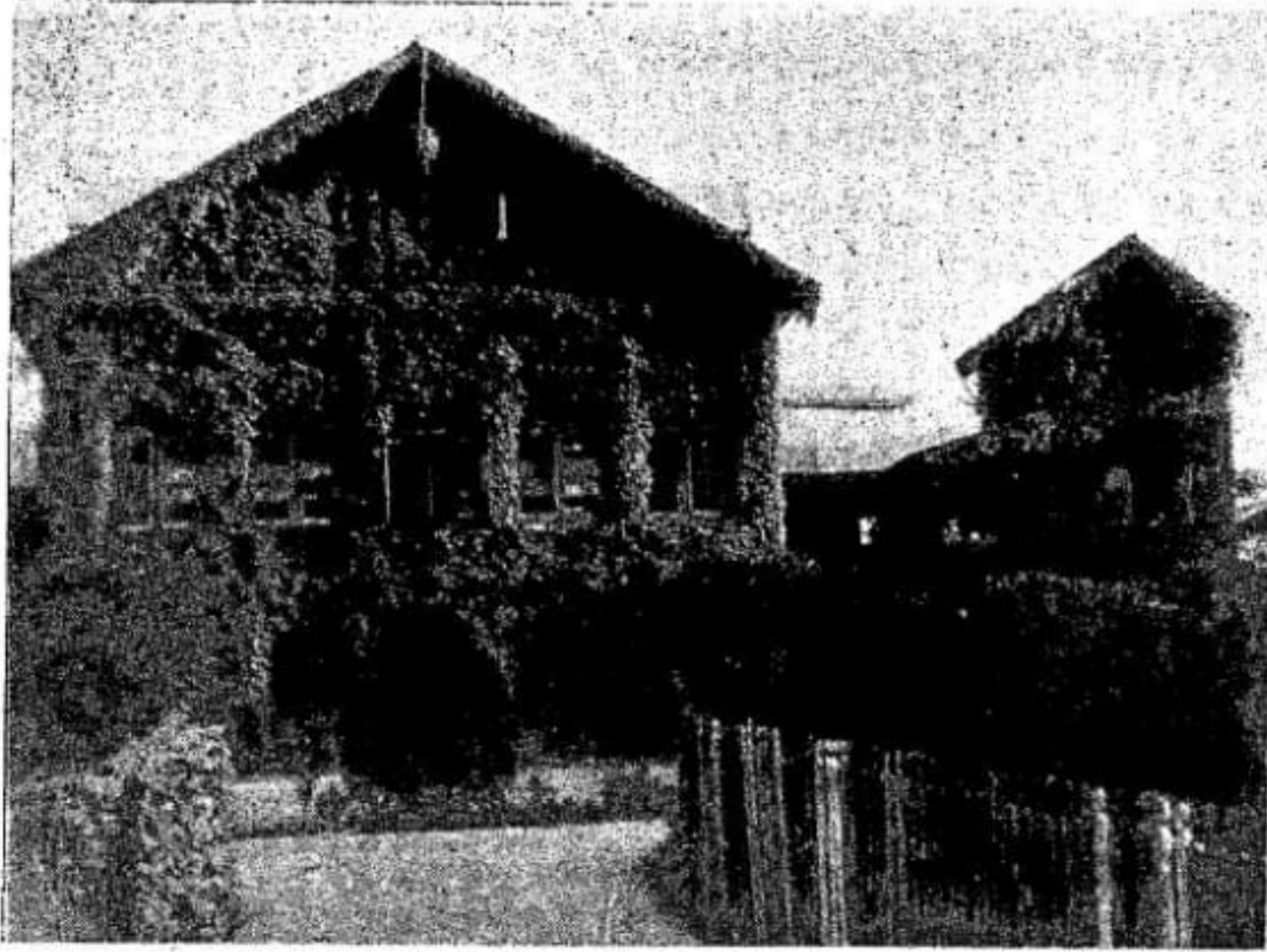


Kashmiris On The March

(Story Page 3)

[Photos: Sunil Janah]



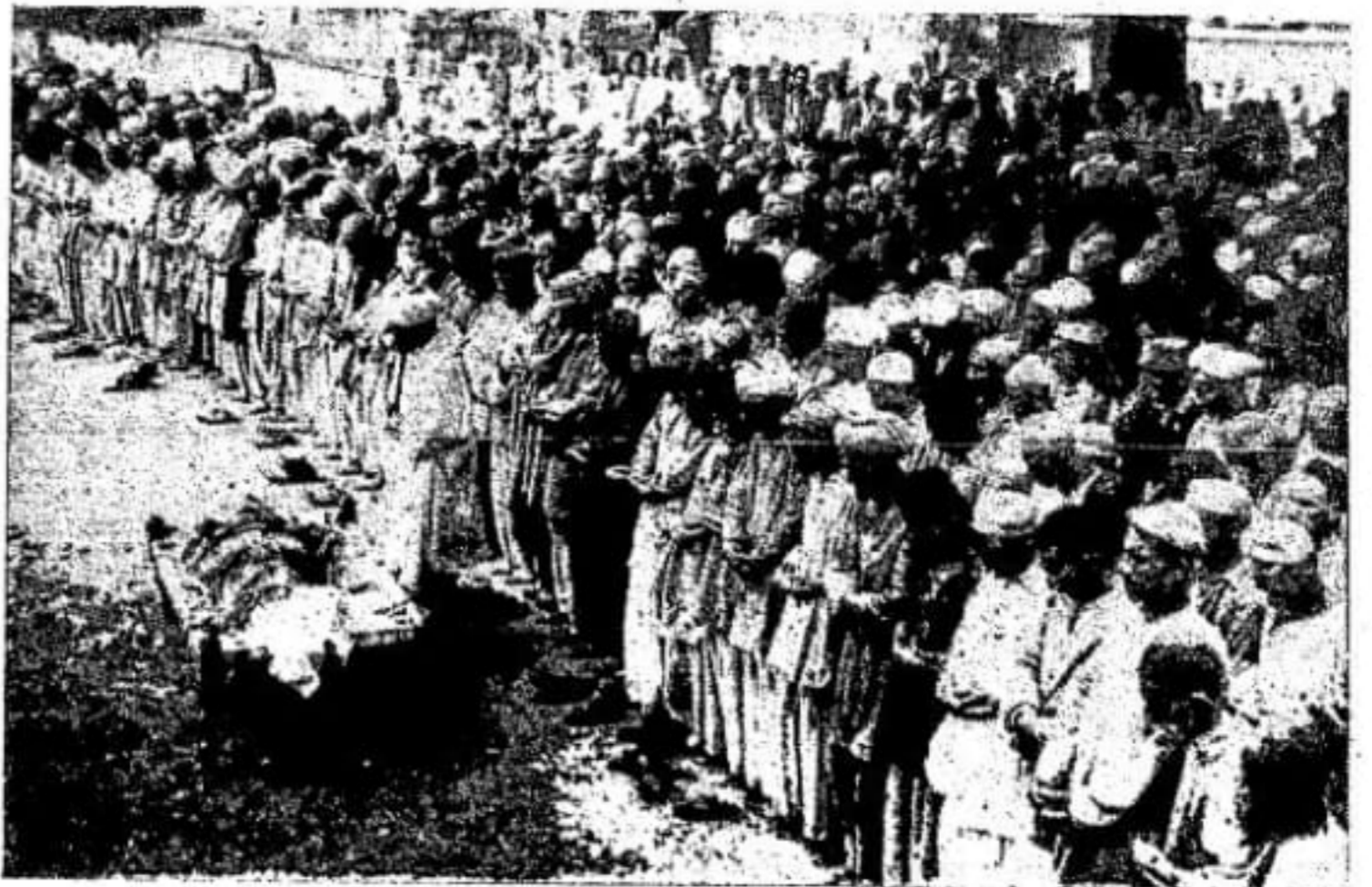
"Mujahid Manzil"—Headquarters of the Kashmir National Conference.



A sectional view of one of the National Conference rallies. These are the common men of Kashmir who are today battling against autocratic terror.



Memorial to the Martyrs of the 1931 Kashmir Struggle.



National Conference-leaders at the funeral of a martyr killed in a clash last August.

PEOPLE'S AGE

VOL. IV NO. 49.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 1946.

As. 3.



Sheikh Mohd. Abdulla, beloved leader of the Kashmiri people.

Quit KASHMIR

(See Page 2 For Full Text Of National
Conference's Memorandum To
Cabinet Mission)

Kashmiris Demand Freedom

A People Sold Into Slavery, Kept Down Under A Corrupt, Autocratic Regime For A Century

Today the national demand of the people of Kashmir is not merely the establishment of a system of responsible government, but their right to absolute freedom from the autocratic rule of the Dogra House.

Nearly a hundred years ago the people of Kashmir became the victims of a commercial deal by the covetous agents of the East India Company.

For the paltry consideration of 75 lacs of Sikh currency rupees (less than half a million pounds sterling) the people of Kashmir, the land and its potential wealth, were sold away, to Maharajah Gulab Singh, the Dogra vassal of the Sikh kingdom.

The Sale Deed

We challenge the moral and political validity of this sale deed, to which the people of Kashmir were never a party, and which has since 1846 been the document of their bondage.

At this moment, the future of the inhabitants of India is on the anvil, and the constitutional pattern of the future is being hammered out by the British Cabinet Mission.

The question of the Treaty Rights of the Princes has become a moot point between the peoples of the States, the Princely Order, and the Paramount Power.

For us in Kashmir the re-examination of this relationship in its historical context is a vital matter.

The crux of our contention is this that the sale deed which brought Kashmir under the rule of the Dogra House confers no privileges equivalent to those claimed by States governed by the so-called Treaty Rights.

As such, the case of Kashmir itself stands on a unique footing, and the people of Kashmir draw the attention of the Cabinet Mission to their just claims to freedom on the withdrawal of British Power.

The sale deed of 1846, misnamed the Treaty of Amritsar, makes the matter quite clear.

No sale deed, however, sacrosanct, can condemn more than four million men and women to the servitude of an autocrat when the will to live under his rule is no longer there.

We, the people of Kashmir, are determined to mould our own destiny and we appeal to the members of the Cabinet Mission to recognise the justice and the strength of our cause.

Kashmir is not merely "a geographical expression" in the North-West of the vast sub-continent of India, famed for its beauty and natural wealth, but it is a land strategically situated, the meeting point of India, China and Russia, and as such has international significance.

Our homeland is the cradle of the Kashmiri nation which by virtue of the homogeneity of its language, culture and tradition and its common history of suffering is today one of the rare places in India where all communities are backing up a united national demand.

Our Plight

The immensity of the wrong done to our people by the sale deed of 1846 can only be judged by looking into the actual living conditions of the people of Kashmir. It is the depth of our torment that has given strength to our protest.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is the biggest of the Indian States, covering 84,471 square miles of mountains and lowlands. Its revenues exceed 2½ crores of rupees, and it ranks as the third richest State in India.

Between the snow-adorned barrier ranges of the Himalayas and the earth-coloured and sun-scorched plains of the Pun-

jab live our people, four millions of them, in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and the Frontier regions in Poonch and the Chenani Ilaqas, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Kashmiri Pandits, Jains and Harijans inhabit the summer and winter capitals of Srinagar and Jammu, thirty-nine towns, and nearly nine thousand villages.

Ninety-six out of every hundred of our people draw sustenance from the land, and live in far-flung and isolated villages, oppressed by want and harried by disease. Their average yearly income barely reaches eleven rupees per head.

It is this poverty-stricken land which was transferred a hundred years ago in 1846 by the Treaty which, signed in the days of Cobden and Bright, claims to hold Kashmir in bondage even a quarter of a century after the fall of the Czarist Empire.

British Imperialism continues to stand guarantor of the sanctity of such treaties.

The age of liberalism and reform came and went, the era of revolutions blazed its trail across history but the land of Jammu and Kashmir remained in the dark hinterland of medieval traditions.

It was in the 'thirties, nearly a decade and a half ago, that the Kashmiri people took their own destiny in their hands and launched a mass struggle to wrest their rights of free civic existence from an autocratic government.

This people's movement, born as the Muslim Conference, in 1932, became the spearhead of the masses of Kashmir, more than three-quarters of whom are Muslims.

It is during this period that the whole of India was shaken into new awakening following the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1931.

The Conference, though Muslim in name, spontaneously formed as an expression of the deep-rooted sufferings of the people, was in spirit national and was concerned with the welfare of all communities.

On The March

Our movement has been dynamic, and, as the years went on, it has rooted itself more and more deeply into the soil of the State.

In 1939 we formally converted the organisation into All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference; thus welcoming into our fold freedom-loving patriotic people from all communities.

We have weathered many storms, repression, jail and bullets in the struggle against the State authorities and their props, those with feudal and vested interests in the exploitation of the people.

Thus the fight of the National Conference has been against the immemorial poverty of the peasant and the artisan, and the unmitigated helplessness of the worker.

The Conference has grown from strength to strength by virtue of its democratic ideal and its ever-expanding mass following. During the whole of this period of growth we have been pressing for responsible government and the economic amelioration of the people of the State.

1934 Constitution

We reached our first constitutional milestone in 1934 when the Legislative Assembly was constituted, consisting of 75 members, out of which however 42 were nominated, and only 33 were elected. The President was also an official, and the Council of Ministers continued to govern as an irresponsible executive at the pleasure of His Highness the Maharajah Bahadur.

At the end of the first elections, the representatives of the people entered the Assembly and constituted the largest single homogeneous group. This group has carried on our struggle right inside the walls of the Assembly Chamber.

This setting up of the Legislative Assembly and the so-called constitutional advance which came subsequent to it only created an illusion of reforms without any substratum of reality, since there was no actual power in the hands of the people's representatives.

Before we go into a detailed analysis laying bare the utter inadequacy of such make-believe progress, it is of importance to expose the sinks of re-

character of the franchise itself the limitations of which were recommended by the Franchise Committee of 1934. A more correct name for the Franchise Committee would be the Disfranchisement Committee, since 97% of the population were denied the right to vote.

This right was allowed only on a property and educational basis to the following categories of people:

- * (a) Payment of Rs. 20 as land revenue.
- * (b) Ownership of Rs. 600 worth of house property.
- * (c) Payment of Rs. 20 as Municipal Tax.
- * (d) Payment of Rs. 60 as rent.
- * (e) Education up to Class 8th.
- * (f) Holding of a title.
- * (g) Being a village headman, or holding any other such honorary office of distinction under the Crown.
- * (h) Being a pensioner.

The farce of the educational qualification is apparent from the fact that, in addition to being below the required tax level, the Muslim population which forms more

of the Amarnath Cave of pilgrimage (18,000 feet high), covering a distance of over 220 miles, some of it on mere mountain tracks.

While on the one hand in a special constituency fifteen Jagirdars representing its total electorate have a right to send one representative, on the other the general constituencies of Muzaffarabad and Handwara with a population of 300,000 and 270,000 respectively can send only one representative each.

Kashmir Budget

The test of the powers of every democratic body lies in its ability to exercise control over finances.

In our State to start with, out of the total expenditure, over 35% (representing the combined expenditure incurred on the army and the privy purse) is reserved from the vote of the Assembly, thanks to section 45 of the Constitution Act.

As to the rest any item of expenditure not assented to by the Assembly can be restored with the aid of proviso A of section 45 which vests the right of certification in the Council of Ministers. And the Council of Ministers is not responsible to the Assembly.

The most astounding aspect of our State army is to be found in the discrimination which forms the basis of recruitment to the State forces.

No Kashmiri be he a Sikh, Muslim or a Kashmiri Pandit is allowed to join the State Army whose ranks are maintained as the exclusive preserve of certain castes in the Jammu Province.

Even during the war years Kashmiri fighters found opportunities for distinguishing themselves at arms only through joining the Indian Army.

It is a great stigma on our self-respect that the Kashmiris should be treated as a bought up race and at the same time be burdened with the huge bill which they are asked to foot for maintaining this army of occupation.

Maharaja's Loot

The privy purse of the Prince is another key point in the finance of our State.

Ostensibly it is only 5% of the total income of the State, but departments like the Royal Stores, Ceremonies Department, His Highness' Motor Garages, the Hunting Lodges, are not included in the Privy purse although they are actually a part of it. They cost one and a quarter million rupees annually.

In addition also are the allowances for His Highness' household, which come yearly to nearly half a million rupees. There is yet another item.

The State compensates His Highness the Maharaja for the personal jagirs which he had to surrender to the State soon after his accession to the throne to avoid the anomaly of being the Ruler and the subject at the same time. For that he is paid 8½ lacs of rupees annually.

In addition, His Highness enjoys immunity from Income Tax and Customs Duties—which though formally paid to the Treasury are refunded at the end of the year. In the year 1930-31 alone Rs. 3,10,000 were refunded in this manner.

Beneficent Departments

As to budget allocations for essential services, and nation-building departments—agriculture, horticulture, industry, veterinary services, co-operatives, panchayats, rural uplift—these amount to one quarter million rupees, and the expenditure on police alone exceeds one and a half million rupees.

(Continued on page 12.)

FULL TEXT OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE'S MEMORANDUM TO CABINET MISSION

action, bestial cruelty and corruption hidden beneath this modern facade of constitutional reform.

Chenani In Chains

A typical illustration of what is happening in the backward areas of Kashmir is to be found in the Jagir of Chenani, a State within a State, which is today on the verge of rebellion, because of the intolerable misrule of an autocratic princeling.

Few of those who pass through Kud, on the Jammu Srinagar highway, realise what shameless robbery of human rights takes place in the territory of which it is a part.

The Jagirdar has got unlimited power over his subjects. The lives and property of the inhabitants of Chenani have been for years the play-things of arbitrary powers.

He monopolises trade and production and illegally seizes land on the flimsiest pretexts, and since the police, the jails, and all the machinery of law is in his own hands there is nobody to put a stop to his activities.

He is the collector of taxes, controller of food, civil and criminal judge all rolled into one.

He is also a shop-keeper dealing in controlled commodities and a money-lender who gives loans to his pauperised peasantry on usurious rates of interest.

In him are vested the powers of Sessions and District Judge with appellate jurisdiction.

Curiously the Rajah is almost illiterate and therefore unacquainted with the barest principles of law.

Those who have dared to raise their voices against these inhuman conditions in order to help their fellow subjects have been arrested, tortured and imprisoned.

Limited Franchise

Thus, it is against this background of darkness and oppression that we have to consider what the Government really stands for, and we would not limit ourselves to conditions in the big towns of the State which, though bad enough, are by comparison better.

The hollowness of the 'democratic' structure which has been so far put up is revealed by the

than 80% of the population of the State is only 4% literate.

Farcical Amendments

In 1939, the constitution was amended and the elective element in a total house of 75 was raised to 40. This increase of seven members who are elected is deceptive, since they represent only special constituencies of big landlords, rural barons, government pensioners and the franchise is so restricted that in one constituency there are only 15 electors and in another just 16.

Four posts were created for parliamentary under-secretaries from amongst the non-official members.

The fact that they were appointed by His Highness on a salary of Rs. 200 per month, at once, severed their allegiance from their respective electorates and hitched it to the government instead.

This aspect of the so-called reforms tantamounts to the reduction of the elected strength in the house.

The President of the Legislative Assembly is appointed by His Highness and is usually nominated from amongst the Judicial or executive officials of the State.

In addition, there is nothing to prevent the President from discharging other offices besides his own.

One of the Presidents was all at one time the Law Minister, the Chief Justice, the President of the Scholarship Board, and the Acting Prime Minister. It might be regarded as a matter of congratulation that he was not also Commander of the State forces.

The demarcation of constituencies throws still more light on the unreality of the constitutional machine. Vast areas of the State, with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, have been summarily robbed of the right to vote, because members representing them are nominated by the State.

As to the elective constituencies themselves, they provide comic contrast. One constituency—No. 31 Hindu, beginning at the door post of Kashmir, Kohala nearly 2,500 feet high, rambles on to the snowy peaks

KASHMIR FIGHTS AS NO STATE PEOPLE HAVE FOUGHT BEFORE

British - Planned Orgy Of Terror, People Bloody But Unbowed

There is blood on the streets of Srinagar—the warm blood of a people fighting for its freedom.

Lies and slanders are being poured out every day in Government Press notes and in inspired reports flashed by the news agencies. Don't believe a word of what they say.

THE censor here wields a hose of acid, not a pen. Every bit of truth is being burnt out.

The Prime Minister's own nephew is the representative of the United Press, the Hindustan Times, the Hindu, the Statesman and the Amrita Bazar Patrika.

The Associated Press of India's man is one REDDY—a sworn enemy of the national movement and an agent of the Government.

Every item these two gentlemen send out is part of the Government's vicious propaganda campaign. It is aimed at isolating Kashmir's national struggle from the rest of the freedom-movement in India.

Twenty Clashes On First Day

But all the censors and all the subsidised news agencies cannot strangle the voice of Kashmir.

The one outstanding truth is: Kashmir is fighting, fighting as no State People's Movement has ever fought before.

On the very first day—when Sher-e-Kashmir SHEIKH ABDULLA and the entire Working Committee of the National Conference were arrested—there were clashes at twenty places in Srinagar alone between the military and the people.

The army rushed round the city firing indiscriminately, madly—in the way the people of Calcutta and Bombay and Delhi now know so well—trying to strike terror in the hearts of the Kashmiris.

All these years, the Maharaja and his White overlords of the Political Department have studiously fostered the lie that the Kashmiri people are a non-martial race, that they are cowardly, unfit for service in the army. Thus in Kashmir's army there are no Kashmiris—only Dogras and Rajputs, whipped into loyalty by communal appeals to defend the Hindu Raj from the Muslim Kashmiris.

It is for moments like this that our army consists of non-Kashmiris—for our own people could never be made to shoot us down.

And it is at moments like this also that we blow up the slander that we cannot fight.

Fighting To Save Our Lives

We did not run like sheep when the murderers' guns were turned on us. We built up barricades, from behind which we fought—fought with whatever we could lay our hands on. We learnt the way as fast as they learnt in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi.

The communiques lie about "a planned revolt". The Kashmiri people learnt to save their lives only in the grim fire of bullets and the mad rush of military lorries.

They went on shooting... every day everywhere. They have not spared women or children. Every day come laconic communiques, reporting how the police "were forced to fire in self-defence." But they cannot fool the Indian people now. The "self-defence" of Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi is too well-known.

I cannot tell you how many people have been killed, how many wounded, so far. But—and I do not have to warn you about this—the official figures

are a minute fraction of the reality.

The terror is no longer confined to Srinagar. Anantnag is another of the cities where shooting has begun. Anantnag's crime is that it elected to the State Assembly (Praja Sabha) MIRZA MOHAMMED AFZAL BEG (the National Conference leader, who was for 18 months a Minister in the Kashmir Government's 'Dyarchy' till he was forced to resign last month). Immediately following his arrest, the firing began.

Our Slogan—Quit Kashmir!

On the streets, you hear again and again the two rallying slogans of the National Conference today:

- Bayanama Amritsar ko tor do! (Tear up the Sale-deed of Amritsar).
- Kashmir ko chorh do! (Quit Kashmir).

These slogans have galvanised the whole of Kashmir. The fortnight preceding the terror has seen the biggest mass up-

call to their community to march shoulder to shoulder with their Muslim brethren.

They declared: "Our friendship shall be sealed in the battles to come and our comradeship-in-arms shall be cemented by common trial and by common blood."

This growing unity of all parties and communities made it practically impossible for the State, despite its best efforts, to foment riots, the weapon it has used all these years to put a break on the popular movement.

Kashmir's Importance To British

Thus it was that the Maharaja and his British masters saw rising before their eyes a movement bigger than they had ever faced before. They tried to break it up, to split it. But all the propaganda done by toady elements and subsidised newspapers failed. The movement grew.

But Kashmir is important—not merely to the Privy Purse of the Maharaja or the pockets of the Prime Minister, RAM CHANDRA KAK (glimpses of whose regime of nepotism and corruption we give elsewhere on this page—Ed.).

Kashmir is important to the British Imperialists, to their plans for a Third World

And now almost every bit of news pushed out of Kashmir by the State has references to "absconding Communists", "Communist organisers of the movement," and so on.

The Political Department, the Maharaja, Prime Minister Kak—all three count on the "Russian bogey" and the "Communist menace" to prevent the patriotic forces in the rest of the country from rallying to the aid of Kashmir.

"Appeals" To Pandit Nehru

I understand that the Political Department specially deputed Sir GOPALASWAMI IYENGAR (a former Kashmir Prime Minister) to meet Pandit Nehru and give him "secret information" about the "dangerous character" of Sheikh Abdullah's movement.

The visit of Pandit DWARAKANATH KACHRU (Secretary of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference) to Kashmir following this meeting gave rise in Srinagar Official circles to the hope that Kachru had come to tell Sheikh Sahib of Pandit Nehru's "disapproval" of his activities.

More than that; the fact that the Congress leaders had not taken up really vigorously with the Cabinet Mis-

Our Special Correspondent's Story Breaks Through Censorship

surge ever known in Kashmir. Before his arrest, at four mammoth meetings in Srinagar on consecutive days, Sheikh Abdullah indicted the Maharaja and his autocratic rule. The National Conference's stirring Memorandum to the Cabinet Mission (see page 2) shows clearly what these slogans mean in the life of the people of Kashmir.

Students of the Amar Singh College were on strike for the whole fortnight for their demands.

Workers of the Silk Factory were preparing for action, all their efforts to obtain a decent living by negotiations with the management having failed.

Talks For United Action

Above everything else talks had begun between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference for joint action. And though the older, reactionary leaders of the Muslim Conference fought the "Quit Kashmir" slogan with the old, out-of-date "Responsible Government under the aegis of His Highness"—the majority led by CHOUDHRY GHULAM ABBAS of Jammu supported the demands of the National Conference.

On May 10th, Palestine Day was observed by the biggest hartal Srinagar had ever known, sponsored by both the National Conference and the Muslim Conference.

Thus these two organisations which have fought each other with the ferocity of a tribal vendetta for the last eight years, were drawing closer together.

Among the Kashmiri Pandits also there was a new awakening. Although their official organisation, the Yuwak Sabha, and its paper, the Martand, continued to spit poison at the National Conference—a large number of Kashmiri Pandits issued a statement denouncing the rule of the Maharaja and supporting Sheikh Abdullah's

War. For the whole century since the British sold Kashmir for 50 lakhs of rupees to the present Maharaja's family, Gilgit has been a military base of primary importance to the British. Today British Imperialism sees in the growing freedom movement of Kashmir a danger to Gilgit's future use as a base for aggression.

This is the real reason behind Kashmir's terror. The Maharaja and the Prime Minister acted with the connivance and on the guidance of the Political Department.

The Russian "Bogey" Again

The new propaganda line was cooked up in New Delhi and put out through the subsidised Press.

The Kashmir Times, a wretched rag owned by one ABDUL RAHMAN MITHA, who poses to be a nationalist, in its editorial of the 18th May, saw "the hidden hand of Russia" behind the "Quit Kashmir" slogan and proceeded to say that Pandit JAWAHARLAL himself "smelt" that Communists, probably under foreign inspiration, are making use of Mr. Abdullah as a tool and are playing the Russian game of creating tension on the frontiers of the British Empire, as an over-all measure to increase Soviet influence in the Middle East.

It ominously referred to the "Azerbaijan incident," which revealed Soviet policy, and warned the State against Sheikh Abdullah and his "Communist advisers."

On May 20, the Orient Press put out the following bit of nonsense:

"The Orient Press is in a position to reveal that the Communist Party in India has established a very strong underground office somewhere in Kashmir in order to be able to assist Russia in extending her influence in India."

sion the question of the States' peoples' representation in the negotiations and the Constituent Assembly—encouraged the British-manipulated Maharaja to launch his brutal attack.

Preparations For The Massacre

For days in advance preparations were made.

* Sixty-four Income-tax and other Gazetted Officers were made Special Magistrates.

* Five hundred or more armed soldiers and military police attended every National Conference meeting.

* Large forces of military were concentrated at Srinagar.

* The police (consisting mostly of Kashmiris) were not trusted an inch—and soldiers were placed in the thanas (police stations) to keep a check on the police.

* Plans for "taking the city" were made by the Chief of the Military Staff, the Inspector General of Police, and the Senior Superintendent of Police jointly.

On May 15th, Sheikh Abdullah announced that a State-wide plebiscite would be taken so that people could give their verdict on the Maharaja's rule. Scared stiff at the prospect of such a plebiscite, the Maharaja asked for instructions to proceed with the terror-plan.

The Political Department waited a little longer. But as soon as they received the news that Pandit Nehru was not prepared to listen to their canards about the National Conference, they gave the line clear to Kashmir.

What precipitated the whole affair on May 20th, was Sheikh Abdullah's departure to see Pandit Nehru. This was the one thing the Sahibs could not allow. Once Sheikh Sahib was out of the State, he could whip up a really strong campaign for the "Quit Kashmir" movement. The

HOW KAK RULES KASHMIR

Profit-Paradise For Family

On June 28th 1945, Rai Bahadur RAM CHANDRA KAK, a man with a most unsavoury reputation as Inspector General of Customs and Excise, was appointed Prime Minister of Kashmir, and under him began a regime of nepotism, corruption and suppression of civil liberties, the like of which even this rotten and police-ridden State had never seen before.

We give here just a few instances of the way Kak rules today in Kashmir.

Insurance Scandal

On September 29 last an agreement was made by Kak on behalf of the Kashmir and Jammu Government with the New India Assurance Company of Bombay by which the Government agreed to place with their Company all insurance of Government property inside and outside the State for a period of seven years.

Hundreds of Kashmiri families, living by insurance work, were hit by this monopoly.

Kak's own son who was an agent of this Company and who now draws a fat salary besides commission from them was the chief beneficiary of this deal.

The proposals of other companies who were ready to offer more favourable terms were rejected.

Silk-Yarn Distribution

The Kashmir Government has monopoly of distribution of silk yarns. Out of 15,000 lbs. of yarn, nearly 6,000 were given to a Bombay Seth through Kak's brother, thereby hitting thousands of loom holders. Junior Kak made a neat profit of over one lakh 50 thousand rupees as middle-man. Seven hundred pounds more were supplied to a concern run by his brother who netted Rs. 13,000 from the black-market.

Where's The Jam?

The same brother has a fictitious Jam factory of which the building is yet non-existent. Yet while no villager can get more than three chataks of sugar per month, this "factory" is supplied with 28 tons of sugar monthly of which the whole amount is sold in the black-market at two rupees a seer (the controlled price is ten annas a seer).

Another brother of Kak is the virtual boss of the P.W.D. where his name is a byword in bribery and corruption.

The Tourist Agency

Kak's brothers have a Tourist Agency—the tourist trade is one of the most profitable in Kashmir. The main job of one BADRI NATH KAK who is paid by the Government and stationed at Rawalpindi for the ostensible purpose of helping tourists with information about Kashmir is to advertise the Hind Tourist Agency of the Kak brothers.

Blood Is Thicker...

Corrupt and inefficient officials are appointed and promoted to responsible positions solely because they happen to be Kak's friends and relatives. These have come to be known as "blood-is-thicker-than-water" appointments.

Under the Defence of Kashmir Rules, meetings and processions stand banned in all public places. All political life is sought to be stifled by these orders and by demanding securities from newspapers.

danger was he would infect all the States' peoples' movements with the new zeal and the new slogans of Kashmir.

Quick telephonic calls were put through to New Delhi. Sheikh Sahib was arrested. The shooting began.

The latest news is that Pandit Nehru is coming to Kashmir, after his visit to Faridkot. Our murdered men and women cry aloud for vengeance.

All our leaders are jailed. The Maharaja has elaborate plans to present Panditji with "his case against the National Conference" through the mouths of all the toadies, who are out and about in Kashmir.

Pandit Nehru, as President of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference, must take a firm stand and insist on the release of all our leaders as an essential preliminary to any talks he may have with the Maharaja and his gangsters.

Panditji must bring on to our side the entire might of the States' Peoples' movement and the Congress. Only that can end the nightmare of Kashmir and bring us freedom.

(May 25)

GAMBLERS ALL!

Events have moved fast since the breakdown of the Simla Conference. But they have not led up to the expected solution but to an unexpected stalemate and bursting up of illusions.

THE ball was set rolling by the Cabinet Mission's announcement which promised everything to everybody and which left room for everybody to understand it in his own way.

Then came Mr. Jinnah's statement which said all that he had said before but did not commit the League to any definite course.

This was followed by the Congress Working Committee statement which again said nothing new and committed the Congress to nothing.

When the British Mission found that neither the Congress nor the League leaders were putting their final cards on the table they came out with their second announcement.

This made explicit what was implicit in the first announcement itself, but to which no party except ours had drawn sharp attention. It was not in tune with all the sweet words they had used before, but they were driven to it "to get a move along" in the direction they had been struggling to guide Indian political development, which they did not want to disclose earlier.

It has greatly annoyed Pandit Nehru, and no element in the Congress had bargained for it.

It is worthwhile recalling who thought what during these fast-changing events to understand correctly what is happening and why.

Hopes, Fears And Illusions

When the first announcement of the Cabinet Mission came there was glee in Congress and gloom in League circles.

Ours was the only critical voice, exposing the British Plan and the dangers of the situation.

We were however easily dismissed as impossible fanatics who talk of airy principles when practical victory is on the agenda, and in more uncharitable quarters we were described as "sour-grape wallas" who did not want the Congress to get into power when the next issue would be how to check Soviet Imperialism and its designs on India!

But a closer study of the British announcement modified the first reactions, although it did not yet bring the two parties to earth face to face with the real implications of the British Plan.

Both thought out their own plan of action within the framework of the British Plan itself and sought the necessary modifications in their clarificatory statements.

Congress - League Lines Of Action

The Congress leadership thought that unity of India had been saved and Congress majority ensured in the Constitution-making Body, but they saw that the danger of "Pakistan in practice" was there in Provincial groupings.

The way out, therefore, they felt was to get British consent that the very formation of groups could be torpedoed in elections to the Constitution-making Body and Congress majority secured in the Interim Government to steam-roller League opposition.

The League leadership thought that the six Provinces had been won and also their separate groupings through there was a Union Centre on top.

The way out, therefore, they felt was to grab the six Provinces now, fight in the Constitution-making Body for the Union Centre to remain weak

and limited in scope and for the right to form a completely separate State after 10 years, and ensure it all by demanding parity in the Interim Government so that the Congress could not have its own way.

The Mission's Own Wily Plan

They were very clever plans but only on paper. What made them completely unreal was that they did not take stock of the simple fact that the British had their own plan.

They had impressed both sides with their "sincerity" demonstrating the unreasonableness of one to the other, and their own reasonableness to both.

They thought that after tearing Indian parties further apart from each other and strengthening their confidence in the "sincerity" of British intentions, both parties would come over to accepting the British Plan as the best way out in the circumstances.

The snag came when both the Congress and League leaders

by P. C. Joshi

took the good wishes of the British Ministers too literally and demanded further clarification in the interest of their own respective plans.

This forced the Mission to cross the 't's and dot the 'i's of their own Plan in their second announcement, and declare that nothing could be changed except with the consent of the two parties.

Now only the blindest will fail to see what they have planned for. It follows logically out of the sort of Constitution-making Body they have fixed up, and has also been made abundantly clear through their announcement.

It Starts With Provinces

Their game is—first start with the Provinces and get on to the Groups and draft their constitutions, and in the bargain tear each other to pieces.

If there is a breakdown the League cannot get the six Provinces nor the Congress advance towards a Union Centre—this threat is the British bait to get the Congress and the League to cross the first hurdle and come to the next, the Union Centre.

Then it starts all over again: the Congress struggling for the Union Executive and Legislature to reflect the Hindu majority; and the League struggling for equality between Hindu and Muslim zones; and the real balance easily and patently lying with the 25 per cent Princely delegation who are tacked on at this stage and would always do what the British order them to do.

After this will come the Indo-British Treaty which MUST be to the satisfaction of the British Government and THEN only will come transfer of power. He will be a bold man who will forecast after how many years this stage will come!

How many foresaw that this was what the British Plan meant? Who will today deny that this is what it really is after reading through the Cabinet Mission's second announcement even cursorily?

Who saw through it on the very first day of the announcement of the British Mission? One will scratch one's head in vain for any name other than that of our Party.

This does not mean that all

the illusions will automatically vanish after the Mission's blunt explanation of what the British Plan means.

What They Mean By Interim Govt.

One has to read through A. S. R. Chari's story (page 4) to realise how even an Interim Government is not certain. And this is what everyone takes for granted, the Congressmen with hope, the Leaguers with fear.

The British Plan for the Interim Government is the same as for the final solution: keep the balance of power in their own hands, use the loyal Princes there and their trusted men here on the basis of 4:4:4.

The Viceroy's proposed names are worth serious thought. The Nawab of Chattari, Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, who not very long ago used to be the most hated men in both the Congress and League circles. It will be difficult to find worse toadies and bigger opportunists who have gone against their people so often and supported the British master more vigorously.

The Congress leaders' line of action is to get at least an Interim Government with a Congress majority and blow up the Constitution-making Body, if its provisions are not modified

in favour of the Congress and against the League.

The League leaders' line of action is to blow up the Interim Government if they cannot get parity in it, and threaten to blow up the Constitution-making Body itself if it is changed according to the Congress' wishes and against the League's.

The calculation of the Congress and League is that the British dare not risk a breakdown and will bring round the other party.

The calculation of the British Government is that neither Indian party dare face a breakdown and will come round to accepting the British proposals not only for the ultimate future but also for the immediate present. They think that both the Congress and League are only bargaining hard but will come round if only they stand firm.

A Blind Gamble All Round

It is a blind gamble all round, each party believing the other dare not refuse and must come round.

The League leadership through its Council meeting may stage another demonstration of Muslim solidarity.

The Congress leadership through an A.I.C.C. meeting may demonstrate Congress willingness to stage a bigger '42.

The last voice will be that of the British Mission. British pronouncement No. 3 will tell us whether there will be an Interim Government or only British "regret" for not forming an Interim Government in the face of "irreconcilable Indian differences" and an invitation to both the Congress and the League to elect delegates for the Constitution-making Body.

The pronouncement will, of course, express the hope that the Indian parties will fight each other with words and not with bricks and continue to leave the final word with the British.

Quiet submission to the British Plan or back to the political wilderness of the war years with famine swallowing our people and freedom far from sight—these are the two equally grim alternatives facing our country.

It is not only legitimate but imperative to pose and fearless-

ly face the question: Why must it have come to this sorry pass after 60 years of a growing freedom movement?

In a slave country no political leadership can climb into power over the backs of a section of its own people and with the help of the foreign rulers. The very effort leads to a deviation from the fundamental aim, or into the ditch of failure.

Neither the Congress nor the League entered negotiations with the firm will that Indian differences were India's own concern, and that the only basis of dealing with the British could be Indian independence.

It is true that the Congress leaders wrote about recognition of independence in their very first letter and again mentioned it in their last statement.

Using The British Against Each Other

But one has to read through the correspondence about the negotiations carefully and the entire Congress Press even cursorily to come to the conclusion that the Congress' practical line was to save the unity of India against the League demand of partition with British aid as the first step, and then take up the issue of independence next.

Gandhi's latest statement, where he calls the British Plan the best document the British Government could have produced in the circumstances, only underlines the above.

The League leadership did not stick to independence even formally. On the other hand, Mr. Jinnah went so far as to declare willingness to accept Dominion Status, actively help to fight Soviet aggression and offer better trade terms than the Congress could—only if the British agreed to partition India.

The leaders talk of complete independence before the people but compromise when

talking business with the British Imperialist rulers. It is the traditional way of the capitalist compromisers the world over.

When it came to the testing point in our country, events revealed that India's political leadership yet reflects the outlook and interests of the upper class elements, to whom principles are good as the noble aim but not much use in practice.

Old Liberal Outlook Still Dominates

The good old liberal outlook of compromise and inconsistent anti-Imperialism dominates our freedom movement through the leaders of the Congress and the League.

What amazes the common people is this: how could their trusted leaders play into the hands of the British over and over again instead of going all out to build a joint front for common freedom?

Once again the answer will be found in their basic outlook in which they regard each other, and act as if they are irreconcilable capitalist rivals dealing with a bigger capitalist firm.

The issue before the Congress and League leaders was not how jointly to make a bid for power but how to grab the "power" that they thought the British were yielding and could not but yield.

If the political leadership of a freedom movement sacrifices freedom principles for partisan aims, the entire freedom movement reaches a dead-end and the leadership itself stands self-condemned, as we find in our country today.

Large sections of honest patriots agree that our plan alone is a just solution and provides the only basis for a joint front. But they argue that it is not practical because neither the Congress nor the League leaders

(Continued on page 9, col. 1.)

"SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE OF KASHMIRI PEOPLE"

— P. C. Joshi's Statement ★

IN the British Cabinet Mission's bogus plan of Indian freedom only the Princes had been assured independence and their subjects severely ignored.

They calculated that while they kept India's main political leaders busy with negotiations the 'backward' States' peoples would be forgotten.

They banked without the real host, the oppressed people themselves.

The people of Kashmir, under their National Conference and the inspiring leadership of Sheikh Abdullah advanced the slogan "Quit Kashmir" and began to rally in their thousands.

The answer of the British-propped Princely Autocrat was the same as that of his British masters to the "Quit India" demand, and inside Kashmir a '1942-terror' is being enacted in the year 1946.

The Administration also tried the new trick of raising the Communist bogey but the Communists in Kashmir are respected and valued elements inside the common national movement.

The latest reports from Kashmir show that the people are heroically standing up to terror and that instead of disruptors succeeding, more and more elements, e.g., from the Muslim Conference and the Kashmiri Pundits, are supporting the movement while greater and greater support is coming from the villages.

The people's movement in Kashmir is among the most advanced and unified of all the States. They will fight and not flinch, carry on and not yield.

But they will fight better and harder if their freedom-loving brothers from all corners of India express their fraternal solidarity with them and their cause.

The people's struggle in Kashmir is not the struggle of Kashmiris alone but the first shot for civil liberties, responsible government and self-determination of nine crore and thirty lakh States' subjects held in subjection by 584 medieval autocrats.

If they win, the entire British plan to use the Princes as their Fifth Column in the new Constitution will miscarry and the feudal filth swept away from within one-third of our country.

Whatever our differences on various issues, the Communist Party appeals to all parties, all patriots, all intellectuals and all toilers' organisations to join hands in supporting the great struggle of the Kashmiri people.

We shall honour ourselves by rising in solidarity with them and help the common cause.

QUIT INDIA! QUIT KASHMIR! INDIA FOR THE INDIANS! KASHMIR FOR THE KASHMIRIS!

● **Democratic Advance In Iran**
● **New Plans For Imperial "Defence"**
● **Communist Victory In Czech Elections**

SINCE the negotiations between the Central Government of GHAVAM SULTANEH and the Azerbaijan leader, PISHEVARI, broke down the British and Americans have been making strenuous attempts to fish in the troubled waters of Iran.

The negotiations broke down on May 13.

The next day itself came a mischievous report that "the movement for a showdown with Azerbaijan rebels is rapidly growing in strength"—betraying eager desire that a civil war should break out in Iran, out of which the British and Americans hoped to profit.

This too was in flagrant contradiction of the statement issued the same day by Premier Sultaneh in which he called "for a speedy settlement of the status of Azerbaijan."

Premier Sultaneh also clarified the points on which the break occurred.

FIRST, that the Azerbaijanis demanded the right to elect their own Governor.

SECONDLY, they demanded the right to appoint their own Army Commanders.

THIRDLY, they demanded the right to distribute the immense State lands among the landless and poor peasantry.

Clearly enough, all the three demands are essential for full autonomy, and they alone can ensure that Azerbaijan does not once more fall under the dictatorship of a reactionary Central Government at Teheran.

Intrigues Of Reaction

Reactionary elements in the Iranian Army however took the hint from their foreign Imperialist friends, and in the third week of May Iranian troops attacked Azerbaijan.

Once more this was eagerly welcomed by Reuter. One of its correspondents immediately concluded that the clash "might even involve bloody resistance and a civil war"; this of course, the correspondent goes on to suggest, would mean a threat to peace and would give the Security Council the chance "to take up as a new question such a threat on its own merits"—or, in other words, give the Anglo-Americans another chance to interfere in Persia!

Their plans, however, misfired. Premier Sultaneh accepted the War Minister's report that "the (Persian) local Commander was bribed to begin the attack" and sharply admonished the Commander-in-Chief.

"I have repeatedly told you to hold your present positions and not to attack. Non-com-

pliance will lead to court-martial."

Since the cessation of fighting, the situation inside Iran has improved; Premier Sultaneh has announced he will hold early elections and also that "he would send a mission to Azerbaijan to conclude the negotiations begun in Teheran" (May 20).

Security Council Farce

Meanwhile, the farce in the Security Council at New York continues.

On May 21, the Persian Government "announced officially that the Red Army left Azerbaijan on May 6—the date agreed upon." (Reuter).

delegate saying: "We cannot help but look upon the matter with suspicion!"

Sharp Rebuff

At the same time there was talk of UNO sending a commission to investigate the situation in Iran—but here again a sharp rebuff came from the Iranian Government when Prince Firouz, Propaganda Minister, declared:

"After the official notification to the Security Council that Iran has been evacuated by all foreign troops, I cannot imagine any pretext exists for interference in our sovereign rights and the infringement of our independence by any country or a collection of countries by Commissions or otherwise, especially when not asked." (Hindustan Times, May 23.)

CZECH ELECTION RESULTS

By Cable from Michael Carritt.

London, May 28, 1946.

The Communists won a big victory in the Czechoslovak elections.

The following are the figures:—

	Bohemia-Moravia.	Slovakia
Communists	2,206,628	490,257
National Socialist (Benes' Party)	1,238,517
Catholic Party	1,126,777
Social-Democrats	862,494	49,063
Slovakian Democrats	968,275
Freedom Party	67,575
	5,483,846	1,598,090

Thus the Communists secured just over 40 per cent of the votes in Bohemia-Moravia and 30 per cent of the votes in Slovakia; out of the total votes of 7,089,936 they secured 2,695,095 or a little over 38 per cent.

The Left parties (Communists, Social-Democrats and Benes' Socialists) secured 69 per cent of the total votes as against 31 per cent secured by the Right (Czech Catholic, Slovak Democrat and Slovak Freedom Party) giving them a decisive majority on the whole.

An outstanding feature of the election was the victory of the Communists in Prague, Czechoslovakia's capital city, where they secured 18,000 votes more than the Socialist Party of President Benes, whose stronghold used to be Prague.

But this meant nothing to the Imperial agent, HUSSAIN ALA, Iranian Ambassador in the U.S.; the very same day he wrote a letter to the Secretary-General of the Security Council, alleging that Soviet interference was preventing the Persian Government from investigating whether the Red Army had left Iran.

The British and the U.S. representatives in the Security Council naturally seized upon this, and despite Ala being forced on May 22 to announce that Soviet troops had left Iran, the Americans and British refused to accept this, the British

It is clear enough that the ground is slipping under the feet of Imperialism's Iranian agents.

A number of reactionaries have been jailed for intriguing with foreign powers.

Ala has been rebuked once more for his letter to the Security Council (the Azerbaijanis have demanded his recall and trial).

And most significant of all, the special correspondent of the British Tory paper, the Sunday Observer, has ruefully written that British influence in Teheran, seven months ago "predominant," is now "on the way to being totally eliminated."

The Iranian people have taken a big step towards democracy; it is likely that the coming elections will confirm this advance and mark the defeat of the agents of foreign reaction.

Anti-Soviet Objective

ON May 27, Reuter sprang on the world a so-called inside report of discussions on Imperial strategy that took place at the Conference of Dominion Premiers that has just ended in London.

The 'plan', in fact, is the working-out of Winston Churchill's plea for an Anglo-American alliance against the Soviet and democratic movements in Europe and Asia. Revealingly, while never mentioning the Soviet by name or against whom the plan is directed, it contains sentences which betray its real objective.

"Facing west," the report runs, "Britain would have Guinea, the West Indies and Canada acting as a natural link with the entire States defence plan." (My emphasis—M.K.).



British Plan for a new canal in Middle East.

Thus the U.S. is to be an ally while in contrast it states that the main strategic direction of the plan would be east (in Europe) and north (in Asia and the Pacific)—i.e., against the Soviet!

The main outlines of the plan, which fixes Imperial bases round the entire world—from Australia to Singapore, Ceylon ("vastly developed as an Imperial base"), Kenya, Nigeria and back to England—are generally known.

But most interesting of all is the attempt to dismiss the Middle East as being of no strategic significance today.

In fact, the British Imperialist Press is devoting considerable attention to just this area; a writer in the Tory Observer of May 12, for instance, plumps strongly for a strong British base in the Palestine-Transjordan area, which would "provide an adequate base for a Middle Eastern defence or police force."

Replacing Suez Canal

And equally revealing is the report in the organ of British Big Business in Bombay, Commerce, regarding the opening of a new canal to take the place of the Suez Canal. This canal is to run from Gaza (in Palestine) to Akaba (in Transjordan—see map), and according to Commerce,

"The Dominion Premiers' Conference in London is likely to have been apprised of the plan, since the new canal will be a vital part of the future schemes of Imperial defence." (May 11, 1946).

Thus the real Imperial strategic plan does place a considerable emphasis on retention of the Middle East as the key link between Britain's Asiatic and European bases, and this is why British Imperialism is so frenziedly intriguing and planning to keep secure its domination of the Arab people.

In the words of the writer in the Observer:

"The alternatives today are simple: Britain has to remain strong in the Middle East—or forfeit her world position and future opportunities of using that position wisely (!)"

Slanders Exploded

THE elections in Czechoslovakia have resulted in a resounding victory for the Communists. Out of a total of 7½ million votes, the Communists polled two million seven hundred thousand, i.e., 38% of the total vote, decisively emerging as the leading political party of the Czechoslovak people.

In Bohemia and Moravia (the Czech area) their victory has been even greater; here they are reported to have polled 40% of the total vote and to have secured nearly twice the number of seats of their near-

est rivals, the National Socialist Party of PRESIDENT BENES.

By voting so strongly for the Communists, the Czech people have resoundingly repudiated the slanders which have lately been appearing from the poison-pens of Imperialism.

Reuter, for instance, stated on May 25, that "the main issue" in the elections was whether the strength of the Communists in the Government is to be confirmed, and implied that they had far too many important posts, compared to their strength.

Another very blue-blooded Tory, LORD BIRKENHEAD, went even further when in April he rashly forecast that "the Communists are unlikely to poll more than 20 per cent of the votes in Bohemia and Moravia."

The truth is that the Communists in the last Government, while holding a number of important posts, held exactly the same number as the other four main democratic parties.

Their victory in the elections only shows the moderation they showed in not demanding a leading position when the Government was formed.

Rout Of Reaction

The results of the Czech elections give a decisive majority to the parties—Communist, Socialist (Benes) and Social-Democrat—that have fought for and put through the programme of punishment of the pro-Hitler traitors, nationalisation of industry and division of big landed estates.

Thus it marks the final and utter defeat of the rich men of reaction who acquiesced in British Imperialism's betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich, and who later joined up with Hitler and always consistently refused to collaborate with the Soviet. It marks the definite emergence of Czechoslovakia as a people's democracy.

May 28.

DEAD-END AT DELHI

(Continued from page 5.)

agree to it, and it is they who matter for the time being.

Our critics have not yet sufficiently seen through the limitations of the dominant political leadership of our country which are the old world liberal outlook, a compromising policy and disruptive ways. From within them there is no way out.

The acid test of effective patriotism for a slave country is whether the struggle for power is planned through a Joint Front of the popular forces, the democratic way, or through sectarian tricks resorted to that may sound very clever but only end in fiascos over and over again and leave the British rulers and the cursed masters of the situation.

The first is the way of the common people, the second of power-mad upper-class poli-

ticians. The latter always imagine that they can climb to power through political manoeuvres with the British ruling power.

They only succeed in compromising freedom principles, dividing the common people further apart and they never reach the goal.

It was the same at the time of the first Simla Conference and it is the same, clearer still, after the Second Simla Conference.

The sooner we see through the policy of compromisers and the ways of tricksters the faster shall we come out of the bog in which our freedom movement finds itself immobilised today.

The only positive way out is to strengthen the will of the common people to struggle to find a common way out. That alone will pave the path to a Joint Front and a joint struggle.

PEOPLES PAGE

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WIPE OUT WHITE BUREAUCRACY'S TERROR-RAJ

Release Patriots, Withdraw Warrants, Return Securities

The following memoranda were submitted by the Malabar Committee of the Communist Party to the Madras Premier, Sri Prakasam, on May 12th:

I. 17 COMMUNIST LIFERS

THERE are 17 Communists who are now undergoing life sentences in connection with three cases. Two of the cases are known as the Morazha and Mattannur cases and the third as the Kayyur case.

The Morazha and Mattannur cases arose out of the disturbances that took place on September 15, 1940. That day was fixed by the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (KPOC) as Protest Day, against the British Government's declaration of August 8, 1940 (Lord Linlithgow's offer to expand his Executive Council) as well as against the various acts of repression against Congressmen and other political workers.

The observance of the Day was banned by the District Magistrate of Malabar at such short notice that the KPOC had no time to meet and decide on the steps to be taken following the ban. Hence it so happened that local Congressmen and Congress Committees decided for themselves as to whether to break the prohibitory order or not.

Thus, while Gandhites and other Right-wing Congressmen decided not to break it, Congress Committees in several places under Communist and Left leadership defied the ban.

How The Cases Arose

Such defiance of the ban took place at over two dozen centres of Malabar, as a result of which nearly 200 Left Congressmen were arrested.

Morazha village in Chirakkal taluk and Mattannur in Kottayam taluk were two centres in which clashes took place between the people who observed the Protest Day and the police who came to prevent the observance. In the course of the clashes, some police officers were killed in both the places.

Cases were launched in this connection and 16 persons (eight in the Morazha case and eight in the Mattannur) were sentenced to life imprisonment.

One of the accused, Mr. K. P. R. GOPALAN NAMBIAR, was sentenced to death, but as a result of country-wide campaign supported by prominent all-India leaders like MAHATMA GANDHI and PANDIT NEHRU, the sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

The Kayyur case arose out of the disturbances which took place in the village of Kayyur in Kasargode taluk of the South Kanara district. The cause of the disturbance was the acts of

extreme repression indulged in by the police against the Kisan Sangham.

One of the policemen, who came to the scene of a public meeting organised by the Sangham to protest against this repressive policy, came into clash with the audience and was killed in the melee.

A case was launched in which four were sentenced to death. (They were hanged in March 1943). The fifth, Mr. C. KRISHNAN NAIR, was also sentenced to death but being very young, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

There is no reason why these lifers should rot in jail, while the new Congress Governments of the C.P. and Madras have already released prisoners of the Ashti-Chimur and Kulaselkharappattanam cases. By no stretch of imagination can they be considered "worse" in the eyes of law than those whose releases have been ordered.

Their Health Shattered

It must finally be stated that the health of many of these prisoners has been shattered.

Mr. K. P. R. Gopalan, for instance, is suffering from chronic dysentery and other diseases. Mr. NARAYANAN NAYANAR is suspected to be suffering from T.B.; so is Mr. P. V. ACHUTHAN NAMBIAR.

The long years in jail and the absence of any contact with their families and friends (this is particularly so because they have been kept in jails outside and far away from Malabar) have told on their health.

It is, therefore, just and proper that the Government immediately call for the papers of the following prisoners and order their release.

MORAZHA CASE

1. K. P. R. Gopalan Nambiar.
2. P. Govindan Nair.
3. Arakal Kunhiraman.
4. V. P. Narayanan.
5. P. V. Achuthan Nambiar.
6. T. Raghavan.
7. M. Ibrahim.
8. E. Narayanan Nayanar.

MATTANNUR CASE

1. K. V. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar.
2. K. Achuthan.
3. T. Gopalan.
4. K. Kunhikoran.
5. P. Sankaran Nambiar.
6. Moolaa Pokkan.
7. K. Govindan.
8. N. P. Kunhiraman Nambiar.

KAYYUR CASE

1. C. Krishnan Nair. (Released on May 22nd—Editor).

2. 9 COMMUNIST ABSCONDERS

THERE are nine Communists against whom it is suspected that warrants are pending.

Two of these are Messrs. P. SEKHARAN and O. J. JOSEPH who escaped from jail in 1941.

It may be stated in this connection that another Communist who had similarly escaped from jail in 1941 and against whom a warrant was pending was Mr. A. K. GOPALAN, who is now free. Even the Advisor's regime decided to cancel the warrant against him when the Communist Party set him up as its candidate in Calicut and agitated for his release.

It, therefore, stands to reason that the Congress Ministry should now cancel the warrants

against his colleagues even without such big agitation as was necessary in his case.

Six others against whom warrants are pending are accused in the Morazha, Mattannur and Kayyur cases. (See note on Communist Lifers). The seventh is the first accused in what is known as the Tellierry case which arose in connection with the disturbances of September 15, 1940. Their names are:—

(a) MORAZHA CASE:

- (1) P. Kumaran;
- (2) A. V. Kunhambu;
- (3) Subramanya Shenoy;
- (4) C. K. Pannikar.

(b) MATTANNUR CASE:

- C. K. Kunhappa.

(c) KAYYUR CASE:

- E. Krishnan Nayanar.

(d) TELLICHERY CASE:

P. K. Madhavan.

There is no reason why the warrants against them should not immediately be cancelled when the Bombay Government has cancelled the warrants against several political workers accused of participating in the Satara Patri Sarkar, and when the Madras Government itself has cancelled warrants against 22 political

workers accused of having participated in the 1942 disturbances.

The "crime" of these Communists can in no way be regarded as more serious than that of the Congressmen who participated in the 1942 movement.

We, therefore, request the Ministry to order the immediate cancellation of warrants against these Communists.

3. PROCEEDINGS AGAINST 200 POLITICALS

THERE are over 200 political workers in Malabar against whom various forms of cases are going on. Several of these are Communists while the rest are Congressmen.

Most of these cases arose out of the election campaign. It must be noted that there were serious fights between Congressmen and Communists in six out of the nine taluks of Malabar where the Communists had set up their candidates during the last elections. Some of these led even to physical clashes in which many on both sides were injured.

The Communists adopted the deliberate policy that, as far as possible, they or their sympathisers would not complain to the police against Congressmen who were responsible for these clashes. Even when the police came to them and demanded that they should help the police in launching cases against Congressmen, they set their face against such a step.

Our Policy Towards Election Clashes

They based their policy on the assumption that political differences cannot be solved in the Courts, but only by friendly discussion between political parties.

They, therefore, made repeated proposals to Congressmen that Communists and Congressmen should agree that there should be no police action either against Congressmen or against Communists following the election clashes.

Unfortunately, however, Congressmen did not adopt this policy. The best among them acquiesced when the police launched cases against the Communists, while the worst actually went so far as to demand police action against the Communists.

This embittered a large number of Communists and Communist sympathisers who demanded of the Party leadership that they too should take police help in launching cases against Congressmen.

But the Communist leadership did not think it wise to further embitter the Congress-Communist relationship by resorting to such a step.

It is, therefore, suggested that, in the interests of amicable relationship between the two parties, the Government itself should come forward and order the withdrawal of all such cases.

Such an action on the part of the Government would go a long way in bringing about a peaceful atmosphere and lead to effective

action on the part of Congressmen and Communists in the matter of tackling such serious problems as food, cloth, etc.

It will be disastrous for the whole people if, at a time when the Ministry has declared its intention of associating the representatives of the people in the matter of procurement, rationing, etc., the representatives of the people in the villages belonging to the two parties are fighting each other and in the process using the police against each other.

Apart from this type of prosecutions and security proceedings there are the cases of Mr. MOHAMED ISHAQ, the Communist leader, and Mr. R. M. MANAKKALATH, the Congress Socialist leader, against both of whom charges have been made of having made "inflammatory" speeches.

Police action against these well-known political workers will be the thin end of the wedge and lead to wholesale police action against political workers unless the Ministry immediately intervenes.

A still further class of police action is the large number of cases launched against the leading Trade Unionists and workers of the Aaron Mill Workers' Union in Cannanore, as also against several Kisan leaders and kisans in the eastern parts of Chirakkal taluk.

Mill Boss-Police Conspiracy

These are obviously cases launched by the police in collusion with the Aaron Mill management and the Kalliat Jenmi who by their anti-working-class and anti-kisan activities are hampering the production of cloth and food.

The sooner this repression against workers and kisans is stopped, the mill management and the Jenmi forced to recognise the Trade Union and the Kisan Sabha and to negotiate with the Union and the Sabha as to how best to increase production of cloth and food, the easier will be the solution of the present food and cloth crisis.

We, therefore, suggest that the Government should take immediate steps to:

- (a) Order the withdrawal of all cases against political workers arising out of election clashes;
- (b) Order the withdrawal of prosecution or security proceedings against Messrs. Ishaq, Manakkalath and others, if any;
- (c) Order the withdrawal of all cases in connection with the situation in Aaron Mills and the kisan-jenmi dispute in the Kalliat Jenmi's estate.

4. EXTERNMENT ORDER ON P. KRISHNA PILLAI

MR. P. KRISHNA PILLAI, the Secretary of the Kerala Committee of the Communist Party of India, has been ordered to leave Malabar. The ostensible reason for this Extern-

ment Order is that he does not belong to Malabar but is an "outsider" from Travancore, who is creating trouble in Malabar. Mr. Pillai is a well-known

figure in the politics of Malabar. He has been living and working here for the last 18 years—ever since he came to Malabar to participate in the 1930 civil disobedience movement.

He has been one of the founders of the Communist movement in Kerala and is the acknowledged leader of the working-class.

He has been the spirit behind all the activities of radical Congressmen in Malabar during the last 16 years and is now Secretary of the Kerala Committee of the Communist Party.

It is absurd to call such a man an "outsider."

Suppose for instance, that the Government of Bombay takes it into its head to call Mahatma Gandhi an "outsider" as he came originally from the State of Porbandar and externs him from the Bombay Presidency. There is no doubt that the whole world will look upon such an action of the Bombay Government as ridiculous.

No less ridiculous is this order of Externment issued by the Collector of Malabar.

The real reason for the externment is, however, the fact that Mr. Pillai has been actively helping the workers of the Aaron Mills to resist the high-handed and atrocious demand of the mill management that they should apologise for having expressed their sympathy for the R.I.N. strikers by means of a one-day strike.

It is not at all surprising that the Advisors' Government should allow the mill management this concession of removing the best leader of the working-class from among them by such a fantastic Externment Order.

It is, however, regrettable that the new, Popular Government has not seen fit to show the Collector and the mill management that it cannot tolerate such repressive orders against the workers and their leaders.

We, therefore, hope that the Government will immediately cancel the order of externment and allow Mr. Pillai to carry on his normal political activities as the Secretary of the Kerala Committee of the Communist Party.

(The order against Pillai has since been withdrawn—Ed.)

5. SECURITY OF "DESHABHIMANI"

IN the year 1943 DESHABHIMANI, the Malayalam organ of the Communist Party, was asked to furnish a security of Rs. 1,000 for the crime of having written an editorial on the accused in the Kayyur case. It was argued that extolling those who were accused in a murder case amounted to approving political murders.

It is clear that this cannot be the policy of the present Popular Government, because this Government itself has been installed in power after a wide-spread campaign extolling the mass actions of 1942.

No less a leader than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru took upon himself the responsibility for all that took place following August 9, 1942. None of these mass actions for which Panditji took personal responsibility is less serious than the disturbance which gave rise to the Kayyur case.

It, therefore, behoves on the Government that it should disregard this argument on which security was demanded of the DESHABHIMANI and order that it be refunded.

"DHARTI-KE-LAL"

Blazes Trail For Realism On Screen

I think I had better state clearly before I begin to analyse this film that if I am found using superlatives about it, I shall be doing so deliberately and with a due sense of responsibility. Of course, not being a professional film-critic and having no reputation to lose, I shall not be afraid of saying what I really believe, but I have a great respect for words and do not use them without care. So here goes.

AFTER seeing Dharti Ke Lal, I feel impelled to say that in my opinion, it is the most honest and most beautiful film yet produced in India. I will venture further and say that its epic quality compels comparison with Grapes of Wrath and The Good Earth, and emerges with honour from the test which the great social feature films of Hollywood and Russia have established.

But how, the sceptical reader may ask, can I justify such large generalisations?

I shall answer this question by way of notes on three aspects of the film.

Content

The pertinacity of instinct which made IPTA choose the great hunger of our own country shows that they have seized upon the basic problem of our country, one which poses itself before our eyes through one famine after another.

Those who might have objected to IPTA's choice of the Bengal tragedy of two years ago, because they want to forget such depressing matters, will find that in view of the threatened horrors in Bombay Presidency remembrances of things past are necessary.

But it is not enough for artists to choose good social themes. They have to make works of art out of them. And in presenting the story of a few families in a little village in Bengal, from the comparative prosperity of before the famine through the slow oncoming of the disaster which takes them on the long trek to Calcutta till the return of the survivors, the IPTA have throughout scripted and dialogued without sentimentality or wasteful personal bitterness, and with uncommon integrity.

The paper work which is said to have been done by a team under the leadership of AHMED ABBAS, is distinguished by a

poetic pictorialism which fixes each character with a few shots and develops his or her latent individuality through tender, half-broken words and silences. In this way the portraiture becomes psychologically honest and the relations of the charac-

ter mulously before the challenge of the present, insidiously presented through the juxtaposition of every social effect with its ultimate cause.

Direction And Acting

The script and the songs would not alone have made it a great picture. It is the comprehensive vision of Abbas, the sweep of his imagination, as well as the lyricism implicit in the intense moments he has felt and recorded which makes Dharti Ke Lal the first film of the last twenty-five years in India.

poser orchestrating a symphony. And the actors—is it the team spirit, the voluntary association for the purposes of making this film, that enables them to surpass themselves? I wonder.

From the moment that SHOMBHU MITRA puts his narial hookah to his mouth, he becomes the typical peasant head of the family, careworn, indulgent, and content. And when HAMID BUTT, in the role of Ramzan Dada, comes to sit by him without a word being spoken between them, their deep friendship is established.

BALRAJ SAHNI, as the eldest son, allies himself to the land without any effort and becomes the authentic lean peasant.

DAMAYANTI SAHNI acts the role of the elder sister-in-law



A scene from the film. On a Calcutta pavement. A whole village family reduced to destitution.

ters are established through concrete day-to-day talks about simple human needs.

And yet the whole film is charged with a spirit, a kind of emotional hangover, the spirit of India itself, the quintessence of customs and conventions and ideals of the past hesitating tre-

Considering the studio difficulties which sometime involve the shooting of the later or the middle parts of a film first and the earlier parts last, Abbas has handled the poise and the counterpoise of each part of the film with remarkable sureness of touch as though he were a com-

with inimitable ferocity.

I wish the man who goes mad with strain had been madder. And the young bridegroom's make-up in the later part of the film is self-conscious.

But the young bride (TRIPATI BHADURI) acts with a restraint and sensitiveness that reproduces the demure shyness of the newly-wed, as it has seldom surely been seen on the Indian screen through the perpetration of hard-bitten, illiterate and obtuse but much advertised film-stars.

Professional actors like DAVID are in tune with the rest of the cast, possibly because the team spirit prevails.

The IPTA slogan "People's Theatre Stars the People" is indeed justified.

Technique

Neither the theme, the directing or the acting would have made this as good as it is, if photography had been inadequate. Of course, there are technical lapses and defaults which are part and parcel of our present inadequate development.

Abbas seems to have learnt much from the Russians, and he has so thoroughly absorbed outside influences that Dharti Ke Lal emerges as a good synthesis of Indian potential and the West.

The hallmark of this film is simplicity, utter simplicity, and poetic sensibility. And those who know how difficult it is to achieve this with such complex material as India will realise the measure of IPTA's achievement.

The music is well composed by RAVI SHANKAR.

The IPTA Central Troupe dances with éclat.

With Dharti Ke Lal we are well on the way towards a new era of the realist cinema in our country, guided and directed by

KASHMIRIS DEMAND FREEDOM

(Continued from page 2.)

Less than 9% of the total budget is spent on education and in spite of the vast areas to be covered there are less than a thousand primary schools, only nineteen high schools and not even a single girls' college.

The Medical Department controls only two hospitals worth the name—one at Srinagar and one at Jammu—and there are none in the vast frontier areas.

Three women's hospitals are totally inadequate and each Government dispensary serves an area of nearly 800 sq. miles, often intersected by mountainous tracts, and the ratio is 1: 38,000 people.

Communications are rudimentary. An area of 85,000 sq. miles has only 500 miles of metalled roads. This includes 350 miles of the highways linking the State with the outside world.

Nothing better than this budget reveals the hollowness of such a limited experiment in constitutional advances.

These mock reforms only injured the legitimate aspirations of the politically awakened masses of Kashmir and whipped them into conducting a more intensified struggle for the establishment of responsible Government.

In fact the period following the formation of the Legislative Assembly is replete with heroic examples of the peoples' strug-

gle against barbarous repression.

At long last, as a consequence of the growing strength of the movement of the people, His Highness announced in the year 1944 his intention to nominate two ministers from a panel of six names suggested by the Legislative Assembly.

(The Memorandum then relates how the National Conference Minister appointed under the new "Dyarchy" was compelled to resign owing to the fantastic conditions under which he was made to work.

In last week's People's Age, our correspondent gave the full facts of the 18 months' of "Dyarchy"—Editor.)

Bartering Away The Future

This helplessness of an enslaved people has made the State a hunting ground of economic adventurers, and the present administration have already given ample proof of their complete inability to safeguard the national interests of our people.

In fact, they have themselves become instrumental in bartering away the long-range interests of the people of the State to outside capitalists wishing to exploit the unrivalled natural resources of our country.

The most glaring instance of such a deal is provided by an agreement entered into by Prime Minister R. C. Kak on behalf of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir with New India Assurance Company of Bombay on 29th September 1945, by virtue of which the Government have agreed to place with the company exclusively all the insurance of Government property inside and outside the State.

This agreement binding for seven years, has eliminated all fair competition from outside, and throttled the development of insurance inside the State. Hundreds of Kashmiri families living by insurance work have had their livelihoods jeopardised.

Tatas To Control Kashmir

Another example of a ruinous agreement to exploit the State resources, is the sanctioning by His Highness the Maharaja of a contract with the Tatas. This gives them the exclusive right of developing or arresting the industrial development of Kashmir.

The signing of such an agreement without reference to the people gives the surest justification of a complete transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. Complete freedom in its modern context is for us a matter of sheer survival.

The claim of the Kashmir people to be masters of their own destiny is reflected against this background history of exploitation and this new threat to its economic potentialities.

In the past, the British sold us away to feudal Dogra barons; and on the centenary of our sale, this very Dogra House is selling our future to a family of commercial magnates in British India.

Thus at a time when the new world is being built on the foundations of the Atlantic Charter a new perspective of freedom is opening before the Indian people.

The fate of the Kashmiri nation is in the balance, and in this hour of decision we demand our basic democratic right to send our elected representatives to the constitution-making bodies that will construct the framework of Free India.

We emphatically repudiate the right of the Privileged Order to represent the people of the Indian States or their right to nominate their personal representatives as our spokesmen.

We appeal to the democratic goodwill of the British Cabinet Mission not to betray the just aspirations of our people or underestimate their vital will to freedom.



SERVING MY TIME

-by Harry Pollitt

Price Rs. 4.

Published by the Socialist Literature Publishing Co., Agra.

THIS famous autobiography of the leader of British Communism is reprinted for the first time in India. A very straight and simply-written story, it gives a colourful picture of two decades (1910-1930) of British working-class struggle—particularly of the post-war trade union upsurge and the general strike of 1926.

Every progressive should read this book to learn how a real leader of the British workers fought (and is still fighting) all his life against the common enemy of both of us—British Imperialism.

They will learn too how the dream of a prosperous Socialist Britain that "will give complete freedom and independence to all the colonial countries now held down by the armed forces of British Imperialism," has never faded from the mind of this tough son of Britain's workers (Pollitt is a boiler-maker by profession) but inspired him to fight on, despite prison, beatings, poverty.

It is a courageous story that will light up anyone's mind, give him courage to go on fighting despite the biggest reverses and apparently most hopeless situations.

Unfortunately the price is by no means moderate, and the get-up and printing are very shabby.

M. K.

INDONESIAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

(Issued by the Indonesian Students' Committee in India)

Price Rs. 3-8

Published by Aund Publishing Trust, Aundh

THIS book has been sponsored by the Indonesian Students' Committee in India as one weapon with which to enlist Indian sympathy and support for the Indonesian Republic.

It is a very detailed, factual account of the story of Indonesia from the earliest days and is packed with figures and statistics. My only regret is that at times the thread of the great story that is the story of the Indonesian freedom battle, gets lost in the mass of factual data the authors have painstakingly gathered together.

However, it is a useful book of reference—particularly for those who want to know the details of Indonesia's war for freedom. It is a pity the book could not have been priced a little lower thus ensuring the wider circulation it deserves.

M.K.

WORLD LABOUR COMES OF AGE

-by Betty Wallace

Price 8sh. 6d.

Lawrence & Wishart

NEATLY got up 200-page volume, this book gives the salient facts both about the history and present strength of the trade union movements in the different countries in the world and also about the World Trade Union Federation.

Of particular value to Trade Unionists is the description of the battle to bring into existence the World Trade Union Federation—in which all the efforts of the reactionaries both in the U.S. and in the British Trade Union movement were resoundingly defeated.

Containing many useful facts and figures, this book will be useful to anyone interested in the Trade Union movement and particularly to Trade Unionists.

S. A. D.

honest writers and artists. And it may well start a movement which will sweep aside the putrescent rubbish with which the commercialists have so far fed us.