

Will the Labor Government Stand for This?

By EVELYN ROY.

THE British Indian government is perpetuating the best traditions of autocratic despotism as practiced under the defunct Russian Czarism. And the exercise of this unlimited autocracy is backed up by the strength and power of the Labor Government in Britain, which through Parliament and the Secretary of State for India, exercises ultimate control over the destinies of 320,000,000 politically disabled subjects of His Majesty, the King Emperor. The latest example of governmental persecution in India, (always excepting the chronic arrests, convictions and imprisonment, or imprisonment without conviction which have become a matter of course in the daily governance of the country) is the trial now proceeding at Cawnpore against eight persons under Section 121A of the Indian penal code, which reads as follows:

121. Whoever wages war against the Queen or attempts to wage such war or abets the waging of such war shall be punished with death or transportation for life and shall forfeit all his property.

121A. Whoever, within or without British India, conspires to commit any of the offenses punishable by Section 121, or to deprive the Queen of the sovereignty of British India or of any part thereof, or conspires to overawe, by means of criminal force or show of criminal force the Government or any local government, shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, or with imprisonment of either description which may extend to ten years.

The charge, as may be seen, is a serious one, usually reserved for offenders of the first rank who have been implicated in acts of terrorism or concrete attempts to overthrow the government by force of arms. In the case of the eight persons now under trial in Cawnpore, the application of this charge is a little unusual, in that it is based, NOT UPON ANY TERRORISTIC ACT NOR PLOT OF ARMED FORCE, BUT UPON THE ATTEMPTS OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS TO ORGANIZE THE INDIAN WORKERS AND PEASANTS INTO A POLITICAL PARTY OF THEIR OWN TO BRING ABOUT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL IMPROVE THEIR PRESENT ECONOMIC CONDITION. In other words, the charge of "conspiracy against the sovereignty of the King-Emperor" is brought against eight people professing to be socialists or communists, who have advanced the program of socialism for the projected emancipation of the Indian working class.

It is as though a Magistrate's Court in Great Britain were to descend upon the leading members of the Labor Party, the I. L. P. and the Communist Party, and summarily imprison them, pending trial, for conspiracy to bring about the Social Revolution which all include in their programs. FOR THE EIGHT ACCUSED AT CAWNPORE HAVE DONE NOTHING WHICH LAYS THEM OPEN TO CONVICTION EXCEPT TO ADVOCATE THE ORGANIZATION OF A POLITICAL MASS PARTY OF THE INDIAN WORKING CLASS UNDER AN ECONOMIC PROGRAM CALLING FOR THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EMANCIPATION OF THE INDIAN PROLETARIAT AND PEASANTRY.

The preliminary hearings have been concluded and the accused committed for trial at the Sessions on April 22. In this preliminary hearing the following accusations were lodged on behalf of the Crown, with the Director of the Intelligence Department as Chief Witness:

"The accused are charged under Section 121A with conspiracy to establish a branch organization of the Communist International throughout British India with object to deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India. It is alleged on behalf of the prosecution that they decided to make use of the association of workers and peasants or People's Party under the leadership of the accused, for securing complete separation of India from Imperialistic Britain by violent revolution, with an economic program of such character as to attract both peasants and workers. It is further alleged that the organization was to have both a legal and an illegal basis, and attempt was to be made to secure control of the Indian National Congress. The conspiracy (it is further alleged) was to be financed by the revolutionary organization in Russia, and an agreement constituting a conspiracy was arrived at by means of letters written by the accused to one another from various places, one of which was Cawnpore. It is also alleged that the accused introduced and circulated into British India prescribed newspapers, pamphlets and circulars of a revolutionary character."

As a proof of these allegations, sixty out of eighty intercepted letters alleged to have been signed by Manabendra Nath Roy were presented, either in manuscript or photograph, with the following explanation by Col. Kaye on cr. ex. Information was received by the government that some persons whom the latter considered as Indian revolutionaries from Europe called a meeting in 1921, at Moscow, with a view to making arrangements for the furtherance of Bolshevik pro-

STITUTE CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY. But the question that arises to one's mind instantaneously is this: WILL THE BRITISH LABOR GOVERNMENT, ITSELF A WORKING CLASS PARTY ORGANIZED FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENDS, AND AFFILIATED TO AN INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT, STAND FOR THIS REVIVAL OF CZARIST AUTOCRACY? WILL THE VARIOUS WORKING CLASS PARTIES OF BRITAIN AND THE EMPIRE, WHETHER CALLING THEMSELVES LABOR, SOCIALIST OR COMMUNIST, ALLOW THIS ATTEMPT TO CRUSH THE RISING PROLETARIAN MOVEMENT IN INDIA TO SUCCEED?

What are the facts of the case, so carefully veiled in the censorship which permits only the barest details of this trial to be published in Britain? M. N. Roy is one of the founders of the Communist Party of India, established in October, 1920, as an open organization with a program which has been given to the world, embodying the minimum clauses of Socialism adapted to present-day Indian conditions, and presented before the 36th

as delegate, he proclaimed himself an Indian Communist and urged the organization of labor for economic and political ends. Since that time, he has devoted himself to the organization of "The Labor and Kishan Party of Hindusthan," with an open program and statutes calling for a minimum Socialist program, and to the publication of the legal organ of that party, "The Labor and Kishan Gazette." The proclaimed principle of his creed is non-violent, non-co-operation applied to the domain of working class agitation and organization, in conformity with the resolution adopted to that effect by the Indian National Congress at Gaya, which appointed a Committee for Labor Organization of which he is a member. He holds various other public posts.

Mr. S. R. Dange, of Bombay, is a young man under thirty, Editor of "The Socialist," a weekly journal devoted to the propagation of theoretical Marxism and to the ideas of Birth-Control and various other radical movements well within the law of British India. He is one of the organizers and founders of the Social Democratic Club of Bombay, and author of several books and pamphlets, among them a brochure entitled "Gandhi versus Lenin." He too was a Congressman and Non-Co-operator, well-known to his province and respected for his intelligence, ability and integrity to principle.

Of the other accused, one, Mr. R. L. Sharma, is a political refugee in French India, previously identified with the nationalist movement before forced to fly the country and seek shelter from British persecution on alien soil, where he has remained for nearly fourteen years; three others, Maula Baksh, Muzaffar Ahmed, and Ahmad Nalin Das Gupta have been languishing in prison without trial or charge for an indeterminate period until suddenly hauled out in connection with the present proceedings, while the last, Ghulan Hossain, is a respected Professor of Lahore who has won the esteem of his fellows during his professional career, and is the author of several books on Social and Economic subjects, as well as former editor of a monthly theoretical journal devoted to the ideas of Marx.

This in brief, is the character of the victims of the present attempt to choke all efforts in behalf of the Indian working-class towards political and economic betterment, under the vulgar charge of "conspiracy." For the crime of having studied, thought and wrote about the conditions of the Indian proletariat and peasantry, and for having advocated various ways and means for their emancipation, (for the accused were not united into a single group, nor did they represent a single tendency or organized movement), these eight individuals are to be condemned, undefended, to the maximum penalty of the law. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT NO LAWYER HAS COME FORWARD TO DEFEND THEIR CASE,—THE FIRST CASE ON RECORD IN THE INDIAN COURTS AGAINST THE DEFENDERS OF THE INDIAN WORKING CLASS. So little is the true nature and gravity of the issue understood in India, that the cause of the Indian masses will be allowed to go by default, on a snap judgment and trumped-up evidence, and charge that could not be substantiated in a court of law in any other part of the Empire.

WILL THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE BRITISH PROLETARIAN PERMIT THIS EMANCIPATION MOVEMENT OF THE INDIAN MASSES TO BE WIPED OUT BY THE METHODS OF CZARIST AUTOCRACY? THE FATE OF THREE HUNDRED MILLION WORKERS AND PEASANTS OF INDIA HANGS ON THEIR REPLY.

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From a Speech by MacDonald:
"Not every Christian is a Socialist, but every Socialist is a Christian."



Jesus Christ—King of England—MacDonald.

paganda. Finally one M. N. Roy was selected as the leader of the organization. As a result of this information, Government authorized the stoppage, interception and examination of postal letters addressed to certain persons. List of such persons was added to from time to time. The Government of India ordered prohibition of certain newspapers and pamphlets under the Sea Customs Act. In course of time a number of letters, newspapers and circulars were obtained, some originals, some copies and some photographs of originals which were produced as exhibits."

So much for the charge and evidence, which speaks for itself, and for the nature of British rule in India. IT IS ONLY IN BRITISH INDIA THAT SUCH A TRIAL CAN BE HELD ON SUCH A CHARGE; THAT THE ORGANIZATION OF WORKING CLASS PARTIES FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENDS, AND THE INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION OF SUCH PARTIES TO THE WORLD PROLETARIAN MOVEMENT CON-

Indian National Congress which met at Ahmedabad in 1921. He is the founder and Chief Editor of the "Vanguard," the organ of the Communist Party of India, which the prohibited in India, circulates freely in other parts of the British Empire. He is the author of several books and pamphlets, equally prohibited and equally allowed, and of constant articles in the European and Indian press on Indian political, economic and social conditions, in which his views, his program and his tactics are openly exposed.

Mr. M. Singaravelu Chettiar is a venerable lawyer of over sixty years of age, a native of Madras, a follower of Mr. Gandhi who gave up his law practice in conformity with the mandate of Non-Co-operation in 1921. He is a prominent Congressman, held in high respect and esteem by his countrymen, and active in the cause of labor since the foundation of the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1921. In the Gaya session of the Indian National Congress, which he attended