

# Problems of the Revolutionary Movement in India

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## THE CAPITALIST CRISIS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR COLONIES

THE intensification of antagonisms, both among the imperialists and within each imperialist country separately, which is characteristic of the third period of the crisis of post-war capitalism, cannot but have particularly clear expression in the colonies. The general crisis of the entire capitalist system, the characteristic feature of which is the growing lack of correspondence between capitalism's increasing productive forces and the shrinking markets, is forcing the question of the repartition of the world very insistently on the chief imperialist countries. The inequality in the development of capitalism is in turn making it possible for individual countries to achieve this redistribution by force of arms. One has but to mention the Anglo-American conflict in order to indicate what place colonies occupy in the economic, financial and military conflicts of the imperialists. At the same time the internal antagonisms to be found in all the more important capitalist countries, antagonisms arising on the basis of capitalism, cannot work towards any other solution than that of the repartitioning of the colonies or the transformation of new, still formally independent countries into lands of colonial serfdom.

As early as 1920, in his speech "On Concessions," Lenin summarised these radical antagonisms, which were, he said "traceable to profound economic causes." Warning against attempts to exploit dissensions of a petty and fortuitous nature, Lenin specified three basic conflicts: (1) that between the U.S.A. and Japan, (2) that between the U.S.A. and Britain, and (3) that between the Entente and Germany. He also indicated the tendency of development of these conflicts. Only now, nearly ten years later, is it possible for us fully to realise all the keen scientific prevision

which lies at the basis of this analysis. One of the problems which Lenin touched upon in his estimate of the sources of the basic antagonisms is concerned with the importance of colonies in the development of American imperialism.

"America has 110,000,000 inhabitants. It has no colonies whatever, although it is many times richer than Japan. Japan has seized China, where there is a population of 400,000,000, and the richest coal reserves in the world. How can such a position be maintained? It is absurd to think that the stronger capitalism will not deprive the weaker capitalism of all that the latter has stolen." "America is strong, everybody is indebted to her now, everybody is dependent on her, everybody is coming to hate her more and more, she steals from all, and she steals in very original fashion. She has no colonies. Britain came out of the war with enormous colonies; France did the same. Britain offered America a mandate for one of the stolen colonies—that is the language used to-day!—but she did not accept it."

It is now clear why American imperialism did not then attempt to satisfy its colonial appetite either by a "voluntary" Versailles agreement between the victors, or in the form of a benevolent gift or enforced purchase from the other colonial robbers united in the League of Nations. In the first place, at that time the United States had no need to hurry with the capture of colonial monopolies, because the situation after Versailles temporarily afforded it the possibility not only of plundering everybody, but of plundering in a very original fashion, without needing to possess colonies. Secondly, American imperialism was striving not for the sharing of the colonial booty, but for its capture, not for an extension of the Versailles Peace Treaty, but for a new, more decisive world war, with a view to "supple-

menting" and "correcting" the results of the war of 1914-1918. It was in connection with the Versailles peace and with one of its most characteristic results—*i.e.*, the fact that the strongest robber of all remained uninterested in the maintenance of the established division of the colonies—that Lenin saw the decisive factor, determining not only the chief object of dispute, but also the moment of the arrival of the coming war. "Thus we have before us the greatest State in the world, which in 1923 will have a fleet stronger than that of Britain, but this State is meeting with the growing hatred of the other capitalist countries. We must take this trend of circumstances into account. America cannot make its peace with the rest of Europe—that is a fact determined by history." The fact that Lenin mentions 1923 may give the impression of an error in fixing the moment of the beginning of the war. But there is no error here, for Lenin is giving the objective symptom of when one may expect the European - American, Anglo-American hatred and dissension to pass into open war: that moment will arrive when the United States "will have a fleet stronger than that of Britain." The chronological date is given approximately, and its exact fixation depends on technical factors (the speed of naval construction in the various imperialist countries), which still remain essentially uncertain, and were necessarily all the more uncertain in Moscow in 1920. A year later Lenin was groping for a more exact date. "Over this gold they are planning undoubtedly to murder 20,000,000 men and to maim another 60,000,000 somewhere about 1925, or possibly 1928, either in war between Britain and America or between Japan and America, or something along those lines." (Article: "On the Importance of Gold.") About 1928!—the very time when the United States openly raised, for official export, the question of the "stronger fleet," and whether America or Britain was with that stronger fleet's aid to rule the seas. It was then made clear that owing to the intrinsic antagonisms of capitalism in the United States the latter was already losing the possibility of plundering all the rest without the necessity to possess colonies.

In no country can the bourgeoisie find any other way out of the contradiction between the

extended possibilities of production and the contracted markets than by seizing new external markets for themselves. In the conditions prevailing under imperialism, in which the distribution of the world's surface between a handful of robbers has gone as far as it can, the seizure of new markets cannot be effected in any other way than by an armed struggle for colonies. In the conditions of post-war imperialism, with its extraordinarily intensified antagonisms, with its basic "injustice" of the centre of economic, finance, technical, and consequently of military power—the United States, being deprived of colonies whilst having extreme need of them—the war for colonies cannot but be on a world scale, cannot but be still more a "world war" than that of 1914-1918. For, being determined first and foremost by the Anglo-American conflict, the line of the chief front will traverse all the oceans and all the continents.

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One cannot help seeing the object which the bourgeoisie and its economists are pursuing in sounding a sudden alarm in connection with the decline in the number of employed workers. Its purpose is to prepare the masses for a war over the issue of the U.S.A.'s colonial power. In 1927 the Secretary of State for the U.S.A., James Davis, wrote an article in the magazine "Wall Street" entitled, "Does prosperity create unemployment?" which is, I think, the first official estimate of the phenomenon of an absolute decline in the number of employed workers. This article persistently and cleverly brings the reader to the idea that the sole way out of the situation which has arisen consists in the States' industry taking on itself the task of benefiting the backward peoples on a scale quite unprecedented. "It seems to me," the imperialist minister mildly remarks, "that there is a possibility of ensuring that our productive possibilities should not become a burden (in the sense of reducing the number of workers). That possibility consists in our directing our attention to the disposal of our surplus production abroad." After coquetting with the nobility of his pacifism, Davis suddenly reveals that "if the purchasing power in China were to be raised by ten dollars per annum a new market to the value of

4,000,000,000 dollars would thus be created, a sum approximately equal to our present export." It is true that it is not altogether excluded that other imperialist Powers may throw themselves into such a profitable business as "improving the living standards and raising the level of the backward peoples and nations." But Davis calms the fears of his reader with the remark: "A certain degree of specialisation exists among the various nations." "At the moment it is violated because the fear of war is forcing the various countries to think of self-support and of developing those spheres of production which it would be better to leave to others." How are we to ensure that every fox should know his own hole, and should not pretend to the role of saviour? If we are to believe Davis this is very easy of achievement! It is only necessary to remove the fear of war from the capitalist countries. And this in turn is not at all difficult to achieve. It is only necessary that American imperialism should be strong enough to deprive its competitors of the possibility, and consequently of the desire, for war! In a word, it is the old formula: "To ensure peace, prepare for war!" Of course, the American minister took China only as an example, one highly popular in 1927. For from this period also dates Manchester's dreams of the Chinese wearing their gowns an inch longer, which would enable the crisis in the British cotton industry to be overcome. If Davis had written his article in 1929, during the period of a further intensification of the Anglo-American conflict, it is not altogether off the cards that his Christian imagination would have carried him from China directly to India.

The so-called "policy of the open door," which was advantageous to American imperialism even after Versailles, when Europe was economically broken, is now unacceptable to it. For, on the one hand, its need of external markets is increasing, and, on the other, it is everywhere coming into conflict with trustified Europe, which is now producing cheaply and swiftly, and is intending to produce still more cheaply at the expense of the working class. American imperialism needs colonial monopoly in order to protect itself from any competition on the world market, to

a smaller extent than does its British brother. But, nevertheless, it has need of such a monopoly. "Open doors" in China no longer satisfy American imperialism. Its need is the extrusion of its rivals, Britain and Japan, and of seizing the strategic points in a "united" China, and the transformation of the Pacific Ocean into an "inland sea" of the United States. But the aggressive designs of American imperialism cannot rest even at this. The British colonial system cannot be administered any decisive blow so long as she dominates the Indian Ocean, with her possession of the strategic points on the line running to Australia through the Malayan Straits, and through India, Egypt, the Sudan, tropical Africa to the Union of South Africa. At the very centre of this arch is the "finest jewel in the English crown," India, with its inexhaustible material and human resources.

In the event of an Anglo-American war—and that war is inevitable unless it is averted by a prior proletarian revolution—the strategic plans of both opponents will include the struggle for India as one of their most important features. In the language of American imperialism the freedom of the seas connotes, first and foremost, the destruction of Britain's hegemony on the seas and the destruction of her colonial might. But neither the one nor the other can be achieved so long as Britain retains her monopolist rule over the Indian Ocean. The most effective method of bringing British imperialism to its knees is by dealing it a blow, or at least by menacing it with the danger of a serious blow in India. Already the shadow of the coming war gives rise to a spider-web of intrigues around India. The agents of American imperialism have long since gathered on the farther side not only of the Pacific, but also of the Indian Ocean, seizing spheres of influence and concessions (in certain instances not without the direct support of Germany) in Arabia, Abyssinia, Persia, etc.

America is aiming at India. Of course this does not mean that she will have any possibility of firing this mortal shot at Britain yet awhile.

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All the prospects for British imperialism are in no less, indeed are in still greater de-

gree than for American imperialism, bound up with the extension and consolidation of its colonial piracy. The stagnation in British industry is not being generally dispelled, despite the strongest of pressure on the workers' living standards, despite the birth-pangs of rationalisation which here and there are evincing themselves as the result of that pressure. British competitive ability on the world market is not improving. But even those partial successes which have been achieved in certain spheres of industry can be destroyed in an hour by a sudden jump in development in the corresponding spheres of the United States or even by a swift success in Germany. And such a success is not only possible but is even a prerequisite to the realisation of any of the variants of the old or a rejuvenated plan of reparations.

Only her colonial monopoly maintains Britain in her present position. That monopoly is the hoop which holds together the dry barrel-staves of the British Empire. One of the chief motives counteracting the centrifugal forces of the dominions consists in the possibility of participating in one way or another in the general colonial robbery carried out by White Britain at the expense of the coloured population of the colonies. Consequently the loss of India would involve not only the loss of one of the chief sources of the exploitation which rejuvenates decrepit British imperialism, but would also deprive the dominions of their chief reason for remaining within the Empire.

Whilst for the U.S.A. the seizure of India is the ultimate aim of their imperialist designs, for Britain the retention of India under her own iron heel is a prime condition of her existence.

So far we have confined ourselves to a consideration of the importance of the struggle for the colonies in the Anglo-American conflict. Naturally, that conflict does not exhaust and does not cover all the antagonisms of the imperialists; but it is their touchstone. The struggles between the U.S.A. and Japan, between Germany and the former Entente, within the Entente itself (between France and Italy) and so on, are in their turn directed towards the repartitioning of the earth, towards the redistribution and extension of the colonial

plunder. The antagonisms of the "third period" must have particular effect in the activation of imperialism's colonial policy, and first and foremost of the policy of Britain, still the strongest of the imperialist robbers, in her largest colony, India.

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In face of such a general increase of colonial aggression it is absurd to expect that even if she desired (which is out of the question in any case) Britain could allow any weakening of her economic and political monopoly in India. To yield to the dream and idea of the possibility of "decolonisation" (in any either open or hidden form) as a new policy of British imperialism in the conditions of the third period is to be inept as a man who dances at a funeral. For that matter it would appear that all except the completely hopeless "decolonisers" and "industrialisers" have already renounced their erroneous theories, and that not only from formal considerations.

None the less is it interesting to note those distortions in the summarisation of the general situation in India which result, and cannot but result in practice, from even the vestiges of the theory of "decolonisation" or of its pseudonym: "the British policy of industrialising India." In this regard one of the clauses in the political resolution adopted by the conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party is instructive, for it pays tribute, one must hope the last tribute, to the theory of industrialisation. But how does that party reconcile this tribute with the general situation which the Indian comrades cannot but notice, with the fact of the general attack of British imperialism in India along the whole line? A conventional "reconciliation" is achieved by declaring this imperialist aggression a temporary factor, a break in the general policy, an exception to the rule, so to speak. "The unexpected aggressiveness of imperialism," the resolution reads, "consequently does not connote a fundamental change in its policy in relation to the Indian bourgeoisie, but only a partial and temporary change. But its policy remains essentially the same."

What justification has the author of the resolution for not only asserting but even assuming that British imperialism will change or weaken in its aggressiveness in regard to

colonies generally, and in regard to India in particular? For the reasons which, as the resolution justly points out, condition that aggressiveness (the approach of war, Great Britain's continuing economic decline, the necessity of resorting to non-economic pressure in consequence of the weakening of the economic factors) are none of them tending towards a decline in their force. And why, in face of the maintenance of and even increase in the causes, should the consequences, i.e., the aggressiveness of British imperialism, which is expressed first and foremost in the defence of its economic and political annexations, disappear or "be sucked out"? The author of the resolution does not even ask himself this question.

None the less, the manner in which the question is raised in the resolution quoted is favourably distinguished from the abstract approach of the apologists of "decolonisation" by the fact that the Indian comrades do not separate concessions in the economic sphere from concessions in the political sphere, for they know that in colonial conditions they are inseparably connected. The superiority of such a formulation of the issue over the attempts to sunder the economic liberalism of imperialism in the colonies from its political liberalism (to separate economic from political decolonisation) consists in the circumstance that the actual course of events more easily disproves and destroys it. Without any risk of error one can declare that in this resolution we have the last little cloud of a storm that has cleared, and moreover a cloud which itself has been blown aside.

#### THE NEW RISE IN INDIA AND THE CHINESE EXPERIENCE

But the "third period" connotes not only an increase in the objective antagonisms of the imperialist system, but also a rise in the revolutionary activity of the exploited and oppressed on the basis of that increase. In the capitalist countries this process takes expression in the revolutionising of the working class. In an intensification and extension of the economic struggle, in new forms of leadership of that struggle, in the counter-offensive and offensive character of that struggle in the ranks of the participants, despite the enor-

mous increase in the strength of the employers' organisations.

In the colonies this process is preparing a new round of colonial wars and revolts. A number of objective conditions are working to ensure that this new round will most probably have its beginning in India. First and foremost among these conditions is the circumstance that the national revolutionary movement in India, the first wave of which was broken owing to the treachery of the bourgeoisie in 1922, has now succeeded in recovering from the blows then administered, and in assembling its forces, purging its ranks, regrouping and reconstructing itself, has succeeded in determining its own master, and in recognising its class enemies.

One of the chief facts determining the character of the new rise of the national revolutionary movement in India is the experience of the Chinese revolution. All the forces participating in the struggle on both sides of the barricades have learned a considerable amount from the Chinese lesson. British imperialism has never ruled in India except with the aid of the most shameful terror and contemptible bribery. And now, not only because of the objective reasons above-mentioned, but also under the influence of the lessons of revolutionary development in China, it regards the display of any concession even to the bourgeois opposition as too risky, for it is afraid that such compliance might set in motion all the avalanche of the national revolution. The more severely the antagonism between the necessity of developing productive forces and the colonial pressure has its effect in India, the greater will be British imperialism's justification for fearing that any weakening of the military and administrative pressure will lead to the break-up of the entire system.

The swift war-period transference of capitalist production to India, the existence of comparatively few, but technically highly organised enterprises in the country, a sprinkling of individual centres in a backward pre-capitalist economy, have already proved to be a source of the greatest danger to Britain's economic and political hegemony. The struggle against a more or less normal industrial development of the country, the ruthless distortion of its economy, the opposition to India's independent entry into the world market, the

support and development of backward, pre-capitalist elements in the cities, and even more in the countryside, all constitute the traditional policy of British imperialism and are all being given a new impulse at the present time.

This it is which determines the extraordinarily limited nature of the concessions to the native bourgeoisie which imperialism can make, even if by so doing it could count on ransoming itself from a national revolution, even if it could achieve a real disarming of the toilers at such a price. But the experience of the Chinese revolution has unmasked the role of the native bourgeoisie in the colonies to such an extent that its authority among the masses has fallen considerably, indeed to such an extent that its role as the channel of imperialist influence with the national revolutionary movement is becoming more and more insignificant. Its corruption for the benefit of imperialism is no longer worth much consideration. This by no means connotes that the possibility of the bourgeois opposition attaching itself in one form or another to the national revolution is excluded in all and every colony and semi-colony, and at every stage of development. The resolution of this question depends in each separate case on the definite situation and the corresponding distribution of forces.

But so far as India is concerned one can definitely assert that not only the imperialist but also the native bourgeoisie has changed from what it was before the Chinese revolution. Possibly there is no better indication of the degeneration of bourgeois nationalism in India (to whose tail, as we know, considerable sections of the intelligentsia continue to cling) than the fact that the present feudal-bourgeois-terrorist regime of China, established by imperialism against the workers' and peasants' revolution and involving the maintenance of the imperialist slavery in a new form, is regarded by the Indian bourgeois parties as a victory for the Chinese revolution. But this same fact finally determines the attitude of the bourgeoisie to the workers' and peasants' movement in India itself. The period of the patriarchal, sentimental, hypocritical attitude of the bourgeoisie to the workers' movement, during which the employers threw widely advertised but miserable

crumbs to the children of the strikers, and when the same employers obtained certain ameliorations for native industry by the agency of the strikes, has passed in India, never to return.

Of course, even in the past the bourgeoisie sought to head the emancipation movement only with a view to beheading it. Of course, even then, in its economic policy the bourgeoisie acted as the class enemy of the proletariat, and, as it had never severed its connections with the landowners, as the class enemy of the peasantry also. But in the tactical realm this hostility to the interests of the toilers was stifled under and lightened by a complete system of "primitive" theories, in so far as the bourgeoisie could count on exploiting the workers' and peasants' movement as a basis of support in its own negotiations and agreements with imperialism.

The present period has as its characteristic the fact that the bourgeoisie are now more afraid of the working class than they are of imperialist oppression. Canton is to them more terrifying than London. This explains not only their cowardice in regard to imperialism, but also their extraordinary resolution in the task of struggling against the workers' and peasants' movements. The relationship between imperialism and the native bourgeoisie at the present time is determined by the circumstance that the first-named is strengthening its machinery of oppression, and neither wants nor can make concessions, whilst the second is increasingly ready to seize on any form of imperialist oppression in order to put up a resistance to the workers. This explains why within the course of a single year the Indian bourgeoisie, which has not received any concessions whatever from imperialism, but on the contrary has been continually humiliated and treated offhandedly by it, without even getting a smell of power in return, has reached the point of becoming the open ally of imperialism.

Of course, neither the Swarajists nor the Liberals are themselves firing on the workers as yet, but it is only for the simple reason that so far imperialism has not confided in them to that extent, has not allowed them to hold the rifle; and even the guard of honour of the National Congress, commanded by one

of the leaders of the Independence League, the Fascist Subash Bose, was armed only with bamboo canes. Unlike the Chinese bourgeoisie, not having the possibility of itself doing the shooting and hanging, the Indian bourgeoisie is for its part doing everything possible to assist imperialism in its handling of the working class. The fact that the Indian bourgeoisie has not so far itself acted as executioner ought to delude nobody. It is imperialism's batman.

But the proletariat also has assimilated the lesson of the Chinese revolution, and that lesson is helping the toilers of India to understand and to exploit the lessons of their own defeats in 1919 and 1922. As we know, at that time the bourgeoisie succeeded in breaking off and damming the national revolutionary movement at the preliminary stage of development, even before the working class had succeeded in acting as an independent force. Owing to the poor differentiation of forces in the nationalist camp the treachery of the bourgeoisie was masked to a certain extent—the latter was successful in combining both the violator and the victim in one. The man chiefly responsible for the betrayal of 1922, Gandhi, has for many years been clever enough to maintain his authority by himself posing as a martyr, partly owing to the fact that after his summons to complete capitulation to British imperialism he continued to find himself shut away in a British prison.

The years of intense reaction which followed the first wave were exploited by the British government with exceptional artistry in order to isolate the Indian movement from international experience. Watchdogs of British imperialism, the most well trained and pernicious in the world, are watching all the roads leading to India, barring access to all who might assist in the growth of the class-consciousness of the proletariat. The colonial prison bars outside conducted to a bestial frenzy of terror within, which tore up and annihilated the shoots of the revolutionary movement at their first appearance. In order to suppress the least attempts of the peasant movement British imperialism has at its disposal throughout the countryside a widely ramified apparatus of repression, which has roots in the very lowest and remotest groups, an apparatus such as

even Tsarism in Russia never had, not to speak of imperialism in China. This political isolation is the chief reason why not only the peasantry but the proletariat of India also have till recently assimilated the experience of their own past defeats slowly. The Chinese revolution proved to be a turning point in this regard also. British imperialism had no resources which could hide from the proletariat of India the flame lit by the Chinese revolution throughout the East. The new rise of the movement, which had its beginning early in 1927, began under a new banner unfolded by the proletariat of China.

#### THE TREACHERY OF BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM

The new attack of British imperialism had as one of its first open expressions the appointment of the Simon Commission, the composition and the program of which left no doubt that British imperialism was renouncing the policy of agreement with the native bourgeoisie, and would demand of it an out and out capitulation. For the Indian bourgeoisie this involved the destruction of their hopes of an extension of their rights under a new constitution and of reward for their moderate and faithful conduct under the old constitution. The Labour Party categorically announced that in the event of MacDonald coming to power governmental policy in India would remain unchanged. MacDonald pledged himself in advance to carry out all that Baldwin should decide. The Labour Party and the General Council showed that they would not allow even a shadow of interference on the part of "third persons" in the domestic dispute between the conservatives and the "loyal opposition"; on the other hand they demanded the completely unrestricted right of British imperialism to interfere in all India's business.

Bourgeois nationalism sought to answer the attack of British imperialism with a protest "by legal and peaceful methods" and by the demand for the Simon Commission to be transformed into a round-table conference, with the participation of representatives of India's possessing classes. If British imperialism had had any intention of combining terror with bribery the "cheap" offer made by the Swarajists with a view to agreement would have attracted it. It was quite an easy matter

to come to an agreement with the National Congress. They had only to offer the simulation of some sort of concession to the bourgeoisie, which was ready to accept not only promises as the reality, but even any equivocal hint, which carried no obligation whatever with it, as a real promise. But British imperialism has need not of agreement but of destruction; and public abuse of the impotence of Indian bourgeois nationalism constituted part of the program of that destruction.

It was in such a situation that at the end of 1927 the National Congress in Madras announced India's complete independence as its aim; they at once added to this that the achievement of the new aim was only by the old, i.e., the legal and peaceful methods. Having proclaimed the slogan of independence the National Congress thus crossed the Rubicon. It was its last weapon, which had either immediately to come into action, or else must reveal its complete impotence. The latter proved to be the case. The congress endeavoured to strengthen the demand for independence by threats against the two most sensitive spots of British imperialism: a declaration of the impossibility of allowing a war with Soviet Russia, and the organisation of a Hartal, a mass solemn protest against the Simon Commission.

The first menace was completely stultified by the fact that not long before the Madras conference there were unequivocal indications in the Indian national press that the Swarajists were intending to make the question of attitude to the U.S.S.R. a subject of bargaining with British imperialism. The most definite and exact formulation of this not merely shameful and cowardly, but openly stupid policy was provided in one of the leading articles of the "Forward," which said that the national movement could not undertake any obligations in the event of a war against the U.S.S.R. so long as its interests were not satisfied. Thus the national bourgeoisie offered the London government its right and obligation to defend the great republic of labour in exchange for a brass farthing. But no purchasers put in any appearance.

During the organisation of the campaign against the Simon Commission bourgeois nationalism concentrated all its efforts on ren-

dering any independent demonstration of the masses impossible; and also on ensuring that the movement should not penetrate into the villages even in an emasculated form. For they realised that here the least spark might evoke an outbreak of revolution, the consequences of which the bourgeoisie fears no less than does the government.

The bourgeoisie's demand for independence was answered by British imperialism with open ridicule. The London "Nation" wrote that India was trying in vain to talk in the language of Ireland; would any Indian bourgeoisie ever really dare to demand the recall of the British troops from the country? Who more than the Indian bourgeoisie itself would suffer from the anarchy that was possible in such an event? In these words there was not only a reminder of the civilising role of British repression in India, but also an unconcealed threat to provoke that anarchy "in the event of anything happening."

Within the space of one short year bourgeois nationalism has without a struggle lost everything that remained to it from the former far from glorious times. There is no necessity to deal with the various steps in this fall. It is sufficient to say that imperialism has succeeded in forcing the bourgeoisie openly to act as the betrayer of the nationalist movement without granting it any compensation, and thus has caused it to eliminate itself even in the capacity of a loyal opposition.

Nor shall we stop to deal with the constitution adopted by the last Calcutta national congress, which represents the next, but, of course, not the last step in the fall of bourgeois nationalism. The "Unity" which constitutes the chief aim and "justification" of this program was achieved in no very complex fashion. The Swarajists achieved it by their acceptance of the program of the Federation of Liberals—an organisation which openly expresses the interests of large-scale and usury capital, which did not even take part in the Congress, and has never even played at opposition to British imperialism. The slogan of independence remained somewhere outside the doors, since through the lips of its president the Federation has declared that it is against independence not only for tactical reasons but on principle, and "does not even understand



how honest advocates of the dominion can allow any slogan of independence."

Nehru's platform goes even farther: he takes on himself the defence of the interests of the feudal landowners and usurers, although in their turn these latter refuse to support his platform. By proclaiming the inviolability of all forms of private ownership, the Nehru constitution provides for the preservation of the entire system of landed proprietorship, and offers the usurers the munificent present of being bought out by the government. In other words the same tax-paying peasant is to pay all his indebtedness, plus all the inordinate interest which has grown on top of it. It is true that the constitution promises the toilers "democratic freedom," . . . in the circumstance of the maintenance of the entire machinery of State repression in the hands of the bourgeois-feudal-imperialist bloc.

None the less, imperialism has deprived bourgeois nationalism of the doubtful satisfaction of toying with democratic rattles. By confronting the Swarajists with the fact of a terrorist attack on the hitherto legally existing mass workers' and peasants' organisations imperialism has obtained their practical participation in and concealment of these crimes. As for the Swarajists' allies on the right, inspired by the British officials these have even shown some initiative, "demanding" of the Government the annihilation of the Communists, the break-up of the workers' movement and the introduction of martial law into the country. The "democratic freedom" of the Indian bourgeoisie has thus even in its cradle succeeded in showing not only its wolfs' talons but its ass's ears.

It is necessary to note that even before the "constitution" betrayed its nature in practice it met with a fitting estimate even among the radical petty bourgeoisie. Not only the workers' and peasants' party stigmatised the constitution as an act of miserable treachery, but even the youth conference dissociated itself from it. Nehru's report showed that the Indian bourgeoisie is no longer capable of expounding, even on paper, a reformist program which could lead the masses up the garden.

Thus the "fathers" and leaders of the national congress have degenerated so far as to be no longer capable of pretending to the function of mask to British imperialism.

Naturally this is not to be taken as meaning that bourgeois nationalism is renouncing once for all its attempts to hide its co-operation with imperialism behind more or less out-worn opposition phrases. It is not altogether beyond the bounds of possibility that in other circumstances these delusive phrases will be decked out in fresh trimmings. But imperialism itself does not reject a certain dose of hypocrisy, and that even in its most open and cynical forms. The important factor which determines the place which bourgeois nationalism occupies in the present struggle, is not its playing at opposition, it is rather that it pins its hopes not to agreement with the bourgeoisie—agreement still presumes more or less equal parties, or at the very least parties pretending to equality—but to bribes from imperialism, which bribes are to be earned only by direct participation in the suppression of the revolution. To have any illusions whatever that the bourgeoisie would again even temporarily incline to the side of revolution would imply failure to see the new element which has now arisen in the distribution of forces in India.

The role which the "fathers" formerly played in the national movement is now, according to the designs of the national bourgeoisie, to be played by the "children." The place of Motilal Nehru is now to be occupied by his son, the place of the Swarajist party is to be taken by the Independence League, headed by the Swarajists, but of a more left wing tendency; the place of the National Congress is to be taken by its opposition. But this play with its rough distribution of roles between "fathers" and "children," between the majority of the National Congress and its minority, between the Swarajists and the Independence League betrayed its nature in the country at its very first move.

It is true that only quite recently comrade Roy expressed in print the opinion that "the national revolutionary party (into which the Independence League must be transformed) must unite the majority of the nation under its banner" (*Forward Annual*, 1928, pp. 57-8.) It is true that in an article devoted to an estimate of the All-Indian conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, comrade Roy reproached it with adopting a too cautious attitude to the Independence League, confusing it with the Swarajist leaders of the

National Congress, not proposing a united front to it, and so on. (Inprecorr, No. 6, p. 94, British edition.) But this time comrade Roy's erroneous point of view found no response in India itself. The workers' and peasants' conference considered the program and practice of the League and decided not to enter it, but to unmask it as a superficial intelligentsia organisation, which in parts had already displayed Fascist tendencies. At the same time the conference provided for a resolute and consequential criticism with a view to splitting off from the League those elements of the petty bourgeois revolutionary wing which can still be of some importance at the present stage of the movement's development.

One has but to make a simple comparison of the National Congresses held this year and last (the Calcutta and the Madras Congresses) to be at once convinced of the extent to which the "children" have already been infected with the ancient impotence of their "fathers." As is well known, at the Calcutta congress the left wing, the majority of which are adherents of the League, had almost half the votes at their disposal, which afforded some justification for certain credulous ones to raise the possibility of a split in the National Congress as the result of a swift growth in its opposition section. But in reality the situation at the National Congress was such that the left-wingers achieved the maintenance of the old positions; whilst Motilal Nehru, the official leader of bourgeois nationalism (who not for nothing was carried to the congress in a silver chariot, and not for nothing was saluted with cannon hired from British imperialism) openly broke with the Madras congress decision for complete independence, and in accordance with the constitution he had drawn up, called on the congress to be satisfied with dominion status within the confines of the British Empire. It is characteristic of the "radicalism" of the left wing that it did not even make a pretence of fidelity to the decisions of the previous year's congress, but only confirmed a compromising formula which had been accepted unanimously only two or three months previously by a conference of all the bourgeois parties, including the extreme right.

But Swarajism is declining so swiftly that

this recently unanimously adopted formula now provides a platform for the left wing opposition. But the matter will not rest here; the process of the political decay of bourgeois nationalism is approaching its consummation, and is moving at such a pace that the resolution of the Calcutta congress is already unacceptable to the "fathers" and is being handed over to the children for their "radical" amusement. Whilst agreeing to dominion status, this resolution none the less makes the proviso that if this demand is not granted by the British Government within one year, the National Congress will recognise all limits as passed and will refuse to be satisfied with anything less than complete independence, obtaining this by struggle, the practice of the system of "non-co-operation," non-payment of taxes, etc. At the congress the opposition voted against this resolution; Nehru senior, aided by Gandhi, summoned specially in order to organise the betrayal, dragged it up again, arguing that it provided the only salvation for the country. But the decorations adorning the congress hall had hardly been taken down when the roles were sharply changed. The defenders of the resolution both in spirit and in letter now proved to be the leaders of the League. Its founders, Motilal Nehru and Gandhi, came forward in the role of revisionists correcting the resolution. In answer to the cynical jeers of the British press of all shades of opinion over the "ultimatum" presented by the National Congress, Gandhi and Motilal Nehru hastened the very day after the adoption of the resolution to explain that the resolution contained no ultimatum and no fixed period whatever. Gandhi declared that he by no means demanded of the British Government that it should even promise to confer dominion status within a year. It was sufficient "if it only displayed the desire to meet India's wishes halfway." Motilal Nehru explained that the phrase "too late" used in the resolution had to be understood in the sense that it was "late for psychological influence," and as on the other hand "psychological influence" was not to be determined by the calendar, the 1930 mentioned in the resolution had only a symbolic significance.

Thus for the authors of the resolution all that is left of the formula which they had

built up is the renunciation of the demand for independence. In all the rest they are essentially against the decision of the Calcutta congress. But on the other hand the leaders of the opposition prove to be ardent advocates of that decision. If to this be added the circumstance that the younger Nehru will not lose any opportunity of protesting his fidelity to the congress, and his readiness to dissolve the League, if only the Swarajists announce themselves in favour of independence, the nature of the new League is clear enough.

The revolutionary crisis in India is so extreme that even at the beginning of the rise of the wave the Indian bourgeoisie is starting where the Chinese bourgeoisie left off.

#### THE STRIKE MOVEMENT

The press has already dealt with the facts which witness to the development of activity among the proletariat during the last eighteen months, to the growth in its class-consciousness and organisation, to its continually growing importance in the national revolutionary movement. We confine ourselves to pointing out the most important of these facts.

First of all is the growth in the strike movement and its militant character. The rise in the strike wave during the past year exceeds the greatest rise in the previous stage of the revolution (1921-22). The strikes are distinguished by great persistence and resolution, self-sacrifice and class solidarity. Considered from the formal aspect, the series of recent strikes might be regarded as purely defensive, since they had very definitely as their aim the repulse of the continually growing pressure of the imperialist and native bourgeoisie. But regarded from the aspect of the nature of the struggle, the activity of the working masses, and the character of the leadership, it is impossible not to note that they are increasingly permeated with the quality of workers' attacks.

The same has to be said of the results of the strikes. If one only judges by the superficial symptoms, by the direct economic results, one would rather have to regard them as defeats, for in the majority of instances the strikers' demands remained ungranted, and the employers' appetites have not been appeased as the result of the strike struggle.

But if we take into account the more important feature, i.e., the influence which the strike struggle has had on the raising of the fighting ability of the proletariat, on its organisation, and on drawing new workers into the movement, we can boldly declare that the whole movement is proceeding on the basis of a rise of the class struggle of the proletariat.

The immediate cause of this successive wave of strikes consists in the introduction of capitalist rationalisation into India, and its introduction in a situation of harsh colonial exploitation. The basic feature of capitalist rationalisation—the maximum exploitation of past labour incorporated in the means and equipment of production, at the cost chiefly of an intensification of living labour and an imperceptible exhaustion of the worker's vital forces—cannot but take on particularly monstrous and tortuous forms in the colonies. The characteristic feature of Indian rationalisation is that it forces a worker to work who is in a state of chronic under-nourishment, clothed in rags, and without living-quarters either for himself or for his family. In other words, it combines the perfected methods of organisation of labour with barbarous methods of obtaining the surplus product. Thus rationalisation carries capitalist production in the colonies to the extreme limits of monstrosity.

In the textile industry the employers are demanding that the workers shall mind three looms instead of two, whilst retaining the old machines and methods of production. In the railway workshops the same form of rationalisation begins by throwing a large number of workers on to the streets, without affording them any hope of finding a new place in production. The railway companies are preparing for the same operation throughout transport generally, only on a much larger scale. In the mining industry the perfection of technique is combined with female labour underground in intolerable conditions. Everywhere rationalisation is being introduced either in face of a standstill in development or even in places of a decline in production. The unemployment evoked by this industrialisation meets halfway the growing wave of pauperisation coming from the villages. Imperialism and its politicians are throwing the ruined

peasantry either into the ranks of the agricultural slaves or into those of the urban coolies. In both cases it delivers millions to the care of its close colleagues, death, famine and disease.

Despite all this, the strikes of the past year have been carried on in the form of a development of the proletariat's tendency to attack. The number of days lost over the latest period exceeds the previous maximum: the number of strikers per enterprise is growing; the wave-like development of the struggle, inevitable under conditions in which each strike reduces the workers to the last degree of exhaustion, none the less retains its general tendency to take a rising curve. Such a curve leads to a general strike as the steadily maturing task of the present period.

A general strike as a unification of the struggle now going on in all the most important spheres of industry, as a resistance to the attempts of the imperialists to shatter the organisations of the proletariat and to deprive them of their ability to struggle, is already in the air in India. Even at the Trades Union Congress the reformist bureaucrats spoke of the necessity of replying with a general strike if the government did not stop shooting down the workers. Naturally in the eyes of the reformists a general strike means a struggle "with folded hands," a form of passive resistance. The masses which have already passed through the strike struggle have quite a different conception of the character and meaning of a general strike. The extensive organisational preparatory work which is being carried on by the textile workers of Bombay, the organisation of left-wing trade unions, the collection of a strike fund, the selection of the best workers for the defence divisions, show that they regard the general strike as one of the higher forms of class struggle.

#### THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The second factor witnessing to the offensive character of the strike movement is the appearance and the development of trade unions during the course of that struggle. According to the statistics of the official Bombay journal, the "Labour Gazette," in the

Bombay presidency alone the number of workers organised in trade unions during the last quarter of 1928 rose from 117,000 to 198,000, *i.e.*, approximately 69 per cent. If we take the unions which have their administrative centres in Bombay, *i.e.*, the largest unions, the growth proves to be still more considerable, being from 84,000 to 160,000, or 89 per cent. The nature of this growth is elucidated still more clearly if one takes into account the fact that it is being accomplished through the appearance, development, and consolidation of the left-wing unions. The "Labour Gazette" considers it necessary to emphasise this fact with unconcealed alarm. "There is observable a striking growth of members of the union, 'Girni Kanigar' (the 'Red Flag' textile union), the membership of which rose from 324 in the third quarter to 54,000 on December 1st. At the moment of writing (January, 1929), according to the latest reports available, its membership has risen to 65,000."

In order to get a sound estimate of these figures it has to be borne in mind that in previous textile strikes the reformist trade union bureaucrats have had a monopoly, uncontrolledly and unhinderedly "directing," in other words, sabotaging and betraying the workers. At the present time the reformist textile workers' union, whose president is Joshi (first violin in the General Council, owing to his being the "representative" of the Bombay textile workers), and whose general secretary is the hardened strike-breaker Bakhhal (who recently travelled around Europe, and even looked in at Moscow), has a membership of 6,740. Thus among the Bombay textile workers the reformists have been completely shattered within a period of a few months, and, what is of even greater importance, they have been shattered in the course of a strike struggle, as the result of pressure from below and the organisation of the vast masses unorganised by the strike committees. Is it necessary to add that both the government and the employers have done everything to support the reformist union, refusing to "recognise" the strike unless it was headed by such "generally recognised" leaders as Joshi, refusing to carry on negotiations except with the participation of these same reformist

leaders, whilst simultaneously the governmental machinery and the employers have done all they could to shatter the left-wing union? But the activity of the masses has made way for itself through all these obstacles.

The fact that the left wing unions have grown out of a strike struggle determines the nature of their organisation and activity. The fundamental weakness of the unions in India as in other colonial countries has consisted in the fact that they were built from the top down, headed by "come-overs," lawyers, bourgeois politicians, who sought to subject to their protection not one but several union organisations. These self-appointed agents of the workers' interests represented the masses in arbitration commissions, in negotiation with the employers, in relations with the government institutions and so on, thus combining a profitable profession with the advantages of a social-political career.

Mr. Purcell realised that this attachment of their persons to the workers constituted the "vulnerable spot" of the trade union bureaucrat Swarajists, and directed his blows against that spot with the object of wresting the unions out of their hands and subordinating them to the British social-imperialists. The delegation of the British General Council, which appeared in India simultaneously with the Simon commission, attempted to conceal their plans for the annexation of the slogan (extraordinarily popular among the Indian toilers) of struggle against the intelligentsia who had attached themselves to the movement while having nothing whatever in common with the working class, by the slogan of struggle against the outsiders. The Bombay textile workers showed the workers how to drive out the outsiders by organising a mass left wing union, not according to the system laid down by Purcell and European reformism, but in struggle against it, in struggle on two fronts: against bourgeois nationalism and against social-imperialism. There is every reason to reckon that at the present time the "Girni Kanigar" not only has deep roots among and commands the sympathy of the masses, but that it also has an organisational basis in the enterprises, that it is operating on the basis of elected factory committees. It is for this reason that neither the govern-

mental terror nor the intrigues of reformism can now succeed in pulling up the roots of the left wing union and regaining their domination over the textile workers.

Of the other left wing unions one has to note the railway workers' union of the Great Indian Railway (the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union), which has 41,000 members, and the union on another railway (the B.B. and C.I. Railway Employees' Union) which has about 5,000 members. It has also to be borne in mind that the "Labour Gazette's" figures only deal with the registered unions. Thus the growth of the left wing trade union movement and the particularly swift growth of the movement in the Bombay presidency is not open to doubt.

In Bengal the tempo of development of the trade union movement lags behind the objective possibilities. The chief reason for this is that in Bengal the leaders of the left-wing voluntarily share their influence with the reformists to an even greater extent than in Bombay, instead of resolutely driving them out. This "Tolstoyanism" of the leaders is in Bengal accompanied by a passivity on the part of the left-wing unions in carrying on the strike struggle. A clear expression of this passivity is provided by the "neutral" attitude of the Calcutta union of jute workers to the heavy and protracted struggle of the Boria workers, as the result of which the reformist union attached itself to the strike. Bengal also shares the weakness common to all the Indian trade union movement, *i.e.*, the almost complete non-existence of work in the reformist unions. All these organisational defects could be eliminated without special labour if the Communists were to arrange their work on sound lines.

As in Bombay so in Bengal, and indeed throughout India, it is indubitable that the objective conditions are already present, given the existence of a strong demand for the development of a class trade union movement, for the organisation and consolidation of the already existing left-wing unions, for their reorganisation on the production principle, and for the realisation of workers' democracy. The conditions are ripe in India for the creation in the immediate future of unions which would be genuinely militant organs of the proletariat.

It would be unsound to explain the comparative swift growth of the left-wing trade union movement in India by the circumstances that the proletariat of the colonies is immune from the reformist infection. That is not so. Of course, the most malignant, stubborn and dangerous forms of reformism are to be found in the imperialist countries, where owing to the super-profits obtained through the imperialist plunder the bourgeoisie is placed in a privileged position, and thus corrupts the upper ranks of the workers and directly bribes the leaders of those upper ranks. In the colonies and semi-colonies the method of exploiting the working class is such that the imperialist bourgeoisie does not wish, indeed, has no need of guaranteeing a minimum tolerable standard of existence to any strata of the native workers whatever, whilst the native bourgeoisie for its part is unable to make any such guarantee even if it wished. Thus reformism is deprived of its chief source of support. None the less, the existence of reformism in the colonies and semi-colonies is a fact which it would be dangerous to ignore. Reformism exerts its influence on the working class to a varying degree at different stages of the national emancipation movement, and given different dispositions and inter-relationships of the struggling forces. But in all cases it reflects the influence and the specific importance of bourgeois nationalism in the country.

"Everywhere throughout the world the proletariat, which in any capitalist society is bound with the petty bourgeoisie by thousands of communicating threads, has lived through to the period of formation of labour parties, the period of more or less protracted and persistent intellectual political subjection to the bourgeoisie. This phenomenon, common to all capitalist countries, has taken on various forms in various countries, in dependence on their historical and economic peculiarities." (Lenin, "Marxism and Liquidatorism," Vol. XII, Part 2, p. 481.)

Even in the colonies and semi-colonies in which capitalist production has already been implanted, the historic and economic conditions are not the same as those in the foremost capitalist countries, nor are they even the same for all the colonies and semi-colonies. The communicating threads connecting the

working class with the petty bourgeoisie, with the home-worker and artisan who are gradually being ruined, and with the landless peasantry, are stronger in the colonies, and at the incipient stages of development this fact cannot but manifest itself in the great backwardness and inertia of the workers. Only in the course of the struggle will the proletariat break these threads, emancipating themselves and at the same time emancipating all the toilers from serfdom to the bourgeoisie.

But whilst in the local organisations the reformist trade union bureaucrats are already being eliminated by the pressure of the workers, the central machinery of the unions remains in practice entirely in their hands. The several representatives of the workers' and peasants' parties who are in the General Council play the role of hostages in it; they humbly submit to the decisions of the majority, and by the fact of their peaceable cohabitation damp down the struggle which is being carried on against the trade union bureaucrats in the rank and file. This is the only true explanation of the fact that the growth of the proletariat's class consciousness and of the class unions was not reflected in the least in the decisions of the Trades Union Congress held last December. Not only so, but the decisions of this Congress are a step backward by comparison with those of the previous year—which is one more summary proof of the fact that the evolution of the trade union bureaucrats repeats the evolution of the bourgeoisie in the National Congress down to the last details.

The only radical gesture made by the Trades Union Congress consisted in its decision to join the League Against Imperialism. But one has yet to see whether the General Council will in practice carry out their most elementary obligations as a member of the League, or whether they will sabotage the workers' struggle against the break-up of the workers' and peasants' parties. The arrest of the League Against Imperialism's representative at the Congress, comrade Johnson, an arrest of a frankly provocative character, put the right-wingers of the Congress in a position in which they did not dare to vote against joining the League. This in turn got the younger Nehru out of a difficult position, for as a mem-

ber of the League he could not vote against membership, whilst at the same time he did not want to spoil his relationships with the right-wingers, by whose votes he had been elected president of the General Council.

One could regard the decision of the Congress to demand of British imperialism not dominion status, and not even independence, but the proclamation of a socialist constitution for India, as a left-wing gesture; however, the Congress entrusted the advocacy of this decision at the Conference of all Indian parties to its president, Dutt, who in his opening words had defended the slogan of dominion status with all his powers.

All the decisions of the Congress on the question of establishing international connections were directed towards a *rapprochement* with international reformism, for whom the poisoning of the colonial movement is now, as we know, the chief task. Unfortunately the reformist bandits met with no effective opposition whatever from the left-wing. Thus in its fears of a "fiasco" the left-wing withdrew its proposal for membership of the Profintern (R.I.L.U.), contenting itself with the compensation which the right-wingers granted in the form of refraining from putting forward the proposal to join Amsterdam. But the very next day the right-wingers united with the "centre" to pass by an insignificant majority a decision to send a delegation to the Geneva International Labour Bureau, and also to participate in the Pan-Asiatic Conference organised by Japanese imperialism with the aid of its social-democrats and the Kuomintang executioners.

The left-wing adopted the same tactics of passivity and with no less harmful results on questions of internal policy, allowing the Congress to avoid even raising the problem of the coming heavy economic struggles, of preparation for them and consideration of their further development. The greeting sent by the Bombay textile workers is a repetition of the official greetings from outside well-wishers which the National Congress customarily sends. We have already noted above that in the hands of the bureaucrats of the Congress the general strike acquired the character of playing at passive resistance.

How is this weak influence of the left-wing opposition in the work of the Congress to be explained? By the fact, of course, that a considerable section of the new left-wing unions had no representation at the Congress, owing to packing and to "constitutional points." The bureaucratic machine of the Indian reformists has adopted the science of "preparing" the Congress in all its perfection from its British colleagues. Despite all the packing, the left-wing was able to collect almost half the votes, as the voting in the election for the chairman of the General Council showed. The railwayman Kulkarni, the candidate of the left-wingers, obtained 29 votes against the 36 obtained by Nehru. The essence of the matter lies in the passivity of the left-wing, in their neutral tactics. The left-wing did not fight to get a majority before the Congress, and did not exploit their positions at the Congress itself. They made no attempt to unmask the treachery of the reformists, a treachery which had a worthy crown in the Congress decision. They did not exploit the activity of the masses in order to put up a resolute struggle against the reformists for possession of the General Council machinery. They preferred not struggle but an amicable sharing of the places in the Executive Committee, whilst allowing the reformists to do the opposition down in the most ridiculous fashion.

But for their part the left wing did not raise the issue of preparation for the general strike with all the seriousness which it warranted. And all these serious, impermissible errors were committed despite the fact that among the left wing opposition at the congress were comrades who enjoy the confidence of the advance guard of the workers. What is the chief reason for this passivity? It is that the workers' and peasants' parties cannot be organisers of the left wing of the trade unions, either by their social composition, or by their principles of organisation, or by the character of their activity. Only the Communist Party can resolve this task.

The same weakness in the left wing was revealed at the railway workers' conference, with the essential proviso that the resolution which it had put forward concerning the strike issue was of a much more business-like and practi-

cal nature. The resolution demanded that the railway companies should be given a definite time-limit (15th February) within which to reply to the conditions long since put forward by the workers and so far ignored by the employers. The federation was to assemble on Feb. 15th to consider the employers' reply, and if it proved to be unsatisfactory it was to fix a date for a general railway strike. In preparation for the strike the resolution proposed the beginning of an agitation immediately for 100 per cent. membership of railwaymen in the unions, the organisation of strike committees in the chief centres, the assurance of their centralised direction and the immediate opening of a strike fund. This proposal, put forward by comrade Bradley, was rejected by only an insignificant majority; to such an extent has the question of a general strike developed. And yet the left wing agreed to this vote, and submitted to the strike-breaking decision, which afforded the railway robbers the opportunity of attacking the proletariat at the moment most advantageous to themselves and of depriving the workers of the possibility of preparing for a counter-attack. The left wing did not transfer the question of preparing a general strike of railway workers to the masses for consideration.

But whilst the left wing opposition retain their blind fidelity to the "constitution of the General Council," the reformists take a different attitude: immediately after the congress they opened a campaign for the exclusion of all left elements from the trade unions. This campaign was headed by Kirk, Shiva Rao and others, who are entirely without importance in the trade union movement, but behind whom is the entire machinery of imperialist oppression. But now it is quite evident that these reformists' counter-revolutionary declarations in the national press were in preparation for the terrorist attack on the workers' and peasants' parties. A preparation which was of no consequence, for these gentlemen's articles breathe the police spirit to an even greater extent than the writings of a Citrine or Thomas.

The break-up of the legal mass organisations, the criminal law against the unions which imperialism is forcing through the miserable legislative assembly to the sound of

the crack of its whips—all witness to the fact that very soon now the left wing in the unions will have to withstand the united pressure of the imperialists, the bourgeois nationalists and the reformists. Very little time is left in which to make preparations for resistance. It is necessary to retrieve what has been lost. That can be achieved only provided the tactic of superficial negotiations and combinations is at once revoked, and provided the left wing leadership turns all its energy, all its authority to preparing and organising the mass activities of the proletariat.

#### POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

Finally, the third indication of the increase in the role of the proletariat in the national revolutionary movement is the increasingly definite nature of the strikes and demonstrations of the workers. Owing to the ruthless manner in which imperialism dealt with the strikers, even previously the workers came directly into conflict with the machinery of State repression. But previously the sectional, local conflicts with the police and at times with the military were not united by any political slogans. At the present moment the political character of the strikes is developing further owing to the fact that it is also directed against the native bourgeoisie, and is thus compelling bourgeois nationalism to abandon the position of hypocritical neutrality and to identify itself openly with the employers.

At the end of 1927 there were two such small, yet characteristic strikes: in Calcutta, where the street-cleaners struck against the Swarajist municipality, and in Bombay, where the municipal workers declared a strike and secured the re-employment of the workers who had been discharged for their participation in the demonstration against the Simon Commission. During the year following the political character of the strikes has widely extended. In February a general strike of Bombay workers was carried out under the slogan of winning the streets for the workers and against the government of pogromists. Only quite recently strikes have been proclaimed in various towns which have as their demand the release of the arrested leaders of the workers' and peasants' party.

A number of workers' demonstrations in the



main centres, sometimes breaking out elementally, sometimes organised in connection with definite events, have been carried out under the slogan of Soviets. This is quite a new phenomenon for India. Until the beginning of the present rise the workers dissolved into general demonstrations organised by the bourgeois nationalist parties. But now, even when they participate in a general campaign, as the one against the Simon Commission, for instance, the proletariat organises its separate columns, arranges its own march routes (as happened in Calcutta in January) and marches under its own slogans, directed not only against the imperialist but against the native bourgeoisie. Even in the very general, propagandist form in which it exists in India at the moment, the slogan of Soviets already connotes not only a struggle against imperialism, not merely a renunciation of the reactionary ideas of Nehru senior, but also the unmasking of Nehru junior, who promises all the blessings of socialism without a revolutionary struggle.

In order to be convinced of the extent to which the proletariat has already outgrown the noisy and wordy petty bourgeois intelligentsia, one has but to compare its class demonstrations with the civic demonstrations which are now occurring in a number of towns. Even the finest of these demonstrations—that of the students in Allahabad against the arrest of Joshi, the secretary of the workers' and peasants' party of the United Provinces—also suffered from its civic lack of discrimination. Whilst demonstrating in defence of the workers' and peasants' party, the radical students, the "flower of the revolutionary intelligentsia" simultaneously very willingly applauded the younger Nehru. The spectacle of the demonstration was the solemn participation of the wives of the older and younger Nehru in the burning of European cloth, which still more emphasised the patriarchally sentimental character of the whole proceedings. There cannot be any question of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia making any claims over the proletariat to the leadership of the national revolutionary struggle. That section which does not submit to the hegemony of the proletariat will be immediately thrown by the course of events into the camp of the counter-revolution.

#### THE PEASANTS' MOVEMENT

The experience of the Chinese revolution summarily showed what decisive importance, especially for the colonies, attaches to the alliance of the workers' revolution with the peasants' insurrection. The consciousness of this necessity is now clear at least to the advance guard of the Indian proletariat. The proletariat of the colonies feels its obligations as organiser and leader of the peasantry more keenly than that of the capitalist countries. But the importance of the workers' and peasants' bloc and its danger to imperialism has since the Chinese experience become clearer than ever before. British imperialism's plan in India is determined by this fact: and that plan is to hasten the shattering of the workers' movement before the extensive peasant reserves succeed in coming into action.

The peasant movement in India has not yet broken loose; the scattered outbreaks of peasant demonstrations are ruthlessly and swiftly suppressed by British imperialism. But the fact that the peasant movement has lagged behind in activity does not permit one to draw the conclusion that it will fall under the influence of bourgeois nationalism. The fact that the peasant movement cannot develop in present conditions otherwise than in the form of revolutionary activities, the arbitrary seizure of the land, the mass refusal to pay rent, taxes, debts, etc., excludes the possibility of the bourgeois intelligentsia having any at all serious influence in the villages. Of course all this applies only provided that the proletariat and its party does not let slip the moment for developing the agrarian revolution in the country. The objective conditions favourable to proletarian influence in the villages are already present. The slowness in the development of the peasant movement at the present time is to be explained not only by the bestial terror, but especially by the fact that the peasantry have become convinced of the ineffectiveness of the old methods of struggle of 1919-22, and realise the necessity of passing to more complex and higher methods of revolutionary activity. And in the conditions of colonial oppression such a transference demands that sparks from the revolutionary conflagration which has started up in the towns should fly to the villages.

The measures which British imperialism is taking against the development of the peasantry consist not in concessions to the peasantry but in an intensification of the terrorist regime. Of course, in the event of the shattering of the workers' movement (and imperialism is basing all its hopes on this) a further attack on the peasantry will become inevitable. There will be a mass expropriation of the land of its weaker sections in the interests of the development of capitalist agriculture; and tens of millions will suffer a hungry death. But it does not follow that because in the event of the suppression of the working class the situation of the peasantry would become yet more intolerable, therefore the slackened tempo of the peasant movement at the present time is to be explained by any weakening of the crisis in the Indian countryside.

The toilers' retaliation that the organisation of a workers' and peasants' bloc is an indispensable condition of victory has found expression in the growing influence of the workers' and peasants' party. This growth in influence is indicative of the trend of the peasantry towards the organisation of its forces. None the less, the workers' and peasants' party, with its dual composition based on the "equality of classes," is not the form of bloc which will guarantee the leading role of the proletariat and consequently a popular settlement of the agrarian revolution. And again, despite the fact that certain of them only recently called themselves peasant-workers' parties, and still partially retain this character, the workers' and peasants' parties are not in any condition to raise the peasantry. This inability arises not only from the circumstance that their agrarian program is abridged, deprived of definiteness, confused, that it does not take into consideration the process of class differentiation which is going on in the villages. All these defects would unquestionably have a fatal influence on the further stages of development of the peasant movement, by increasing the danger of the influence of the kulak elements, and of the bourgeoisie through them. But for the present preparatory stage of the swing, the negative side of the workers' and peasants' parties still makes its presence felt not so much in these defects, but, much more important, in the circumstance that the workers' and peasants' parties have even

proved incapable of overcoming the Swarajist philanthropic approach to the work in the villages, incapable of turning to the organisation of the revolutionary activities of the peasantry.

In view of the amount of combustible material in the Indian villages—reserves which cannot but be increased—a circumstance of no great importance in itself can cause an outbreak of the mass peasant movement. In order to guide that outbreak it is necessary to organise the peasants, and, of course, the poor peasants first and foremost, into revolutionary unions and committees. In view of the variety of agrarian relationships in the Indian countryside and the consequent heterogeneity of the sectional demands of the peasantry in various areas, local peasants' unions, growing up in the course of the struggle and directing that struggle, cannot have a single platform; they cannot be homogeneous in their organisation. At the given stage of the struggle, and in view of the still surviving passivity of the peasantry, the work of prime importance is not even the propaganda among the peasant masses of the entire program of our measures after the seizure of power, but rather their organisation under the influence of the proletariat for a genuinely revolutionary struggle against British imperialism, feudalism and bourgeois reaction. In the conditions of the present revolutionary crisis, in the course of that struggle the peasantry will swiftly pass from sectional demands to a developed program of agrarian revolution, to the nationalisation of all the land.

#### THE POSITION OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN INDIA

British imperialism is carrying on a frenzied struggle against the emancipation of India. The higher the revolutionary wave rises, the more desperately will imperialism hang on to its richest booty. Britain has never yet paused before any methods of suppressing India's least attempts to emancipate herself. But never before has the independence of India threatened the capitalist system of Great Britain, its very existence, with such a blow as it does at the present time. The mobilisation of all the forces which British imperialism has at its disposal in the home country, in the colonies, in the dominions—naval, air and

land forces on the one hand, and political, economic financial on the other, against the Indian revolution—is a foregone conclusion. The struggle of the British Government against the Indian revolution will truly be a struggle for life and death.

At the same time, it would be the height of frivolity to under-estimate the enormous dimensions of those resources for destruction which British imperialism has at its disposal against the Indian revolution. Britain's economic and technical backwardness has not yet undermined her naval and military might. The fact that the United States will overtake and is already overtaking, Britain's war forces must not hide the other just as undoubted fact that there is a simultaneously occurring, further frenzied growth of the world war machine of British imperialism, especially in that section of it the direct purpose of which is the "defence," *i.e.*, the enslavement, of India, (the Singapore base, the incessant increase of the fleet in the Indian Ocean, the vigorous development of the air fleet in India, the vast plans for organising "peaceful" aviation in India, in circumstances which ensure British imperialism the possibility of transforming it into war aviation at one stroke, the incessant perfecting of the Indian army, the mechanisation of its transport, its re-equipment, etc.) All this system of war measures is not only directed towards holding India under external bars, "defending" it from the encroachment of any competing imperialism, but it can at any moment be directed to the maintenance of "order" inside this monstrous prison which is India. And to this purpose also is directed the entire British system of diplomatic intrigue, provocations, petty wars, assassinations and open organised attacks which envelop India in an ever-denser cloud. (The counter-revolutionary war in Afghanistan with a view to capturing the country through the mediation of one or other of the crowned mercenaries, the extending seizure of positions in Persia, the activity in Arabia, etc.) Thus isolating India on all sides, surrounding it with a dead zone of British domination, imperialism is facilitating the possibility of flinging itself on the Indian revolution with all the strength of its war machinery.

The second base of British domination is its positions inside the country, both State administrative and economic positions. India is a colony: not a semi-colony, not simply a dependent country, but a colony in the most perfect form, *i.e.*, a country where the rule of the conqueror directly and immediately dominates the people, concentrating into its hands all the machinery of State oppression from top to bottom, controlling, subordinating, and suppressing all the functions of social life, reserving to itself an unrestricted monopoly in this sphere. This factor of the unrestricted monopoly of the colonial autocracy is rarely allowed to slip from view, for the very reason that such a despotic power on the part of the conqueror is a savage anachronism when applied to a country with a population of three hundred millions, with capitalist production, with large-scale concentrated enterprises, with a developed network of railways, with enormous natural riches, with a grown-up class-conscious proletariat, with a certain achievement of bourgeois culture, etc. This savage anachronism, which is an inexhaustible source of the vital motive forces of the Indian revolution, witnesses none the less to the still maintained might, depth and ramification of the machinery of imperialist oppression and to the variety of the levers with the aid of which it suppresses, subjects and deforms the life of the country. In this regard one has but to compare present-day India even with China in order to see all the extent of the slavery of India. Only the direct blows of the organised Chinese revolution compelled the imperialists competing in China to unite their war operations in Shanghai, to put the fleet under a general command, to disembark a joint expeditionary force, to surround themselves with barbed wire, and so on, so as to establish a war base safeguarded against all surprise and for the purpose of attack against the Chinese revolution. But even operating on this base, imperialism could move its military forces directly only along the main waterways, and, with definite limitations, over the railways. The direct war aid which it could afford the Chinese counter-revolution off the track of these roads, in the heart of the country, in the ocean of villages, could not immediately be considerable. Herein was one of the chief

reasons why the agrarian revolution in China could accumulate its forces for a definite period, could develop and grow, even although at the same time the forces of the imperialist counter-revolution were being formed in the central town points, with the fleet and the Shanghai arsenal of imperialism as their operating base. In India, British imperialism already possesses a number of military bases in various central, strategically important points, whilst these were created in Shanghai only at the moment of the height of the revolutionary battles. Not having to share its rule with any other imperialism, and consequently not having to overcome the inevitable competition which would otherwise result, the British war staff is systematically working on its plan for the suppression of the revolution in India, modifying it in accordance with the growth and the redistribution of revolutionary forces, establishing the chief bases for its struggle both in the native principalities and in British India, stretching its threads across the whole country, penetrating into its utmost depths, even into the villages. A peasant rising in India cannot develop away from contact with the imperialist forces; it will come to a hand-to-hand struggle with them from its first step.

The machinery of open repression is not exhausted with the pincers by the aid of which imperialism is strangling India. Together with political annexation, colonial oppression also presumes economic annexation, which develops out of the first, fusing with it and strengthening it. From the aspect of economic annexation the positions of British imperialism in India are exceptionally strong, despite the circumstance that India's economy is more developed than that of any other colony, and to a certain extent owing to that very development. It is superfluous to remind the reader that British financial capital has not only subjected to itself the entire banking system in India, and not only all its external trade, but through the compradore bourgeoisie, through the wholesale merchants it finds its way to the tiniest roots of economic life, enveloping, subjecting and exploiting the countryside in manifold ways. Being the largest landowner in the country, and directly extorting rent from approximately one-fourth of the peasant population, through its agents,

the zemindars of various shades, imperialism holds in its hand the economic threads of all the remaining agricultural economy. Its positions in the industrial sphere are still stronger (transport, mining industry, jute and in part metal-working). But even those spheres of industry in which native capital predominates cannot but find themselves in subjection to finance capital, which dominates the whole country. The strength of Britain's colonial monopoly is, inter alia, revealed by the fact that all the attempts of Indian capital to operate with the aid of the United States finance capital come up against very serious obstacles. Naturally one cannot deny that American capital is penetrating into India, partly openly, partly through the Japanese banks; but the extent of this penetration is quite insignificant by comparison with the "trend" which both the two factors reveal: both by the Indian bourgeoisie, which counts on weakening the British monopoly by this means, and by American imperialism, for whom the extension of their economic positions in India would be a weapon in the struggle against Britain.

The military and economic might of Britain determines the circle of her social allies in the country. These are first and foremost the despots of the native principalities, the ruling princes, whose fates are directly and immediately bound up with the fate of the British imperialists. Then there are the landowners and all the elements interested in one way or another in the maintenance of the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation in the countryside. Nor must one underestimate the role which the compradore bourgeoisie plays openly or secretly in India as a buttress for imperialism. The fact that out of seven provincial legislative councils only one (in the central provinces) stood by the position of boycotting the Simon Commission, is very significant. As for the other legislative councils, part of them pronounced in favour of co-operation from the very beginning, whilst the others which had pronounced in favour of a boycott did not stand by this quite harmless position, so strong in the legislative councils is that group of feudalists and section of the bourgeoisie on whose unreserved support imperialism can count in all its policy.

On the question of the industrial bourgeoisie

we have already noted the growing speed of its decline. In the struggle with the workers' and peasants' movement—and that movement continues to determine the content and the character of the national revolution in India—imperialism has every justification for regarding the bourgeoisie as its instrument, and will either extricate it or leave it in such a situation, confronted with such accomplished facts as to force its line of conduct to correspond with the government's plans.

#### THE FORCES OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE METHODS OF ORGANISING THEM

The struggle against British imperialism therefore demands the greatest exertion of effort of all the toilers and oppressed in India, demands not a single victorious battle, but a series of class conflicts which will gradually extend the positions of the revolution, unloose its forces, increase their organisation, and lead the movement to increasingly developed methods of struggle. Only an alliance between the workers' revolution and the peasant struggle can develop the revolutionary energy which is necessary in order to overthrow British imperialism. The Indian revolution will conquer only under the leadership of the proletariat.

The industrial proletariat of India is not numerically large, but none the less it exceeds the number of the proletariat of China. The concentration of industry is leading to the concentration of the proletariat in the most important points. Hence arises the possibility of organising the striking forces of the revolution in the decisive town centres. The youth, the insufficient political experience, and the poor organisation of the Indian workers are compensated for in practice by their revolutionary self-sacrifice, their activity, endurance, ability to carry on through protracted conflicts and in conditions of the utmost deprivation. How swiftly the class growth of the proletariat in India has proceeded during the past 12 to 15 months has been shown above. The proletariat has passed from sectional, separate strikes under the formal "leadership" of the reformist strike-breakers, to a combination of mass strikes with political demonstrations, to a discussion of the question of preparing for a general strike in the more

important centres of industry. From a state in which they were a more or less dependent appendage to the National Congress the proletariat is passing to the slogan of soviets. The experience of the strike struggle and of the political demonstrations is bringing the proletarian advance-guard, the Bombay workers, to a realisation of the necessity of extending the struggle and to the first steps in this sphere—steps still uncertain, it is true, but already extraordinarily noteworthy, such as the overcoming of the dominant theory and practice in India of "non-resistance" and the formation of divisions for workers' defence. It is also necessary to take into account the circumstance that in all cases the transfer to higher forms of struggle is evoked by the initiative of the masses, which invariably move before the leaders. It is further necessary to take into account the circumstance that the left wing leadership is in turn developing in conditions of almost complete mechanical isolation from the international revolutionary experience, which hitherto has been able to react only after considerable delay on the swift tempo of development of the movement in India. In such conditions the road laid down by the workers' advance-guard of recent days particularly emphasises the growth in the forces of the revolution.

The industrial proletariat is being joined by the workers of the large plantations, whose importance in the task of safeguarding the leadership of the working class over the peasantry may grow swiftly. Together with them are coming the dozens of millions of agricultural workers and coolies who are held in a state of semi-slavery and chronic unemployment, and so represent an enormous reserve of elemental hatred for imperialism and its native allies.

The great majority of the 175 millions of the peasantry cannot follow the proletariat, cannot form the numerically chief forces in the revolutionary bloc of the workers, peasants and city poor against the bloc of imperialists, landowners and treacherous bourgeoisie. Despite the fact that in certain areas, which are of particular strategic importance to imperialism either from the aspect of the coming war or that of the struggle against revolution, separate sections of the affluent peasantry are receiving or may in the future receive bribes

from the government, one cannot from this draw the deduction that British imperialism is in a condition to take any way whatever leading to reforms in the countryside without intensifying the unbearably heavy situation of the main peasant masses and without increasing the revolutionary crisis in the country. Now that the conclusions of the Royal Commission on Agriculture have been published, there is less doubt than ever that British imperialism has and can have no other plans for resolving the crisis in the countryside and its associated crisis of the internal market than those based on the literal annihilation of millions of peasantry. Imperialism may postpone its "reforms," realising that they will evoke an outbreak of the revolutionary forces which have accumulated in the villages. But so long as imperialism remains imperialism it can find no other ways of reform in India but this. Hence there is every justification for considering that the peasant attacks will not keep waiting long.

Finally, at the present stage of the struggle we have to take into account as possible allies of the proletariat the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie and their intelligentsia, which, however, have hitherto been exploited by the Swarajists, and also by the Independence League, for the organisation of nationalist demonstrations, Hartals, etc., whenever bourgeois nationalism seeks to show that the "people" are behind it.

At its present stage the struggle against imperialism makes possible and necessary the joint revolutionary activity of the proletariat with all the toilers and oppressed, with the entire nation, with the exception of the feudal bourgeois upper groups. But it goes without saying that in order to safeguard the leading role of the proletariat during the accomplishment of this national task, it is necessary first and foremost that a theoretically, politically and organisationally independent Communist Party should be in existence. During all its manoeuvres both inside the worker-peasant bloc and outside it, in its unmasking of the bourgeois nationalism, in its criticism of the unstable petty bourgeois allies, and in still greater measure in its leadership of the peasant struggle, the C.P. must remain the organisation of the special class of the proletariat, the most consistent and most

revolutionary class in the country. Under no conditions whatever, from no conceptions of a united front should it bind its own hands in the work of propagating its views, in the work of winning the finest elements of the working class to the side of Communism, in the work of mobilising the industrial agricultural workers under the banner of the class struggle, in the work of destroying the highly dangerous petty bourgeois illusions as to the possibility of overthrowing imperialism without opposing to it the forces of the revolution. Only by concentrating against the compromising bourgeoisie, by systematically and unswervingly unmasking the true character of its miserable playing at opposition, by pointing out the bonds which exist not only between the bourgeoisie, but also between considerable sections of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia and the feudal system of landownership, only by criticising the vacillation and instability of its allies, will the C.P. emancipate the toiling masses from the influence of bourgeois nationalism, will it teach them to depend only on their own organised forces, will it teach them to raise the practical question of the revolution in all its exceptional difficulty and harsh necessity.

Do the objective conditions for the creation of a mass C.P. already exist in India? Everything we have said above on the swift growth of class consciousness among the vast masses of the proletariat is an answer to that question. Can one deny the existence of an incipient process of forming Communist elements in the workers' movement, the existence of Communist groups and a growth not only of their ideological but of their organisational influence? In my view, we cannot. But at the same time there is no doubt that the condition of the organised Communist movement in India is extremely backward, and that it is a question of life and death to retrieve the lost ground. In the conditions now established time will not wait. The Indian Communists are risking the likelihood of their falling into a torrent of great events in a disintegrated and impotent state, they are risking the likelihood of losing the game for the proletariat at the present stage of the struggle.

One of the chief reasons for this backwardness in the organisation of the C.P. in India

consists in the fact that the young Indian proletariat has to carry on a struggle against British imperialism, the most experienced and the most astute of all imperialisms in the work of suppressing and disintegrating revolutionary forces; and furthermore, it has to carry on that struggle almost alone. In the struggle against the Indian Communist movement the British Government is applying the entire system of rationalised methods known to the European and American secret police. Together with penal servitude for those who are merely suspected of Communism, together with death sentences, the British Government has sought to poison the revolutionary movement by other methods, by simulating the possibility of the Communist Party of India having a legal existence. This "Communist Party of India," which existed legally on paper, and in which together with honest revolutionary elements were also petty bourgeoisie confusionists, and openly suspect elements, by its utter impotence, passivity, and complete severance from the mass struggle could only give the workers the impression that the organisation of a Communist Party in India is quite impossible. The fact that the legal Communist Party neither lives nor dies has led to the theory that its destiny is to "occupy an empty place," whilst the struggle of the workers and peasants has to go on independently of the C.P., outside it and under the leadership of other party organisations. And in these circumstances the worker-peasant parties which were at first connected with the left wing of the National Congress afterwards began to acquire the sympathy of the workers and peasants seeking organisational forms for their struggle.

The increase in the activity of the masses, and particularly of the working class, cannot but be reflected in the development of the Worker-Peasant parties also. On comparing the decisions of the conferences of the Worker-Peasant Parties held in December, 1927 and 1928, the character and also the rate of their development is clear beyond all doubt. The practical activity of these parties has changed still more considerably. Hence arises the present attack being made by British imperialism along the whole line against the worker-peasant parties. But in exact accordance with

the growth of the movement and the development of the positive activity of the worker-peasant parties, its negative sides, as a party of dual elements, began to be revealed in practice, and that not only in the sense of the dangers which the mixing of the working class and the peasantry in one party may bring in the future, but also in the sense of the harm which it is already bringing now, by hiding the Communist Party, by taking its place, by conducing to the spread of the most dangerous illusion that the absence of a Communist Party can be compensated for by the activity of the worker-peasant parties. Thus India also, albeit in a different form from other colonial countries, has already revealed the tendency to "re-dye the pseudo-Communist revolutionary emancipation movements in backward countries in the hue of Communism," a tendency against which Lenin warned us that it was necessary to wage a resolute struggle ten years ago at the Second Congress of the Comintern.

Without prejudging the question of what forms of mass workers' and mass peasants' organisations are most expedient in the present period in India, one may nevertheless remark that the left wing trade union movement, and the factory committees selected at delegate meetings of the workers, constitute a base for such a mass workers' organisation. The existence of a Communist Party and its fractions in all organisations, and in the unions first and foremost, its struggle for the exploitation of all the legal possibilities, will ensure the leading role of the Communists. It is inexpedient artificially to unite the peasant committees and unions, which are the elemental organisational forms of the peasant movement and which develop in the process of the peasantry's active demonstrations on the basis of their sectional demands, into an all-Indian organisation, for reasons which we have already stated. The carriers of the Communist influence into the local peasant organisations are the industrial workers, who in India remain connected with the countryside to a considerable extent, and many of whom return to the villages during a strike, and also the plantation workers. The workers-peasants' bloc might take the organisational form of workers-peasants' committees, elected at local conferences from repre-

sentatives of the workers' organisations and the peasants' unions. Here also the centre of attention should be concentrated on ensuring that these committees are an expression of a militant alliance, that their programme should contain the clearly formulated demands of the current struggle, that they should enrol their leading ranks from workers and peasants thrown up by the masses in the course of that struggle. The most dangerous phenomenon in India is the endeavour of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, with its philanthropic attitude to the peasantry, with its interest in land rent, to exploit the enforced stagnation of the peasantry in order to claim to represent it in all organisations. In the organisation of the worker-peasant committees a maximum of suspicion of these intelligentsia upper groups, and an endeavour to establish direct connections with the peasant masses is obligatory. In all these organisations, whatever their forms, the proletariat is to act as an independent force. Its party is not to be mixed or blended with others. It will address itself to the masses in its own name and through the medium of its Communist Party.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIES OF THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

The Indian revolution can be victorious only under the leadership of the proletariat and as part of the world proletarian revolution. A blow inflicted on British imperialism in India is a blow to all the capitalist world. The proletariat of India has allies not only inside the country. Its tasks are of an international character; its allies on the world scale are the international proletariat and the colonial revolutions of all the oppressed peoples. The nearest and immediate allies of the Indian revolution in their joint struggle against British imperialism are the British proletariat and the Chinese revolution.

After long years of study of the Irish question, and on the basis of the experience of the national movement in Ireland, Marx wrote: "A decisive blow to the ruling classes of Britain can be inflicted not in England, but only in Ireland, and it would be of decisive importance to the workers' movement of the whole world." (Marx: letter to Danielson, 19th February, 1881.) During the decades

which have passed since Marx wrote these lines the situation throughout the world and in Britain first and foremost has changed profoundly. The Irish insurrection took place at a moment when the European insurrection of the proletariat had not matured. On the other hand, at the moment of the insurrection, British imperialism had at its disposal adequate resources not only to suppress that rising by armed force, but also to resolve the revolutionary crisis in Ireland and in the countryside first and foremost by reformist methods.

At the present moment the positions of the British bourgeoisie are incomparably more vulnerable in Britain itself, than they were before and during the first years of the war. The influence of those perverted by super profit of the bribed lieutenants of the bourgeoisie, and the bribed lieutenants of the bourgeoisie, and is becoming an enormous revolutionary force. On the other hand the blow which the Indian revolution will administer to British imperialism is certainly not weaker than the blow which it avoided in Ireland: the distance separating Bombay and Calcutta from London is only enormous geographically. A revolutionary conflagration in India is a conflagration in the chief stronghold of British reaction. The developing revolutionary blows of the British proletariat and the Indian revolution, combined, albeit not entirely coinciding in point of time, will settle accounts with British imperialism.

In these combined blows an extraordinarily important role will be played by the reciprocal action of the Chinese and Indian revolutions. We have above noted one of the manifestations of this reciprocal action: the class growth of the Indian proletariat on the lessons of the Chinese revolution. There is no doubt whatever that in its turn the Indian revolution will evoke new strength in and a new outbreak of the Chinese movement. The worker and peasant movement of China was suppressed not so much by the forces of the Chinese bourgeoisie and gentry, as by the forces of world imperialism, among which the British and Japanese played the decisive role. Any weakening of the positions of British imperialism in India will bring alleviation to the Chinese revolution also. Any success achieved by the proletariat in Bombay or Calcutta is



providing direct support to the proletariat of Shanghai and Wuhan.

The difficulties confronting the Indian revolution are extraordinarily great. A systematic, deliberate struggle, waged without illusions, but also without pessimism, against these difficulties along all the long road is possible only provided the revolutionary advance guard of the proletariat, its Communist Party, keeps before it the main tasks confronting the colonial revolution, with a view to overthrowing imperialism and annihilating its political and economic annexations. As a section of the Comintern, the C.P. of India must elucidate, must agitate, and in the course of the struggle must gradually lead the masses to the realisation of their tasks, and then to the struggle for their accomplishment in the developed form in which they are formulated in the program of the Communist International.

The proletariat is already acting as the most active force in the national revolution. It is already head and shoulders above not only its opponents, but also its petty bourgeois allies. Acting as an independent class force, building up its own Communist Party, the

proletariat, and only the proletariat, is in a condition to mobilise the peasant and petty bourgeois masses for the struggle to drive out imperialism and to pull up the roots of its economic power.

The already developing wave of proletarian economic strikes, the proletariat's political demonstrations, and the co-ordination of strikes with demonstrations have revealed all the strength of the revolutionary energy in the proletariat; but also all the unpreparedness of the organisation and the leadership. Even if this wave were temporarily to ebb, it would profoundly disturb the people's consciousness, would give the peasantry a mass revolutionary education. In the conditions of India to-day it would inevitably be followed by a further wave of still greater dimensions and might. The course of the revolutionary development places the general strike on the agenda of the revolutionary struggle. Among the tasks of the Communists during the present period are the preparation and organisation of the general strike, and also the propaganda of the necessity for the political strikes to develop still further. Without this, India cannot be free.