

of their differences can be in the resort to arms. They will meet to the accompaniment of the roar of cannon in **Shanghai** and other parts of China.

The **Anglo-American antagonism** remains the most acute of the imperialist antagonisms. Britain, handicapped though she is by a colossal burden of parasitism; relatively obsolete technique; with its colonial empire a blazing furnace of revolt; and its Dominions moving further and further away will not give up without a desperate struggle.

Britain still controls 87% of the world's rubber production, 88% of nickel, 69% of lead, 15% of silver, 77% of wool, 66% of rye, 27% of wheat etc. She still has resources with which to fight and she will not give in without a desperate struggle.

The failure of the Lausanne Conference, the MacDonald-Laval conversations, etc., over Reparations, the seething cauldron of revolt in India and the tense situation in China will be ever present in the minds of the British delegates to the conference.

Since the last meeting of the Disarmament Conference there has taken place a fundamental change in the fiscal policy of Great Britain. Her traditional policy of Free Trade has been replaced by one of Protection. By means of tariffs, Britain hopes to transfer the burden of the crisis on to the backs of the workers at home and in the Colonies, in order to make possible a drive for markets at the expense of rival imperialist groups. Already this has resulted in retaliatory measures by a number of countries and has brought nearer the day of settlement of the differences by a resort to arms. The adoption of a tariff policy is part also of the fight against American imperialism.

As the date for the Disarmament Conference draws near the Labour Party and I.L.P. have intensified their efforts to lay an effect smoke screen behind which the British Imperialists have been perfecting their war plans.

They entered with enthusiasm the campaign of the churches which included a day of prayer; they have actively participated in the organisation of a petition which is to be presented at the Conference; the Labour press has been full of articles calling for "Disarmament by example"; they have touted for support for the League of Nations.

The Labour Party and I.L.P. are endeavouring to deceive the workers into the belief that a numerically strong Labour Party and League of Nations will prevent War. By such methods they disarm the workers and make imperialist war possible. Much fuss is being made over the departure of Henderson, and an "international" demonstration on "disarmament" was staged on the day Henderson left for Geneva. A German and a French Social democrat were brought over for the occasion. The T.U.C. at its Council meeting conveyed to Henderson, that in his capacity as President of the Disarmament Conference, he would realise that he had the whole-hearted support of the Trade Union Movement. On the eve of this "Disarmament" Conference, which received the blessing of the Labour Party and I.L.P., and which is presided over by their leader, it is as well to briefly recount the war-making record of the Labour Party.

It is not necessary to detail its record during the World War. It is sufficient to quote the Chairman at the 1917 Conference of the Labour Party, **Mr. Wardle**:

"I am proud of the fact that the majority of the Labour Party threw itself into the struggle with all the ardour at its command."

During the 1924 Labour Government the Air Estimates increased by 2½ million pounds. The amount spent on Rison Gas and deadly chemicals was higher at this period than at any time previously. The attitude of the military machine to the last Labour Government is summed up as follows by the Army Quarterly.

"So many of the supporters of the Labour Government are supposed to be in favour of a radical reduction in the fighting services that some people were filled with dismay. The same anxiety was felt in 1924 when the first Labour Government came into office, but the record of the Government showed that it fully realised the responsibility in the matter of defence, and there is no reason to suppose that MacDonald's second administration will be less active in its duty."

This proved a correct estimate of the second Labour Government. Within a few weeks of its formation, an announcement was made of a decision to completely re-equip

the auxiliary air force involving the construction of 16 new air war craft of the latest pattern. ("Times" 25. 6. 29.)

The London Three Power Naval Conference, the results of which the Labour Government regards as its greatest achievement, produced a Three Power Agreement to increase the fighting strength of each Government.

Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty of the Labour Government in a speech in the House of Commons, said:

"While the Labour Government does not want to hide its real desire to go on progressively with disarmaments, we must also make it perfectly clear that we are not going to let the British fleet fall to the bottom."

The propaganda of the Labour Party and I.L.P. for "disarmament by example" admirably suits the British imperialists, who impudently claim that Britain has already set an example to the world.

MacDonald says:

"The reductions must be all round. We have gone pretty near the limit of example."

By cooking figures and ignoring the fall in the price level, they attempt to prove that there is a reduction in Armament Expenditure. Yet figures prepared for the Disarmament Committee show the following total Armament expenditure.

1914	385.5 million dollars
1923	520.0 million dollars
1930	537.0 million dollars

The increase is continuous, yet the wholesale price index figure has fallen below pre-war. These figures do not include Empire Armaments. There is an increase of 100% in Armaments expenditure in India. Britain is the most heavily armed Empire in the World.

The Imperialists talk endlessly about "limitations of Armaments", but in the forefront of their minds, and the subject of their secret negotiations, will be the **Soviet Union**. British Imperialism will play a leading role in plotting to crush the Soviet Union at the Geneva Conference, which will be brought up sharply against the Peace Proposals of the Soviet Union. The workers of the world will again see that only when the workers have captured power, can war be abolished.

The British Labourites will loyally play the game of the British imperialists. But the **British Communist Party** will re-double its efforts to expose the Disarmament swindle, and will reveal to the workers the imperialist war-mongering role of the Labour Party and I.L.P.

INDIA

The Growing Mass Revolt in India.

By Clemens Dutt (London).

British imperialism, faced with increasing difficulties in every respect, finds not the least of these in the acute situation in India. Never was it more difficult for it to maintain its system of enslavement and exploitation in this enormous colonial possession. The threat of a mass upheaval on an unprecedented scale stares British imperialism in the face. Against this threat every possible measure of terrorism is being applied. Virtual martial law prevails all over India. Troops and armed forces parade the most affected areas. The shooting down of workers and peasants and the beating up of demonstrations are of daily occurrence. Additional troops have been sent from England. Special ordinances follow one another in interminable succession. The number of arrests already exceeds 20,000. Tax and revenue collection in the countryside, the main function of British administration in the enormous rural areas, is carried out by the aid of troops and armed police. The "Times" (January 29, 1932) is compelled to record:

"Without taking an unduly pessimistic view, it has to be admitted that the situation to-day is definitely worse than at any time since the end of the old year."

During the past month the mass movement has gone forward in spite of all attempts at suppression and a series of actions have taken place which testify clearly to the growing revolutionary spirit of the workers and peasants. The desperate plight of the peasants cannot be gainsaid by anyone. In most parts of the country, the peasant has already pledged everything he possesses including the crop for a year or even

more ahead, at crisis prices, and is over the borderline of starvation. Rent and taxes can only be paid by selling himself body and soul to the usurer. It is not surprising therefore that during the past months, in spite of all attempts of the Congress leadership to postpone or at least to limit the character and extent of the movement, the peasant revolt has assumed ever graver proportions. Nowhere was this more noticeable than in the **United Provinces of Agra and Oudh**, the most feudal part of British India, the paradise of landowners and moneylenders. In Oudh, the whole land is owned by 226 families, but there are 30,000,000 rent-paying peasants in the United Provinces. The average holding of a peasant is less than two acres. The organised refusal to pay rent developed first and most strongly in this province and was a signal to the whole country. It has led to many bloody collisions with British troops. As recently as January 29 a fight took place with armed police in the village of Samaria in which three peasants were killed and many seriously wounded.

In **Bengal**, flood disaster has added to the ruin of the peasants. In village after village **peasant committees** have been formed, mostly without Congress authorisation or support, and revolts with refusal to pay rent have occurred in many districts. Troops have been sent to north of Madras where a no-rent campaign is being conducted. Particularly important is the **Red Shirt movement** on the North West Frontier, which is primarily a peasant movement and which has brought down upon it the special repression of the British, because it has led the peasants in refusal to pay rent and revenue. The biggest revolt of all has taken place in the so-called Native State of **Kashmir**, which has been occupied by British troops since the beginning of November 1931. Here the peasant action has been on such a scale as to amount almost to an insurrection comparable with that of the peasants in Burma. Masses of armed peasants have attacked the landlords and destroyed landlord property and engaged in fierce battles with the British and State troops. In spite of heavy censorship, reports of fighting between peasants and troops continue to filter through. It is reported that during the last three months there have been 5,000 killed and 7,000 wounded. British imperialism has determined to hold Kashmir itself and to put down the revolt there, not only because of the danger of infection through the Punjab to the rest of India, but for important strategic reasons. The British imperialist organ, "The Near East and India", reveals this clearly when it states (January 14th, 1932):

"Kashmir is a **buffer State**. On its borders are British outposts essential for keeping an eye on Central Asia. These outposts must not be lost. If ferment in Kashmir were added to by incursion from non-British frontiers, **the long border between Kashmir and India would be an open gap through which all Central Asia might pour.**"

Simultaneously with the growth of the peasant revolts, there has been a pronounced development of activity on the part of **the industrial workers**. The occurrence of sporadic strikes was already a feature of the last month of 1931 and these strikes have recently assumed greater dimensions. **Strikes** of textile workers have occurred in every centre in India. Some of the strikes of jute workers in Bengal and of cotton workers in Bombay have continued for over three months. In Cawnpore the striking textile workers engaged in a series of fights with strike-breakers and police and also conducted successful propaganda among other workers. In December a series of strikes took place in the Ahmedabad textile mills and at the end of January this became a general strike. This strike is noteworthy because the workers are members of a special yellow trade union established by Gandhi and his assistants and the strike is being conducted in spite of their resistance. The Gandhist trade union works in closest collaboration with the Ahmedabad mill-owners who are largely supporters of Gandhi.

There have been a number of isolated **railway strikes** and the pressure for a general strike on the railways is increasing. All these strikes have been conducted in the first place, against the wage offensive of the employers, but they are also directly or indirectly a part of the protest movement against the government terror regime. In most cases, the workers on strike have been deserted by the section of the Trade Union Congress led by the "left" Nationalist leader S. C. Bose. Nevertheless, these strikes have been marked by the stubbornness with which they have been fought on the part of the workers. In these fights, the independent leadership of the proletariat is finding expression.

The serious light in which British imperialism views the situation in India is clearly revealed by the extraordinary measures of terror to which it has had recourse. Particularly in view of the weakened position of British imperialism on a world scale, it has felt very deeply that no risks could be afforded of losing its grip over India, the central bulwark of the British Empire. Hence the regime of terror and government by ordinance which has been operated on a large scale and after careful preparation. The period of so-called "truce" during 1931 when the **Indian National Congress** was bending all its efforts to help tax collection and the dispersion and break-up of the mass movement of the year before, so as to produce a favourable atmosphere for the negotiations of the Round Table Conference, was utilised by the British authorities in India to work out a systematic plan for dealing with any revival of the mass movement. The propaganda of the Indian National Congress has, of course, tried to make it appear that the Government programme and action of drastic repression is directed primarily against the Congress movement. Actually, they have little to point to except the arrest of the Congress leaders, and this is only an incidental feature in the Government action. It is significant to notice that the three fundamental ordinances, the "Bengal Ordinance", the "United Provinces Ordinance", and the "North West Frontier Ordinance", were all enacted in December before the Congress had in any way renounced its attitude of docile cooperation with the Government.

It is seen that the special powers given to local British authorities are first of all intended to legalise action against the peasants and their leaders. The spate of additional ordinances of this year has pursued the same object. Thus, the "Times" (January 23rd) reports that as a result of the rounding-up of Red Shirts and forcible action on the North West Frontier

"revenue continues to come in satisfactorily. **In Takhtadai District, for instance, 37,000 rupees of arrears have been collected in one week.** There could be no question of releasing the present tight grip for some time to come."

Similar quotations from the Indian press make clear the important use of armed forces and police for the purpose of collecting revenue, and punitive and other taxes, in all parts of India.

Another point to be noted is that the vast majority of the arrests that have been made have been peasants and workers who have been resisting rent or tax collection or taking part in demonstrations but who are not Congress members and are not in jail because of activity on the Congress programme. At the same time, the Congress organisation, along with others, has been very drastically dealt with during the past months. Early in January, after the series of new Ordinances were issued, a Government order was issued in Bombay declaring all Congress organisations and others of a similar tendency, numbering 486 in all, to be unlawful associations. In Calcutta, on January 14th, the Government "Official Gazette" published a list of 272 organisations in Bengal which were declared to be illegal, including all the District Committees of the National Congress. It is clear that the Government attack on the Congress has not been carried out because of fear of the Congress leaders but as part of the general campaign of terror in order to crush any subversive activity which could, even against the intentions of its leaders, result in increasing the activity of the masses. Further, the definite suppression, or rather beheading, of the Congress movement represents also a special act of chastisement intended to reduce the leaders to a more amenable frame of mind. Under pressure from below, the Congress was beginning to be recalcitrant. It is being chastised now, not because it is being regarded as an enemy, but in order to make it more submissive when negotiations are renewed.

As far as the Congress is concerned, it can truly say that the ending of the "truce" was forced upon it against its will. Its leaders delayed as long as possible in starting any campaign against the Bengal or U.P. Ordinances. Only when it became quite clear to them that the danger of the whole movement going out of their hands and of their control was a very real one, did they commence agitation. In the United Provinces, the no-rent campaign from the outset caused a split in the Congress leadership because many of the latter were themselves landlords. The Provincial Conference held in Bengal in December 1931, which was presided over by a Bombay leader and had representatives from other provinces, refused to accept a resolution supporting civil disobedience and

the no-rent campaign and only decided to call for the boycott of British goods.

Even when the Congress was forced to act at the end of the year, after Gandhi's return and simultaneously with his rebuff by the Viceroy, it only went so far as to adopt an unreal programme which was a faint echo of that of the year before. The main points of its resolution call for the boycott of foreign cloth, whether British or other, the picketing of liquor shops and the unlawful manufacture of salt. In general terms, it adds that unjust orders issued under the Ordinances may be civilly disobeyed, but it also makes the proviso that no province, district or village may take up civil disobedience "unless the people thereof understand the non-violent nature of the struggle with all its implications", and it adds that social boycott of government offices, police or anti-nationalists should not be undertaken.

The class character of the Indian National Congress is becoming more and more clearly marked. The Working Committee, which on January 1st passed the resolution described above "in the absence of a satisfactory response from the Government", also passed resolutions to the following effect

"requesting support from commercial and political associations as much as possible;
assuring zemindars (landlords) that the no-rent campaign will not be directed against them, and stating that the campaign has no design against the legitimate interests acquired by them, and soliciting help from landed and monied classes;
 appealing to indigenous mills not to exploit by multiplying profits and weaving low counts." ("Liberty", Calcutta, January 2, 1932.)

The guarantee to the landowners and "monied classes" could hardly be more explicit in stating the class attitude of the Congress and recalls the provisions of the Bardoli surrender in 1922. These resolutions and the actual programme of the Congress activity, with its narrow limitation to unreal forms of struggle which have no meaning for the mass of the workers and peasants, has resulted in a very widespread exposure of the Congress as an organisation, and a consequent significant decline in its authority and influence. The Congress has attempted to revive and repeat the experience of 1930. It begins "civil disobedience" in order to come to terms with imperialism, in order to increase its bargaining power in the current negotiations. But the situation is no longer the same as in 1930. The development of the imperialist contradictions has gone very much further ahead. The internal developments in India have also been considerable. The workers and peasants are more and more becoming disillusioned with the Congress leadership. It is more widely recognised than ever before that the Congress programme means support for Indian capitalists and a betrayal of mass action.

In view of this changed situation, it is not altogether surprising that the arrest of Gandhi and the other Congress leaders has not been followed by very great mass protests throughout the country. The petty bourgeois hartals that were called for by the Congress have been comparatively unsuccessful. The militant mass demonstrations that have taken place have been carried through by workers and peasants but hardly in accordance with Gandhi's precepts. The leadership of the National Congress has not yet been overthrown, even in the Trade Unions, but the features of the growing resistance of the masses to the terror regime of British imperialism illustrate also the struggle for the hegemony of the working class in the development of the revolutionary solution of the problems of the world crisis in India. The struggle for the Communist leadership of the masses develops with increasing intensity. The question of the **Communist Party** and its programme is being more hotly debated and discussed in India than ever before. In Calcutta alone, it is reported, in spite of the Ordinances there are at least five different organisations which claim to be political Communist parties. This is an indication of the present situation. It is also an indication of the tremendous need for further work by the revolutionary class organisations in **Great Britain** especially for strengthening their bonds of solidarity with the Indian workers and peasants, promoting the development of class conscious ideology and undertaking definite action in their own country in support of the Indian mass struggle.

CHINA

Open Letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to all Members of the Party on the Present Political Situation in China.

Dear Comrades,

After our heroic Red Army, supported by millions of workers, peasants and the toiling masses of the whole country, has brought to nought the "extermination-campaign" of the Kuomintang and imperialists, the development and victory of the Soviet movement, and especially the setting up of the provisional government of the Soviet Republic of China, the storm of indignation of the broad masses of workers and peasants and of all toilers against the attack on Manchuria by Japanese imperialism, and against the partition of China by the imperialist Powers, are causing an ever greater shaking of the bourgeois-landowner Kuomintang regime and an accentuation of the revolutionary crisis.

In this situation, when the imperialist Powers are conducting a brutal attack on the masses of the Chinese people, the Kuomintang, in pursuance of its capitulatory policy of "toleration", makes a present of Manchuria to the Japanese imperialists, abandons the whole country to European and American imperialism, and thereby directly furthers the imperialist partition of China. In concert with the imperialist troops and police in China, it is exercising the most bloody terror, the most cruel policy of oppression against the growing anti-imperialist movement. Under the slogan: "unity against the enemy in the North, to repel Japan", new attacks are commencing against the centre of the Soviet movement, especially against the soviet territory in the three provinces of Honan, Hupeh and Anwhei. Thus the Kuomintang is endeavouring, with the most frightful white terror, to choke in blood the revolutionary fights which are increasing throughout the whole of China. But this policy of the Kuomintang is encountering the growing resistance of the working and peasant masses in the whole country. The working masses are losing all faith in the Kuomintang. The broadest strata of the workers, peasants, soldiers and students are voicing the slogans issued by our Party: "Workers' strike, school strike, soldiers' strike against Japanese imperialism! Arming of the population for the fight against imperialism! Smash the Kuomintang which capitulates to imperialism!" The national fight against imperialism is being linked up ever more closely with the fight against the Kuomintang.

The fight against imperialism and the Kuomintang is spreading like wild-fire. The courageous fights of the revolutionary scholars and students, expressed in demonstrations against the Kuomintang, in collisions with the military and police, in the wrecking of the Party and government institutions of the Kuomintang, the tearing up of pictures of Sun Yat Sen, are a sign that the broadest masses of workers, peasants and toilers of China are being roused to direct action in order to crush the Kuomintang and imperialism and will initiate a fresh upsurge of the revolutionary struggle.

Hunger Riots in Rome.

Paris, 30th January 1932.

According to reliable information from private sources hunger riots of desperate unemployed workers took place yesterday in Rome, particularly in the working class suburbs. Numerous foodstores were raided and cleared out. The police and the fascist militia were taken completely by surprise and it was some time before stern measures could be taken against the hungry masses. It is not known whether any serious casualties occurred.

The fascist censorship is doing its best to suppress all news of the rioting as a matter of prestige. There are over a million unemployed workers in fascist Italy, only about 20 per cent. of whom receive any assistance and even then it amounts to about threepence a day.