

2. "An Indian Communist Manifesto"

The time has come for the Indian revolutionists to make a statement of their principles in order to interest the European and American proletariat in the struggle of the Indian masses, which is rapidly becoming a fight for economic and social emancipation and the abolition of class rule. The appeal is made to the British proletariat because of their relation to revolutionary movements in countries dominated by British imperialism.

The nationalist movement in India has failed to appeal to the masses, because it strives for a bourgeois democracy and cannot say how the masses will be benefited by independent national existence. The emancipation of the working class lies in the social revolution and the foundation of a communist state. Therefore the growing spirit of rebellion in the masses must be organised on the basis of class struggle in close cooperation with the world proletarian movements.

But, because British domination deprives Indians of the elementary rights indispensable for the organisation of such a struggle, the revolutionary movement must emphasise in its programme the political liberation of the country. This does not make its final goal a bourgeois democracy under which the native privileged class would rule and exploit the native workers in place of British bureaucrats and capitalists. All that the world is allowed to know of the

Indian revolutionary movement is the agitation for political autonomy. This has naturally failed to enlist the sympathy of the working class in any country, which must always be indifferent to purely nationalist aspirations.

The idea of class-conscious rebellion against capitalistic exploitation has been gaining ground in India, immensely stimulated by the war. The quickened industrial life, the rise in the cost of living, the employment of Indian troops overseas and the echoes of the Russian revolution have fanned the discontent always existing in the masses. The nationalist revolutionary movement, recruited from educated youths of the middle classes, tried to turn the discontent to an armed uprising against foreign rule. Since the beginning of the present century, terrorism, local insurrections, conspiracies and attempts to revolt have become more and more frequent until at last practically the whole country came under martial law. These activities did not inspire the masses with lasting enthusiasm: the leaders failed to prescribe remedies for the social and economic evils from which the workers suffer. But dynamic economic forces, which are destined to cause a proletarian revolt in every country, have grown acute in India and hence the spirit of rebellion has grown more and more manifest among the people who were not moved by the nationalist doctrines preached by the revolutionaries. Today there are two tendencies in the Indian movement, distinct in principles and aims. The nationalists advocate an autonomous India and incite the masses to overthrow the foreign exploiter upon a vague democratic programme or no programme at all. The real revolutionary movement stands for the economic emancipation of the workers and rests on the growing strength of a class conscious industrial proletariat and landless peasantry. This latter movement is too big for the bourgeois leaders and can only be satisfied with the social revolution. This manifesto is issued for those who fill the ranks of the second movement. We want the world to know that nationalism is confined to the bourgeois, but the masses are awakening to the call of the social revolution.

The growth of class-consciousness in the Indian proletariat was unknown to the outer world until last year, when

one of the most powerful and best organised strikes in history was declared by the Indian revolutionaries. Though the nationalists used it as a weapon against political oppression, it was really the spontaneous rebellion of the proletariat against unbearable economic exploitation. As the workers of the cotton mills owned by native capitalists were the first to walk out it cannot be maintained that the strike was nothing more than a nationalist demonstration.

It is known in England how this revolt of the famished workers was crushed by British imperialism. But the British working class were misled into believing that it was merely a nationalist demonstration and therefore abstained from taking definite action according to the principles of class solidarity. A simultaneous general strike would have dealt a vital blow to imperialistic capitalism at home and abroad, but the British proletariat failed to rise to the occasion.

The only step taken was very weak and of a petty bourgeois nature—the protest against the manner of crushing the revolt signed by Smillie, Williams, Lansbury and Thomas. This was not the voice of the revolutionary proletariat raised to defend class interest.

The bourgeois nationalist movement cannot be significant to the world proletarian struggle or to the British working class, which is learning the worthlessness of mere political independence and sham representative government under capitalism. But the Indian proletarian movement is of vital interest. The tremendous strength which imperialistic capitalism derives from extensive colonial possessions rich in natural resources and cheap human labour must no longer be ignored. So long as India and other subject countries remain helpless victims of capitalist exploitation and the British capitalist is sure of his absolute mastery over millions and millions of human beasts of burden, he will be able to concede the demands of British trade unionists and delay the proletarian revolution which will overthrow him. In order to destroy it completely world capitalism must be attacked simultaneously on every front. The British proletariat cannot march towards final victory unless he takes his comrades in the colonies along with him to fight the common enemy.

The loss of the colonies might alarm orthodox trade union psychology with the threat of unemployment, but a class-conscious revolutionary proletariat, aiming at the total destruction of capitalist ownership and the establishment of a communist state, cannot but welcome such a collapse of the present system since it would lead to the economic bankruptcy of capitalism—a condition necessary for its final overthrow.

To all possible misgivings of British comrades we declare that our aim is to prevent the establishment of a bourgeois nationalist government which would be another bulwark of capitalism. We wish to organise the growing rebelliousness of the Indian masses on the principles of the class struggle, so that when the revolution comes it will be social revolution. The idea of the proletarian revolution distinct from nationalism has come to India and is showing itself in unprecedented strikes. It is primitive and not clearly class-conscious so that it sometimes is the victim of nationalist ideas. But those in the van see the goal and the struggle and reject the idea of uniting the whole country under nationalism for the sole purpose of expelling the foreigner, because they realise that the native princes, landholders, factory owners, moneylenders, who would control the government, would not be less oppressive than the foreigner. "Land to the toiler" will be our most powerful slogan, because India is an agricultural country and the majority of the population belongs to the landless peasantry. Our programme also calls for the organisation of the Indian proletariat on the basis of the class struggle for the foundation of a communist state, based during the transition period on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We call upon the workers of all countries especially Great Britain to help us to realise our programme. The proletarian struggle in India as well as in other dependencies of Great Britain should be considered as vital factors in the international proletarian movement. Self-determination for India merely encourages the idea of bourgeois nationalism. Denounce the masked imperialists who claim it and who disgrace your name (of British workers). The fact that India is ruled by the mightiest imperialism known to history makes

any kind of revolutionary organisation among the working class almost impossible. The first step towards the social revolution must be to create a situation favourable for organising the masses for the final struggle. Such a situation can be created only by the overthrow or at least the weakening of the foreign imperialism which maintains itself by military power.

Cease to fall victims to the imperialist cry that the masses of the East are backward races and must go through the hell fires of capitalistic exploitation from which you are struggling to escape. We appeal to you to recognise the Indian revolutionary movement as a vital part of the world proletarian struggle against capitalism. Help us to raise the banner of the social revolution in India and to free ourselves from capitalistic imperialism that we may help you in the final struggle for the realisation of the universal communist state.

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(NAI-HPD, August 1920, File No. 110, Weekly Report of the Director, Central Intelligence, Simla, 2 August 1920—"The Bolshevik Menace".)