

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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May Day Manifesto

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**The Land Question
in Mexico**

Theoretical Organ of the
INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

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May Day Manifesto

To the Workers and Oppressed Masses of the World:

May Day 1940 — the day of international solidarity — finds the proletariat of the world destroying itself on the battlefield of Europe in the interests of finance capital.

The world scene this May Day is one of unparalleled murder and banditry. On every hand we behold the foul fruit of capitalism in its full ripeness and rotten decay — imperialist war, plunder of small nations, ruthless inroads on the living standards of the working class, unprecedented starvation for the unemployed, brutal subjection for the colonial peoples. The new imperialist world war for the redivision of the world and its markets is gaining momentum daily. More and more nations are being drawn fully into the bloodbath: yesterday France, Great Britain and Germany, Soviet Russia and Finland; today Norway; tomorrow the whole world from pole to pole will be drawn into the conflict. Millions of the finest youth of every nation are being used as cannonfodder to create profits for the greedy Morgans, Deterdings, Krupps, Schneiders and their like.

In this black hour of reaction, when every vestige of working class rights gained by years of tireless struggle, is being erased by the lust for profits, it is necessary that we speak out clearly and firmly on the **ONLY ROAD TO PEACE AND FREEDOM**. The International Contact Commission for the New Communist (4th) International summons the proletariat of the whole world, regardless of all divisions of race, color, language, creed or anything else, to **STOP** this bestial slaughter, to turn the capitalist war for profits into a **Workers' War** against the Profit System!

AGAINST ALL THE BELLIGERENTS

For the workers of all lands there are neither aggressors nor defenders, neither "good" nor "bad" capitalist nations. Responsible for the war are the imperialists of **ALL** nations, both the Allied and the Axis powers; America as well as Japan and Italy. All are

equally guilty; all must be equally destroyed if mankind is ever to achieve peace and security.

Tear the mask from the lies of British, German, French, Italian, Japanese and American Imperialism! All the claims of Britain that she is fighting to end dictatorship, to defend the existence of small nations, are contradicted by her continued enslavement, by her brutal exploitation of the colonial masses in India, Arabia, Africa and a score of other places. No class-conscious worker will forget how many thousands of Irish workers have lost their lives in the still unsuccessful struggle for independence. Easter of 1916 is still fresh in the minds of millions of Irish men and women. Nor will the post-war massacre of Peshawar be lightly ignored by the Indian textile-worker, slaving for starvation wages so that Manchester can maintain its textile dominance.

Lying French Imperialism also prattles about "democracy", while millions of French workers are working 60 to 72 hours a week, are being deprived of every single workers right fought for and gained in the last 150 years; while millions of colonials in Indo-China, Morocco, and Equatorial Africa are being starved and slaughtered in the interests of the French Capitalists.

German Imperialism, like its British and French kin, shouts of "living-space" and the right of self determination, while it destroys one small nation after another, while it throws hundreds of thousands of workers into concentration camps to be slowly starved or murdered in the dead of night. And what is true of German, French and British Imperialism is just as equally true of American, Japanese and Italian Imperialism.

The world crisis of capitalism has reached unheard-of proportions. The desperation of capitalism leads it to untold actions of barbarism, to the most brazen blood-bath of all history.

The neutral nations and the small nations merely play the part of puppets in the hands of one or the other of the great imperialist powers.

The Balkans, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, all find themselves subordinated to the interests of the groups of finance capitalists, fighting for world domination.

DOMINATION OF THE EARTH

The question at dispute — for which millions of innocent boys are to lay down their lives — is who shall dominate the world markets, reap the profits from the robbery of the colonial masses and the workers everywhere. The main antagonists in the dispute are British and American Imperialism. The main loot lies in Asia; the present war is only a first step in the direction of the plunder of Asia, where Japanese Imperialism has already consolidated a temporary foothold. Every nation — even those not yet directly involved in the military struggles — is already involved in the war; especially the strongest of the so-called neutrals, American Imperialism.

The United States, like a vulture, hovers over the battle-fields, waiting for the opportune moment to swoop down and throw her weight and wealth into the struggle wherever it offers the most advantage. Every day brings the war plans of the United States capitalists nearer to fruition; every day finds the American working class more tightly shackled to the chariot of militarism.

The capitalists everywhere want to be victorious in this war so they can continue to oppress the millions of unfortunate wage slaves in the world today. The workers of the world must everywhere work for the defeat of their "own" capitalists and their armed forces in this war, must continue the class struggle until the imperialist war is turned into a civil war.

DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION

The working class has no interests in defending any capitalist nation. It is interested in defending only the one Workers State in the Soviet Union, where capitalist property relations have been destroyed and the property relations of a Workers Society establish-

ed. And it must defend that state despite the domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the parasitic caste which has tightly grasped the reins of the Soviet State and is steering its course back towards capitalist restoration. Only in a political revolution against Stalinism can the Soviet masses protect their October and extend it to the rest of the world. **DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION DESPITE AND AGAINST STALINISM!**

FOR THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The Second World War, like the first has its traitors and renegades in the ranks of the proletariat. The whole Second International stands today on the side of Anglo-French Imperialism. The Third International, born in the struggle against social-patriotism in the last War, has itself succumbed to patriotism on the side of the German Imperialists, the bandits on the other side of the fence.

The centrist London Buro and the centrist Trotskyites, both wings, stand on the platform of social-pacifism, of deceiving the proletariat with impossible dreams of peace without civil war.

Against these forces the International Contact Commission raises its voice to again reaffirm the lessons of the first World War.

Today, on historic May Day, celebrated as international labor's day of struggle, the I.C.C. sends its call to all the workers, all the toiling peasants, all the colonial masses of the world:

END THE GOVERNMENTS OF NATIONAL UNITY! DOWN WITH CLASS COLLABORATION! THE MAIN ENEMY IS AT HOME! CLASS AGAINST CLASS!

ONLY THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION CAN END WAR!

BREAK WITH YOUR MISLEADERS! TURN THE IMPERIALIST WAR INTO A CIVIL WAR!

FOR A WORKERS' COUNCIL GOVERNMENT! FOR WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION!

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS. YOU HAVE A WORLD TO GAIN!

Provisional
International Contact Commission
for the New Communist (4th) International
Central Committee of the Red Front of
Greater Germany.
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A New Stage in the Imperialist War

The Imperialist War is entering a new phase. The first phase was the short period in which Germany conquered Poland. The next phase consisted of the development and tightening of the British blockade and the various raids by both navies against merchant ships. The third phase was the Soviet-Finnish war. Although neither power was **directly** involved in the bigger war this was really an unsuccessful attempt by Anglo-French Imperialism to broaden the arena of the war, to create a flank movement against Germany from the North, rather than a direct attack against the West-wall. Very likely, too, a Balkan and Near East attack was also contemplated.

And now comes the "violation of Danish and Norwegian neutrality," the shift of the battlefront on sea and land, the intensification of the imperialist bloodbath.

The area of the crisis is being multiplied daily. The main arena for the moment is Norway, the Skagerrak, the Kattegat. The outcome of the struggle for the control of Norway will to a large degree determine the whole next phase of the war. If England's navy cannot wrest this area from Germany, then the Balkan countries will to a greater degree than ever before be at the mercy of Germany, and Hitler, in turn, can press Mussolini and Stalin harder.

Sweden is on the verge of being drawn into the war. In the Balkans new demands are being made by both sides, on the small powers like Rumania, Jugoslavia, Hungary. The struggle over Rumanian oil and wheat is becoming white hot. In the Adriatic, conflict between Britain and Italy is reaching large dimensions, as the Empire's navy threatens to close the Adriatic in order to check German shipping from Jugoslavian ports to Italy. And naturally, added to all these are the "old" fever areas: the battlefront in China, the threatened Khyber pass and the threatened Baku oil fields, the Dardanelles, Holland, Belgium, etc.

WHY NO "TOTAL WAR"

Why hasn't this bubble burst long before this? The answer is really not too hard to find.

The Imperialist conflict developed, matured, and broadened from the very moment of the end of the First World War of 1914-18. But the involvement of the Powers in the direct military phase proceeds at a differing tempo in all countries, depending for the most part on economic factors at home, the level of economic decay. It is no accident that the main MILITARY antagonists are Britain and Germany: German Imperialism with the most developed productive forces in Europe but approaching bankruptcy because of a lack of markets, political control over colonies, etc., and British Imperialism — with its French ally — which was the most seriously affected by German expansion, even though Italy, the U. S., and even Japan lost a good deal also by the swallowing up of Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Danzig, Poland.

Neither Germany, Britain, nor France, however, were desirous of engaging from the outset in what has been named by the press the "total war." The complaisance with which Britain permitted Poland to be swallowed up showed that British plans were laid long in advance, that the invasion of Poland was but the excuse. Had the Allies really wanted to save "poor little Poland" they could undoubtedly have given far greater aid; but their strategy was based on other considerations. The same was true of Germany. Following the conquest of Poland, Hitler attempted to achieve temporary "peace", to call off the war and to consolidate.

Neither the Allies nor Germany have yet begun to attack each other seriously. German factories under the mercy of French guns, and French factories which could be extinguished in a moment, are still operating peacefully after 7 months of war on the Franco-German frontier. It is beyond a scintilla of doubt that this state of "peacefulness" in the first period

of war was arrived at by formal or informal agreement between the "warring" powers.

U. S. IMPORTANCE

Behind the whole process, of course, is the grave imperialist fear of proletarian revolution. But in addition, what stays the hands of the imperialist bandits is not any humane desires to preserve human life, but the fear of exhausting their resources before the other powers enter. Germany and Britain are trying with all their might to keep off the "total war" until Uncle Sam becomes an active participant. Otherwise both powers will be reduced to such economic poverty that win or lose in the imperialist bloodbath, American Imperialism will gain the real fruits, will attempt to reorganize the whole world according to her own wishes. Britain well remembers the lessons of the first World War. America then fought on Britain's side; but America took more booty from England, gained more markets and spheres of influence AT THE EXPENSE OF HER "ALLY" than Britain gained from defeated Germany. Uncle Sam wrested control of Latin America from John Bull; he destroyed the role of the pound as the international medium of exchange and took over a much larger share of the world banking swindle than Britain had; he edged into the markets of the British Empire itself, notably Australia and New Zealand; and he completed the dominance of Canada. In spite of the military conflict in Europe and some parallel action of the United States with the Anglo-French, the fact remains that the Anglo-American antagonism is still the most fundamental of world imperialism. It manifests itself at every turn of events.

Neither England nor Germany wish to repeat the errors of the first war. Only these factors explain the failure of the war to date to take on a more bloody and aggressive form.

Events, however, move beyond the wishes of even the most farseeing imperialists. Even though they try to hold back the "total war" as long as possible, the same economic factors which underlie the war are forcing them to take more and more aggressive steps. The need for iron ore and foodstuffs FORCES Germany into Scandinavia. The need for oil, wheat, etc. is forcing the Hitler Regime to an attack on the Balkans, particularly Rumania. And each one of these steps must be answered by British and French Imperialism if they are to exist. They must attempt to invade Baku to keep Russian

oil from going to Hitler; they must invade Rumania to protect their large investments. They must keep control of the Mediterranean and stop Italy from swallowing up Jugoslavia if they are going to keep the sealanes of their empires under the control of the British and French navies.

Each power tries to keep out of the war as long as possible, but the inexorable economic realities, the simple fact that production is constantly outstripping markets, and the need for "new" markets, is forcing them all into the war earlier than they would like.

WHEN AMERICA WILL ENTER

American Imperialism, too, would like to stay out and reap wartime profits. But the titan of imperialism, as we pointed out in the past, has great dangers to contend with:

1 — The danger of the developing proletarian revolution, which would sweep all of capitalism into the dust-bin. America must see to it therefore that the various powers exhaust themselves in war as much as possible and to the advantage of Uncle Sam; but that they do not exhaust themselves **so much** that they are unable to combat revolutionary developments.

2 — The danger that either of the two present belligerent sides can win a decisive victory without exhausting itself and thus consolidating itself against American Imperialism. A victorious German, Russian, Italian bloc, for instance, could keep American trade and investment out of the greatest part of the Earth. Similarly a quick British victory and consolidation against Germany might have the same effect. America's policy in the whole sector from France to China since the last war (and before) has been, AND WILL INEVITABLY CONTINUE TO BE, to keep as much confusion, disorganization and weakness as possible; to prevent any one power from having dominant control of the area; to break up any possible four power bloc of Germany, Russia, Italy, Japan, as she check-mated any attempt by England in recent years to establish a four power bloc in Europe; and to force all these powers into dependence on the American dollar.

America must either enter the war and gain hegemony over a German-Russian-Italian, and possibly Japanese bloc; or organize successful parallel action with Britain and wring concessions from her "ally", as in the last war, which would now reduce both a

victorious Britain and a defeated Germany to second-rate powers — ALL UNDER THE THUMB OF UNCLE SAM.

The tide of events thus draws American Imperialism into the orbit of mass murder as well as the others. When the U. S. actually enters will depend on the events of the next period. Behind the scenes and in the economic and diplomatic spheres she already is a participant OF DECISIVE IMPORTANCE.

The present invasion of Scandinavia, specifically, was already foretold by the International Contact Commission at the time of the Russian invasion of Finland. In our February issue we pointed out that the Russo-Finnish war "is part of a much broader scheme of new divisions of spheres of influence and conquest in Sweden, Rumania, etc." Recent events have adequately confirmed this. Hitler permitted Stalinism its "pound of Flesh" in Finland only on the basis that the big booty shall go to Germany in taking all the rest of Scandinavia. In the present invasion of Norway Stalinism gives Hitler not only material aid — as in the past — but political aid as well. Before the whole world she has excused the invasion and condemned only British Imperialism for forcing the "peace-loving" butchers of Berlin to take this step.

THE NORWEGIAN BOURGEOISIE

The role of the Norwegian bourgeoisie is significant. The occupation of Oslo and Narvik was accomplished largely through the treachery of sections of the army. Germany seems to have had great influence over a great section of the native capitalists, who readily chose German occupation to British occupation. The so-called question of independence in the present invasion is not at all involved. It is merely a question of two sections of the Norwegian bourgeoisie falling back on their masters amongst the imperialists for protection and profit. Real independence is possible only through the proletarian revolution — not through any blocs with either German or British imperialism.

The big fleet owners in Norway readily fall back on British Imperialism in order to be able to continue their world shipping.

But each little step leads to another. Hitler and the German imperialist robbers want Norway to protect their iron ore shipments in Sweden to gain control of 1100 miles of

seacoast to break the blockade, and to form a new base for attack against Britain. But the battles in the Skagerrak and Kattegat will force Germany to find new communication lines — most likely Sweden; or to divert the British navy and armed forces elsewhere — possibly Holland and Belgium, possibly the Near East, possibly the Balkans. The next step is bound to involve directly or indirectly other imperialist powers, most likely Italy, possibly Japan launching a new series of invasions in Asia; and not at all excluded, America's entry within the next 6 month or 1 year period. Each step brings the "total war" nearer; condemns countless millions to brutal death.

NEW ULTRA-LEFT THEORIES

Our ultra-left "theoreticians", having looked at 6 months of "quiet" warfare have suddenly blossomed out with a new set of theories, and like the studious study-circle gentlemen they are, they have brought forth "facts and figures" to "prove" their point. It seems that imperialism is no longer capable of waging a war. Some of them have even stated that the present war is a pure farce to fool the workers (literally) and prepare for an invasion of the Soviet Union. Among the "proofs" listed is the fact that the war costs today are many times greater than in the last war; it takes as much as 10 men in the factory system in the rear to keep one man at the front supplied with the necessary amunitions, food, etc., whereas it took only one man in the last war to do the same thing.

We do not wish to argue on the specific figures. Facts prove, however, that the imperialists are well aware of this factor, that they have prepared for it long in advance. Capitalism in decay, in the midst of a new world carnage, has universally LENGTHENED THE WORK DAY. In the better days of capitalism the bourgeoisie could shorten the work day and nevertheless reap ever greater profits. Today, however, when so large a percentage of production is pure waste, destructive, they not only must introduce new labor-saving machinery, but must actually lengthen the work day as well.

France makes an excellent example. This "great democracy" has lengthened the work-day by almost 75% — by actual government decree. Hours over 40 a week are considered overtime, but everyone must work between 20 or 32 hours overtime at regular pay. Forty percent of the overtime pay is confiscated by

the government, in addition to the other war time taxes. Added to all this, both in England, France, and Germany "forced savings" are now being introduced. In other words the governments have devised a new method of robbing the proletariat to pay for the imperialist war. In addition the new high prices — in many cases double and triple the pre-war costs — are another method of shifting the burden.

NEW LEVELS OF CAPITALIST DECAY

Capitalist decay has reached such a stage that "free" labor, which was so vital to the development and growth of capitalism is now passe. Each belligerent has organized what amounts to a giant workshop system of forced labor, of serfdom relationships of each worker to his job, where no one can quit.

These methods not only show the decay of capitalism, but indicate the desperate measures the imperialists have taken to pay for their war, to keep their industrial machinery at high enough gear to supply the war front. The slow tempo of the first 7 month period must be ascribed not to the fact that war is "too costly", or that it takes too much man power in industry to keep the front supplied — because the cost of the war is being passed onto the working class far more than even at the close of the 1st bloodbath. The slow tempo is the result of the inner-imperialist antagonisms. The entry of the other imperialists, primarily the U. S. into the war, or the inevitable further intensification of the economic crisis will bring on the "total war".

Meanwhile, however, evolutionary developments are going on in the minds of the world working class and the oppressed everywhere. Total consumption in each country at war has not increased at all. What has happened is that the imperialists have shifted the weight of production in each country. The increased production of destructive goods that serve no social purpose — guns, bullets, tanks, etc. — is met with a decrease in consumption

goods, clothing, shelter, food. The war accelerates the chronic tendencies of capitalism. The rich grow ever richer, but the impoverished masses are being reduced to worse pauperization than ever before in recent years, and at a much more rapid speed.

SITUATION FAVORABLE

Only the blind pacifists, the treacherous reformists, and the near-sighted centrists, can possibly fail to see that the OBJECTIVE events are moving towards proletarian revolution at an unprecedented speed. Even a glance at the activity of people like Franklin Roosevelt, the role of the Vatican, etc. will confirm that capitalism is conscious of this danger, is fearful of it, preparing for it.

History is full of rapid turns. But the most rapid turns of our times, based on the rapid intensification of capitalist decay, await us in the next period. The seeming strength of the bourgeoisie is a sham and a lie. Underneath it is mounting putrefaction which nothing can erase. A rapid turn towards revolution is inevitable in the next short period. To checkmate that development the imperialists, too, will make rapid turns; will force the revolutionary movement into illegality, will slaughter revolutionists and militant workers.

The proletariat of the world must be ready; **MUST PREPARE THIS VERY MOMENT.** Despite all our defeats this is NOT a period of doom or despair. The objective situation moves in our direction at lightning speed. Despondency, hesitancy is our worst enemy. Small as the forces of Marxism may be at the moment, the war is bound to give it a great impetus in the very near future. Let the bourgeois cynics shout themselves hoarse that Lenin too uttered similar words in 1914 and capitalism survived. The growing forces of Marxism have assimilated the lessons of Lenin's time. Under the guidance of the forces for the New Communist (4th) International, under the leadership of the growing International Contact Commission, **VICTORY IS ASSURED.**

Problems of the Indian Revolution

The strategic importance of India for the world revolution can hardly be overestimated at the present time. Desperately British Imperialism strives, by force and by guile, to hold on to "the crown of the Empire", the loss of which would mean its end. Here also meet the conflicting intriguers of German and American imperialism and the Stalinist class-collaborationists. India has become a seething cauldron in which bubbles a witches' brew composed of all the antagonisms of decadent imperialism superimposed upon a semi-feudal sub continent.

A revolutionary situation is maturing in India. There is:

1 — A crisis at the top, in the sense that the rulers are no longer able to rule as of old. Gandhism, an integral part of the British machinery, is no longer able to play its role of brake on the revolt of the masses.

2 — The war will increasingly dislocate and drain Indian economy on the one hand, at the same time that it offers added advantages to the Indian proletariat for militant action on the other.

3 — There is already an increase in the militant activity of the Indian proletariat, as seen by the textile strike, and of the Indian peasantry. These pre-conditions of revolution developing on a background of imperialist war in which England's extremity can become India's opportunity, to use the old Irish phrase, will lead, and in a comparatively short time, to a direct revolutionary situation. But, as has been said by Lenin, it is not from every revolutionary situation that a successful revolution results, but only from such a situation as finds also the subjective factor present, the Marxian leadership. This is completely lacking in India today.

ECONOMIC CHARACTER OF INDIA

Before entering upon a discussion of Indian politics and the elements of a Marxist program for India, it is, of course, first necessa-

ry to take a look at its economic character.

India is a vast sub-continent containing 319,000,000 people. Of these about 80,000,000 are nominally under the rule of Indian princes, who are only helpless stooges of British imperialism. The remainder are directly under British rule.

India is overwhelmingly a peasant country. 287,000,000 of its population live in 685,665 villages. Agriculture is generally carried on very primitively, with wooden ploughs, for instance. The holdings are small. Tenancy is on the increase. The **zamindari** or landlords have acquired more land between 1911 and 1930. The **ryots** or peasants, according to British official figures, have to pay from 1/10 to 1/5 of their gross produce in the form of taxes. In addition this generally has to be paid before the harvest and the vast majority of Indian peasants are in perpetual debt to the **banias** or money lenders who charge from 60% to 100% interest per annum.

There are very few agricultural wage-laborers except on the plantations, which are run on typically capitalist factory lines in most instances, although in some provinces the English companies farm out production to the **zamindari** who dictate conditions of production to tenants and squeeze them to the utmost. The standard of living is very low. The bourgeois writer, Keller, estimates that there are always 40,000,000 in India who have never in their lives known what it is not to be hungry. It is important to note that a large section of the urban proletariat is seasonally recruited from the countryside, working part of the time in the factories, and the other part as tenant farmers (Indian Year Book). It is also important to note that the Indian peasantry does not live on isolated farms, but is concentrated in villages, surrounded by the farm lands. These villages are locally governed by **parchayats** or village councils, supposed to be controlled by all the male inhabitants, but under present conditions, inevitably dominated by the **zamindari** and the **banias**. However, within these com-

munities, fierce and violent conflicts often take place between the classes.

In former times these villages had a large number of handicraftsmen paid a salary by the community, but this condition no longer prevails. The number has been reduced to only about 12% or 15% of the population.

URBAN POPULATION

The urban population is 32,000,000 living in 2,316 cities and towns. 8 million live in towns of 100,000 or over. $3\frac{1}{2}$ million in towns of 50-100,000. 6 million in towns of from 20-50,000.

10% of the population is industrial. Only 1%, however, or about 3,000,000 are in organized, concentrated industry. The industrial census of 1921 showed 821,000 employed on tea, coffee, rubber, and other plantations, 294,000 in mines and quarries; 773,000 in textile industries; 270,000 in coal and metal industries. There is only one large steel works, Tata Brothers at Jamshedpur. There are 819,000 railway employees of whom 136,000 are in railway workshops. The proletariat is terribly exploited. Hours of labor may extend legally to 60 per week, and, in practice, may be still longer. Housing conditions are abominable, crowded, and lacking elemental sanitation. The standard of living, according to such an official source as the Indian Journal of Economics, of the employed worker, is on a par with the diet provided in jails and on relief works during a famine. The number of organized workers is about 500,000.

Under the Trades Disputes Act of 1929 very severe legislation was passed, providing for compulsory conciliation and arbitration, and imposing severe penalties for "lightning" strikes.

The proletariat is mostly concentrated in the Punjab, the United Provinces, and, particularly, Bombay.

The Indian industrial bourgeoisie, as such, is practically non-existent, except for Tata Brothers. Most of the large industry is English owned and controlled, with participation financially by the Indian princes and the wealthier Indians, the **banias** and the **zamindari**. There are about 160,000 English in India in the army, the Civil Service, and the cushy jobs in industry, on the railroads, and the plantations. Their standard of living is universally high.

CASTE SYSTEM

A peculiar feature of Indian life is the caste system. A petrification of former economic divisions of Hindu society is divided into four main castes: The **Brahmin**, the priestly or clerical caste; the **Kshatriyas** or warrior caste; the **Vaisya** or trading caste; and the **Sudras** or serving caste. Outside of the caste system are the **pariahs** or outcasts, mostly found in Southern India. These number 50-60,000,000 people. These castes are distinguished by caste marks on the forehead generally and a member of one caste is not supposed to mingle socially with a member of another. Prior to capitalism two main attacks have been made in India on the caste system. Early in the history of India, Buddhism arose as a distorted religious reflection of the attempt of the early merchants to overcome the caste system which hampered trading. Being a distorted religious reflection of economic differences, arising on the basis of caste, and seeking to work through the intermediary of princes, it failed in India, being defeated in a military-political sense, and migrated to China where, for historical reasons, it had more success. The main reason, of course, was the then immobile, stagnant nature of Indian feudalism.

Centuries later the second attack on caste came with the Mohammedan invasion. When the warlike hordes of Islam, with their tribally-rooted doctrines of monotheism and equality of all true believers, poured into India they dented the caste concept under the mogul emperors. But, again, the basic economy of feudal India remained. The Mohammedan conquerors came to displace the former exploiters on the basis of essentially the same social system as before, and ultimately found the caste system convenient for the oppression of the conquered Hindus. There are about 80,000,000 Mohammedans in India.

Caste has been most deeply dented in India, however, by the advance of capitalism. With the growth of a proletariat the caste system began to be shaken to its foundations. On the one hand the political requirements of British imperialism demanded retention of the caste system and Hindu-Moslem antagonism on the basis of the old principle "divide and rule". On the other the necessities of the factory system crowded various castes and the untouchable pariahs into the same four walls, unified them in production and by common exploitation.

CLASS RELATIONS

Proceeding from the above short summary it is possible to pass to a political analysis of the various classes in Indian society.

First. The specific ruling class is, of course, British finance capital. Allied with this force, and practically melted into complete solidarity, are the Indian princes and their immediate satellites. The only point of difference between these allies is that the native stooges of British imperialism, as symbolized by Sir Tej Bahadur Saprta, would like to see a loosening of the British restrictions against Indian heavy industry. The policy of British imperialism has been to attempt to solve its contradictory problem of restricting Indian industry in order to favor the home concerns and at the same time to provide for the export of British capital by trying to pin Indian economy within the confines of the extractive industries and the railroads. Its political policy is a combination of the sadistic brutality of the Jallianwalla Bagh mass murders at Amritsar and Liberal-Labour promises of Dominion Status, never meant to be kept; together with reliance on Gandhism to keep real revolt in check.

GANDHISM AND NEHRUISM

Second. The Indian bourgeoisie, the **banias**, and the **zamindari** are represented by Gandhism, "His majesty's Loyal Opposition" and a necessary part of the British machinery of oppression. Gandhi does not, as some think, represent the Indian petty bourgeoisie but the large bourgeoisie. Though making use of the most reactionary prejudices of the petty bourgeois masses against modern industry, whenever a crisis arose, Gandhi supported Indian native capitalists against the proletarians, (acting as a conciliatory strikebreaker), the **zamindar** against the peasant at Bardole, and when the struggle reached its height in 1922, the police against all the revolting sections of the Indian people in the Chauri-Chaura incident. Nor is Gandhi non-violent when it comes to the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie. In 1914 he directly recruited soldiers for the English army because of promises of concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. Gandhi, as a representative of that class, would like more room to manoeuvre but is much more afraid of the Indian masses than of British imperialism.

Third. The Nehru group of the Indian nationalist congress. Nehru does not represent the Indian rural or urban petty bourgeoisie but a left wing of Gandhism based on the upper peasantry, proclaiming Indian independence in words, but denying it in deed by still clinging to the old **Satyagraha** and **Ahimsa** (soul force and nonviolence). For whoever of the petty bourgeoisie of India denies the necessity of violence to overthrow British rule negates any theatrical demand for immediate independence and serves only to replace outworn Gandhism by another — Gandhism. There is forming an opposition to Nehru with whom we can and must march separately and strike together, composed of real petty bourgeois representatives, split off from the "individual terror" groups of Bengal and rank-and-file followers of Nehru.

Fourth. The Indian proletariat has no real Marxist party to lead it today. At the time of the formation of the illegal Communist Party of India the Communist International had already been vanquished by Stalinism. Manohendra Nath Roy's group (Brandler-Lovestone) is now practically acting with the Stalinists. Both are preparing to repeat the tragi-comedy of China for the Indian masses. Both form a "legal opposition" to the Indian bourgeoisie, which, in turn, is a "loyal opposition to his majesty, George VI, the King Emperor". Both unreservedly support Nehru. (Our American Trotskyites, by the way, also support him). The concept of both is that the highest form of activity is a strike for rent reduction, as in China, 1926-27.

THE WAY OUT

In this historic situation, when an Indian Revolution can help destroy British imperialism, give new impetus to the proletarian revolution in China, and call forth a wave of militancy among the working class in the Soviet Union against Stalinism, the International Contact Commission must work out a program for India on the basis of:

- 1 — Complete independence of a proletarian (Marxist) Party, organizationally and ideologically.
- 2 — Fight Gandhism and Nehruism uncompromisingly.
- 3 — March separately and strike together

with the national revolutionary elements.

4 — Build Workers Soviets and Peasants Committees.

5 — Organize the seizure of the lands of the government, the princes, and the **Zamindari** by peasants committees, even before any

Constituent Assembly.

6 — For the immediate, complete, and unconditional independence of India by the violent smashing of British rule.

7 — For a Constituent Assembly as a subordinate strategy to the building of Soviets.

8 — For the seizure of the factories, railroads, mines, and plantations, under Soviet leadership.

9 — Against any cooperation with Japanese, American or German Imperialism in India.

10 — For immediate practical assistance to the Indian revolution, including material aid, but only to the Marxists and the independent working class organs.

11 — Break up the caste system.

12 — For a Soviet Socialist India; for a Near East Union of Socialist Republics.

The Land Question in Mexico

The application of scientific principles to farming, the use of machinery, of a perfected technique and organization, all made possible by the development of capitalism, inevitably lead to a higher cultural level for the small farmers. But the process of capitalism ultimately meant the concentration of wealth in the sphere of agriculture as well as in the industrial sphere. Many of the small farmers were gradually squeezed out and reduced to the position of sharecroppers or agricultural laborers. The ownership of their lands went to the banks, to large industrialists, or large landowners who worked their land on a factory basis. So long as the capitalist system was progressive, the small farmer could hang on but it was inevitable that he meet the same fate as that of the small industrialist.

In backward countries like Mexico, in which, for certain historical reasons capitalism has not fully matured, the agrarian problem constitutes the outstanding problem of the nation. Although Mexico presents many features of advanced capitalism, its predominant feature is its backward semi-feudal agrarianism. Of its approximately 20,000,000 people, over 16,000,000 depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. Their future is in-

exorably bound up with the future course of the agrarian problem. What is this future course to be?

LIBERAL CAPITALISM OR SOCIALISM

The supporters of the Cardenas regime maintain that a liberal capitalism can still play a progressive role in Mexico, that it can substantially raise the cultural level of the nation. Furthermore, they insist that given a state apparatus having the interests of the workers and peasants at heart regulating this capitalist economy, it will be possible to peacefully transform the capitalist system into a Socialist society. They point to the **ejidos**, the government owned industries and to the co-operatives as evidence of this fact.

In this contention there are two basic political errors. First, they do not understand the nature of the capitalist system. Mexico does not exist in a vacuum, but is a part of world capitalism which, by virtue of the world market, the contradiction between productive forces and national boundaries constitutes a world economic system. In spite of the fact that the capitalist system in Mexico has not attained maturity, it is a part of world capitalism which is in its decay stage. The future of Mexican capitalism is not determined by its

own immaturity, but by the senility of world capitalism. What these observations all boil down to is the fact that capitalism can not play a progressive role in Mexico, that in this present period it is incapable of carrying out the belated bourgeois-democratic revolution.

What is more those who believe that the solution of Mexico's problems lies in freeing the country from the domination of foreign capital and the emergence of a national capitalism, are day dreaming. So long as the economy of Mexico remains capitalistic in nature, Mexico can never free itself from its semi-colonial subservience to one or another imperialist power. Unlike the economies of England, France, Germany, or the U. S., capitalism in Mexico is not an indigenous development, but in the main, was imposed from without by foreign capitalists, upon an essentially feudal economy. The domestic capitalists of Mexico are in the main subordinated to foreign Imperialism, especially to Wall Street. Were world capitalism today in its progressive period, were the world market today expanding, there would be a possibility for the development of an independent capitalist economy in Mexico. Today this is impossible. Mexico's subordinated position is amply demonstrated by its dependence on the U. S. silver purchases.

THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM

The second aspect of the Cardenas program, namely the possibility of a transformation of a capitalist economy into a Socialist economy, is nothing more than traditional reformism whose bankruptcy history has demonstrated again and again.

In this article we continue our discussion of the agrarian problem. As we have pointed out, more than once, this problem is the fundamental problem of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. If liberal capitalism is to prove that it still can play a progressive role in Mexico, it must solve the agrarian problem.

Since the day the Spanish conquerors robbed the Mexican Indians of their land, the land hunger of the Mexican peon has been his basic problem. It was the cause of revolutions, the subject of many speeches and promises of the Mexican politicians, but until the Cardenas regime very little was accomplished in this sphere. Cardenas tackled this problem in a

manner that aroused the praise and hopes of all liberal elements in Mexico. His term of office being practically over it is in order now to consider results.

According to the 1930 census, Mexico had 13,444 **hacendados** each of whom owned over 2,500 acres of land. This small group owned 83.4% of all the privately owned agricultural land, the remainder of the privately owned land was divided among 600,000 small and middle peasants. The 668,000 **ejidatarios** (members of collective farms) owned less than one-tenth as much land as the large landlords. Furthermore, there were 2,332,000 peons who were landless. No one can deny that Cardenas distributed more land in the six years of his administration than all other presidents of the revolutionary period (i. e., since 1910) put together. What do statistics disclose to us today? At the end of 1938, the **ejidatarios** owned 23,600,000 hectares of agricultural land, about 20,000,000 hectares were in the hands of the small and middle peasants and 87,000,000 hectares belonged to the large landowners. What is more in view of the population increase between 1930-33 it is estimated that there are still about 1,900,000 landless peons.

The liberal apoligists will contend that in view of the accomplishments of the past six years there is sufficient reason to believe that the agrarian problem will be completely solved in a short period. These individuals lose sight of a few facts. First, according to the Agrarian code two-thirds of the Mexican villages are incapable of securing any land. One of the provisions of the agrarian code entitles the large landowners to retain 300 hectares of semi-arid crop land or 150 hectares of irrigated land. Many of the large estate owners make use of a legal trick quite familiar to capitalist corporations. They divide up their estates among dummy owners and so maintain intact the bulk of their estates. It is interesting to contrast the 300 hectares of semi-arid land or 150 hectares irrigated land that the **hacendados** are permitted to retain with the 4 hectares of irrigated land or 8 hectares semi-arid land that is granted to each **ejidatario** according to the Agrarian code. It has been estimated that according to the present distribution of land, the 1,900,000 landless peons, if they were to receive land, could expect no more than two hectares each. Just enough land to keep them alive.

LAND AND MONEY

As we have pointed out elsewhere, the mere fact that the Mexican peon receives a few hectares of land, does not solve his problem. In order to raise his standard of living a little above the primitive level that we have described, in the first article, he must have money in order to develop his land. The government is incapable of rendering him substantial assistance in this respect for it pays the **hacendados** in cash for the land it takes from them. This independent status for many peons has not been a blessing, and on many occasions, the peons, incited by the land-owners, protested against the land division. Many peons, unable to provide for their simple primitive needs by exploiting their meager semi-arid bits of land, hire themselves out as part time workers on the large estates. In various ways these ostensibly independent peasants become dependent upon the **hacendados**. All this because the agrarian reform can only be carried out in a miserly, half hearted manner under capitalism.

It is now in order to consider the future of agrarian reform in Mexico. Assuming that a "liberal" will be elected to succeed Cardenas, will the reform program be intensified, can we expect substantial concessions to the peons or can we expect a definite retreat? The followers of Cardenas are optimistic and hopeful; we say categorically, that there will not and cannot be any further reforms. The liberal bourgeoisie have gone about just as far as they can go. The prevailing opinion among Mexican politicians is that it is necessary to call a halt to all reforms in order to win the confidence of the Imperialist nations. The last years of Cardenas' regime witnessed a slowing down in the process of land division. Neither Cardenas nor his successor would consider the complete appropriation of the large estates without indemnification. Such a policy would mean social revolution, something that Cardenas relishes no more than did Kerensky or Azana. Barring such a course, what else can the "liberal" bourgeoisie of Mexico do. Those liberals who look forward to the development

in Mexico of a prosperous, healthy class of small farmers, are living in a dream world. The capitalist system is incapable of making any further progress in Mexico. The continuation of capitalism can only inevitably lead to a reactionary regime and to the withdrawal of those concessions that the workers and peasants of Mexico have gained through their own bitter struggle.

ROLE OF THE BANKS

Furthermore, in Mexico as elsewhere, it is the banks, finance capital, which behind the scenes dominate the land question. Any agrarian reform under capitalism can only have the effect of changing control of the land from large feudal owners to the finance capitalists, through their system of mortgages, credits, etc. Mere formal ownership of land does not assure the peon of the produce of that land. To get seed, farm equipment, and other necessities he must fall back to the perennial capitalist "pawn-brokers", the banks; he must fall more and more into their clutches. Although we do not produce the figures on this question here, any cursory examination will undoubtedly reveal that the changed status of the Mexican peasant is only a change of form.

In every capitalist country the large land-owners and the banking interests inevitably collaborate, their interests intertwine. There can be little doubt that the "expropriation" of sections of the landed estates and the indemnification is part of a scheme of finance capital to save its mortgages on the large estates and to prop up the sick **hacendados**.

The only solution to the land problem in Mexico will be the forceful expropriation by the peons of the large estate owners, without any indemnification; the division of the land as a first step towards eventual socialization. But this can be successfully carried out, not under capitalism, but only as part of the social revolution to overthrow capitalism, only under the leadership of the Mexican proletariat (and with the aid especially of the workers of the United States) and the establishment of the Mexican Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

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