On National Struggle of August 1942

Posted on August 8, 1942 by Archive

(Adopted by the Central Committee of R. S. P. I. in 1942)

[***The decision of the RSP central committee to fully support the "1942 Quit India Movement" represents a significant statement of genuine internationalism, contrasting sharply with the type of "internationalism" previously enforced by the Comintern, which was still operational at that time (officially dissolved in May 1943 and later guided by Cominform under Stalin's leadership). The party adopted a stance of authentic and historically validated Marxist-Leninist internationalism within a colonial context, aiming to advance the national democratic revolution under the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and other working people with a singular, immediate program focused on dismantling imperialist dominance. In summary, the resolution serves as a distinctive historical document***

***that continues to affirm its foundational position regarding the classical Marxist interpretation of internationalism*.** – Partha Sarathi Dasgupta, Member, Central Secretariat, Revolutionary Socialist Party]

I. Intensification of the national struggle against foreign imperialist domination on the widest possible mass basis culminating in national revolution and seizure of power by the toiling masses has always been the fundamental basis of the national political strategy and tactics of the R. S. P. I. and its main platform of political action. As the vanguard of the Indian proletariat and an integral part of the international revolutionary proletarian and socialist movements, the R. S. P. I. has always striven the utmost to develop, broaden and intensify the national struggle by suitable class and mass action. It was for this reason that it adhered to the platform of the Indian National Congress which has been for the past three-quarter-century the principal national political organisation of the Indian people in their fight against British Imperialism and with this end in view it has always sought to develop the Congress as an integral part and the central component of the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Peoples' Front under the leadership and hegemony of the working class so that ultimately it might emerge as the organisational expression of the unity of the Indian workers, peasants and other sections of the toiling masses of India in their struggle for national, democratic and socio-economic freedom.

II. With the out-break of the Second Imperialist world war the R.S.P.I. as a Marxist-Leninist working class party at once proclaimed its unqualified adherence to the international revolutionary proletarian Leninist line of transforming the imperialist war into civil war. Verily, it had anticipated the out- break of the war and advocated the programme of immediate launching

of an all-out national struggle against British Imperialism on the widest possible mass basis by integrating all local and partial struggles of the masses which were daily increasing in number, extent and volume on the working class, Kisan and ‘States Peoples’ fronts. It had at the same time organised in co-operation with other left groups a country-wide mass campaign both inside and outside the Congress against the vacillation and instability of the reformist bourgeois leadership of the Congress then finding expression in the parleys, secret and open, undertaken by the right-wing members of the Congress Working Committee with the Viceroy and other spokesmen of the British Imperialism on the issue of Federation and war in clear contravention of the Haripura Resolution of the Congress. The Tripuri and Ramgarh stands of the R.S.P.I. were based upon the fundamental political line of uncompromising national struggle on the issue of Federation and Imperialist war on the basis of Haripura Resolutions. The Imperialist war did not catch the party unawares, for it had already adopted the line of intensifying the all national struggle which was also its clear duty in the background of the imperialist war according to the fundamental revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism. For, the International Revolutionary Proletarian task of transforming the imperialist war into civil war can only be given effect to in colonial countries in the shape of national struggle; the National Colonial Struggle and National Democratic Revolution against imperialist domination being in this epoch of imperialist-capitalist world domination is an integral and inseparable part and one of the main political fronts of the world-struggle against imperialism-capitalism and of International Proletarian Revolution. Consistent to the basic tenets of Leninist Communism the R. S. P. I. had declared in its war theses that the second Imperialist World War has opened up the perspective of world revolution and seizure of power by the masses in all countries and called upon the Indian working class in particular and the toiling masses at large to

intensify the national struggle immediately.

III. When the new historical phase of the imperialist war was initiated in June 1941 with the treacherous and unprovoked Anglo-Soviet pact of mutual assistance, the R. S. P. L., on behalf attack of Nazi Germany upon the Soviet Union and the signing of of the Indian proletariat and the toiling masses of India, at once, with the workers and peoples of Soviet Union in their fight for proclaimed its feelings of deepest sympathy and steadfast solidarity self-defence and freedom. The R.S.P.I. unequivocally declared that the Indian People fighting against British Imperialism for their own national independence and social, political and economic freedom cannot remain indifferent to the struggle of the Soviet Union, the friend of the oppressed and exploited and of all freedom- loving people and citadel of socialism against Nazism-Fascism, The R.S.P.I., however, unlike certain groups of reformist Pseudo- Communists, refused to be led astray from the international revolutionary Leninist path by superficial considerations of the apparent interests of the Anglo-Soviet Pact or by the lip-sympathy of Anglo-American imperialism for the Soviet Union, by reading into the Anglo-American-Soviet entente the significance of anything more than a military strategic alliance or to play into the hands of Anglo-American Imperialism by thinking that a qualitative change has occurred in the character of the war, so far as Anglo-American Imperialism was concerned, by reasons of the above mentioned pact-that the war has become even from the point of view of the Anglo-American imperialism, transformed into an anti-fascist popular crusade or a ‘people’s war’. It refused likewise to jump into the petty bourgeois nationalist mistake of judging Soviet Russia by the apparent fact of Anglo-Soviet Pact, of considering Soviet-Union as an enemy of the Indian people by reason of this Pact and of forgetting the revolutionary obligations of the Indian people in

general and the Indian working class in particular towards the land of Soviet Socialism. The R. S. P. L. rather, saw in the attack of Nazi Germany upon the Soviet Union an expression of the basic socio-economic class contradiction between Socialism and Imperialism-Capitalism and interpreted all subsequent developments objectively in terms of the unfolding of and as the result of the intensification of the fundamental socio- historical contradictions of the imperialist epoch. The R. S. P. I. regarded these developments as the prelude to international proletarian revolution predicted by Comrade Lenin. While undertaking, therefore, a systematic campaign in the country for rendering all aid to Soviet Union in its work of strengthening and defending socialist construction in the U.S.S. R. from all internal and external aggression, the R. S. P. I., at the same time, refused to play the imperialist game by interpreting that task to mean the suspension of the national struggle against British Imperialism and offering unconditional support to the war efforts of British Imperialism, or for the matter of that to any other imperialism. The R. S. P. L., rather, held that, in the context of the Second Imperialist war, the task and the slogan of helping the Soviet can have no other meaning for the Indian people and the Indian working class than an intensification of their national struggle against British Imperialism.

The task of intensification of national struggle, which is logically derived from the international proletarian strategy of turning the imperialist war into civil war, was not, however, conceived as a mechanical formula but was deduced on the basis of an objective analysis of the national and international events of the present world historical epoch of generalised capitalist crises, imperialist wars and international proletarian revolution. The formulation of the national political task in terms of intensification of the national struggle, therefore, went hand in hand with the Marxist-Leninist recognition of the

inexorable fact that this intensification might take various tactical forms suited to varying exigencies of the national and international situation. This international proletarian revolution being a combination of different historical processes extended over a whole epoch, a succession of various up-curves and down-curves, sharp swings and twists often in apparently opposite directions, naturally imposes upon the Marxist-Leninist Party the obligation of interpreting from time to time the same general national political task (intensification of National Struggle in India at the present time) corresponding to that epoch in terms of varying tactical tasks impact these varying tactics result ultimately in the complete as the situation demands. By their successive and cumulative realisation of the national political task which, thereby, imparts to the successively varying tactics their rigid logical consistency, a correct and scientifically objective perspective and ultimate international revolutionary significance.

The R. S. P. I. proclaimed that the world struggle against imperialism-capitalism is fundamentally one and undivided in whatever national sector, in whatever political front against whichever particular imperialist power it may be directed immediately. It further, proclaimed that the struggle of the Soviet against Nazi Germany and its fascist underlings and the struggle of the Indian people against British Imperialism are but two fronts of the same world struggle directed fundamentally towards the same end, viz., the overthrow of imperialist-fascist world domination. Not only are the struggles of the two fronts, in its considered view, inseparable from each other, but rather, either could not be carried on without fundamentally and ultimately depending on the support of the other and that both by their fundamental unity of revolutionary objectives and the solidarity of strategic interests further both equally to their respective immediate national political and ultimate

international goal. The R. S. P. I., therefore, resolved that the national struggle of the Indian people for complete independence and democracy which the British Government have been positively suppressing, must be intensified, continued unabated and pressed forward relentlessly. The so-called promise of the Governments of Great Britain and U.S.A. for rendering all-out aid to Soviet was, in view of the R. S. P. I., an apparent necessity forced by war strategy in the background of an unprecedented intensification of inter-imperialist contradictions; it was never meant to be a support for Soviet Socialism or any substantial help to the Soviet State in its fight against Nazism-Fascism. The said promise is, from the point of view of the masses, coming from the mouth of Messrs, Roosevelt and Churchil and their henchman Linlithgow, nothing but a ruse to hoodwink them and to secure their co-operation in the imperialist war efforts. The R. S. P. 1. held that it is not Anglo- American imperialism but the toiling masses of India who are the real friends of the workers and peoples of U. S. S. R. and can render effective help to them; only an independent and Soviet India can help Soviet Russia. The R. S. P. L., therefore, concentrates and emphasises upon the immediate task of winning national independence and power for the toiling masses.

IV. The imperialist war, in the meantime, has spread to all the five continents and seven seas on both hemispheres of the globe with the entry of Japan and U. S. A. in the war and the involvement of the Pacific. Although this new development in the war crisis was not indicative of any fundamental change in the alignment and correlation of belligerent forces already achieved since the beginning of the Soviet-German war and, therefore, did not entail any change in the basic analysis of the war as given in the successive war theses of the R. S. P. I. or any corresponding shift in its main strategic line, whether nationally or internationally, it brought the war concretely closer to India

proper. India was placed in a predicament unprecedented in her recent history and fraught with dangerous consequences for the masses of the people, specially for the working class and peasantry. In the imminent clash between the British Imperialist army of occupation and the fascist army of invasion the Indian masses faced the frightful possibility of becoming a victim to the aggressive and ruthless exploitation of two rival imperialist powers, fighting for the possession of India, on the very soils of India and at the expense of the masses of the people who were the pawns in the struggle and were to be its main and real sufferers. The Imperialist war with all its horror, devastation, destruction, death and misery for the people approached the soils of India in the shape of two gigantic pincers from the West and the East and drew the Indian Ocean in its orbit. Malay and Burma were over-run, the Indian ocean became the scene of several naval and aerial engagements, the soil of India was bombed. In India itself the unprecedented rising cost of totalitarian warfare was heaped upon the people in the shape of increasing burden of taxation, intensification of the exploitation of labour in factories and workshops, soaring prices, increasing cost of living, depression of the standard of living of the great majority of the people reaching to intermittent and chronic starvation and semi-starvation in some cases and the shameless and brutal sacrifice of India’s youth and manhood in the battlefields; all these without the slightest reference to the wills or aspirations of the Indian masses. As insolent and brazen-faced imperialism supported by the most backward and reactionary bloc of feudal-capitalist exploiters constituted itself as the self-elected champion of the masses, suppressed the limited democratic and civic freedom of the people and went on clapping their leaders behind the prison bars.

V. In view of the national danger in the shape of new imperialist aggression

and in view of the openly proclaimed sympathy of the Indian people for Soviet Russia and nationalist China in particular and for the cause of world democracy in general, the Indian National Congress was prepared to take Anglo- American Governments at their words and offered the pledged word of the premier national organisation speaking on behalf of the people to fight on the side of the Allies against Nazism- Fascism, provided the Indian people could join this fight with self respect as a sovereign people working through their own independent national Government. With bended knees it asked of the so-called British democracy to apply the self-same democratic principles, for which Anglo-American people and the United Nations were said to be fighting, by proclaiming the independence of India and offering to the Indian people concrete and living ideal for which to fight and die. The answer came in the shape of the Cripp's proposals which sought to bind the Indian people more securely to the Chariot-wheels of the present imperialist war machine and bureaucratic Juggernaut, in the name of indefinite promise of Dominion Status and a ram-shackle Constituent Assembly. The Indian National Congress rightly spurned these proposals and demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British Power and complete transference of power to a National Government constituted by the Indian people. This demand was voiced by Mahatma Gandhi, the accredited leader of the National Congress and the Indian people in his "QUIT INDIA" slogan and ratified by the National Congress. National Independence which was the inherent birth-right of the Indian people had now become a desperate necessity if India were to contribute to her utmost to the victory of world-democracy, to the victory of Chinese and Russian people against imperialist-fascist aggressions and the overthrow of the system of imperialism- capitalism throughout the world. The Indian people could wait no longer, for, waiting meant the dire prospect of national extinction. The National Congress, therefore, decided upon a non-

violent mass struggle to assert the independence of the Indian people and to enable them to contribute their full quota to the struggle for the emancipation of world humanity. Imperialism which thrives on the denial of democracy and freedom of the masses could not countenance this demand. It, at once, showed its fangs and blood- shot eyes to this national and democratic self-assertion of the Indian people and struck its mailed fist at the heart of the nation, shattering, thereby the lingering illusion of a distinction between so-called democratic imperialism and fascism. The wholesale arrest of national leaders and Congress workers, suppression of Congress and other popular organisations of the masses and working class, the indiscriminate shooting of workers, men and women and children of all classes, has completely revealed the identity of democratic Anglo-American imperialism and Nazism- fascism in their fundamental social character and interests. The inexorable dialectics of historical events both in the national and international spheres have, with relentless fury, proved to the hilt the correctness of Leninist R. S. P. I. contention that the war of Great Britain and America is as much imperialistic as that of Nazi- Germany and Axis-fascists and that there is no other road for the Indian people for proceeding to the help of Russia and China except by way of complete overthrow of British Imperialism in India."

VI. The R. S. P. I. as the vanguard of the Indian proletariat and as the unfaltering adherent of Leninist Communism, hereby, pledges the unconditional and unequivocal support of the revolutionary working class of India to the Congress in the national struggle launched against British Imperialism. It accords its whole- hearted support to the Allahabad, Wardha and Bombay resolutions of the ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE and proclaims the readiness of its members to fight as loyal soldiers in the national struggle. It congratulates the nation, the working-class in particular

for the magnificent revolutionary protest they have launched throughout the length and breadth of the country against the arrest of national leaders. It congratulates the working class of Bombay, Allahabad, Nagpur, Delhi, Cawnpore and other places for rising to the full height of the revolutionary traditions of the Indian working class and giving the lie to the shameless call of the social- imperialists of “National Front’ and ‘Royist’ groups for abandoning the path of class and mass action against imperialism and for coming out in their millions to take up their rightful position in the national struggle against imperialism. They have proved once again that the working class is the vanguard in the fighting ranks of the nation. We congratulate the working class and the student community for the magnificent spirit of fraternisation and fighting unity that they have evinced in the last few days. The first phase of national revolution is on. We, of the R. S. P. I. proclaim our unconditional allegiance and full participation in it, once again.

VII. It is an undoubted fact that the leadership of the struggle is still in the hands of the national bourgeoisie, who held in their fundamental socio-economic class interests an oppositional but reformist position with regard to imperialism. Nevertheless, mass pressure from below, tightening of the imperialist grip on the plea of the war which leaves them little elbow-room for self expansion and military reverses of British imperialism in the Far East, Europe and Africa which has shakened their faith in the stability of that imperialism-all these have produced in bourgeoisie a mood of intense opposition at the present juncture. Though this opposition does not immediately transcend the limits of their basic reformism, the conjuncture of circumstances enumerated above has pushed it to the extreme left within the span allowed by their reformism and give their opposition to imperialism in the background of the war crisis objectively, almost a revolutionary

significance. The mass forces upon which the bourgeoisie rely, open before them inexhaustible resources for action. The masses, schooled by the experience of three previous all national political struggles against imperialism since 1921 and that of the local and partial class and mass actions in the present war period, have come to the forefront. The recent strike waves which spread from west to east from Bombay naval docks to Calcutta Tramways, south to north from Cananore and Coimbatore textile mills to Lucknow Railway workshops, the wide-spread food-riots in the rural areas throughout the length and breadth of the country prove the mettle of the masses and capacity of revolutionary actions from a fundamental revolutionary point of view. It little matters, whoever leads in the immediate present, the participation in the struggle of the militant masses and the progress of struggle will inevitably result in a series of sharp changes in the class correlationship of forces in favour of the masses. Emphasis should, therefore, be laid not on the immediate character and composition of the leadership of the struggle but on its revolutionary mass basis which gives the struggle its force, volume, momentum and acceleration. The dynamics of the struggle is sure to lead it to a revolutionary denouement where it may not be possible for the reformist bourgeoisie to move with and at the head of the masses, But immediately the more important task is to develop the revolution, national unity and its mass content rather than on the harping on the so-called limitations of leadership which is, though real, nonetheless not powerful enough to dam up the revolutionary upsurge for all time. It is rather this upsurge which is driving the leadership, compelling it to shed its reformist vacillation and inhibitions. It is the masses who are waging the struggle and who

will shape its future. As a party of the masses the R. S. P. L.’s task is to

broaden, develop and intensify the mass content of the struggle through its various ups and downs to the final revolutionary consummation.

VIII. The R. . P. I. is further of opinion that the struggle demands the maxin.um organisational and political unity in the Congress and therefore finds scant justification from the point of view of struggle for the existence of two Congress bodies in Bengal. The more so as the present leadership of the suspended B.P.C.C. has failed to ratify the Allahabad, Wardha and Bombay resolutions of the Congress and has retained offices in the Ministry of Bengal Government in clear and open contraventions of its own proclaimed policy of uncompromising anti-imperialist mass struggle for national emancipation at a time when the All India Congress itself and the nation have taken a headlong plunge in the national struggle. The suspended B. P. C. C. has by its conduct forfeited its claim to the support of all honest congressmen in Bengal who must at once proclaim their allegiance to the official Congress and A. I. C. C. and the struggle launched under their leadership. The R. S. P. I. true to its policy of uncompromising national struggle can no longer support a Provincial parallel Congress body which, whatever justification it might have had in the past, has now outlived its necessity in view of the All India Congress having launched a countrywide mass struggle against imperialism and has belied every justification of its separate existence. The members of R. S. P. I. shall, therefore, at once, place the organisational and other resources at their command, at the disposal of the movement and signify their active participation in the organisational and agitational activities of the All India Congress in furtherance of the struggle and shall generally abide by the instructions and programme of the All India Congress and shall even without waiting for organisational formalities openly proclaim their severance of connection with the suspended B. P. C. C. and proceed to realise the

programme of struggle of the parent body.

IX. The participation of R. S. P. I. in the struggle is not a mere formality. It joins the struggle with an ultimate end in view, viz, to broaden, develop and intensify the struggle in a revolutionary manner so that it may develop into national seizure of power and the establishment of the rule of the toiling masses. It should be remembered that the slogan of “QUIT INDIA” is in its essence a demand for transference of power to the nation and the toiling masses. A mass struggle on this slogan, therefore, at once assumes a comprehensive all national political character which leads logically to the struggle for the final seizure of power. Moreover, in the background of the war, this slogan by its very same all national character comprehends every isolated class and mass action directly within the orbit of general political struggles and link up all local and partial struggles of the masses with the latter. Thirdly, it is also a struggle against the imperialist war and the imperialist mode of waging war in India-it thus, furthers the national and international struggle against imperialism-capitalism and world imperialist war. Last but not the least, it is an open challange not only to British Imperialism but to Fascist aggressors as well, for building up its sanction of the determination of the masses to resist all sorts of fascist and foreign imperialist aggression. By fighting Imperialism it builds up in the masses the fighting strength wherewith to resist fascism.

About the Author

Archive

Author

View All Posts

Archive

+ posts