

In India

The C. I. and Two-Class Parties

The sharpening of the class struggle in India finds the proletariat of that country in the absence of a conscious vanguard, a Communist Party, unable to take the leadership in the rising movement against British Imperialism. The bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalists are able to get control of the movement, lead it into "safe" channels and ultimately betray it. The attempts of sections of the nationalist movement, i. e., the All-Indian Youth League, the workers and peasants of Peshawar, the railroad workers, the textile workers of Bombay, etc., to break away from this leadership have met with only partial success.

Why is there no Communist Party in India today? This question which confronts every Communist and class-conscious worker must receive a definite answer.

"The Two-Class Party" Policy

The Comintern under the leadership of Stalin and Bucharin (1924-28) basing itself on an incorrect estimation of the degree of stabilization of world capitalism and the relation of class forces, separated the question of bourgeois democratic revolution in the colonial countries from that of the proletarian dictatorship and consequently based its activities in these countries on dual composition class parties. (In China, the bloc of the four classes in the Kuomintang and later the "Left" Kuomintang, in Japan, the Workers and Peasants Party, in Mexico, Workers and Peasants Bloc)—in India, "Workers and Peasants Parties").

Every once in a while one reads a declaration of the "Communist Party of India" or representatives of such a "Party" would appear at Congresses, Plenums, etc. In reality there are only a handful of individual Communists, according to a leading member of the Anti-Imperialist League, about 75 scattered throughout the country, having no central organization and no collective activity. Most of them, under instructions from the E. C. C. I., worked hand in hand with petty bourgeois elements in building "Workers' and Peasants' parties".

But, a combination of events forced a "change". This was the joint pressure of the Left Opposition led by comrade Trotsky the change in the correlation of class forces in the Soviet Union, the crushing defeat of the Chinese proletariat due in great measure to the criminal subordination of the C.P. of China first to the Kuomintang and later the "Left" Kuomintang, etc. The occasion for this "change" was the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (August-September, 1928).

At this time the Comintern leadership was compelled to admit that it was responsible for the "Workers' and Peasants' parties in India" and officially to repudiate such tactics. Sikandar Sur, the reporter on the Indian question, in his summary, stated:

"The Workers' and Peasants' Parties exist owing to the wrong tactics and instructions of the Comintern. The last report of the Annual conference of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' parties show that the party is falling into the hands of philanthropic petty bourgeoisie. Our comrades do not hold office there. Comrade Shubin (Soviet Union—J.C.) is absolutely wrong when he talks of the inadvisability of forming a Communist Party on account of objective difficulties. But should we surrender to obstacles or should we overcome them?" (Inprecorr—Vol. 8, No. 78 p. 1473). Even here, we have no real repudiation of dual composition class parties, but such parties in which "our comrades do not hold any offices."

The official colonial theses of the Congress had this to say in reference to the question at hand. "Special Workers' and Peasants' Parties whatever revolutionary character they may possess, can too easily at particular periods, be converted into ordinary petty bourgeois parties, and accordingly, Communists are not recommended to organize such parties." (Inprecorr, Vol. 8, No. 88 — P. 1670). Communists are not recommended, not advised to build workers' and peasants' parties! Since when does the Comintern hand out mere advice and recommendations to Communists? It is obvious that this "literary change" in policy is meant primarily for the record. It also leaves the door open for a repetition

of Stalin's sophistry on the Kuomintang. That is the argument that the Communists did not "organize" the party but came into it in order to get to the masses.

It should be also noted that the phrase "at particular periods (can) be converted into ordinary petty bourgeois parties" is an underhanded attempt to excuse the Comintern's policy of building such parties "at particular times".

After the Sixth Congress

Not only was a Communist Party not formed after the Sixth Congress, but the official Comintern press continued to speak of the "Workers' and Peasants' Parties" as a legal expression of the Communists in India. For example, the erstwhile Comintern specialist on India, M.N. Roy, writing on the municipal elections in Bombay stated: "Owing to the doubtful position of the Communist Party (!) and the general antagonism to Communism that characterizes the present bourgeois political atmosphere of the country, the election was contested (by the Communists—J.C.) in the name of the Workers' and Peasants' party"—and later adds "By contesting the election the Communists gave another sign of their political independence (sic!). Most resolute fighters for national freedom, they will defend the interest of the working class not only against foreign imperialism, but also native capitalism. By these tactics of the revolutionary class struggle the Communists will mobilize and lead the proletariat as the driving force of the national revolution." (Inprecorr—Vol. 9, No. 12—March 1st, 1929). What could be plainer? Roy and his political allies, Lovestone and Brandler, demagogically criticize the Stalinists today for not having built a Communist Party in India! These individuals who share the responsibility with the Stalins' and Kuusinsens for the past Kuomintang tactic now call for the building of a Communist Party side by side with a "national revolutionary party". But what will be the role of the Communist Party? The objective logic of their policy means the subordination of the C. P. to the "national revolutionary party", the duplicating of the events of 1925-26-27 in China.

Again, after the Sixth Congress, the hitherto scattered and unconnected Workers' and Peasants' parties, for the first time organized a national party, the "Workers' and Peasants' Party of India". What was the attitude of the Comintern towards this conference?

The "Workers' and Peasants' Party"

Discussing the Conference of the Work-

Flaunt Royal Courts at British Workers

Helston, Cornwall

Editors, the Militant:—

We know that ghastly destitution prevails in your country as in ours; and that in your city streets, and upon the high roads affluence and misery are often sharply contrasted when the motor car of the millionaire scatters dust or mud on the unemployed worker tramping hopelessly on the search of a job which does not exist. But these contrasts are the result of chance encounters; the rich man is out on his daily business or possibly he is bent on pleasure. In no case does he organize hundreds of his wealthy friends to display themselves in gorgeous attire at a given time, as a provocative and shameful contrast to the wretchedness of thousands of the surrounding population.

But this is the spectacle we can see in London whenever a Royal Court is held and we have had four of them this spring. The women have worn gowns of silk and lace with trains encrusted with jewels, and had ornaments of precious stones. Some have even worn shoes with jeweled heels. And all this perfectly unnecessary display has been made in a wealthy capital city which can show the most appalling depth of poverty among its hosts of slum dwellers.

While the company at the palace at a recent court were partaking of the customary refreshments, served on gold plate, a fleet of motor cars could speedily have conveyed the whole of the guests to houses where (after supping in a very different fashion) adults of both sexes and child-

ers' and Peasants' Party Roy wrote:

"Meeting in this atmosphere of revolutionary development from all sides, the Workers' and Peasants' Party, whose driving forces are the Communists, was objectively the most important event of the moment. The Workers' and Peasants' Party is not the Communist Party (sic!), although the Communists play in it the leading and dominating role. Several years ago it appeared on the scene as the first sign of radicalization of the nationalist masses. As such the Communists supported it and aided its growth. Practically all the great strikes of the last two years were led under the banner of the Workers' and Peasants' Party. The object of the Communists was to make this new party the rallying ground for all the nationalist revolutionary elements, to develop it into a revolutionary mass party which is a crying need of the moment." (Inprecorr, Vol. 9—No. 6—February 1, 1929). The above is a precise summary of the tactics of the Comintern in India for the past few years.

Roy however criticized the Conference for not having made provisions for united front action with the "League for Indian Independence" (the organization of the petty bourgeois intellectuals which Roy wished the Workers' and Peasants' Party, and the Communists to unite with to form his Indian "nationalist mass party").

Immediately Roy was rebuked. The Conference, a Comintern representative wrote, did make provision for united front action with the "League for Indian Independence." Roy is wrong, says the writer, Communists must not try and build "a mass nationalist party", but must build a Communist Party. But how about the Workers' and Peasants' Party? The writer states that confusion exists in the party; although it is showing signs of a "decided improvement"; its confusion is due to its character, in its "composition of two classes, which is bound to result in rendering vague the proletarian line itself." (!) The implications of the writer P. Sch. are clear. The line of the Workers' and Peasants' Party must be a class (!) policy; the Communists must organize themselves in a C.P. but at the same time struggle for a class line in the W. and P. party. (Inprecorr, Vol. 9, No. 16, March 29, 1929.) Nowhere in his article does P. Sch attempt to repudiate Roy's above quoted characterization of the role of the Communists in India. The Comintern, through P. Sch offers the conception of a "Left" Kuomintang as against a "whole" Kuomintang.

In April 1929, that is only a few months after the National Conference of the "Workers' and Peasants' Party of India", the British and Indian governments started a general offensive against strike leaders, revolutionary workers and Communists. Thirty one were arrested for carrying out

the orders of the Comintern in India and being in favor of the violent overthrow of the government. The Workers' and Peasants' Party broke down under the offensive. In a few months there was no Party. (Clemens Dutt, Labour Monthly—July 29, 1929) This again compelled the official Comintern press to speak about the necessity of a Communist Party in India.

Safarov's Apologetics for Stalin

In a recent issue of the Communist International (Vol. VII, No. 5, English Edition) G. Safarov, a former Oppositionist, with an even more flexible spine than his fellow-capitulators, discusses the situation in India. After condemning Roy's position on India he writes: "Of the same worth are the accusations of another careerist (!), a Max Shachtman, in the Militant, who accuses the Communist International of resisting the formation of a Communist Party in India." (Militant, Feb. 8). Both the Right and the 'Left' renegades ignore the real facts, for the birth of the revolutionary working class in India in 1928-29 is an indisputable fact... That did not and could not take place until the development of the class struggle had aroused the masses, until the slogans of the Comintern had turned into class reality. They could only be embodied in the real life of India thanks to the self-development of the working class, in the process of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism." (P. 48). Safarov undertakes a task never before attempted in the Party press—to explain why no C.P. was built in India.

First, he does not deny the accusation of comrade Shachtman that the Comintern resisted the formation of a C.P. in India. Secondly, who denies the existence of a revolutionary working class in India in 1928-29? Certainly not the Left! Third, if one is to make sense of this quotation one must interpret Safarov as saying: There was no revolutionary working class in India until 1928-29, because the development of the class struggle had not aroused the masses; therefore a Communist Party could not be built. Let us dissolve the Communist Party of the United States because there is no revolutionary working class in this country!

It is the Communist Party which must help intensify the class struggle. Fourth, a C.P. could not be built in India "until the slogans of the Comintern had been turned into class reality" (Page 48). Who was to propagate the slogans of the Comintern? The Workers' and Peasants' Parties, individual Communists? What slogans had to be turned into class reality? The "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" or perhaps (and we are not very far from the truth) the realization of a "powerful mass Workers' and Peasants' party"?

The official press once again carries reports of leaflets issued by the Workers' and Peasants' Party without comment of its own. The Stalinist press gives little information as to what the Comintern is actually doing in India today.

The Daily Worker from time to time speaks of the formation in the "near future" of an All-Indian Communist Party. In one of its issues, (Wednesday, May 21, 1930), it carries on its front page photostatic copies of two issues of the "Workers' Weekly". The story underneath it runs: "The first Marxist-Leninist paper published in India, is shown above in the headings of two issues. The 'Workers' Weekly' began publication in Bombay on January 26, and is acting as the ideological leader and organization center for the forces of the working class in the Indian Revolution".

The April 30 issue of Inprecorr available at least one month before the Daily Worker story, carries an article by V. Chattopadhyaya (one of the secretaries of the World Anti-Imperialist League and the latest of the Stalinist writers on India) with the following: "The Workers' Weekly, the new organ of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, points out in its last issue that the movement has gone far beyond Gandhi and the Congress, and calls for a general strike throughout India." (The Revolutionary Situation in India—V. Chattopadhyaya Vol. 10 No. 21).

How are we to explain this? Is the Comintern at present building a "Left" Kuomintang in India or doing nothing at all? What efforts are being made to build a Communist Party? What has happened to the All-Indian Communist Party that was to be formed in the near future? What is this "revolutionary Marxian Workers' Party"? These questions must be answered.

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—M. SHOOTER