

REMEMBER THE R.I.N.

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PEOPLE'S AGE



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IMPERIALISM'S OPEN ROBBERY OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS

Masses Bled White To Pay For Britain's War Expenses

The year 1946 witnessed the biggest strike-wave India has ever seen.

This wave of militant working-class unrest is the direct outcome of years of exploitation which reached its culmination during war years. Like the rest of the Indian people, the working-class was bled white by India's imperialist masters—in conjunction with their Indian accomplices.

THE war-time economy of imperialism was based on making the Indian masses pay for British war expenses. It had two main features:

- (1) Ruthless exploitation of the Indian people through inflation and rise in prices;
- (2) Refusal to develop Indian industries and Indian national income.

Inflation is always a method of indirect taxation of those who are least able to bear it. Imperialism made it an open robbery of the workers and peasants.

Controlling the State and taking advantage of the financial settlement and control over India's currency and banking, the imperialist Government agreed to pay for British expenses, for the huge war expenditure, in paper rupee notes, accepting payment in sterling in Britain.

Paper For Goods

They could not purchase capital or consumer goods with sterling and, therefore, the British payment only remained a promise to pay. They went on issuing more paper notes against real goods—so that Indians were paid in a daily depreciating paper.

The result was not exchange of goods for goods, but exchange of goods for paper, which was issued in enormous quantities, leading to inflation, giddy prices, blackmarketing and hoarding.

The robbery of the Indian people, of their resources, a forcible reduction in their standard of life and brutal exploitation through the mechanism of rising prices, was the specific imperialist plan of war finance.

On September 1, 1939, sterling securities held by the Reserve Bank amounted to Rs. 5,930 lakhs. On August 30, 1944, they amounted to Rs. 1,13,533 lakhs. This accumulation shows the value of goods given by India for which India up till now has secured nothing except the promise to pay.

Ever-Rising Prices

This directly led to ever-rising prices through the mechanism of increasing note circulation. On September 1, 1939, the value of notes in circulation was Rs. 15,213 lakhs. On August 30, 1944, it was Rs. 1,20,678 lakhs. This vast increase in note circulation led to high prices and rise in the cost of living.

While the index number of wholesale prices (base—August 17, 1939 equal to 100) rose from 118.7 in 1939 to 244.1 in 1945, the index number of prices for food (base—last week of August 1939 equal to 100) rose from 112 in 1939 to 235.3 in 1945.

The cost of living on 1946 on the base August 1939 equal to 100 was:

Bombay	247
Ahmedabad	279 (May)
Bhopalpur	277 (May)
Jalgaon	327
Cannore	321
Nagpur	287
Jubbulpore	304
Lahore	294
Madras	240

The steep rise in the cost of living without a compensating rise in wages was the war-deal of the British Government for the Indian worker.

Every rupee earned by the worker now had half or one-third its former value. It was tantamount to an indirect wage-cut of 50 to 60 per cent.

The worker waged struggles against the worsening of his already meagre standard and most of the conflicts centred round dearness allowance. Wherever the workers were in a strong position and their produce of direct use to war, the capitalists and imperialists made concessions though these were always belated and miserable.

Cut in Real Wages

Except in certain strong textile centres, the compensations were a mockery, the working-class being forced to bear the entire burden of high prices on old wage-scales. Jute, plantations, the vast mass of railway workers, coal and iron ore workers, on the whole the vast majority of the Indian workers got a miserable pittance as compensation.

Even those who could secure a better deal could not stop a



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needs. Even then the basic industries were totally neglected. Only auxiliaries were developed, India's role being mostly confined to repair shops. The bulk of the Government orders ranged from buttons to parts of rifles, cloth, etc.

Unemployment

The total number expected to be released from work in the near future—according to Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Government of India's former Member for Planning—was nearly five million.

The Army was to register a fall in its strength to 8,50,000.

COMPLETE CHANGE IN STRUCTURE OF INDIAN ECONOMY ONLY WAY OUT

deterioration of their standard of living. Except at Ahmedabad, nowhere was the worker compensated in full for the rise in the cost of living.

Intensification of work, a drastic cut in real wages, a widening gap between earnings and cost of living, a general deterioration in standard of living through housing shortage, blackmarkets, bad quality of food-stuffs—such has been the character of the war burden on the working-class.

Today after the formation of Congress Ministries and Interim Government, all these factors are operating in the same old way, with the result that the accumulated discontent of the past few years is bursting forth with unprecedented rapidity and intensity.

The end of the war not only continues the intense exploitation through inflation and widening gap between earnings and cost of living but it has brought imperialism face to face with what businessmen call the problem of achieving the transition from a war to a peace economy.

But there are problems of a special type in India, problems which make it impossible for imperialism to find a way out of the crisis unless the working-class is crushed.

War-Time Expansion

The war-time expansion of India was based merely on strangulation of further growth of new industries—the increase in industrial employment having taken place merely by working the machines for longer hours; in actual fact, the number of machines or the amount of the means of production practically did not increase in India.

The increase in production was merely of such a type as

ment and production was mainly the result of overworking of the old machinery or developing of auxiliary operations. There was hardly any increase in the means of production—machine tools, etc.—so that India can hardly talk of turning the war-time employed to peace-time avocations.

Thus, while America has at least 50 per cent more machines than the pre-war period to provide employment to her workers and England has 25 per cent more, we start only with our pre-war stock of machines and have to provide employment to three times the pre-war number.

The present strike-wave and its future course is determined by these factors of the imperialist war-time economy—and no amount of diversion will stop it.

Indian Capital

There is yet another feature of this economy, a feature which contributes towards intensification of strike struggles. It was not only imperialism which exploited the Indian working-class; they had a partner in the Indian capitalists who minted millions out of the sweat and toil of the people.

Thanks to the war orders by the Indian Government (during 1938-39 to 1944-45, these amounted to Rs. 82,84,140,000), thanks to the continuous inflation and rising prices, the Indian capitalists made fabulous profits as never before, while

ployer has robbed them of two hours of labour.

Accustomed to such huge profits of the war period the Indian capitalist is in no mood to sacrifice his vantage position against the workers. He is prepared to wage a bitter, life and death struggle against the worker.

All the more so, when he knows that his profits were made because the shaky Indian economy had been geared to war expenditure and is, therefore, very conscious of the fact that tomorrow he may have to force wages down and attack the workers repeatedly if he is to continue to reap even a part of his war profits.

Thus the Indian capitalist class will make desperate efforts to pass on the burden of the crisis to the shoulder of the workers and provoke long drawn-out and bitter struggles—the like of which India has never seen.

The competitive capacity of his industries—the ones he wishes to build also—depends on low labour costs. The success of his various Indo-British partnership-deals, which are today his main concern—depends on how far he secures cheap labour, forces down the working-class standard of living and guarantees to his British partner the full use of State power on his behalf.

Interim Govt.-No Change

Things have not changed with the formation of the Interim Government or the Provincial Ministries.

On the contrary, the cost of living has gone on rising while the vested interests, intent on saving their war-time level of profits, are exercising their influence over the Ministers and the Interim Government, are straining every nerve to deny the workers any rise in wages or radical improvement in the standard of living.

It is these bare facts of imperialist economy that set the pace for the strike movement today. Like the Indian people, the Indian workers have only one alternative:

- To secure their demands through organised strength or to tamely submit to mass unemployment and misery.

India's millions were being robbed, fleeced and driven to death. Never before had they enjoyed so much State patronage for their products; never before they had such opportunity for making continuous profits taking advantage of the soaring prices and inflation.

The enormous profits that they made during this period can be seen from the following table:

in by the workers, the em- Out of every three hours put

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
Jute	100	590	617	896	926
Cotton	100	73	205	313	645
Tea	100	118	214	252	392
Sugar	100	143	122	160	218
Coal	100	88	107	95	124
Engineering	100	115	180	36	225
Miscellaneous	100	104	326	394	401
All kinds	100	127	282	250	327

The rate of exploitation can further be seen from the following figures about wages and profits in some of the Bombay textile mills.

Name of Mill	1939-1945 Wages & Salaries Bill	Profits
Bombay Dyeing	3.78 crores	9.7 crores
Finlay	1.70 crores	2.86 crores
India United	8.75 crores	12.00 crores
Khatani Makanji	3.9 crores	3.18 crores
New China	1.32 crores	2.00 crores
New Kaiser-i-Hind	1.63 crores	1.87 crores
Podar Mills	98 lakhs	1.96 crores
Simplex Mills	1.44 crores	2.13 crores
Standard Mills	1.77 crores	3.18 crores

The rate of exploitation is revealed here as 24 to 44 or nearly two hundred per cent. growing poverty and ill- tion and perpetuation of sarily low living standar

by **B. T. RANADIVE**

A HISTORIC ANNIVERSARY

FEBRUARY 21 and the two succeeding days will always be regarded as memorable dates in the annals of our struggle for freedom.

The general uprising of the twenty-thousand men in the navy reached its climax in Bombay and Karachi harbours on the 21st February 1946.

The men of the navy were on a peaceful protest hunger-strike against bad food, against the insulting and humiliating behaviour of the British officers. They were demanding what the whole of India was demanding in monster demonstrations throughout the country—the release of I.N.A. prisoners, withdrawal of British troops from Indonesia, Indianisation of the army.

Imperialist brass-hats, panic-stricken at the unwonted spectacle of their slave colonial army rising itself to its full patriotic stature, shrieked: Surrender or else we destroy the whole navy!

A giant British man-of-war was speedily moved in—its mighty guns trained on the pigmy Indian Naval ships lying at anchor in the Bombay Harbour. The shore batteries were ready.

It was in this grave moment that the naval ratings had to choose: surrender or annihilation, crawl back to slavery or stand up and fight.

If die they must, they would die fighting every inch of the ground. They seized the ships, took to arms in self-defence. The odds were heavy against them. They knew it meant certain death. But they preferred death to dishonour. They fought to guard their own and the country's honour.

It was called indiscipline, mutiny, rebellion and what not! The RIN Enquiry Report, published under the auspices of the popular Interim Government, calls it a 'tragic episode'.

History has vindicated these men. Their self-sacrifice, their fearless action will rank among the immortal episodes in the history of our people's fight for independence.

Heralding A New Period

Their fight in self-defence, the volleys they fired in reply to the big guns of the British are the salvos heralding a new period—the period of the final battles of our people for liberation.

Living history recorded its verdict almost immediately. Workers and citizens of Bombay rose as one man in an unprecedented general strike and hartal, despite the ban which top Congress and League leaders sought to impose upon it. The people of Bombay saw as if in a flash the historic significance of the defensive action of these navy men: when limbs of imperialism's armed forces are fired with this spirit, then its day is done.

Hundreds of thousands came out on the streets to demonstrate in solidarity with the brave sons of India who had the courage to run up on the ships' masts Congress, League and Red flags and to bare their chests before imperialism's brutal might.

Men in the Indian air-force as well as in the Indian army stationed in Bombay, also recognised the significance of the action of the navy men. Imperialism could not rely on these men to lift their weapons either against the ratings or against the demonstrating people.

Terrified by this crisis, the imperialists let loose British military troops through the streets of Bombay. Bren-gun carriers, tanks, armoured lorries swept through the streets spitting murderous fire, recklessly. People erected barricades in the streets to fight back this terror which continued for two days.

The battle went on in the ships for eight hours and in the streets of Bombay for two days. British imperialist terror had no more fear for our people. One naval rating lost his life. Three hundred innocent workers and citizens of Bombay—men and women—were shot dead in the streets. Among the martyred dead was our KAMAL DONDE, and among the thou-

sand wounded was our KUSUM RANADIVE.

When the tempo and courage of all were at their highest, the leaders of the Congress and the League intervened and, promising to stand by the naval lads and secure their demands, persuaded them to call off their mighty strike.

They surrendered to their people and people's leaders, not to the British—as they proudly said.

Now one year has passed since that historic strike.

Have the demands which the naval ratings put forward been conceded? Has the RIN become a real people's navy, as they had hoped, for which they fought? Have the pledges of "no victimisation" given by Sardar Patel and Mr. Jinnah been honoured?

And to our shame, the shame of our people and our leaders, we have to answer—NO.

Even today the British rule the navy, insolently, viciously, brutally.

Of course, the Interim Government, in which today are leaders of both the Congress and the League, has published the RIN Enquiry Commission's report.

But it, too, only repeats the old, old British promises of 'speedy' nationalisation and better conditions, while in practice, inside the navy, the old imperial order goes on.

Since then, frightened by the advancing wave of revolt, the imperialists have produced their fake plan of Indian freedom, the Cabinet Mission's child, a plan designed to buy off the upper-class interests in the Congress and the League and play one off against the other so as to retain the supremacy of British authority.

They carried it forward in the communal massacres of Calcutta, Noakhali and Bihar, hoping thus to permanently divide our people and perpetuate their ugly imperial order.

But the spirit of the revolutionary awakening a year ago is not dead. In the factories and fields, in the States, inside colleges, more and more people are coming forward to fight the evil imperial plan, to demand a break with the British and a struggle for freedom.

Textile workers in Cawnpore and Coimbatore, share-croppers of Bengal, the peasants of Telengana and countless others are re-forming the ranks of the Indian people, marching forward in the heritage of last February.

We Pay Our Homage

On this first anniversary of the Naval Rising, we pay our homage to the RIN strikers, to the martyrs of Bombay, to the millions who saw the significance of the great event, when, in the words of the Naval Central Strike Committee, "for the first time the blood of men in the services and of men in the streets flowed in a common cause."

All honour to these naval ratings, to the workers and citizens of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta—to all those who rose in support of the great Naval Rising!

All glory to the martyrs of the February days! They raised the three flags together; they forged the invincible unity of the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Untouchables—they brought about the unity of the men of the forces with the mass of common citizens, and they rose in defiant resistance against imperialism's challenge.

In three historic days, they showed, as if in a flash, what the Indian people could achieve if they could forge such broad-based and revolutionary unity for the final struggle to achieve independence of the country, land and bread for the common people and freedom for every national unit.

On this historic anniversary, let us pledge that we shall NOT rest till we have achieved the dream of united struggle which inspired those who fought and those who died in those unforgettable days.

RIN STRIKE IN BOMBAY—FROM HOUR TO HOUR

(February 18 to 23, 1946)

February 18

Morning—On H.M.L.S. Talwar at 8 a.m. ratings of the Central Communications Office walk out of mess in protest against bad food. Refusal to attend parade follows. By 10 a.m. the strike of over 1,000 ratings is complete, with ratings of Remote Control Office joining in.

Immediate demands—withdrawal of insolent Commanding Officer King, redress of grievances relating to pay, welfare and amenities, and discrimination, etc.

12 noon—Flag Officer Bombay, Rear-Admiral Rattray, offers to replace King by Capt. Inigo Jones. Ratings demand an Indian officer. Demand refused but ratings asked to formulate grievances through representatives.

Night—News spreads to 11 shore establishments, 45 ships, 11 miscellaneous ships and four flotillas in and around Bombay.

February 19

Morning—Ratings in Castle Barracks, Fort Barracks and other shore establishments refuse to join the 5-30 a.m. parade. Orders to "clean ship" defied; bugle for parade on ship ignored. Eight hundred ratings from

Castle Barracks march out in procession to Talwar.

On ships the White Ensign is hauled down and Congress, League, and Communist Party flags are hoisted, H.M.L.S. Punjab leading the way.

11-45 a.m.—Processions of ratings from different parts of the city pour into Talwar. General meeting formulates common demands.

3-30 p.m.—Meetings and processions from and to Talwar electrify the Fort area. F.O.B. Rattray confers with strike leaders.

Night—Naval Central Strike Committee (NCSC) elected.

February 20

Morning—2 a.m.—Ratings from H.M.L.S. Hamla march to Castle Barracks. News of ratings' strike at Calcutta, Karachi and other centres.

Processions again—Fort Barrack to Talwar, Castle Barracks to Talwar; from meeting on Oval Grounds to Talwar.

11-0 a.m.—M. S. Khan elected President at the first meeting of the NCSC. Negotiations Committee elected.

1-0 p.m.—Ratings from H.M.L.S. Akbar reach Talwar.

2-0 p.m.—F.O.C., R.I.N. orders all ratings to return to Barracks or ships by 3-30 p.m. or face arrests. Ratings return.

3-30 p.m.—Maharatta Guard surround all establishments.

4-30 p.m.—The NCSC demands withdrawal of guard.

8-0 p.m.—After one and a half hours, meeting between the strike leaders and F.O.C. ends in failure. F.O.C. promises to issue rations immediately but refuses to withdraw military guard and demands unconditional surrender.

10-0 p.m.—The NCSC meeting orders ratings not to eat food sent by the authorities.

February 21

Morning—9 a.m.—Military guard opens fire at Castle Barracks. Fire returned.

11-30 a.m.—The NCSC meeting on H.M.L.S. Nakhada prepares to meet offensive. Orders rushed to ships.

1-30 p.m.—British guns open offensive, mainly on Castle Barracks but also on ships as well. Ships and barracks return the fire.

2-00 p.m.—News of ratings' revolt at Karachi; on H.M.L.S. Bahadar, Chamak, etc.

2-30 p.m.—F.O.C., R.I.N. Godfrey broadcasts message to the R.I.N. Threat of total destruction of the navy. R.I.A.F. procession in Fort area.

3-00 p.m.—British military ceases fire. Ratings also. Civilians throng in thousands at the Gateway of India with food parcels for the ratings. Motor trucks rain death on passers-boats pick up the gifts. A boy wounded by British bullets while rushing a food parcel.

8-00 p.m.—The NCSC issues a statement, refusing to surrender to threats but expressing readiness to negotiate.

February 22

Press flashes news of Communist Party, the NCSC and Bombay Students' Union issuing appeals for a sympathetic strike and hartal. Godfrey's threat of destroying the navy and Sardar Patel's call against strike.

A pact complete peaceful strike and hartal in Bombay.

Processions of workers parade the streets. Police

begin in workers' chawls. People defend homes at Lalbaug. British military runs amuck. Firing claims 50 wounded in one lane.

11 a.m.—Godfrey's second call for unconditional surrender. Threat to "employ full force" to destroy the R.I.N.

2-30 p.m.—Formations of aircraft fly over Bombay.

3-00 p.m.—British troops in trucks rain death on passers-by in Parel area. Tens of people, women and children killed. At DeLisle Road workers resist.

7-00 p.m.—On assurance from Sardar Patel, Khan advises ratings to surrender. The NCSC's statement issued to Press.

February 23

5-30 a.m.—Final meeting of the NCSC after six hours' discussion refuses to surrender.

5-35 a.m.—News of Mr. Jinnah's assuring support.

5-45 a.m.—The NCSC decides to surrender by 30 votes to 6.

6-30 a.m.—The NCSC issues final message to Bombay citizens.

7-30 a.m.—Ships and establishments hoist Black flags.

CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY'S

The All-India Conference of the Congress Socialist Party is meeting at a moment of greatest significance for our people, for the Indian Revolution.

THE immediate perspective before us is the deepening of the crisis of imperialist-feudal rule in India, the worsening of economic conditions for all sections of the toiling people.

With this crisis as the main driving force, the great revolutionary upsurge of 1946—which opened with RIN Uprising and the unforgettable demonstrations for the release of the INA—is soaring to new heights.

● The strike battles are growing both in numbers and in intensity.

● The kisan struggles against the decrepit feudal system for the harvest and the land are sweeping whole Provinces—

● In the States, the peoples' movement stands on the threshold of the complete overthrow of autocracy. Struggles of an unprecedented intensity are raging in the major States.

● On January 21, the patriotic students of Calcutta and Mymensingh gave their blood in defence of Viet-Nam and highlighted the part being played by India's youth in the revolutionary upsurge of today.

To head this upsurge, organise and spread these struggles of the workers, peasants, States peoples and students is the duty of all serious revolutionaries.

Imperialism's Counter Offensive

The policy of compromise and of opposition to the mass upsurge pursued by the Right-wing leadership of the Congress has been utilised by imperialism to foist on the Indian people its slave Plan—with all its obnoxious, reactionary and undemocratic features.

Through this Plan, imperialism intends to retain its economic monopoly and its military death-grip over India through the perpetuation of the Hindu-Muslim conflict, which is guaranteed by the diabolical "innovation" of "grouping."

The Cabinet Mission Plan is imperialism's counter offensive against the popular upsurge.

At this moment, this counter-offensive is being intensified a hundred-fold:

● In the imperialist army of occupation's GHQ, the secret military plans to drown the people's struggle in blood, which have been carefully prepared, rehearsed and carried out during 1946, are being rapidly renovated, brought up-to-date, made more ruthless than ever to cope with the rising tempo of the anti-imperialist freedom movement.

● Alarmed at the fact that the riot-wave—which it has itself deliberately provoked and engineered—is subsiding, imperialism is making desperate efforts on the one hand to bring Congress-League political conflict again to a head and, on the other, to provoke actual riots with the aid of CID agents-provocateur.

Repression Against The Left

● A campaign of severe repression has been launched by imperialism against the Left parties and the organised movement of the working-class, the kisans and the youth—as the first round in its efforts to crush the entire national movement.

Making use of the anti-struggle policy of the Right-wing, its anti-Left factional prejudice and its increasing subservience to the vested interests, imperialism and its bureaucracy have succeeded in giving their repression the stamp of the Right-wing, which proudly claims for itself the "credit" for the worst repressive measures.

The recent all-India raids on

Communist, trade union and Kisan Sabha offices;

The searches and arrests of Congress Socialists in Bihar and Maharashtra;

The wholesale arrests of all leading Communists, trade unionists and Kisan Sabha workers in Madras Presidency under a dictatorial Ordinance;

All these are part of one and the same imperialist all-India policy of crushing the fighting elements in the country—and creating a split between the national movement as represented by the Congress Right-wing with its main base in the middle-classes, and the organised sections of the toiling people.

Task Of Revolutionary Parties

To foil and fight back this counter-offensive and isolate the disruptive policy of the Right-wing is the task of all revolutionary parties.

The central and dominant issue before the CSP Conference must therefore be the dual task outlined above, of organising and developing the rapidly growing peoples' upsurge and fighting back and defeating imperialism's devilish counter-offensive of riots and repression.

In his Independence Day policy article "Transition to Socialism," Sjt. Jai Prakash Narain has laid down what he believes to be the present situation in our country and the tasks which arise from it.

This article is the framework of the thesis and the programme which the CSP leadership will place before the Conference.

Sjt. Jai Prakash envisages what he calls "two parts" of "the problem of the transition to Socialism."

"The first part is concerned with the achievement of a free Indian democracy and the second with the transformation of that democracy into a socialist democracy."

Of the second part, which he discusses first, Sjt. Jai Prakash categorically declares:

"In a fully democratic India, the transition to Socialism can be and should be a peaceful democratic process. That is to say the future Socialist Party of India, into which the present CSP must evolve, should by a victory at the polls, take over the Government and the Legislature and use them in accordance with law to destroy capitalism and create Socialism."

Sjt. Jai Prakash approvingly quotes the case of Britain to prove his thesis.

"There is democracy in England... Accordingly we find British Labour installed in Government by a democratic process and putting socialist schemes into practice in a democratic fashion. Not even the blindest fanatic would dream of the possibility or necessity of violent revolution in Great Britain today."

Britain's Labour Imperialists

Sjt. Jai Prakash forgets how the previous Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 were hounded out of Office, not by the "democratic process," but by the powerful sabotage of British monopoly capital, and how today again the coal monopolists in their fight against the nationalisation of the mines have faced the Labour Government with the greatest crisis of its life.

A peaceful transition to Socialism may be possible but not unless the power of the capitalists is broken, with armed force if necessary.

In the European countries like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, if it can be said that there can be today a peaceful transition to Socialism, it is because during the resistance and battle against Hitler-Fascism, the toiling masses of these lands already destroyed WITH ARMS the power of their native monopolist bourgeoisie.

The power of monopoly capital cannot be broken at the polls—this is the lesson of history which Sjt. Jai Prakash forgets.

How indeed can any Indian Socialist accept that the British vote has installed Socialism in power in Britain, when imperialism in its most naked form continues to exploit our country.

The diabolical British Plan—the military murder schemes of GHQ, the fomenting of riots, the bullets which killed our youth in the demonstrations for the INA and the RIN—are all these "putting into practice of socialist schemes in a democratic fashion"—as Sjt. Jai Prakash maintains?

How does Sjt. Jai Prakash's thesis based on peaceful transition to Socialism differ from the Congress Right-wing's faith in peaceful transition to Independence?

A pledge in advance to adopt only "peaceful" means for attaining freedom or Socialism only allows the one-way violence of the imperialists and the vested interests. For it must be obvious that our pledge does not bind our enemies.

And this is what is happening today. While the Right-wing Congress leadership is trying "peaceful" and peaceful methods, the imperialists are using leonine violence against the working-class and peasant movements, against the heroic risings of the States' peoples—thus trying to crush the forces of Indian freedom.

Sjt. Jai Prakash in his "Transition to Socialism" envisages two possible paths before the country.

In the first place, he "feels convinced that circumstances

the Congress Socialist leadership holds out before the country: Prepare for the struggle which the Right-wing Congress leadership must "inevitably" launch for the enforcement of the Constitution, which the present Constitution-making Body produces.

Faith In Constituent Assembly

The reformist faith of the CSP leadership in the "democratic" process, in the "Socialism" of the British Labour Government and the "Socialist measures" it is introducing in "a democratic fashion"—leads to this totally unwarranted faith in the British-created Constitution-making Body.

It is this same outlook which makes them forget that the Right-wing leadership has entered this Constitution-making Body to use it as an instrument for COMPROMISE, NOT for STRUGGLE.

The recently reported "agreement" with the Princes' Negotiating Committee, paraded as a "victory" by the Right-wing Capitalist Press, is nothing short of a SURRENDER to the autocratic demands of the Princes and a betrayal of the States' peoples.

How can a constitution framed by the Right-wing compromisers and approved by vested interests and the Indian Princes ever be the starting-point of a mass struggle for freedom?

Is it not patent that in the very process of constitution

working-class, back the reactionary anti-working-class measures which the employers are pushing through the Assemblies, because of their close links with the Right-wing Ministries, and thus coax the battling working-class into the death-parlour of the bourgeoisie.

This creature of the vested interests is today calling for "a uniform Labour policy for all Congressmen", is offering Congress Socialists the bait of the "leadership" of the new "national unions", is playing upon the differences which the Congress Socialists have with the Communists to persuade them to break away from the AITUC, and thus disrupt the united strength of the working-class.

If the Congress Socialist leadership wants to carry out its own professed objectives of "strengthening the class organisations"—indeed, if it wants to retain the great name of "Socialists"—then it must refuse to fall into the trap of the employers, preserve the unity of the working-class in the AITUC and fight the disruption of the Right-wing supporters of the vested interests.

Silence On Repression

Unfortunately, this has NOT been happening consistently in the past. It is true that in the great Cawnpore strike, rank and file trade unionists of all opinions—Congress Socialists, Communists—all fought together. But even here the CSP leaders did not welcome this unity.

At a time when the Congress Ministries, under the growing pressure of the employers, are allowing themselves to be used as masks, from behind which the bureaucracy can enact blood-baths like those of Amalner, Golden Rock and Coimbatore and carry out all-in detentions without trial of trade union leaders like those of Madras—at such a time one would expect the Congress Socialist Party to rally all its strength against this repression to save the working-class and its Unions.

But the tragedy of the situation is that so prejudiced is the Congress Socialist leadership against its brother Leftists of the Communist Party (who happen to have led the majority of the strike battles which have been fired upon or for which mass arrests have been made), that it prefers to keep silent about or even to applaud this repression and echo the cry of "Communism, a menace" to the delight of the vested interests.

In the course of replies to certain questions put to him by certain Nationalist Muslim workers in Bombay, Sjt. Jai Prakash Narain speaking of the Communists, declared:

"We must face them and we must out them from the working-class movement, carefully preserving the solidarity of the workers."

Echoing The Vested Interests

These sentiments are exactly those of the vested interests and almost word for word those expressed in a recent editorial in Birla's Hindustan Times on "Labour and the Communists."

The result of such an aim can never be "solidarity of the workers," but only disruption and disunity.

In the first week of this month, at the meeting of the General Council of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF), we saw this directive of Sjt. Jai Prakash in practice.

The Congress Socialist railway leaders made common cause with the notorious henchmen of the White Sahibs of the Railway Board (men like M. A. Khan and Miller, whose names stink in the nostrils of every single worker on the NWR) and

by ROMESH CHANDRA

themselves will force the Congress once again as in 1942 to take recourse to direct action." That "willy nilly" the Congress will be "driven into open conflict with the British."

And, therefore, it becomes the duty of all revolutionary Congressmen "to prepare the people through the Congress organisations (where possible) and other organisations such as trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, student and volunteer bodies, etc.", for this struggle.

If Struggle Becomes Inevitable

On the other hand, "if, however, it is found that the Congress had forsaken the revolutionary path and was determined, whatever compromises it might have to make, to remain in the offices of the Government, we should have come to parting of the ways"—and the CSP would have to become the "Socialist Party of India" and plan the revolution afresh.

In his recent speeches, Sjt. Jai Prakash has given an even more concrete picture of what he believes is about to happen.

Speaking at a meeting in Fatehpur on February 2, he outlined this picture. The National Herald reports his speech as follows:

"Visualising the future course of events, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain said that the President of the Indian Republic would be elected and he would ask the Viceroy to quit India. The Viceroy would say that Pandit Nehru's constitution was not binding upon him and he was not going to quit. Then there would be a fight. The speaker added that it was his firm conviction that a fight was inevitable."

Indeed this has been the fundamental outlook of the Congress Socialist leadership ever since the Constituent Assembly started its work.

In his Press Conference at New Delhi on the eve of the January AICC meeting, Sjt. Jai Prakash declared:

"Left to itself, the Congress should not take more than six months to draft a constitution and we should then try to put that Constitution into force. Pandit Nehru says he wants a republic. Let him ask Lord Wavell to hand over power. Probably, Lord Wavell will not do it and that would lead to a struggle on a very high level."

This is the perspective which

making, it is the reactionary anti-struggle forces, the Princes and vested interests, to whom concessions will be made, who will grow stronger while the forces of struggle, the rising working-class and peasant movements will be hit the harder in the name of safeguarding the "peaceful" path to freedom?

Right-Wing Strategy One Of Compromise

The Congress Socialist leadership forgets—because of its essentially reformist thesis—that the strategy of Sardar Patel and the Right-wing is one of compromise, of concessions to the vested interests and of opposition to the revolutionary forces. You cannot build a revolution out of its fruits.

It is this wrong understanding of the future, this pathetic dependence on the Right-wing to launch a struggle which can be "transformed" by the Socialists that lies at the bottom of the Congress Socialist leadership's practice today.

Sjt. Jai Prakash says: "...It is the task of Socialist Congressmen, particularly of the Congress Socialist Party, to ensure that in the preparatory work (preparation for the Right-wing's "inevitable" struggle—Editor) every care is taken to develop and intensify the social consciousness of the masses and strengthen the class organisations and struggles through which alone that consciousness is best expressed and developed."

How in practice is the Congress Socialist Party leadership carrying forward this key task of "strengthening the class organisations and struggles"?

As Socialists, there is no doubt that the foremost duty of their Party is to build and preserve the unity of the working-class in the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and fight resolutely all attempts at disruption, at the creation of rival unions by the imperialists and the vested interests.

Today, the Right-wing leadership of the Congress, on the pressure of the vested interests, afraid of the growing independent strength of the working-class movement, has started the Hindustan Mazdoor Seva Sangh.

This body's objectives are to start rival unions, split the

POLICY AND PRACTICE REVIEWED

the Roylists in their efforts to disrupt and weaken the AIRF.

It was a shameful spectacle to see Congress Socialists fighting for the expulsion from the AIRF of the SIR Labour Union, recognised as the strongest trade union in India by every honest trade unionist in the country.

But it was still more shameful when the Congress Socialists in the General Council backed the attempts of Khan and others to use this disruption to stifle the vital question of preparation for a strike ballot in case, as is expected, the recommendations of the Pay Commission do not meet the minimum demands of the railway workers.

It was the support of the Congress Socialists for this obviously Railway Board-inspired disruption that helped Khan and Co.'s game to succeed.

In their effort to "oust" the Communists from the working-class movement, the Congress Socialist leadership is wrecking the movement itself—to the applause of the vested interests.

Same Story Everywhere

It is the same with regard to the mighty upheaval in the countryside. For all their lip-support to strengthening class-organisations and struggles, the Congress Socialist leadership refuses to work in the All-India Kisan Sabha or back the country-wide kisan upsurge, being led by it. Instead, it is attempting to start everywhere rival kisan organisations.

The student movement—which is the proud standard-bearer of the great demonstrations for the release of the INA which were the signal lights of the new patriotic upsurge—stands divided. Every effort made for united All-India student action on concrete issues is spurned by the Congress Socialist leadership of the Students' Congress, despite the tremendous urge for unity among their own rank and file.

The States' peoples' movement, which has entered the decisive phase of the final struggle against autocracy, stands today in danger of being betrayed and disrupted by the compromising policy of the Right-wing leadership which is wooing the Princes and is making concession after concession to them.

At such a time, the greatest and most urgent need is for united Left-wings in the Prajamandals, which can act as the fighting core of the States peoples' movement.

And yet here again the tragedy is that in every single major State struggle, the CSP leadership has deliberately kept the edge of its sword turned against the Communists instead of against Princely autocracy.

The Travancore Struggle

The Travancore struggle—which was led by a joint Communist-Socialist Council of Action—was at first repudiated by the CSP leadership, ridiculed and spurned by the CSP organ Janata, which characterised the struggle as being merely a personal quarrel between the Communists and the Diwan.

Later, a little before the Meerut Congress, when Congress Socialist leaders of Travancore themselves came and met the leadership, the policy towards Travancore was changed, and the CSP began to support Travancore.

But it is a shameful reality that Sjt. Ashoka Mehta—who seems to have been specially appointed to run the struggle in Travancore on behalf of the CSP—found nothing else to do in Trivandrum than to declare that "Communism is the worst menace in India", that the Com-

munist had launched "a violent revolution".

And all this at a time when the Diwan is looking for support to continue his brutal repression against the working-class in the name of crushing Communism.

Instead of carrying forward the deathless unity against Diwan Rule, which made the whole country turn its eyes to Travancore and hail it as a new bastion of the freedom movement, the CSP leadership has gone out of its way to break with the Communists and echo the Diwan's anti-Communist lies.

Whom Does It Benefit

It has been the same in Hyderabad. Instead of halting the epic courage of the Andhra peasants of Telengana, who continue their invincible struggle against the Nizam's Raj despite being subjected to Martial Law for the longest period in Indian history—Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, who was deputed to study conditions in Telengana, came back to repeat Sir Mirza Ismail's story of the Communists' "violence" and "precipitate action".

In Kashmir, the CSP leadership also raises the Communist bogey thus splitting the fighting elements in the National Conference and playing into the hands of the hated Kak.

Thus in the States, the policy of the CSP leadership

The Congress Socialist leadership believes that the fact that Muslim masses are organised in the rival camp of the Muslim League does not matter much for the success of anti-imperialist struggle.

Jai Prakash Forgets Civil War

In his Press Conference on the eve of the last A.L.C.O. meeting in January, Sjt. Jai Prakash Narain declared:

"I think in the present circumstances, I would not meet with a very large measure of success (in the task of winning the Muslim masses for struggle—Editor) but I do not apprehend that in the event of a National struggle, the Muslim masses will actively oppose it. At the most they might be apathetic towards it and keep out..."

Sjt. Jai Prakash forgets imperialism's plan to create riots, forgets Noakhali and Bihar. It is no longer the question of just saying: Let us go forward with 75%, if the other 25% does not come with us.

For, today imperialism's plan is to scotch all possibilities of the great all-in joint struggle, which Sjt. Jai Prakash is envisaging, by plunging the country into civil war.

The chauvinist Right-wing leader can and does say: "We shall crush the Muslim League into silence."

But what is demanded of a Socialist Party—which claims that for it "the question is of

Muslim) and the bureaucracy is waged, the faster will the Muslim masses be drawn into the common anti-imperialist struggle.

But a neutral and hostile attitude towards those struggles will only play into the hands of the reactionary leadership of the League, enabling it to ascribe the sufferings of the toiling Muslim masses to "Congress-Hindu Raj."

The Oppressed Majorities

Finally, if the CSP were to analyse the reality behind the hold of the League leadership over the Muslim masses, despite the pro-imperialist policy, the leadership pursues in contrast to the surging anti-imperialism of the oppressed Muslim toilers, it would understand that the only way to real Hindu-Muslim unity is to fight inside the Congress and among the people for the right of self-determination for all linguistic Provinces, for the acceptance of their right to decide by adult vote of the whole population the question of separation or union.

This alone is the way by which the toiling Hindu-Muslim masses of every Province, with their common ties of suffering and exploitation, their common language and common land, can come together in the fight for freedom in the confidence that it is they,

Left is being utilised by the bureaucracy and the vested interests—it must fight it by pooling all its forces together.

It helps only to increase the wave of repression, if the Left parties attempt to fight it back separately and remain silent about the repression against each other.

It does no credit to the name of Socialism or the Left that the Janata hailed the raids on Communist Party offices—or Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (in an interview to the Hindustan Standard in Calcutta) observed that he could not condemn the anti-Communist repression, though he was normally opposed to "any kind of suppression."

Such an attitude only serves the interests of the imperialist bureaucracy—which wants to profit by differences in the ranks of the Left, to crush each in isolation.

Break With Present Policy Needed

At the time of this Conference of the CSP, Congress Socialists must seriously discuss all these issues, and formulate their policy for the future.

They must demand a firm break with the past policy of their leadership, which till now:

- Has based itself on reformist illusions about the road to freedom and Socialism;
- Has placed faith in the imperialist Constituent Assembly;
- Has failed to understand and expose the disruptive role of the compromising Right-wing leadership of the Congress;
- Has refused to face the communal question squarely but has been content to echo the cry of Hindu chauvinists which label the entire Muslim League leadership and masses—as a front of the British; and
- Has consequently helped not in the growth and the preservation of the unity and sweep of the mass upsurge, but actually in the disruption both of the organisations of the working-class and the peasantry and of popular struggles.

The CSP must pledge itself to join with the Communist Party and all Left parties and elements to fight joint actions for any or all of the following tasks:

- To resist repression and the curtailment of civil liberties.
- To support and develop with all their resources every mass action of the people—every struggle of the workers, peasants, students and States' peoples.
- To build, strengthen and defend the "united, common organisations of the working-class, the students and the States' peoples.
- To call for a break with the imperialist Plan of slavery.

Rally Behind Congress For Struggle

The task before the Left is to rally, through such joint actions, the entire Congress for building a joint freedom front for the defeat of the British Plan and for the final struggle for power.

The vast masses who stand for the democratic programme of the Congress, who, though increasingly critical of the compromising policy of the leadership, stand behind that leadership, can and must be drawn into such actions.

Such joint actions, therefore, must be carried out NOT as a Left factional bloc inside the Congress—for this would definitely stand in the way of the fundamental task of rallying the ENTIRE Congress.

Nor must such actions take the form of factional manoeuvres fought under the false illusion that the Right-wing leadership can and must be replaced by such manoeuvres.

The Left forces of the country will watch with interest the decisions which will be taken by the CSP Conference.

ISSUES BEFORE THE CAWNPORE CSP CONFERENCE

merely helps the compromisers to go ahead with their "agreements" with the autocrats behind the backs of the States' peoples, and provides an excuse for the butchers in each State to continue their oppression in the name of rooting out the "violent" Communists.

Thus whether in relation to the struggles of the working-class, the peasantry or the States' peoples, while the leadership of the Congress Socialist Party talks and writes of preparing for "struggle", in practice it often repudiates and opposes the big major peoples' struggles going on today, on the plea that they are Communist-led.

This way it only plays into the hands of the vested interests and the bureaucracy, and enables the compromising leadership to attack these struggles on the very same anti-Communist grounds, and in fact all struggles led by any Leftist party including the CSP.

Congress Socialists must also examine how their leadership has fought back the imperialist counter-offensive against the people's struggle—how it has fought back riots and repression.

The Communal Question

In every one of his speeches, Sjt. Jai Prakash declares:

"I do not distinguish between the Muslim League and the British. To me the League is a British front."

In his speech at Fatehpur on February 2, he declared:

"I plainly say that the Muslim League is the only obstacle now in the way of India's freedom." (National Herald, February 7).

The Congress Socialist leadership thus briefly and naively dismisses the whole communal problem—on the basis of which imperialism has been able to create the terrible holocausts of Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar, East-West Bengal and is planning to create more and worse holocausts such as these.

the rich and the poor not of this community or the other" (Jai Prakash Narain, Janata, February 9), which claims to be scientific—is a serious consideration of the following two questions:

- How is it that the vast mass of exploited, rack-rented, debt-ridden Muslim masses, who undoubtedly hate imperialism as much as their Hindu brothers, are NOT in the Congress, but with the Muslim League, which the CSP leadership dismisses as "a British front"?
- How is it that the terrible virus of communalism is sweeping into the Congress itself—not in the way it used to come in the old days—but in a new, vicious form—exemplified by the heart-breaking fact that in Bihar, Congress workers led communal pogroms, with Eri-colours waving in front of them, with the immortal slogans of JAI HIND and DELHI CHALO, on their lips?

The Way To Win Muslims

Only an understanding of the answers to these two questions can lead to a resolute and successful fight to wean away the vast masses who owe allegiance to the League from the reactionary communal, pro-imperialist policy of the League leadership, and a determined struggle against the Hindu chauvinist forces, which have worked their way into the Congress.

If Sjt. Jai Prakash Narain were to go and, together with the Kisan Sabha, organise and support the great peasant movement for land and against landlords—such as the great Tebhaga struggle of Bengal's kisans—he would find vast masses of Muslims already being won over for the anti-imperialist struggle.

If he were to forget his anti-Communism and to join up the surging tide of Hindu-Muslim workers' strikes for a better life, he would see the unity and militancy of Hindus and Muslims that is being achieved in the course of actual battle.

In fact, the more firmly the struggles of the common people are built up round their democratic demands for land and wages, the more vigorously the battle against vested interests (both Hindu and

the oppressed majority of their Province, who will determine their own future and refashion their own social order.

Another vital question faces the CSP Conference: A new constitution is being proposed for the Indian National Congress. The proposals to end the four-anna membership of the Congress and the consequent right of the people to elect the Congress leadership, and to ban the organisation of parties within the Congress are the most important of these proposals and form the crux of the proposals as a whole.

The meaning of such changes in the constitution will be to strike a heavy blow at the democratic nature of the Congress, from which it has always derived its main strength.

It will be to weaken the voice of the militant anti-compromising elements inside the Congress and strengthen the authoritarian tendencies which are growing inside the Right-wing leadership.

It is the task of all democratic elements in the Congress to fight against these proposals and preserve the Congress as the fighting people's mass organisation and platform it has always been.

In this task, the Congress Socialist Party has a key role to play.

Leftists Must Join To Fight Repression

The CSP Conference will undoubtedly discuss all these matters and formulate a policy to be pursued by the Party in the coming critical months.

Above all, it will have to discuss how to meet the wave of repression which has been launched by the bureaucracy against the Left parties and the organised workers' and peasants' movements.

If the Left is to fight back this offensive—which has on it the stamp of approval of the Right-wing Ministries, whose factional prejudice against the

GOVT. EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE MERELY TINKERS WITH PROBLEM

Stranglehold Of Bureaucracy And Vested Interests Must End

The demon of unemployment is stalking the land.

At a very conservative estimate, between the end of war and now, over 20 lakh Indian workers have been thrown on the streets; well over nine lakhs from the army; a similar number from among the civilian war workers; and over a lakh alone from those of the private firms which have cared to submit their employment records to the Government.

But that is certainly not all. Even if the estimate of Sir Ardeshir Dalal, ex-Member for Planning, Government of India, is accepted—and it by no means could be exaggerated—then in the near future the total number to be thrown out of jobs will be no less than 50 lakhs.

Two Crore Affected

At the average estimate of four members per family, it means about two crore of our people—one in every twenty—will be faced with loss of means of livelihood and starvation in the near future.

Two crores without income, fifty lakhs without jobs, that is the picture. And not only this means misery and starvation for those directly affected.

This huge army of unemployed is bound to be used—as it is beginning to be used—to put down through threats or employment of blacklegs, the workers' struggles for a better life and later even to force down their present standard of living.

The immensity of the task before the Government can be seen from the fact that the number of persons threatened with unemployment constitutes 2½ times the total number employed in industry in the pre-war years.

Unless this problem of the transitional period—from war economy to peace economy—is solved, the country cannot undertake any planned utilisation of her resources, securing food and security for all.

Govt. Record

What has the Government done so far to end their sufferings, to secure them at least the standard of life they had earned?

Faced with "military and industrial demobilisation on an unprecedentedly large scale" the Government of India formed a Department for Resettlement and Employment in July 1945.

(So appreciative was this body of the urgency of its social duties, that its first letter regarding the formation of a Central Employment Advisory Committee, with labour representatives on it, was sent on June 3, 1946, while the first meeting of this Committee was convened on January 23, 1947. And the only business this Committee did then was to elect its Sub-Committees whose Vice-Chairmen will now meet on February 28, to discuss procedural matters.)

As for the Department's achievements during the first seventeen months of its existence, here is what its Director-General himself has to say:

"Up to 31st December 1946, Employment Exchange had registered 6,16,451 persons (total discharged till November end were well over nine lakhs) of whom 1,15,988 (about 19 in every 100 of those registered or less than 13 per cent of those discharged) were placed in employment."

"The number of registered ex-service personnel was 4,58,598 (50 per cent of the total discharged till October, 1946) of whom 79,879 (about 17.4 per cent of those registered or 8.7 per cent of those discharged) were placed in employment."

And yet the bureaucrat patted his back for this performance!

by P. B. RANGNEKAR

Indeed, such is the top-heavy administration that while Regional Commissioners are taken on Rs. 1,000 each (or more), all the stipend that a de-mobbed soldier gets—if at all he is fortunate enough to be picked up for vocational training—is Rs. 15 per month! That, in brief, is the achievement of a Department which was set up to "help the country in its transition from war-time to peace-time economy!"

The blame for this certainly has to be laid at the doors of imperialism's war economy (see article on page 2) but the Interim Government cannot easily escape its share of the guilt as the table on this page shows. ("Employment = Exchange at work")

The solution of this alarming problem of mass industrial unemployment lies not in

manufacturing, automobile, etc., importing machines for adopting war industries to peacetime needs (railway engines, boilers) for producing more consumers' goods like textiles.

What Could Be Done

But even if this should take time, the Government could solve the problem by maintaining public expenditure at high level on just such jobs of the transitional period as house-building, road building, railway extension, adapting some war plants to immediate peacetime production etc. And in our country the burning need of such a programme needs no stressing.

As for the immediate rehabilitation of the vast mass of ex-soldier peasantry, it can be done by:

- (1) Giving them fallow land for cultivation;
- (2) Cancelling all mortgage deeds against their lands;
- (3) Supplying seeds and implements at cheap rates; and
- (4) Cash loans for starting small business.

In this connection, of course, the most vital need is the abolition of landlordism.

These are measures that our Interim Government can and must put into immediate operation.

Tinkering No Way Out

Today, bureaucracy rules the roost everywhere. And perhaps nowhere else is its crude bankruptcy seen better than in this Department. This body which is supposed to secure employment for the jobless has just no contact with the Department for Post-War Reconstruction whose main purpose is to create jobs!

Unless the stranglehold of bureaucracy is immediately removed from the Department and unless the steps above-mentioned are taken—against the machinations of the bureaucracy and British vested interests—this vast unemployment problem will only grow more acute, leading to untold sufferings for the people and creating fresh problems for the Popular Government.

The present tinkering with it is no way out. It must be ended.

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE AT WORK

MONTH	NUMBERS NEEDING JOBS AT END OF PREVIOUS MONTH	REGISTRATIONS DURING MONTH	NO. PLACED
July '46	147,587	53,193	8,886
August	182,983	59,831	7,681
September	218,977	52,118	8,402
October	228,976	48,572	9,484
November	241,488	54,264	11,378
December '46	270,285	47,259	10,570

(Interim Government took office on September 2).

While the number of those needing jobs regularly increased every month and grew by well over 100 per cent in six months (those needing jobs at the end of December 1946 were 2,91,533), the number of those placed in employment has increased at best by 25 per cent.

This endless and more often than not fruitless search for jobs through the Exchange shows a marked effect on the number of registrations during the month, which if anything, are falling, showing a lack of confidence among the people towards the Exchange.

Since then, the Government has been able to open only "98 centres with a training capacity of 11,178 and the number of persons undergoing training at present is 5,000". And from the Government factories alone about two lakh skilled workers were discharged during this period.

As for training disabled ex-servicemen for rehabilitation and resettlement (total number discharged till December 31, 1945 being 49,000) the Department, 18 months after the war, had "as many as" eight centres opened for them "with a total capacity of 3,150 and the number under training is 194!"

Ex-Service women who "volunteered for service in quite a large number", fare no better. "Provisions have been made for the training of 1,000 women per annum!"

Totally Inadequate

How far do these 'achievements' meet the needs of those disabled personnel? Out of the total discharged of 49,000, the Department "contacted for rehabilitation and resettlement," 37,754 persons. Of these, those who needed no assistance numbered only 2,460. "Those recommended for jobs numbered 2,871 while those recommended for training were 4,202!" Between July '45 and November '46, only 5,523 of them were registered while only 673 were placed!

This Department had demanded 71 mobile vans of the Government for touring the various districts to acquaint the discharged men with its work. And yet, the Government which have by now disposed of thousands of trucks could not offer the Department more than 24 trucks so far!

Nevertheless, with this work to its credit, the expenses incurred by the Department are colossal. On an average, it costs Rs. 27 (now reduced to Rs. 16) to place one person in job!

creating an Employment Exchange to be larded over by stiff-necked bureaucrats, but obviously in raising the country's employment capacity 3½ times its pre-war level (to absorb the 2½ times increase in number of workers employed).

This will mean importing capital goods for developing basic industries here (and not merely assembling British-made cars)—like chemicals, steel, machine

Empire Communist Parties Conference

Dr. ADHIKARI'S STATEMENT

Dr. G. M. Adhikari left for London by air on February 17 to attend the Conference of the Communist Parties of the British Empire countries. He issued the following statement on the eve of his departure:

I AM proceeding to London to attend the Conference of the Communist Parties of the countries at present in the British Empire, as a delegate of the Communist Party of India.

The purpose of this Conference is to co-ordinate the policies and actions of these Parties, which are all pledged to the complete destruction of imperialism and its reactionary policies.

The Conference is convened by the Communist Party of Great Britain—which is the only Party in England which has consistently supported India's demand and struggle for complete independence.

The Conference is meeting at a time when the great post-war freedom upsurge is sweeping through India, Burma, Malaya and the other subject countries under the heel of British imperialism, and when a Labour Government set in power by the workers and people of Britain on the programme of Socialism and international co-operation for peace and freedom, is pursuing the same old Tory policy of suppressing these freedom struggles under new and deceptive slogans.

The Conference will enable the British Communist Party, which has already sharply posed before the British working-class the alternatives—Empire or Socialism, to intensify its work in rousing the British workers against the imperialist policy of the Labour Government and in winning them for the freedom struggles of the subject peoples of the Empire.

It will enable the Communist Parties of the countries of the present British Empire to co-ordinate their anti-imperialist action in such a way that they consign this obsolete and oppressive structure known as British Empire to oblivion—and are able to free their respective countries and bring them in a free world based on co-operation for peace and democracy.

The Bookshelf

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★ Behind The Coal Crisis In Britain

★ Choice -- Empire Or Socialism?

★ Democratic Advance In Poland

THE British coal shortage marks the most intense political and economic crisis that the country has faced since the end of the war.

by **M. Kumaramangalam**

is also one of the direct causes for the present grave crisis in Britain.

Over the entire country millions of workers have been temporarily laid off from their factories and mills which have been shut down in order to save coal; the use of electricity in private houses has been cut down to a rigorous minimum of five hours (while the normal average at this time of the year would be about ten to twelve hours); street lamps remain unlighted, a virtual blackout has been imposed, BBC broadcasts have been cut; train services have been heavily curtailed.

and almost nothing has been done to improve the very dangerous conditions in the coal mines.

Ignoring the weakness in Britain's economy as a result of a long and exhausting war, they drifted, optimistically hoping for a mild winter and allowed the Coal Boards to function as they liked.

Clearly enough, if British troops have to be always at hand to suppress the anti-imperialist demonstrations of Indians in Calcutta and Bombay, of the Burmese in Rangoon, Malaysians in Singapore, if a hundred thousand of them are to enforce martial law in Palestine, and at least another hundred thousand guard Britain's "life-line", the Suez Canal and the Middle East, then the difficulties of British man-power will continue and the coal crisis will be only the first of many more crises of Britain's economy.

Tory Opposition

Naturally enough the Tory opposition has taken full advantage of this situation which has affected every single British family. Their chief spokesman and arch-imperialist, Winston Churchill, last week launched a full-blooded attack on the Labour Government saying:

"We are now experiencing a sample of Socialism—if you will, half-baked Socialism in action.... The brute fact is that Socialism means mismanagement, bad house-keeping, incompetence and the progressive degeneration of our island life."

Nobody in India, of course, is going to accept at face value the wild accusations of this confirmed enemy of progress. Yet the question arises: the Labour Government, whatever might be the defects of its foreign and imperial policy, is reputed to have gone a long way towards putting Socialism into practice inside Britain itself; how is it then that just at this time, Britain is faced with the biggest fuel crisis in its history?

Lack Of Programme

And the answer to the question is simply this: the Labour Government has not put into practice its own pledged Socialist programme and it is this that is the main reason for the present crisis.

For the entire last year, the British Communists, and in particular Arthur Horner, Communist General Secretary of the National Union of Mine-workers, had been sharply criticising the Labour Government for their hesitancy in going forward to nationalise the mines and had warned that the results of this wrong policy would be an intensification of the coal crisis. And it is not of hesitancy alone that the Labour Government is guilty.

Even after a year-and-a-half of negotiations, counter-negotiations, etc., when actually the Bill to Nationalise the Coal Mines was put through, it was so loaded with defects arising out of concessions made to the coal bosses as virtually to nullify it.

1) The Coal Boards which today run the mines on behalf of the Government and the people, are dominated by coal owners who are the bitterest enemies of the Labour movement and are vitally interested in discrediting the Labour Government. These Coal Boards have contributed their due share to the lack of foresight and planning which is the reason for the crisis.

2) Apart from setting up the defective Coal Boards, the Government has done nothing to recruit the enthusiasm, energy and initiative of the mine-workers in the drive to increase coal production. They have been given negligible representation on the Coal Boards,

Clinging To Empire

The second major reason for the coal crisis rises directly out of the Labour Government's imperialist foreign policy.

While the mines (and in fact most of Britain's key industries) are suffering considerably from the man-power shortage, there are still about twenty lakh Britishers who are solely engaged either in policing the Empire (fifteen lakhs is the present strength of the British Army) or in producing weapons with which to police the Empire (about five lakhs engaged in making equipment and supplies for the armed forces).

These twenty lakhs amount to about one-tenth of Britain's present available man power; the fifteen lakhs in the armed forces are more than three-times Britain's pre-war figure, 480,000 of men employed on these duties.

Thus, the desire of the Labour imperialists "to hold what we have," to fulfil all their imperialist commitments over the five continents and seven seas

Coal Or Guns?

The coal disaster, therefore, has once more brought sharply before the people of Britain the real choice facing them:

EITHER they cling to their old imperialist foreign and Empire policy with all its military-interventionist consequences and bring on themselves greater and greater suffering, more and more crises at home;

OR they break with the Empire, bring the troops home and go forward to a full-blooded socialist programme of reconstruction, based on the freedom of all peoples.

In the biting words of the Communist Daily Worker: "The picture of Bevinism is a luxury that Britain cannot afford. These monstrous figures (roughly 90 crore pounds on military expenditure) are fantastic in peace-time. Men and money are needed at home desperately. We repeat our words of yesterday—coal before guns."

Mikolajczyk Routed

THE results of the Polish elections and the formation of the new democratic Government in Poland represent a big victory for the

Polish Democratic Bloc and a defeat for the Anglo-American backed Mikolajczyk and his real masters, the Fascist underground bands in Poland.

It is estimated that the Democratic Bloc received over 80 per cent of the votes while Mikolajczyk received about 10 per cent, and minor parties about 10 per cent.

Out of the 444 seats, about 382 go to the Government Parties (Communists and Socialists 118 each, 108 to the Peasants and 38 to the Democratic Party).

In addition, the Catholic Workers' Party, which fought the election independently and has joined the new Government, has 17 seats, bringing the Government total to nearly 400 seats out of 444.

Usual Slanders

From Britain and the U.S., of course, have come myriads of comments that the election was "unfair", terrorist methods were used, Mikolajczyk was not given a chance, etc.

It is true that the Government has adopted severe measures against certain of its opponents—not the legal opposition but the underground arm-bands, financed from abroad, and Mikolajczyk and his Party have suffered to the extent they have been allied to the armed bands.

But the basic cause for the Democratic Bloc's victory was its successful tackling of the immense problems of economic reconstruction.

In the words of the Left-wing New Statesman and Nation:

"All problems are being successfully tackled by the Government in the framework of a general plan which sets out the detailed changes in production, employment and income needed to convert Po-

land from an over-populated country into an industrial State, with developed ports and a prosperous agriculture.

"The Mine Plan (so-called after its author, Henry Mine, Communist Minister of Industry—M.K.), in general conception and detail is masterly.... The Government programme is so much in accordance with the needs of the new State that the opposition made no attack on it in the election campaign." (January 25).

Intrigues Fail

Thus the basic cause for its victory was the real success with which the Democratic Bloc has tackled and is tackling the difficult problems of the Polish people.

Meanwhile, in the West, the flirtations of the British Government with the Fascists (already exposed in the notorious trial of one of the bandit leaders, Count Grocholski, who was proved to have been in contact with the British Ambassador, Cavendish-Bentinck) have become still more obvious.

Recently the British gave permission with special paper allocation for a new Polish daily paper in England, *Slowo Polskie*, to be edited by the former Editor of the Fascist General Anders' Army newspaper—and this newspaper will certainly only mouth Anders' vicious anti-democratic propaganda whose central theme is that of the burning necessity to free Poland from Russian rule! (Reynolds News, January 28).

All this, however, cannot stop the advancing forces of Polish democracy whose victory in the elections represents the biggest blow to General Anders and his like who had hopes of re-establishing the old Pilsudskite Fascist dictatorship in Poland.

February 17, 1947.

CEYLON COMMUNIST LEADER WINS BYE-ELECTION

(From our correspondent)

Dr. S. A. WICKREMASINGHE, President of the Ceylon Communist Party, was elected a member of the State Council of Ceylon by a record majority of 23,823 votes at the bye-election from the Morawaka Constituency on February 8.

Dr. Wickremasinghe polled 23,036 votes against 1,213 votes against his opponent, who lost his deposit.

The main plank of the Communist Party's campaign in this bye-election was to get the verdict of the people on a provision of the new Soulbury Constitution which disqualifies persons imprisoned for political offences from being members of the new Parliament, which will be inaugurated at the end of this year.

Dr. Wickremasinghe, who was imprisoned in 1949 for anti-imperialist activity, is debarred from being a candidate at the forthcoming Parliamentary elections.

The British Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor of Ceylon flatly turned down the demand of the people that this provision of the Constitution should be withdrawn and Dr. Wickremasinghe allowed to contest the Parliamentary elections.

People's Answer

The smashing vote polled by the Communist Party at the Morawaka bye-election is the answer of the people to the autocratic attitude of the Secretary of State and the Governor.

A small band of planters, war-profiteers, black-marketiers and "big game" hunters decided to put up a candidate against Dr. Wickremasinghe. Every conceivable slander was

No Stopping Them

All these tactics could not stop the people. On election day, thousands of peasants marched several miles in demonstrations to vote for Dr. Wickremasinghe. There were instances of villagers who had walked 15 miles, climbed hills, crossed rivers and paddy fields in order to cast their vote. At several polling stations the crowd of voters was so great that hundreds were unable to register their vote.

The anti-Communist scoundrels got their answer when their candidate forfeited his deposit, the first time this has happened in any straight fight in a State Council election in Ceylon.

The Secretary of State and the Governor got their answer in the next regular vote, the highest ever recorded in any bye-election. Dr. Wickremasinghe polled over 60 per cent of the vote in the constituency which is one of the largest in Ceylon being over 60 square miles in

★ INSIDE THE FORCES ★

SARDAR BALDEV SINGH AND ADMIRAL GEOFFREY MILES

Once again Sardar Baldev Singh, Defence Minister, has spoken to the sons of India in the armed forces.

FIVE months ago he had spoken to them, expressing his—and the Interim Government's—determination to build up a "truly National Army", adding the Indian soldiers, airmen and naval ratings to support him and the Interim Government.

All India welcomed this decision—but also asked how it was to be put into practice and when.

For our people have bitter memories of promises of "Indianisation", "better treatment" and so on. Now the Sardar has spoken again. What has he to say on progress made towards building the promised "truly National Army"?

He reports that a Nationalisation Committee and a Pay Commission have been set up—and that is all he reports, except for once more pleading that the Government is "faced with overwhelming and complex problems", the men should "bear with me awhile."

Six Months Record-Blank

Everyone knows the difficulties facing the Government. But at the same time everyone inside and outside the Forces wants to know how it is that in the six months since the Interim Government took office, NOTHING, literally nothing, has changed inside the Forces.

The old regime continues. The same British Generals and Admirals use the horses, make the plans, take the decisions. Lower down, their White underlings lord it over the Indian victimisation of anyone suspected to be a patriotic son of India is still part of life in the Forces.

Not has anything been done about the restoration to service of the victimised B.N. Jindan, despite the open protest of Sardar Patel and Mr. Jinnah made a year ago.

And more than that: just a week before Baldev Singh gave his new message—which had a passage specifi-

ally addressed to the "men of the naval forces", warning them about some "people" with "alterior motives", who were out to "mislead" them—Vice-Admiral Geoffrey Miles, Flag Officer Commanding the Royal Indian Navy, held a Press Conference in which he bluntly reasserted that the RIN will remain as it has always been—i.e., an Indian Navy of the British and not our People's Navy.

But Baldev Singh has no word to say about this except to announce two days after the Admiral's independent conference, the raising of Sir Geoffrey Miles to be "Commander-in-Chief", Royal Indian Navy, from March 11.

Address White Bosses

It would have been better if Baldev Singh had addressed his remarks to White Admirals and his White colleagues and warned them, rather than warn the ratings, for, it is the continuance of their rule with all its ingulgence and viciousness that is responsible for the natural impatience of the ratings, an impatience that inevitably breaks out into strikes as on HISS Kutri.

Fine words about the future—and Baldev Singh is very generous with his words about his intentions—are no substitute for action here and now.

And India wants action, not words—action against the British bosses at GHO and their murder plans, action to kick out the White Admirals, action to enforce no racial discrimination, to improve food and leave conditions, to have elected men and welfare committees; to restore the victimised RIN strikers and, lastly, to allow them free access to all books and newspapers; in a word action directed really to Indianise India's armed forces.

—Our Forces Correspondent

Princes' Stooges Not People's Leaders To Represent States?

SHAMEFUL SURRENDER BY CONGRESS LEADERS

Press reports from Delhi joyously speak of an agreement arrived at between the Princes and the Congress leaders to the effect that about 50% of the States' representatives to the Constituent Assembly will be 'elected' from the existing 'popular legislatures' in the States.

The deal is being publicised as a big triumph for the States' peoples and a vindication of the Congress leaders' diplomacy.

Is it really so? Does it really denote a victory of the States' peoples' movement which has been unanimous on the demand that only peoples' leaders should represent States in the Constituent Assembly?

To answer these questions, we should see what these so-called "popular legislatures" in the States are and what is their character.

The Cabinet Mission Plan has given 93 seats to the States in the Constituent Assembly on the basis of one representative for every one million of population. Roughly this means that no State with less than 2 million of population will be able to get direct representation in the Assembly.

On this basis only the following 30 States, out of a total of 564, are qualified to send their own delegates to the Constituent Assembly: Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore, Kashmir, Gwalior, Jaipur, Baroda, Jodhpur (Marwar), Patiala, Rewa, Udaipur (Mewar), Indore, Cochin, Bahawalpur, Bikaner, Kolhapur, Mayurbhanj, Alwar, Bhopal and Kotah.

The States will send about 60 of the 93 delegates to the Constituent Assembly.

Bogus Assemblies

● In seven of these States, namely, Patiala, Alwar, Rewa, Udaipur, Bahawalpur, Jodhpur and Kotah (population over 14 core) there are no legislatures of any kind, "popular" or unpopular.

● In Hyderabad and Kashmir elections to the legislatures were boycotted by the Prajamandal and other progressive groups. Therefore, there is not even a single representative of the two entire peoples of Hyderabad and Kashmir in their State Assemblies.

The majority of the leaders of the Kashmiri people are languishing in jail, and in Hyderabad they have to live underground, by the hundreds.

● In Bhopal, elections to the Legislative Council (which consists of eight elected and 16 nominated members) were held eight years ago.

One or two peoples' representatives, like Qudus Sahbai or Abu Sayeed Bazmi, who had got into the Council in spite of the extremely restricted franchise, were removed from there by the Nawab for the crime of taking part in the State people's movement and going to jail. Two nominees of the Nawab were put in their places in the Council!

Nominated Blocs

● The Legislatures of the other States (see Chart on this page) are distinguished by the following features.

* Strong nominated blocs constituting from 40 to 88 per cent of the total strength of the houses;

* Functional allocation of elected seats, thereby giving a further 25 to 50 or 60 per cent of the elected quota to the sardars, jagirdars, industrialists, planters and other loyalists of the State;

ing about this settlement by the Ruler of Bikaner. His Highness invited important Congress leaders and his other brother patriots to a dinner party. The terms of the agreement were forged out at this party!

In all probability, it is true, because through this deal His Highness gains everything for himself and his masters and loses nothing. The "popular legislature" in his own State is an ancient relic of 1913, packed with his own men and boycotted and spurned by the people's representatives.

There is nothing surprising in these facts. These legislatures were, after all, not introduced to democratise the autocratic regimes in the States or to share power with the people. They were created as a safety-valve against the States' peoples' movement.

The fake Assembly of Kashmir was constructed in 1934, according to the Glancy Commission report, to check and canalise the growing revolutionary ferment in the State, which had already once boiled over in the 1931 revolt.

The present rush for the creation or expansion of legislatures was also initiated by the masters of the Princes, with the same end in view to arm the Princes to face the new situation.

Wavell's Coaching

Just as the first post-war volleys of the peoples' assault be-

gan to burst on the decrepit citadels of feudalism, Wavell called his boys together at Delhi on January 17, 1946, and asked them to take "full share" in the "preliminary discussions" of the Cabinet Mission Plan, and "so to modify the constitutional position of their States as to ensure the... political stability" of their "administration."

The Nawab of Bhopal's pompous declaration of January 18, 1946, promising wide internal reforms in the States was made after this address from Wavell.

It was followed by a spate of constitutional trickeries in Hyderabad, Travancore, Cochin, Jaipur, Gwalior—in almost every big and small State—for ensuring their "political stability" in new India.

The British Cabinet Mission Plan seeks to perpetuate nothing but this "political stability" of its stooges—the Princes—so that it can perpetuate its own rule over us also.

Undemocratic

The real nature and purpose of the so-called "popular legislatures" must now be clear. Neither by design nor by content do they offer any possibility of a democratic election of the States' peoples' representa-

tives for the Constituent Assembly.

Delegates elected by these legislatures will not represent, as can be seen from the Chart, even one or two per cent of the States' population. Nearly half of them will be the Rulers' men. Add to these delegates, elected by the "legislatures", the other 50 per cent of the representatives who will be directly nominated by the Rulers and the devilish plan of the Rulers will become clear.

People Let Down

The reported agreement, therefore, is not our victory—it is a shameful surrender. It is not merely a whittling down of the common and time-honoured demand of the States' peoples and the Congress leaders regarding the inalienable right of the people to choose their own spokesmen, it is a complete sell-out of the 100 million States' peoples to the Rulers.

Some Prajamandals and individual leaders of the States have already protested against this deal. To scotch it the voice of protest will have to be raised louder and from every part of the country.

by
Ramesh Sinha

*Extremely narrow franchise ranging, in 99 per cent of the cases, from 10 to 1 per cent.

In the Baroda Dhara Sabha, for example, among the 33 elected members, one is a mill-owner, two are big traders and the remaining 30 are big or small zamindars.

Similarly, in the Indore Legislature, 19 out of the 37 elected seats are allotted to special interests, i.e., jagirdars, industrialists and traders, etc.

In Travancore, one of the seats is held by an European Planter!

Bikaner's Dinner Party

We are told by Birla's Hindustan Times that an important contribution was made in bring-

CHART Of "Popular Legislatures" In States Which Will Send Representatives To Constituent Assembly

States	Population (1941 census)	Approximate No. of delegates	Legislature and Distribution of seats	Franchise	Strength of the Prajamandal or other progressive parties.
1. HYDERABAD	163,38,534	16 or 17	Single Legislative Assembly; Elected—42; Nominated bloc—46.	1 per cent	Nil; the elections were boycotted by all the parties.
2. MYSORE	73,29,140	7	Bi-cameral. Lower House Elected—398; Nominated—12. Upper House Elected—41. Nominated—24.	Limited, percentage not known.	124 out of 310, i.e., about 41 per cent in the Lower House, 17 out of 68, i.e., 25 per cent in the Upper House.
3. TRAVANCORE	60,70,918	6	Bi-cameral. Lower House Elected—49. Nominated—24. Upper House Elected—27. Nominated—15.	-do-	11 out of 72 or about 15 per cent in the Lower House; 6 out of 42 or about 14 per cent in the Upper House.
4. KASHMIR	40,21,016	4	Legislative Assembly Elected—40. Nominated—35.	5 per cent.	Nil; the National Conference boycotted the elections.
5. GWALIOR	40,06,159	4	Bi-cameral. Lower House Elected—32. Nominated—35. Upper House Elected—20. Nominated—20.	0 to 10 per cent	34 out of 90 or 38 per cent in the Lower House; 7 out of 49 or 17 per cent in the Upper House.
6. JAIPUR	30,49,876	3	Bi-cameral. Lower House Elected—43. Nominated—5. Upper House Elected—25. Nominated—14.	Very limited, exact percentage not known.	—
7. BARODA	28,55,010	3	Assembly Elected—36. Nominated—23.	8.5 per cent	39 out of 50 or about 78 per cent.
8. JODHPUR (Marwar)	25,55,994	2	A Legislative Assembly of 41 elected and 24 nominated members has been announced but it has not yet been brought into existence. No Legislature.	Very limited	State Congress has announced decision to boycott elections.
9. PATIALA	19,26,259	2	No Legislature	—	—
10. HEWA	18,20,445	2	No Legislature	—	—
11. UDAIPUR (Mewar)	19,26,898	2	No Legislature	—	—
12. INDORE	15,13,966	1	Legislative Council: Elected—37; Nominated—16.	Less than 10 per cent	50 out of 53 or about 94 per cent.
13. COCHIN	14,22,375	1	Legislative Council: Elected—38, Nominated—16.	Matriculates or those who pay land tax, comes to about 20 per cent.	14 in a house of 54, i.e., about 25 per cent.
14. BAHAWALPUR	13,41,209	1	No Legislature	—	—
15. BIKANER	12,82,828	1	A legislative Assembly of 51 formed in 1913; bogus; meets twice a year. An Assembly of 51 (?) 13 nominated. Legislative Assembly Elected—13; Nominated—15.	Very limited	Boycotted.
16. KOLHAPUR	10,92,015	1	No Legislature	Very limited	About 55 per cent seats held by Prajamandal.
17. MAYURBHANJ	9,90,977	1	Legislative Assembly Elected—13; Nominated—15.	Very limited	—
18. ALWAR	8,23,888	1	No Legislature	—	—
19. BHOPAL	7,55,323	1	Legislative Council Elected—6; Nominated—16.	Less than 5 per cent	Nil. Elections were held eight years ago.
20. KOTAH	7,71,308	1	No Legislature	—	—

GREATEST LIVING URDU POET PROTESTS AGAINST ANTI-COMMUNIST DRIVE

Josh Malihabadi's Open Letter To Pt. Nehru

(We are proud to publish below an open letter which JOSH MALIHABADI, Sheir-i-Inqilab—Poet of the Revolution—as he is known throughout our country, has addressed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with regard to the countrywide repression against the Communists. The poet's voice is not his alone, but of all India's freedom-loving fighters—EDITOR).

MY dear Friend, Pandit Jawaharlal, You know, as others do, that I keep myself aloof from politics. But at the same time, I am sure there is not a single poet or writer who does not yearn for the complete independence of the Motherland from all oppression—political and intellectual.

It is because of this yearning in me that I feel I must write this letter to you, because you are the one person with whom are bound inevitably all our proposals for achieving the independence of India.

You are the leader of the progressive section of the biggest freedom-loving political party in our land. You stand for undiluted independence, for a complete Revolution, for Socialism.

The country-wide searches of the offices of the Communist Party, of the houses of Communist leaders; the scandalous raids on various trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and student unions; the arrest of the Editor of People's Age, the chief organ of the Communist Party; the arrests in Madras of Communist, trade union and kisan leaders under a Special Ordinance and their detention without trial;—all these have caused me a great deal of anxiety.

With Popular Governments

And the more so, because all this happened when at the Centre a National Government is functioning under YOUR leadership and there are Congress Ministries in the Provinces.

The reason given for these raids and these arrests is that "a handful of Communist mischief-makers" have published in their paper a few secret plans of the "innocent British army". I have read these "innocent plans" of the "innocent army" in the Communist paper.

And as far as I can see, if all that they have written is true, then such a patriotic party should be hailed from every corner of the country and, in particular, applauded by you and your Government for nobly carrying out a part of their patriotic duty.

On the other hand, of course, if what they have written is not true, then GHQ should at once refute it.

You know that the news about these military plans was published more or less six months ago, and till now, the Army Headquarters have not dared to deny it.

Plans Against Congress

The secret plans were intended definitely to crush the Congress. And it is, therefore, amazing that, in spite of there being a Congress Government in office today, British army officials and the police dare to take action against the Communists, six months after the publication of the plans, and above all, without your sanction or knowledge! (The poet is referring to Panditji's cable to R. Palme Dutt denying all knowledge of the raids—Editor).

You must forgive me, Panditji, if I say that your statement has not satisfied me at all. May I respectfully ask you, who is responsible for this illegal and condemnable act?

A moment's thinking is enough to make it clear that it is the British who are responsible and are taking full advantage of the differences between the Congress and the Communists in order to strengthen their position inside our country. This is an



JOSH MALIHABADI

attack, then, not only on the six months in this Province. I recall the memorable strike of Golden Rock workers, in which five workers were shot dead, out of whom two were Communists. In Coimbatore, workers on strike have been fired upon twice.

As for the drive against the Communists in Madras, it is so mean and so shameless that it hurts me even to think of it. It seems that all civil liberties have been buried in Madras, and Ordinance Raj thrives and searches and arrests are made without warrants.

I am sure you have not forgotten how, only a few months ago, the British used to make exactly the same accusations against the Congress which today Premier Prakasam is levelling against the Communists in Madras.

Workers on strikes have been fired at many times in the last

The peasants of Malabar have also met with similar 'benevolent' treatment. The same Malabar Special Police which earned notoriety for its brutal treatment of the Congress, is today shooting and lathi-charging the Malabar kisans and workers.

The same police that was yesterday beating the elder brother at the bidding of the British imperialists, is today trying to crush the younger brother. But under whose orders?

In Vellore Jail

SCANDALOUS TREATMENT OF MADRAS DETENUS

(From Our Correspondent) IN the Madras Assembly Mr. K. Bhasiyam, Minister for Law, stated that the 120 detenues in Vellore Jail were being given practically all privileges enjoyed previously by Congress detenues and that instructions were passed to that effect to the jail authorities the very night they were arrested.

I learn authoritatively that no such instructions from the Government reached Vellore Jail till February 5, the 12th day of their arrest. All these days they were kept as criminals and received the most brutal treatment. They made repeated representations to the Jail Superintendent and the Ministry, but received no reply. Ultimately they were forced to resort to a protest hunger-strike.

The treatment that these detenues get even now can be easily judged from the following:

● They are given Rs. -12/6 per day for food expenses as against Rs. 1/14 which Congress must end.

detenus used to receive between 1940-45 when there was Advisers' Raj in Madras.

● The jail authorities only provide them convicted B Class prisoners' clothes, whereas Congress detenues were given Rs. 60 per year for clothing expenses.

● They are locked-up every night from 8 p.m. till 6 in the morning like ordinary convicts.

● Letters handed over by detenues as early as on January 25 had not reached their destination in Madras till February 9. Congress detenues were permitted to send 16 letters a month.

● No interview is granted—not even to the wives of detenues. Their legal advisers have not yet been able to secure permission for interview. Congress detenues were permitted four interviews a month.

This scandalous treatment is against the Congress. It

The most fantastic part is that while workers, kisans and Communists were being killed, Mr. Prakasam has charged the Communists with the responsibility for all this bloodshed! "How brave is the thief who carries a candle in his hand!"

When Mr. Prakasam was asked in the Legislative Assembly whether a single policeman had been killed, he had no reply to give. How brave and honest it is to charge the murdered with being the murderer!

I beseech you to consider all this.

I am afraid, Panditji, that if you do not take this matter immediately into your hands and throttle this extremely dangerous policy, it will cause irretrievable harm to the Congress.

The most urgent need of the hour is for the Congress and the Communists to join hands and fight the diabolical policy of the British imperialists and the exploitation of the jagirdars, capitalists and profiteers.

Fulfil Pledges To People

Instead of screening their evil deeds and crushing the India-wide upsurge in the old imperialist way, it is time for the Congress Ministries to fulfil the pledges made by the Congress at the time of the elections.

I know personally a number of Communists. I have attended their meetings. And because of this, I have tremendous confidence in their great patriotism, their anti-imperialism and in their unshakable belief in the Revolution.

I am certain that all these repressive measures against them cannot crush the universal ap-

peal of their Party till the doomsday.

If you do not use your influence to put an end to the present policy of the Ministries, the united front against imperialism will inevitably be weakened and the attainment will be delayed of that glorious final goal, for which you have suffered unceasingly for the last so many years.

It is my urgent, sincere request to you to think over all these matters dispassionately. It is not I alone, but a large circle of progressive, literary people who are most anxious and worried about the existing conditions and events.

'Our Hearts Are Shattered'

Our hopes have always been centred round your beloved personality, and, therefore, when today under your regime, such repressive measures are showered on the Communists, our hearts are shattered, as the nest is shattered by the lightning.

I knew well that you have a few complaints—the complaints of a brother against brother—about the attitude of the Communists. I talked to you about them in December 1946 and you promised me then that you would discuss these with the Communist leaders in my presence. I am still waiting for that day.

But for the present, considering the deplorable conditions which are growing from bad to worse, I urge you that even before you can come here and meet the Communists, you should at once take steps to stop this aggression.

Otherwise, the goal of independence will move further away from us.

Yours,
JOSH

FIGHT BACK ATTACK ON "PEOPLE'S AGE"

THE OPERATION ASYLUM case in Andhra, Kerala and Tamilnad. On is imperialism's first bold bid to them depended a big share of the responsibility and practical job-going involved in sales of PEOPLE'S AGE.

Have you done your bit in fighting back that attack?

● EVERY SINGLE AGENCY can and should immediately make a special drive and RAISE the number of copies it gets every week.

● EVERY SINGLE COMMUNIST PARTY UNIT can and should immediately work out in detail how the sales it carries out can be expanded, increase its orders with its agency and go ahead with a bang—not waiting for others, but carrying out its own duty by PEOPLE'S AGE on its own.

● EVERY SINGLE READER of PEOPLE'S AGE can and should strive his utmost to secure new subscribers, new readers.

The circulation of all editions has been steadily going up since July 1946. It can go up still higher, far quicker—if all who want to keep PEOPLE'S AGE alive, realise that today, with the repression which has been launched against the paper, it becomes imperative to fight it back in the best possible manner—BY INCREASING ITS CIRCULATION.

We want to be able to report in this column every week how this drive to increase PEOPLE'S AGE sales is going. So will all agencies, Party units, individual readers send us reports of their decisions, their experiences in the drive?

One piece of really good news just shows how much can be done.

As you know, a large number of key Communist, Trade Union and Kisan Sabha organisers have been arrested

It would have been natural to expect a sharp drop in PEOPLE'S AGE sales in these Provinces.

But, THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED. Individual salesmen, individual readers—have all put their resources together and have succeeded so far in

People's Age Defence Fund

Wanted Cash: To Defend PEOPLE'S AGE.

Have YOU sent your share? Has YOUR UNIT started collections?

Send donations fast to: The People's Age Defence Fund, C/o People's Age,

100-B, Khetwadi Main Road, BOMBAY 1.

(All cheques, money orders, postal orders, demand drafts, etc. to be made out in the name of KANTILAL J. SHAH.)

more or less keeping up their old sales figures.

It can be done.

The experience of P.A. sales squads in Bombay is that there is far more general interest and sympathy for P.A. after the raids than ever before.

Agents, Sales Squads, readers—get busy!

MORE READERS; MORE SUBSCRIBERS.

G. Adhikari

AEROPLANES, MACHINE-GUNS IN BARBAROUS MAN-HUNT

Army Called Out To Crush Hajang Kisan Movement

On the borders of Assam, under the shadow of the Garo hills, in the district of Mymensingh, aeroplanes, army trucks, jeeps, machine-guns are in action. A terrible organised massacre is being directed by a British Brigadier against the people who inhabit this area—a tribal people known as the Hajangs.

THE number of dead is not known. But among the bodies which have been found riddled with army bullets, are those of men of all ages, mere boys, old veterans; three bodies were those of women. Machine-guns have been flown to Susang, which is the centre of the Hajang belt. Troops are reported to have been flown to Mymensingh from Calcutta. Aeroplanes have zoomed over the Hajang villages on "reconnaissance" flights, preparing to bomb and machine-gun from the air.

Why This Terror

Why has this hell been let loose on these tribal people? What crimes have they committed?

The story is no secret from the people of Mymensingh. They know that in five thanas (Kalmakanda, Durgapur, Halnaghat, Nalitabari and Bribaridi) live one hundred and fifty thousand kisans—tribal people—the Hajangs, Dalus, Garos—and Muslims and Scheduled Castes.

On them has been imposed for years what is known as the Tanka system, by which every year the kisan must pay the landlord a certain fixed amount of paddy, irrespective of whether his crop has been good or bad, a success or a failure.

You can guess for yourself from what the ways of landlords are that this fixed levy of paddy (previously from seven to fifteen maunds an acre) is nearly always well beyond the capacity of the kisan to meet and yet keep enough for himself and his family to live.

And so the inevitable borrowing. And from debt and failure to pay to eviction, the landlord letting out his land afresh every year to the kisan who would pay him the highest Tanka.

The 1937 Struggle

In 1937, the Hajangs could bear this barbarous rack-renting no longer. They organised, started a struggle for the ending of the blood-sucking Tanka system.

They found for themselves a leader, who could guide and help them, carry out their wishes. This was Moni Singh,

by
Nikhil Chakravarty

who came himself from a Susang zamindar's family, but faced torture and suffering and fought his own family by upholding the cause of the kisans.

The 1937 movement ended in a partial victory.

● All those who had tilled one piece of land for twelve years and more were given the right of cultivation. The landlord could not let their land out to anyone else.

● Those with less than twelve years' standing had however to pay a fixed sum amounting to one year's Tanka to the landlord for the right of cultivation.

● The Tanka rate was revised and fixed at NINE maunds an acre.

Growing Misery

But in the last ten years the condition of the Tanka kisans grew from bad to worse.

This belt yields only one crop per year, and the kisan had barely three months' food left for his family after paying his Tanka of seven maunds.

The bitter winter of the hills, severe epidemics and on the top of all, the 1943 famine have reduced the Tanka kisans to a state where death has almost become preferable to the agony that is called life.

This is evident from the fact that in one year, 1945-46, the landlords of Susang instituted 3,200 cases against the kisans for failure to pay Tanka.

At the same time the Susang zamindars realise an annual revenue of four and a half lakh rupees every year. All told every year they collect three lakh maunds of paddy from these one and a half lakh slave-kisans.

So this year, when the cry of Tebhaga (the movement for a two-thirds share of the crop for the kisan which has swept through Bengal) touched the foothills of the Hajang lands, these kisans, with long traditions of relentless struggle under the Red Flag, raised their demands: "No Tanka, no Salami, no evictions."

The kisans began their harvesting, determined to resist the barbaric feudal system, which had eaten into their bodies and made them serfs. The jotedars attacked without the slightest provocation.

At Nalitabari, Sarveswar Dalu was killed by jotedars' men for the crime of being a kisan. The police watched on, took no action against the murderers.

But it was when harvesting was nearly over, and the zamindars and the Government found the kisans determined to win their demand for the abolition of Tanka, that full swing repression was let loose.

Notorious Magistrate

There was a man called Sudhir Majumdar, who was Additional District Magistrate in Mymensingh. In Midnapore in 1942, he earned notoriety for the terror he imposed on the people.

It was he with his experience, who was sent out first to the Hajang belt with a large armed force. It was under him that the first blood-bath took place. He was followed by the District Magistrate and the Deputy Inspector General of Police from Dacca, each of whom came with fresh contingents of armed police.

On January 7, a police party of nearly 200 raided several villages like Bharatpur, Langura and Jigatala. The most brutal assaults were perpetrated against kisans. Women were mercilessly beaten; 25 arrests were made.

Baby-Killers

In these raids, a baby of three months was beaten to death. This shocked the whole district and there were demonstrations against such barbarities in Mymensingh town. Hajang kisans demonstrated also before the police thanas in the Hajang area demanding that such atrocities stop. The District Magistrate gave his orders to shoot and kill.

On January 31, armed police raided the village of Behertali three times in the course of the morning and resorted to indescribable torture, specially on women.

They seized a kisan girl Kamudini, 17 years old, perpetrated inhuman atrocities on her and then dragged her round the village. A body of kisan men and women came forward to rescue her. The police placed Kamudini in front and putting a rifle over

her shoulder began firing at the kisans. Two of them were killed immediately.

The next day, February 1, village of Jigatala, where too armed police from Mymensingh and military from Dacca appeared and continued the most gruesome tortures on the kisans.

War Against Kisans

Bren-guns and machine-guns were freely used. Villages were set on fire and many houses razed to the ground. Paddy stocks found in kisan huts were seized and confiscated. According to the correspondent of the Jugantar, nearly 23 Hajang men and women were killed by bullets and the number of wounded exceeded 50.

On February 3, attacks were made on Lengura which is the key centre of kisan movement in Susang.

The District Magistrate with a posse of officials, police and military launched an attack, which was preceded by a "reconnaissance" from the air. Three machine-guns, two tommy-guns, one Bren-gun and scores of rifles were used. The orgy of loot and arson devastated the village.

The District Magistrate himself led the attack on the Communist Party offices which were set on fire with petrol; a cart full of paddy and supplies

Red Cross were also seized.

They next proceeded to the village of Jigatala, where too huts were broken open, men and women tortured, cash, ornaments, utensils, clothes and food-stuff, seized from the kisans.

Many of the kisans in these parts have now taken shelter in the forests.

This terror against the Hajangs has caused widespread consternation in Bengal. Local Congress and League MLAs have issued statements protesting against the repression.

In the Bengal Assembly the Communist MLA, Jyoti Basu, tabled an adjournment motion to discuss the military atrocities on the Hajangs, but the motion was disallowed without any reasons being given.

Censorship On News

The Government has imposed a very heavy censorship on all news from the Hajang belt and is deliberately putting out lies about an agrarian revolt, about Hajangs using deadly weapons, etc.

But despite these lies, the people of Bengal are learning the truth about the military terror and will rally to the rescue of the heroic Hajangs in their resistance to terror.

British Conspiracy Behind This Butchery

WHAT is the secret behind the grim butchery which is going on today in Hajang land?

The British have for long been planning to create a separate Eastern Frontier Province, consisting of backward tribal people, which can be a permanent base for their troops, a permanent base from which East Bengal and Assam can be kept in "control."

Hajangland is on the fringe of this proposed Frontier Province, and the Hajangs are the only tribal people among all those to be included in the Province, who have a twenty-year old tradition of kisan struggle.

The Hajangs, therefore, constitute the only danger to the imperialist attempt to create a safe backward base for themselves on our Eastern frontiers.

If the Hajangs can be beaten into submission, their Kisan Sabha destroyed, then imperialism can go ahead with its plans. If the Hajangs live, the militant spirit may well spread to the other tribal peoples, who may refuse then to play the White Sahibs' game.

● Last November, Governor Burrows paid a sudden visit to Mymensingh district and made a special halt at Susang. It is understood that during his visit, the plans for today's butchery were blue-printed.

● In December, a new District Magistrate—a White Sahib named Bastin—was appointed for Mymensingh. Bastin is "a tribal expert."

● In January the assault began.



Under the Red Flag : A Rally of Hajang Kisans (Photo : Sunil Janah)