, widely developed the policy of repression and provocation, the organising of the reactionary elements of the country, trying to drown in blood the rising masses of workers and peasants and simultaneously continuing negotiations with the Indian bourgeoisie. Full agreement between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British imperialists is being hindered at the present time by the rapidly developing revolutionary movement under the conditions of the deepening economic crisis.

Because of the sharpening of the economic crisis, the insignificant and temporary reduction of taxes in a few provinces has not helped the position of the peasants in the least. The burden of ruin, oppression and poverty, which is pre-conditioned by the whole system of imperialist

feudal-money-lending exploitation, and is aggravated by the present decline of agricultural prices, together with the actual increase in taxation and reaction, is reaching an unprecedented height. In spite of the fact that the process of drawing the peasant masses into the struggle is proceeding *unevenly*, it has already assumed such a powerful character (guerilla warfare in Burma and Kashmir, struggles in U.P., etc.), that on the one hand it has compelled the National Congress (which was negotiating an agreement with the imperialists) to continue pretending its sham opposition towards imperialism longer than it wished, to deceive the masses and disorganise the peasant struggle. On the other hand it has forced the British imperialists to hasten in the use of barbarous forms of mass terror to break up the people's movement.

On January 7th, 1932, the "Bombay Chronicle" was compelled to admit that

"a noteworthy feature of the peasant movement in the United Provinces is the fact that the peasants are becoming their own leaders . . . that the peasant movement to an ever-increasing extent takes place at the initiative of the peasants themselves, and that they have identified themselves with the Congress because they could not get assistance from other organisations."

The leaders of the National Congress, Gandhi, Nehru, and Co., are compelled to admit the fact, in a number of speeches, that the anti-imperialist movement and the agrarian struggle are beginning to come together more and more. The terrified bourgeoisie are now trying to disorganise the peasants' struggle and hold the peasant movement back, so that it be limited to a peaceful, submissive economic campaign for slight reduction of taxes, postponement of debts, etc. However, in spite of the efforts of the National Congress, the peasant movement is beginning to exceed the limits marked out by the Congress, and dissatisfaction of the peasantry with the policy of the Congress is beginning to spread.

Dissatisfaction with the policy of the National Congress is likewise increasing among the petty-bourgeoisie in the towns (the increase in the wave of terrorist actions, increased interest of various elements in the terrorist movement, in the working-class movement and Marxism, speeches at student meetings in Calcutta, etc.) and is expressed to a still greater extent among the working masses.

The working class has roused the town petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, by its activities beginning from 1928, to the struggle against the British imperialists and thus had a tremendous

influence on the development of the people's movement in 1930-31.

The events of the last few months (the Bombay demonstration against Gandhi, the Sholapur strike, etc.) show that the process of drawing the Indian proletariat into the economic and political struggle, accompanied by its liberation from the influence of the National Congress, is growing, and in spite of the still existing uneven character, is beginning more and more to assume an *all-Indian character*. All the facts show that in most cases, the workers themselves begin the strikes and that among the workers, not only in Bombay, but also in other places, there is growing a strata of active workers who are capable not only of becoming the cement and the leaders of a mass revolutionary trade union movement, but can become, with energetic work carried on the part of the Communists, the mass basis of a strong, working class, illegal Indian Communist Party.

Some comrades are inclined to think that the working-class movement entered a period of decline and depression as the result of the defeat of the Bombay strike in 1929. Such a point of view is entirely wrong. It is true that the defeat of the strike (which occurred as the result of the absence of a C.P. and neglect of the task of spreading the strike to Ahmedabad and Sholapur), the growth of unemployment in the first half of 1930, the terror of the employers and the police and particularly the insufficient work of the revolutionary wing of the trade union movement had undoubtedly a bad effect on the position of the G.K.U.\* But this does not at all justify the theory of decline, because it was exactly in the years 1930-31 that (1) there was a final split of the Communist groups from "Left" national reformism and for the first time there really commenced the formation of an illegal Communist Party; (2) the working masses took a most active part in all political activities to the point to open fights against the police and the troops (Sholapur, etc.); (3) the backward sections of the proletariat of the country (Bangalore, Cawnpore, Baroda, etc.), who had been lagging behind, began to be drawn in the struggle; (4) a number of independent political activities of the working masses took place, and the working class, by its methods of struggle, put a specific imprint on the whole mass movement. The advanced sections of the proletariat commenced an open struggle against the National Congress. The historical demonstration of Bombay workers on the day of Gandhi's departure to London, and the Sholapur demonstration of textile strikers, are

\* "Girni Kamgar" (Red Flag) Union.—Ed.

very remarkable instances of such a struggle, against the influence of the National Congress.

The development of a spontaneous working-class movement, the growth of the class-consciousness of the proletariat most definitely refutes the theory of reaction among the working masses, of a decline of their fighting spirit, of the low level of class-consciousness of the Indian proletariat outside Bombay. Such theories merely show that some comrades have not overcome their disbelief in the power of the working class, are not in contact with the workers outside Bombay, and confuse the question of the literacy of the workers, with the level of their class-consciousness. These comrades have brought with them, into the workers' movement, the anti-proletarian bureaucratic organisational principles of the National Congress, division into leaders and masses, and practical disbelief in the strength of the revolutionary rank and file, therefore they cannot even explain the outbreak of spontaneous economic strikes and the tremendous participation of the working masses in the anti-imperialist movement. This shows that many Communists have not yet pondered the experience of the end of 1927 and 1928, when the Bombay textile workers very quickly kicked out the reformist group of Joshi, to the astonishment of the revolutionary leaders, and solidly came over to the platform of the "Red Flag."

It may be stated accurately that in India "the strength of the present movement lies in the awakening of the masses (chiefly the industrial proletariat), and its weakness lies in the insufficient consciousness and initiative of the revolutionary leaders" (Lenin).

The general picture of the Communist movement is not satisfactory. On the one hand there is a tremendous unprecedented development of the working-class movement. On the other hand, the Communist Party still consists of a small number (though the number is increasing) of weak groups, often isolated from the masses, disconnected with each other, not politically united, and in some places not clearly differentiated from national reformism, adopting a conciliatory policy towards it. Instead of a struggle for a united all-Indian Communist Party, we find socialism, provincialism, self-isolation from the masses, etc., which, though it could be understood to some extent in 1930, now represents the *main* danger to the revolutionary, proletarian movement.

The lagging behind of the Communist vanguard must be rapidly and most decisively overcome. This is the first and *the most important* task for all those honest Communist revolutionaries who stand by the platform of action of the C.P. of I.,

and are faithful to the cause of the Indian and world proletariat.

## 2. COMMUNISTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

The biggest mistake made by Indian Communists consists in the fact that, in reality, they stood aside from the mass movement of the people against British imperialism. In spite of the fact that the documents of the Communist movement refer to this mistaken policy, no change has yet taken place, and self-isolation from the struggle for independence still exists.

In June, 1930, one of the documents of the Bombay organisation said:

"We came to a position in Bombay when we actually withdrew from the struggle and left it entirely to the National Congress. We limited our rôle to that of a small group who sit aside and issue . . . leaflets occasionally. The result was one which could have been expected; in the minds of the workers there grew the opinion that we are doing nothing and that the Congress is the only organisation which is carrying on the fight against imperialism and therefore workers began to follow the lead of the Congress . . .

"The result of the policy of actual withdrawal from the political struggle, lack of attempts to lead the masses, to organise them, to isolate the reformist elements proved to be harmful in regard to the growth of the C.P. itself."

The self-isolation of the Communists from the anti-imperialist mass struggle, alleged to be a purely Congress movement, has created confusion in the Communist ranks. It helped to increase the disbelief in the strength of the proletariat and the growth of its class-consciousness among Communist-intellectuals. It has hindered the development of the process of differentiation in the revolutionary movement, has hindered the isolation of "Left" national-reformists from the working masses, and objectively strengthened the positions of the bourgeois National Congress.

The whole history of the Indian working-class movement, however, proves that this is a most dangerous error. At the dawn of the Indian working-class movement, Lenin, estimating the participation of the Bombay workers in the protest demonstration against the arrest of Tilok (in 1908) wrote:

"In India also the proletariat has already reached the point of a conscious political struggle, and as this is the case, the days of the Anglo-Czarist order in India are numbered."

The movement of 1921-22, developing under the influence of the October revolution, showed a further maturing of the proletariat. Even the

enemies of the revolutionary proletariat, such as Gandhi, were compelled to admit (see "Young India") that the workers of Bombay, Ahmedabad and other towns came forward during this period as a most active force, thereby frightening the bourgeois National Congress terribly. But the present period, which is developing under the influence of the Chinese revolution, and the successful construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. (the Bombay strikes, the boycott of the Simon and Whitley Commissions, the Meerut trial, the movement of 1930-31, the formation of the C.P., etc.), shows the gigantic extent of the working-class movement, its further progress, and its particular activity in the struggle for independence. The whole history of the working-class movement decisively refutes those who do not believe in the strength of the proletariat, and its ability to fight for the leadership of the people's movement.

The bourgeois *National Congress*, deeply hostile to the proletariat, distracting the workers and peasants from the struggle against the capitalists and landlords, has so far succeeded in maintaining influence over considerably wide masses of the workers. This can be explained, mainly, by the fact that bourgeois national reformism has cleverly made use of the hatred of the working masses for British imperialism, and using this, has been foisting on them a policy of internal class peace concealed by "radical" phrases on the "joint national struggle."

Thus the liberation of the proletariat from the influence of the treacherous bourgeoisie, and its conversion from an active political force into the *leading* force with the hegemony of the people's movement can be brought about at present only by the exposure of the bourgeois National Congress and its "left" wing, Bose, Kandalkar, Roy, etc., as the betrayers of the struggle for independence. It can be realised only if the Communist Party takes a most energetic part in the struggle for independence, on the basis of an irreconcilable struggle against the national reformists.

This participation in the anti-imperialist movement is *closely* connected, and interwoven with the energetic participation of Communists in the everyday struggle for the economic interests of the working masses, with the most energetic support, organisation and development of the peasant struggle, the agrarian revolution and the attraction to their side of all revolutionary-democratic elements who are prepared to struggle against British imperialism.

The prerequisite for a correct policy for Communists in the anti-imperialist movement is a definite, sharp, clear and *uncompromising* struggle and exposure of the National Congress and

especially the "Left" national-reformists, first of all its special variety — the group of Roy-Kandalkar.

However, while struggling against "left" national reformism, it is incorrect to separate ourselves from the mass movement of the people, who appear to be under the leadership of the National Congress. A distinction must be made between the bourgeois Congress leadership and those sections of the workers, peasants and revolutionary elements of the town petty-bourgeoisie, who, not understanding the treacherous character of the National Congress, followed it, correctly seeing the *basis* of their slavery in the domination of British imperialism.

The National Congress was able to preserve its leadership over the masses of town poor, workers, student youth, artisans, etc. (who participated in a number of armed struggles with the police force of British imperialism on their own initiative), not by its positive political programme which conceals its bourgeois-feudal contents under vague "radical" promises, but only on the basis of assurances of its loyalty to the independence movement, utilising the hatred of the people toward blood-thirsty robber imperialism and the still existing illusions of a "united national front."

To isolate the National Congress and all the "left" national reformists from the toiling masses, to help the separation of the forces of revolution and counter-revolution and establish the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle of the people, the Indian Communists must take the most energetic part in the anti-imperialist movement and must be in the forefront in *all* activities, demonstrations and clashes of the toiling masses with the imperialists, coming forward as the organisers of the mass struggle, openly exposing everywhere and at all times, by concrete examples, the treachery of the bourgeois National Congress and its "left" wing. It is necessary to participate in all *mass* demonstrations organised by the Congress, coming forward with our own *Communist* slogans and agitation; to support all the revolutionary student demonstrations, be at the forefront in the clashes with the police, protesting against all political arrests, etc., constantly criticising the Congress leaders, especially "left" ones, and calling on the masses for higher forms of struggle, setting ever more concrete and ever more revolutionary tasks before them.

The experience of the Girmi Kamgar Union confirms the correctness of this analysis. The Kandalkar-Roy group was able to split the G.K.U., because (paying lip service of their loyalty to the revolutionary struggle for independence) they appealed to the workers to support the united national front, and urged the workers

to join the bourgeois National Congress, describing it as a people's organisation, thus helping it to disorganise the revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses. It was only by use of "anti-imperialist" phraseology, utilising the hatred of the working masses towards the imperialists, that the national reformists were able to attract considerable sections of the workers to their side.

But if the existence of "united national front" illusions played its part in maintaining the influence of the National Congress, the self-isolation of the Communists objectively assisted the reformists, and retarded the process of the breaking away of the workers from the bourgeois National Congress. The treacherous Roy-V.N. Joshi-Kandalkar group tries to hide its counter-revolutionary essence and its affiliation to the National reformist camp, by the old and well-known bourgeois method of charging the Communists with ultra-radicalism and sectarianism.

This charge of sectarianism is nothing but slander of the Communists for their Bolshevik irreconcilability to national reformism, for their revolutionary hatred of the imperialist and feudal system of exploitation, for their persistent and continuous preparation and mobilisation of the toiling masses for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialist rule.

The treacherous Roy-Kandalkar group, in their appeal to the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta, in the leaflet issued in Bombay against Bradley and the Meerut prisoners, by their condemnation of the position of the revolutionary wing at the Nagpur Congress of trade unions, and the organisation of a reactionary bloc with the Joshi-Giri-Bokhale group, their disruptive work on the railroads, their struggle against the general strike, and the platform of action of the C.P.I., etc., only prove once more that they are agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement, that they are carrying on a policy of subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie, that they are hindering the differentiation and break of the toiling masses with national reformism, and disorganising the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants for independence, land and bread.

Pledging their support to the Comintern in phrases, the Roy-Kandalkar-Joshi group are the worst enemies of the international revolutionary proletariat and the Indian anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution in deeds.

The conclusion to draw from this is: that the formation of an All-Indian Communist Party, the isolation of the national reformists, and the development of the people's revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, can only be achieved when the Communists determinedly liquidate their self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle of

the masses. It can only be achieved when the Communists show that the C.P. is the leader of the toiling masses and the only leader of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution *in practice*, as the vanguard of the masses, showing the way of revolutionary struggle, sharply and mercilessly exposing and struggling against the National Congress and its "Left" wing.

From this point of view, the Communists must also sharply combat all ideas of those comrades who unconsciously arrive at self-isolation from the mass anti-imperialist struggle through their desire to preserve the cadres, to gain time for building the Party.

Such a line is harmful and shortsighted. The preservation of cadres, the guarantee of continuity and the formation of an illegal Party is an *extremely necessary task*. However, the fulfilment of it must not be achieved through self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle, but only by the correct combination of illegal and legal methods of work, organisation, and the most energetic drawing of workers into our ranks, and developing of new cadres from workers and trustworthy revolutionary youth.

### 3. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE PETTY-BOURGEOISIE.

The increase of the dissatisfaction of wide masses with the policy of the National Congress (negotiations in London, etc.), directly connected with the deepening of the crisis, the offensive of imperialism, and the further revolutionising of the toiling masses, has compelled the leaders of the National Congress to follow the path of new "Left" manoeuvres to strengthen their influence. Very characteristic in this connection is the fact that the "Left" national reformists (Bose, etc.) have again raised the question of their readiness to create a separate organisation of "Lefts" and have begun to "criticise" the participation of the National Congress in the Round Table Conference, etc. (see his speech at the Conference of the Youth in Maharaster). All this is done in order to once more fool the masses, and organise, if necessary, a "safety valve" like the former League of Independence to give an outlet for the dissatisfaction of the masses. These manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie show the process of ferment and disappointment which is spreading among the toiling masses, and confirms the *correctness* of the platform of action of the C.P.I. which speaks of the necessity of the sharpest differentiation, criticism and exposure of "Left" national reformism, including its foremost detachment, the group of Roy, as the necessary prerequisite for the mobilisation of the toiling masses

for a revolutionary struggle and the creation of a mass C.P.

Struggling against the bourgeois National Congress, some comrades mistakenly identify the bourgeoisie with the petty-bourgeoisie, mechanically contrasting the "class" interests of the proletariat with the independence movement as a whole; while other Communists, fighting against this mistaken conception, *forget* about the bourgeoisie, *forget* about the instability, the waverings and hesitations of the petty-bourgeoisie, and sometimes in practice join with or follow the latter, thus objectively subordinating the proletariat to the leadership of the national bourgeoisie.

For example, it was a mistake when the leaders of the trade union movement stated (see "Bombay Chronicle") that the split in Calcutta is a matter for the workers, only affects the trade union movement, is only connected with the economic struggle and has no connection whatsoever with the "patriotic" feelings of the nationalists. The struggle, against the bourgeoisie, inside the working class, is of decisive importance for the whole of the anti-imperialist movement. The split and issues raised in Calcutta are also an important stage in the anti-imperialist struggle, and the differentiation of the forces of revolution and counter-revolution. The organisation of an All-India centre of the trade union movement, based on the principles of the class struggle, must serve, in spite of the mistakes made, not only for the class consolidation of the proletariat, but must also help in the mobilisation of the peasantry and the revolutionary strata of the petty-bourgeoisie around the proletariat and its Communist vanguard. To do this it is also necessary to distinguish between the revolutionary patriotism of the toiling masses, suffering from national oppression and the treacherous counter-revolutionary pseudo-patriotism of the bourgeoisie. We must learn to prove that that portion of the trade union Congress which followed Bose, Kandalkar, Roy and Co. has carried on and is carrying on a struggle against the "patriotism," against the anti-imperialist fight of the revolutionary people. Those who separate the class interests of the proletariat from the struggle for independence in *practice* drive the toiling masses and the revolutionary sections of the petty-bourgeoisie into the arms of the National Congress and the "Left" wing, strengthen the position of the bourgeoisie, instead of rallying the toiling masses around the Communist Party and fighting for the hegemony of the proletariat.

A mistake of an opposite character is the statement of some comrades that the anti-imperialist movement of 1930-31 can be described as a move-

ment of the town petty-bourgeoisie. From the viewpoint of these comrades, the proletariat and peasantry as the basic forces of the Indian revolution disappear, and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie with its influence over the masses (still great) is forgotten. The tactics of the Communists are adapted as a result to the town petty-bourgeoisie and hence criticism of the National Congress and the "Left" national reformists is toned down. Among the supporters of this view there arose at the end of 1930, under the influence of the waverings of the town petty-bourgeoisie, a theory of "reaction" in the working-class movement (see "Railwayman," November, 1930). This theory incorrectly explained the situation of 1930 and would be wrong for the present period. Is it correct as "Railwayman" states, that the working class in 1930 came into motion under the influence of the dissatisfied petty-bourgeoisie and fell under its leadership? It is not.

In 1928-29 the proletariat by its strikes, its struggle against the Simon and Whitley Commissions, its revolutionary position at the Nagpur T.U. Congress, etc., aroused the petty-bourgeoisie to the anti-imperialist struggle. In 1930 the most active element in all mass actions in the towns (Bombay, Sholapur, Calcutta, Madras, etc.) was the working class. In many cases the advanced sections of the workers spontaneously took the initiative into their hands, drawing the students and the city poor to their side (Calcutta, etc.). Therefore, to underestimate the growth of the revolutionary consciousness and activity of the working class, to claim that it was an appendage of the petty-bourgeoisie, means in reality to fail to see its process of development, to lag at the tail end of events, give up the idea of forming a mass Communist Party and blame the workers for their (some of the revolutionary leaders) own pessimism, shortsightedness and inability to organise the struggle of the working class. Depicting the petty-bourgeoisie as the leading force in 1930 and construing a theory of "reaction," the authors of the article made a mistake, in the sense that they gloss over the question of the treachery of the national bourgeoisie, which succeeded, in 1930, in leading the petty-bourgeoisie, and a considerable portion of those sections of workers and peasants, who, for the first time, were drawn into the independence movement. By stating that the working class was following the petty-bourgeoisie, the authors of the article unconsciously help to conceal the bourgeois character of the National Congress, identify the petty-bourgeoisie with the bourgeoisie and in reality hinder the exposure of the national reformists—objectively helping to spread the harmful theory of the necessity of toning down

criticism of the National Congress, so as not to frighten away the masses who follow it.

Actually what the author of the article entitled "reaction" meant was that among the workers there was a growing discontent with the treacherous policy of the National Congress, that the illusions of the "united national front" had begun to disappear, and a drift of the masses from the National Congress had commenced. The absence of the C.P. hinders this process and makes it possible for the enemies of the working class to bring demoralisation into the ranks of the proletariat. It is from this point of view, without throwing responsibility for the mistakes of the revolutionary leaders on to the workers, that we should attentively consider the counter-revolutionary speech of Ruikar, and the resolution adopted by the Nagpur textile trade union in January, 1932. Speaking of the growing disbelief of the workers in the leaders of the National Congress, Ruikar called on the workers not to support any political party whatever, but to *only* carry on an economic struggle, and persuaded the Nagpur textile union to pass a resolution not to take any further part in the national movement and restricting themselves merely to the trade union struggle. ("B.C.," January 14th.)

These facts testify to the drifting of the masses from the National Congress and the treacherous work of the national reformists Kandalkar-Ruikar-Roy, once more confirm the harmfulness and the danger of the theory of "reaction," which is linked up with self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle and lack of faith in the working class. Self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle aids the work of all the agents of imperialism, who are trying to detract workers from the political struggle, and disorganise their ranks, especially at this moment when millions of peasants are being drawn in, when dissatisfaction and disappointment with the National Congress is growing, when the class character and treachery of the National Congress, in the struggle for independence, and the interests of the peasantry, becomes clearer.

In close connection with the mistakes exposed above we find the underestimation of the danger of "Left" national reformism and an insufficient struggle against it. In all the statements of the Communists (leaflet for the Karachi National Congress, etc.), the question of the "Lefts" and their special function and rôle *was not raised*. A struggle is carried on against persons but the "programme," manoeuvres and nature of "Left" national reformism is not exposed. Such a mistake was made also at the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta. But it is not accidental that the

"Left" national reformists are hastening to cover themselves with "socialist" armour and the renegade Roy swears devotion to the Comintern. The "Lefts" will come more and more to the forefront, especially the Roy group, whose particular task is to carry on disintegrating work among the proletarian *vanguard*. The position of the comrades who tried to secure unity with Kandalkar was entirely wrong, because instead of raising questions of principle (the struggle against national reformism), they raised the question of persons, forgetting that the positions of groups and persons always reflect the interests of definite classes, and thus these comrades have been objectively helping the National Congress. The point of view of those comrades who think that criticism of the "Left" national reformists in the trade unions will lead to the isolation of the C.P. is wrong. On the contrary, if criticism is taken to the *masses*, the Communists will only strengthen their influence and win over the masses to their programme. We must hold the "Left" national reformists to their words, and expose their phrases appealing to the people, before the masses by *comparing them with their deeds*, showing that the first and smallest test was the fact that, instead of fighting against the imperialists, they went to the Round Table Conference; instead of helping the peasants they helped the imperialists to collect taxes; and now they are disorganising the no-rent movement; instead of supporting the workers they sabotage the general strike; instead of a revolutionary struggle they preach counter-revolutionary non-violence and submission; instead of supporting the revolutionary workers they split the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta and made an agreement with the Joshi and Giri group, the open agents of the imperialists, etc. Therefore, we must consider as incorrect the fact that the proletarian revolutionaries, while struggling against the national reformists at the Calcutta T.U. Congress, did not come out simultaneously with a special declaration against the Sen-Gupta group, thereby hindering the differentiation and the struggle against national reformism. The struggle against national reformism, and still more against its dangerous variety (the Roy-Kandalkar-V.N. Joshi group) serves as a base, and is connected with the overcoming of two incorrect points of view which have appeared in the process of the formation of the Communist movement. One of these consists in passive resistance to the extensive recruiting of revolutionary workers into the ranks of the Party. The other consists in glossing over the *class character of the Communist Party*. It is wrong to propose to the revolutionary petty-bourgeois organisations to

*fuse* with the Communist Party. An alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry is the *basis* of the strategy of the Indian C.P., but while fighting for the leadership of the anti-imperialist and the general peasant struggle, we must not for a moment forget the separate organisation of the town and village proletariat, and the formation of a completely *independent* class Party—the Communist Party. While fighting in alliance with the peasantry, the Indian proletariat must preserve its class independence; this is the only guarantee, not only that it will be able to ensure its hegemony (if a Communist Party exists) in the general national movement, but that it will be able to *draw* the majority of the oppressed peasantry, after the overthrow of the power of the imperialists, *with it* in the struggle for socialism.

#### 4. THE PEASANTS AND THE NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES MOVEMENT.

The tremendous growth of the peasant movement, taking on the character of guerilla warfare in some districts, the struggle in the United Provinces, etc., was the main reason compelling the National Congress to move more and more to the right, against the revolutionary people, concealing its actions by "Left" manoeuvres. The National Congress has retarded the "no-rent and no-taxes" movement in every way for one and a half years, and helped the British imperialists to collect taxes and debts from the peasants. Now, stating that it sympathises with the non-payment movement in words, it continues to carry on disorganised counter-revolutionary work against it in reality.

The present "no-rent and no-tax" movement bears a spontaneous character. The task of the Communists at the present time is: following the policy as outlined in the platform of action of the C.P.I., to actually start the organisation of a mass movement for the non-payment of taxes, rent and debts, drawing all revolutionary democratic elements into this campaign, and giving it the anti-imperialist character of the struggle for independence. Only in this way, proving by concrete examples how the "radical" words of the National Congress differ from their disorganising actions, will it be possible to *isolate* the national reformists and develop a powerful peasant movement. Besides direct agitational and organisational work by the Party and the utilisation of the industrial workers connected with the villages, it is necessary to call on the revolutionary elements of the *rank and file* (followers of the National Congress; the youth leagues; the peasant organisations, etc.), to undertake the organisation of a nationwide movement for the non-payment of taxes and rent, in spite of the National Congress and over

its head, organising *peasant committees*, self-defence groups, and establishing contact with the town workers.

It is incorrect to oppose the slogan of the general strike to the mass movement for non-payment of taxes and debts, civil disobedience, and the boycott. While supporting this mass movement, the Communists must win the leadership of it, and exposing the treachery of the National Congress by concrete example, develop and guide it into genuinely revolutionary channels.

#### 5. THE SLOGAN OF THE GENERAL STRIKE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE PROLETARIAT.

At the end of 1930 some revolutionists (see article of "Railwayman") took a negative attitude to the slogan of the general strike. These comrades "explained" their negative attitude by claiming that the workers were not yet sufficiently class-conscious and that most of the trade unions opposed this slogan.

The basis for this position was an incorrect estimation of the general situation, lack of faith in the strength of the working class, and confusion on the question of the tactical tasks of Communists.

The objective situation of 1930, and at present, shows that the slogan of a general strike was and is timely, corresponds to the relationship of class forces, and is one of the basic uniting slogans for the next stage of the struggle of the working class for hegemony in the people's movement.

The author of the article confused the question of the slogan of the general strike as a tactical line for the Communists, with the question of the *date* for calling the strike, which depends on a number of concrete factors. We must not, under the excuse of disagreement with the fixing of a date for the strike, carry on a struggle against the tactical line of the revolutionary proletariat. "To consider the mood of the workers is important when choosing the moment of action, but not for deciding the tactical line of action, of the working class" (Lenin).

It is also incorrect to consider the slogan of a general strike according to the attitude of the trade union leaders. The majority of the Indian trade unions are bureaucratic, non-mass organisations, acting against the interests of the working masses, *without contact with them*. At the present time, the strength of these reformist trade unions is the result of the poor activity of the proletarian revolutionaries, of disorganisation in the workers' ranks, and the fact that the national reformists utilise the anti-imperialist sentiment of the working class. It is useful to recollect the experience of Bombay in 1928 and the rapid breaking up of the textile "Union" of Joshi and Co.

When considering the slogan of the general strike we must not mistake the attitude of the reformist leaders for the real sentiments of the working class. This is a gross error.

In order to break down the disorganising influence and work of the reformists, it was necessary not to withdraw the slogan of the general strike, but on the contrary transfer the struggle for it to the *rank and file*, to the masses, exposing the reformists and *organising* the workers.

The events of the last few months (the increase of strikes, the growing demand of the railwaymen for a railway strike, the growth of unemployment and poverty, resistance to the terror of the imperialists, etc.) show that support for the slogan of the general strike is *increasing*. The task of Communists is to come forward in deeds not in words as *initiators* of the struggle of the workers. To start to organise strike committees, composed of rank and file workers and using the assistance of *all* revolutionary democratic organisations (youth leagues, rank and file revolutionaries at present deceived by the National Congress) and thus mobilising *all* forces, over the head of the reformist trade union leaders, developing the strike movement, especially on the railways, and by means of them, linking them up with political demands, leading the masses to the general political strike. We greet the fact that Indian workers, as stated in the "Railway Mazdoor," are beginning this task. The general strike is of historic importance for the development of the revolutionary movement and the conversion of the proletariat into the leading force, mobilising the peasants and the city poor around it. It will deliver the first powerful blow at the power of the imperialists — bringing the revolutionary people right up to the highest form of struggle, the revolutionary uprising.

The development of the strike movement places the task of forming mass trade unions, and factory committees, before the Communists and the necessity of combining the battles for the everyday interests with the political struggle. The revolutionary T.U. movement has registered a number of individual successes, like the strikes at Sholapur and Bombay, the calling of a conference of textile workers with the participation of 400 delegates from 60 factories, the strengthening of its position among the railwaymen, the growth of the workers' press, etc.

However, the weakness of the G.K.U., the loss of the leadership of the strike at the "Madhowji Dbaramsi" factory, the loss of the leadership in the tramway union, etc., also show that the Communists disdain the everyday work in the factories and trade unions, do not build up groups of active workers, do not form Communist frac-

tions, do not carry on sufficient everyday organisational and agitational work. It is *only* by leading and defending the interests of the workers in large and small struggles *constantly and every day*, in attack and defence, that the Communist Party can win the unshakable *confidence* of the working class and lead it to the decisive battle against the exploiting classes.

It is time to get rid of bad traditions in the trade unions (the traditions of bureaucratic methods of work from above, the division into leaders and rank and file) and to start to form mass trade unions with *elected* management committees, consisting of workers from the bench, regularly functioning and *in contact* with the working masses, boldly promoting workers, supporting them and in every way developing their initiative and self-reliance.

We must carry on energetic work among the workers who follow the reformist trade unions. It is a great mistake to continue the practice of self-isolation from workers' meetings, and the mass trade unions which are under the influence of the reformists. Communists must *always* take part in them and carry on work among the workers, urging them to join the united fighting front of the proletariat.

During strikes and other economic and political actions of the workers, it is necessary to propose to the workers who follow the reformists to help the general struggle, take part in the rank and file unity committees, defend the workers' demands, etc., and thus fight for the unity of the workers, not in words, *but in deeds*, exposing the reformists at the same time.

At the same time, it is necessary to change the passive attitude of Communists to the question of the *All-Indian* trade union movement and repudiate the special theory that "the trade union Congress is not living and concrete for the workers." In this, as in the other questions, lack of faith is shown in the working class and local tasks are *counterposed* to all-Indian tasks, the G.K.U. is counterposed to the trade union Congress.

Such counterposing is very harmful. While developing our activity a hundred times for strengthening the G.K.U. and converting it into an all-Indian textile union (including Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, etc.), it is necessary to completely do away with a negative attitude towards the all-Indian trade union movement, and begin to form mass trade unions all over the country, in the coal, steel and jute industry, the plantations and the railroads, *attracting* the workers of the reformist trade unions to our side.

After the split of the Calcutta trade union congress, the revolutionary wing did *nothing* to form

a mass trade union movement, while the national reformists are carrying on a "unity" campaign (i.e., disorganisation of the revolutionary proletariat), organised a number of all-Indian campaigns ("Labour Day," etc.), formed a textile federation, seized the initiative on the railroads, formed provincial trade union councils, etc.

Even now the revolutionary trade union movement is in a position to send a number of groups of active workers to various centres in the country so as to start work among the rank and file workers. Only by boldly *promoting* workers and tested revolutionary Communist intellectuals into the leadership, starting real work and abandoning a number of mistakes explained above—only in this way will the Communists be able to start the organisation of the proletariat and develop the struggle for the hegemony of the working class in the people's movement.

#### 6. THE STRUGGLE FOR AN ALL-INDIAN PARTY.

The biggest gain of the proletarian movement, the greatest move forward is the fact that the advanced workers and revolutionaries have entirely separated from the National Congress and commenced to form an illegal Communist Party. The idea of an illegal C.P. has *already* been adopted and is beginning to be carried out.

However, the development of the Indian Communist movement is being blocked by the state of discord, the separate existence of the Party groups, a number of mistakes connected with it and enumerated above, without overcoming which, the movement cannot normally develop further.

If the period of isolated circles might have been considered inevitable in 1930 and the beginning of 1931, such a position must be considered as *extremely* harmful and dangerous to the further development of the Communist movement at the present time.

The movement has now reached a stage of development when it is *absolutely necessary* to raise the standard of struggle for an All-Indian Communist Party resolutely and firmly, for uniting and welding together all the Communist groups, for the organisational and ideological *unity* of the Communist ranks, utilising and developing the initiative from below to form and develop new local groups and organisations at the same time.

Hence it must be recognised that the Party organisation has not carried out a correct policy; instead of a struggle for the Party, it has, in reality, taken the line of provincialism. Instead of helping the local groups, it has taken up the position of self-limitation, and reducing the whole Party merely to a local organisation, not linked

up with other local organisations. Instead of rousing and organising the *ideological* struggle for the Party, widely explaining and discussing all the questions of principle of the movement (for which purpose it is necessary to create an illegal printed organ of the Central Committee and legal newspapers in the *shortest possible time*), the Party organisation was not even able to continue publication of the legal Marxist paper of all-Indian importance. The absence of such illegal and legal papers (and their substitution by the trade union press does not improve the position) not only drove all disagreements deep inside, hindering the working out of a united Party line, but it played a great negative rôle in the formation of the Communist Party, strengthening of contact between the various districts, development of the class struggle against the imperialists and the bourgeoisie, and winning the workers and the revolutionary youth to the Communist Party. Revolutionary newspapers are appearing everywhere in the country (in Calcutta, Madras, Punjab, etc.), trying to preach Marxism and defend the proletarian point of view. However, the absence of an illegal (and a legal) Party press makes it exceedingly *difficult* to influence them, to struggle against confusion, discord and gross mistakes, *hinders* the working out of a united Communist line and the establishment of unity of views and methods of struggle. It is necessary to clearly understand the teachings of Lenin on the rôle of a central Party paper as an agitator and *organiser* of the masses and the Party. This is particularly important for the *present* period of the Indian Communist movement.

A psychology of provincialism has developed in the circles and refusal to work on an *All-Indian* scale. On all questions which were of All-Indian importance (the All-Indian Trade Union Movement, the general strike on the railroads, the peasant struggle, the movement for the non-payment of rent and taxes, the Round Table Conference, the jute strike, etc.), the Communist groups proved unable to rise above the provincial horizon. They did not see the general task and the All-Indian scale of the struggle, which in its turn, led them to narrow down their tasks, on the spot, in their provinces. In practice, they completely cleared the All-Indian arena for the national reformists, who took the initiative in the organisation (i.e., in reality disorganisation) of the railroad movement, the textile federation, the united front campaign, the work among the miners and metal workers of Jamshedpur, etc. Abandonment of the All-Indian arena, *self-isolation*, for instance, inability of revolutionary leaders of the Bombay

workers to give assistance to the jute strike in Calcutta, etc., in practice leads to the strengthening of the influence of the bourgeoisie, hinders the formation of the C.P., prevents the winning of the hegemony in the struggle of the people by the working class, leads to the *loss of initiative* in all questions whatsoever (in the struggle for the trade union congress, preparations for the railway strike, etc.).

Provincialism and discord is also shown in the fact that the G.K.U. alone is made to take the place of the All-Indian trade union movement. In practice this leads to the fact that the Communist groups *voluntarily* leave the All-Indian arena and objectively play into the hands of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The existence of the Party as a number of isolated groups brings about complaints that there are no forces, no comrades available, that it is impossible to cope with the great tasks facing the revolutionary movement. Hence we often find passivity, despondency, mutual disputes, deviations of all kinds, sectarianism and an opportunist attitude to national reformism, in which the possibility of splits, on an unprincipled basis, becomes very great. However, this complaint of the absence of forces is contradicted by thousands of facts of every-day life which show that among the workers and the revolutionary youth there are thousands of active fighters sympathetic to the C.P.

It is necessary to come forward decisively for an All-Indian C.P. While increasing a hundred-fold local work (especially in Calcutta, etc.), it is necessary at the same time to move the centre of gravity of Party work somewhat to the All-Indian activity, and begin to build the Party, carrying on the struggle for a common political line, creating a network of local Party organisations, developing the sense of responsibility, Party feeling and discipline, encouraging local initiative and courageously drawing workers and those revolutionary intellectuals who are true to the working class cause into our ranks. Such a change will not weaken, but on the contrary will make the local activity, contacts and agitation, stronger and more stable. It is necessary to build and extend Party organisations everywhere, encouraging local initiative. The strength of the Communist Party is determined by the degree of its contact with the wide masses, above all with the proletariat. The only correct form of organisation to secure this contact, and the fighting ability of the Party is the system of *factory cells*. Particularly in India, under conditions of terror and comparatively high concentration of the proletariat, the formation of factory cells is *absolutely* essential

obligatory and highly important task of the Party. It is necessary to get in touch with, and draw in all active industrial workers, because that is the chief guarantee of successful building of an illegal Communist Party, able to withstand the terror and lead the struggle of the working class. It is essential to arrange propagandist circles, short courses, etc., at the same time, to develop and teach the active workers the elemental essentials of Marxism, helping them in every way into active Party work as organisers and leaders of working class struggles and Party organisations. The Communist groups were also unable to properly combine legal and illegal forms of work. In some districts, following the correct position of the platform of action of the C.P.I. that under present conditions the C.P.I. can exist *only* as an illegal Party, the Communists have not been able to ensure the formation and normal existence of illegal organisations and leading organs.

It must be thoroughly realised (and this will determine how seriously and consistently the Communists stand by the illegal Party and the revolutionary struggle) that the leading organs of the Party, and the kernel of the Party organisations, must be in an *illegal position*, and that mixing the conspirative and open apparatus of the Party organisation is *fatal* to the Party, and plays into the hands of Government provocation. While developing the illegal organisation in every way, measures must be taken for preserving and strengthening the conspirative kernel of the Party organisation. For the purpose of all kinds of open activity (in the press, meetings, leagues, trade unions, etc.), special groups and commissions, etc., should be formed which, working under the leadership of Party committees, should under no circumstance injure the existence of illegal cells.

To sum up: the slogan of an All-Indian illegal, centralised Communist Party, ideologically and organisationally united, a true section of the Comintern, fighting for the platform of action of the C.P.I. and the programme of the Communist International must become the *central slogan* for gathering and forming the Party; and for the struggle against waverings, against the tendency of maintaining isolated circles, against toning down the struggle against national reformism and opportunist sectarianism, all of which hinder the victory of the working class.

#### CONCLUSION.

The international situation is becoming more and more acute. Japanese imperialism is carrying on war in China and, together with a number of imperialist States, is preparing its division

and complete subjugation. It meets the resistance of U.S.A., which is striving to strengthen and widen its imperialist position in China by way of reducing the share of the other imperialist robbers and increased exploitation of the Chinese masses. The military offensive, the war of the imperialist States against the U.S.S.R., the first working class republic, which has the sympathy of the revolutionary proletariat and the oppressed colonial masses of the world—is *fast approaching*. British imperialism is once more trying to utilise India, as in the world war, to supply reinforcements for its army, use its raw materials, and make it into a strategic basis for the war against the U.S.S.R. and the revolutionary peoples of the East. The Indian bourgeoisie is *once more* betraying and selling the revolutionary people for a mess of pottage.

In the approaching deadly struggle between world imperialism and the proletarian State—the rôle of the Indian Communists is enormous. The Indian anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution can deliver a death-blow at British imperialism and thus hasten the complete destruction of capitalism throughout the world and guarantee the victory of the world revolution. The C.P. of India occupies a responsible sector of the world revolution. And for this struggle the Indian Communists must prepare in a truly Bolshevik manner.

At the present time, the tasks are exceptionally difficult. But for the Indian Communists there is no other revolutionary way to solve these tasks than the Bolshevik way, that is: With

the maximum of energy, tenacity and consistency, following the Marxian-Leninist theory and practice, to undertake, in spite of difficulties, individual failure and defeats, the fulfilment of these tasks and the most important of them—the creation of a true Communist Party.

There can be no greater crime than if the Indian Communists (having their platform of action of the C.P.I. and agreeing with the present letter) *instead* of struggle for the great historical aims of the Indian and world proletariat, follow the path of unprincipled factional struggle, fractions and personal groupings. Unprincipled factional struggle will play *into the hands* of the British imperialists. True Communist groups must put the interests of the proletariat above everything else, direct all their efforts towards the rapid formation of the Communist Party, settling all questions of dispute within the framework of the Communist International and if necessary with its assistance.

The Communists of the whole world do not doubt that, in spite of their present weakness, inexperience and partial isolation, the Indian Communists will show sufficient Bolshevik firmness, courage and decisiveness to enter the wide All-Indian area of struggle for the Party—the leader and organiser of the Indian revolution.

*Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.*

*Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain.*

*Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany.*