

AGAINST COLONIAL OPPRESSION

The Struggle of the Indian Railway Workers.

By M. Ali.

"Strikes are inevitable as long as capitalism and imperialism lasts . . . Our struggle is against capitalism and imperialism. Workers of the G. P. I. Railway, you are fighting as vanguard of all the railway workers of India" Thus writes the "Railwayman" the organ of the G. P. I. (Great-Indian Peninsular) Railwaymen's Union, which is leading the present strike of the 125,000 G. P. I. Railway workers.

This estimation of the present railway strike gives a true picture of the situation in the contemporary working class movement of India. The Indian proletariat is carrying on a heroic struggle against its class enemies, the British Imperialists and their allies, the Indian capitalists. That is why the Bombay workers raised aloft their red banner on the 26th of January last, when the bourgeoisie had staged a scene of their "independence day" while ready to sell themselves and betray their "independence" for "very simple but vital needs" of the Indian bourgeoisie as for example, reduction of the rupee ratio, protection to their cotton and shipping industries, etc., the demands put forward recently by Gandhi. The Bombay workers declared that "the Congress Flag could never be the real flag of independence", it was a flag of betrayal, of compromise with British imperialism.

That is why the Meerut trial started by the Tory imperialists and carried out by the "labour" imperialists. That is why the Indian bourgeoisie refused to help the Meerut prisoners legally and materially. On March 20th, a year has elapsed, since 32 leaders of the Indian working class were arrested and thrown into prison of Meerut a small and remote town in the North. The farce of a trial is not yet finished. The class justice awaits them in the form of a heavy sentence of conviction with hard labour.

At Meerut is being tried by British imperialism not only the working class movement in India, but the international proletarian movement, standing for the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism. The chief accused in the trial is the Communist International.

Faced by the revolt of the Colonial slaves British imperialism attacks the Communist International, arrests and subjects to cruel torture the leaders of the working class movement, with a view to check its growth. But in spite of depriving the working class of its leaders by repeated arrests, the movement is going forward. New leaders are springing up to take the place of those who fall victims as prisoners in the class war. The strike of the 125 000 G. I. P. railway workers carried on in face of terrorisation by imperialist armed forces, treacherous tactics of the nationalists and social-reformists shows that.

The strikers are being arrested, the volunteers who picket the railway lines are terrorised by the police, the workers are being forcibly ejected from their quarters, their water supply is being cut off, their meetings are forbidden and convicts from prisons are being used as blacklegs. All this is being done by the Anglo-Indian Government, the owner of the Railway, under the instruction of MacDonald's Labour Government. The agent of the railway has declared that all those on strike should consider themselves to be dismissed from work. Blacklegs are paid double wages to replace the strikers.

The treacherous nationalist and social-reformists are helping MacDonald's agents to break this strike. A reformist union, composed of the superior grade employees of the G.I.P. railway has refused to join the strike. At the head of this union stands, as president, **Mr. Jammadas Mehta**, who along with Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose is a leader of the "Independence League".

The workers are rejecting all efforts of compromise and conciliation with the capitalists. The **All-India Trade Union Congress**, now under the militant leadership of the **Left Wingers**, of the Red Flag's Union, stands at the back of the strikers. Appeals are being made by them to all the railway workers to declare sympathetic strikes with their comrades. They are closely watching the situation in order to see that the strikers are not deserted and betrayed by some of the pseudo left leaders, as the president of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union, who has been showing such signs. Thus, a bulletin issued by the Workers and Peasants Party, of Bombay, lead by the leaders of the Red Flag Union of Bombay, says:

"The Workers of the G.I.P. railway must see that Mr. Ruikar (President of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union) stands by the strike and does not begin to retreat. Mr. Ruikar has sent a cable to MacDonald. It is very wrong again for him to appeal to the imperialist premier to use the strike-breaking machinery of the Trade Disputes Act. . . . The G.I.P. men should go to the B.B. & C.I. (Bombay-Baroda and Central India) Railwaymen and appeal to them to join the struggle. Men on the B.B. & C.I. line your conditions are as bad as those of your comrades on the G.I.P. line. Your grievances are the same. Join the struggle."

The G.I.P. railway workers are carrying on the struggle for the cause for which the Meerut prisoners fought. Their cause is the cause of the international proletariat, the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism. They are fighting against odds, the colonial regime of MacDonald, aided by its Indian agents, the reformists. Their victory or defeat is the victory or defeat of the international proletariat. The international proletariat, therefore, should come to their aid. By helping them they will be helping the Meerut prisoners and the cause of the revolutionary workers of the world, fighting against capitalism, capitalist rationalisation, fascism and the imperialist preparation for war.