

# GANDHI'S POLICY AND THE PROLETARIAN MOVEMENT

According to recent newspaper reports, Gandhi, the Indian nationalist leader, was preparing to use the power conferred on him by the Indian National Congress in the month of January, for the purpose of carrying on an active campaign of "non-cooperation" throughout the country.

This event is important in that it marks a new attempt of the bourgeoisie of India to resume the struggle against British Imperialism under the pressure of continued agitation of the worker and peasant masses.

A problem of prime importance for British Imperialism, as well as for the Communist International, is that of the Indian Revolution. For England, its importance is infinitely greater than that of the Chinese Revolution. Although the Indian Revolutionary movement is unfolding thousands of miles away from the Metropolis, it affects one of the principal vital centers of the English Empire. As for the Communist International, it is occupied with a big battle in India, which, with improper leadership, can prove even more disastrous to it than its defeats in Germany in 1923 and in China in 1925-27.

## British Policy in India

India is England's last great colony—Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc., have long since become Dominions under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie united with the English capitalists. India alone remains completely dependent on England. It embraces a mass of 300 million inhabitants, which means a formidable proletariat, although mainly a peasant one. Considerable English capital is invested in India; and in addition it provides an indispensable market for British industry. Its location, important from an economic point of view, has an added importance from a strategic point of view. India is the center of an expanse which extends southward to Africa and Australia, and northward to Egypt and China. English policy in the Mediterranean, Gibraltar, Malta and Suez, is determined by the necessity to maintain at any price the freedom of communication with India. Under these conditions, the necessity for continuing the domination of India by force cannot become weaker. Baldwin, Lloyd George or MacDonald—all carry out, and are compelled to carry out the same policy, that is, a policy of coercion and violence against the worker and peasant masses and in certain circumstances, even against the petty-bourgeoisie.

## Gandhi's Policy Is Unstable

The nationalist bourgeoisie and Gandhi, its leader, pursue a policy of instability toward the government and toward the revolutionary masses. In India, as elsewhere, the petty bourgeoisie represents strata susceptible to various influences, and never able to pursue consistently and energetically either a reactionary or revolutionary policy. The petty bourgeoisie, and even large sections of the big bourgeoisie in India, are naturally nationalistic; that is, they demand national sovereignty for India, which means the right for the Indian bourgeoisie alone to exploit the worker and peasant masses. Among the Indian nationalists there are variations in program and in the means of applying it. Some would be satisfied with a Dominion status while others, now in the majority, want to push the struggle until complete independence is achieved. It is because of the pressure from the growing unrest of the masses, taking the form of important strikes in the large cities, that certain nationalist leaders, among them Gandhi, go as far as that.

But the truth is that these leaders have never stopped negotiating with British imperialism and betraying the revolutionary masses. This policy finds characteristic expression in the attitude of Gandhi, apostle of "non-violence" and "non-resistance" with the English imperialists, but who forgets that English domination is maintained only by violence, and that, like all class domination, it can be destroyed only by violence.

The Indian nationalists reissue under a new form, or at least are attempting to reissue the politics of the Chinese Kuo Min Tang, that is, an alliance of workers, peasants, artisans and the petty bourgeoisie

under the leadership of the petty bourgeoisie against foreign imperialism. However, the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants constantly outstrips the action of the nationalists.

## Indian Masses Militant

This is because the workers—metallurgical, longshore, textile, as well as the farm hands, the artisans and the ruined peasants, etc.—fight against the British capitalists as being an enemy class. In order that their class liberation be complete, they must overthrow not only the domination of the British bourgeoisie but also that of the Indian bourgeoisie. For them the national deliverance can only be the first stage in mass actions which will culminate in the overthrow of all capitalist oppression, and in the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat through which will be achieved the emancipation of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the proletariat organized in a class party.

Naturally in this perspective, which appears to be in line with the growing ferment of the masses, is violently combated by all sections of the native or British bourgeoisie, and, at the moment, it is not at all favored by the Communist International. The programs of the liberals, conservatives and intellectuals in India is at bottom the same, the only difference being in phraseology. Their opposition to the native bourgeoisie is coupled with the suppression of all workers' movements. British capitalism alternates periods of political tension with periods of apparent concessions.

It is these policies on the one hand, and the pressure exerted by the revolutionary masses on the other, that determine the course of evolution of the nationalist petty bourgeoisie. Naturally, the form and speed of the movement of the masses can be influenced to a large extent by the tactics for struggle laid down by the Communist International.

## Comintern Policy Continues Wrong Line

Unfortunately, the Communist International persists in a political bloc with the petty bourgeoisie in the same manner as that which led to the defeat of the Chinese proletariat. In theory it has corrected its tactical line. But in actuality it could not and still cannot change its method of combat. Its first concern should be the creation and building of a genuine proletarian party, completely independent of the various nationalists and "popular" groups. Only such a Party can lead the proletariat in virtue of the soundness of its doctrines, and its organization on the solid base of proletarian hegemony. But, it must be admitted, at present the Communist Party of India is almost non-existent. The Communist International carries on by means of superficial agitation among the nationalist masses, but it does nothing to hasten the formation of a genuine Communist Party in India. The International Communist press never makes mention of this Party. They never have a word to say about it. They never tell us of its struggles, its political developments, and of its activities among the masses.

This may seem astounding, but it is actually so. At the moment when a renewal of the proletarian struggle is unfolding, at the moment when the petty bourgeoisie is preparing to dupe the workers once again by drugging them into a meaningless struggle against English imperialism, the Indian Communist movement does not possess the least organization which would enable it, if not to conquer immediately, at least to place itself at the head of the struggling masses. The position of the Indian proletariat is thus very unfavorable. Gandhi, Nehru and the other nationalist chiefs enjoy great prestige among the peasant masses, and will make use of this prestige to deceive the masses, to check their revolutionary development, to bind them to conciliation with British imperialism. Before the cannon of the British police they will persuade the workers to refrain from all violence. What makes this a very serious situation is the absence of any coherent proletarian organization, of any Communist Party. The present trade union movement far from sufficing as a base for the offensive of the masses. What they need are the

cadres and the leadership of a Communist workers' organization.

## Task Is to Build a Communist Party

An important movement of the Indian workers, especially in the cities where tens of thousands of proletarians live under conditions even worse than those of Chinese coolies, outstrips the nationalist chief in a Leftward direction. It is under this pressure that Gandhi and the National Congress have once again started the struggle against England. But it is necessary, it is indispensable for the future that these workers should be under the influence of the Communist movement. For the activity of the National Congress and of Nehru cannot lead on the masses. Actually they follow the masses, but are ready to turn against them.

# The Split in the Leninbund

After barely six months struggle for the views of the Russian and the International Opposition led by comrade Trotsky, the Left Opposition in the German Leninbund was expelled at the instigation of Urbahns at a carefully "sifted" session of its National Executive Committee, on February 23.

After Maslow, Ruth Fischer, and Schollem emulated the example of capitulation set by Kamenev, Zinoviev, and others, the leadership of the Leninbund stood at the crossways. Its fundamental task was to sweep the boards clear of the theoretical and practical heritage of Maslow and R. Fischer, to build up a truly revolutionary German Left Opposition, and to link it up inseparably with the fighting Russian Opposition.

Developments have shown that the Leninbund leadership did not choose the historically necessary path. It did not make an end of the old tradition of covert factional struggle with the Russian Opposition. While on the one hand, the Leninbund leaders lived off the spiritual capital of the Russian Opposition, they did not give up their opportunism, superficialities and ambiguities. They did not so much lead the organization as alternately yield concessions, now to the Ultra-lefts, now to the Centrists, and then to the Right Wing tendencies. Without a clear-cut political position on the International and German problems of the class-struggle, the Leninbund confronted the Soviet-Chinese conflict (Far Eastern Railway) without a platform. The helplessness of this leadership was well characterized by the fact that the discussion of this question was allowed to open with an article entitled "Hands Off China" by a Korschist and a non-member of the organization.

## The Theoretical Misconceptions of the Leninbund

The articles of Urbahns and the position of the national committee are well known: A conception of ultra-left, social democratic and pacifist conceptions.

The repudiation of the proletarian character of the Soviet State, the theory of a "third type" state ("hybrid state") resting on an equilibrium of the class forces, has been the only "independent" pearl of wisdom contributed by the ultra-left Leninbund leaders. Such a theory spells the adoption of the Austro-Marxist appraisal of the nature of the Soviet State, general conception of the State, and rupture with the Marxian-Leninist theory.

On the basis of its fallacious analysis, the Leninbund leadership was led to adopt the idea of a second party. Denying that the Soviet power is a proletarian state, despairing of the Comintern and German Party, losing all faith in the possibilities of its proletarian rank and file, the Leninbund leaders looked for salvation in the formation of a second (dual) party. The "declaration" of the Russian Opposition (Rakovsky, Okudschawa, etc.) was interpreted by the Leninbund leadership as a step in the direction of capitulation. The conception of the role of the Opposition as a faction fighting to win the proletarian core of the Party was regarded by the Leninbund leaders as masked capitulation.

## Political Bankruptcy of Urbahns

In the German questions, Urbahns has not been able to define his position up to the very present. The leadership has been working on a "program of action" behind closed doors, since the meeting of the

national committee last October. Urbahns himself had to admit at the national committee (February 23) that the leadership has not been able to work out this "action program."

The only thing they did not have to learn was the Zinovievist Comintern methods. In this they appear to outdistance the master." By suppressing all proletarian thought and political discussion, by systematically diverting the attention of the membership from the big questions, the Urbahns group was able to exclude the Left Opposition at the handpicked "Reichsausschuss" (National Committee).

The extent of the ideological confusion in the Urbahns Group may be judged from the conclusions of the speakers at the "Reichsausschuss" . . . "The Communist Party of Germany no longer harbors any revolutionary workers" . . . The politically unorganized are more revolutionary than the communist workers" (Deductions of the representative of a bloc with the Right Wing) . . . "Social Fascism now rules Russia. Russia has entered upon its 18th Brumaire" . . . (Reporter from a conference in Halle). "The theory of the Comintern regarding social fascism is correct. Industrial Unionism is our salvation" . . . "Out of the old trade unions ("free trade unions"), blocs in the unions and other organizations, not only with the Rights but with the remains of the U. S. P. D. (Independent Socialists) and the S. P. D. (Social Democratic Party)." Urbahns and others were of the latter opinion.

## The Decline of the Leninbund

The result of this policy is a catastrophic defeat at the communal elections, a disastrous drop in the membership (from about 6,000 at the time the expulsion from the Party to, at the most, 400 to 500 today). The *Fahne des Kommunismus* which was issued four times a week, is now a Weekly; lack of a platform owing to impotence, and rupture with the Russian and International Opposition. Without a platform, without a press, without a rudder or sail, the Urbahns organization is going full steam ahead to its complete collapse.

The struggle with the Right Liquidators and the criminal adventurist policies of Contrism will be conducted by the Left Communist Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninist) in Germany in closest organizational connection and principled agreement with the International and Russian Opposition. Only the petty-bourgeois and those who are completely hopeless, can bewail this "newest" split. Freed from the harmful and irresponsible politics of the Urbahns leadership, the German Left Opposition will develop its program on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the international and German position, and will gather the proletarian cadres of the Party in the struggle against the Centrist leadership, for the reform and the conquest of the Communist International and the Party.

—ROMAN WELL.

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