

transitional stage of growth and no permanent basis for political working-class organization, passed out of the picture after Meerut. In 1934 the Communist Party was proclaimed illegal by the Government. Such measures could not check the rapid growth of socialist and communist influence and Marxist ideas. New accessions of strength were won after the close of the national non-co-operation struggle of 1930-34, as the younger national elements proceeded to draw the lessons of their struggle and came under the influence of socialist ideas. The period of the Congress Provincial Ministries from 1937 to 1939 was marked by a signal advance of the working-class and peasant movement, the strike wave of 1937 reaching to the largest number of workers on record. An active campaign for the lifting of the ban on the Communist Party was conducted by the Trade Union Congress and left nationalist representatives. The one-day political strike of the Bombay workers in October, 1939, revealed the role of the working class in the vanguard of the political movement. In 1942 the ban on the Communist Party was lifted, reflecting the growth of its mass influence, and opening a new period of extended political activity and responsibility of the Indian working-class movement in the increasingly critical situation.

XIII. Constitutional Reforms

"We will suppose that the Rev. Dr. Ross has a slave named Sambo, and the question is, 'Is it the will of God that Sambo shall remain a slave or be set free?' The Almighty gives no audible answer to the question, and his revelation, the Bible, gives none—or at most none but such as admits of a squabble as to its meaning; no one thinks of asking Sambo's opinion on it. So at last it comes to this, that Dr. Ross is to decide the question; and while he considers it, he sits in the shade, with gloves on his hands, and subsists on the bread that Sambo is earning in the burning sun. If he decides that God wills Sambo to continue a slave, he thereby retains his own comfortable position; but if he decides that God wills Sambo to be free, he thereby has to walk out of the shade, throw off his gloves and delve for his own bread. Will Dr. Ross be actuated by the perfect impartiality which has ever been considered most favorable to correct decisions?"—Abraham Lincoln, Notes for Speeches, October, 1858.

1. THE POLICY OF REFORMS

The "Indian question" during the past quarter of a century, to judge from nine-tenths of the voluminous literature which has poured out upon the subject in British discussion, is mainly a question of the successive "constitutions" handed out at intervals by imperialism to the Indian people. In the background, as a kind of setting to the constitutional question, appears a vague fringe of "unrest" and undesirable manifestations by the people under the influence of "extremists," with some references to the enigmatic personality of Mr. Gandhi.

The various "constitutions" or constitutional projects have been simply forms of the battle, successive stages and arenas of the battle between imperialism and nationalism. They have not even been the main stage of the battle. The reality has been the battle; the ghost has been the Constitution.

The suggestion is sometimes put forward today that the real purpose of British rule in India has been to train the Indian people for self-government.

This was not the view of the early British rulers of India. Until the strength of the national movement for liberation forced the issue of self-government into the political arena, any possibility of such a development was rejected by British ruling opinion with contempt.

Not only Conservative opinion, but Liberal opinion right through the classic period of British supremacy concurred in this view. Macaulay declared in 1833:

"In India you cannot have representative institutions. Of all the innumerable speculators who have offered their suggestions on Indian politics not a single one, as far as I know, however democratical his opinion, has ever maintained the possibility of giving at the present time such institutions to India." (T. B. Macaulay, speech in the House of Commons, July 10, 1833.)

No less definite was the expression of the Liberal Lord Morley in 1908.

"If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I, for one, would have nothing at

all to do with it." (Lord Morley, speech in the House of Lords, December 17, 1908.)

Such was the consistent standpoint of imperialism in relation to India up to 1917.

Up to the war of 1914 the proclaimed aim of imperialism was the successively extended drawing of Indians into association in the imperialist administrative machine. This aim, which is indispensable for the successful working of any imperialist system (of the 1½ million in government service in India it is practically impossible for more than a fraction to be English), has been consistently proclaimed, and, with due caution to maintain hold of all strategic positions of control, continuously pursued for over a century. The Charter of 1833 laid down:

"No Indian by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, color or any of them, shall be disabled from holding any place, office or any employment under the said Government."

The Queen's Proclamation of 1858, which has been commonly presented as the starting point of a new policy, in reality only amplified the above:

"It is our will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to office in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge."

These pledges or promises to India of complete equality and disappearance of distinctions between rulers and ruled were not, of course, intended to be fulfilled in the broad sense in which they appeared to be made. Lord Lytton, Viceroy in 1876-80, in his "confidential" letter to the Secretary of State, Lord Cranbrook, stated:

"We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We had the choice between prohibiting them and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straight-forward course. . . . This I am writing confidentially, I do not hesitate to say that both the Government of England and of India appear to me up to the present moment unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of

breaking to the heart the words of promise they have uttered to the ear."

Lord Salisbury, in his downright fashion, characterized the British pledges to India as "political hypocrisy."

Alongside the cautious widening of the number of posts held by Indians in the civil service (but never in the decisive positions), a series of reform measures were carried from 1861 onwards.

In 1861 the Indian Councils Act provided for the addition of six nominated non-official members to the Viceroy's Legislative Council; and some of these nominated members were carefully selected Indians. It is worth noting that, like every subsequent reform measure, the "reform" was accompanied by a new repressive weapon: the Viceroy was given the power to issue Ordinances having for six months at any time the force of law—a power freely used in the modern period.

In 1883-84 the Local Self-Government Acts introduced the elective principle into municipal government, and established Rural Boards and District Councils.

In 1892 the Indian Councils Act added a few indirectly elected members (actually recommended for approval, not formally elected, by the local government and other bodies) to the Provincial Legislative Councils, and through them, at a further stage of indirectness, to the Viceroy's Legislative Council.

In 1909 the Indian Councils Act, better known as the Morley-Minto Reforms, introduced an elected majority into the Provincial Legislative Councils (in part indirectly, and in part directly elected), and an elected minority (indirectly elected, except for the landowners' seats and the Moslems' seats) into the Viceroy's Legislative Council. The functions of these Councils remained severely restricted, with no control over administration or finance; their legislation could be vetoed, if disapproved; the franchise was extremely narrow, and to the existing multiplication of electing bodies was added the system of separate Moslem electorates.

The Morley-Minto Reforms were the first reforms to be carried in the midst of and as a result of widespread national agitation and demand for self-government, and with the avowed political aim to defeat that agitation and, in Morley's phrase, "rally the Moderates." Lord Morley's calculations to defeat the move-

ment for self-government by his Reforms were openly expressed. He analyzed the situation in the following instructive terms:

"There are three classes of people whom we have to consider in dealing with a scheme of this kind. There are the Extremists who nurse fantastic dreams that some day they will drive us out of India. . . . The second group nourish no hopes of this sort, but hope for autonomy or self-government of the colonial species and pattern. And then the third section of this classification ask for no more than to be admitted to co-operation in our administration.

"I believe the effect of the Reforms has been, is being and will be to draw the second class, who hope for colonial autonomy, into the third class, who will be content with being admitted to a fair and full co-operation." (Viscount Morley, speech in the House of Lords, February 23, 1909.)

Up to this point the policy of imperialism is clear and unmistakable. There is no question of any advance to self-government. The interests of the Paramount Power are decisive. The purpose of constitutional reform is to enlist the support of the upper-class minority in the interests of imperialism.

Then came the war of 1914-18, the weakening of the foundations of imperialism, the awakening of India, as of all the colonial peoples, Hindu-Moslem unity and the Congress-League scheme of 1916 for self-government, and the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, opening the wave of popular advance in all countries and launching the slogans of national self-determination throughout the world.

On August 20, 1917, the British Government met this situation with a new Declaration of Policy, which has since been regarded as the keystone of modern imperialist constitutional policy. The essential passages of this Declaration ran:

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon

as possible. . . . Progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

This Declaration is generally known as the Montagu Declaration, from the name of the Secretary of State, E. S. Montagu, through whom it was issued. Its drafting was largely the work of the veterans of Die-Hard British imperialism, Lord Curzon and Sir Austen Chamberlain.

The key to the policy was the conception of "stages" for which the British ruling authorities were to be the "judges of the time and measure of each advance." The first stage took two years to reach. This was a lightning speed compared to the second stage. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report had contemplated ten-year intervals for periodic review and revision to advance to a new stage. The second stage, however, took sixteen years to reach, with the Government of India Act of 1935 after seven years of exhaustive inquiry. The Simon Report recommended dropping of the ten-year intervals as far too short.

Two legislative measures have so far been enacted to implement the new policy.

The first, the Government of India Act of 1919, established the system known as Dyarchy. No change was made in the Central Government; but in the Provincial Governments certain subjects, such as Health, Education and similar constructive subjects for which there was no money, were "transferred" to Indian Ministers responsible to the Provincial Legislatures, while the other more strategic subjects, such as Police and Land Revenue, were "reserved" in the hands of Ministers responsible to the Governor. The Provincial Legislatures were established with a majority of elected members, on the basis of a restricted property franchise representing (apart from Burma) 2.8 per cent of the population. The Provincial Governors had power both to veto legislation and to "certify" legislation they wished adopted, if not accepted by the legislature. At the Center two Chambers were established:

a Council of State, nearly half nominated and the rest elected from the narrowest upper circle (less than 18,000 electors for the whole country); and a Legislative Assembly, with an elected majority on the basis of a franchise even more restricted than that for the Provinces (less than half of 1 per cent of the population). The Governor-General had unlimited over-riding powers to veto or certify legislation.

Dyarchy was universally condemned, not only by Indian opinion, but also after a few years' experience by ruling imperialist opinion. The "responsibility" of the Indian Ministers was admittedly a farce. The Simon Report unsparingly exposed the defects of the system, by which the Indian Ministers were in practice "largely dependent on the official bloc" and regarded as "Government men"; the "almost irresistible impulse towards a unification of Government" defeated the paper plans of divided responsibility. Indeed, nothing is more striking than the impartial justice with which each successive stage of imperialist constitution-making has exposed the pretensions of its predecessor. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report was merciless to the illusory claims of the Morley-Minto Reforms. The Simon Report was no less unsparing in pointing out the shortcomings and failure of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. The present Constitution is, however, as always, assumed to be a paragon, condemned only by the shortsightedness of Indian opinion.

The Government of India Act of 1935 represents the second constitutional enactment following that of 1919 and is the Constitution in force, since 1937 (though the main Federal section has not been brought into operation and has been indefinitely suspended since the war).

2. THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

The present Constitution of India is formally based on the Government of India Act of 1935, with subsequent modifications by wartime legislation.

The Government of India Act of 1935 provided for (1) the establishment of an All-India Federation of the Indian States (the Princes) and British India, with a Central Federal Government under the Viceroy; (2) "Provincial Autonomy," or the establishment of Provincial Ministries, with certain restricted powers,

responsible to elected Provincial Legislatures, and subject to the overriding powers of the Provincial Governors.

The Federation has not been established; and the Federal sections of the Act have never come into operation; although the Central Government partially operates under its provisions in respect of its executive powers. The central legislatures are still those established by the 1919 Constitution.

The plan for Federation was intended to draw in the despotic Princes to counterbalance the advance of democratic forces in British India. Special weighted representation was to be given to the Indian Princes in the Federal Legislature: although the population of the Indian States was one-quarter of the population of India, the Princes were to have been given two-fifths of the representation in the Upper House and one-third in the Lower. The Federal Legislature was to have been highly undemocratic: in the Upper House or Council of State, out of 260 seats only 75 were to have been "general" seats (*i.e.*, not allocated to special sections) open to direct election from the narrowest upper-class electorate of 0.05 per cent of the population of British India; in the Lower House or Federal Assembly, out of 375 seats only 105 were to have been "general" seats open to indirect election from the Provincial Assemblies. This unrepresentative Federal Legislature was to have had no power of control of the Central Government or of finance; defense, the civil services, police and a series of other spheres were reserved as outside its purview; any legislation it might pass might be refused assent by the Viceroy, who also had power to give the force of law to any measures it might refuse to pass. The Viceroy was given special discretionary powers to override his Ministers and the Legislature, dealt with in detail in ninety-four sections of the Act, as well as a series of reserved subjects and "special responsibilities" or "safeguards" covering every conceivable issue or situation. In short, the Federal plan of the 1935 Constitution bore not the slightest resemblance to any plan for Indian self-government.

The Provincial sections of the Act were brought into operation in 1937. Under these provisions the Provincial Legislatures were elected in 1937. On the basis of the sweeping Congress successes in these elections, despite the extremely restricted character of the electoral system, Congress Provincial Ministries were formed in seven (later, nine) of the eleven Provinces, and held office be-

tween 1937 and 1939. Their powers were limited, and were subject in principle to the same overriding powers of the Provincial Governors as those held by the Viceroy at the Center. After the resignation of the Congress Provincial Ministries in 1939, the working of the Constitution in seven Provinces was suspended, and direct autocratic rule was resumed by the Provincial Governors.

With the war, the dictatorial powers of the Viceroy and of the Provincial Governors have been further intensified.

The present Constitution is thus based in form on (1) parts of the 1935 Constitution; (2) parts of the 1919 Constitution; (3) wartime legislation and special powers. In practice the present Constitution is an absolute dictatorship of the Viceroy and the bureaucracy, acting on behalf of and under the control of the British Government in London.

Sovereignty over India ultimately rests with the British Secretary of State for India and the British Cabinet, responsible to the British parliament. On their behalf the Viceroy or Governor-General holds supreme executive power.

The Viceroy appoints an advisory "Executive Council," enlarged in 1942 to fourteen members, eleven of whom are Indians. This inclusion of Indian nominees in official positions has nothing to do with self-government; the members are not representatives or responsible to any body of Indian opinion, but nominated by the Viceroy and hold office at his pleasure; they cannot be removed by any hostile vote of the legislature; they have no collective responsibility; the Viceroy is not bound to take their advice; supreme executive power rests with the Viceroy.

The Central Legislature, surviving from the 1919 Constitution, consists of two Chambers. The Upper House or Council of State consists of 60 members, of whom 27 are nominated by the Government, and 33 are elected by 18,000 electors for all India. The Lower House or Legislative Assembly contains 145 members, of whom 40 are nominated by the Government, and 105 are elected from communally divided electorates (only 48 being "general" seats) on the basis of a narrow restricted franchise, which in the last election in 1934 gave an electorate of 1,416,000 or less than one-half of one per cent of the population of British India. This Legislature has no real powers, and can be overridden in all issues by the Viceroy, who can refuse assent to

any measure it carries, or pass any legislation at his own discretion, despite a hostile vote of the Legislature. The Viceroy can also issue Ordinances with the force of law.

The Provinces are ruled by the Provincial Governors, responsible to and controlled by the Viceroy. The Provincial Legislatures are based on a wider electorate than in the case of the Center. Upper Chambers have been established in five leading Provinces. The Provincial Legislative Assemblies or Lower Houses are based on an electorate of 30.1 million voters, or 11 per cent of the population of British India (compared with 67 per cent of the population enfranchised in Britain). The qualification is mainly on the basis of property, taxpaying, tenancy-holding of a certain value, with an additional literacy qualification. The constituencies are split up to provide for no less than thirteen sectional or communal groupings, with extra weighting for minorities. The 1,585 seats of the 11 Provincial Legislative Assemblies are divided as follows:

General seats (open)	657
Moslems	482
Scheduled Castes	151
Commerce and Industry	56
Women	41
Labor	38
Landholders	37
Sikhs	34
Europeans	26
Backward areas and tribes	24
Indian Christians	20
Anglo-Indians	11
University	8
	<hr/>
	1,585

It will be seen that the "general" seats are a minority of the whole.

Provincial Ministries can be formed on the basis of the support of the Provincial Legislatures, and can function to a certain extent as collective organs, responsible to the Legislatures, subject to the overriding powers of the Governors. In practice, however, their powers and functions are extremely restricted, owing to the

controlling power of the autocratic Center in British hands, the statutory limitation on any action or interference in any important issue affecting British interests or the basic organization of the regime, the lack of finance and the overriding powers of the Governors in the background. This is especially conspicuous in relation to finance. The expanding sources of revenue, such as income tax and customs, are allocated (subject to certain provisions for partial re-allocation) to the Center. On the other hand, all the constructive forms of expenditure, such as health and education, are handed over to the Provinces, while for their main source of revenue they are given the burdensome, inelastic and unpopular land revenue, which urgently needs to be reduced.

Where no Provincial Ministry can be formed commanding majority support in the Legislature, the Governor can decree the suspension of the constitution and resume direct rule. This is at present the case in the majority of the Provinces.

Such is the formal existing Constitution. In practice wartime legislation, the Emergency Powers Act and government by decree have largely nullified the significance of even these meager constitutional reforms and shadowy channels of restricted representation without powers.

The 1935 Act brought no self-government to India. The next step in the long series of constitutional plans and reforms has been the Cripps Plan of 1942, which made certain proposals for the future (discussed in a later chapter), but insisted on the necessity of maintaining British power for the immediate future.

The real Constitution of India up to the present, behind all the varied and complicated forms, thus remains the absolute power of British rule.

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA FOR BRITISH IMPERIALISM

Through the whole period of constitutional reforms in India, from 1861 to the present day, the keys of power have been firmly held in British hands. The 1917 Declaration, affirming the aim of "responsible government" in the future; the 1929 Declaration, affirming the aim of "Dominion Status" in the future; or the Cripps Plan of 1942, re-affirming in more explicit terms the

future aim of Dominion Status, have all alike equally insisted on the necessity of maintaining British power for the present. The successive Constitutions, including the existing Constitution, have all conformed to this principle.

Furthermore, even in the period since 1917, after the promises of "the gradual development of self-governing institutions," British Prime Ministers and leading statesmen have repeatedly emphasized the intention of the permanent maintenance of British power in India.

Thus Mr. Lloyd George, as Prime Minister, in his famous "steel frame" speech in 1922:

"That Britain under no circumstances will relinquish her responsibility in India is a cardinal principle, not merely of the present Government, but of any Government which will command the confidence of the people in this country. . . .

"I can see no period when India can dispense with the guidance and the assistance of this small nucleus of the British Civil Service. . . . They are the steel frame of the whole structure." (Lloyd George, in the House of Commons on August 2, 1922.)

Similarly Mr. Churchill declared in 1930:

"The British nation has no intention whatever of relinquishing effectual control of Indian life and progress.

"We have no intention of casting away that most truly bright and precious jewel in the Crown of the King, which more than all our other Dominions and Dependencies constitutes the glory and strength of the British Empire." (Winston Churchill, speech to the Indian Empire Society, December 11, 1930.)

In no less definite language Mr. Baldwin, speaking as Prime Minister, declared in 1934:

"It is my considered judgment in all the changes and chances of this wide world today, that you have a good chance of keeping the whole of that sub-Continent of India in the Empire forever." (Stanley Baldwin, speech to the Central Council of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, December 4, 1934.)

"Our Viceroys and our Governors in India, and under them the Services that will be recruited by the Secretary

of State and safeguarded by parliament, will have the duty and the means to insure, if need be, that that political power is exercised by Indian Ministers and Legislatures *for the purposes that we intend.*" (Stanley Baldwin, broadcast on the Government of India Bill, February 5, 1935. [*My Italics: R. P. D.*])

These repeated declarations by the principal British Prime Ministers during the past quarter of a century reveal the tenacious resistance of the British ruling class to Indian national liberation. Nor are the reasons for this far to seek. The continued domination of India is seen as vital to the interests of the British possessing classes. In the conditions of the crumbling of the former world monopoly, with the weakening hold of British industries in the world market, and with the increasing economic and political independence of the white Dominions, the maintenance and even extension of the monopolist hold on India and the colonial empire is seen as not less essential, but more essential to British finance-capital.

Both Liberal and Conservative expression have reflected this outlook.

"There are two chief reasons why a self-regarding England may hesitate to relax her control over India. The first is that her influence in the past depends partly upon her power to summon troops and to draw resources from India in time of need. This power will vanish when India has Dominion Status. The second is that Great Britain finds in India her best market, and that she has one thousand million pounds of capital invested there." (*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, January 3, 1930.)

This brutal statement of the "self-regarding" arguments by a leading Liberal journal is paralleled by such statements on the Conservative side as that of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab at the time of Amritsar, on "our duty to our Imperial position, to our kinsfolk in India, and to a thousand millions of British capital invested in India" (speech to the Society of Authors, quoted by Lord Olivier in the *Manchester Guardian* of March 12, 1925), or of Lord Rothermere in the *Daily Mail* on May 16, 1930, that "many authorities estimate that the proportion of the vital trading, banking and shipping business of Britain directly dependent upon our connection with India is 20 per cent.

... India is the lynch-pin of the British Empire. If we lose India the Empire must collapse—first economically, then politically."

India is the pivot of the British Empire. As the last outstanding Viceroy of still expanding imperialism in India, Lord Curzon, wrote in 1894 (before his Viceroyalty):

"Just as De Tocqueville remarked that the conquest and government of India are really the achievements which have given to England her place in the opinion of the world, so it is the prestige and the wealth arising from her Asiatic position that are the foundation stones of the British Empire. There, in the heart of the old Asian continent, she sits upon the throne that has always ruled the East. Her scepter is outstretched over land and sea. 'God-like,' she 'grasps this triple fork, and, kinglike, wears the crown.'" (Hon. G. N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, 1894, p. 419.)

Four years later, in 1898, he was sounding a new note:

"India is the pivot of our Empire... If the Empire loses any other part of its Dominion we can survive, but if we lose India the sun of our Empire will have set."

The economic and financial significance of India to Britain, and to the whole development and structure of British capitalism, has played a predominant part in the historical record, and, even though now weakening, is still very great. The old monopoly of the Indian market, reaching to over four-fifths in the nineteenth century and to two-thirds even on the eve of the war of 1914, has now vanished never to return; since 1929 India is no longer the largest single market for British goods, and had fallen to third place in 1938. But the lion's share of Indian trade, of a nation advancing to 400 millions, is still in British hands (nearly one-third of Indian imports and over one-third of Indian exports). The volume of British capital holdings in India has been estimated at £1,000 million (estimate of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in India in 1933), or one-quarter of the total of British overseas capital investments. The value of the annual tribute drawn from India to Britain, in one form or another, has been estimated at £150 million (calculation based on the year 1921-22, in Shah and Khambata, *Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India*, p. 234), or more than the total of the entire Indian Budget at the same date, and equivalent to over £3 a year per head of the

population in Britain, or nearly £1,700 a year for every supertaxpayer in Britain at the time of the estimate.

No less important is the strategic significance of India to British imperialism, both as the basis from which the further expansion of the Empire has been in great part undertaken, the exchequer and source of troops for innumerable overseas wars and expeditions, and also as the center-point to which strategic calculations (control of the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Middle Eastern Empire, and Singapore) have been continuously directed.

The concentration of British world strategy around the pivot of the domination of India can be traced with increasing clearness through the past two centuries. The eighteenth-century wars of Britain and France revolved primarily, not so much around the kaleidoscope of the shifting European constellations which appeared as their immediate cause, but around the struggle for the New World and for the domination of India. The loss of the United States increased the importance of India. When Napoleon directed his expeditions to Egypt and the Near East, he had before him visions of the advance to India. Through the nineteenth century Russia appeared as the bogey extending ever farther over Asia and threatening India. When Britain abandoned isolation at the beginning of the twentieth century, the first step in this new orientation of policy was the alliance with Japan, and the revised Anglo-Japanese Treaty, when it was renewed, contained the formula for Japanese assistance in maintaining British domination in India. The conflict with Germany turned especially on the control of the Middle East, opening up the way to India.

India has throughout provided the inexhaustible reservoir for Britain, alike of material and of human resources, not only for its own conquest, but for the whole policy of Asiatic expansion. Wars were conducted on this basis in Afghanistan, Burma, Siam, China, Persia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt and Ethiopia.

Closely intertwined with the economic and strategic significance of India for Britain is the social-political significance of the control and exploitation of India for the whole structure and character of internal social and political relations in Britain. The conflict between empire and democracy runs like a continuous thread through the modern history of England.

From the conquest of India in the middle of the eighteenth

century this strand of the direct influence of empire on British internal politics can be continuously traced. The influence of the "nabobs" on the corruption of eighteenth-century politics and of the pre-Reform Parliament is notorious. The Reform Ministry of Fox in 1783 was defeated over India, and gave place to the long rule of reaction, the tenacious counter-revolutionary hostility to the French Revolution and the postponement of democratic reform in England. When the Reform Bill of 1832 replaced the old ascendancy by the nineteenth-century domination of Lancashire, it was the role of trading and manufacturing interests in the exploitation of India that played no small part in frustrating the aspirations of nineteenth-century Liberalism and guiding it along the path which led to its outcome in Liberal Imperialism. From the camp of the Anglo-Indian rulers, trained in the methods of despotic domination, have been continuously recruited the forces of reaction in British internal politics, from the days of a Wellington to the days of a Curzon and a Lloyd. In the rifts and currents within Conservatism the close connection between the Anglo-Indians and the Die-Hards can be continuously traced.

Not only within the ranks of the ruling class, but within the ranks of the working class this same influence of empire holds the main responsibility for retarding the advance and weakening the independence of the British Labor Movement. Therefore the fresh and powerful current of Chartism, leading the world working class in the struggle for class liberation, and openly espousing the cause of the colonial peoples, gave place to the ignominious nineteenth-century compromise of the upper sections of the working class following docilely at the tails of their masters and sharing the spoils of colonial exploitation.

Even in the modern period, when the basis of this domination is crumbling and the consequent apparent gains to a section of the workers are vanishing, the statesmen of imperialism still try to hold out the profits of empire as indispensable to the interests of the British working class and the British people. Thus the argument has been put forward that the maintenance of Empire trade and investments is essential for the livelihood of the British people:

"There are fifteen million more people here than can exist without our enormous external connections, without our export trade which is now halved, without our shipping which is so largely paralyzed, without the income of

our foreign investments, which are taxed to sustain our social services. I suppose that two millions or three millions in these islands get their livelihood from beneficent services mutually interchanged between us and India." (Winston Churchill, speech in the House of Commons, March 29, 1933.)

"India has quite a lot to do with the wage-earners of Britain. The Lancashire cotton operatives have found that out all right. One hundred thousand of them are on the dole already, and if we lose India, if we had the same treatment from a Home Rule India as we have had to our sorrow from a Home Rule Ireland, it would be more like two million breadwinners in this country who would be tramping the streets and queuing up at the Labor Exchanges." (Winston Churchill, broadcast on India, January 29, 1935.)

But the whole experience of the modern period has proved the falsity of this argument. For the sake of the crumbs of a dwindling and doomed monopoly the British workers are called on to forego their birthright to freedom, and to ally themselves with a despotic system against the subject peoples. The outcome of this policy is not prosperity, but ruin. This has been proved in hard practice in recent years. Freedom has not been granted to India; but this did not prevent the two million breadwinners in Britain queuing up at the Labor Exchanges.

Today the whole basis of the old Empire domination is crumbling. The illusions which were built upon it are falling to the ground. The old nineteenth-century monopoly is doomed and can never be recovered. The maintenance of domination in India has reaped a harvest of hostility of the Indian people which is today endangering, not only the defense of India, but the defense of the British people and the freedom of the British people. A new path must be found which shall open the way to the equal cooperation of both peoples on the basis of freedom, for the mutual benefit of both nations.