

## KASHMIR CALLING

(From Our Srinagar Correspondent)

**W**HY did Kashmir's lords dare to arrest the President-elect of the Indian National Congress? Are they just blind and do not know what they are doing?

I am in a position to state categorically that NOT A SINGLE step was taken by Maharaja Hari Singh and Premier Kak without consulting the Political Resident and the Political Department in New Delhi.

**WELL BEFORE PANDIT NEHRU LEFT FOR SRINAGAR, WAVELL HAD SANCTIONED THE ORDER BANNING HIS ENTRY INTO KASHMIR.**

This is the grim reality, which you must hammer home to the people of India. Little creatures like Hari Singh and Kak dare not do a thing like this without the white master's permission. And from inside sources close to Kak's Secretariat-I am able to reveal this information.

Why did they dare to do this? What did Wavell count on? They examined in detail the latest utterances of the National leaders on Kashmir:

- Their disapproval of the "QUIT KASHMIR" slogan.
- Pandit Nehru's withdrawal of the allegations regarding the burning of the bodies of our martyrs.
- Sardar Patel's veiled but obvious attacks on the Kashmir National Conference in the recent meeting of the General Council of the All-India States Peoples' Conference (AISPC), when he said that "people who take decisions on their own" should not complain when faced with repression, and poured ridicule on "underground" struggle. (See last week's "People's Age"—Ed.)
- The weak and watered-down resolution on Kashmir passed by the General Council of the AISPC which failed to give a call for jathas to march to the help of Kashmir.
- The experiences of the Maharaja's puppet "Hindu-Sikh" deputation, which received distinct encouragement from the Congress leaders, especially from Sardar Patel.

All this made it seem to them that the Congress High Command as a whole was not serious about Kashmir, that many of them were clearly averse to giving Sheikh Abdullah any real backing.



A Group of Kashmiri Village Elders.

Stop Pandit Nehru, there will be a sensation, but eventually he will go back, we shall have won a victory for the entire tribe of blue-blooded Princes, and can continue our terror in Kashmir with a new round of fury. THIS was Wavell's and the Maharaja's calculation.

WERE THEY RIGHT?

MAKE THE ANSWER .... NO!

Already from all over India has come the reply to our Special Correspondent's question: "Were they right?" A reply in the form of spontaneous hartals and demonstrations. (See page 2.)

The people want to march on Kashmir. Their leaders stand back and refuse to give the call. In the Punjab, the Congress Ministers actually acquiesced in the closing down of the road to Kashmir to prevent the Punjabis from going to the aid of Pandit Nehru.

These are the actions—the holding back of the Indian people's wrath—on which Wavell and the Maharaja reckon.

But how long can you hold up an ocean?

**BLOW UP THE WHITE SAHIBS' CALCULATIONS.**

**KASHMIR CALLS ALL INDIA TO ITS AID.**

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Boys of New Kashmir. "In our New Kashmir we shall build again the men and women of our State, who have been dwarfed by centuries of servitude, and create a people worthy of our glorious Motherland."—Sheikh Abdullah.

—Photos: Sunil Janah.

# Voice Of Indignation Rises At Kashmir's High-Handed Policy

## Complete Hartal, Workers' Strike, Meetings In Calcutta Police Lathi-Charge Protest Demonstrations In Madras

By wire from Nikhil Chakravarty Calcutta, June 21

Pandit NEHRU's arrest has had remarkable popular repercussions in Calcutta. Angry comments could be heard on Thursday when the papers splashed the news of the bayonet injury sustained by Pandit Nehru.

THE same evening, at a military police was also kept a meeting of over 10,000 at Shradhdhananda Park, called by the All-Parties Pre-Reform Prisoners' Release Campaign Committee (formed to secure the release of the Chittagong Armoury Raid and other long-term prisoners) to demand release of Bengal's long-term political prisoners, news of Pt. Nehru's arrest electrified the audience.

A resolution was immediately passed denouncing the insolence of Kashmir's Imperialist stooge, demanding release of Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah and his comrades, and greeting the people of Kashmir in their heroic struggle.

### Communist Party's Call

Late in the night, the Bengal Committee of the Communist Party gave a call for a one-day protest strike. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee did not give a call for hartal, but announced a protest meeting on Friday evening.

Friday morning showed remarkable popular reaction to Nehru's arrest. The Red Flag's strike call was responded by workers in thousands. Trams and buses stopped, and soon workers from factories in Calcutta and neighbourhood downed their tools.

Never before in the Red Flag's history has such a protest strike taken place at such a short notice.

Another noteworthy feature was that in the popular indignation at this high-handed action of a British puppet, party bickerings were forgotten.

At Bellaghatia, where during the elections, there had been organised Communist baiting and attacks on Communist workers, all workers came out on strike. All the prejudices which had been roused in them against the Red Flag could not prevent them rallying behind it. They sympathised wholly with the cause for which it demanded action.

The response among bhadralogs was great. Shops remained closed even without any canvassing. Babus walked to their offices, for lack of transport, ungrudgingly. Work in many offices was dislocated, though, of course, Burra Sahibs had kept them open.

Dalhousie Square and Olive Street bore a deserted appearance; the Stock Exchange was closed and so was the Howrah Municipality. But the Calcutta Corporation, to the surprise of many (because of its past patriotic traditions), did not close, though most of the staff did not turn up.

### No Rowdyism

There was no rowdyism as bureaucrats would like to call it. Two military lorries were burnt, but more as symbol of foreign Imperialist might. The police, of course, seemed nervous and they had made elaborate arrangements; armed police vans scoured Calcutta all day long;

Perhaps their notorious 'Operation Asylum' is at work.

In the morning, a Red Flag rally took place at Shradhdhananda Park, presided over by Prof. KSHITISH PRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA and addressed by SOMNATH LAHRI, ABDUL MOMIN, NIRANJAN SEN and student leaders.

A resolution was passed denouncing the arrests of Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah and greeting Kashmir's heroic struggle.

A long procession of workers, interspersed with middle-class, with the Red Flag, the Tricolour and the Green Crescent of the League marched down Harrison Road, College Street and Wellington Street. The streets resounded with slogans demanding the release of Pt. Nehru and of the Kashmir leaders and denouncing Imperialism.

### Workers' Procession

The Congress meeting in the evening took place at Wellington Square. For a meeting called on such an important issue it was very poorly attended—hardly five thousand were present. This was partly due to the rain. But the real reason for this small crowd was the indifference of Congress leaders, who did very little propaganda for the meeting.

In the absence of the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, Sjt. PRATAP GUHA ROY, M.L.A., presided. NIHARENDU DUTT MAJUMDAR, BEPIN GANGULY and KALIPADA MUKERJI spoke. A resolution was passed condemning Nehru's arrest. Despite summer vacation, a batch of school students joined the meeting in a procession.

Throughout these two days people talked of nothing else but Pt. Nehru's arrest and the Kashmir Maharaja's insolence.

In Dalhousie Square I overheard clerks saying, "This will upset the Interim Government. The British are trying to prop up the Princes and they will lose the Congress. Now they will realise that they cannot placate both the Congress and the Princes."

### Clerks' Comments

At the Muslim locality of Park Circus, I found an excited shop-keeper asking if Sheikh Abdullah belonged to the League, and if not why not? A Congress boy, anti-Communist in the past, came to me knowing me to be a Communist and said, "Now the final battle is coming. We will all fight together."

Another meeting was held on Friday evening at Shradhdhananda Park presided over by Sjt. DEVESHWAK SARMA, Speaker of the Assam Assembly, and addressed by Forward Bloc leaders Mrs. HEMAPROBHA MAJUMDAR, Sjt. DWIJEN BOSE and others.

Numerous other small meetings took place in other parts of the city and suburbs.

### Gurkha Meeting

Calcutta Gurkhas also held a meeting presided over by Sjt. D. N. PRADIAN and their resolution stated that the Kashmir State authorities, "have started playing with fire, which will operate against the autonomy of the State."

They also supported the aspiration and demands of the States' peoples and declared that the Gurkhas would march shoulder to shoulder with the Indian people in wresting freedom.

The Bengal Provincial Students' Federation called a meeting at College Square addressed by ANNADA BHATTACHARYYA and GITTA MUKHERJI. Despite vacations in schools and colleges, the meeting was well attended.

## BIKANER MAHARAJA'S PROCLAMATIONS

### --On Paper And In Fact

(From Our Rajputana Correspondent)

The Maharaja of Bikaner has announced that on his birthday, he proposes to "issue a formal proclamation announcing the outlines of the constitution" for "the establishment of a form of government, which, under the Ruler's aegis, will be responsible to the people, thus fully associating them with the administration of the State"

Wonderful! Of course, says the Maharaja, "there must INEVITABLY be an interval to enable the transition to popular government to take place smoothly."

This is his proclamation.... This is the story of two days—May 9 and 10—during the INTERVAL. This is the real face of the Maharaja. These are his real preparation for "associating the people with the administration"....

There are no bloodstains today on the floors of the Sitla Mandir in Rajgarh (in Bikaner). But there were on May 10.

Fifty kisans had come from the villages to place their grievances before the authorities. Their lives under the feudal lords of Bikaner were a living hell.

They rested in the Sitla Mandir. The Maharaja's police arrived, snatched away the flags the kisans carried and began to beat them mercilessly.

Yes, there was blood on the floors of the Sitla Mandir. But the Assistant Superintendent of Police—a wily fellow named Ghulam Mohammad—had it all washed away.

But anybody will tell you where exactly the bloodstains were. Anybody? Yes anybody, provided he is sure you are not a C.I.D. fellow and are not being followed by a C.I.D. hound. Of course, as a precaution, he will shut all the doors

By wire from Muthiah

Madras, June 23.

Complete hartal was observed in the city today as a protest against the arrest of Pandit NEHRU by the Kashmir State authorities. The call for hartal was given by the District Committee of the Communist Party, the Madras Provincial Trade Union Congress, the Madras Students' Organisation (affiliated to the All-India Students' Federation) and the Jayaprakash Youth League.

GOLD and silver markets in the city were among the first to close. By noon, the hartal was complete in the city and almost all the transport came to a standstill.

Workers of the M.S.M. Railway Workshop, Parambore, engineering workers, Mount Road, and press workers belonging to various presses, all struck work.

### Lathi-Charge, Arrests

At 11 a.m. two processions—one led by T. P. S. VADIVELU CHETTI, Secretary of the Jayaprakash Youth League and starting from the Triplicane end of Pycrofts Road and another of the tramway workers led by T. R. GANESAN of the Communist Party starting from

Poonamalle High Road—were prevented by the police to advance. On their refusal to disperse, the police lathi-charged the procession and arrested the leaders.

At 3 p.m. another procession of press workers marched through Broadway to China Bazar shouting, "Release Nehru", "Down with Princely autocracy", "Down with Imperialism," etc.

The police stopped this procession near the Flower Bazar Police Station and Communist leaders P. JEEVANANDAM, A. S. K. IYENGAR, BALACHANDRA MENON, were arrested.

Another procession led by V. P. CHINTAN and ISMAIL KHAN which started from Mount Road was also dispersed by the police after arresting the leaders.

K. V. ANANTANARAYANAN and M. VELLAPA MENON, leaders of the Madras Students' Organisation were arrested in the evening for announcing through megaphone a public meeting at Gokhale Hall.

All told, the police have so far arrested 25 persons under Section 41 of the City Police Act.

The police highhandedness, under a popular Ministry, in arresting labour leaders and lathi-charging processionists protesting against the arrest of Pandit Nehru has aroused widespread indignation in the public of Madras.

### Public Meetings

Under the auspices of the Madras Students' Organisation, a well-attended public meeting was held at Gokhale Hall to protest against the arrest of Pandit Nehru.

Another mass meeting of workers was held at People's Park which was addressed by Communist and Labour leaders.

The Buckingham and Carnatic Mill workers who were now on strike proceeded to attend the mass rally at People's Park. But the police stopped them on the way. The workers, however, refused to disperse. After 7 p.m. the police let them go.

When they arrived at People's Park, a separate meeting of the bus workers was going on addressed by their leader Mr. M. SITARAM NAIDU. Soon, Jeevanandam, A. S. K. Iyengar, P. Balachandra Menon and others just released on bail arrived there. Mr. ANTHONY PILLAI, who came leading the Buckingham and Carnatic mills workers, and Communist leaders addressed the meeting. This joint rally of various trade unions belonging to different political parties has enthused the workers.

The workers are, however, bewildered at the fact that the police should have dared to snatch away the Tricolour from processionists at Mount Road and Flower Bazar, when a Congress Premier himself is in-charge of the Police Dept. They have also been enraged to hear that the General Secretary of the Madras Provincial Trade Union Congress (P. Balachandra Menon) was kicked by a White Sergeant while he was being removed to the Police lock-up.

and talk to you in whispers. But that is because you dare not speak the truth aloud and in the open today in Rajgarh under the rule of Bikaner's Maharaja.

Rajgarh was no exception. The same thing happened in the village of Hamirwas. For the Maharaja's trained police, beating and blood-letting seem to be as natural as breathing for you and me.

**B'KANER**  
AREA: 23,000 square miles, the sixth largest state in India the second largest in Rajputana.  
POPULATION: 13 lakhs (1941 census).  
ANNUAL REVENUE: 2.8 crore rupees (1946-47).  
AVERAGE INCOME of a Tenant of Maharaja: 2 annas and 8 pies a day (official figures).  
AVERAGE INCOME of a Jagirdar's Tenant: Very much less.  
EDUCATION  
In villages owned directly by Maharaja .. NOT ONE SCHOOL.  
In 1473 villages owned by Jagirdars .. FIVE SCHOOLS.

On May 9, in Bikaner itself, there was a lathi charge. It was no ordinary lathi charge. For the police slapped a lady... the sister of the ex-President of the Bikaner Raj Praja Parishad, Mr. Mangha Ram... They dragged her to jail with the rest. They laughed when others protested at this barbaric treatment being meted out to a woman.

THIS is the Maharaja's proclamation—just a preview—divested of its pompous language, in its naked, cruel reality. Beware of the Princes, the sweeter their tongues, the bloodier their hands....

# NEW TIDE OF SIKH CHAUVINISM SWEEPS PUNJAB

## Congress Plays Second Fiddle To Akalis

(From Our Special Correspondent)

"To another great community, the Sikhs, they (the British Cabinet Mission's proposals) preserve the unity of their homeland, the Punjab, in which they have played and can still play so important and influential a part." This was what the Viceroy said in his broadcast on May 17.

But the Sikhs do not seem to agree with the Lat Sahib.

No section of the Sikhs is satisfied with the British Plan. Deep in the countryside, in the villages, each with its own patriotic history, meetings are being held denouncing the British proposals.

### Genuine Resentment

HERE is a genuine resentment among the mass of Sikhs that the British proposals compulsorily force the Sikhs into a group in which they will be a tiny minority.

The Sikhs desire to build a free life of their own. In the British-awarded group, they see no prospect of this.

FOUR seats in a Constituent Assembly of THIRTY-SIX, that is what the Sikhs see as their immediate prospects. And in the present atmosphere of hate and prejudice, the grouping of the Muslim Provinces seems to spell disaster for the Sikhs.

How did the Akali leaders propose to lead the Sikh masses in the fight against the undemocratic features of the Plan?

On May 20, Master Tara Singh the Akali leader, in a statement to the Press declared that the Sikhs were "ready to die to the last man in order to save the Punjab from Muslim rule."

### Anti-Muslim Demagogy

And then came the "call for action."

"We must now stand upon our own legs or fall for ever. Now or never. Unite, unite to a man, rise, rise to a man; and be prepared to die to a man. Oh Khalsa, oh sons of the great Guru Gobind Singh! Shall we perish without a struggle? Accursed is he who stands aloof now!"

And up and down the Province the Akali leaders took this message calling for action, struggle, sacrifice, death.

What for? To blow up the British Plan? Yes. But not by a fight against the British, but by a fight against the Muslims and the Hindus. Anti-Muslim demagogy was the key-note of Akali speeches. They talked of the "glorious days when the Sikhs fought and won against the Muslims."

It was talk of blood, of "Do or Die", but it was not British Imperialist blood the audience were asked to thirst for, but Indian blood.

The Mission's Plan was working well. Civil strife was already on the agenda.

### Nationalist Sikhs

The Akalis were allowed a free hand everywhere.

In the beginning, the Congress Sikhs and other nationalist groups fought up against the Akalis' hate-demagogy, while expressing their strong condemnation of the British Plan.

Baba KHARAK SINGH, the veteran President of the Central Akali Dal (a pro-Congress body), declared:

"The injustice done to the Sikhs is due solely to the step-motherly treatment of the British Cabinet Mission alone and in the interest of fairness and justice, the Sikhs have got to fight only the British Imperialists."

Babaji strongly condemned the Akalis' talk of launching a "triangular morcha" against the British, the Congress and the League.

Nationalist Sikhs at a meeting, presided over by the Forward Bloc leader Sardar SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR, held the Akali leadership responsible for the present state of affairs. The resolution adopted

the Congress High Command accepted the proposals.

The other nationalist groups waited for a lead from the Congress. When they did not get any, they tailed behind the Akalis and marched straight into their parlour of disruption.

The Akalis saw clearly the possibilities of lining up behind them all Sikh groups, right from the traditional toadies organised in the chief Khalsa Dewan to the Congress Sikhs.

They changed their outward line of propaganda to secure this end. While in their speeches in the villages they kept up their anti-Muslim outbursts, in their Press statements they took a different pose. Master Tara Singh in a statement denied having made any move for "a triangular morcha."

by the meeting read:

"By their reliance on the British and by isolating the Sikh masses from other patriotic forces, the Akalis have led the Sikhs to the present position when they cannot get any allies."

### Initiative Left To Akalis

But apart from making these statements, the Congress Sikhs and other nationalist Sikh groups failed to take the initiative to launch a rousing campaign against the Plan. They failed to campaign among the Sikhs for a united front with Hindus and Muslims for freedom.

The Congress Sikhs, who could indeed have most effectively countered the civil war propaganda of the Akalis kept silent, afraid to commit themselves too categorically in case

### "Unity" Of The Panth

They then adopted a seemingly pious attitude and convened a "Panthic gathering" on June 9 at Amritsar.

Every Sikh party, group and individual leader was invited with the exception of the Communists.

All of them accepted the invitation. Only Baba Kharak Singh refused to attend.

But the Akalis were not seriously concerned about the absence of Babaji. They secured the active participation of all

other groups—and above all of Congress Sikh leaders, like GIANI GURMUKH SINGH "MUSAFIR."

There were fiery speeches. "Get ready to die rather than tolerate this humiliation," said Master TARA SINGH.

A Council of Action was appointed with Colonel NIRANJAN SINGH GILL as Dictator. But the resolutions did not say a word about any campaign against the British Plan.

### Viceroy's "Assurance"

Then what is all this noisy talk of struggle about?

The key to this apparent inconsistency in the speeches and the resolutions was revealed by the attitude of the Akali Minister BALDEV SINGH.

On the first day of the Conference he took the news-agency representatives aside and inspired them to 'reveal' that there was "a small but influential" minority in the Conference which did not favour direct action and was trying to make the Sikhs "take a reasonable attitude."

I am very reliably informed that on June 6 when Sardar Baldev Singh met the Cabinet Mission he got an assurance from Lord Wavell that the Sikhs need not be unnecessarily upset.

"I am here to protect your rights, and in the Constituent Assembly you will be in a

strategic position, for you hold the balance. To get any of your demands accepted, you are free to create a deadlock." Besides this, the Viceroy is reported to have promised important portfolios to the Sikh Member in the Interim Government.

This assurance, Baldev Singh argued with the Sikh Conference, should be utilised instead of starting direct action which might lead them nowhere.

The stand he took at the Subjects' Committee meeting was:

"Let us keep up the threat of a struggle. Go on collecting money, enrolling volunteers and making strong speeches. But the Constituent Assembly must not be boycotted. There we shall bargain with the Congress, League and British. If need be, we shall create a deadlock, and we can use the threat of a morcha to strengthen our bargaining capacity."

This is the hollow inside of the "struggle" of the Akalis, of the latest "refusal" to join the Interim Government.

And the shame is that the Congress has allowed itself to be tagged on to this treacherous game of disruption in the unprincipled hope that in return the Akalis will help it to hold its own against the League in the Constitution-making Body.

### Congress-Akali Pact?

The presence of Congress Sikhs at the "Panthic" gathering was, I understand, specially sanctioned by the Congress High Command, and was the open announcement of a new Akali-Congress Pact, far more vital than the recent election pact. By this new Pact, the Congress High Command agreed:

- That the Congress Sikhs would vote with the Akalis in the Constitution-making Body.
  - That the Sikhs would be represented in the Interim Government by an Akali.
  - That the Congress would back the Akali morcha.
- In return, the Akalis were expected to throw their weight in with the Congress against the League in the Constitution-making Body.

I am also reliably informed that a deputation of Akalis and Congress Sikhs met Sardar PATEL and Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD in Delhi. The leaders told the deputation to continue their agitation jointly against the grouping, as that would help the Congress to secure better terms from the Mission.

This was the bargain which was the reality behind the Panthic gathering of June 9.

### Getting Wise To Akalis

But the Sikh masses are already beginning to see through the Akali leaders' sham talk of struggle.

While coming back from the Amritsar Panthic gathering I was travelling with some delegates from Rawalpindi. They were discussing the resolutions of the Conference.

"It is just a farce—big talk and no decision," one of them said.

Another remarked: "How do you expect any struggle from Baldev Singh or from the toadies of the Chief Khalsa Dewan? They conspired to sabotage the Conference from within."

The more this consciousness grows on them, the more they will realise that only a united campaign of all Indians against the British Plan and for a democratic Indian Plan based on self-determination can really help the Sikhs to build a new free life for themselves.

# A PATRIOT'S NOTEBOOK

### New Ports For India.

S IKA, Veraval, Bhatkal, Vizagapatam... Learn these names. They are the Indian ports which Imperialism plans to develop.

Yes, develop—as ports! All these years the British have done their damndest to keep our vast coastline dead; so that our industry and agriculture may not grow.

And yet, today, with a magician's suddenness—one, two, three—out comes an 80-page report of the Government of India's "Ports Technical Committee," actually recommending, enthusiastically, the rapid development of FOUR of India's ports: Sika, Veraval, Bhatkal, Vizagapatam.

### War And The States

What's the secret? Has Imperialism changed its dirty heart? Three facts hatched together answer these questions:

(1) The Chairman of the Committee was a prominent officer of the War Transport Department of the Government of India (the important word here is WAR).

(2) One of the "broad conclusions" which governed the Committee was: "the strategic importance of India in the development of world order in the Far East" (which, as you know, means Indonesia and other similar attempts at developing the "World Order" of Imperialism).

(3) All four favoured ports are connected with the Indian States... with the Princes' gang of butchers.

- SIKA is in the State of Jannagar.
- VERAVAL is in the State of Junagadh.
- BHATKAL at present in Bombay, is claimed by the State of Mysore.
- VIZAGAPATAM at present in Madras, is claimed by the State of Hyderabad.

Churn all three facts well. And the answer is there as large as life. Imperialism's heart is as dirty as ever—so dirty it has begun to stink.

The British want desperately plen-

ty of military bases in India, from which to fight the criminal war they are planning, from which to keep their slimy grip on their 'sun-never-sets' Empire.

The safest bases they can get are in the lands of their beloved monster-progeny—the Indian Princes. For they alone, in their own interests, will allow the White Devils to stay.

And it's the same with ports. Bombay, Calcutta—yes. But safe no longer. For these are the storm centres of the National movement. A flash and they pass out of British control.

And so—to the States, for 'safe' harbours, where British troops and British goods can be dumped at will.

And so—build up Sika, Veraval, Bhatkal, Vizagapatam.

Who said the British weren't bright?

### Monty In New Delhi

A FRIEND who is pretty close to G.H.Q. has written to tell me that Field Marshal MONTGOMERY'S visit to India has had a really important bearing on the New Delhi negotiations.

Monty had a chat with the Cabinet Mission man to man. He told them straight that it was vital to have in power in India a Government which would:

- (i) Allow British troops to remain at specified strategic points in India.
- (ii) Allow Indian troops to continue their duties in Malaya, Japan and in other places abroad.

Monty, in fact, discussed these points with Maulana Azad also. I wonder what answers he received from the Maulana. But I wish Monty had meant it seriously and not as a joke, when he told the Maulana in the presence of Pressmen:

"I must get out of this country before you come to power. Who knows you may like to put me into jail!"

For if this had been a serious remark, it would mean that Maulana Azad and the Congress had given Monty the answer he deserved:

"Quit India with your troops. Quit! And quickly!"

As it happens, Monty was joking. A grim sort of joke, laughing at our national leaders and their helplessness in the face of the British Army. We Indian people don't like your British jokes.

May be, some day the laugh will be on the other side. And then we too will joke.... Our time is coming Monty.... coming.... and then may be—Did you talk of jails?

### Sten Guns

ON June 10, Poona saw a strange sight.

The Congress Home Minister Mr. MORARJI DESAI was busy examining "Sten" guns, inspecting new types of rifles, watching a mock "riot", in which Poona's tear-gas squad dispersed "rioters."

When the Congress was in office in 1937-1939, there was a huge sensation when the Bombay Ministry ordered its police to open fire on Bombay workers. To-day, the Congress Ministry is taking shooting all in its stride—as part of its routine.

Think over this horrid fact a moment.

Mr. Desai does not seem to realise that all these guns and rifles, all these rehearsals are not meant to fight anti-social elements, but the people's rising anti-imperialist consciousness.

They are being provided, by the British not to help the Congress Ministers, but to crush the power behind the Congress—the people who voted it into the saddle.

To-day, Mr. Desai you are "examining the simple mechanism" of the Sten Gun (Times of India report).

Tomorrow, maybe, your own people will be "examining its simple mechanism" in another way—examining its effects on their own bodies.

Sten guns are beautiful instruments, Mr. Desai. But not when they are in the hands of the people's enemies—the Police Commissioners and Sergeants. Bombay expects you to take these deadly weapons out of our enemies' hands, safe out of their reach.

—Ramesh Chandra

# CABINET MISSION'S DOUBLE-FACED POLICY LEADS TO BREAKDOWN

## Viceroy's Contradictory Assurances To Both Parties

June 23

**A**FTER a week of uncertain stagnation, matters have come to a head and it is likely that by midday today, the Congress would have released its final decision in the form of a resolution.

I reliably understand that it will list those features of the Cabinet Mission's Plan which in the opinion of the Congress are unsatisfactory. The Congress will nevertheless declare that it is prepared to cooperate both in the Interim Government and in the Constitution-making Machinery provided the personnel of the Interim Government is changed in a manner desired by it.

It can be said that the chances of the Cabinet Mission accepting the demand of the Congress for inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim are few and speculation tends to be gloomy.

It must be remembered that it is the double-faced policy followed by the Cabinet Mission and Wavell that is the cause of this continuing crisis and permanent danger of breakdown.

### League Promised Parity

In order to induce the League to accept the proposals, Wavell promised that the Interim Government would be based on Congress-League plus Hindu-Muslim parity in the proportion of five-five-two.

This assurance having done its job of securing the League's acceptance was given up by Wavell with that dishonest callousness characteristic of the British ruling class.

In order to pull the Congress towards acceptance, it was assured that it would get six seats as against the League's five, and I reliably understand that in a letter dated June 15, Wavell gave this assurance to the Congress President:

### Wavell's Letter To Congress President

"Our discussions with regard to the Interim Government have been on the basis of political parties and not communities. I understand that this is regarded as preferable now, as it was at the first Simla Conference. In the proposed Interim Government of myself and thirteen others, there will be six Congress and five Muslim League nominees. I do not see how this can be called parity.

"Nor is there parity between Hindus and Muslims, there being six Hindus and five Muslims. Even at this late moment, I still hope that Congress will accept the statement and consent to join the Interim Government."

This it will be seen was the exact opposite of the assurance given to Mr. Jinnah, namely, that there would be parity as between Congress Caste Hindus and League Muslims and that the League would be the sole representative of Muslims, since there would be no Mussalman in the proposed Congress quota.

### Hopes Revived In Congress

Mr. Jinnah is reported to have agreed to one more seat being given to a Scheduled Caste Hindu representative, but it is obvious that he would never have given his consent if the basic demand of the League for the sole representative capacity of Muslims and for some form of parity had been called in question.

This is how once again, hopes were revived in the Congress that if they pressed sufficiently hard, Wavell could not reject their demand of inclusion of a Na-

tionalist Muslim in the Congress quota.

Wavell himself had admitted that there was no form of parity and that the basis of selection would be party strength and not communities.

This, it was argued, gave the Congress reasonable ground to assume that it had the right to nominate whomsoever it pleased provided it kept within the quota of six allowed to it.

In the final announcement the additional vote conceded to the Congress was sought to be balanced by the inclusion of Engineer who, it was expected, would be more anti-Congress than anti-League and in any case being pro-Wavell would vote as Wavell desired.

### Mr. Jinnah's Tale Of Woe

Mr. Jinnah's letter to Wavell was a long tale of woe listing how many times the League had been let down by Wavell in order to appease the Congress.

It was also a warning that if

of replacing Engineer by a person who has a greater right to be in the popular Interim Government, this issue has been soft-pedalled for the last three days.

The tactics of the Congress Working Committee seem to be to treat anti-British issues as subsidiary and anti-League issues as crucial.

Once again speculation is rife as to who is going to be "bypassed." The general majority opinion, despite being pro-Congress, feels that the British have left no room for further negotiation and that rejection is inescapable. The only redeeming feature from the point of view of the Congress is that it has not yet accepted the final proposals and, therefore, holds the whip hand.

June 24

In last night's discussions, the Congress Working Committee had already formulated its decision to accept the Interim Government only if the changes asked for namely the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim in the

These meetings however did not yield any fruit.

I understand that the ninety-minute talk between the Congress leaders and the Cabinet Mission consisted mainly of the review by the Mission of their strenuous efforts to form a Coalition Interim Government which would bring the League in, while rejecting its unjust claim to parity.

It seems that they made a fervent appeal to the Congress, as the strongest organisation and the largest party in the country not to allow the Coalition Government scheme to break down.

Their main theme was that though the Congress had the undoubted right to nominate a Nationalist Muslim in the quota allotted to it, the raising of the issue at this late stage could not be allowed, because it would inevitably lead to rejection by the League.

They seem to have urged that even though the Congress rejected the Interim Government scheme because of the non-inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim, they should co-operate in the Constitution-making Machinery.

In the Working Committee today therefore there was no difference of opinion on the question of the rejection of the Interim Government scheme.

To a certain hour in the evening, there was still a trend of opinion in favour of co-operation in the Constitution-making machinery.

### Bengal Govt's Circular

Just about that time, it was learnt that the Bengal Government had issued a circular making it obligatory on the delegates to the Constituent Assembly to pledge that they would remain in the section to which they had been attached, in other words, work in groups till such a time as the final constitutional decisions are taken.

This it is understood has strengthened that trend in the Working Committee which favours complete rejection of the Cabinet Mission's Plan, both final and Interim.

## From A. S. R. Chari

a Nationalist Muslim was included at this stage it would be the last straw and the League would never consent to co-operate in the Interim Government.

The Muslim League also protected itself by immediately but unofficially releasing its letter to the Press.

This, however, had the effect of lining up the entire Congress Working Committee behind Gandhiji in the demand for the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim.

Wavell's reply to Mr. Jinnah's letter is a closely guarded secret, but there is little doubt that Wavell has assured Mr. Jinnah that he will not allow the Congress to nominate a Nationalist Muslim at this stage.

Unfortunately for Wavell, his letter of June 15, referred to above by me, makes it difficult for him to give any valid reasons for rejecting the Congress demand.

That is why Wavell had to resort to a bit of cheap trickery. When the Congress President asked for the correspondence that had passed between Wavell and Mr. Jinnah, he was given a brief resume of the correspondence.

### Inclusion Of A Nationalist Muslim

But the para dealing with the question of a Nationalist Muslim was deliberately omitted.

Wavell, however, assuming an air of innocence wrote a letter to the Congress President that from the Press reports he had gathered that the Congress was likely to ask for the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim in the Congress quota.

He clearly indicated that if this demand was made, it might make the formation of a coalition Interim Government extremely difficult, if not impossible.

I understand that Cripps, following his usual tactics, told the Congress leaders that though their right to nominate a Nationalist Muslim could not be questioned in principle, it would not be wise or expedient to insist on it.

It is reported that Pethick-Lawrence is much incensed against the Congress for raising this issue at this final stage, thus pushing back the entire negotiations to where they began.

It is significant, however, that though the Congress Working Committee had raised the issue

Congress quota of six and the replacement of Engineer were conceded.

### Efforts To Avert Congress Rejection

Presumably in order to avoid the imminent Congress rejection, Pethick-Lawrence today chased Sardar Patel from Birla House to the Bhangal Colony and back again, and catching up with him somewhere on the road, took him away for an hour's talk at Willingdon Crescent (the place where the Cabinet Ministers are staying).

Pethick-Lawrence and Alexander were invited to lunch by G. D. Birla who also invited Sardar Patel, Rajaji and Rajendra Prasad.

In the afternoon, the entire Cabinet delegation together with Wavell met Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and Rajen Babu.

## "MAILED FIST BEHIND VELVET GLOVE"

### Palme Dutt On Nehru's Arrest

In the course of a special despatch to the *Daily Worker* on the arrest of Pandit NEHRU in Kashmir, R. PALME DUTT says:

**T**HIS episode at the height of the negotiations throws a vivid light on the real situation in India. No such major action can be taken in any State against the wishes of the British Government. The Maharaja of Kashmir is notoriously weak; the British Resident is the real ruler. The terror in Kashmir is evidence of the importance attached by British policy to maintaining the power of the Princes.

### Lynch-Pin Of British Plan

The Princes are the lynch-pin of the British, Constitutional Plan. The entire structure is devised to play off the Congress and the League against each other in perpetual friction, whether in the Interim Government or in the long-term proposals, and so to maintain balancing power through the Princes as British puppets.

The Princes are given one quarter of the representation in the Constituent Assembly with no provision for democratic election. No change is to be made in the powers and position of the Princes without their consent.

Behind the scenes military

and strategic plans are being hurried forward to build up the power of the States as the final bases of British power.

Hyderabad has just announced that the war-time strength of its army of 1,00,000 will not be reduced.

Nawanagar has ordered a fleet of planes with White pilots.

British air headquarters are at Bangalore in Mysore State.

It is reported that a new All-India Air Corporation is to be floated by Tatas with the majority of the shares in the hands of the States.

The Princes are arming to the teeth at the orders of the British.

It is in the States that British policy is planning to build the new cantonments and aerodromes, the bases from which Imperialism will seek to keep its grip on India and the rest of Asia. Hence the importance of the fight of the States' peoples.

The bullets of Kashmir and Nehru's arrest at the very moment when soft words are being spoken in Delhi, have revealed the mailed fist behind the velvet glove.

## India Demands

# END KASHMIR TERROR!

## Release Kashmir's Heroes!

**P**ANDIT Nehru's arrest was followed by a countrywide mass protest against the Kashmir Maharaja's terror. Telegrams poured in to the Congress leaders from all parts of the country, each declaring the readiness of an individual, a group, a whole town or a whole Province to march at the leaders' orders on Kashmir.

India's smouldering rage at the savage brutality of Princely autocracy had burst out in a flame which swept the land.

On page 2 we have given reports of the demonstrations in Madras and Calcutta.

We give below a glimpse of the spontaneous hartals and strikes in other cities throughout the country:

**BOMBAY:** 150,000 workers in Bombay came out on strike. 41 out of the 63 mills were closed, while the remaining 22 worked with a partial complement.

The railway workshops at Parel and Matunga were empty.

Thousands of dock-workers joined the strike.

The hartal in shopping and business areas was complete.

**KARACHI:** All students from the Law and Engineering Colleges were on strike, while other colleges were partially closed.

**LAHORE:** There was a complete hartal in the city. Students observed a 2-hour strike.

The university classes had to be closed for the day.

**POONA:** The Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee had banned any hartal. But despite this, a spontaneous hartal took place in all parts of the city. The Rajabhadur Mills—the only mill in the city—was on strike.

**ALLAHABAD:** There was a complete hartal in all parts of the city.

**NAGPUR and AMRATHI:** There was a total stoppage of all work and business.

**CALICUT:** All shops were closed. The vast majority of students came out on strike.

**ERNAKULAM (Cochin State):** Students of the Maharaja's College and High School came out on strike.

**CANNANORE and TELlicherry:** Complete hartal. All workers were out on strike.

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## MALABAR HEROES RELEASED

This week orders were passed for the release of K. P. R. GOPALAN, beloved hero of the Kerala people, and the 16 other Malabar Communists, undergoing life sentences in Madras prisons.

On June 20th from the Madras Penitentiary, K. P. R. Gopalan, U. P. NARAYANAN, T. RAGHAVAN and A. K. KUNHIRAMAN were released and received at the jail-gates by leaders of the Communist Party.

K. P. R. Gopalan, on behalf of all his comrades, expressed their gratitude to all sections of our people and to all the political parties whose action had saved them from the gallows and had ultimately secured their release.

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# LET LEADERS LEARN

ALL that freedom-loving India stands for—democracy and independence—the heroic people of Kashmir are claiming for themselves, and fighting for them with their backs to the wall.

The British rulers are talking soft and sweet at New Delhi because they want to net Indian leaders into the British Plan, but lathis and bayonets and bans come into play if even Pandit Nehru dare set his foot on Kashmir soil, where an actual battle against the British puppet is on.

Hands off the Princes, keep the people in check—this is the British command to the Congress, the price of the Indo-British alliance they are selling at New Delhi.

There is no room for any illusions, the Cabinet Mission is on the spot; the British Viceroy has directly sanctioned all steps taken so far against the struggling people of Kashmir and Pandit Nehru.

How did they dare to go so far so brazenly and brutally?

The servility of the Congress leaders themselves not only in the Indo-British negotiations, but on the issue of Kashmir itself emboldened them.

Even Pandit Nehru had considered the Kashmir struggle unwise. Sardar Patel had sneeringly asked the Kashmiris to take the consequences and not ask for aid.

The British rulers thought therefore that if they showed firmness the Congress leadership would itself pull Nehru out of Kashmir.

But the common people saved national honour; they spontaneously came out in hartals; the working-class everywhere on the initiative of our Party took a foremost part. They took Pandit Nehru's humiliation as India's humiliation.

They took the demand of 'Quit Kashmir' as part of their own 'Quit India' slogan. They rose in solidarity with the people of Kashmir because they are a part of our own people. When their blood flows, our blood boils.

But the Punjab Congress Ministers passed orders to prevent Punjabis from entering Kashmir.

Under the Madras Congress Ministry, Tricolours were snatched away from demonstrators, workers and students were lathi charged at Madras.

In Madras, the police ran riot and the death roll is already ten.

These are alarming signs.

The Congress leaders are pulling one way, the common people another; the former towards servility before the British, the latter towards the struggle for freedom.

The people have to pull hard before the leaders would bother to read the signs of time and bow to the will of the people.

- ★ Diplomacy Of Double-Crossing Ends In Fiasco
- ★ Meaning Of Acceptance Of Long-Term Plan
- ★ New Deadlock—What Next?

Four weeks of closed-door negotiations at New Delhi for the formation of an Interim Provisional Government at the Centre have ended in a fiasco leaving a bitter taste in the mouth for all concerned.

**T**HE award which the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy gave on the formation of the Interim Government nominating 14 political leaders to be his Executive Councilors has been rejected by the Congress and accepted by the Muslim League.

### Mission's Dishonest Tactics Fail

The arrant hypocrisy and the dirty double-dealing of the four representatives of British Imperialism has ended in a miserable failure for them.

All honest patriots would welcome this defeat of the dishonest tactics of the Cabinet Mission by which they sought to trap both the Congress and the League in an Interim Government in which the Viceroy and his stooges would be in the dominating position.

But this defeat has not come through the united stand of the Congress and League leaderships for wresting real power for the Interim Government from the hands of the British.

It has come as the accidental result of parallel intrigues of the Congress and League leaderships with the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy, in their respective efforts to checkmate the other with the help of the British.

### Result Of Compromising Policies

In the very beginning the Congress leaders had taken a stand with the Cabinet Mission demanding that the Interim Government should function as a free popular Government and not become Viceroy's puppet like his present Executive Council, and subject to his all powerful veto.

The Press reports stated then that the Congress President was satisfied by the reply given to him by the Mission.

The Congress relied upon this Imperialist assurance and expected the Viceroy's nomination to give it its natural majority in the Council vis-a-vis the League. Instead of seeking a just basis for a joint front with the League to form a government of popular unity to defeat the Imperialist veto, it relied upon Viceroy's nomination to give it power as against the League.

Is there any wonder then that the Mission and the Viceroy should make successful use of the Congress-League conflict and their own power of nomination to cook up a solution, which denies power to both and reserves it for Wavell?

### League's Undemocratic Stand

The League leadership has taken up an even more undemocratic and compromising line.

It never raised the demand of the Interim Government functioning as a free government.

On the other hand, it clung to the Viceroy's veto to give it protection as against the Congress majority.

It was easily taken in by Wavell's bogus assurance and sought to gain its undemocratic demand for parity as well as its equally preposterous and undemocratic demand that the Congress should not be allowed to nominate a Nationalist Muslim even in its own quota, with the aid of Wavell.

When faced with the Congress majority in the Mission's award of June 16, it even demanded a communal veto, which was readily granted by Wavell because he thus got a convenient screen to hide his real veto and keep the real power in the Interim Government in his own hands.

Congress and League papers are already laying the blame each on the other party for having sabotaged the interim settlement.

### Both Tried To Adapt Imperialist Plan

But the reality is that both tried desperately to adapt them-

seives to the Imperialist plan and to use the Mission and the Viceroy against the intransigence of the other, instead of joining hands to evolve a common Indian plan of settling Indian differences democratically by people's vote and thus forge a joint front against British intransigence and domination.

It is undoubtedly true that the stand of the League leadership has been more cravenly compromising and undemocratic.

This was however, no justification for the Congress leaders adopting a conciliatory attitude towards the Imperialist long-term plan or for accepting the humiliating principle of nomination.

Both accepted the humiliating principle that the Viceroy is to nominate the Executive Council and wanted to use the Viceroy's power against the other instead of joining together to produce a common panel and thus turn the table against the Viceroy and his veto.

The result is that instead of getting a free Interim Provisional Government of popular unity capable of ending the era of repression; of effectively tackling the pressing issues of famine and industrial rehabilitation, we shall continue to have the same old bureaucratic Viceroy's Executive and the regime of bungling and bullets.

### Acceptance Of Long-Term Plan

Similarly, both have accepted the Imperialist long-term plan for setting up the Constitution-making Machinery.

Both seem to accept that bankrupt State paper of May 16 as a sort of charter of freedom.

Both are preparing to marshal their legal arguments to interpret chapters, verses and comas of that document to use it against the other's point of view.

The League leaders are desperately clutching to para 19 which speaks of the compulsory groupings of Provinces.

They hope to get now autonomous arbitrarily carved out Pakistans in the North-West and the East without any reference to popular vote and expect to make them separate and "independent" after 10 years with the gracious help of the British.

The Congress leaders claim that the preceding para 15 over-

rides para 19 and groupings are not compulsory.

### Pathetic Faith In State Paper

They hope that the British law courts would uphold their interpretation and thus a united free India with complete Provincial autonomy would come into existence with the blessings of the British and in the teeth of Muslim opposition.

What a pathetic and naive faith in the sanctity of Imperialist documents and their round and hypocritical phrases about freedom!

And that too in Anno Domini 1946—the year of unprecedented and united people's upsurge against Imperialism, when Hindus and Muslims, Touchables and Untouchables, men of the armed forces and civilians, are prepared to join hands, given a

united lead, for a final battle to end the ignominy of British rule!

### Neither Pakistan Nor Free United India

It should be plain as a pike-staff to every intelligent and patriotic Indian that the State paper of May 16 is no charter for sovereign Pakistan or for united free India.

It lays down a Constitution-making Machinery in which the Congress and the League may intrigue and fight each other, the Congress seeking alliance with the Princes to fight the League, the League seeking alliance with the British to fight the Congress, while the Imperialists arbitrate inside the Assembly and outside use bullets and batons to smash up the disrupted people's upsurge both in the Provinces and the Indian States.

This is where the country stands today after 12 weeks of negotiations, thanks to the bankrupt and compromising stand taken by our leaders.

The Congress has rejected the short-term plan while accepting the long-term one, while the League has accepted both in order to score against the Congress and rise higher in the favours of the British.

Both have left the initiative in the hands of the Imperialists and are awaiting the next step to come from them.

### Next Step Can Come From Common People Alone

But the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy have no more wisdom than what they have put together in the State paper of May 16.

The next step can only come from the common people, both Congressmen and Leaguers; when they force their respective leaderships to break away from the compromising policies they are following; when they rally round a common plan of forging a joint front to solve the issue of unity of India and Pakistan by putting it to the democratic vote of the people by recognising complete self-determination of redemarcated linguistic national units; when they join hands in innumerable people's struggles that are breaking out in the States and in British India, for food, wages, and for democratic rights.

by G. Adhikari

# Railwaymen's Struggle

**L**AST week, the General Council of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation decided to call off the railway strike in view of important concessions secured and of the delicate political situation in the country.

The immediate concessions secured by the railway workers constitute a distinct gain for the workers and a retreat for the Railway Board, which in its arrogance had earlier turned down every demand of the workers including even that of referring the dispute to a court of adjudication.

In the long and hard battle against starvation wages and conditions of slavery, the railwaymen have won the first round. It has been won because they rallied round their Unions in ever increasing numbers; because through their tumultuous enthusiasm in meetings and demonstrations, they made it clear that they were determined to fight in defence of their demands, no matter who came in their way.

In their march forward, they swept aside the old weak-kneed and reformist leadership which still occupies strategic positions in a number of railways. This leadership did its worst to sabotage strike preparations by refusing to take ballot, by refusing to campaign for strike or organise it. But the ordinary worker did not stop. He moved ahead and won the first round.

We congratulate the railway workers on this victory. The main battle is still to be won. The question of pay, the fight against retrenchment, have still to be decided.

That requires ever sharp vigilance. Above all, it requires a hundred per cent organisation. The workers must utilise the coming six months to ceaselessly build their Unions and prepare themselves for the inevitable fight if the Board refuses to grant their demand of minimum pay and living conditions.

### Workers Have Demonstrated Their Patriotism

By withdrawing the strike at a time when the political situation was delicate and the food situation serious, the workers have demonstrated their love for their people and their sincerity for their country's freedom. They have proved themselves to be good citizens who in their fight for their own rights do not forget the good of their country.

The people also owe a duty to the railway workers. The fight of the railway workers is not over. In fact, the basic questions of pay and retrenchment are still to be decided. The fight for these is part of the common struggle against Imperialist exploiters.

And yet the representatives sent by the people to the Central Assembly, the members of the Standing Finance Committee, ranged themselves against the workers and in typical Imperialist fashion charged the poverty-stricken starving railway workers with the attempt to steal a march over the rest of the people, just because they dare ask for increase of a few rupees in their wages.

These representatives of the Congress and the League parties had blessed the Finance Member when he abolished the Excess Profits Tax and granted a relief of Rs. 75 crores to the Indian capitalists. But they felt scandalised when the railway workers asked for increase in their miserable pay.

The people have not protested against this open support to Imperialism against the exploited railway workers.

With the revision of scales of pay and retrenchment proposals on the agenda, the question will come up again. The Railway Board and the Indian vested interests will do their best to prejudice the case of the workers. They will attempt to confuse popular opinion and wear it away from the workers.

In the coming battle between the Board and the railway workers, a battle which is part of the big anti-Imperialist upsurge, the people—Hindus and Muslims—must range themselves on the side of the railway workers.

They must demand that their elected representatives and Ministries must support the workers. They must ask the Congress Governments to implement the assurance of Maulana Azad that the Congress will support the demands of the workers. Their slogan must be all support to the railway workers in their struggle against poverty and exploitation, unemployment and starvation wages.



# WHY RAILWAY STRIKE WAS CALLED OFF

## Workers' Unity Wins Substantial Gains

### BATTLE NOT YET OVER

Messrs. D. S. VAIDYA (of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union), KALYANSUNDARAM (President of the S. I. Railwaymen's Union), and SHIV BISHAL SINGH, M.L.A., (President of the B.B. & C.I. Railwaymen's Union), have issued the following statement:

THE full session of the General Council of the Railwaymen's Federation decided on June 20 to withdraw the strike notice on the railways.

This decision is likely to come as a surprise to thousands of workers because the affiliated Unions had not sufficient time to acquaint the workers with the new proposals made by the Standing Committee and the Government of India and the final assurance given by the Railway Board.

The proposals together with the assurances given by the Railway Board on June 19 in Delhi represent a climb-down for the railway authorities and a big advance for the railway workers.

The united strength of the railway workers has at last compelled the administration to give up its arrogant attitude towards the workers' demands.

It will be remembered that the railway workers had given strike notices to enforce the following demands:

- (1) No retrenchment;
- (2) Revision of Scales of Pay;
- (3) Adequate Dearness Allowance, and
- (4) Three months' Bonus.

When the Council of Action met the Railway Board towards the end of May, the attitude of the Board was arrogant and contemptuous of the rights of the railway workers.

It would neither concede the demands nor agree to refer them to adjudication or promise a speedy enquiry. It was after this arrogant refusal that the Federation called on the Unions to serve the notices and go ahead with strike preparations.

#### Board Sobers Down

The mass enthusiasm shown by the workers during the last month, the exemplary unity and solidarity shown by Hindu, Muslim and Untouchable workers seemed to have sobered down the Railway Board.

It referred the whole matter to the Standing Finance Committee of the Assembly which contains a majority of members from the Congress and League parties.

Those members by their unreserved support to the railway administration badly let down the workers. They supported the Board in refusing adjudication on every point; they accepted the Board's reasoning on a number of points; they supported retrenchment and turned down the demand for dearness allowance and bonus.

Nonetheless the Standing Finance Committee could not remain indifferent to the angry and indignant mood of the railway workers.

The Standing Committee has recommended, and the Government have accepted, the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the question of retrenchment. The Railway Board has further agreed that pending the consideration of the report of the adjudication on shorter hours of work, there will be no retrenchment. The Board has also agreed that the 16-point programme of the Federation to avoid any retrenchment will form part of the terms of reference.

The appointment of a Committee to examine retrenchment and the assurance that there will be no retrenchment pending the report of the adjudication, constitute a distinct gain for the workers

and a retreat for the Railway Board.

The Board's conspiracy to summarily dismiss three lakhs of railway workers can now be fought better and defeated.

On the question of scales of pay also the Government and the Board had to yield. The Standing Finance Committee and its Congress and League members let the workers down by refusing adjudication on this point and supporting the reference to the Pay Commission.

But once again the Committee and the Government had to take notice of the angry mood of the workers and arrange for a speedy conclusion of the question.

#### Pay Commission

The Committee, therefore, suggests that the recommendations of the Pay Commission should be available within six months and though the Government does not give an assurance on this point, it accepts the Committee's recommendations that the new scales of pay should have effect from January 1, 1947—that is within six months from now.

Thus, here again, the workers have secured another gain, forcing the Government to come out with the recommendation as soon as possible and compelling it to introduce the new scales from January 1, 1947.

The Railway Board has also agreed to recommend the Government that the results of the Pay Commission should be ready within six months.

The same Railway Board which would not agree to set a time limit to the Pay Commission's recommendations, which arrogantly suggested that it might be a couple of years before the Commission's recommendations were available, now agreed that they should come in operation by January 1, 1947.

The unity of the nine lakh workers once more compelled the officials of the Board to come down from their high pedestal and deal with the workers.

#### Interim Relief

While the Government, the Standing Finance Committee, and the Board declined to add anything to the dearness allowance or give bonus, the workers have secured a big victory on the question of interim relief.

In May when the strike preparations had just begun, the Railway Board only offered Rs. 3½ crores, and said that it had no money.

In June when everyone realised that the strike was coming, the Standing Finance Committee recommended Rs. 9½ crores as immediate relief, i.e., three times the relief recommended by the Board; and the Railway Board and the Government accepted it. They no longer pleaded that there was no money, that they would go bankrupt if Rs. 9½ crores were granted.

The railway workers, by threat of strike, thus secured an additional sum of six crore rupees or three times that offered by the Board. Rs. 9½ crores is equal to three months' wage-bill, or the pay of all railway workers. The Finance Committee has proposed that the workers should be given five crore rupees relief for this year and Rs. 4½ crores for last year.

Thus this year the net gain to the workers will be Rs. 9½ crores—i.e., equal to three months' wage-bill of all workers. It is as if the Government have agreed to grant a three months' bonus to all workers.

This year, therefore, the net gain to the workers will be nearly Rs. 105 to Rs. 110 per head—which might either be given in lump sum or by instalment along with the monthly wages. The workers will have to decide how they want this sum to be distributed.

In any case, the net gain to the workers will be between Rs. 105 to Rs. 110—which in cases of lower paid staff will be equal to five to six months' wages.

#### The Net Gains

The net gains are as follows:

(1) We had asked for and got a Committee to inquire into retrenchment. Retrenchment is no longer the affair of the Board only.

(2) We had asked for inquiry in to wage scales and had given six months as the time limit. The Government have more or less accepted it and agreed that the recommendations will have effect from January 1, 1947.

(3) We have secured Rs. 9½ crores by way of relief which is equal to three months' wages.

All this has been achieved by our unity and solidarity, by the enthusiasm and work of thousands of railwaymen who worked for their Unions and strike, risking their jobs, livelihood and health.

All this is due to the fact that the railway worker himself came forward and took the leadership in his own hands, because the workers united themselves under the banner of the Unions, because Hindus, Muslims and Untouchables—all realised that the battle was a common battle.

Yet there is no doubt that there were some weaker leaders who opposed strike, would not take ballot and opposed it. They got frightened, and the Railway Board knew about it. Had it not been for them, we would have won a still bigger victory.

#### Keep Up The Fight

The battle is not yet over. It is only suspended. The question of retrenchment of three lakhs; the question of revision of scales of pay—are yet to be settled. They can be decided in our favour only if the Board and the Government know that the ten lakhs are ever ready to give a fight if the demands are not granted.

We call upon the workers, therefore, to utilise the coming six months for building their Unions, strengthening themselves and marking those leaders who are afraid of strikes.

We call upon them to fight all those who would disrupt their unity—and remember that the Pay Commission will give a verdict in their favour only if they stand united and if the Board is afraid of their unity.

The railway officials and enemies of the Unions will attempt to disrupt your ranks. All those who were preparing to break your strike will now come and attempt to disrupt your Unions, because they know if your strength continues like this, they will have to grant you new scales of pay.

Expose such enemies and disruptors and stand firm. You have scored a big victory—unite and strengthen yourselves.

And let the Government know that if by January 1, 1947, the promise of introduction of new scales of pay is not carried out, if any retrenchment is attempted—then nine lakhs will again take up the challenge and organise a country-wide strike, which cannot but be victorious.

## EXTRACTS FROM A. I. R. F. RESOLUTION

THIS Council congratulates all the railway workers and the affiliated Unions on their readiness to face all ordeals and hardships in order to secure redress of grievances common to all railwaymen.

This Council regrets to note that the elected representatives in the Standing Finance Committee should have supported the Railway Board's policy and outlook in respect of the demands of the workers; nor can the Council accept the contention of the said Committee that the railway workers have demanded preferential treatment.

The General Council regrets that the Railway Finance Committee went out of its way to prejudice the issue of retrenchment by saying that it cannot be a subject for adjudication.

This General Council places on record that this interim relief falls far short of the legitimate requirements of the railwaymen in the existing circumstances, and therefore the Council resolves to press its just demands until they are fulfilled.

This Council repudiates the suggestion that the Federation has attempted to exploit any political or food situation.

On the contrary, bearing in mind the present political, economic and food situation in the country and unsatisfactory though the response of the Government has been to the demands of the Federation, in view of the terms secured under the circumstances, this Council calls upon all the affiliated Unions to withdraw Strike Notices and advise railway workers to refrain from the proposed stoppage of work with effect from midnight of 27th June 1946.

This Council further resolves to review the situation as soon as the Award of the Adjudicator is published.

(1) There was no assurance from the Government that there would be no retrenchment pending the report of the High Power Committee (whose function it would be to examine the case for retrenchment).

(2) The demand for adjudication on the question of revision of scales of pay had been rejected—and there was no certainty of an early report from the Pay Commission appointed by the Government of India to consider wages of all government servants.

(3) The demand for adequate dearness allowance had been summarily rejected.

(4) For bonus and interim relief, it was true that 9½ crores had been granted in place of the original meagre offer of three crores. But this did not fully meet the railwaymen's demands.

Complete silence greeted the reading out of the reformists' resolutions while there were loud cheers for Kalyansundaram's resolution.

#### Tackling The Burra Sahibs

The reformists, faced by a barrage from the militant rank and file, were compelled to give in.

And it was decided to meet the Railway Board and secure more categorical assurances regarding the points raised in the resolution moved by Messrs. Kalyansundaram and Vaidya.

Twenty-one leaders of the AIRF met the Railway Board bosses. Point after point was hammered home.

The Chief Commissioner of Railways was cornered again and again. He came out with the assurances:

● That no retrenchment would take place till the findings of the High Power Committee were out.

● That the Railway Board would urge the Pay Commission to expedite its report and in any case its recommendations would have retrospective effect from January 1, 1947.

Armed with these assurances, the 21-man delegation to the Railway Board reported back to the General Council on June 20.

The Council now unanimously decided that in view of these assurances, they should withdraw the strike notice.

The General Council ended after passing a unanimous resolution (see Col. 5). The first fruits of victory had been won. And the railway workers had spotted out those who wavered at the crucial moment and are likely to waver again. This knowledge will stand them in good stead in the future when the final battle comes.

### AIRF General Council Meeting

## WEAK-KNEED WOBBLING DEFEATED BY CRUSADE FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS

One hundred and twenty delegates attended the meeting of the General Council of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation in New Delhi on June 18, 19, 20.

India's eyes were focussed on them.

These one hundred and twenty representatives came from railways where every single worker was prepared and ready for strike. On their call, nine lakh railwaymen would walk out of the shops and the yards.

THE delegates as they assembled, expressed their indignation at the callous words used by the Railway Standing Finance Committee (RSFC) in its report on the railwaymen's demands.

By declaring that "the possibility of retrenchment is not a trade dispute", the RSFC had strengthened the hands of the Railway Board.

There was the old Imperialist slanderous accusation in the RSFC's report against the railwaymen of trying "to steal a march" over "the rest of society."

And yet despite the RSFC, the workers' own unity and preparedness had already without a strike, won considerable gains.

But there was no doubt that the Railway Board's latest offer fell far short of the genuine and just demands of the railwaymen. And more could be won, if the workers stood firm.

#### Sharp Division

From the start, it was clear that there was a sharp division in the Council.

On the one side were the old reformist leaders who were literally afraid of a strike. Earlier they had been prepared to ask the railway workers to accept the Railway Board's offer of only three crores Interim Relief. Now they wanted the rail-

way workers to hold back again.

Sjt. KALAPPA, who scarcely ever comes to railwaymen's meetings, was specially mobilised for this session to throw in his weight against the strike.

The resolutions moved and supported by these reformist leaders reflected their attitude. They were not even prepared to say a word against the unpatriotic pro-Railway Board statements of the Standing Finance Committee. "Call the strike off"—that was their only panicky cry.

Sjt. HUMAYUN KABIR (the Bengali railway trade unionist) declared that the railwaymen had won a "victory all along the line".

DIWAN CHAMAN LAL, the Congress Central M.L.A., declared the proposals "very good."

Sjts. N. M. JOSEPH, KHEDGIKAR, KALAPPA, SHIBNATH BANERJI—all senior, pro-Congress trade unionists, were all of the same opinion and favoured the calling off of the strike without any further ado.

The Railway Board could not have had a better advocate, so vigorously and earnestly did Sjt. Humayun Kabir plead for the withdrawal of the strike notices.

#### On The Other Side

On the other side were the rank and file workers, the men who run the railways themselves.

Supporting them was a section of the leadership composed in the main of the Communists and a section of the Royists. Among these leaders were Sjts. KALYANSUNDARAM of the S.I.R., D. S. VAIDYA and H. G. KALE of the G.I.P., SHIV BISHAL of the B.B. and C.I., JYOTI BASU of the B. & A., MIRZA IBRAHIM of the N. W. Railway.

The Royists appeared to support the rank and file, though their resolution talked only of negotiations and did not say a word about the strike.

These were the men who had campaigned and worked for the strike, in marked contrast to the reformist leaders who had done little or nothing to help in the organisation of the strike, and had in fact, in many places, actually put impediments in the way of the holding of the strike ballot itself.

#### Rank And File's Resolution

This section of the Council saw clearly that in view of the situation as it had emerged—the possibility of an Interim Government, the acute food situation and above all, the distinct surrender of the Railway Board—a strike was no longer possible.

But they stood on totally different ground from the reformists. They were determined to press home the advantages gained and secure categorical assurances from the Railway Board with regard to a number of outstanding points.

The views of this rank and file—and they were the majority in the General Council—were expressed in a resolution moved by Sjts. Kalyansundaram, President of the South Indian Railwaymen's Union and D. S. Vaidya, Vice-President of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union.

This resolution pointed out that:

# BURMA ON THE EVE OF FULL-SCALE BATTLE FOR FREEDOM

## Growing Dissatisfaction With Govt.'s Repressive Imperial Policy

"Burma is on the eve of a great battle between the people and their alien rulers," this is what one of the leaders of the great national organisation of the Burmese people, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFL), told me last week.

**T**HE present events in fact are a climax to the growing dissatisfaction of the Burmese people and of the AFL with the repressive and Imperial policy of the British Government in Burma.

Ever since the defeat of the Japanese, the AFL has been demanding the formation of a National Government and the immediate convocation of a Sovereign Constituent Assembly, free from foreign control, the elections to be held on the basis of universal adult franchise.

### Puppet Executive Council

The British Government has however refused this demand and instead set up a puppet Executive Council.

In this Council the main portfolios (Defence, Foreign Affairs, Home, and Finance) are either in the hands of European civil servants or Burmese loyalists (Sir Paw Tun and Sir Htoon Aung Gyaw).

Among the members is Ithakin Tun, who was a key Japanese agent and against whom in February this year General MacArthur issued an order of arrest as a war criminal.

The AFL was also offered minor seats on the Council but it rejected the proposal; the Myochit Party, formerly the party of U. Saw, war-time Premier and in jail for pro-Japanese activity throughout the war, however, broke away from the AFL and sent three of its members into the Council.

### 50,000 - Strong Demonstration

Immediately after the formation of the Council, the AFL held a huge 50,000-strong demonstration in Rangoon to protest against the Governor's action. The demonstration unanimously demanded the setting-up of a Provisional Government with full powers.

The Governor, however, went steadily ahead with his plan. On one side, he made pretence of setting up a popular administrative machinery; but to back up the Executive Council, he formed a Legislative Council of fifty members, all nominated by himself! He offered the AFL three seats on this Council, an offer which was naturally indignantly rejected.

On the other hand, finding himself incapable of tackling the key economic problems facing Burma because these were tackled not to rehabilitate Burma but to rehabilitate British interests in Burma (see below)

### by Our Correspondent

he launched on a regime of repression.

U. Sein Tha, one of Arakan's most popular leaders, was declared an outlaw. Mass arrests took place all over Burma from Monywa in the north to Tavoy in the south; the usual charge was that of assassination of Burmese agents, police officials, magistrates of the Japanese regime!

### Propaganda Drive Against AFL

Simultaneously, a big propaganda drive against the AFL was begun. The Government began publishing stories that former members of Aung San's anti-Japanese guerilla army were committing dacoities and terrorising the people.

In fact, these guerillas, by agreement with the British authorities, had been recruited into the British army while the dacoities were being committed by armed robbers,

products of the chaotic economic conditions which the Governor had done nothing to change but everything to intensify.

On the basis of these false charges, the Governor went ahead with his plans to destroy the AFL.

In April, as the arrests increased and the economic situation worsened, the AFL had organised a mass volunteer corps to serve the people in the fight against blackmarketing and hoarding, against repression and to act as the organised vanguard of Burma's national movement.

### Large-Scale Repression Begins

The Governor immediately prohibited military drill and volunteer organisations under the Defence of Burma Rules; and by May 20, sixty-five members of the People's Volunteer Organisation of the AFL had been arrested for drilling with dummy rifles and bamboos; thirty-five had already been sentenced for periods from six to eighteen months.

Worst repression was seen on May 8 at Tantabin, a small town. Here a demonstration of 2,000 that was peacefully protesting against the arrest of thirteen volunteers was brutally fired upon,

three people were killed, fifty more injured.

Since then the tension in Burma has increased; a huge fifty-thousand strong demonstration of June 7 in Rangoon condemned the Tantabin firing; sixty political prisoners at Akyab are on hunger-strike against bad treatment; a number of AFL district leaders have been arrested.

### Aung San's Warning To Govt.

Simultaneously, the battle against the worsening economic conditions has started; ten thousand peasants marched in demonstration at Pegu to demand paddy for consumption and agricultural weapons for the coming harvest.

Aung San has sharply warned the Government that the people cannot wait. Speaking at the mighty demonstration on June 7, he said:

"We want to achieve our national demands by peaceful and legal methods, but owing to the Government's action ... there is very little chance of a peaceful settlement. A full-scale battle for freedom may not yet come if the British give us full satisfaction of our demands. If the British, however, insist on it, they will have it."

## BRITISH BIG BUSINESS MONOPOLY RULE REESTABLISHED OVER BURMA

### Rehabilitation Of Imperialism, Not Of People

Since the British armies reentered Burma, British Big Business has made big strides in its efforts to get a stranglehold on Burma's economy.

#### Civil Supplies

**T**HIS began with the formation in August 1945 of the Civil Supplies Board (CSB) at SIMLA, whose Chairman was an old Tory civilian, Mr. Bourne; among its other four members one was a civil servant, another was, Rai Bahadur Kapadia, an Indian in the hardware business and connected with the British firm, Steel Brothers; the third was a nominee of Steel Brothers, one of the biggest British concerns in pre-war Burma, with an average annual profit of six lakh rupees and interests in timber, rice, oil, cement, etc., and the fourth was a representative of Harbrink Smith and Co., big hardware dealers.

This CSB was the final authority for the procurement and distribution of all consumers' goods; with it was associated a number of Boards (Transport, Inland Waterways, etc.) on which too British business was liberally represented.

#### Oil

One of Burma's chief products was oil; before the war oil production was entirely controlled by the Burma Oil Company, a subsidiary of the mammoth Shell combine.

This control has now been entirely reestablished, a reestablishment which was heralded by a statement by Amery in May 1945, when he promised that "on the completion of liberation such companies (which operated the oil-fields in pre-war years) would again be in a position to exercise their rights."

In November 1945 yet another Board was formed in Rangoon—to deal with agricultural products. This Board again contained men "who had practical experience of business in

Burma," and was to farm out the trade "on a commercial remunerative basis among firms which were formerly engaged in the branches of the business concerned."

#### Rice

But the most obvious attempt of all to make Burma an exclusive preserve of British capital was seen in the handling of the rice-trade.

Before the war, Indian merchants handled about 70 per cent of the Burmese rice trade—and according to proclaimed Government policy to go back to the old regime, these Indian firms should once more have been given rights to trade.

But this was not done; by the end of February 1946, the CSB refused to recognise the Syndicate of Indian Rice Merchants on the ground that opportunity must be given to a Burmese Syndicate also—and there was no Burmese syndicate in existence then; this, however, did not prevent the CSB from appointing Steel Brothers and another big British firm as its sole agents with the monopoly right to purchase and sell not only Burma's entire rice crop, but her groundnuts, cotton, oil-seeds, etc.!

#### Fake Loan

The climax of this policy of reestablishing British economic rule was reached in the granting of a "loan" of £80 millions with no fixed date of repayment.

But this loan, in fact, was not to be used for Burma's rehabilitation but mainly for rehabilitation of Burma's business concerns—which are mainly British concerns.

As the 'Labour' Under-Sec-

retary of State told the House of Commons on October 15, 1945:

"Capital equipment for mills, river transport and so forth would be recoverable as soon as the business concerns were in a position to pay for them."

#### Economic Crisis

The inevitable result of this has been the sharpening of the economic crisis in Burma. The Governor's Executive Council is too busy with giving contracts to businessmen while throughout Burma, the blackmarket flourishes and according to General AUNG SAN, paddy prices in many places have soared to seven times the pre-war prices.

Cloth prices too are high; Khaki drill in January 1946 was being sold for Rs. 10 per yard (Bombay price As. 13-8), long-cloth Rs. 8 (Bombay price As. 10-3). Similar was the position with all other commodities.

Production too is very low; for instance the rice crop for 1945-46 is estimated to be only 50 per cent of the normal rice crop and barely sufficient to feed Burma's own people—while in past years over 50 per cent of the crop was exported!

Thus the last war has seen not the improvement of the conditions of the Burmese people but their rapid worsening; economic recovery is almost negligible; the only advance made has been bringing back British Big Business.

This is why General Aung San, Burma's national leader, has summed up (Dec. '45) the Government's economic programme thus:

"The Government's policy is not to reconstruct and rehabilitate Burma, but to reconstruct and rehabilitate British Imperialism."

## WHO'S WHO IN BURMA

**T**HE Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFL) is the national organisation of the Burmese people.

Its President is General AUNG SAN, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Burma Defence Army that under the instructions of the AFL organised the Burmese insurrection against the Japanese in early 1945.

It is a federal organisation having affiliated to it a number of parties, including the Communists and Socialists, the parties of the minority communities like Karens, Shans, etc., the trade unions, student and peasant organisations, and stands for immediate freedom.

It is generally agreed that if elections were held today, the AFL would win a complete majority.

Outside the AFL, the only organised party is the Myochit Party of U. Saw, Premier of Burma at the time of the Japanese invasion, who was detained during the war years on the ground that he was in contact with the Japanese.

### Why U. Saw Was Brought Back

U Saw was brought back by the British according to the United Press of America to be used "to counteract the growing strength of General Aung San and the AFL."

U Saw, however, has been too clever to line up with the Government, instead he cleverly put forward a demand exclusively his own—that unless the Governor-dominated Executive Council is replaced by a Ministry with the same rights as the Ministry under the 1935 Constitution had, the Myochit Party would withdraw its members from the Council.

The Governor, however, rejected this demand and two of three Myochit members have resigned, the third was expelled for refusing to resign.

The only other important Burmese politicians are the open agents of Imperialism, Sir Paw Tun, now Home Member, and Sir Htoon Gyaw, Finance Member. These loyalists have licked the boots of the British all their lives.

## WHO RULES BURMA?

**B**URMA is governed by the Governor, an old Tory M.P. and formerly Chamberlain's Minister of Agriculture, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith. He has supreme powers invested in him by the White Paper of May 1945.

The Executive Council and the Legislative Council that he has appointed are subject entirely to him and he has the last word over all matters.

According to the White Paper, he is entitled to govern in this totally autocratic manner until December 1948, though the Labour Government announced last week that elections would be held in April 1947, after which a new government would be formed.

The nature of the franchise, the powers of the new Government to come into existence after the elections, the powers of the Governor, etc., have all been left undefined, and even the date given for elections is only a tentative one.

Thus the one certain feature of the present administration in Burma is that it is a British Imperial administration which has no vestige of popular support.

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