The Fight For Indian Independence.

By R. Bishop (London).

The conclusion of the second Round Table Conference in London has been quickly followed by an intensification of the struggles of the workers and peasants of India against British Imperialism, its exactions and its exploitation. It has been as quickly followed by the British Government in India, paradigmizing its repressive measures.

Within the last few weeks Ordinances have been issued in the United Provinces, Punjab, Bengal and the N.W. Frontier Province of the most drastic kind. Hundreds of arrests have taken place all over India, and in the N.W. Province over 3000 have been arrested for their connection with the Red Shirts movement.

In the N.W. Frontier, too, peaceful meetings have been fired on and peasants killed with a wanton brutality reminiscent of the days of Amritsar. And now Gandhi—delegate to the Round Table Conference, and Vallabhai Patel, the Congress President have been arrested, and four new general ordinances promulgated. In addition the Indian National Congress has been suspended.

The arrest of Gandhi was the very thing that astute politician needed to rehabilitate him with the Indian masses who were naturally very suspicious of his consort with Imperialist enemy at the Round Table Conference.

It was preluded by the usual interchange of telegrams between Gandhi and the Viceroy, and when the police came to arrest him Gandhi was waiting for them with his luggage packed ready. He is now in Yevada Prison, with his spinning wheel, his cooking vessels, a selected library and a personal servant to attend him. His cell is a suite of three rooms—he has been placed under arrest "during His Majesty's pleasure".

May 5, 1930, Gandhi was arrested in a similar way—with every consideration for his comfort—but when his release was sought in January and two months later signed the Delhi Pact with Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy.

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact aimed at bringing to an end the activities of the peasants and stemming their rapidly-growing political consciousness. The rapid fall in the price of agricultural commodities, and the exactions of the rent and the taxes, however, proved more effective in their results than the signature of "martyr" Gandhi, and the fames of revolt broke out with redoubled vigour in all parts of India. Peasant organisations are to-day springing up with amazing rapidity in the rice fields of Madras and Bengal, among the jute cultivators of Bengal, Assam and Orissa, among the cotton growers of Bombay, Punjab, and the Deccan, among the wheat growing areas of the Punjab and the United Provinces.

But the most complete revolt has been in the United Provinces—the heart of feudal India—and in the N.W. Frontier Province where the sturdy Khen tribesmen have been flocking to the banner of the Red Shirts who are, now, computed to number some 200,000. In industrial India too there has been a notable resurgence of activity. While little news comes through to Britain, there have been numerous strikes of textile workers, railwaymen etc. within the last period. In the United Provinces the Ordinances were directed against the rapid development of the No-Rent and No-Tax movement—that is directed equally against the Government and the seminaries, many of whom are pillars of the Congress.
police officers. They have power to levy collective fines on whole districts.

In the United Provinces meetings and the publication of leaflets and pamphlets are prohibited, whilst the movements of non-violent resistance are prohibited. Throughout India, the Imperialist Government is making an unprepossessing show of its armed force. Special parades of troops, accompanied by armoured car columns, machine guns, artillery, etc., have been organised in the most remote parts of the country. The flag has been raised, noise made, the flag "and its purpose has been to intimidate the population into a belief that it is useless to oppose the might of the British Raj. In places targets have been placed in the sea and the village population lined up in the streets to witness the attack. The arrested are smashed by anti-terror bullets. The task of bringing them to the forts places the troops have been accompanied by aeroplanes flying overhead, dropping leaflets which inform the inhabitants that they could as easily drop bombs and will do so if there is any trouble. In Chittagong and the neighbouring towns in a state of virtual martial law has been reigning for some time and the armed troops make daily house-to-house searches, rounding up suspects and picketing the town.

Throughout India the toilers find their position, always a terrible one, getting steadily worse. They find that the Congress in which they are for the most part joined, is a Congress with the Imperialist exploiters. They feel that the demand for independence has been watered down to one for a constitution within the Empire.

In the light of these facts it is easy to understand the manoeuvres of the Vicerejy with Gandhi and his followers. Gandhi calls for a policy of non-violence, he repeals all the measures that he used after the war and again prior to the Delhi Pact, but he finds that he has lost much of his old magic, that the masses are distinctly sceptical. His utterances are too flagrant a contradiction to be ignored.

In Europe, when he openly supported the retention of British troops in India, when he pleaded himself to work for an "uplifted" settlement.

British imperialism tries two methods, and uses them as occasion offers, to suppress at one moment and 1899 to the forerun of individuals like Gandhi, with the object of diverting the real struggle. The Congress is declared illegal. The new Ordinances declare peaceful picketing to be an offence. The Ordinances applied to the United Provinces and the frontier districts are now applied to all India. Gandhi is arrested. Vallabhai Patel is arrested; Jawaharlal Nehru is arrested; the arrest of other Congress leaders is anticipated.

Gandhi's arrest was followed by the declaration of a hartal in Bombay which operated with thoroughness on the following day. The Congress was called for a resumption of civil disobedience.

The role of Gandhi is frankly acknowledged by a section of the British capitalist press, their only doubt is as to whether he has the power to fulfill that role.

A short time ago, on December 29th, the "Times" in the situation which has now arisen, upon Mr. Gandhi. What is unfortunately doubtful is whether he possesses the power to implement his own pledges. Mr. Gandhi's speech (on landing) stripped of its customary qualifications, ambiguities, appears to be an offer to the" new Congress to co-operate with the Round-Table Conference."

The fear here expressed, by the bourgeoisie is well-founded. It is extremely doubtful whether Gandhi has his lieutenants will once more be able to check the revolt of the toilers of India. The economic crisis is reeking such havoc upon the agricultural workers and Gandhi's non-violent hunger strike is likely to fall upon deaf ears.

The fight will develop, drawing into its strife ever wider and wider masses, including more and more Congress rank and file who have long been disheartened with the pacifist policies of the Amritsar Congress. The fight is not for the immediate overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie; its leaders have shown on innumerable occasions that they are willing to make a bargain for the common exploitation of the Indian workers and peasants. The masses, on the other hand, are fighting, ever more strongly, for the overthrow of exploitation—whether, by British or Indian landlords and capitalists.

The fight is a fight for free Workers and Peasants India, and in this fight the Gandhists are in the camp of the Imperialists. They realise that Workers and Peasants India would have no place for the rich millionnaires and zemians who provide the Congress Party with its financial backing and determine its policy.

In this struggle against the domination of a foreign imperialist and capitalist exploitation, the workers of Britain have got to play an important part. Particularly amongst the troops has it got to be made clear that they are kept in India. Amongst the workers in Britain they is a growing realisation of the common nature of the struggles and the common Indian Cushies. But that realisation has by no means been lost amongst the British workers, in uniform and out, are prepared to unite with the Indian masses in the common demand for the complete independence of India and separation from British colonial rule.

POLITICS

From Basle to Lausanne.

By Th. Neubauer (Berlin).

The International Conference on Reparations, to which the report of the Basle Special Advisory Committee under the Young Plan must be submitted, is to take place on January 2d at Lausanne on Lake Geneva. From there to Geneva, at which the "Disarmament Conference" is to commence a little later in the month, a train of the Federal Express, the American Ambassador in London and father of the Dawes Plan, and the former United States Secretary Norman Davis, will be ready to hand, and there therefore exists every chance that between Basle and Geneva a game of diplomatic intrigue will develop such as the world has never seen.

The Basle negotiations were not yet ended and the German bourgeois press were still clinging firmly to their belief in the futility of the English part in negotiations when the diplomatic manoeuvres preparatory to the reparations conference commenced. Sir Leslie Ross, Under Secretary in the British Treasury, went to Paris in order, in negotiations with the French Finance Minister M. Plandin, to seek a balanced compromise, which of course could only be concluded at the expense of Germany. The London "Daily Telegraph" reports regarding these negotiations that, whilst complete agreement had not been reached, it had been agreed to report on the two formulae and that they, as the experts on each side would give the task of bringing the two formulae into harmony, when it would only remain for the two governments to express their approval of the same.

This report throws an interesting light on the situation. France and England come to an agreement between themselves regarding what repayments Germany has promised or future, without even asking the German government, and as soon as the compromise, the formula has been found, then it will be submitted to the German government for acceptance.

The French press hastened to publish the main outline of the Franco-English compromise. Germany is to be granted a moratorium for three years (the English at first demanded five years), but only for the postponement of the annuities, i.e., on a sum of 1100 to 1200 million. On the other hand, Germany shall pay the unprotected annuities, amounting to about 700 million, to the Bank for International Settlements, which would then lend them back as private debt. In addition thereto Germany would have to fulfill deliveries in kind to an extent not yet fixed. The payment back of the private debts was paid concurrently with these tribute obligations. Finally, Germany's reparations creditors shall make full compensation to the United States in order to induce the United States to accept the share. The whole of the reductions of the reparations will bring the Germany and the sacrifices of the reparations powers for the economic restoration of Europe.

This plan represents a large-scale manoeuvre on the part of French imperialism in order to sidetrack the whole question of the cancellation of reparations. It is known that the American Congress, a stormy session, has pronounced energetically against any further reduction of war debts, and