

Bleeding

Punjab



Warns

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FOREWORD

Premier Nehru has made a stirring appeal to all of us to come out in the open to fight back the riot wave that threatens to engulf our nation.

Only a clear knowledge of who are the enemies of our nation who wrought on the Punjab this unprecedented tragedy and brought our people to this pass, will rouse that holy indignation which alone will call forth that popular activity which is needed to liquidate these enemies. Only then can we give effective and all-in support to our popular governments who so badly need it today.

Dhanwantri's story of the Punjab gives us such a powerful weapon. It exposes the real face of the conspirators. It shows that we are not faced with an ordinary riot but a big conspiracy to weaken our popular governments, to drown our freedom in fratricidal blood, to sabotage our national reconstruction and disintegrate our national and democratic movements.

Only if we learn the lessons of the Punjab shall we be able to launch a People's Peace offensive against the riot offensive of imperialism and its agents.

It is a grave danger and serious crisis that faces our nation.

We will need all the clarity of understanding and the undying faith of Mahatma Gandhi in Hindu-Muslim unity and the personal courage of Pandit Nehru to be able to play our role in the battle for communal peace and democratic progress.

P. G. Joshi.

THE AUTHOR

DHANWANTRI, the author was a comrade-in-arms of Bhagat Singh, was the President of the Lahore District Congress Committee for six years and is a prominent Communist leader of the Punjab.

As one of Bhagat Singh's fellow fighters and an organiser of the Nawjawan Bharat Sabha, he was sentenced to 7 years jail in the Delhi Conspiracy Case after a trial which lasted for 2½ years. He spent over 3 years in that living hell, the Andamans where he along with many other terrorist revolutionaries came over to Communism.

Released in 1939, he was soon elected by Congressmen as the President of the Lahore District Congress Committee but he was not allowed to remain long outside. He was re-arrested in 1940 and detained in jail for six more years without trial and was released only after the Congress-Khizar Ministry in the Punjab was formed in 1946.

Out again at last, he threw himself into the trade union and kisan sabha movements. During the recent, biggest ever, riots in the Punjab he worked his hardest to fight back the riot flames.

Countrymen . . .

In the name of my people . . .

BEWARE !

Dhanwantri

I WAS IN THE PUNJAB ever since my release from jail in 1946. I was there when the first riots began in March this year and saw how it was allowed to spread on and on till Punjab became a veritable hell in August.

I left Amritsar only on August 26, for Delhi to meet Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, the leaders of our national government and tell them all that had happened and who were the incendiaries that let all Punjab aflame. With me was Baba Gurumukh Singh, the veteran revolutionary who had put in 27 years in imperialist prisons and whose blood was boiling at the way Punjab was reduced to a bloody shambles.

The story I give below, except that it is more detailed, is the story we told Pandit Nehru. It is based on what we ourselves saw and knew and on the reports of our co-workers in the Party, the trade union and Kisan Sabha movement. It is based on our talks with Congressmen, Leaguers and many people at refugee camps and at railway stations.

It is the story of the agony that is the Punjab today.

NATURE OF DISTURBANCES

What happened in the Punjab cannot be called a riot. It was a regular war of extermination of the minorities, of Sikhs and Hindus in Western Punjab and of Muslims in Eastern Punjab.

It cannot be compared to Calcutta or Noakhall, Bihar or even to Rawalpindi for, in all those cases it was mobs of one community that took leading part in killing, looting and burning the minority in the area, their communal passions being roused to a pitch of frenzy and savagery.

In the Punjab, however, in the recent biggest killing ever seen, it was the trained bands equipped with fire-arms and modern weapons that were the main killers, looters and rapers. These were the storm troops of the various communal parties such as the National Guards of the Muslim League in the Western Punjab, and the Shahidi Dal

of the Akalis and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh of the Mahasabha in the Eastern Punjab. They were actively aided and often actually led by the police and the military in committing the worst atrocities.

In violence, in brutality, in the number killed (which Sgt. Shri Prakasha, India's Ambassador to Pakistan places at 15 lakhs), in the use of plenty of modern deadly weapons, in the devastation spread over 14 districts of the Punjab and in the way in which the police, the military and the entire administration was geared not to stop the riots but to spread it—the Punjab tragedy is without parallel.

If we remember that all this happened on the eve of and during the formation of the two popular Governments of India and Pakistan, that it happened in the Punjab alone while all over the rest of India including Bengal scenes of mass fraternisation were seen on August 15, then we will understand what a decisive role was played in all this by the Section 93 rule that Governor Jenkins had kept clamped firmly on the Punjab since March this year.

The role played by the British bureaucrats, their design and the devilish skill with which they played their game is nowhere seen so clearly as in the Punjab.

PEACE AND PROVOCATION

Everyone knows that despite Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar and Garhmukhteshwar, despite the riot wave unleashed over the rest of India, the Punjab had no trouble throughout 1946.

The Muslim League's civil disobedience which began as a protest against the banning of the Muslim National Guards was continued even after the ban was withdrawn (within a week) as pressure tactics against the Khizar-Congress ministry. Despite the factional aim of this movement, it was run on non-communal lines. Slogans of taking Pakistan by force were always given but anti-imperialist unity slogans such as "Hindu Muslim bhai bhai; sabki dushman naukarshahi" were also heard often. Courts and prisons were attacked by the Muslim masses. Hindus and Sikhs and their lives and property were quite safe then. In fact many Sikhs and Hindus used to attend League meetings in those days and when they heard League speakers declare that the League's fight was not against them but against the bureaucracy many Hindus and Sikhs expressed their gladness at the fact that Muslims were also at last coming forward to fight the British.

This was not all what the Imperialist wanted.

Soon after the provocative Attlee Declaration of February 20 had laid the basis for division of India, Governor Jenkins asked Khizar Hyat, the life-long trusted stooge of

the British to resign and get out of the way. His plan was simple. It was to rouse hopes in the League of being able to form a ministry and rouse the anger of the Akali Sikhs and Hindus at such a prospect. Overnight the atmosphere in the whole of the Punjab became charged with communal poison.

It is not an accident that the first riots in the Punjab broke out in Lahore that very day. By using one against the other he kept every popular party out of Government and used his Section 93 rule not to prevent and stop riots but to provoke and spread it.

In fact the riots spread most quickly and were most violent precisely in the five districts of Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Amritsar and Jullundur, all of which had British civilians as Deputy Commissioners.

I shall give you a few instances of how Jenkin's rule gave full room for riots to spread.

SPREADING THE RIOTS

In Lahore and Amritsar, stabbings, killings and arson were going on.

But while Amritsar was under a 24-hour curfew for 4 days and even we in Lahore only 30 miles away could not get the news that Muslims in Chawk Pragdas were murdered by Sikhs, in far away Rawalpindi the news was already going the rounds, inflaming the Muslims. How did it get there, when press and private agencies were rigidly censored and prevented from sending out news of the riots in Lahore and Amritsar? That is a question only the Jenkins administration can answer.

In Rawalpindi, the British Deputy Commissioner was approached by leaders of the Muslim League and other parties who warned him that trouble was expected and he should take precautionary measures. The Deputy Commissioner said he was "watching the situation closely." The next day stabbing began and again the leaders met him and said effective measures must be taken, otherwise the trouble might spread to the countryside. The D.C. told them he was taking all necessary steps, that they should keep calm and not get panicky. On the 5th the trouble broke out in a large way in the rural areas round Pindi. Mobs were out looting, killing and burning and committing unspeakable atrocities. When Congress leaders of Pindi rushed to the D.C. for drastic steps to save the minorities, do you know what the British bureaucrat replied? He said:

"Go to Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru—They are the Government now. You want the British to quit. Why do you come to the British for help?"

And it is in Rawalpindi under such a Deputy Commissioner that the first round of riots in the Punjab reached its peak of carnage and savagery.

I shall give another instance of how callously and devilishly the British bureaucrat delighted in the spread of riots.

Some Hindu and Sikh leaders went and met Macdonald, a notorious British civilian who was the Chief Secretary of the Punjab Government. They told him of the miseries of the refugees and asked him to give urgent Government help to settle them elsewhere. To this, Macdonald replied:

"Don't worry. They will soon forget their miseries when they see Rawalpindi being avenged in Central and Eastern Punjab."

He knew what was coming and seemed to welcome the idea of riots spreading in the form of retaliation.

That is how Punjab got its first round of riots and the basis was laid for the next and other rounds. That is how the British bureaucracy acted as the arch-incendiary—first lighting the spark and then spreading the flames.

PREPARATION FOR RETALIATION

Sure enough, as Macdonald had told in advance, the spirit of retaliation was beginning to be roused in Central and East Punjab by the RSS among the Hindus and by the Akalis among the Sikhs.

The Akali leadership has for some years now been forging close links with the rulers of Sikh States like Patiala, Faridkote, etc. Because of this they have been claiming to be opposed to both the Congress and the League and have been relying mostly on the British rulers to concede their demands.

When refugees came straining from Rawalpindi with their tales of woe and horror and the unspeakable atrocities committed on the minorities there, the Akali leaders used them to rouse the spirit of retaliation among the Sikh peasants. They sent refugees to each one of the Gurdwaras and through them and their own agents they spread the poisonous idea of retaliation against Muslims. They began to form the Shahidi Dal (Martyrs' Battalion) in every Sikh village, each unit consisting of 16, six to be armed with rifles and all the rest with swords and spears. They also formed bands of horsemen and soon jeeps and motor trucks were brought in for use by this armed force. In this work not only the princes but the big landlords of Amritsar District like Majithas and Harindar Singh of Rajhansi lent their patronage and help.

In the towns, the R.S.S. was rapidly gaining ground. The Congress in the Punjab has always been weak being

based mainly on the traders and professionals of the towns. It grew weaker since it allied with the toady Unionists and having for long carried on a bitter agitation against the League and its demands for partition, it became more and more tongue-tied as it moved nearer and nearer acceptance of division. Thus the R.S.S. took leadership of the towns, roused the spirit of retaliation on the communal slogan of Akhand Hindustan by force. It was backed by the big blackmarketeers of the towns. Among its financiers and patrons were men like Bawa Gurumukh Singh, multi-millionaire of Amritsar and Gokulchand Narang, the industrial magnate of the Punjab. The leader of the R.S.S. was Rai Bahadur Badri Das, an old communalist. The R.S.S. which was a volunteer organisation on an all-India basis, in the Punjab took to arming its members with daggers and swords but soon got revolvers and other fire-arms. They also set about preparing bombs for attacking Muslims.

On the other side in Lahore in West Punjab, the Muslim National Guards were similarly arming themselves with help from Bahawalpur, and from the Frontier Province. They had the backing of the most reactionary toady section of big landlords of Pakistan of whom Feroz Khan Noon is today the most active.

ROLE OF THE PRINCES

All those storm troop bands became equipped with modern arms, quite easily.

All of a sudden, thousands of rifles, hand grenades, sten guns, mortars, etc., sprang up in the Punjab. Where did they come from? We will get the answer to it if we remember that the Punjab is the one province which has a number of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh States right inside its borders, e.g., Patiala, Jhind, Nabha, Faridkot, Malakotla, Bahawalpur, Kapurthala.

The princes of these States like their British masters were finding that the popular movement for freedom and democracy was gathering strength, a threat to their autocracy and privileges. So they too went all-out to help the bands and use the refugees to rouse the spirit of retaliation among the people and win for themselves a measure of popular support.

For instance Patiala opened a big refugee camp for the refugees from Rawalpindi. Thousands of them, many of whom were rich landlords and traders came there. It is reported that nearly 8 crores of rupees were deposited by them in the Patiala State Bank. From here the refugees spread the tales of atrocities and praised the Maharaja who was so kind and good as to give them ready shelter and even land.

Faridkot, it is widely said in Ferozpur, supplied a number of jeeps to the Akali bands.

Bahawalpur supplied arms to the Muslim National Guards and Kapurthala opened a training camp for the R.S.S. bands.

Thus the Indian States became the hotbeds of war preparations, cold deadly preparations for a war of extermination.

It is from Patiala for example that bands used to operate against moving trains and the attack on the Pakistan Special on August 10 took place here.

It will thus be seen that next to the British imperialists, their stooges the Indian Princes were the incendiaries, because this way they could split the rising popular movement in their own States and get even in Eastern Punjab a Government which would be amenable to their own influence.

IN THE TOWNS

All the propaganda for retaliation and brisk preparations for it were given a free hand by the Jenkins rule.

In Lahore and Amritsar, stabbings of members of the minority communities went on unchecked, and so did arson. Curfew was imposed frequently but it was only to get all decent men inside their own houses so that they may not see the nefarious game going on during those hours.

For it is a fact that everyone who was in Lahore and Amritsar during the months of April to August would testify that the biggest arson was committed during curfew hours with the police actively assisting or passively looking on.

Respectable citizens or shop-keepers who came out to put out the fire were shot down by the police, not the gangs that went about committing arson. That was the role of the police force led by Sir John Bennet, I.G.P.

For example the *Tribune* editorially asked the question, "If a citizen engaged in extinguishing a fire is shot at by the police, what is he to do?" Hindus and Sikhs who were the minority and were more the victims than aggressors in Lahore were themselves arrested and put in jails.

The biggest single case of arson, the setting fire to the big Hindu area at Shahalim Gate was carried out as everyone in Lahore knows, when a civilian official, Mr. M. G. Cheema, an assistant magistrate of Lahore personally supervised this operation. A strong Muslim police party and a gang of Muslims equipped with quantities of petrol systematically set fire to the whole bazaar till it was burnt down to ashes.

The biggest single action by the R.S.S. and the first when bombs, rifles and revolvers were used was an attack in April on Rajgarh, a Muslim suburb of Lahore and several

Muslims were killed. It was said in Lahore at the time that the police officer of the area, a Hindu, knew about it and that he had in fact got the leader of the raid in his hands 15 minutes before the raid, but he let him go. And within a few minutes the attack was mounted and the massacre took place. The officer was first suspended but soon forgiven and reinstated.

It was the same story in Amritsar. The police actively helping the rioting gangs and punishing innocent people.

Thus Lahore and Amritsar burnt as no two cities ever burnt. Refugees were steadily leaving the cities, because life was becoming impossible for them there.

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Sikh peasantry of the central districts of the Punjab and particularly of the Doaba, the land lying between the Beas and the Sutlej, have the most patriotic traditions.

It was here that successive waves of the national movement and the patriotic movements of the Sikhs such as the Akali and Babar Akali movements had their base.

So when the present Akali leadership tried to provoke them to retaliation on the Muslims here, the Sikh peasants with faultless patriotic logic asked, "If it was wrong for the Muslims to kill the Sikhs in Rawalpindi, how can it be right for us to kill the Muslims here?"

Desperate attempts were made to draw them into the rioting.

For instance, during April, we got reports pouring in from the Doaba villages, that the Akali bands were secretly setting fire to the grain stocks of the Sikh peasants and spreading stories that the Muslims of the area had done it.

The police also was actively playing the same game. In the village Kokri near Moga a police head-constable was caught red-handed in the act of burning a wheat stock.

Soon, by May end, isolated murders of stray Muslims began.

When armed Akali bands moving in fast-moving jeeps came tearing round the villages the division of the countryside into Muslim and Sikh villages was brought about. Muslims who were not afraid of their own Sikh brethren in villages started leaving the villages for they knew that though there was no danger from inside their own villages there was little protection against death coming from outside through these bands. They left and concentrated in some villages along with other Muslims.

Only when this division had taken place was it easy for the police and the armed bands to pull the Sikh peasant into the riot fever. Many reports came to us of how police and other Government officials told Sikh villages that

neighbouring Muslim villages were arming to the teeth and they would be fools if they did not arm themselves for self-defence. And thus warlike preparations began in almost every village. Spears and swords were furnished and the entire countryside was frantically arming in the fear that an attack was coming from the neighbouring Sikh or Muslim villages.

Nevertheless, the mass of peasantry did not get into the rioting on a large scale except that when Muslims started fleeing for their lives in fear of the armed bands, a large number of Sikh villagers went out fired with the lust for loot, but that was in the last stage after two or three months of this unrestrained lawlessness, this spirit of death and destruction was in the air and active encouragement was given by police and military to the looters.

THE BOUNDARY FORCE

The Mountbatten Award for division of the Punjab and the provocative use of the phrase "and other factors" that would be considered by the Boundary Commission added fuel to the fire.

Extravagant claims and counter-claims were made.

The Akalis who demanded a division of the Punjab knowing that the Sikhs would be split went on assuring the Sikhs that Mountbatten had given them an assurance that property rights, religious shrines, etc. would be considered as factors justifying the decision of boundary in their favour. They said they would get up to the Chinab or at least the canal colony areas and Nankana Sahib, the famous Gurudwara of Guru Nanak.

The League leaders put up their claims of getting Pakistan boundary fixed on Jumna and so on.

Thus each side was rousing hopes and inevitably turning the anger of each community against the other.

The Akali leaders were also forming Shahidi Dals in Western Punjab towns like Sialkot, Sheikhupura, Multan, Pindi, etc. and were continuing the attacks on Muslims in Central Punjab. In these conditions, deputations from Sikhs came from Western Punjab to Master Tara Singh. They told him that if the attacks on Muslims in Eastern Punjab were not stopped soon, retaliation would begin in Western Punjab and they would be massacred. They even said that if their lives and property were safe, they had no objection to staying in Pakistan areas. But the Akali leadership was following a policy not based on the interests of the Sikh people but which expressed the expansionist aims of the Sikh Princes. The Akali leaders ignored the entreaties of their own people from Western Punjab and

kept on giving the boastful slogan of 're-establishing the empire of Ranjit Singh.'

It is in these circumstances that the announcement came that the Boundary Force would be sent to take control of the 12 districts of the Punjab namely, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Lahore, Montgomery, Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, Sialkot and Gujranwala.

The Boundary Force was to take charge on August 1 the very day fixed for a general attack on the Muslim villages by the Akali bands. The attack on July 30 night on the Muslims in the village Nagoke of Jathedar Udham Singh, the organiser of the Shahidi Dal became the signal for a general flare-up.

In the Amritsar district alone, hundreds of armed men began to attack the Muslims wherever they were found, attacking village after village, Beas, Tarantaran and Majitha areas being the first to be attacked and from there the trouble spread all over the district. By August 5 it had assumed serious proportions, the police and civil administration taking sides openly. It spread to the Doaba and Gurdaspur districts.

On August 4, Maj.-General Rees, Head of the Boundary Force, held a Press Conference in Lahore. He declared that his Boundary Force was a "neutral", "very large" force officered by British officers, that "when the military is out on the job, they are not out for fun. They mean business." He said that though this military would co-operate with the civil authorities it had powers to act independently and that it was under the "direct orders" of the Supreme Commander, Auchinleck. British tanks were sent round the Lahore streets to reinforce the series of assurances that Rees had given.

The fact is that if the Boundary Force had not been sent to the Punjab at all, probably we would have had less people killed and less devastation. As it is it acted as the greatest single force that spread the destruction.

It did not arrest a single person while committing arson, though large-scale arson went on under its nose. It did not disarm or arrest a single band of either the National Guards Shahidi Dal or R.S.S. It did not even touch their arms and ammunition stores, despite the fact that their locations were public knowledge.

In fact in the Punjab, it is a common saying now that a British officer with a Muslim regiment went League, with a Sikh regiment went Akali and with a Hindu regiment went R.S.S.

In Lahore Railway Station non-Muslim refugees who were trying to escape from Lahore were shot down by the Baluchi regiment or they looked on while the Muslim National Guards massacred these refugees. It is estimated

that not less than 3,000 to 4,000 were thus murdered on 13th and 14th.

In the same station, the Dogra regiment also of the Boundary Force, was shooting down Muslim refugees from Amritsar who were arriving in Lahore thinking it would be safe.

Both were units of the Boundary Force, both were officered by the British and functioning under "direct orders" of the Supreme Commander and still both were shooting down defenceless refugees quite "impartially"! In Amritsar station Sikh regiments were similarly protecting the Akali bands who were finishing off the Muslim refugees.

In Sheikhpura, the Baluchi regiment there, machine-gunned the Hindu and Sikh minorities and it is reported in the press that thousands were thus killed by the military of the Boundary Force.

That was the criminal role played by the Boundary Force.

ATROCITIES UNTOLD

The climax came when on August 11, in Amritsar District the Muslim police were asked to disarm and asked to go on leave for a week and report in Lahore afterwards. This order was given on August 11 and I who was in Amritsar knew about it only that day, because it was a sudden order, which no one except the officials concerned knew.

But in Gujranwala, in West Punjab, on the 9th and 10th, the rumour was already going round among the Muslims that the Sikh police in Amritsar had decided to kill every Muslim, and there would be no Muslim police to save them. Retaliation was being expected there! Who could have set that rumour going in West Punjab? Only the Jenkin's administration and the Boundary Force can answer.

The news that the Muslim police in East Punjab and the Sikh police in Lahore and West Punjab were disarmed and sent away spread big panic among the minorities. For they knew that the police were playing an active role in the communal killing and were terror-stricken that their only hope of some protection from the police of their own community would be no longer available.

Thus streams of Muslims in Amritsar and Hindus and Sikhs from Lahore started rushing away to get out of the cities as soon as they could. They were attacked on the way by the armed bands. Bombs were thrown on the fleeing refugees, rifle and revolver fire mowed them down and many were put to death with kirpans and spears.

These armed bands, fully drunk with liquor and with the lust for blood were roaming and falling on the poor vic-

tims actively assisted by the Hindu and Sikh police and by units of the Boundary Force. Similar scenes were enacted in Lahore.

The whole of the city of Amritsar was burning like Lahore on the other side. Looting on an incredible scale was going on, and there was such a complete collapse of all social morals that there may be hardly a few in Amritsar who had not participated either in the looting or in a share of the loot.

From the 10th when I reached Amritsar upto the 18th when Pandit Nehru left Punjab after his first hurried tour, I could hear the reports of rifle fire and bomb explosions day and night. Thousands of shots must have been fired and hundreds of bombs must have exploded. The city was under curfew for 22 hours daily but looting went on. The military fired many rounds but only in the air or on the Muslims. In some cases the Baluchi army of the Boundary Force opened fire on Hindus and Sikhs.

Hundreds of Muslim women were raped or abducted from Amritsar. In one instance a batch of Muslim women were stripped naked and made to parade in the streets of Amritsar. There were even public raping of women. All humanity, all chivalry and decency seemed to have gone.

But there was a deep plan to provoke and spread the savagery. For instance we received a report from Gujranwala in West Punjab that as early as August 6, Muslim Maulvis were inciting their congregations at Friday prayers to retaliation. They told the congregation that in Amritsar Muslim women's breasts had been cut and that Muslim children's heads had been displayed on spear heads. The very next day there was terrible arson and looting. Evacuation of Sikhs and Hindus began but trains were attacked and the refugees were massacred. By 14th Karnoke, Wazirabad, Gakhar, Aminabad, Akalgarh, Ramnagar, etc. were all involved. On 14th a train leaving for Jammu was attacked by the Muslims and all women and child refugees were put to death.

In the streets of Sialkot, Sikh and Hindu women were paraded naked in public and mass raping took place, same as in Amritsar. The same was repeated in Sheikhpura where parents killed their own daughters to save them from dishonour.

Thus thousands were killed in both parts of the Punjab, and corpses hacked and mangled were lying all over in the fields, on the roads, along the railway track and hundreds on the station platforms themselves.

Whichever side we went, one could see scores of dead bodies of men, women and children. At first attempts were made to bring the dead bodies for postmortem to the Hospital, then the corpses were lying over such a wide area that Doctors were sent out to those areas. Soon the dead bodies

were so many that the postmortem was itself given up. You just could not cope with the number of dead; and they were left lying where they were, and dogs and vultures fed on them.

Every day news came of this village being attacked and that, of whole areas cleared of Muslim, and whole Muslim villages looted and burnt.

Where the gangs failed, the army went in to finish off the Muslims.

In the West Punjab, similar scenes were seen in Gujranwala, Sialkot, Sheikhupura, Lyallpur, Montgomery and Gujrat.

It is to be noted that all this unchecked devastation went on over an area of 14 districts of the Punjab, and except for Patiala in the East and Gujrat in the West, this area was wholly under the Boundary Force.

The ghastly events I described in the case of Amritsar, Lahore and Sialkot, amply reflect the situation in other districts as well. In East Punjab Amritsar, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur have been the worst storm centres and in the West Punjab, Lahore, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura and Sialkot.

Over a lakh and a half were killed, thousands of women were raped and abducted, property worth crores looted and burnt. Amritsar and Lahore burnt as no city ever burnt. Looting on a scale, I can never describe, took place. Whole areas are desolated. Millions of people are rushing away across the border for safety.

What a tremendous problem this will be can be seen from the fact that there were 36 lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab and 44 lakhs of Muslims in East Punjab. Everyone now wants to leave. Even from areas like Pindi and Ambala, minorities are pouring out.

ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND RED FLAG

From the very beginning the Communist Party, the Trade Union and Kisan Movements under the Red Flag saw the rising menace and tried to fight against it.

In the towns we tried to keep the unity of Muslim, Sikh and Hindu workers. This unity could not easily be broken from within. The bureaucrats and the communal bands could not set worker against worker. But soon the division of workers was brought about. Hindu and Sikh owners threw out Muslim workers on the plea that there was danger of sabotage by them. Muslim owners threw out Hindu and Sikh workers. The division of the country into Indian Union and Pakistan and the consequent option to the workers and employees to join service in one dominion or the other also led to a division among the Railway and

other workers on communal lines. Nevertheless one of the most inspiring stories comes from Sialkot.

Most of the sports factories here are owned by non-Muslims. Most of the factories were burnt by the Muslim armed bands. But one of the biggest factories, the world famous Uberol factory though owned by a non-Muslim was saved from destruction by the Muslim workers. It is they who guarded the premises and told the Muslim bands that an attack on the factory would be an attack on their bread, and they would not allow it to be destroyed.

After this division of workers, the Muslim gangs were used to spread the riots even among the workers. Raids were organised, with the backing of Railway officials who were notorious toady elements, against the non-Muslim workers in the Railway workshop at Lahore.

Today the entire young Trade Union movement in Punjab lies shattered. Muslim workers have gone West and non-Muslim workers East. Factories are either burnt down or are idle. Lakhs of workers are jobless, and there is grave danger of their falling into the arms of communal reactionaries and of being exploited brutally by the vested interests in their own communities. The Trade Union movement must speedily be rebuilt, to help them to fight forward together with the workers of the brother communities.

One of the most outstanding examples of the working class spirit of bravery and service is that of Siri Chand. He was a railway worker, a leading militant of the North-Western Railway Workers' Trade Union. Throughout the riot inferno in Lahore, he worked for peace and rescued many victims. His home in Bharatnagar became the shelter for many homeless refugees. Large-scale looting was going on. But the police did not act against the looters. They arrested Siri Chand and seven other members of his family and all those who had taken shelter in his house. On August 14, he and seven other members of his family were released from the police station and asked to go home. Two police constables were sent with them and just outside the police station the constables suddenly, without reason and at point blank range fired on Siri Chand and his people. They killed five on the spot, Siri Chand himself and 3 women of his family and seriously injured his mother and wife.

Such were the odds that progressive anti-riot elements had to face. Is it any wonder that they were able to do little to save the situation?

In the countryside, wherever Communists existed and in Kisan villages under the influence of the Red Flag of the Kisan Sabha, peace committees were formed, patrols were put on and protection was assured to the Muslim minority in the villages.

But when the armed bands backed by the police and the military attacked villages and the communal division of the countryside had already taken place, it was no longer possible to keep the Muslims safe.

So we organised their safe escort to refugee camps or to railway stations or to other villages which were safer.

Such safe centres were organised in all districts. In Amritsar District of which I know personally there were several such villages as Kharparkheri, Kathania, Verka, Badala-Bhittewid. Around Preetnagar, a belt of about 100 villages were safe till I left Punjab. Round Bhakhra the village of the veteran 82 year old Revolutionary and Communist Kisan Leader Baba Sohan Singh Bhakhna, the villages were safe for Muslims. In all these areas Red Flag Sikh Kisans fed and protected the Muslim Kisans.

But the odds were too heavy. In Hoshiarnagar near Railway Station Khana, about 300 Muslims were given shelter by Sikh and Hindu Kisans of the Red Flag. Twice, the armed bands tried to attack the village and kill the Muslims who they knew were being kept safe there. Twice they were repulsed. On 18th August after Pandit Nehru's first visit to Punjab, Sikh military went with armed Akali band to the village, pulled out the 300 Muslims and put them to death. The village was helpless when the military itself did such a thing.

These were conditions under which it was death even to show ordinary compassion for a Muslim. But the only thing that inspires some hope is that several patriotic kisans braved death to help their Muslim brothers.

In village Kharparkheri, Amritsar District the Sikh kisans had sheltered 900 Muslims. When the situation became too unsafe for them they escorted them to the Amritsar Station to see them safely off. In those days, when armed bands equipped with sten guns, were shooting down Muslims wherever they were seen, it was the most inspiring thing to see those 900 Muslims being escorted by the Sikh kisans who with drawn swords marched on either side of them to keep them safe.

The best we could do, was but a drop in the ocean. Worst reactionary elements were on top, and had the powerful support of the police and the military. One had to face death even to do the most elementary act of humanity. Many of our comrades faced death, many sustained bullet wounds from the armed bands.

When the full story of this period is written, you may be sure that Communists and Red Flaggers acquitted themselves nobly, whether they were Muslims in West Punjab, or Sikhs and Hindus in East Punjab.

INDUSTRIAL LIFE SMASHED

People outside Punjab do not yet know what grave problems this orgy of violence has created for us all.

Two of our biggest industrial and business centres—Lahore and Amritsar—are burning ever since March. The rest of the province had a thousand economic links with these two centres. Amritsar was the biggest commercial centre which fed the whole of the Punjab, N.W.F.P. and neighbouring States. Its life being smashed up, there is a big collapse of all supplies all over the province.

The two cities had a population of at least 16 to 17 lakhs, of these nearly ten lakhs were either workers or small traders, Chhbriwalas (hawkers), Pheriwalas, who have now no means to fall back upon. Goods have become scarce, shops have not opened at all and the worst form of black-markets is thriving.

In the Punjab, a province of milk and ghee—you can hardly get milk in the towns. At the only ghee shop that opened in Amritsar, ghee sold at Rs. 10 a seer, and this was so scandalous that the people looted the shop.

There is a very acute shortage of cloth, because Amritsar, the supply centre has been burnt up. Insurance companies refuse to insure godowns and stocks because arson is too general and widespread. Merchants do not place orders.

Industrial production in Lahore and Amritsar came to a standstill since March. In Amritsar alone more than 30 factories have been burnt down. Hindu owners dismissed Muslim workers and Muslim owners threw out Hindu workers—thus uprooting thousands of workers from their jobs.

The same tragedy has now overtaken almost all the industrial centres in Punjab, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Lahore, Patiala, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Lyallpur and Okara.

Sialkot one of the world famous sports manufacturing centres is now dead. Many a factory has been burnt. The rest are closed.

Wazirabad, famous for its cutlery works which employed 35,000 artisans and labourers, has lost all its industrial importance now.

The whole of industrial life of the Punjab, the advance made by the people of the Punjab over a period of last ten years, lie shattered. This is true for East as well as West Punjab.

The labour force in lakhs has shifted from one side to the other. Hindus and Sikhs have left the West and Muslims the East.

COMMERCE DEVASTATED

During the riots in Rawalpindi, the whole commercial community consisting mainly of Hindus and Sikhs was uprooted from the area. They were either killed or forced to run away. This has happened now on a much larger scale.

All the Mandis in the West Punjab, which were in the hands of Hindus or Sikhs, are now razed to the ground. The whole class of trade and businessmen in West Punjab has been liquidated.

This is bound to have a terrible effect on the whole economy of the West Punjab. One has only to know what intimate links commerce has with agriculture in the Punjab which is predominantly a surplus food growing agrarian province.

The merchants who supplied goods to the countryside and who marketed the agrarian produce are gone. Even the Government's food procurement plan based on purchase from the Mandis has now collapsed.

ALL FERTILE AREAS ARE DESOLATE

Our agriculture stands similarly desolated.

The Muslims in East Punjab were either Kamins (agricultural labourers) or petty peasants. Lakhs of them have left or are leaving East Punjab, without any prospect of employment in the West.

From the Canal Colony areas, the most fertile in West Punjab, Montgomery, Lyallpur, Sheikhupura and Gujranwalla, lakhs of Sikh and Hindu peasants have left these areas.

It is not easy to rehabilitate these lakhs of peasants in new areas, for they have lost their agricultural implements, live stock and all.

This is happening at a time when the maize crop is ready for harvesting and when within this month the rice crop has to be sown. With the present chaos in the countryside and the migration of millions, our crop will be nothing to speak of. What this means at a time when our country as a whole is facing the worst food scarcity can easily be imagined.

The most fertile areas of Punjab, all those of West Punjab and East and Central Punjab, were all under the care of the Boundary Force and have been devastated completely.

THE PUNJAB TODAY

With industry gone, commerce gone and with agriculture also gone and millions in either part of Punjab without food, without homes or jobs—what remains of the Punjab?

And this at a time when the whole administration has collapsed and with armed bands which have tasted blood and loot and terrorised the whole countryside.

What terrible suffering this means for the people of the Punjab, what tremendous hardships they are up against, can be only partially realised.

When such large prosperous areas are in economic ruin and under the debris of destruction, it will not leave the rest of our land unaffected.

Punjab which was a surplus province in respect of food is today devastated. Instead of India looking to it for food, it might itself ask India for food and relief just now.

With thousands of dead littering the roads and railway tracks as rotting food for dogs and vultures, another great problem threatens—the problem of epidemics. Doctors are of opinion that unless speedy effective steps are taken, epidemics will surely burst out. This would be a calamity of enormous magnitude. What epidemics did to Bengal after the famine, how it intensified the ravage cannot easily be forgotten.

Even the educational life of the Punjab lies shattered, with Lahore, the University centre and biggest educational centre in North India going up in flames. It was here that all the technical centres such as the Engineering, Medical and other colleges were. They are now closed.

Our transport system, one of the finest in India built by the British for their efficient military strategic needs today stands completely paralysed.

One must realise from this how great has been the tragedy of the Punjab and how difficult it will be to rebuild its economy.

For us in the Punjab it is a question of saving our very existence.

CONCLUSION

Such is the Punjab today. The worst communal elements are right on top today. The R.S.S. and Akali bands on this side and the National Guards on the other are openly flouting the wishes of the best leaders of both the Governments. When Pandit Nehru was in Amritsar on August 17 and 18 he told the military officers that peace must be restored at all costs. But the trouble was continued even after that. Ludhiana and Ferozepore were involved only after this and in Jullundur the trouble rose to the highest pitch after Pandit Nehru's visit.

The entire administration has collapsed. New recruits are being taken into the police force to fill the vacancies caused by the Muslims who were sent to West Punjab. The R.S.S. and the Akali bands are burrowing into these services.

The R.S.S. wants its own men to hold dominating positions in the East Punjab Government. They want Bakshi Tek Chand, to be the Governor and Rai Bahadur Badri Das as Premier.

They openly demand that Pandit Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, such noble leaders who want communal peace and brotherhood, should go. They say they must meet Aung San's fate.

The Akalis too, want that the Government of East Punjab should be under their control. They want an Akali nominee to be the Governor.

These bands and their demands are a grave threat to the popular democratic Governments both at the Centre and in the Province.

The present Governments are not taking drastic action to disarm these bands, for they do not want to risk too much unpopularity.

Punjab will be in constant peril, and there will be no hope for Punjab till these armed bands are disarmed, till the administration is purged of all guilty officials and new patriotic elements who can be relied upon to grant the minorities safety in the areas are taken in the administration.

The evacuation of refugees, which is now the main concern of the two Governments is no solution of the problem. The job is to restore peace and get the refugees back. The same dark forces that brought this tragedy to Punjab are spreading it everywhere.

It is the British game to discredit our two Governments, in the eyes of the world, to keep them hostile to each other and face the Governments with the big insoluble problem of millions rushing across the borders and demanding shelter, food and jobs.

THE PUNJAB TRAGEDY IS A CRISIS FOR THE WHOLE OF INDIA. IT IS A GRAVE THREAT TO OUR VERY EXISTENCE AND THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN OUR LAND.

THE MESSAGE OF BLEEDING DEVASTATED PUNJAB IS: LET NOT ITS FATE OVERTAKE ANY OTHER PART OF INDIA. LET THE DARK FORCES OF REACTION THAT BROUGHT THIS TRAGEDY TO PUNJAB BE HOUNDED OUT IN EVERY PART OF INDIA. ONLY THEN CAN YOU HELP PUNJAB AND SAVE INDIA.

FROM PUNJAB DANGER TO US ALL

P. C. Joshi

Within two weeks of August 15 and the country-wide rejoicing over the establishment of a National Government, opening the prospect of a new free life for our people, the nation stands horror-struck at the dark menacing clouds rising from the Punjab.

From the two parts of the Punjab mass migration of minorities is taking place after a systematic campaign of mass extermination. The latest Punjab riots far surpass all earlier riots both in the numbers involved and the area affected.

Our Press has once again not served our people aright. The Hindu and nationalist Press has only exposed the atrocities in the West Punjab and the League and most of the Urdu Press has concentrated on atrocities in the East.

Today is not the time to unravel the chain of cause and effect. It goes far back to the provocative Atlee Award of December last, which laid the basis for the partition of the Punjab, and the claims and counter-claims over boundaries made by the different communities.

The best of our leaders have rightly emphasised not to stress the past. What, however, needs to be known to everyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, whether citizen of the Indian Union or Pakistan, is that there is nothing to choose between the extent of brutalities, or type of atrocities, committed on either side. The more we realise it the sooner shall we be able to hunt down the real enemies in our own camp.

If the martyrdom of Jallianwala Bagh stands soiled on this side, Bhagat Singh's Lahore burns on the other. In whole cities and districts minorities have faced butchery or are evacuating, on a mass scale, from Amritsar, Jullunder in the East Punjab, from Montgomery, Lyallpur in the West Punjab.

The numbers killed on both sides surpass all earlier records. The number of women raped and abducted runs into thousands.

Property looted and burnt goes into crores and has been a common feature on an unprecedented scale.

Neighbourliness, humanity, chivalry, all seem to have disappeared for the time being.

Who set this fire alight, who poisoned our people? This is what all of us must know to draw our own lessons from the national tragedy that is the Punjab of today.

Our Party has been systematically pointing its accusing finger at the British incendiary. And now that is being recognised, unfortunately too late, in the Punjab and to some extent by the leaders of the two Governments themselves.

THE GUILTY MEN

Imperialist bureaucracy—Arch Incendiary. It was not an accident but deliberate design that soon after the Attlee Declaration on February 20, the Punjab Ministry was sacked by Governor Jenkins, who installed his autocratic Section 93 rule, so that when the transfer of power came on August 15 our Governments inherited a Province which was already aflame, where the administration had already broken down.

It was not an accident that the round of riots in March which had taken place in Rawalpindi, Multan, Lahore, Amritsar and Jullundur were all in the districts headed by British Deputy Commissioners.

Next, on the eve of transfer of power from August 1 to 5 and then up to September 1, the centre of the latest riots was all the 12 districts on both sides of the border where the British officered Boundary Force was supposed to keep the peace.

Pandit Nehru has publicly hinted that the Boundary Force did not do its job and every Punjabi, whether in the East or in the West, if questioned can easily give innumerable examples from his own experience to show how the army and the police took a leading part in looting, burning, raping and killing.

If the British bureaucracy thoroughly disrupted the civil administration before August 15 it is the British-officered army and the police that made matters worse by becoming chief looters and killers.

Thousands of bands armed with rifles, hand grenades, Sten guns, etc., abound both in the East and West Punjab today. Neither the army nor the police has arrested any one of these gangs nor disarmed them, nor got at their very large armed dump.

Punjab's Princes, and vested interests. Reactionary anti-national elements, nursed under British rule, have played their own part and are the main criminals inside each community.

The Punjab's Princes have supplied arms to bands of their own communities, Bahawalpur to the National Guards, Patiala and Faridkot to the Akalis.

In the countryside it is the big landlords who raised and led big armed bands to kill or drive out the minorities so that they themselves got their lands and houses, the peasantry got split communally and their own feudal rule was maintained unimpaired.

In the towns it is the war-rich blackmarketeers who have acted as financial patrons of their respective communal organisations.

Factory owners, if Hindu, sacked all the Muslim workers and, if Muslim, sacked all the non-Muslim workers and this added fuel to the fire.

The aim of the war-rich capitalist elements has been to drive out their trade and industrial rivals to be able to get monopoly control in their own hands.

Political criminals. The game of the British incendiary and their anti-people creatures, the vested interests, could never have succeeded without reactionary communal leaders who made a bid for mass popularity in the chaotic condition that has prevailed in the riot-torn Punjab during the last six months.

In the Punjab Congress has always been weak and has become weaker still because of the unnatural alliance with the Unionists first and later with the reactionary Akalis.

In Eastern Punjab towns, it is the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) that won the leadership of the town Hindus by pretending to organise them for self-defence and later playing on the spirit of retaliation for mass extermination of the Muslims.

The RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha today feel powerful enough to openly demand in their Press the **Sangram** and **Baljeet** (Urdu papers from Delhi) and the **Organiser** (English) that Bakshi Tek Chand, the Mahasabhaite chief, should be the Governor of the East Punjab and Rai Bahadur Badri Prasad Das, the RSS boss, should be made the Premier.

AIM OF THE AKALIS

In the countryside, the reactionary Akali leadership ruled the day through armed bands. Their political aim inside the Eastern Punjab is to get a dominant hold over the East Punjab Government.

In their illegal leaflets issued in the name of the Government of Khalistan, and distributed en masse, they boastfully declare their aim of establishing Khalistan:

"Khalistan is the Empire of Khalsa as left by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sher-i-Punjab. Every Khalsa must pledge himself to this and nothing else."

In fact, what they are planning is a confederation of the Sikh States and the Sikh central districts of the Punjab around Patiala, as the base!

The Punjab's officials have always been anti-national and now all the old anti-people bureaucrats are becoming pro-RSS and anti-Congress while the Sikh officers are becoming pro-Akali.

The leaders of both these reactionary communal organisations are building systematic contact with all civil officers in key strategic places.

They are also planfully burrowing into the police force. The East Punjab police was formerly dominantly Muslim and after the transfer of the Muslims to the Western Punjab the RSS and Akalis are recruiting their respectable following into the officer cadre and their goonda gangs into the rank and file of the police force. Thus the key administrative offices in the Eastern Punjab would be packed with anti-national elements.

Reaction is organised into armed bands, which function in a co-ordinated manner with the police and the army of their own community. And the danger does not stop here. These armed bands have unfortunately been able through terror and panic, to forge links with the patriotic mass. Here lies the biggest single danger.

The ambitions of these communal reactionaries are not confined to the Eastern Punjab alone. Both the Mahasabha and the Akalis are running a systematic campaign to discredit and run down the Nehru Government. Their common slogan is that the Nehru Government is neither protecting the minorities in the Western Punjab nor letting them retaliate against the Muslim minorities in the Eastern Punjab. Their slogan is: Nehru must meet Aung San's fate.

In Delhi itself the Mahasabha and the Akali circles are running systematic whisper campaigns that Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad and Rafi Saheb must be removed from the National Government.

We can treat these mad anti-national dreams of these reactionary communal elements lightly only at our peril. Reaction must be struck on the head. Its fangs are spreading the poison too fast already.

In Delhi, the Mahasabha called for an observance of Martyrs' Day on August 30 for which leaflets were distributed in thousands in the name of Jai Bharat in which it openly called:

"Remember 30th August 1947 when you have to observe Martyrs' Day. The day should begin with mass murder of Muslim children and women alike. Forcible occupation of the Muslim buildings should be your objective. Set fire to Muslim mohallas, but beware that the fire does not spread to Hindu Sikh localities."

The National Government rightly and quickly banned the day.

As in the Indian Union, so in Pakistan, the danger from extreme communalists, all old pro-British elements, is

equally great. In the beginning Mr. Jinnah and the mass of League leaders were trying to concentrate fire on the atrocities in the Eastern Punjab, completely ignoring the atrocities in the Western Punjab.

Soon the Pakistan leaders, too, were faced with complete administrative breakdown and the worst reactionaries began denouncing the League leadership itself for not taking strong measures against the atrocities in the Eastern Punjab. And they too began to make a bid for leading places inside Provincial and Central Governments.

It is the realisation of this grave situation inside Pakistan itself that led to the laudable sentiments in Mr. Jinnah's broadcast speech on August 31:

"These decisions and measures adopted by the special conference should reassure the people of all communities that both the Pakistan and India Governments are determined to put down ruthlessly these orgies and their far-reaching consequences... The civilised world is looking upon these doings and happenings with horror and the fair name of the communities concerned stands blackened in the eyes of the world."

The League circles inside Pakistan frankly admit among themselves and are seriously worried about the following:

That Peroz Khan Noon is acting the worst provocateur after he failed to get a leading place in the West Punjab Government.

That the armed Muslim National Guards in the Western Punjab no longer listen either to the local or Provincial League leaders but in alliance with the police function independently against the minorities and were the opposite number of the RSS and the Akali bands.

The Pir of Manki Sharif (whose father was created a Pir by the British for loyal services rendered) is already in Lahore and is threatening the League leaders that he will get his one lakh mureeds (religious disciples), who took active part in the rioting, to march into the Eastern Punjab.

He is also reported to be mobilising all the Pirs (Muslim religious heads) against Mr. Jinnah's declaration that Pakistan will be a secular not a religious State and for the right of the Pirs alone to dictate the Constitution of Pakistan as a theocratic communal State.

After the British imperialists had laid the basis, and their own men set the flames alight, the worst reactionary elements have been raising their heads to challenge and discredit the Pakistan and Indian Governments and endeavour to change them in a reactionary direction.

This is the imperialist design behind the Punjab riots.

The immediate necessity is to rouse the whole country to a realisation of the full significance and true meaning of the Punjab riots.

In one word, August 15 and all that we had looked for on that historic day is at stake.

The Punjab riots are being used by the imperialist agencies to discredit both India and Pakistan, to prove that we are incapable of ruling ourselves.

The BBC is running a campaign of atrocity stories to discredit Indian honour and boost up the British officers. And yet the AIR relays this imperialist propaganda instead of answering it back and cutting off the BBC altogether.

Tory papers like Beaverbrook's **Daily Express** are screeching that the Punjab disturbances are due to the hasty withdrawal of British officers.

"Britain's 'precipitate renunciation' of authority in India on August 15 was a gamble with the lives of millions. . . The horrors of the Punjab were the result of 'a hasty and clumsy policy'." (**Bombay Sentinel**, 2-9-47).

A **UPA** message from Washington, dated August 27, states that the Anglo-American Joint Chiefs of Staff are watching to see that the Punjab riots do not become a menace to the security of South East Asia.

IMPERIALIST HOPES

In other words, they are waiting to see how far their own military juniors, who unfortunately yet remain the leaders and commanders of our armed forces, can carry on the riots so that they may get an excuse for intervening as a 'neutral force' and getting a stronger grip over our defence.

The same message says that their diplomatic interest goes to show that disturbances in India would mean that we shall not be able to play our leading role in Asia.

This danger is real. Instead of India continuing to play an active role against imperialist intervention in Indonesia and Viet-Nam, we are being threatened with imperialist intervention ourselves.

Our international standing, our national honour abroad, is at stake.

I have already indicated how the prestige and power of our two Governments are at stake. The riots are a British-planned and British-inspired challenge through their reactionary stooges to our popular Governments.

Further, the peaceful relations between Pakistan and the Indian Union are at stake.

Our Party was the first to warn the country that the British were plotting to turn partitioned India into two hostile States. Today the threat is becoming an actual menace.

One hundred and fifty border villages of the Eastern Punjab have been mortar-shelled and occupied by Muslims from the Western Punjab.

Two hundred miles of the India-Pakistan border are 'dangerously disturbed,' says the **API**.

The **National Standard** reports that the Pakistan Government is alleged to have supplied two rifles per person in their border areas. The **FPJ** reports that the Eastern Punjab Government has asked the National Government to send at least 10,000 arms to border villages in the Eastern Punjab to meet the daily raids.

The urgent need of the hour is not for either Government to arm their border areas but for both Governments to disarm those that are armed, if we do not want two hostile States to grow up.

The greatest danger to the common people in both the parts is of the riots being spread through atrocity stories, rousing the spirit of retaliation and provoking incidents through the hired gangs of the same reactionary elements.

Their criminal aim is to divert the popular movement away from the struggle against the blackmarket, liquidation of vested interests and the beginning of national reconstruction which the whole country had demanded on August 15.

What we are facing today is a British inspired attack by all the counter-revolutionary forces combined against the advancing tide of the popular movement for the building of democracy and the advance towards full and final freedom.

Our international status, our national heritage, our future, all are threatened.

DUTY OF US ALL

The Punjab stirs heroic memories in every heart.

Today it is bleeding, burning, suffering and calls to all of us for aid and not to let ITS plight overtake any other Province. We must act in aid of the Punjab and in our own interests. The two are one.

(1) **All support to Government.** Reaction is threatening our two Governments and it is the duty of us all to rally whole-heartedly and enthusiastically behind them and pledge them all our support.

It is a very good sign that the two Governments are co-operating closely. We must demand the closest cooperation. That way lies the shortest path to restoring peace and establishing good relations.

The primary efforts have got to come from the two Governments themselves, so far as restoring peace within the Punjab is concerned and also for mobilising the popular forces outside for any and every service required.

It is here that the great weakness lies because the two Governments are still relying only on the bureaucracy

which is rotten to the core and needs a drastic and immediate purge.

There is no doubt that patriotic elements from within the Punjab and all over the country will be willing to serve the Government in any and every capacity if it gives the call.

(2) **Send New Troops.** The Punjab riots, on both sides, need quelling with firm military action.

The troops there are the very same that constituted the Boundary Force and who have already been infected with communal poison and have been guilty of the worst atrocities.

The same Major General Rees who was the Commander of the Boundary Force remains still in command of the same troops in the Indian Union areas of the Punjab, instead of facing a court-martial for criminal neglect of duty.

It is necessary to disarm and withdraw all these troops and send the British officers back home.

The immediate necessity is for Pandit Nehru to appeal to the patriotism of the Indian Army and send new troops under picked loyal patriotic Indian officers, of whom there are plenty, with orders to arrest and disarm all the armed gangs and restore peace for the people who have been terrorised or misled.

Together with this it is necessary that both the Premiers must appeal for an army of patriotic volunteers for service in the disturbed areas together with the armed forces for aiding the task of rehabilitation, relief, raising mass morale and going all out to fight provocation and bring the minorities back to their own homes.

Such is also the demand of all non-communal Congressmen in the Punjab who are feeling utterly miserable and helpless, because by themselves they feel overwhelmed by the communal elements.

(3) **All Help to Refugees.** A big problem of the moment is that of the refugees. They must be assured a welcome and all reasonable relief in camps run by all-parties' committees. This will at once reverse the present position when the worst communal elements are exploiting the refugees and using them for spreading atrocity tales.

The sooner peace is restored in the disturbed areas through a combination of Government and popular efforts the faster we will work to a situation when the refugees can go back to their homes in safety and security.

(4) **Countrywide Exposure of Reactionaries.** The spirit of retaliation can no longer be fought by moral sermons alone.

Inside the Indian Union it is the duty of us all who love India, stand for progress and are pledged to fight for demo-

cracy to rouse our people against dark communal elements, the RSS and the Akali leaders of the Punjab, and similar elements in every province who would rouse the spirit of retaliation.

Inside Pakistan we look forward to progressive Leaguers seeking the cooperation of all popular elements and fighting their Noons, disarming the Muslim National Guards, and warning the Pirs against the misuse of religion.

In every town and district the initiative must come from the Left in rousing the people against the spirit of retaliation and all riot-mongers and firmly holding out that our real battle is not one against the other but all together against the vested interests and for a new social order.

The Punjab is a grave warning to us all, and all popular organisations outside the Province must go on record pledging full support to the Government, volunteering all help in saving the Punjab and working for all-out united efforts to keep the peace in their own areas.

This way we would have learnt our lesson and pledged our duty anew.

7-8-47