

# AGAINST COLONIAL OPPRESSION

## The Terror of British Imperialism in India.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the League Against Imperialism held in Amsterdam on April 13th. and 14th. 1929 under the chairmanship of James Maxton, M. P., special attention was paid to the present situation in India where the British Government are attempting, by a series of repressive legislative measures and acts of terror and oppression, to crush the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, the youth movement and the movement for national independence generally. S. Saklatvala, M. P. gave a detailed account of the various measures such as the Trade Union Dispute Bill and the so-called Public Safety Bill which have been passed by the Government notwithstanding the fact that they were rejected by the Indian Legislative Assembly and were put into force by the dictatorial powers of the Viceroy as the agent of British Imperialism in India.

It was decided to take international action, in order to give active support to the Indian movement, and the following resolution was unanimously passed; and it was further decided that India should be placed in the forefront of the international activities of the League as well as of the deliberations of the World Congress, which will take place from July 20th. to 31st. 1929.

### RESOLUTION ON INDIA.

Passed at the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the League Against Imperialism held at Amsterdam on April 13th & 14th, 1929.

British Imperialism is making desperate efforts to stem the rising tide of the struggle for the independence of India. Repression is accompanied by adroit proposals designed to disintegrate the ranks of the national revolutionary movement.

The workers of Bombay are shot down and bludgeoned in hundreds, meetings of strikers and demonstrations of workers, peasants and students are broken up, the leaders of the militant trade unions have been arrested wholesale and held in

Indian jails, the streets of Bombay were recently patrolled with troops, tanks and machine-guns, military officers and magistrates are notified to hold themselves in readiness for immediate mobilisation against the working class.

At the same time, the Fawcett Committee appointed by the Government at the end of the Bombay strike last October is urging the millowners to give up their claims for a wage reduction, but on condition that the workers choose docile Trade Union leaders, and virtually cease to follow those, now cast into jail, under whose militant leadership the owners were compelled to abate their claims.

Not content with this the Government of India, alarmed by the indomitable spirit of the workers who of their own initiative have carried on a protracted struggle and have sustained and stimulated their leaders, is now forging new weapons of oppression.

By the Trades Disputes Act the Government of India aims at smashing the militant trades unions, at splitting the workers' movement, at paralysing the effort of the exploited proletariat of India to improve their lot and at perpetuating an infantile death rate which is the highest known in the world. These terrible conditions in India serve also as a weapon against the British workers. Low wages in India drag down British workers' earnings especially in the mining, steel and textile industries.

At the same time, the Viceroy of India promises a Labour Commission in order to remedy the grievances of the workers. "We ourselves", said the wolves, "will guard this helpless flock when once those interfering watch-dogs are removed."

By the Public Safety Bill the Viceroy of India confers upon himself the power to deport without trial British subjects who may be suspected of "subversive propaganda", in order to secure the safety of those other British subjects who spend their time exploiting the masses of India.

The decision of the Indian Nationalists not to debate the Public Safety Bill is met by what appears as the staging of a "bomb outrage" (reported in the Continental papers as mere fire-works) which bears all the characteristics of a provocation engineered by the British Secret Service utilising for this purpose misguided fighters for the independence of India. This incident has certainly had no other effect than to provide a further pretext for the death-dealing hand of the Government and to serve as a handle to intimidate the Nationalist leaders into a surrender to the dictates of the British Crown.

If proof were needed of the futility of parliamentary action against the might of Imperialism, of the contempt felt by the British Government towards the Indian Legislature, of the hypocrisy of the repeated promises of self-government, of the fact that the utmost the Nationalist President can do within the rules and limits of the Legislative Assembly is overridden by the despotic action of the Viceroy, it would be found in the celerity with which this functionary assumed the garb of autocracy and required the attendance of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly in order that he might proclaim to them his ordinance for bringing into immediate force the Public Safety Bill and thus completing the humiliation of the Indian Legislature.

Faced with the possibility of a determined revolutionary struggle amongst the 300 millions of mankind whom they deprive of freedom and independence, the Government of India, the representative of British Imperialism, will use both force and fraud to maintain its hold on this valuable field of exploitation for British capital.

And while the British Government are engaged in the hypocrisy of discussing disarmament proposals at Geneva, they are carrying on feverish war preparations in India, and through the Butler Commission are converting the States ruled by the Indian princes into military strongholds, for the purpose, on the one hand, of crushing the movement for independence of the Indian masses, and on the other, of furthering British Imperialist plans of aggression directed mainly against the Soviet Union, British policy in Afghanistan and the disturbances provoked and organised among the tribes of the North West Frontier Province are but preludes to the war that is being planned by British Imperialism.

Against such tyranny and aggression, the fighters against Imperialism all over the world must redouble their efforts to help the Indian masses in their struggle for independence.

Everywhere, in every country, in the workshops and the fields, the cruelties and barbarous methods of exploitation of

British Imperialism in India must be made known, and the help of all the struggling working masses of mankind must be directed to their brethren in India. Especially amongst the workers of Britain and the British Dominions must help be sought. All movements to India of munitions and armed forces must be hindered by strikes, by open opposition and organised resistance. To the troops themselves must be explained the hideous task that is set them of shooting down unarmed Indian workers and peasants to save the profits of the British capitalists.

The Executive Committee of the League Against Imperialism calls on all adherents not to lose time but immediately to redouble their efforts, to collect money, to mobilise their forces, to do everything in their power to free the fight for independence from the tyranny now raging over India.

## To the Rescue of the Indian Victims of British Imperialist Terror!

The Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism has issued the following Appeal to all Affiliated, Associated and Sympathising Organisations of the League Against Imperialism:

Friends and Comrades:

The International Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism has just received from the President of the All-India Trade Union Congress and General Secretary of the All-India National Congress, which are both affiliated and associated organisations of the League Against Imperialism, an urgent appeal to take immediate international action against the reign of terror which the British Government has initiated against the workers and peasants of India and against the mass movement for national independence.

We have received authentic material with regard to the recent arrests of 31 prominent trade union and political leaders from all parts of India who have been rendering active service to the masses of India in their struggle for national and social emancipation.

The majority of those who have been cast into prison are leading members of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, one is an ex-President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, eight are members of the All-India Congress Committee, and two of them are English comrades who have been rendering signal service to the trade union and political organisation of the Indian masses.

Hundreds of house searches have been undertaken by the police including Labour offices and offices of the Youth Leagues.

The arrested leaders were handled brutally. They were taken handcuffed on long railway journeys lasting several days.

This wave of terror aims at the complete destruction of the Workers' & Peasants' Parties, at crippling the trade union movement and bringing it under the complete control of the Government and its Labour agents, at crushing the rising youth movement and the general mass movement for the national independence of India.

The trial of the arrested leaders is to take place at Meerut in Northern India. It is necessary to point out to our international organisations the significance of the choice of this particular city for the trial. The so-called "conspiracy" for the overthrow of the imperialist Government is admitted to have been widespread and most of the arrested came from Calcutta, Bombay and Lahore while only one was from Meerut. But the trial will nevertheless take place at Meerut because in that city the accused will not have the right of claiming a trial by jury except in the case of the two English comrades who as "European British subjects" alone have that right. They will be absolutely at the mercy of the judicial agents of the Government who will exercise their arbitrary will against the accused. The most brutal and savage sentences are sure to be passed and appeals against these sentences can only go to the High Court at Allahabad which is notorious in all India as the most vindictive "Court of Justice" in the case of so-called political "offenders".

The League Against Imperialism has already issued an urgent appeal to all anti-imperialist organisations and to a

ade unions to record their protest against British imperialist error and to help the cause of the Indian workers and peasants by contributing financial help for the defence of the arrested and for relief to their families.

The International Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism, in response to the urgent appeal received from India, once more calls upon all affiliated, associated and sympathising organisations of the League as well as all organisations and individuals interested in the emancipation of the colonial peoples, to lose no time in coming to the rescue of the Indian victims of British imperialist terror.

We call upon them to take the following steps without loss of time:

1. To organise meetings and demonstrations to protest against British despotism in India and to express solidarity with the Indian masses.

2. To collect funds for the defence of the prisoners and to emit the same as quickly as possible to the International Secretariat of the League Against Imperialism, Messrs. Münzenberg, P. and Chattopadhyaya, Secretaries, Berlin S. W. 48, Friedrichstraße 24.

3. To send telegrams to the British Trade Union Congress protesting energetically against the acts of terror and repression directed against the Indian working class and to send messages of solidarity and encouragement to the All-India Trade Union Congress (cable address: Tradunic Bombay) and the Workers' and Peasants' Party, 2 European Asylum Lane, Calcutta. To make sure that these messages reach their destination and are not suppressed by the British Government copies should be forwarded to the International Secretariat of the League.

We especially call upon all trade union and workers' organisations in the imperialist and the colonial countries to give effect to the above appeal and thereby demonstrate to the workers and peasants of India that they do not stand alone and isolated in their heroic struggle.

**LEAGUE AGAINST IMPERIALISM**  
Willi Münzenberg, V. Chattopadhyaya  
Secretaries.

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## **Full Text of Indictment against Leaders of Indian Workers.**

**Complaint of King Emperor  
Versus**

1. Philipp Spratt; 2. Benjamin Francis Bradley; 3. Ajodhya Prasad, son of Ram Prasad; 4. Shaukat Usmani, son of Ghulam Shauddin; 5. Puran Chand Joshi; 6. Gauri Shanker; 7. L. R. Adam; 8. Dr. V. N. Mukharji, son of Dr. Harish Chandra Mukharji; 9. Ch. Dharamvir Singh, M. L. C. (Vice President, Workers' & Peasants' Party); 10. Dharani Goswami, son of Usmani Mohan; 11. Shib Nath Banarji, son of Dwarka Nath; 12. Muzaffar Ahmad, son of Mansur Ali Sarkar; 13. Gopal Prasad, son of Brindaban; 14. Shamsul Huda; 15. Kishori Lal Joshi, son of late Nanda Lal; 16. Gopendra Chakravarty, son of Harendra Lal; 17. Radha Mittra, son of Bipin Behari; 18. Sridhar Amrit Dange; 19. Sachchidanand Vishnu Ghate; 20. S. H. Bhawalla; 21. Dhondi Raj Thengdi, son of Gunwant alias Arba Thengdi; 22. Keshav Nilkant loglekar; 23. Shantaram Savaram Mirajkar; 24. Raghunath Shivram Nimbkar; 25. Gangadhar Moreshwar Adhikari; 26. Motiram Gajanan Desai; 27. Arun Amaram Alve; 28. Gobind Ramchandra Kaste; 29. Sohan Singh Joshi, son of Lal Singh Jat; 30. M. A. Majid alias Abdul Majid, son of Mir Faiz Bakhsh; 31. Kedar Nath Seghal, son of Jag Mal.

The complaint of Mr. R. A. Harton, Officer on Special Duty under the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India, sheweth:

1. That there exists in Russia an organisation called the Communist International. The aim of this organisation is, by means of armed revolution, to overthrow all the existing Governments of Government throughout the world and to replace them by Soviet Republics subordinate to, and controlled by, the central Soviet administration in Moscow.

2. That the said Communist International carries on its work and propaganda through various committees, branches, and organisations, controlled by the subject to itself, e. g. the Executive Committee of the Communist International (E. C. C. I.), and various sub-committees of the same, including a sub-committee concerned with Eastern and Colonial affairs (Colonial Bureau); the Communist Party of Great Britain (C. P. G. B.), which is a section of the Communist International; the Red International of Labour Unions (R. I. L. U.), the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, the League Against Imperialism, the Young Communist League (Y. C. L.) and various other bodies.

3. That the ultimate objective of the said Communist International is the complete paralysis and overthrow of existing Governments in every country (including India), by means of a general strike and armed uprising. It has outlined a programme or plan of campaign which should be followed for the achievement of this ultimate objective. Among the methods so ordained are:

a) The incitement of antagonism between Capital and Labour.

b) The creation of Workers' & Peasants' Parties, Youth Leagues, Unions, etc., ostensibly for the benefit of the members thereof, but in fact for the purpose of propaganda: the domination of such parties by Communists pledged to support the aims of the Communist International, and the unification of such bodies under one control subservient to the Communist International.

c) The introduction of fractions or nuclei of such Communists with illegal objects as aforesaid into existing Trade Unions, Nationalist bodies and political and other organisations, with the object of capturing the same or obtaining their support in the interests of the Communist International.

d) The encouragement of strikes, hartals, and agitation.

e) Propaganda by speeches, literature, newspapers, the celebration of anniversaries connected with the Russian Revolution, etc. etc.

f) The utilisation and encouragement of any movements hostile to the Government.

4. That in the year 1921 the said Communist International determined to establish a branch organisation in British India, and the accused Sripad Amrit Dange, Shaukat Usmani and Muzaffar Ahmed entered into a conspiracy with certain other persons to establish such branch organisations with a view to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty of British India.

5. That thereafter various persons, including the accused Philip Spratt and Benjamin Francis Bradley were sent to India by the Communist International through the medium of one of its branches or organisations, and with the object of furthering the aims of the Communist International.

6. That the accused named in this complaint reside at different centres throughout British India. They have conspired with each other, and with other persons known or unknown within or without British India, to deprive the King Emperor of the sovereignty of British India, and for such purpose to use the methods and carry out the programme and plan of campaign outlined and ordained by the Communist International, and in fact they used such methods and carried out such plan of campaign with the assistance of, and financial support from, the Communist International.

7. That the accused have met and conspired together as aforesaid at various places within and without British India, and amongst other at Meerut, and in pursuance of such conspiracy as aforesaid, the accused formed a Workers' and Peasants' Party at Meerut and there held a Conference thereof.

8. That the above named accused have committed an offence under section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code and within the jurisdiction of this Court.

It is, therefore, prayed that the Court will enquire into the above named offence.

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