

What Saklatvala Symbolizes -

By William F. Dunne

ARTICLE II.

ONE has only to read one extract from Saklatvala's recent speech in the house of commons to realize that to British imperialism he appears as the forerunner of the day when India drives out British hangmen and becomes an ally and friend of Soviet Russia. Said Saklatvala to the representatives of British imperialism:

"It may be that you are honest incompetents . . . but why not learn from others. Our Russian Bolshevik friends have in five years time been able to give the political franchise to the agriculturists of Russia, who as a class are parallel with the agriculturist population of India. The are also people of diverse religions, including Mohammedans, Jews, Greek church people and others. The Bolsheviks have been able to give them education in five years, yet in the Czar's days these people were treated with that same callousness and brutal cruelty as that with which you have been treating the Indian peasant for 150 years. In five years after the Communist International revolution in Russia, 65 per cent of the agricultural population have received education and you have today the testimony or half a dozen British men and women that in spite of the bloodcurdling articles in your newspapers, the Russians have done their job well. Why play a dog-in-the-manger part? I appeal to this committee to allow a commission of Indians to go to Russia to study and to find what the British have failed to discover—the way of granting to the people of political franchise and education, scientific laboratories, institutions, health homes, compensation and allowances for industrial workers. If Russia, a country of agriculturists,

could find the way out, how is it that you with your world-proclaimed cleverness as administrators have failed to find it, why not be honest and step aside and let us do the job, and we shall do it on an international Communist basis? Why are you turned inside out at the very thought of Communist propaganda in India? If as an industrial nation with your Western mind you have failed to discover a humanitarian cure for the ills of an agricultural population in an Eastern country, why play the-dog-in-the-manger? Why not permit the Russian nation, which has actually discovered the way out of the darkness, to come and help you?"

THIS is no parliamentary bombast. These words are true words and the lords by right of birth and bank-roll know them to be true. The colonial liberation movements are shaking imperialism the world over and British imperialists know better than any other ruling group that the eyes of all the colonial people are turned towards Soviet Russia and that in Moscow are the headquarters of the Communist International which links up these movements with the struggle of the working class in all lands.

THEY will ask even their bitterest imperialist enemy to prevent their working class being "corrupted" and moral aid being given by them to the Indian liberationists.

But Saklatvala speaks also for the British working class—the working class that in the last year has astounded observers by the rapidity of its development to consciousness as a class. The organized section of this class—the trade unionists has sent an official delegation to Soviet Russia and has published a report that has shattered the lies of the capitalist

press and given to millions of workers an insight into the wonder of the Russia of the workers and peasants.

THE British trades unions have, with the all-Russian unions, taken the lead in the drive for world trade union unity. An English worker, chairman of the Amsterdam International, A. A. Purcell, is a leading figure in the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee.

The British miners force the government to subsidise the coal industry and while the coal owners will profit largely by the settlement it is nevertheless only a temporary one, represents a huge concession by the tory government and it has allowed the alliance of miners, transport workers and railwaymen nine months in which to prepare their forces for a still more serious struggle.

THE government subsidy to the coal industry, the cost of which is estimated variously from \$50,000,000 to \$100,000,000, is made possible by the super-profits from the colonies — India in particular.

Yet the British Trades Union Congress meeting at Scarborough passes a resolution (by some 3,000,000 votes with a negligible majority voting against) endorsing the liberation movement in the colonies and upholding the right of any or all of them to separate from the empire at any time. This is a great historical action on the part of the organized section of a class which has been bound up with imperial exploitation for decades. It has been proverbial that to scratch any Briton was to find an imperialist but the chains of tradition were broken at Scarborough and British labor, at least the very powerful left wing, now acknowledges that the empire must be broken up if the British working class is to save itself from utter slavery.

WHAT has brought about this change?

The outstanding fact is that with all the loose talk of the "stabilization of capitalism" the trend of Great Britain's national economy is definitely downwards.

Unemployment is on the increase and conservative estimates place the total number of jobless workers at 1,000,000. The numbers of these workers on part time is at least double this figure.

THE report of the ministry of labor as of September 17, published in the London Daily Herald states:

For food alone the corresponding percentages were 70 and 68 respectively. A housewife who has one pound to spend on food is receiving now in values eleven shillings and nine pence as compared with 1914, and during the month of August the price of food rose 2 per cent.

The British pound is worth approximately \$5 in American money. There are twenty shillings of the approximate value of 25 cents to the pound. The penny rates at about two of American pennies. In other words the British workers is able to buy with one pound nominally rated at \$5, food only to the value of \$2.93

INCREASING unemployment and rising food prices!

It is no wonder that the British imperialists want no talk in the United States or elsewhere of the oppression by them of the Indian and British working class — or of any other subject which would tend to explain the need for working class solidarity with the colonial peoples.

BRITISH seamen are on strike. In defiance of Havelock Wilson, the imperialist tool who heads the union, the seamen have tied up shipping thruout the empire. They have received sympathy and support from a

dozen different countries — Russia in particular.

But most surprising of all they received support from the regular British trade unions. An example of the disgust that the Havelock Wilson have aroused among the honest element of the trade unions is the following statement of J. Rowan, general secretary of the Electrical Trades Union published in the Daily Herald:

The unfortunate thing for the seamen is that they are not only fighting the shipowners, but they are fighting their own union, who, altho they did not consult the men about the reduction, are insisting even at the revolver point, on its acceptance.

It is a most disgraceful state of affairs and a blot on the whole trade union movement.

The procedure seems to be that the union, representing their own grades, agree with the shipowners what their reduction is going to be, and seem to do it without any consultation with their members.

It is well to say here that "union," when used in the sense in which it is used by Rowan, refers to the official committees and not to the general membership.

A militant spirit among the seamen — the most oppressed and lowest paid of all the "sons of Mary" of whom Kipling wrote in the one moment he forgot his imperialist allegiance!

Revolt in the merchant marine — the second line defense of Britain's empire! God save the mark! It is time for something more than letters to The Times—when "outlaw" strikes get support — outlaw strikes of seamen at that!

In times like these no impudent Indian can be allowed to raise the fiery cross in other Anglo-Saxon lands!

(To Be Continued)