

Communism on Trial in India

By M. N. Ray

THERE is a deliberate attempt on foot to render the growth of a political party of the working class impossible in India, by damning it before hand in the eyes of the law as "seditious conspiracy," and by prosecuting these champions of the exploited and downtrodden masses who seek to point the way to their emancipation.

Without any warning, and upon no adequate legal grounds, the Director of the Intelligence Department of India, Col. Kaye, has preferred a charge in the Magistrate's court of Cawnpur, U. P., against Manabendra Nath Roy and seven other Indians, of "conspiracy against the sovereignty of the King-Emperor," for the crime of having advocated the organization of a mass-party of workers and peasants in India!

The whole charge is a frame-up to declare the young Communist and working-class movement illegal, and to crush it to the ground before it has had time to root itself deeply in the minds of the exploited proletariat and peasantry. The steadily-growing spirit of revolt that is present among the Indian masses,—the deep interest that is being taken among wider sections of the population in the ideas and theories of scientific Socialism, above all, the danger that the organization of a class-conscious party of the Indian working-class would constitute for British Imperialism, have driven fear in the souls of the Anglo-Indian ruling class. They dread another Russian Revolution repeated in India on a larger scale. Hence the steady anti-Russian propaganda that has been carried on in the Indian press, fed by Reuter. Hence also, the present trial.

The evidence, like the charge itself, is trumped up to suit the occasion. Out of eight accused, only two are present to defend themselves.—Dange and Singaravelu Chettiar. One is the editor of a theoretical weekly paper called "The Socialist"; the other is editor of a small weekly called the "Labour and Kishan Gazette." The other six are already under government ban, four being interned under an obsolete law known as "Regulation 111 of 1818" without trial or due process of law on the unproven charge of being "Bolshevik Agents"; the other two, Manabendra Nath Roy, an exile in Europe, and Sharma, an exile in French India, have not the least chance to appear in their own defense.

It is alleged on behalf of the prosecution that intercepted letters, alleged to have been written by the accused, call for the "complete separation of India from Imperialist Britain by means of a violent revolution," this end to be achieved by the organization of a party of workers and peasants. According to Col. Kaye, who seems to be the chief witness as well as prosecutor, "an agreement constituting a conspiracy was arrived at by means of letters written by the accused to each other." This conspiracy, explains the Colonel was to be financed by the Third International, without preferring any letters to substantiate his claim.

It appears that the six absent are to be proclaimed guilty by default of any opportunity to defend themselves. Four being interned, and 2 prohibited entry into British India, there is little chance to put up a legal fight against these Starr-Chamber methods, even did time and space permit them to travel to the scene of their trial. It appears that the two accused who will appear in their own defense have been permitted the services of a lawyer.—a concession to "British justice and fair play." This gentleman requested Col. Kaye to produce proofs of his allegations. The latter graciously complied and proceeded to exhibit a series of documents which he gratuitously described as "correspondence written by Roy from Moscow." But it was not inquired if these letters were bona fide, nor in what manner they came to the hands of the Intelligence Department instead of to the addresses. Can it be that letters are intercepted in the post-office of His Most Gracious Majesty, the King Emperor? And in the days when a

Labour Government, describing itself as Socialist, rules India from White-hall?

The crime of these letters, according to Col. Kaye, seems to consist in the fact that they criticize the Indian bourgeoisie as well as the British ruling-class, and even venture to question the action of Mahatma Gandhi in ordering the Bardoli Retreat, which resulted in the condemnation of 72 starving peasants to death by hanging for the crime of having attempted to better their miserable lot, and to the subsequent arrests and sentence to six years' imprisonment of the Mahatma himself. The letters further declare, according to Col. Kaye, that "the bourgeoisie will not accept a Communist program," and that it therefore became necessary to organize a party of the Indian workers and peasants, free from Congress control. This is indeed a great crime in the eyes of the Anglo-Indian bureaucrats, but what about the British proletariat, which is supposed to rule India today thru its elected representatives that constitute the Labour Government? Has the Labour Party, the Labour Government nothing to say in defense of the right of the Indian proletariat and peasantry to organize into a political party for their own emancipation?

Further "proof" produced by India's Scotland Yard Chief consists in a manifesto, openly published and circulated thruout Europe, America and India, by the Communist Party of India, calling upon the British Labour Party and the world proletariat to protest in the name of International working-class solidarity against the wholesale slaughter of 72 Indian peasants, driven to revolt by hunger produced by the unbearable exploitation of the British Government in league with the Indian landlords. This is, indeed, a piece of "revolutionary conspiracy" against the hitherto unchallenged despotism of British Imperialism and Indian landlordism. Has the Labour Government of Britain nothing to say on this subject?

The whole idea is rush thru this farce of a trial in order to (secure) a verdict which will serve as a precedent to crush the rising working-

class movement of India. The few constitutional privileges that exist for the bourgeoisie, miserably curtailed tho they are, are to be altogether denied to the Indian working-class. Will India stand for it? Will the British Labour Government sit quietly by while this travesty of justice takes place? Will the British working-class allow this act of treason to be committed against the Indian workers and peasants in their name?

One hundred and fifty thousand workers in the cotton-mills of Bombay have been locked-out for two months and refused their back pay already earned, and bonus by the Indian Mill Owners' Association, which has been drawing profits of from 12 to 20 per cent, while the workers are dying in the streets from starvation! The Indian Government refused to intervene with the "freedom of negotiation between capital and labour," which means the freedom of the mill-owners to exploit the workers at their pleasure, protected by the machine-guns and armed forces of the State. On March 7th, mounted soldiers and police were brought to bear against an unarmed mob of peacefully demonstrating workers, four of whom were killed and countless wounded for daring to protest against the monstrous injustice of the double oppression of State and Capitalism which crushes them to the grave.

Yet nothing has been heard from the Labour Government on this subject beyond an answer to a question in the House of Commons that "it has been left to the Indian Government to conduct an inquiry."

These are some of the reasons why a Communist Party is needed in India. And these are also the reasons why Communism, in the eyes of the government and capitalists, should be stamped out. Hence this bare-faced attempt to crush out all attempts to organize a political party of the Indian working-class by branding it as "conspiracy."

WILL COMMUNISM BE STAMPED OUT IN INDIA BY THE METHODS OF THE MACHINE-GUN AND THE STAR-CHAMBER? NO. A THOU-

"The Simple Proletarian"

"I start to write a play in my hotel. Too noisy, so I pack up and dash off to Washington. Then to Atlantic City. After I have visited half-a-dozen or more cities I come back and begin to write"—"Why my plays succeed," by George M. Cohan.

The simple proletarian
With dramatic aspiration
Will never make a healthy stake
If he stays in one location.

He may be earning twenty
Or twenty-five a week,
But wealth galore, will on him pour
If travel he will seek.

His family, friends and furniture
Must all be left behind
A railroad fare, new cities' air,
Will stimulate his mind.

He may be down, he may be out
And unemployed for years,
But Carlton suites, and Statler eats,
Will ripen his ideas.

The stockyard and the foundry
May give him hire and cash,
But folks will praise his wondrous plays,
If 'round the earth he'll dash.

Altho he's read the classics
And studied at every school,
His plays will fail, for lack of kale,
Unless he's a travelling fool.

Producer of the country's wealth,
He can't produce a play,
The parasite, just holds him tight
Like spider holds his prey.

O workers here and workers there,
Let's hasten evolution,
The grafters rage, the world's our stage,
Our play—The Revolution.

ERNEST BRADY.

SAND TIMES NO! Communism survived the bloody aristocracy of the Czars, and sits today triumphant as the ruling power of Soviet Russia and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. It will some day see the end of imperial rule in India, and will lead the hungering masses on a better road to freedom.

The Communist Party of India demands a manifestation of solidarity from the Communist Parties of all countries, and from the militant proletariat thruout the world. It calls upon the British Labour Government and the British proletariat to denounce this attempt to crush the right of the Indian working-class to agitate and organize for its own emancipation. Failure to do so will be a lasting blot on their name in the history of the working-class struggle.

OUR SCHOOLS

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our school histories.

If perchance an educator ventures from the path prescribed by the money powers and voices his opinion orally or in the form of a text book he is promptly dismissed and his book discredited. In no event must the children of America be contaminated with any new idea. We encourage the medical students to dissect a cadaver in order that they may arrive at the truth. Should not a new idea be placed on the dissecting table as well?

The Teachers Are Not Free.

In order to carry out their plans for class domination it was necessary, of course, that those who impart the information should be subservient to the moneyed class. This practically takes care of itself for the teachers are the products of the schools, have never been trained to think independently, hence they accept unquestioningly. If there should be any who see the light and voice their opinions openly they are at once dismissed as "dangerous radicals." So the teachers group themselves into two classes, the one composing the greater number do not know that they are enslaved—they are perfectly satisfied with things as they are. The other which represents a very small per cent know the truth but are afraid to speak for fear of loss in their position. Both are in a pitiable condition and need help. The first group must be educated for the slave who is unconscious of his fetters makes no effort to better his condition. The latter must be liberated academically and economically. Neither the teacher, who has no understanding of freedom, nor the one who, understanding, is not permitted to live it, can lead the children to that land of truth and beauty which is the ultimate dream of the workers. Servility breeds servility, and boys and girls cannot be free so long as they sit, educationally, at the feet of men and women who are not free.

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