

JUBILEE-- TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM --JUBILEE

"The British Government is the purest form of the Executive Committee of the Bourgeoisie"-Lenin

The fact that republicanism plays no part in the British working-class movement today is conclusive proof that the monarchy and nobility have no independent role in British bourgeois society but are inextricably bound up with the ruling bourgeoisie. The absence of republicanism is a salute to the fact that the British workers understand that the fall of the bourgeoisie means the end of the royal authority. "The royal authority is weak, so long as the instrument of bourgeois domination is the bourgeois Parliament, and so long as the bourgeoisie has no need of extra-parliamentary methods of action. But in case of need the bourgeoisie can make use of the royal authority with great success, as the concentration point for all the extra-parliamentary, that is to say, the real forces directed against the working class. The British bourgeoisie itself, when in a similar position, knew perfectly the danger of even the most fictitious monarchy. Thus, in 1837 the British Government abolished the title of ~~Great~~ Mogul in India, expelling its bearer from the sacred city of Delhi, despite the fact that that title had become a purely nominal one by that time. For the British bourgeoisie understood that given certain conditions the Great Mogul might focus the struggle of the Indian upper classes against the British sovereignty." (Trotsky)

Great

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& The English bourgeoisie came to grips with its old feudal Monarchy aristocracy in the middle of the 17th century, that is, a century and a half before the great French Revolution and almost two centuries before the rest of Europe. Cromwell was a great bourgeois revolutionary who ~~did not shrink from anything~~ in the struggle to maintain the interests of the new bourgeois social structure against the old aristocratic structure. He carried a book of psalms in one hand and the axe of revolution in the other. But he relied on the axe because it was more convincing.

** shrink from nothing*

As early as the forties of the 17th century, during the reign of Charles I, it was proved that the House of Commons was three times more wealthy than the House of Lords. But Parliament, based as it was on the most fantastic of electoral laws, could not express and defend the interests of the bourgeoisie. Parliament created an army for its defence and then capitulated to this army, the Puritan army of Cromwell, because it expressed the needs of the revolution more boldly, more logically, and more decisively than Parliament.

Beneath the cloud of clerical disputes, the conflicts between Anglicans, Presbyterians, Puritans, and Levellers, went on the social self-determination of classes, their realignment on new bourgeois bases. Cromwell's task consisted in giving the most shattering blows possible to the absolute monarchy, the Court nobility, and their semi-Catholic Church. Under Cromwell's guidance the revolution acquired the impetus necessary for such blows and when the struggle threatened to develop beyond the limits imposed by the needs of bourgeois society, ~~Cromwell~~ ruthlessly dealt with the Levellers.

he

It was Cromwell who laid down the road for the political development of Britain for the next two centuries. In revenge for the execution of Charles I by Cromwell, ~~Charles II~~ Charles II hung Cromwell's body on a gibbet. But no Restoration could resurrect pre-Cromwellian society. Cromwell's work could not be liquidated by the rapacious legislation of the Restoration. It was impossible to annihilate with a pen what had been written with an axe.

blot out

Under the leadership of the bourgeoisie Britain marched with seven league boots. Her industries grew without competition from anyone,

Germany entered this struggle confident that her enormous industrial superiority over Britain guaranteed her victory.

For Britain, the period of great expansion by colonial conquest falls between the years 1860 to 1880 with the last twenty years of the 19th century also of great importance. But for Germany and France the period of great expansion falls precisely in these last twenty years, 1880-1899. We see then that it is precisely following the "boom" in colonial annexation that the struggle for the territorial division of the world becomes extraordinarily keen.

For Britain the last quarter of the 19th century was a period of partial stagnation, a period in which the rate of expansion and exploitation was checked and slowed up by her rivals. If in 1892 Germany produced 4,900,000 tons of pig iron to Britain's 6,800,000 tons, by 1912 Germany had produced 17,600,000 tons and Britain only 9,000,000 tons. Germany had an overwhelming superiority over Britain in this respect. The disparity between Germany's development of production and accumulation of capital on the one side and Britain's hold on the world's markets and colonies on the other side ~~xxx~~ inevitably led to war.

The start of the 20th century witnessed the completion of the partition of the world. Germany looked on with hungry eyes as Britain grabbed the Transvaal and the Rhodesias. The U.S.A. entered the family of great imperialist robbers with one stride, *by grabbing Cuba & the Philippines.*

The changing position of Britain in world capitalism was reflected internally by the changes in the British labour movement. As Britain's monopoly was broken by Germany, France, America, and Japan, the economic basis of the narrow, petty-bourgeois trade unions and liberalism among the British workers was undermined. The ranks of the aristocracy of labour, that is, the skilled factory workers who had isolated themselves from the mass of the proletariat in close, selfish craft unions and ~~wh~~ who in politics supported the liberals, now became penetrated with socialism in spite of the rank opportunism of their "intellectual" leaders, the English near-socialists, the Fabians. A militant left-wing arose.

George V ascended the throne on the eve of great class battles in Britain. The British proletariat had awakened. In 1911 the railway workers struck; in 1912 the miners struck; in 1913 the Irish transport workers, led by the remarkable Jim Larkin struck and engaged in a veritable civil war with their exploiters. The workers of Britain had found a new path.

At the same time the great imperialist robbers were lining up and preparing themselves for the coming slaughter.

1914 saw them lined up.

On one side stood Great Britain, the strongest colonial empire, her fifty millions of population exploiting the four hundred millions of her colonies, in the front rank so far as wealth was concerned, her four or five giants banks ~~xxxxxxxx~~ entangling the whole world by thousands of threads and exploiting millions. On the other side stood Germany, arriving at the capitalist feasting-board when all the places had been taken, more predatory, more pitiless, and introducing into the struggle new methods of capitalist production, improved technique, incomparable organisation.

When the blood had sunk into the earth, British imperialism found itself triumphant over German, - but at what price!

The whole capitalist system was shown to be rotting. In Russia the workers and peasants led by the Bolshevik Party, by Lenin and Trotsky, took power, chased out the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ decrepit nobility and corrupt bourgeoisie and established the first workers' state. All over Europe the workers rose, in Germany, in Austria, in Hungary, in Italy, and only the most frantic efforts of Britain, U.S.A., France, and Japan prevented the whole filthy and disgusting capitalist system from destruction ~~xxxxxxx~~ at the hands of the tortured and enraged masses. British imperialism had conquered, - but at what price?

The U.S.A. had entered the war as a debtor to England. At the end of the war the U.S.A. alone of all the powers proved to have an absolutely independent financial position. The debtor of 1914 became the creditor of the whole world in 1918. England found herself in the position of a debtor to the extent of more than 50%. England found herself with a depreciated currency, two millions unemployed workers, and a permanent economic depression. World power had crossed the Atlantic.

Before the war England was the freest country in the world. There was freedom in England because there was no revolutionary movement. But the war changed everything. In a country where for decades there was not a single instance of interference with the workers' press, a strict censorship was established, and English prisons became crowded with socialists. If for centuries the capitalists of England were able to rule without the use of force within England, now, because of the growing revolutionary movement, they must depend more and more upon repression, upon "National" Governments, upon incitement to Disaffection Acts. The workers of England are seeing for the first time that face of British imperialism that has always been turned upon the masses in the colonies.

symptomatic

The uneasy note underlying the Jubilee jollifications is ~~part~~ ^{symptomatic} of the general insecurity of British imperialism. Great Britain is slipping. She is challenged openly by the U.S.A. and covertly on all sides. Due to the degeneration of the ~~Communist~~ Communist International, the opportunist policy of Stalinism, the Communist Party has not been able to gather around its banner the masses which are instinctively seeking a way out of the horrors of capitalism. Nor will the impotent and still-born Communist Party of Great Britain ever succeed in giving the revolutionary lead to the masses of Great Britain. This is the task of the New International and of ~~its~~ its British Section. The time is running short, the revolutionaries of the world are faced with gigantic tasks and tomorrow will be faced with still greater ones. New parties, REAL communist parties, must be built up throughout the world.

We cannot wait for our brothers in England, no more than they can wait for us. We must build here and they will build there. Each of us to our tasks.

Great Britain is attempting to retain her 'independence' a mere shadow of her former 'splendid isolation', by waiting & manoeuvring. Great Britain hopes & attempts to utilize the 'Antagonisms in Europe', & the 'Far East'. But ruling England is ever less successful in her scheming designs. Terrified by the disintegration of her Empire, by the revolutionary movement in India, by the instability of her position in China, by her loss in the struggle with America, the British bourgeoisie covers up the wretched hypocrisy of MacDonnell & Henderson her greedy & cowardly policy of waiting & manoeuvring which, in turn, is one of the main sources of today's general instability & tomorrow's catastrophes.

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