

By 1924, Communism had made sufficient headway for an Indian Communist party to be established at Cawnpore.

In the spring of that year it was discovered that four men at Cawnpore were conspiring with M. N. Roy to bring about a revolution in India. (I may mention here that a subscription list opened to pay for the defence of those four conspirators was *headed by the name of a leading member of the Socialist Party*).

Meanwhile, in 1926, the Viceroy, Lord Reading, had given place to Lord Irwin and, since his appointment, the Government of India had become even weaker and more pitiable than before.

In 1926-1927 Communism became more active in India and in the latter year, G. Alison (alias Donald Campbell), Philip Spratt and Benjamin Bradley, all English Communists, arrived in India. On the 1st November following their arrival, a widespread conspiracy was discovered, the object of which was the overthrow of the British Raj by a revolution.

This conspiracy, composed mostly of Bengalis, was not so dangerous as symptomatic and was defeated, and the serious results of revolutionary propaganda were not seen until the following year, 1928, when a series of strikes took place. The funds required by the strikers were supplied continually *from Moscow* to the strike leaders, and it has never been understood why the Government permitted this money to be sent by Soviet Russia through British banks to these revolutionaries. It is estimated that *90 per cent. of Trade Union funds were received by them from Moscow* and, while the strike movement was at its height, Roy issued a manifesto calling on the Communists to conduct propaganda among the people of India for the overthrow of the Government.

This was too much even for the meek and anaemic Government of India and it proposed in a "Public Safety Bill" on September 28th, the deportation of all Bolshevik agents other than Indian or British subjects. This very moderate measure, though solidly supported by the Moslems, was opposed and defeated by the Hindus by the casting vote of the President of their Legislative Assembly, Mr. V. Patel, a President of the Congress and a notorious extremist who, in January 1932, was imprisoned and it needed strikes and the murders and burnings of policemen in Bombay, an attempt to blow up the train which contained the Simon Commission, the murder of Mr. Saunders, a police officer at Lahore, and the discovery at that place of a bomb factory, before the Government could pluck up sufficient courage to introduce a new "Public Safety Bill" which passed in February, 1929, this time by a majority of *one* vote!

The Simon Commission having successfully passed through stonings, boycotts and bombs, was drawing up its report in England in the summer of 1929. The recommendations about to be made, were known in general outline and, generous as they were to the Extremist in India, they did not satisfy him, and very naturally so, because he knew perfectly well that he had only to make a great outcry, arrange for some murders and strikes and burnings of policemen, to get from a weak Government something more than the Commission proposed to give him.

At the end of June, the Viceroy went to England to see the Socialist Prime Minister, who had just got into office. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was apparently only too anxious to give him more than the Simon Commission suggested and it is understood that he himself, without any excuse, offered "Dominion Status" (whatever that may mean—I believe there is nothing very definite about this expression—but even moderate Hindu politicians claim that it gives the right to secede from the Empire.)