

Increased Imperialist Repression in India.

By V. Chattopadhyaya.

Even before the publication in India of the Simon Commission's first volume, the "**Indian Daily Mail**", an organ particularly well-informed regarding the intentions of the British Government, stated in its issue of June 10th. that there were "reasons to anticipate the strengthening of the policy of repression."

The prediction has been speedily realised. The Working Committee which is the "General Staff" of the Indian National Congress has been declared an unlawful association, its President, the seventy year old **Pandit Motilal Nehru**, has been arrested along with the General Secretary of the Congress, **Dr. Syed Mahmud** (a Mohammedan) and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment. **Pandit Madan Moham Malaviya**, the moderate Nationalist leader, calls this measure of the Government "the crowning act of a policy of repression pursued for two months", and has offered his services as a member of the forbidden Committee to **Vallabhai Patel** (the leader of the **Bardoli** peasant movement of 1928), who has been nominated by Nehru to be acting President of the Congress. The **Panjab** and **Andhra** Provincial Congress Committees had already been declared illegal, and now a number of other Congress Committees have met with the same fate.

The **Naujawan Bharat Sabha** (Revolutionary Youth League) has been forbidden in all its branches and anyone suspected of belonging to it is subjected to summary imprisonment and in many cases to torture. The petty-bourgeois youth leagues, that more or less constituted the youth section of the National Congress and that have taken an extremely active part in the anti-imperialist struggle, especially in conjunction with workers' and peasants' organisations have been suppressed.

The press is being increasingly silenced, heavy securities under the new Press Ordinance having been demanded of 70 newspapers and 97 printing presses, leading to the closing down of 67 newspapers and 55 presses.

In addition the Viceroy has just issued his seventh **ukase**, known as "**The Unauthorised News-Sheets and Newspapers Ordinance, 1930**". And the reports that appear in these publications more than confirm the reports that reach us from private sources, as to the enormous increase in the frequency and intensity of the torture of political prisoners by the police under the orders and supervision of British officials.

Much speculation has been aroused as to the real intentions of the Government in arresting **Motilal Nehru**, about whom it was generally felt both by the British and by the moderate Indian politicians that he was "the last leader left at liberty who could reasonably be regarded as the intermediary who might bring the Congress back to reason" ("**Times**", July 1st.) In fact, almost on the eve of his arrest, he had indicated that there was still a possibility that the Congress might on conditions participate in the coming Round Table Conference. Nevertheless his arrest was considered necessary to enable the Government to carry out its policy of crushing the growing revolutionary movement of the workers and the peasantry with all the armed forces at the disposal of a "Labour" Cabinet, and to demonstrate its strength "before the Round Table Conference begins, so as to avoid the impression that it had yielded to "force and intimidation".

There are reasons to believe that the crushing of the revolutionary unrest among the peasantry before it has become too dangerous is a policy not entirely unacceptable to certain Congress leaders.

It is fear of the revolution, coupled with the desire to retain their hold on the masses, that constitutes the leit-motif of the speeches and actions of all the important Congress leaders, almost without exception, and if they are in gaol today — without any of the terrible hardships that working class leaders have to undergo — it is because the Government has

to get them out of the way for carrying out a naked policy of repression and torture, while at the same time it makes them more popular as national heroes so as to add to their prestige and their influence when the inevitable negotiations begin.

In the meanwhile, while the policy of repression is being carried out by the Labour Government, the various political agents of the Government in India among the so-called minorities are being mobilised to make the Round Table Conference "a success". The preliminary session of the **All-India Moslem Conference** was opened on July 4th, in **Simla**—from where the Viceroy and his staff are at present carrying on the Government of India—and it is sufficient to point out that the Conference was convened by **Malik Feroz Khan Noon**, Finance Member in the Panjab Government. The two traitors to the cause of independence, **Mohamed Ali** and **Shaukat Ali**, are of course playing an important part at the Conference.

In **Burma**, which British imperialist interests find it essential to separate from India, the Government is not finding it quite so easy to mobilise political opinion in its favour. The Burmese commercial bourgeoisie and richer intellectuals who had allied themselves with British shipping interests and heavy industry to agitate for the separation of Burma, now find that they are not going to get the "Free State" which they had expected.

As far as the movement itself is concerned, it is certainly growing among the masses, and the arrests of Congress, youth or working class leaders have had no deterrent effect upon them. In the Panjab and elsewhere, even according to enemy reports, "proscribed associations have developed an awkward habit of springing to life under another name". Revolutionary leaflets have been printed in various Indian languages and systematically distributed among the police and the army, with the result that "sedition" among them has become a source of alarm to the Government, in consequence of which the very severe Police Act of 1922 has now been revived and put into action, without, however, producing any appreciable effect.

In Bihar and Orissa where the peasant movement is beginning to cause alarm among the zamindars, the Government has been obliged to increase its police force by 400 new men.

In **Sholapur**, where military rule during nearly two months had committed sufficient havoc among the workers, martial law has been withdrawn, but the National Congress flag has been prohibited.

In **Bombay** there have been a number of hartals of protest against the arrest of Motilal Nehru as well as a number of students' strikes. During a students' procession through Hornby road the police charged them several times with their clubs and wounded a large number. **Mrs. Perin Captain**, President of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, and **Mrs. Munshi**, Vice-President of the Committee have both been arrested and sentenced to three months' imprisonment each, while two other Congress officials and the editor of the forbidden "Congress Bulletin" have been sentenced to 5 months' rigorous imprisonment each.

In the village of Khersai, near the border of the Balasore District a party of police opened fire on the peasants killing one person and wounding several. The police had gone to the village to carry out attachment of property for non-payment of taxes, and were resisted by 2000 peasants who defended themselves with brickbats against the onslaughts of the police.

There have been also hartals in **Calcutta** and stormy demonstrations in **Allahabad**, the headquarters of Congress Working Committee.

The revolutionary ferment among the railway workers is becoming extremely intense, and the reformist Labour leader, **Giri**, General Secretary of the Indian Railwaymen's Federation, declared that the Federation "may have to decide in favour of a more active participation in the national movement". The object of the reformists is obvious.

The immediate development in India is likely to be a considerable intensification of the revolutionary struggle, accompanied by a regime of imperialist terror.

In the meanwhile the **MacDonald Government** is contemplating a translation of the Simon Report into a number of European languages, in order to poison European opinion in favour of its policy of repression.