

THE WHITE TERROR

Imperialist Terror in India.

By special order of the Viceroy, 66 leading members of the Nationalist Party in the province of Bengal have been arrested. The police raided simultaneously hundreds of houses all over the province, which is as large as France. The arrest of the nationalist leader, Chittaranjan Das, is also expected.

This reign of terror is sudden and totally uncalled for because the men arrested and the party they belong to are frankly partisans of constitutional action, and do not stand for separation from the Empire. This brutal repression is inaugurated on the pretext of the existence of secret terrorist organisations supported by the Nationalist Party. But the very fact that this wholesale repression could not be carried on with the help of ordinary criminal law, proves the groundlessness of the pretext. Because, had there been any terrorist societies really in existence, and had the nationalists had any relation with them, ordinary criminal law would be enough to bring them both to trial and secure adequate punishment. Since the pretext is the invention of the police, the autocratic powers of the Viceroy had to be invoked.

In spite of their moderate programme, the Nationalists have during the last year, made much trouble for the government. At every step, they resisted the autocratic action of the government, and repeatedly inflicted on it parliamentary defeat. By means of the sham Reforms granted after the war, British Imperialism sought to buy off the Indian upper classes and square its domination with the much advertised doctrine of self-determination. From the very beginning, the majority of the people rejected these reforms as totally inadequate; and the movement of Non-cooperation with the government was launched in 1920. Subsequently a section of the National Congress gave up the negative programme, and participated in the elections of 1923. Their plan was to capture the pseudo-parliamentary bodies with the view to exposing their sham and impotence. In less than a year they have accomplished this plan admirably. In two provinces, faced by a nationalist majority, the governors assumed dictatorial powers, and dismissed the legislature. In the Central Legislative Assembly, the government was defeated on a number of vital questions, including the budget, but calmly overrode the verdict of the elected representatives of the people. The whole country has been in a political and administrative deadlock for several months. All these unparliamentary, undemocratic and unconstitutional events took place while the Labour Government was in office. The latter did not do anything but to sanction the action of the colonial pro-consuls. On the eve of assuming office, Mr. MacDonald shook his mailed fist at the Indian Nationalists, and during his short life of glory repeated this inglorious feat several times. Nevertheless, the Government of India did not dare wreck its vengeance, on the impertinent nationalist while the Labour Government was in office. It feared a possible intervention. Of course, there could be no apprehension that the Labour Government would intervene; but the British proletariat would not permit a government ruling in its name to connive at such an unwarranted reign of terror.

The last straw that broke the camel's back, was the motion carried in the teeth of official opposition, repealing the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1909 — a law which empowered the

executive to place any part of the country practically under martial law without observing the formalities of declaring it. Thus, not only the worthlessness of the "Reforms" was thoroughly exposed, but the precious prestige of the forces of "law and order" was gravely jeopardized. The British bourgeoisie at home and their representatives in India breathed fire, and demanded the blood of the nationalists. The press was full of lurid accounts of "murder organisations" spread all over the country. The fall of the Labour Government was a God-send. The only obstacle to the inauguration of a reign of terror was gone.

Now what is the crime committed by these Indian Nationalists? They have not risen in an armed revolt; although even such an action on their part could not be held culpable by any code of law, if democracy and self-determination were not mockery. Indian Nationalist parties, including the most extreme wing, are ardent advocates of non-violence. Failing to prove otherwise, not by yellow journalism, but by authentic facts, their profession cannot be legitimately challenged. They demand democratisation of the present administration, and have shown that the Reforms of 1919 do not contain the most rudimentary principles of democracy. The brutality of wholesale repression against this "crime" is a hundred times accentuated, because it is perpetrated on the bloody background of the last five years.

The II. International rushes gallantly to the aid of Georgian counter-revolution; but it approves bloody British Imperialism, which it glorifies as a "civilizing agency". We appeal to the European proletariat to repudiate the social-imperialism of the II International, and declare their solidarity with the Indian people fighting for freedom. This solidarity can be expressed through protest meetings and by sending to the Indian Nationalists messages of support and sympathy. The appeal is especially directed to the British working class, on whom falls the major portion of the responsibility of springing to the aid of the Indian Nationalists suffering under the iron heel of Imperialism. Direct action should be taken to stay the bloody hand of the bourgeoisie.

Proletariat of the World! Your revolutionary tradition is at stake.

Proletariat of Britain! Your revolutionary spirit is put to the test.

Spring to the aid of the victims of Imperialism in India.

M. N. Roy,
Communist Party of India.