

# INDIA

## The Old and the New in India's Struggle for Freedom.

By B. Saunders (London).

The revolutionary gale is once more sweeping the Indian continent. In the **United Provinces** more than 1,000 villages have decided not to pay the rent to the zemindars. The no-rent movement is spreading farther to the Punjab in the North and to Bengal in the South. In the **North-Western frontier province** the Red Shirts arouse the tribes against their chieftains—the nominees of British imperialism. In **Bengal** the students have taken to the bomb with such a zeal that during the last two months the killing of British officials became an almost every day phenomenon. Sporadic workers' strikes have broken out in a number of cities. Open battles with the imperialist police and military are reported from Peshawar, Chittagong, Bombay . . .

The imperialist executions have run amok. For months past the European Association of British capitalists in India which in that country takes the place of the so-called "public opinion" elsewhere, has been shouting for blood. Lord Reading admitted in the House of Lords that the Indian Government was discussing last year the "policy" of making a desert out of India. It is this "policy" that is now put into action.

"To make a desert out of India!"—this is the motto of MacDonald's National Government. And the British rulers of India, stained with the blood of the toiling masses, are as good as their word. The policy of suppression is being carried out on a truly grand fashion, on a Himalayan scale. Mass shootings, mass imprisonment, punitive expeditions, military parades through the villages, Martial Law all over the country—this is something unheard of even in the eventful years of 1919—21.

The bourgeois **National Congress** is again embarking on its old game. The Congress has declared for civil disobedience. **Patel**, its president, has promised this time it will be "a war to a finish". **Gandhi** once more went to prison, again in the company of his God and the spinning wheel. All this looks like a tedious repetition of an old familiar tale.

But history does not repeat itself. The Indian masses on the back of which the Congress carries out its policy of sham fights and actual surrenders, are already different from the masses that two years ago were reverently making salt from sea-water. The masses have learnt much and are learning every day more about the treacherous role of the bourgeois nationalists.

"Its, i. e. the Congress' service and its challenge", writes the "Liberty" with pride: "have led the Government out of many a misadventure . . . It was Congress

that rallied India in a day and made the Delhi Pact. It was Congress that suspended its considered conviction in the interests of peace when it deputed Mahatma Gandhi to the Round Table Conference. Congress in the person of Mahatma Gandhi laboured and negotiated and compromised . . .”

Yes, it was the Congress that compromised India's struggle for freedom! There can be no doubt but that the Indian masses have assimilated this experience. And if the Congress now declares civil disobedience without going through all the intermediate stages of Gandhi's prayers to God and the Vice-roy, without spectacular marches to the sea like in the year 1930, when it took Gandhi 11 months to start the campaign decided upon by the Lahore Congress, it is because the bourgeois nationalists know that the masses have changed, and will no more put up with dilatory tactics.

To be sure, the Indian workers and peasants who now enter the anti-imperialist struggle have not yet drawn all the necessary conclusions from their bitter experience with the counter-revolutionary Congress. This, the **Indian Communist Party** must help them to do. To bring out before the masses the history of the Congress betrayals past and present, in its proper light is the supreme task of the moment. This can be done only on the basis of organising the masses in the present fight which is developing with ever increasing momentum. This task of the Indian communists is much easier now than it was two years ago. For the treachery of the Congress to the cause of India's freedom is as old as the Congress itself. But the Indian masses are being reborn in the fire of the struggle. Under revolutionary guidance they will achieve victory.

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**London, January 8.**

The Vice-roy has granted interviews to a number of Indian Liberal leaders who attended the Round Table Conference with a view to arranging for the smooth working of the Round Table committees which are nearly due to assemble in India. At the same time the whole position is being reviewed by the Imperialists and their lackeys. The London "Daily Telegraph" reports that proposals for the calling off of civil disobedience had been prepared by Mr. Jayakar, the "Moderate", leader before Gandhi's arrest and had been shown to him. Says the Telegraph".

"The Moderate leaders had drawn up compromise proposals which they placed before Mr. Gandhi . . . He yielded to the Moderate's pressure stating that he had no objection to the proposals being laid before the Viceroy by Mr. Jayakar".

At **Cawnpore** a number of boys and girls 14 and 15 years of age, have been arrested and charged with circulating leaflets on the No-Rent campaign. Their parents have been summarily fined. The salt laws were broken to-day at **Karachi**, where a number of Indians in defiance of the Government proclamation, marched to the seashore and made salt. This was later sold at a public meeting.

The **Calcutta** Corporation has decided by a majority vote to suspend its sitting as a "protest against the reactionary and repressive policy of the Government".

In **Ahmedabad** the City Council has decided to buy no British goods until further notice. In both Councils the only Councillors to vote against these measures were the appointed European members.

**Dr. Ansari**, the acting President of Congress, has been arrested. He is the third successive president taken into custody this week. Ten other leaders were arrested at **Karachi** to-day. Two prominent Poona lawyers were arrested to-day while attending the civil court there to defend the prisoners in a conspiracy case.

January 12 is the anniversary of the hanging of a number of Indians in connection with the death of a number of police in fighting in **Sholapur**. The Government have decided that on that day a parade of British troops with flags flying and bands playing shall be organised in that city. A machine gun company is to remain in the city while the battalion marches through the surrounding district "showing the flag".

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**London, January, 11, 1932.**

During the last six days 4,000 persons were arrested in the North West Frontier Province; nevertheless the Red Shirts continue to display great activity.

When yesterday the Congress men arrived at Bombay Common in order to celebrate the weekly salutation of the flag which is now prohibited, they found large numbers of troops assembled there. A large crowd watched the demonstrative hoisting of the Union Jack, the line of inspection and the march past. In the middle of the proceedings, a man bearing the tricolour of the Congress, broke through the ranks marching straight to the saluting base amidst great cheers of the crowd. The man was at once arrested and the crowd dispersed by the troops.

An armed crowd 12,000 strong besieged the police station at Srenegar yesterday and released three peasants who had been arrested. 28 persons were injured last night in Karachi as a result of a police charge with lathis following a meeting.

Gandhi's wife has been arrested in Bardoli.