

# What Saklatvala Symbolizes

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## Article I

THE exclusion of Shapurji Saklatvala, British subject, native of India, member of the British house of commons representing Battersea, one of the working class districts of London, member of the British Communist Party and delegate to the conference of the inter-parliamentary union has focused the attention of the American working class upon the status of the 330,000,000 natives of India within the British empire.

We Communists can afford to thank the British foreign office and the American state department for an action which has brought before the workers of this country a question which, largely because there is no considerable number of Indian immigrants here, has received but little attention heretofore.

But this is not the only issue in which the rulers of two great imperialist nations have, contrary to their evident desire, created great interest among large numbers of American workers.

THE puerile excuse given for the exclusion, i. e., certain provisions of the American immigration law, only serve to arouse the curiosity of the masses. That curiosity is being gratified in a measure because upon this matter in which certain sections of the middle class press see a violation of "international courtesy" and other sections a confession of weakness and an elevation of a despised Communist to a position of import-

ance, there is no real unity of opinion. That portion of the press which caters to the Irish population takes advantage of its anti-British prejudices to exploit the Saklatvala incident. Irish republican societies pass resolutions of protest and they find their way into the papers. The liberal press becomes quite indignant while disavowing all sympathy for Saklatvala's political beliefs.

The very thing that the rulers wanted to suppress occurs—an inquiry into and a discussion of India and its people, of the British empire, its present condition and of Communists and Communism, of the relation of the American government and the working class to all these weighty questions.

THE British foreign office is a ponderous machine and when it calls to its aid the state department of America—its most powerful rival—we are justified in assuming the visit of Saklatvala to America was considered a grave danger to the safety of British imperialism and the prestige of His Majesty's government.

A few facts stand out:

(1) Saklatvala speaks officially for a militant section of the British working class—the workers of Battersea, and indirectly for the whole left wing of British labor.

(2) He speaks for the 330,000,000 oppressed workers and peasants of India—the colony which a British statesman has called "the brightest jewel in the imperial diadem."

(3) As a member of the British Communist Party he speaks for that party and in the name of the Communist International of which it is a

section.

THE exclusion of Saklatvala is in fact a blow delivered jointly by two groups of imperialists who are rivals in almost every form of capitalist activity at the British working class, at the workers and peasants of India and at the Communist International. Only the fear and hatred of the leader of the world revolution could bring such unity between two imperialist enemies.

The attitude of the American state department is inspired principally by a fear of the impetus that the visit of Saklatvala might give to the revolutionary movement here. American labor is passive and the rulers wish to keep it so.

But the action of the British foreign office is based on actual conditions of the most critical nature. If there is one thing the American masses are susceptible to it is appeals in behalf of national liberation movements—particularly if these movements are against Great Britain. The traditions of the war for independence still live and such appeals find a ready response from large sections of the American people.

GREAT BRITAIN cannot afford to have popular sentiment in behalf of Indian nationalism aroused in America. The danger of the colonial liberation movements is too real for that.

It is hard for the American workers to realize the ever-present fear of the loss of India that abides in the breast of every loyal son of the empire. The whole strategy of the British imperialists is based on India.

Ever since the French were driven

from India and the adventurer Clive consolidated British influence, the protection of India and the extension of the British frontier in Asia has dominated British imperial policy.

THE major factor in the Mediterranean policy of Great Britain has been the securing and holding of the sea route to India. The acquisition of Egypt and South Africa have been incidental to this dominant strategy.

Great Britain went to war with Germany when the latter power began to build the Berlin to Bagdad railway which would have made ineffective the British sea route to India and the Far East.

Before Germany became by reason of her rapid industrialization and its resulting imperial ambition the most dangerous enemy of Great Britain, Russia was the foe which Britain feared. One has only to read that songbird of British imperialism, Rudyard Kipling, with his ceaseless denunciation of "the bear that walks like a man" to understand that the possibility of invasion of India from the north was a constant nightmare to the British rulers.

THE robbers of the Indian workers and peasants could never get rid of the thought that in her drive towards warm water Russia would some day send her hordes thru the Khyber pass and take for the czar the rich loot that was going to England in a thousand ships and on which British imperialism prospered and expanded.

British imperialism strives to extend her Asiatic front from north and east.

On the north it now encounters the Soviet Union, in the east the Chinese national liberation movement de-

velops under the influence of Soviet Russia and the Communist Party of China a revolutionary proletarian character.

IF the British imperialists feared Czarist Russia they fear the Russia of the workers' and peasants' government a thousand times more. Czarist Russia could offer the Indian masses only a change of oppressors but the Soviet Union offers admission on a basis of full equality to all Asiatic peoples. From over the mountains that crown India's norther border comes the news that in Soviet Russia the peasants have the land and that the factories are the property of the joint government of workers and peasants. This one fact is more dangerous to British imperialism in India than all the armies of the czar.

From the east comes the news that the Chinese workers and peasants are driving the British robbers from their country and that alone of all the nations Soviet Russia treats the Chinese workers and peasants as equals.

The front of British imperialism in the north and east has been broken.

Saklatvala is a member of a section of the Communist International and an Indian. He symbolizes in his person all that British imperialism hates and fears—to the British foreign office he is the emblem of the Russian revolution and of mass revolt in India and China. He represents the unity of the working class in the imperialist nations with the colonial peoples and wherever he speaks, there the two great forces which will overthrow world imperialism are seen in action.

(To be Continued)