

VIJAYAWADA FIRES

- THE TRUTH

COMMUNISTS DEMAND PUBLIC INQUIRY



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The daily newspapers are full of stories, seeking to place the blame for the terrible outbreaks of fires in Vijayawada on the Communists. Factional fights, it is alleged in these interested reports, were responsible for arson.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH? Our Andhra Pradesh correspondent, Mohit Sen, here gives us the inside story . . .

NEW AGE earnestly appeals to all its readers:

- ★ To join in making the demand of all democrats in Andhra Pradesh, for a **PUBLIC INQUIRY** into the causes of the fires;
- ★ To send money and clothes with the greatest generosity possible, for the relief of the homeless.

THE REACTIONARIES SEEK TO MAKE POLITICAL ANTI-COMMUNIST CAPITAL OUT OF THE MISERIES OF THE VICTIMS OF THE FIRES. THEY MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO DO SO.

FOR the last week Vijayawada had been reduced to a city of fire, of fear and of terrible anger. It has been officially estimated that in this period in the city and in some of the surrounding villages some 1,700 houses have been totally destroyed and well over 40,000 persons have been either rendered completely homeless or forced to leave whatever remains of their homes. The damage will run to several lakhs of rupees.

The trouble started on June 10, when the worst fire in three decades swept across Krishna Lanka, one of the districts of Vijayawada inhabited mainly by the working class. The CPI has great influence here and has been steadily reducing whatever

influence the splitters still have in this area.

Some anarchist elements, under the influence of the splitters, provoked some clashes in Krishna Lanka just a few days before the outbreak. Terrible scenes were witnessed as a result of the raging fire.

Cinders And Ashes

Everything, just everything was reduced to cinders and ashes. Many lost all their life-savings. Some lost money they had borrowed with great difficulty for the weddings of their daughters. All wandered with a dazed and unbelieving look on their faces. The speed

with which the fire travelled along the two-mile route was amazing. Flames as high as 30 to 40 feet licked up everything in their path.

Rumours spread, that the faction fights between the Communists were responsible for this fire. It has to be recorded that the local Congress leads and bosses were most prominent in spreading this canard. Some even went about in motor vans speaking forth this slander. The Congress MLA Chalapati Rao trunk-called the Chief Minister to inform him that the Communists were indulging in arson to settle scores among themselves. He is a notoriously anti-Communist and anti-progressive figure.

On June 11 all newspapers carried the news that officials who had investigated into the Krishna Lanka blaze have come to the conclusion that it was purely an "accidental fire" and that there were no political motives.

It was reported that a woman, Aminabi who made her living by selling snacks, had left the house while the stove was still on and that this was the origin of the fire.

again in localities where the CPI is a strong force. All evidence available points to the conclusion that the fires this time were not accidental but deliberate cases of arson.

The Chief Minister went round city on June 13, morning and came to the conclusion that all the fires were clear cases of arson and could by no means be described as accidents. He said that he agreed with the opinion that faction fights were responsible for them, though proper investigation was essential.

It was later disclosed that the owner of the house where Aminabi stayed—and from which the first fire in Krishna Lanka originated—had told him that he was away at the time and that his tenant had removed her belongings prior to the outbreak. He is further privately reported to have said that this Aminabi was under the influence of the splitters.

On his return to Hyderabad, the Chief Minister gave the impression that the situation was under control and that the culprits would be found out soon. He also contradicted the report that any officials had up to that time made any investigation into the Krishna Lanka blaze.

The Chief Minister, however, was reported to be "flabbergasted" when on June 14, yet another fire broke out in yet another working class locality and reports came in of fires from villages near Vijayawada.

At the same time arrests began. Among the 80 (eighty)

Relief Arrangement

CPI leaders Thamma Reddy Satyanaryana, K. Rajgopala Rao and T. Venkateswara Rao, immediately set about making arrangements for relief and for restoring calm among the people. They issued a statement to this effect and appealed to the people not to fall a prey to the rumours and slander being broadcast by interested persons.

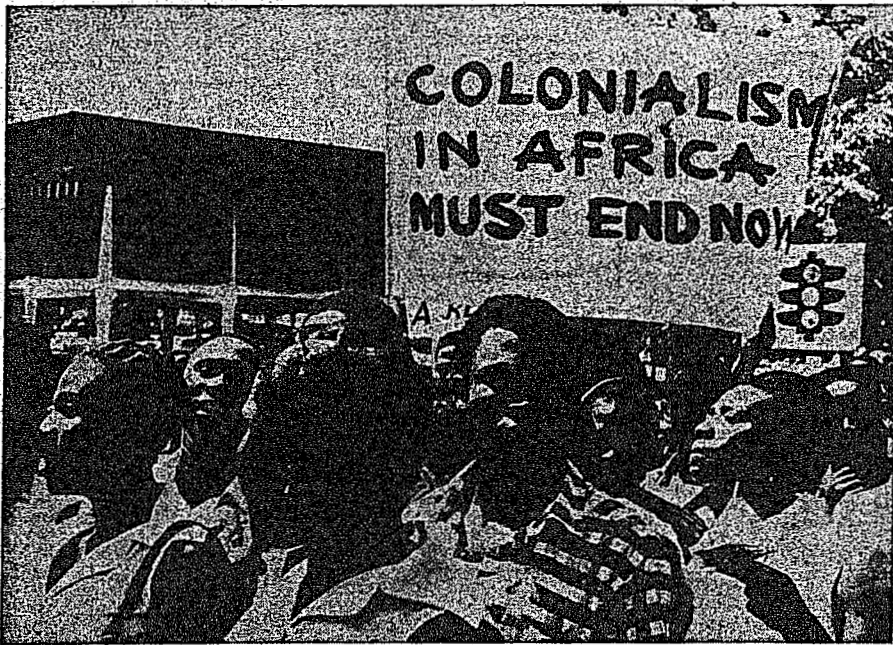
The splitters also came out with a statement where they warned the people against those who were trying to make capital out of the conflicts among the Communists.

But the JANASAKTI of June 14, the splitters' organ, however, came out with an item on its front page trying to implicate Municipal Councillor C. Venkataraman of the CPI. The splitters also went about saying that the CPI was spreading rumours and panic as they wanted to "spoil" the splitters' conference scheduled for the first week of July.

On June 12, there were two fresh outbreaks of fire,

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RELEASE SOUTH AFRICAN PATRIOTS. See Centre Pages.



CPI's SEVENTH CONGRESS

THE National Council of the Communist Party of India, meeting in New Delhi from June 7 to 17 decided to convene the Seventh Party Congress in Bombay in the fourth week of November this year. The exact dates will be announced after consultation with the Maharashtra State Council of the Party.

The National Council discussed the draft Programme of the Party as well as a report on the ideological differences in the international Communist movement. Both these documents, which are being finalised on the basis of the opinions expressed in the National Council meeting, will be released next week for discussion by all Party units and by Party conferences held at all levels.

Forward To Seventh Congress Of CPI

COMMUNIST PARTY ON NEW GOVT

The National Council of the Communist Party of India in its meeting on June 17 adopted the following resolution:

THE National Council of the Communist Party of India views with concern the difficult situation that faces the country after the sad death of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

This sudden tragedy had been a signal for reactionary elements within the country and for diehard imperialist circles abroad, to make renewed efforts to infiltrate their nominees into vantage posts in the new government, with the object of subverting the basic policies of Pandit Nehru.

Even during the life time of the late Prime Minister, certain foreign circles had gone to the brazen length of openly discussing the question—after Nehru, who?—and speculating on their choice as Nehru's successor of certain persons who, they hoped, would bring about a shift of policies in a reactionary direction.

Against this background, the National Council of the Communist Party of India welcomes the fact that the new Prime Minister has publicly proclaimed faithful adherence to Nehru's policies and ideals, thereby foiling the immediate hopes of the reactionary circles. At the same time, it is a matter of concern that such a well-known advocate of Rightist policies as Shri S. K. Patil has re-entered the cabinet.

The National Council of the CPI is of the opinion that with the sudden removal of Pandit Nehru's towering personality the pledge given on behalf of the cabinet by Prime

Minister Shastri to follow his predecessor's policies of non-alignment, peace and anti-colonialism and to strive to solve India's disputes with Pakistan and China through peaceful negotiations consistent with India's security, dignity and national integrity has to be reinforced by concrete steps in that direction by the new government.

At home, Shri Shastri has announced that top priority will be given to the questions of reducing economic inequalities, of holding prices and of improving the living standards of the people.

This is, in fact, the field in which the new government faces its most critical and immediate test; the people will judge it by its performance here. Profiteering and speculation are playing havoc with the peoples' food and other essential commodities of life. Prices, especially of foodgrains, are going higher and higher every day. The octopus-like grip of corruption and monopoly is strangling the nation's economic life and intensifying the crisis.

The Communist Party of India urges the new government to take drastic practical steps without delay to break the power of the profiteers and the monopolists by controlling the market through state trading in foodgrains, nationalisation of banks, and severe penal measures against the anti-social robbers of the peoples' food.

The Communist Party of India has consistently sup-

ported in the past all progressive and democratic policies and measures of the Nehru government.

At the same time, it has always categorically opposed and fought all policies and measures which seek to reverse the policy of non-alignment and peace and which are anti-democratic, which hit the peoples' interests, increase the burden of their misery and suffering, and help a handful of monopolists and speculators to enrich themselves through profiteering and hoarding.

The Party will continue to do the same in future also in relation to the new government headed by Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri.

TRUE COLOUR OF "TRUE" MARXISTS

From S. SHARMA

TRIVANDRUM: The "true Marxists" who have quarrelled with the Communist Party because they say it is not sufficiently "anti-Congress" for them and therefore have embarked upon splitting the Party are now coming out in their true colours.

THE splitters are so keen on fighting the Communist Party that they have begun to put up rival candidates in local elections and to disrupt the unity of progressive forces, leading to the victory of the Congress. That is what happened recently in Trichur.

In a bye-election to the Trichur Municipal Council, the splitters supported an independent candidate against the candidate of the Progressive Bloc.

The votes of the democratic opposition were divided as a result of this and the Congress candidate won. This

happened in a ward where Communist influence is dominant, and but for the disruption by the splitters, the Congress would have been defeated there.

Similarly, in the elections to the Kerala University Senate from panchayat presidents' constituency, the disruptive activities of the splitters have led to the victory of Co.-gress-sponsored candidates.

In the ensuing Corporation elections at Trivandrum also, the splitters have put up their rival candidates to oppose the candidates of the Party.

RELEASE COMMUNIST DETENUS

The following resolution was adopted by the National Council of the Communist Party of India on June 17:

THE National Council of the Communist Party of India records its strong protest at the continued detention of Communists in certain states under the notorious Defence of India Rules.

While the great majority of Communist detenues have been released a number continue to be detained in West Bengal, Maharashtra, Bihar, Tripura and UP.

The continued detention of these comrades even after one and a half years of the ceasefire on the Sino-Indian border knocks the bottom out of the contention of the government that their arrests had anything to do with the "special situation" created by the border war or with the interests of "national security".

The very fact that majority of the state governments have already freed all the Communist detenues in their states, proves that these comrades are being detained purely to serve the local interests of the party in power.

The prolonged and unwarranted detention of these comrades constitutes a wanton attack on the fundamental rights and democratic liberty of the people.

It is a matter of deep shame that the government has not yet seen its way to order their release even after nearly a year of the verdict of the Supreme Court declaring their detention constituting an infringement of the fundamental rights guaranteed in the constitution but re-

cording its inability to order their releases in view of the Presidential order.

This is a matter of grave concern not only to Communists but to all lovers of civil liberties in our country, because it shows in what contempt the government holds judicial pronouncements of the highest court in the country.

The National Council of the CPI demands that all the Communist detenues languishing in jails in the various states should be immediately released. The National Council further demands that the state of emergency should be ended forthwith.

The National Council calls upon all members and units of the Party to conduct a vigorous release campaign in cooperation with all other democratic organisations and elements.

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED TO CENTRAL SECRETARIAT

The National Council of the CPI unanimously elected Comrades G. Adhikari and C. Rajeswara Rao as members of the Central Secretariat of the Party.

THE other members of the Secretariat are: Comrades S. A. Dange (Chairman), Bhupesh Gupta, Z. A. Ahmad, M. N. Govindan Nair, Yogendra Sharma, P. C. Joshi and Romesh Chandra.

This expansion of the Secretariat has been made with a view to strengthening the centre which has to carry out heavy responsibilities connected with the preparations for the Party Congress and is without prejudice to any changes that may be made following the unity efforts of the Party.

Architect Of Modern India

*FROM PAGE 17.

underdeveloped countries, Nehru did not accept scientific socialism as the people's path from poverty to prosperity.

Yet, despite these flaws in his social philosophy, Nehru saw and trenchantly criticised all the negative aspects of capitalism, which he rejected as inapplicable to India. Opposition to the big Indian monopolies, militant anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, unwavering championship of peace and national independence — all these made Jawaharlal Nehru India's recognized and revered leader.

He will always live in our memory as a noble and courageous fighter against imperialism, colonialism and war, as the architect of the new India. Now that he is gone, now that the Indian people have lost their leader and the Soviet people a sincere friend, one's thoughts involuntarily turn to the future of relations between our peoples. It is to be hoped that they will continue to rest on true friendship and close co-operation.

The Soviet people pay homage to Nehru, the great son of a great people building a brighter future.

(NEW TIMES, No. 23, 1964. Slightly abridged.)

* FROM FRONT PAGE

so far arrested are M. Hanumantha Rao, assistant secretary of the Andhra Splitters' Committee and T. Pottharaju, MLA, the Splitters' City Committee secretary. C. Venkataraman, Communist Municipal Councillor is also among the arrested.

The secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Council of the CPI, N. Rajsekhar Reddy, rushed to Vijayawada from Delhi on June 14. Together with other leaders of the CPI he is making an on the spot investigation and leading the work of organising relief and helping to restore calm among the people.

It is reported that due to the intransigence of some Congress leaders a joint appeal to the people and a joint tour of the city to allay panic could not be made, despite efforts made at a meeting of prominent personalities on June 15 called by the I. G. of Police.

The I. G. of Police, who is personally handling the problem, declined to answer the question whether there was any political pattern behind the outbreaks, though he agreed that most of them were clear cases of arson.

The CPI leaders have called for a public enquiry

into the fires by a committee composed of officials and non-officials. They have come out strongly against those Congress leaders who are trying to make anti-Communist capital out of the misery of the people. They have also condemned the splitters' organ JANASAKTY (whose editor is M. Hanumantha Rao) for propagating the falsehood that some CPI leaders were trying to create panic and scare.

The CPI leaders have asked for the immediate release of all those arrested so that united efforts could be made to calm the people and help relieve the terrible distress of the victims of the fires.

They stress that it is utterly reprehensible for anybody to try to bring in political differences of any kind when the need of the hour is unity to help the people and to prevent any further outbreaks.

Vijayawada remains a city where the people are afraid that any time anywhere more fires may blaze. The people are also terribly angry and demand that the culprits be brought to justice immediately. Many are of the opinion that whatever may have been the origin of the Krishna Lanka blaze, the other outbreaks are clear cases of

arson by anti-social elements.

Some are of the opinion that anti-Communist reactionaries are out to use the split in the CPI and the resulting tension to damn both the CPI and the splitters, not hesitating to use the weapon of arson.

Many are confused and have fallen a prey to the anti-Communist propaganda and are blaming the Communists for fighting among themselves and creating tension which could be used by anti-social and anarchist elements.

It has to be underlined that the immediate task is to rush relief in the shape of cash and clothes to Vijayawada. This is the duty not only of Andhra but of all democrats anywhere in India. The suffering of the victims is heart-wrenching.

Of equal urgency is the need to restore calm, allay panic, organise vigilance squads and for the authorities to move with all speed and thoroughness. It is essential to ensure that no further fires break out.

And to satisfy the people the government must order an immediate public enquiry so that nobody at all can make political capital out of the ashes of the homes of the poor and of their tears of rage. (June 16)