

# How Britain Governs the Blacks

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FOR centuries the ruling class of Britain, through wars with rival imperialist powers, military expeditions, fraud, corruption and trickery, especially of British merchant-capitalists and missionaries in Africa and India, has succeeded in planting the Union Jack in other peoples' territories. It is in this way the so-called mighty British Empire has been carved out.

During these centuries of colonial domination and exploitation, the imperialists of Britain can truly be said to have learnt the art of "governing." Their policy is a dual one. On the one hand, they maintain their domination over the colonial masses through deceit, hypocrisy and corruption. And when these methods fail, brute force and terrorism, backed up by machine-guns and bombing planes, are brought into action in order to maintain the authority and "prestige" of these white overlords.

Now let us see how the first method of British domination is being concretely applied in various parts of the Empire.

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First of all, let us begin with India, "the Jewel in the British Crown." In this land of unparalleled misery and oppression a handful of imperialists have been able to maintain a strangle-hold over three hundred million people by exploiting religious differences among the toiling masses, through organised pogroms. When the true history of India comes to be written, the facts will reveal that the agents of the British Raj have been as skilful provocateurs as those of Bloody Nicolas II. Let no one be so naive as to think that the British are in India for India's good. That is what the missionaries and other middle-class people who masquerade as "friends of India" would have the world believe. And it is just because of this kind of humbug that these people must be branded as some of the greatest enemies of the Indian masses. In this respect the die-hard Tory imperialists are far more honest than these ecclesiastical and petty-bourgeois charlatans. Some years ago the late Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, publicly declared:

"We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know in missionary meetings it is said that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant!

"We conquered India as an outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword, and by the sword we shall hold it.—(Shame!)"

"Call it shame if you like. I am stating facts. I am interested in missionary work of that kind, but I am not such a hypocrite as to say that we hold India for the benefit of the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general, and for Lancashire cotton goods in particular."

And just because of this, as long as India remains under British domination, so long will we witness Hindus flying at Mohammedans' throats, and vice versa. For back of every communal riot in this land of misery and hunger, stands the agent-provocateur of British Imperialism. Believe it or not!

A "Tass" message from Rome published in the *Proveda* of June 26, 1932, states:

"Italian divers who are employed in the Bay of Biscaya on the salvage of cargo from the *Egypt*, which was sunk some years ago on a voyage from England to India, state that the steamer was loaded with arms and munitions, although the official bills of lading and customs documents show a different cargo.

"The Italian press calls attention to the fact that the English customs issued false documents, and points out that, with the sanction of the English authorities, the steamer was carrying arms for the Indian Moslems for the purpose of provoking religious conflicts."

Referring to the recent bloody events in Bombay, *Stampa* writes:

"This episode throws some light on the eastern policy of England, which sends millions of bullets and arms to the Indian Moslems, although no trace of such a transaction is to be found in the ship's documents. It is possible that some individuals who thought that their secret was buried at the bottom of the sea will be very much disconcerted by this compromising discovery."

What applies to India also occurs in *Ireland*. Wherever the British imperialists have conquered a people of homogeneous racial stock, they have utilised religion as the wedge to carry through their policy of "divide and rule." In India it is Hinduism against Mohammedanism, and vice versa. In Ireland it is Protestantism against Catholicism. For nobody realises more than the hypocritical, psalm-singing British capitalists the truism that "religion is the opium of the people." And they are out to exploit it in the fullest measure in maintaining their strangle-hold on the colonies.

Ireland, one of the oldest nations in the world, has not only been robbed and plundered for centuries; its peasantry starved and driven off the land; millions forced to migrate to America; but the British bondholders and absentee landlords have torn the country in two. Protestant Ulster versus the Catholic South! During a religious congress in Dublin in 1932 we witnessed the extent to which religious fanaticism has driven bleeding Ireland. Irish protestant workers and peasants, misled by British imperialist agents, attacked groups of Irish catholic workers and peasants, simply because religion has been used to poison them against their fellow-exploited countrymen. Thanks to these artificial barriers fostered and maintained by an alien conqueror, these arrogant British slave-holders have the impudence to threaten the toiling masses of the Irish Free State to pay them three million pounds annual tribute, under the farcical display of indignation that the Irish people are violating "sacred" obligations. Such hypocritical phrasemongering is enough to turn the stomachs of all decent-minded and freedom-loving people.

### AFRICA

What applies to India and Ireland equally applies to *Africa*. It is quite true that the methods used by the British exploiters and oppressors in Africa are not so much based upon religion, but the policy of "divide and rule" is the same nevertheless. Let us see how this policy is being actually applied.

First of all comes the much-talked-of *Indirect Rule*. In those parts of Africa where the British invaders

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found a feudal economic and social system with a sufficiently developed political organisation, through which they could operate—as in Northern Nigeria—they introduced this unique system. Lord Lugard was the father of this ingenious form of colonial plunder. The lands were confiscated from the natives and the chiefs were stripped of all their traditional authority, and turned into tax-collectors and forced labour agents, behind whom the European officials have been able, not only to extort tribute from the workers and the peasants, but to make chattel slaves out of them.

In other colonies, especially in East Africa (Kenya), the same policy has been applied. The natives have been driven away from their best lands, which have been turned over to white landlords, for the development of plantations and mining companies with the use of forced labour.

At the present moment the British imperialists are attempting to introduce the same methods into the Gold Coast. Here we witness some of the most brazen methods utilised by the imperialists to carry out their aims.

Thanks to the world economic crisis, the Gold Coast, like other African colonies, is faced with a tremendous financial deficit. So in order to find the money to maintain the state apparatus, the late Governor, Sir Ransford Slater, attempted to introduce direct taxation in the form of *Income Tax*. This, however, met with spontaneous mass opposition. The workers and peasants in Cape Coast staged demonstrations and protests against the enactment of the Bill.

Faced with a threatened revolt of the great mass of the population, the government made a temporary retreat. Governor Slater paid a hasty visit to Nigeria and after a conference with Sir Donald Cameron, the governor of that colony, returned to the Gold Coast well armed with the weapon of indirect policy which Lugard had saddled upon Nigeria.

Slater held a conference with the native chiefs, and by promising them certain privileges succeeded in driving a wedge among the Gold Coast people. The new scheme is to enact the original *Income Tax Bill* under the title of *Native Revenue Bill*. Through this vicious piece of legislation, the British imperialists tell the chiefs that they would be given the right to impose taxation upon the people, and as reward for this they would get a certain percentage for their local administration.

Although there is still much opposition against this new manœuvre, the government has succeeded to some extent in splitting up the united front which formerly existed among the chiefs. Those of the eastern provinces, enamoured of the opportunity of becoming His Majesty's tax-collectors, are in favour of enforcing the new Bill when it becomes law with the aid of armed police and the West African Frontier Force.

The danger of increased taxation still menaces the Gold Coast people. The toiling masses must realise that the imperialists do not give a tinker's damn about individual African "leaders," no matter how big or powerful they may consider themselves. What they are afraid of, however, is the organised mass action of the workers and peasants. For at heart every tyrant is a coward.

Another method through which the British rulers in Africa maintain their domination is by utilising the services of the upper stratum of the urban petty bourgeois intellectuals who are still closely connected with the richer rural population—such as big landlords and chiefs. For example: in Nigeria, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, as well as South Africa, where the prestige of the chiefs can no longer be utilised to rob the toiling population, the governments try to alienate certain sections of the intellectuals from the broad masses and thereby undermine the nationalist movement and put a brake upon the ever-increasing anti-imperialist struggle for freedom and self-determination.

This is done in the following way. The government buys over these intellectuals by promising them jobs or a career in the colonial service. Already a number of them, who were at one time considered opponents of British imperialism and briefless "champions" of the people, have been won over by the skillful manoeuvring of the white officials and missionaries—they are now the chief agents of the imperialists.

These native traitors have either been given decorative seats on legislative councils, petty positions, such as police magistrates, and other minor state offices, or otherwise decorated with some medal or title, O.B.E., a Knighthood, etc.

These British imperialists certainly know the art of effectively applying in their colonial policy semi-feudal decorations and high-sounding titles in corrupting the upper-class and so-called educated Negroes in Africa.

### WEST INDIES

In the West Indies this method of corruption is even more widespread than in Africa. The Negro bourgeoisie and upper middle-class are the most bribable strata of the population. The former, without any substantial independent economic basis, and the latter, saturated with all the ideology of exploiters themselves, aspire to serve His Majesty in some form or other from the very day of their birth. Through-



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out the West Indies and British Guiana the greatest ambition of average middle-class Negroes is to play the rôle of imperialist lackeys and strut about as "honorable" members of hand-picked legislative or municipal councils. When they fall short of this, they make a compromise with some fifth-rate position in the state apparatus. But here again, the British overlords have been able to resort to an artificial method of splitting up the population and thereby preventing the crystallisation of any dangerous anti-imperialist united front. This is done through the *Colour Caste System*. This is widespread in the West Indies, especially in Jamaica, Barbados and the Windward and Leeward Islands. Since the majority of the population of these islands are Negroes, the imperialists see to it that the mulattoes are put against the blacks, and vice versa. This is skilfully carried out in the following way. The dominant economic and political power is vested in the hands of Europeans, who in turn appoint the mulattoes to positions immediately below them; and in this way, use the mulattoes as overseers, foremen, superintendents, etc., to keep the black masses in subjection. So whenever the black workers and peasants revolt against oppressive taxation or other forms of imperialist robbery, they invariably find that the ones who are directly applying the policy which they are in rebellion against are native mulattoes who shelter the real blood-sucker—the white imperialists. What applies to the State policy is even more openly manifested in the commercial life of the islands. It is a well-known fact that the majority of banks, shipping companies, wholesale stores, and commercial houses of the British capitalists make it a policy only to employ mulatto men and women as clerks, and blacks as porters. The mulattoes, because of their more privileged economic positions, in turn despise the darker skinned Negroes and help their white masters ruthlessly to exploit them. This caste system, besides providing a sort of buffer class between the foreign capitalists and the native toiling masses, also enables the white imperialists to increase their profits at the expense of the mulattoes. For, in a number of cases, the black-skin porters and charwomen receive more wages than the light-skin office workers and salesmen, who are flattered into the belief that a "white collar job," no matter how underpaid, is more in keeping with the "dignity" of the ruling class.

### STRONG-ARMED POLICY

Hand in hand with their policy of "divide and rule," the British imperialists foster many illusions among the Negro colonial masses, which serves as a tremendous bulwark behind which millions and millions are deceived as to the true mission of these whites in the colonies. In order to put these humbugs over, the churches, the missionary schools, the boy scouts and girl guides movements, flag-waving ceremonies, especially Empire Day, are all brought into full play in the service of British imperialism. For example, one of the most widespread illusions to be met with in Africa and the West Indies (and we presume the same thing applies to India) is, that there is no colour prejudice in England. That the Union Jack is the symbol of "justice" and "fair play" for all, whether white or black, rich or poor, high or low. This kind of bunk is repeated so often, that although the Negroes are treated hardly any better than chattel slaves, or a pariah race, the vast majority of so-called educated Negroes still believe in this nonsense.

As we have already stated, the British bourgeoisie is shrewd and cunning. They are not of yesterday. They are one of the oldest ruling classes in the world, with centuries of colonial experience. Furthermore, they are past-masters in the art of hypocrisy, and when compared with their American rivals, they can truly be said to be in a class by themselves. Herein lies the difference: Yankee imperialists will openly treat coloured people in America, as well as in their colonies (Haiti, Hawaiian Islands, Philippines), as an "inferior" race to be exploited without mercy. The typical American colonial official does not disdain to wound the sensibilities of the Negro people under the Stars and Stripes by referring to them as "niggers." The British imperialists and their colonial lackeys do not differ from the Yankees in their mental attitude towards the darker colonial peoples, but being more cunning and hypocritical, they try to create the impression that Negroes and Indians are theoretically the equal of the other peoples in the Empire. While an American imperialist will openly refuse to associate with the Negroes of Haiti, or elsewhere, the English exploiter would shake hands and even dine with some bourgeois Negroes in Jamaica, or one of the other colonies, who could be used as tools to further the interest of British imperialism. But you may rest assured that as soon as the Negro's back is turned the British "gentleman" runs to the first wash-basin to clean his hands from the "contamination" of a "nigger." This, in brief, characterises the difference in outward attitude between these two types of imperialists—British and American. But because the Negro bourgeoisie and middle-class, belly-crawling, kow-towing Negro intellectuals in Africa and the West Indies have been so saturated with British imperialist propaganda they are not able to see through the fraud and deceit of their colonial oppressors. And it is just because of this such types of Negroes can never carry on a real militant struggle for the freedom of the black toiling masses.

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These are only some of the many ways through which the rulers of this "mighty" British Empire are able to maintain their yoke over hundreds of millions of human beings in the colonies.

It is hardly necessary for us to record the other method which British imperialism utilises when the so-called peaceful methods fail to achieve the required results. This is too well known. To record the occasions on which the strong armed policy of British imperialism has been applied would fill volumes. It is sufficient to recall the "Black and Tan" régime in Ireland; Amritsar and the present reign of terror in India; the incarceration of 31 labour leaders in Meerut prison; the 40,000 Indians in His Majesty's prisons for the "crime" of expressing their right to live as a free and independent people; the thousands of peasants bombed on the North-West Frontier and other parts of India; the massacre of unarmed Negro women in Nigeria in 1929; the mass terrorism in South and South-West Africa; the forceful confiscation of land of thousands of East African toilers, and their enslavement on European plantations and mining companies; the denial of every elementary right of freedom of speech, public assembly, organisation and press; the administration of "justice" through Ordinances that can only be equalled to the régime of terror which prevailed in Russia under Tsarism.

These are only a few items in the list of crimes perpetrated against millions of oppressed and unarmed subject peoples in the British Empire, on which its defenders and upholders boast that the sun never sets.

It is from this yoke of slavery that hundreds of millions of black, white, yellow, brown, toiling humanity are struggling for national freedom and social emancipation. This struggle can only be successfully carried through by cementing the closest bonds of international solidarity between the toiling masses, whether Indians, Negroes or whites, in the colonies and the metropolis against the common enemy—British Imperialism. For us the issue is clear. The Negro masses in Africa and the West Indies can never free themselves from their tyrants single-handed. Victory can only be achieved when the workers of India, the workers of Ireland, of Britain and other parts of the Empire, realise that theirs is a common struggle with ours. That the same rulers who oppress them, also oppress us. And that as long as the British imperialists are able to keep our struggles divided from each other, so long will they be able to maintain their domination over all of us. Therefore, let us join hands in *the* common struggle against *the* common enemy—*Imperialism*.