

Capitalist Oppression in India

By Dr. N. S. Hardiker, Secretary of India Home Rule League.

(From An Exchange.)

Recent reports from India, many of which have appeared in the American press, tell the story of a wide-spread revolt, of "open rebellion," in the words of the Viceroy of India, of general strikes, of attacks by British machine guns and bombs. Ostensibly, these riots were the result of the passage of two coercive measures, the Rowlatt bills. But to determine the real causes one must penetrate further into the economic and political conditions under which the three-hundred millions of India live.

The government of India is a rule of one people by another for the sole profit and benefit of the administration. The results of such a policy of exploitation are:

I. Abject Poverty.

The people of India have been ground down to dust. Their average per capita income, according to government estimates is \$9.50 a year. Out of this is extracted a tax of \$1.60. This leaves the head of a family with a balance of \$7.90 with which to buy food, clothing, and the other necessities of life. But cost of food for one meal a day is \$10.90 a year, this one meal to consist solely of rice. Obtaining the ordinary comforts of life is out of the question. More than half of the population go to bed with an empty stomach every night. Contrast this with the figures for the United States. The average per capita income is \$372, and out of this but \$12, is paid in taxes. The average American family has at least three hearty meals, sends its children to school, clothing and feeding them until they are 14 years old, and sometimes sends them to high school. In India the average life is 23 years. In America it is 40, at the very lowest estimate.

II. Famines.

Famines have now become chronic and are continually taking a heavy toll of human lives. Famines are caused not by a lack of rain, nor a lack of fertile soil, nor because of over-population, but because of the incessant exploitation by the British of the subsistence of the people of India. The record of famines in India for the period preceding British rule, and a comparison of this with the figures for famines after the British had established themselves in India will serve to show how British rule has sought to oppress the masses of India. Before the British came to India, the records show a series of eighteen famines spread over seven hundred years, from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century are recorded thirteen famines from 1800 to 1875, with a total of 6,500,000 deaths.

From 1875 to 1900, there were eighteen famines with a death toll of 26,000,000. In the twentieth century there have been famines every year, with distress and suffering that are indescribable. The latest reports from India tell of another famine, worse than any that India has ever known, with heavy losses, and great suffering. The causes of these famines are to be found in the scarcity of money rather than of food. There is plenty of food in the country, but the wherewithal to buy this food at prices demanded by exporters and dealers is lacking. If the peasant, in good seasons, could get a little ahead, he could, in times of famine, draw upon his savings. But as things are, there is not sufficient upon which to live in good seasons.

III. Industries.

The industries of India have deliberately remained undeveloped through all the time that the industrial revolution was working so rapidly in England, and on the continent. Yet India possesses all of the raw materials necessary for the manufacture of goods which she is at present forced to purchase from England. The exports of raw materials from India and the import of manufactured

products is the cardinal feature of Indian foreign trade. The markets of India are controlled by the British merchants. Free trade policy forced upon her by Britain prevents the growth of infant industries through protection. Agricultural progress is retarded by lack of means with which to buy new machinery and new tools. Natural resources lie undeveloped.

IV. Prevalence of Diseases.

Cholera, influenza, plague, malaria, all of these and many other diseases flourish undisturbed in India. No efforts have been made to check the spread of these deadly diseases. Sanitation is neglected on the plea that the government has not sufficient funds for improvement of living conditions of the masses. The simplest instruction in hygiene is denied the people. Food and proper living conditions alone can combat the ravages of the diseases. But both are lacking. The deaths from influenza alone for the past year are calculated at 6,000,000. During December of 1918, eight per cent. of the population of Bombay died from cholera. The total number of deaths from cholera for the first 14 years of the enlightened 20th century is 5,128,000. The prevalence of cholera in India, when it has been eradicated in all civilized Western countries is but one example of the indifference of British officials to the life and health of India. Although the germ of the cholera was discovered in 1883, and the immediate eradication of the disease begun in Europe it was permitted to flourish in India, and is taking tolls of human lives every year.

V. Indebtedness.

Bondage and death are gradually causing the deterioration of the entire population of India. A continuation of such policy can have only one result—the wiping out of the race.

While claiming that there is no money for education or sanitation, the government is constantly increasing the military expenditure in the country. In the proposed budget for 1919-1920, nearly 48 per cent. of the total revenues are to be spent on the military and navy alone. Next to the military charges the biggest item on the budget is the sum allotted to the railways. On the ground that the government has not spent enough money on railways during the war it proposes to spend about 27.1 per cent. of the total outlay now. Thus the military and railways alone consume about 75.38 per cent. of the proposed revenues. From the remaining 24.62 per cent. they wish to improve agriculture, irrigation, education, industries, sciences, and sanitation.

With a military strength unsurpassed in Indian history, the government has seen fit to pass a law which is so drafted that any one whose writing or speaking is disliked by officials may be arraigned and tried by special processes, which in effect abolishes all ordinary law. The passage of the bill was bitterly opposed by all of the Indian members of the Legislative Council, who voted against it. Five of the members in the legislative and executive council have resigned their seats. Passive resistance movements have been started. On April 6, a national "Humiliation Day" was declared. All shops were closed, and in many provinces fasting was observed. Strikes, riots and revolts have been taking place all over India. To quiet the restless people, the government has employed bombs, machine guns, armored cars, and has succeeded in fanning the flames of revolt. In the revolts at Ahmedabad and Amritsar, a total loss of 400 lives was the result of the government efforts at subjection of the people. Floggings and imprisonments are the order of the day.

V. Indebtedness.

Indebtedness is chronic with the Hindu agriculturist. As soon as his crops ripen his first concern is to sell his produce to pay the landlord his rent, and the government its revenue. There is no pro-

SOVIET RUSSIA IS BONE DRY REGIME.

(From the Vancouver "Sun," July 13.)

NEW YORK, July 12.—Soviet Russia is bone dry. One can not get a drop of vodka anywhere. There is no wine nor beer, either.

It is surprising to find the water-wagon compulsory in that wild land, where anarchy is what one anticipates.

No W. C. T. U. could have been more diligent in enforcing the bone-dry law than the Bolsheviki. Russia never had saloons, but the cafe where the Russian formerly had his "nip," is closed up and the doors are locked.

According to eye-witnesses, lovers of the "social glass" almost rioted against the Bolsheviki when Lenin ordered all the bottles and barrels of fire-water poured into the gutters.

In place of vodka the Russian drinks tea several times a day. To satisfy that "craving" for alcohol he sips it through a lump of sugar held between his teeth. In all institutions and industries operated under soviet rule, tea is served to employees at least four times a day.

The Bolshevik reformers did not stop with voting the country dry. They are waging a war against begging and prostitution, and have succeeded to the extent that there is less of either in evidence in Moscow or Petrograd than in other European capitals. According to authorities, the decrease in prostitution and begging is due to two causes. In the first place, the leisure class that supported these occupations is gone. Secondly, fear of harsh Bolshevik punishment has driven parasites to work.

LABORITE DEFEATS COALITION CANDIDATE IN LANARKSHIRE SEAT.

LONDON, July 29.—(Reuter's.) James Robertson, Laborite, has been elected to the Rothwell division of Lanarkshire in a bye-election—the result of which was announced today. The vote stood: Robertson, Laborite, 13,135; T. Moffatt, Coalition Liberal, 5,967. The seat was previously held by a Coalition Unionist.

The tide of popular feeling continues to run against the Imperialistic junkers in Great Britain.

vision for storage of the grains, to enable the agriculturist to get advances for payment of revenue pending profitable sale at good prices. More often than not the ryot sells at low prices and then buys at high rates to supply his own needs and those of his family. The need for capital with which to purchase grains for the next crops forces him to go to the money-lender who exacts the very life blood of his victim. The lack of capital for new implements and for new experiments hinders the progress of the agriculturist and the fear of fresh taxes destroys all initiative. The utter lack of education in scientific agriculture is still another cause for the backwardness of agriculture.

VI. Illiteracy.

Out of three hundred million people in India, 295 million can neither read nor write. After 160 years of enlightened rule in India, the British have enabled 6 out of every 100 to be educated. An admirable record, indeed, for a progressive Western nation. Education is neither free nor compulsory in India, except in the native states. Five out of every hundred girls get common school education. The expenditure on education in the United States per head, is \$4. In India, it is two and one-half cents! Within 20 years, the people of the Philippines have reduced their illiteracy to 55 per cent. Now 44 per cent. of the people are educated. Within eight times that period, England has produced a nation of illiterates numbering 94 per cent. of the population. The repeated requests for free compulsory education have been met with the same objection—insufficient funds. Yet there is always sufficient for the military.