

Further Intensification of the Fight in India.

V. Chatto padhyaya.

Notwithstanding the strict censorship exercised by the British Government of India and notwithstanding the attempt made in the latest official communiqué of May 17th (circulated in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for India) to produce the impression that there have been signs of improvement during the week, even the news that has been allowed to get through to the British Press and through the correspondent in India of reactionary French and Italian journals is sufficient to show that the movement is spreading among larger and larger sections of the population. There is an all-round increase in the activities of the District and the Village Congress Committees, of the Workers' Unions, of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties, of the nationalist terrorist organisations, of school and college students and of ex-soldiers of the Indian Army.

The Congress Committees in various parts of India have taken up a militant attitude since the arrest of the principal Congress leaders. The Government has therefore begun inflicting much severer punishment upon members of the Congress Committee. For instance, among the recent Court Martial sentences passed on 23 persons in **Sholapur**, are the following sentences: the Secretary of the local Congress Committee to seven years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of 225 Pounds Sterling; the President of the Congress Committee to five years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of 150 Pounds Sterling; seven members to two years' rigorous imprisonment and fines of 75 Pounds Sterling each; nine members to one year's rigorous imprisonment and fines of 37 Pounds 10 shillings each; and four to corporal punishment.

The Salt Campaign has been extended from mere breaches of the Salt Law to the "storming" of salt depots at **Dharasana** and elsewhere. Of the 2,000 Congress volunteers who attempted to capture the salt depot in Dharasana some 500 were arrested, after the police had attacked them with their batons and wounded about 350. Among the arrested is **Mrs. Sarojini Naidu** who was in charge of the Civil Disobedience movement after the arrest of **Gandhi** and **Abbas Tyabji**. She has been succeeded in the leadership by the old **Patel**.

The two most important events since the beginning of the present revolutionary outburst have centred in **Sholapur** and **Peshawar**. The importance of **Sholapur** is that it is a very important industrial centre where the 60,000 workers of the cotton and silk spinning mills have been playing a prominent part in the revolutionary movement. These workers are intimately connected with the peasantry of the surrounding areas and, further, the troops of the **Mahratta** regiments are drawn largely from among these peasants. The revolutionary movement of the workers has produced an effect both among the peasants and among the soldiers, and it is not at all astonishing that the city was in the hands of a committee of workers, peasants and intellectuals for a couple of days. **Sholapur** is now being governed by very severe martial law.

In **Peshawar**, **Bannu** and **Kohat**, the movement of insurrection is spreading, in spite of martial law, the Seditious Meeting's Act and the numerous arrests of "prominent agitators" undertaken by the police with military support. The Congress Committees have been declared to be unlawful associations. And the revolutionary Youth organisation of the

Punjab, the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, that has taken a very prominent part in the organisation of the movement has been declared illegal in the Peshawar area. An organisation known as the "Red Shirts" bearing the hammer and sickle as their badge has made its appearance in the North of Peshawar and its members drawn mostly from among the poor villagers, and organised in military form with lances as their weapon, are carrying on an active agitation among the masses to overthrow the imperialist Government and establish a Workers and Peasants Government. This Red Shirt organisation is more widespread in the Punjab than is admitted by the imperialist press. Similar organisations exist in Amritsar, Gujranwala, Hoshiarpur and other cities, where the Workers & Peasants Party has been engaged for some time in organising the peasantry.

The tribal chiefs on the other side of the North West Frontier, such as the Haji of Turangzai, were invited by the revolutionaries to join the anti-imperialist war. A section of the Mohmands, of the Afridis, of the Wasiris, and of the Mahsuds, have organised small armies for the support of the movement in Peshawar. The forces of the Haji of Turangzai were bombed from the air by the Royal Air Force, during which action his son, Bad Shah Gul, was wounded. The tribes in Tochi are up in arms against the British and a lashkar (armed force) attacked the British post of Datta Khel on May 11th, and on May 14th several villages of the Madda Khel which were concerned in the attack were bombed from the air.

The tribes, however, have not taken concerted action because a number of their chiefs are in the pay of the British Government and are doing their best to prevent a general movement of the North Western tribes in support of the movement in India. But the events in Peshawar—the mass demonstrations, the fraternalism of Hindus and Mohammedans, culminating in the refusal of the Garhwali troops to open fire on the demonstrators, the sympathetic movement of the tribes, the revolutionary ferment among the peasantry and the massacre perpetrated by the British regiments and 40 bombing of the Royal Air Force—have shaken the power of British imperialism in the most sensitive, the North West Frontier.

The Sikh ex-soldiers of the Army have been very active among the soldiers and the peasantry throughout the Punjab, under the guidance of the Workers and Peasants Party in Amritsar consisting mostly of Sikhs. In Calcutta and in Rangoon the Sikhs have played a very prominent part in the anti-imperialist demonstrations and in the attacks on the police. The Sikh ex-soldiers in Bengal have an organisation and in conjunction with the terrorists, they organised the attack on the arsenal at Chittagong some four weeks ago. They are reported to have carried off several motor lorry loads of arms and ammunitions for distribution among the peasants of Eastern Bengal.

Owing to a rumour that an Indian who had been run over by a tram had been murdered by the police, a tremendous demonstration in Bombay took place in which 100,000 participated. Another rumour that the Director of the Bank of India in Bombay had taken part in the police attack on the headquarters of the Indian National Congress resulted in thousands storming the Bank; all business was closed, the Stock Exchange suspended its activities and a very severe conflict ensued between the masses and the police when the latter searched the National Congress building, confiscated literature, arrested its President, K. F. Nariman, who is also President of the Bombay Presidency Youth League and closed the Congress building.

The movement is spreading in the Madras Presidency which was comparatively quiet when the campaign started. There have been mass demonstrations following one upon another in the city of Madras and in the latest demonstration the police attacks were met not only with usual shower of stones which have characterised demonstrations in all parts of India, but actually with bombs which wounded several police constables. There have also been similar demonstrations in Masulipatam on the eastern coast. Among the railway and textile workers of Madras there is a growing

tendency to join the General Strike that is being prepared by the revolutionary unions.

Intense excitement has been caused by the sentence of one year's imprisonment on Mrs. Lakshmi Pathi of Madras, of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in Bombay, and of Karmala Devi, a prominent woman member of the Youth League, who has received six months imprisonment.

An event of considerable importance is the mass meetings of Mohammedans that have been held in Bombay and Madras, the one in support of the Arab General Strike and for Arab Independence, the other against MacDonald's imperialist policy in Egypt. The leaders of the Khalifat Committee, such as Mohammed Ali and Shaikat Ali, who for their own personal ends are against the independence movement in India are unable to prevent the expression of an anti-imperialist temper among the Muslim masses. While advising them not to take part in the movement in India they mobilised a mass meeting attended by 100,000 Muslims in Bombay to demand Arab Independence and to protest against the brutality of the Imperialist Labour Government in Palestine and other Arab countries. The meeting for Egypt in Madras was charged by the police with batons, the masses replying by throwing bombs on the police injuring several constables.

The movement for the non-payment of taxes and of land revenue is being organised mainly by the Congress Committees, the province of Gujarat where the land revenue is paid direct to the Government being at present the main centre of the campaign.

The Trade Union Congress has called on all workers to declare a General Strike and the Workers & Peasants Party has issued an appeal to the peasants to form committees, expropriate the landlords, join the workers and overthrow imperialism and feudalism.

Anxiety over the Situation in North-West India.

According to latest reports, the situation in the North West Provinces of India is causing increasing concern to the British authorities. The insurgents, with the leader of the Tusangai tribe, Hadshi, at their head, are capturing further fortified positions in the mountains thirty miles from Peshawar, and do not think of retreating. The question of ridding the Peshawar district of insurgents is a source of considerable worry to the British authorities, as the refusal of Hadshi to obey the ultimatum of the British supreme Command is greatly damaging the prestige of Great Britain in the whole of the frontier districts.

Every morning and evening British aircraft carry out demonstrations over Hadshi's headquarters in Ghalandi, as well as over the fortifications of the village of Matta Mukhal Khel, where the forces of Hadshi's son, Bad Shah Gul, are concentrated. Volunteers and redshirts (peasant partisan troops) are guarding Hadshi's son and supplying the village with food. The British aircraft are fired upon by the insurgents. The Redshirts are continuing to operate along the Swat and Kabul rivers, to cut the telegraph wires etc.

The Fights in Rangoon.

The events in Rangoon (Burma) are of special importance in view of the revolutionary movement in India proper.

The immediate cause of the events was the ending of the dock workers' strike, in the course of which the employers and the authorities did everything in order, for their own purposes, to stir up racial hatred between the workers and the strike-breakers. After the conclusion of the strike, native strike-breakers from Burma attacked workers belonging to the Andhra tribe who had resumed work. The latter gathered together in large numbers, armed themselves with iron rods and other objects, and offered determined resistance. Collisions took place in all parts of the town. Both parties erected barricades. Furious fights and attacks on houses took place. The population of the town were seized with panic; the shops

were closed. It was only with great difficulty that the armed police succeeded in restoring order.

Many houses and several motor buses were damaged as a result of bombardment with stones. There were many wounded among the Riksha pullers. The total number of the victims amounts to eighty, including twenty killed.