

BUDGET MOCKS AT NAGPUR DECISIONS

Hits Common Man Hurts National Economy

To what extent have the pronouncements and sentiments of the Nagpur Congress found place in the scheme of Sri Morarji Desai's Budget, asked Bhupesh Gupta addressing himself to members of the Congress Party in Parliament and the country as a whole. The leader of the Communist Group was initiating the debate in the Rajya Sabha from the Opposition side on Sri Morarji Desai's maiden Budget.

NOBODY expected socialism to be advanced by Sri Morarji Desai but still being a Congressman, "at least as a matter of courtesy" one would have thought the Finance Minister would not flinch from using that expression. "Now it is a significant fact" said Bhupesh Gupta "that in the whole budget proposal, Sri Morarji Desai who is a case-hardened businessman in many matters, has chosen not to use the word 'socialism' once."

"It is symptomatic" Bhupesh Gupta proceeded to add "of the present mentality that is coming about in the financial policy of Government...."

"The Nagpur declaration has gone by the board as far as the Budget proposal is concerned."

The Nagpur resolution on Planning, had clearly stated that public enterprises and State trading should be conducted so as to yield resources for public purposes. Bhupesh Gupta recalled the Prime Minister's speeches, the Nagpur decisions on cooperatives, on land ceilings which was considered "a commitment to the nation" "to be completed by the end of the year". He asked Congressmen and Congress members to examine the Budget in terms of those declarations, stating:

"The Budget proposals mock at the Nagpur declaration, if I may say so. They run counter to the good declarations made at Nagpur."

Three Basic Propositions

At the outset he had asked the House to keep in mind "three basic propositions" in discussing the Budget: first, the present economic situation in the country in general and the crisis of the Second Plan in particular, secondly, the need to prepare for the Third Plan and finally, the Nagpur decisions of the Indian National Congress.

Having dealt with the Budget vis-a-vis the Nagpur declarations Bhupesh Gupta turned to the economic assessment stating:

"The Hon. Minister, like all his predecessors, has given a distorted account of the economic situation in the country as though he is afraid of facing the reality and I do not think we can go ahead and make things better by shying away from reality and trying to draw imaginary pictures that do not exist."

"No one will say that our country's economy is going to

topple", said Bhupesh Gupta, adding that it was essential nevertheless "to take into account realistically the actual situation that obtains."

In the Finance Minister's whole speech there was hardly any reference to unemployment. "Yet the facts are telling," said Bhupesh Gupta.

"When we started the First Five Year Plan, unemployed persons on the live register

numbered 3.37 lakhs—almost 3½ lakhs—in 1951.

"At the start of the Second Five-Year Plan it had risen to 7,05,000 and now, in December last year, the number is 11,83,229.... This is only an index; the real rise is much higher."

Unemployment Growing

He recalled that Sri D. N. Ghosh the Director of National Employment Survey in his recent report to the Employment Advisory Committee had pointed out that in West Bengal alone there were 2,14,914 unemployed persons on the live register and that a new feature that had emerged was that of these, 74,000 were women. Sri Ghosh had also pointed out that the rate of creation of employment opportunities was declining in the country.

Bhupesh Gupta also cited figures of the new job-seekers entering the market given recently by Prof. Mahalanobis, the Statistical Adviser to the Cabinet—one million every year in urban areas and 2½ million every year in rural areas. As for underemployment, according again to Prof. Mahalanobis, 20 million people have hardly an hour's work per day, 27 million less than 2 hours' work per day, 45 million less than 4 hours' work per day and 53 millions less than 15 days' work in a month.

"Now," said Bhupesh Gupta, "the Second Five-Year Plan envisaged eight million new employment opportunities and now they are saying that it would not be even five millions.... That is to say, all the entrants into the labour market after the second year would not have been absorbed in the five-year period. So a backlog is created and this is a new phenomenon in our economy.

Let alone the creation of employment opportunities for the new job-seekers every year, we are not able to find jobs even for the old job-seekers. So the position is reversed and unemployment is growing.... but here the Hon. Minister gives us a somewhat over-optimistic picture which is not at all sustained either by reality or even by official statistics....

"What are we budgeting for? What are we planning for? Whom are we looking

and that fertilisers are also being used and in some cases productivity per acre has also gone up."

Food imports in 1956-58 had been 8.87 million tons costing about Rs. 350 crores and in the whole Second Plan period even at the existing scale they would go up to 12 to 14 million tons costing Rs. 560 crores. "Is it a crisis of bad harvest only?" asked Bhupesh.

"It is a crisis of agrarian relations, aggravated by profiteering and hoarding

very high we find it declining, taking the industrial sector as a whole.

While balance of payments position too remained bad, trends in export trade also showed stagnation and alarming symptoms. Deficit in balance of trade in 1956-57 was 460.5 crores, in 1957-58 Rs. 580 crores and in the first half of 1958-59, Rs. 272 crores. The problem was going to be more acute because of the European Common Market. In face of all this the Finance Minister remained absolutely happy and unperturbed. Bhupesh Gupta pointed out.

The major reason for declining trade he pointed out lay in the fact that this trade followed certain fixed lines. Some 70 to 75 per cent of our exports continue to go to capitalist countries in Western Europe and North America and the commodities which

figure dominantly in this trade as a whole have shown a contradictory trend.

From whichever angle you look at it, Bhupesh Gupta said, "the economic situation is far from so encouraging as is sought to be made out."

"I should have thought that the Hon. Finance Minister would have taken the Nagpur Resolutions a little more seriously and formulated the Budget proposals. That would have helped to carry forward whatever good declarations have been made, in practice. But then he has belied the hopes of some and fulfilled the hopes of others: He has belied the hopes of many delegates at the Nagpur Session of the Congress—Congressmen and the country—and he has fulfilled the hopes of Mr. Chinnai who was defeated and walked out at the Nagpur Session, the Big Business and those elements who are well up in finance, who are against the public sector, against State trading, against big industrial development."

Big Business Jubilant

Bhupesh Gupta cited press reports of jubilation and "unbounded enthusiasm" in Stock Markets over the Morarji Budget and the satisfaction being expressed over it in the Big Business Press and asked "If the Nagpur Resolutions were sought to be implemen-

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Bhupesh Gupta's Indictment Of Morarji Desai

up to for the remaking of our country? Is it only the U. S. A. we must look up to to find the resources or must we turn our attention to the idle labour, to our unutilised labour, in the urban areas and in the countryside so that human endeavour could at once be harnessed into great productive channels, so that economic development could go on? It is a question to which we must find an answer," Bhupesh Gupta said.

Coming to the food situation he said it was not merely a question of good or bad harvest as the Finance Minister had tried to make out. "After all the crisis in agriculture today is essentially a crisis of the existing agrarian relations, which is the reason why the Nagpur session of the Congress took the decision to go ahead with the imposition of ceilings.... It is acknowledged even by the ruling party that there is something wrong in the agrarian relations. But this attitude finds unfortunately no reflection whatsoever in the Budget proposals of the Finance Minister."

Stagnant Agriculture

Giving figures of cereal production and of its availability—per capita to consumers Bhupesh Gupta showed the state of stagnation in our agriculture—"despite the fact that 40 lakh acres have been brought under new irrigation

on the part of these anti-social people against whom, I must confess, to our eternal shame, no action is taken by this Government. This is the crisis of the food situation, and yet you see that in the matter of State trading the Government is not moving fast. In fact, the State trading scheme remains still on paper."

Referring to the constant rise in prices of foodgrains—occurring even at harvest time, the leader of the Communist Group showed how besides causing endless misery to the people the process was having a baneful effect on the whole economy: fall in consumer demand for other commodities, upsetting of the price structure as a whole. "It upsets the calculations and the price structure of the Plan and it pushes the economy into a state of continued uncertainty and crisis."

The wholesale price index had risen from 102.6 in 1956 to 111 in 1958 and 112.3 in January 1959.

No proposal whatsoever had been made in the Budget for holding the price line, not even in regard to essential commodities, Bhupesh Gupta pointed out.

Decline in the rate of growth of industrial production as indicated in the Budget proposals was from 8 per cent in 1955-56 to 3.5 in 1957-58 and this was another indication of the seriousness of the situation. At the approach of the fourth year of the Second Plan when the tempo of development should have risen

Against The Betterment Levy

MOVEMENT

CONTINUES

UNABATED

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Seven thousand peasants of the Punjab were in jail on March 2 when the Punjab peasantry's united mass movement against the unjust betterment levy entered its second month.

DEIFYING brutal repression—teargassing, lathi-charges, manhandling of individual satyagrahis, indiscriminate arrests and attachment of property—the struggle which began on February 2 has assumed proportions which the Congress rulers of Punjab had certainly not expected, which have gone beyond the expectations even of the Kisan Sabha which had initiated the satyagraha.

Every passing day has seen more and more peasants coming forward voluntarily to court arrest and on just one day on March 2, 1,500 satyagrahis courted arrest.

Two weeks after it started it spread to four more districts, Bhatinda, Sangrur, Karnal and Rohtak and with Patiala joining the movement on the 23rd, the movement had gripped all the nine districts affected by the levy.

Brutal Repression

The Congress rulers, instead of seeing sense and conceding the just demand, have totally lost their heads at this unprecedented upsurge among the peasantry and have tried to meet it with repression of the most brutal kind.

In Dhaliwal village in Jullundur District, the police are reported to have resorted to firing on March 2, seriously injuring some persons, including women. Communist leader Harnam Singh Chamak has said in a statement that "martial law conditions" exist in Sangrur District.

In Dhuri and Garna Sub-Divisions in Sangrur District, severe lathi-charges were made on peaceful satyagrahis on the 25th and 26th and again on the 27th literally breaking the heads of the satyagrahis. Even the women's satyagrahis jatha of 16 with nine children at Sangrur was not spared by the police.

Old Man Dies Of Police Manhandling

In village Bhainimara in Sangrur District, 70-year old Godhamal, father of Ved Perkash who had been arrested earlier, was manhandled by the police who raided the village. The old man who was already ill has died as a result of the manhandling. He is the second victim of the repression against Anti-Betterment Levy struggle—the first, Malkiyat Singh of Kandola Kalan in Jullundur District died of pneumonia in jail as a result of the callous negligence of the authorities.

Truckloads of armed police are rushing from village to village in search of Communist and Kisan Sabha workers and in an attempt to terrorize the peasants. That they have not been able to arrest any of the leading organisers of the

movement has only added to their ire and they are making indiscriminate arrests. Even students and shopkeepers are being arrested for the only reason that their fathers in the villages had sympathised with or participated in the satyagraha.

The villagers are most shocked to find that the leaders of the Kisan Section of the Congress, who had first tried to counteract the movement with propaganda, are now moving along with policemen, pointing out Kisan Sabha activists.

In their blind fury, the authorities of the Punjab have disregarded all considerations of old age, ill-health, etc. Baba Karam Singh Cheema, 90-year-old Ghadr hero, who is at present in falling health, has also been arrested and put behind the bars.

In Sangrur District, the police on their rampage beat up the sister of a sharecropper in Comrade Hardit Singh's farm and later have started prosecutions against her and some others on a charge of clashing with the police. Comrade Hardit Singh's wife Jagir Kaur had led the women's jatha which had been beaten up severely by the police.

Lathi Charge At Midnight

When they raided village Hathan at midnight, the armed police began a lathi-charge and the people were forced to take shelter in the fields.

Properties of leading kisan workers are being attached as also those of satyagrahis who have been sentenced to pay fines. In Sangrur District, for instance, the entire properties of Hardit Singh Bhattal, former M.L.A., Janak Singh Bhattal, Ghagwan Singh Dangarh and others were attached.

All this repression has not frightened anybody—as can be seen from the great momentum the movement has gathered and the women and children who have been drawn into the struggle to become militant participants of the Anti-Betterment Levy struggle.

In fact, rarely before has Punjab seen such large-scale participation of women in any movement. Not only do the women bring out processions and demonstrations daily; they are in the forefront in beating back the police raids and their attempts to make arrests and attach property. In Litaran village, a big posse of police arrived to attach the property of the satyagrahis who had been sentenced to pay fines. The womenfolk of the village came together and with cowdung and whatever other missiles they could lay their hands on they drove away the policemen.

If this mass participation



All nine seats in the Cheharta Municipality were won by Communist candidates. Picture shows the elected Councillors. Chairman Satyapal Dang is sitting third from left.

SUPPORT PUNJAB PEASANTS' STRUGGLE

AJOY GHOSH'S CALL

GENERAL Secretary of the Communist Party of India Ajoy Ghosh has in a statement to the Press condemned the brutal repression against the Punjab peasantry and called on the people to express their solidarity with the Punjab struggle.

The Kairon Government has resorted to the most brutal repression against the peasantry of the Punjab who are unitedly putting up a heroic resistance to the unjust betterment levy the Congress Government has imposed.

The climax of this one month's repression came on March 2—the day the peasants' struggle entered its second month—when the police opened fire in Dhaliwal village in Jullundur District resulting in serious injury to many women.

Two persons have fallen victims of this repression—a 70-year old man has died as a result of police manhandling and another has died in jail of pneumonia due to the callous negligence of the police.

Inhuman lathi-charges have been made, literally breaking the heads of the people including women satyagrahis.

Indiscriminate mass arrests have taken place and large-scale attachment of

the properties of satyagrahis and kisan leaders.

With all this the Kairon Government hopes to impose on the peasantry the unjust levy.

The Punjab Government has no case for collecting this levy. The Punjab Kisan Sabha, the Communist Party and Independent leaders have massed enough facts and figures to show that Punjab's share of the capital cost of the irrigation part of the Bhakra Project can be met without this levy, with the existing taxes which the Government has gone on increasing during the last few years. Even Congressmen have in open statements demanded that the Central Government should bear the main part of the unproductive cost of the project.

When the Kairon Government has not been able to refute this unassailable case, when it has not been able to put forward a single fact or figure to prove that the levy is necessary, it should have withdrawn the ordinance ordering its collection.

Instead, it has unleashed this repression reminiscent of the British and princely days.

The Punjab peasantry is putting up a glorious resistance to this repression.

They have upset all the calculations of the Government, their movement has become the biggest united mass movement of the peasantry of the Punjab in decades. All party barriers have been broken, Congressmen and Akalis are offering satyagraha in large numbers. Even the Government's own revenue officials are tearing up the orders for collection of the levy and leading satyagrahi jathas.

The Government must not be allowed to crush this glorious struggle. The Punjab peasantry's resistance has to be supported by the rest of the country. The Punjab Government must be forced to stay its hands.

I call on the people in all States, specially the peasantry, to express their solidarity with the fighting peasant of the Punjab, to protest against the brutal repression and demand that the Punjab Government stop its repression, release the arrested satyagrahis and withdraw the betterment levy.

I hope the Punjab Government has enough wisdom to see that repression will be of no avail. I earnestly call on it to withdraw all repressive measures and concede the just demands of the peasants.

witnessed when the satyagrahis court arrest.

The first few days, they were arrested and convicted for contempt of court. But seeing the rapid filling of jails, the authorities have changed their tactics.

Before the satyagrahis arrive, the Magistrates and others leave the courts. But the satyagrahis determined to court arrest, occupy the courts for many hours till they are ar-

rested. On the 16th, Smt. Jagir Kaur occupied the chair in the Deputy Commissioner's Court at Sangrur. The Deputy Commissioner hurriedly left when he heard the women's jatha was arriving.

At Barnala the satyagrahis occupied the court of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate. The Deputy Commissioner telephoned the court from the District Headquarters and he