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# COMMUNIST

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*THE COMMUNIST* is the monthly organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. Its aim is to popularise Marxism-Leninism as the world outlook of the working class and progressive humanity and to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism to the problems and struggles of the present phase of the Indian and world revolution.

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## LAND TO THE TILLERS — A CRITIQUE OF THE BENGAL LAND REFORM BILL

**BHOWANI SEN**

**T**HE abolition of the zemindari system by itself does not mean abolition of landlordism. Unless land is given to the tillers of the soil, the zemindari system will be replaced by the jotedari system which is another variant of landlordism. The Congress has pledged to liquidate the intermediaries between the State and the tiller of the land. It is possible to liquidate the intermediaries only in one way — i.e., by removing all private owners above the actual tiller of the soil. The abolition of the intermediaries in the real sense of the term must mean removal of all private owners except the peasants.

In the whole of Bengal (East and West together) 37.8% of the area is owned by landlords who get it cultivated mostly by share-croppers, and also by labourers on wages. The owners of this 37.8% of the area are called jotedars, who will remain even if the zemindari system goes. The All-India Kisan Sabha demands that all land of the private landlords, exempting a maximum of 25 acres, must be taken over and distributed among the poor and landless peasants. The importance of this demand in solving the agrarian crisis can be realised from the fact that 41% of Bengal's tillers of the soil are share-croppers. They have no right over the plot of land they cultivate. They get only half the crop, while both capital and labour are to be supplied by them. The jotedar is the absolute proprietor who gets half the crop without any cost. Of the 37.8% of private (Khas) land of the landlords, 27% is cultivated by share-croppers. This sort of concentration of land in the hands of private landlords has taken place mostly in north Bengal. According to the rural survey made by the Statistical Institute (Calcutta), 32.1% of the area in north Bengal is under share-cropping; the corresponding figures for West and East Bengal are 29.2% and 8.3% respectively.

The abolition of the zemindari system by itself will enable the State to appropriate the super-profits of agriculture which at present go to the zemindar as rent. Under the existing system, only 10% of the total rents collected annually in the

whole of Bengal go to the Government exchequer. The remaining 90% are appropriated by the private landlords who collect them by fleecing the poor peasant. This deprives agriculture of an immense source of capital. The abolition of the zemindari system will undoubtedly enable the Government to get the resources for improvement of agriculture. But it will not give land to the tillers, majority of whom are today under-tenants, share-croppers and agricultural labourers. A radical programme of agrarian reform demands that land must be given to them.

The extremely deplorable condition to which the poor peasants are condemned is well known and universally recognised. As long as land can be owned and sold by anyone like any other commodity, no law can prevent expropriation and pauperisation of peasants. The various land reforms carried out by the British Government during the last half a century have expedited the process of expropriation of the peasantry. In the last one decade alone the percentage of families with medium holdings has gone down from 17% to 8% and the percentage of families with holdings above 10 acres has decreased from 8% to 3%. Ten years back, 20% of the cultivated area in the whole of Bengal was under share-cropping; now it is 27%. About a quarter of a century back the majority of the peasants enjoyed occupancy rights in land, now majority of them are under-tenants, under-ryots, share-croppers and agricultural labourers. Out of this process of expropriation has arisen the new landlords—the jotedar class who now holds 37.8% of the cultivated area of the whole of Bengal and who has now converted 41% of the peasants into semi-serf share-croppers. Any radical land reform must bestow full and inalienable holding rights to the actual tillers of the soil, leaving, as a concession, not more than 25 acres to any jotedar for self-cultivation. There must be no intermediary between the State and the tiller of the soil. But if the private possessions (Khas holdings) of the landlords are not touched, and simply the statutory rights of the zemindars are purchased by the Government, land will go not to the peasants but to the jotedars—the new type of absentee landlords.

That the zemindari system must immediately go is agreed to both by the Congress and the League. They are, however, inclined to make two big concessions to the landlords. First, they do not want to touch the private holdings of the landlords. This will enable the zemindars to become jotedars, and jotedari today is more profitable than zemindari. While the zemindar gets only a fixed rent, which is nowhere in Bengal more than the value of one-third of the produce, the jotedar, being the real proprietor of land, appropriates half the produce. Technically he is a tenant but actually he is the landlord. When the zemindar above him is removed, the jotedar becomes the sole proprietor.

It is often argued that if all land is given to the tillers, the middle-class people will become paupers. But the Kisan Sabha proposes that one can be permitted to retain upto 25 acres for self-cultivation. This solves the problem of the majority of the middle class. According to the Floud Commission Report, only 8.4% of the families possess holdings of 10 acres or more. According to the rural survey in 1944, it is only 2.7%. This shows that only a negligible sect of the rich landlords will lose if all land above 25 acres is redistributed among the poor peasants and share-croppers.

This aspect of the question is so important that Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy, the former Premier of Bengal, drafted a bill for the abolition of the zemindari system with a proviso that all land over and above 100 bighas (i.e., about 32 acres) will be taken over and distributed among the poor peasants, share-croppers and agricultural labourers. But since then, opposition to this provision has grown very strong inside both the Congress and the League. The Legislative Assemblies of West and East Bengal are dominated by jotedars, and hence the prospect of securing this measure is not at all bright. An increasing mobilisation of the people alone can force the issue.

The second concession contemplated is in the form of huge compensation to the landlords. The Kisan Sabha proposes the abolition of landlordism without any compensation. In order to save poor middle-class interests the Kisan Sabha demands rehabilitation grants to those landlords whose earnings from land rents do not exceed Rs. 500 a year. This will save the entire middle class from losing anything. In East and West Bengal together there are about 100,000 rent-receiving families. Out of them not more than 2,000 families earn more than Rs. 500 a year from land rents. To the vast majority of the one lakh families this over-all compensation, varying from 8 to 15 times the land revenue, will mean no extra benefit over and above that proposed by the Kisan Sabha. The Congress and League schemes of compensation will cost about Rs. 80-100 crores for the whole of Bengal for the benefit of the rich 2,000 families. Where most of this compensation of Rs. 100 crores will go can be estimated from the fact that under the Bihar scheme Maharaja of Darbhanga will get Rs. 36,000 per month for a period of 20 years. The present zemindari income of this family is Rs. 500,000 per month. Why spend this huge sum for the lazy rich landlords when national reconstruction remains in abeyance for want of money?

Though the Congress and the League both are pledged to a radical reform of the land system, they have been pursuing a delaying policy under cover of many a complicated legislative procedure. They are giving enough chances to the landlords to ventilate their grievances and push forward their demands. But

the mobilisation of peasantry is being opposed and the peasants are being asked to remain quiet, leaving it to the Government to solve their problems. This is a dangerous device that will add to the obstacles in the way of a radical land reform. "Give us time and we will do the job," say the Government spokesmen, while one famine after another, mounting food crisis and mass hunger give no respite to the people.

In Bengal this rotten system of landlordism, the product of our colonial slavery and the producer of famines, has reduced the agricultural productivity by 30% during the last 25 years. The yield of rice per acre has dropped from 1014 lbs. in 1929-30 to 707 lbs. in 1945-46. While the people are starving, nearly 4 million acres of cultivable land remain fallow. Our agriculture is so primitive that there are only a little over 4 million ploughs for our 30 million acres of cultivated land, i.e., one plough for about 10 acres. Most of these ploughs are wooden ploughs, the number of iron ploughs being only 6,000. There are, in the whole of Bengal, only 52 tractors. The low productivity and the low technical level are due to the fact that 0.24% of the population appropriate 10% of the agricultural income and it is never reinvested in agricultural production.

Such is the true meaning of the system of absentee landlordism. This system must immediately be thoroughly overhauled by giving land to the tillers of the soil and by providing State assistance to the peasants in the form of more ploughs, cattle, manure and tractors, and better irrigation. Unless this is done "Grow More Food" will ever remain an empty talk.

NOTE: Statistical figures in this article are taken from *Agrarian Crisis in Bengal* by Sjt. Ambica Ghosh.

## ALL ROADS LEAD TO COMMUNISM

V. M. MOLOTOV

[Extracts from V. M. MOLOTOV'S Speech at the celebration meeting of the Moscow Soviet on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution]

Comrades,

**T**ODAY the peoples of the Soviet Union are celebrating a date of notable significance to the working people of the whole world, the 30th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. We, the Soviet people, are not alone these days in the joy we experience on the occasion of the great victories of Socialism in our country.

Not only in the countries friendly to us are there millions of devoted friends of the U.S.S.R. Wherever capitalism rules, oppressing the working people and enslaving the toilers of the colonies and dependencies, people with awakened minds see in the achievements of the Soviet Union the approach of their own emancipation from oppression and enslavement. There is no country in the world where among the working class, among the toiling peasants and in broad democratic circles, the Soviet Union has not numerous friends imbued with warm sympathy and faith in our cause. That is why today, on the 30th Anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, our October banner, the victorious banner of Lenin and Stalin, waves so proudly.

\* \* \*

Compare the old Russia to the Soviet Union, created by the Revolution. We know that the bourgeois-landlord Russia was beaten by the Japanese imperialism in 1904-5. We also know that the Tsarist Russia proved impotent against, and unable to withstand, Wilhelm's hordes. Since then the situation has radically changed. The victory over German Fascism in Europe and the defeat of the troops of the Japanese Empire in Manchuria that followed it, vividly demonstrated how far our country has progressed since the days of the old Tsarist Russia.

## REVOLUTION CREATED OUR GREATNESS

Attempts to rejuvenate and revive Russia failed both in the 1905 Revolution and in the February Revolution of 1917. The Great October Socialist Revolution alone brought the long-awaited rejuvenation and created the conditions for the powerful rebirth of our country. The Soviet Revolution alone, a genuine revolution of the people, of which the Party of Lenin and Stalin took the lead, made our country the great and foremost power that it is today. The greatness of the Soviet Union was created by the Socialist Revolution and is now recognised by all the nations of the world.

Is it not obvious that, had the Bolsheviks not succeeded 30 years ago in wresting our land from the hands of Kerensky, the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Cadets and other servitors of the bourgeoisie, it would have lost its independence and would now be languishing in misery?

Compare the Soviet Union with the most highly developed capitalist countries in Europe. Take Britain, which for a long time has legitimately been considered a highly developed industrial country and even the "workshop of the world." In the period between the two world wars it was only in the exceptional years that the industrial output in Britain rose above the level of 1913; most of the time it was considerably lower. That being the case, it can hardly be said that the British industry made any progress between the two world wars. And even now, as you know, Britain is in serious economic difficulties and is relying more and more on the aid from "Uncle Sam."

In France, in the same period, industry made no better progress, although there were individual boom years. Suffice it to say that, before the outbreak of the second world war, France's industrial output was only six per cent above the level it had reached before the first world war. It may be said that throughout the whole period between the two world wars, French industry marked time. Today France, too, is passing through a period of economic difficulties and, like Britain, is pinning her hopes on help from abroad.

## FOUNDATION OF SOCIALISM

How is this striking contrast between the industrial development of the U.S.S.R., on the one hand, and the state of industry in Britain and France, on the other, to be explained? How is it to be explained that, whereas the industrial output in the Soviet Union in the period of respite between the two world wars increased almost twelvefold, the industry of Britain and France made no progress—registering a little rise in some years, but in most years stagnation and even decline?

To unbiased persons, who desire to understand modern developments, the answer is suggested above all by a comparison of facts. The fundamental difference between the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and Britain and France, on the other, is well known: our industry, like the entire national economy of the U.S.S.R., is built on the foundation of Socialism; but their industry, like the entire State edifice of Great Britain and of France, rests on the old pillars of capitalism. Moreover, both science and practice graphically show that while the foundation of Socialism in the Soviet Union is growing firmer with every passing day, the pillars of capitalist society in Europe have long been rotten through and through.

It is now more than ever evident how ripe were the conditions for Socialism in our land 30 years ago, when the victorious Socialist Revolution led our country into a new path—the path of revolutionary rejuvenation.

## DIALECTICS OF HISTORY

Thirty years ago, on the eve of the October Revolution, Lenin passionately argued that in the historical conditions of the time it was impossible to go forward without taking steps towards Socialism and that the material requisites for Socialism already existed in our country. He said:

"To advance in 20th-century Russia, which has won the Republic and democracy by revolutionary means, is impossible without advancing towards Socialism, without taking steps towards it. Such are the dialectics of history that war, by accelerating the conversion of monopoly capitalism into State-monopoly capitalism, has by that very fact brought mankind nearer to Socialism. Imperialist war is the eve of Socialist revolution. And that is not only because war, by its horrors, engenders proletarian uprising—no uprising can bring Socialism if conditions are not ripe economically—but because State-monopoly capitalism is the fullest material preparation for Socialism, is the ante-chamber to it, it is that rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called Socialism there is no intermediate step."

It goes without saying that both in Britain and France even then—30 years ago—the material conditions for the passage to Socialism were no less favourable than in our country, but, as we know, the material conditions alone are not enough even for the solution of those problems to solve which has already become a historical necessity.

The second world war dealt another blow to the capitalist system and still further shook its position in Europe. The New

Democracies—Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Albania—with the support of the broad masses of the people, have carried out bold democratic reforms, among them the elimination of the landlord class and the transfer of land to the peasants, the nationalisation of large-scale industry and banks, and so forth. These countries are taking steps towards Socialism in their own independent ways, having created for the working people a life that is free from the capitalist bondage, and defending their national independence against the attempts of foreign imperialists to get these countries into their power and to impose their will upon them.

\* \* \*

The task today is to unite all the anti-imperialist and democratic forces of the peoples into one mighty camp cemented by common, vital interests, against the imperialist and anti-democratic camp and its policy of enslaving nations and of indulging in new adventures.

\* \* \*

### GROWTH OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The Bolshevik Party, founded by Lenin and Stalin, emerged strengthened from all these trials; it purged its ranks and welded itself into a mighty force, which is the supreme embodiment of the moral and political unity of our people, who are confidently marching towards a Communist society, and who, led by the great Stalin, are now pointing the way to universal peace and deliverance from sanguinary wars, the way to the overthrow of capitalist slavery and to the great progress of the nations and of all mankind.

Experience has shown that the Communist movement today has grown to such dimensions and strength in many countries that it can no longer be directed from one centre. In this we see one of the outstanding achievements of Communism in our day.

At the same time, experience has shown that the Communist Parties, and especially the stronger amongst the Communist Parties of Europe, must have a unifying body through which to effect a continuous exchange of views and, when necessary, to co-ordinate their activities by mutual accord. This will help to promote the further growth of the Communist movement and to strengthen its influence among the masses.

The Bolshevik Party welcomes these timely measures of the Communist Parties, and wishes them every success.

### ALL ROADS LEAD TO COMMUNISM

Thirty years ago the Bolshevik Party was only a small section of its people. But the Party of Lenin and Stalin defined the matured historical needs of the country with scientific accuracy, found powerful support among the masses of the people, and the people, led by our Party, won a revolutionary victory. Today everyone can see the fruits of this victory of Socialism and their great international significance. Today the united forces of democracy and Socialism in Europe, and outside Europe, together are incomparably stronger than the opposing anti-democratic camp of imperialism.

Capitalism has become a brake on human progress, and the continuation of the reckless policy of imperialism, which has already brought about two world wars, constitutes the major danger to the peace-loving nations.

The Great October Socialist Revolution has opened the eyes of the nations to the fact that the age of capitalism is drawing to a close and that reliable roads have been opened to universal peace and the great progress of the nations. The feverish efforts of the imperialists, under whom the ground is giving way, will not save capitalism from its approaching doom.

We are living in an age in which all roads lead to Communism.

# THE COAL SITUATION AND COAL PLAN

JAGANNATH SARKAR

**C**OAL is of primary importance for the industries of every country, particularly so for a technically backward country like India, where other forms of power, like electricity, are extremely undeveloped. Truly has coal been recognised as the "bread" of all industries.

On Coal depends not only our railway transport, cotton and jute mills, steel industries, and a host of other power-driven industries, but it is also a source of important bye-products like tar, dyes, benzol, petrol, explosives, chemicals and medicines. Good quality coal (coking coal), whose reserves are rather limited in our country, is an essential ingredient in the production of steel.

The importance of coal has increased immensely at present. For, with the transfer of power to Indian hands, the nation is looking forward to a period of national reconstruction which will bring the scarcity of every essential commodity to an end. Hence in order to face the future with confidence, the nation must be assured of the supply of coal, of a steady increase in the output of coal, so that our industries may not be starved of their "bread".

Yet our coal industry is not only in a state of chaos, at an extremely backward technical level, but in recent months the coal monopolists have been out callously to sabotage our basic industry in order to counter every effort at reorganisation of the industry. What makes the problem very serious is the fact that 70 per cent of the coal production is controlled by British capital, whose attitude towards any plan of industrial reconstruction of our country need hardly be explained.

That our coal industry is not in dependable hands will also be obvious from the fact that the industry failed us at one of the most critical moments in our recent national history. In 1943 our coal production dropped by 4 million tons or by about 14%. This serious situation came about because thousands of miners were forced to leave the coalfields due to the refusal of the coal profiteers to give them a pie as dearness allowance even during the famine conditions of 1943. And that at a time when the coal owners were reaping unheard of profits ranging up to

Rs. 50-60 per ton! (Indian Coalfields Committee Report, 1946.) The prewar profit was about 10-14 annas per ton.

And it is these coal profiteers who are trying to parade themselves before us as the champions of coal production. With the mass demand for nationalisation of key industries and national reconstruction they see danger ahead. But, meanwhile, they are trying their best to confuse the people, to make the workers the cat's paw for their sins, to threaten the Government with a coal famine if it attacks their right to profiteer. They are desperately trying to crush the miners, to drown their movement in blood, because the miners are the first to challenge their right to profiteer at the cost of our people.

But it is necessary for our entire people to know the facts about coal, to be clear about the steps that are necessary to guarantee an adequate increase in the output of coal and to see that all those steps are rigorously implemented despite all the criminal and obstructionist methods that are being followed by the coal profiteers.

## PRESENT COAL PRODUCTION AND OUTPUT TARGET

The output of coal in 1946 was above 29 million tons which is about the same as the peak figure of 1941-42. That is, the output of coal in 1946 was 2 million tons above the 1939 level and 4 million tons above the output in 1943 and 1944.\*

Thus, in comparison with the past, the position of the output of coal today cannot justify the howl about coal crisis that is being raised at present.

But looking at the production position in relation to needs, we find that a serious shortage exists.

The office of the Coal Commissioner had estimated 32½ million tons to be the requirements for 1946 and 1947 after a careful study of the wartime consumption and the existing industrial capacity. While referring to these estimates of requirements of coal on peacetime basis, the Indian Coalfields Committee correctly stated:

"In putting forward the above estimates, we are not suggesting that it is possible to meet the requirements immediately. On the contrary, the indications are all to the effect

\* The official figure of coal output in British India in 1946 is 26 million. The figure of 29 million tons in the whole of India (including the Indian States) is an estimate made on the basis of the calculation that the output of Indian States averages 13 per cent of the output in British India in any year—Editor.

that, if no careful planning is done and the coal industry and transport system are not properly organised, the railways will not be able for many years to transport very much more than they have done in the last year or two, nor is production likely to reach the level which will make despatches of this order possible" (p. 35).

The apprehensions of the Indian Coalfields Committee have come true, for in the beginning of 1947 the Regional Coal (Distribution) Controller stated that even now we are 4 million tons short of our needs.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

Not only did our coal industry fail to meet this estimate of requirements for 1946 and 1947 (allotments of coal to various industries had to be cut to the extent of 13%), but it looks as if the entire programme of national reconstruction will prove abortive from the end of fuel itself.

The Government of India had set up 29 panels, composed of officials and non-officials, to draw up detailed plans for the development of various industries. On the basis of the reports of 11 panels, covering our main industries, the Indian Coalfields Committee has estimated the requirements of coal in 1956 at about 41 million tons. Since we have also to replace 4 million tons of coking coal (which is being consumed by industries other than steel) by non-coking coal, the output target for 1956 should be put at 45 million tons.

We should not forget that this target of 45 million tons of coal per year is based on the industrial plans of the Government of India before the National Government was formed, and that our coal requirements in future years are likely to be more than this target.

However, on the basis of this target the Indian Coalfields Committee recommended that "the aim should be broadly to make provision for a progressive increase in the supplies of 1½ million tons of coal a year from now on until 1956." And there is the need to step up coal production immediately to 32½ million tons—i.e., by 3 million tons more—to meet the present requirements.

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE COAL INDUSTRY

Before we go to formulate any coal plan for reaching the coal target, it is necessary to review briefly the structure of the coal industry and particularly those factors which have a bearing on production.

First, unlike other modern industries, the coal industry in India is organised with tier upon tier of exploiters, each of whom adds his burden on the industry, thus depriving the miners of a decent wage, on the one hand, and forcing up the price of coal, on the other. First in the chain come the landlords, the royalty-receivers. Then a chain of lessees, sub-lessees and under-lessees follows, each of whom draws his tribute. Then comes the managing agents (who control two-thirds of the coal industry), private colliery owners, the raising contractors and finally the various types of "Sirdars" who generally draw the wages on behalf of gangs of miners and pay wages to the miners after making as much deduction as they can.

### PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF MINERAL RIGHTS, THE LANDLORDS

In Bengal and Bihar, where the bulk of our coal mines lie, mineral rights vest in the landlords. They lease out their coal-bearing lands and receive in return a fat "salami" and a royalty rate per ton of coal extracted.

They impede the development of mines in the following manner:

1) The "salami" and the royalty rate are a big burden on the industry and are paid to the landlord without his having any hand in the production of coal. Before the war, royalty rates were never higher than 4 annas per ton and "salami" too was small. But during the war royalty rate increased to twelve annas per ton and "salami" to several hundred rupees per bigha of land.

2) The landlords, who have the absolute right of leasing out their coal-bearing land, do so without bothering about the capacity of the lessee to run the mine; the latter's technical equipment and his *bona fides* as coal raiser are of no significance to them so long as they receive their "salami" and royalty. The decision as to how the various parts of land, in what sizes and shapes, are to be leased out rests also with the landlords. We shall presently see what results this right of the landlords has produced on coal mining. The landlords also could not guarantee that the lessee will work the entire coal-bearing land. As a matter of fact the best coal-bearing lands were taken on lease by big British firms which do not work them in full.

3) It has led to fragmentation of mines to an alarming extent. This has taken place particularly during the period of war when coal-bearing lands and collieries have been leased out only with an eye to heavy "salami" and royalty receipts. And this has been done not only by the landlords but by the lessees and sub-lessees also.



An idea of this can be had from the following:

#### COAL OUTPUT IN BIHAR

(in million tons)

Year	No. of mines	Output
1939	333	14.79
1945	594	16.59

#### COAL OUTPUT IN BENGAL

(in million tons)

Year	No. of mines	Output
1939	175	7.59
1945	216	7.29

This has led to fragmentation of mines in all sorts of grotesque shapes and sizes which prevent satisfactory extraction of coal. They baffle all efforts at raising coal by sound mining methods, lead to loss through fires and collapses and also heavy loss of coal in barriers. An indication of this can be had from the fact that in 1942, out of 725 mines operating in India, 133 were "wagon-mines," i.e., mines producing less than 1,000 tons per year or less than 4 tubs per day!

Thus the first in the list of criminals who act as a barrier on the path of development of mines are the royalty-receivers. And among them are some of the most notorious landlords of India, like the Rajas of Burdwan, Panchakote, Ramgarh, Cossimbazar, Jharia and Nawagarh.

#### COLLIERY OWNERS AND MANAGING AGENTS

Next come the colliery owners and managing agents. About 70 per cent of the output of coal in India is in the hands of British companies. About a dozen of them, like Macneil, Bird & Meilgers, Mackinon and Mackenzie, Andrew Yule, Turner Morrison, and Jardine and Henderson, control this huge percentage of coal production in India. And it is these British monopolists, organised in the Indian Mining Association, who have been responsible for the backwardness of our mines and who are today acting as the spearhead of revolt.

The Indian colliery owners, who own a large number of small mines, account for only about 17 per cent of the total output of coal. Among the Indian colliery owners the biggest is the Tatas.

The manner in which the colliery owners have run the industry can best be summed up in the words of the Coal Mining Committee of 1937, which states:

"In short, to use a sporting metaphor, the coal trade in India has been rather like a race in which profit has always

come in "first," with safety a poor "second," sound methods an "also ran," and national welfare a "dead horse," entered perhaps, but never likely to start."

This has happened because the colliery owners have invested an absurdly small amount of capital in the industry, which is absolutely inadequate for development purposes, for sound mining methods and for achieving a technical level that is needed by modern mining.

About 200 and odd joint stock colliery companies in India today have a total paid-up capital of only Rs. 10 crores. And the collieries under individual ownership have a total capital investment of only Rs. 4 crores. About the callousness of the colliery owners towards the development of coal mines the Indian Coalfields Committee (1946) has made the following statement:

"It is rarely that reserves of any substantial order are maintained for development purposes..... Commercial considerations of a short-term nature often stand in the way of building up essential reserves which a long-term policy dictates..... The investment of further capital as a long-term policy in the development of a coal mine cannot usually be reconciled with the need for an adequate return on the new capital invested in as short a time as possible.... (and hence)..... not much capital appears to have been invested in the last two decades for further development of mines or for improvements in mining methods" (p. 169).

In plain language it means that the coal profiteers have raised coal only with an eye to getting a big return on their capital and without bothering about the development of mines, about sound mining methods, about mechanisation etc.

The British companies today control not only the bulk of the coal production but also vast areas of the best coal-bearing seams, which they do not develop because that is likely to depress prices.

The coal monopolists refuse to undertake stowing, excepting to the extent the Government forces them to do so from the point of view of safety, because stowing involves cost. Hence, only about 60 per cent of coal is extracted, while with stowing 90 per cent of coal can be extracted. They refuse to raise coal on the basis of a proper planning of pillars etc., because that slows down the return on capital—despite the fact that their irresponsible methods lead to loss of coal, avoidable collapses, fires etc. They refuse to mechanise the mines, because mechanisation involves greater cost per ton and smaller return on capital. The representative of the Tata Iron & Steel Co. stated before the Indian Coalfields Committee:

"Mechanical coal-cutters increase the production from the mines by 100 per cent but the mining cost based on the actual number of miners and loaders employed is higher than for pick-mining."

Thus one of the biggest Indian coal raisers admits that they do not mechanise the mines because the sweated miner with his primitive pick is cheaper. That is why we find that the coal got by machines in India is only about 8 per cent of the total output. So far as the mechanical loading and conveying of coal is concerned it is almost unknown.

### CONDITION OF LABOUR IN COAL MINES

There is yet another way in which the coal monopolists have continued to retard the development of coal mining in India and perpetuated its backwardness.

The coal owners, like the tea-planters, have taken advantage of the backward tribal or semi-tribal population of India in order to coin money out of their blood.

Not only have the coal owners kept the miners in a brutish condition of life, but for the sake of their callous hunt for profits they have ruined the health and efficiency of the miner.

The average monthly earning of a miner before the war was only Rs. 10. He was housed in congested, ill-ventilated pigsties called "dhowrahs." Welfare measures such as provision of medical aid, water supply etc. were extremely inadequate. Congestion had increased to 6 persons per "dhowrah" in 1944; now with 50,000 more miners in the coalfields, congestion must have increased further. And apart from the low wages, their earnings and service depended on the tender mercies of the "sirdars" and contractors. Such conditions of life and work naturally failed to create a settled labour force even after 100 years of coal mining. Besides the seasonal exodus from the coalfields at harvest time, thousands of miners leave the coalfields either through sheer desperation or the moment they get work anywhere else.

But during the war the exploitation of the miners became extremely brutal. Their real wages were reduced to one-third of the prewar level. This resulted not only in a large-scale exodus of miners, but the extreme impoverishment and undernourishment led to a serious decline in the output of coal per head. It fell from about 125 tons per head to 94 tons per head in 1944!

Thus during the war crisis when the nation badly needed coal, the coal monopolists who were making fabulous profits, created a coal famine rather than spend a pie either for develop-

ment purposes, or for mechanisation. They even refused to compensate the workers for the rise in prices—a demand which was necessary to maintain the prewar efficiency of miners.\*

This has been the state of our coal industry and it is in the hands of these coal monopolists that the key to our national reconstruction plan lies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDIAN COALFIELDS COMMITTEE

The Indian Coalfields Committee, which worked out the target of coal production, naturally felt the need of a planned control by the Government if the output target was really to be fulfilled. Accordingly, it made a number of important recommendations:

a) Acquisition of mineral rights by the State in order to direct the development of mines in a satisfactory fashion and to amalgamate the fragmented mines in order to facilitate technical improvements, and avoid the wastes that are involved through fragmentation.

The Indian Coalfields Committee has recommended compensation at 10 times the present income from royalties. It means that Rs. 6½ crores have to be paid as compensation to the landlords.

b) Building up of a settled labour force by improved working and living conditions of miners and by providing a better wage and adequate amenities. It recommended that the wages of miners should be based on the basic needs of an individual human being. In connection with the fixing up of wages it has referred to the recently adopted measures in France which give an unskilled underground worker 25 per cent more than the highest wage of an unskilled worker in Paris (i.e., in the metal industry). Among the amenities it has recommended healthy and comfortable working conditions, adequate housing, good food, clean water, compulsory accident insurance, holidays with pay, etc. It has also recommended training facilities for miners.

c) Abolition of the raising-contractor system.

d) Financial assistance to the deserving mines.

e) Continuation of price control. A fair wage to labour should form the starting point for price fixation.

f) Development of new fields to aim at an output of 2 million tons per year by 1956.

g) Compulsory stowing in respect of all coals with an ash content upto 30 per cent, which will comprise the bulk of the coal

\* Even after the coal prices were controlled in 1944 and some wage increases were given, they were making a profit of Rs. 7 to 8 per ton, and today even after the Conciliation Board award they are making a profit of at least Rs. 5 per ton!

produced in Bengal and Bihar. At present only 2-3 million tons are extracted with stowing. Stowing should be assisted to the extent of 75 per cent of the total cost, subject to a maximum assistance of Rs. 2 per ton of coal. For meeting the expenditure a cess of Rs. 1-12 per ton of coal should be levied. For the next five years it should be 8 annas per ton. The State should acquire and operate collieries which refuse to accept stowing or to amalgamate after Government insistence.

Apart from these, the recommendations cover the conservation of coking coal, plans to increase electric power, railway transport etc. The Indian Coalfields Committee also rightly resented the exclusion of technical problems of the industry from the terms of reference and expressed the hope that the Government of India would find it necessary to appoint a technical committee to go into the issues of the opening of new collieries, the most suitable methods of working mines including questions of mechanisation, adequacy of lighting and ventilation arrangements in view of their bearing on the output of coal per man-shift, etc.

Finally, it recommended the constitution of a National Coal Commission, under the Ministry of Fuel and Power, for controlling the coal industry in all its aspects.

The Indian Coalfields Committee also discussed the question of nationalisation of coal mines. It accepted that "it is too late in the day to question the theoretical justification for State ownership and operation," and added further "that such ownership and operation may become essential at a future date."

Yet it hesitated to recommend immediate nationalisation on the following grounds:

a) State acquisition of mines ought not to be undertaken until mineral rights have been acquired.

b) Suitably trained mining engineers may not be available after the nationalisation, because the foreign technical talent now at the disposal of the industry may not be forthcoming.

But one is left wondering why the acquisition of mineral rights and the nationalisation of mines should not be a simultaneous operation. One is further left wondering why so heavy a compensation should be paid to royalty owners, when it is the miners (working and living in sub-human conditions) who should be compensated, and when payment of this compensation will entail heavy expenditure and a new burden on the tax-payers.

### WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING ?

Despite all these recommendations of the Indian Coalfields Committee the Government has so far taken no steps except increasing the stowing cess by a few annas.

The Government appointed a Conciliation Board in February, 1947, to recommend wage increases etc., but it did not come on the initiative of the Government. It came under the pressure of the miners, and after about 2 lakhs of working days were lost through strikes, and bigger strikes were being threatened.

The Conciliation Board made some important recommendations which were accepted by the Government. The main recommendations being as follows:

a) Earnings of miners (including the basic tub rate and all other allowances) to be increased to about Rs. 40 per month on the basis of 4-7 days attendance in the week. Special rates for load and lift were given.

Trammers and loaders were given 50 per cent increment on prewar basic rate and 150 per cent dearness allowance on the new basic rate.

The basic wage of an unskilled male worker was fixed at 8 annas per day plus 150 per cent dearness allowance.

For others a diminishing scale of dearness allowance from 100 per cent to 40 per cent on prewar basic rate was given.

b) 2 months' attendance bonus and 2 months' production bonus to be distributed out of a fund created at five and a half annas per ton. The bonus to be paid only to those who put in a minimum of attendance in the year and who do not take part in any illegal strike.

c) 7 days' leave with pay for weekly workers and 14 days' leave for monthly staff.

d) Free railway passes for coming and going home to those who put in a certain amount of attendance in the year.

e) Those unions to be recognised with which managements had opened negotiations before the appointment of the Conciliation Board and which agree not to go on illegal strike or to call out the essential services under any circumstances.

Apart from these, concessions were granted with regard to provident fund, systematisation of payment for load and lift, payment for temporary or short stoppages and breakdowns, standardisation of the size of tubs and an overtime allowance to loading coolies during periods of forced idleness, etc., etc.

These recommendations, even if they are implemented in full, give a monthly earning of only about Rs. 40 to the miners and unskilled workers (before the Conciliation Board award the miners earned about Rs. 24 and the unskilled workers about Rs. 35).

These recommendations give an increase in basic wage only to the miners, trammers and loaders. The others have got only an increase in dearness allowance from 100 per cent to 150 per cent, 75 per cent to 100 per cent and so on, the scale diminishing for the higher categories. Thus the earning of an unskilled worker has gone up from Re. 1-4 to Re. 1-10 per day only!

The Board did not give any bonus for 1946 and even for 1947, hardly any worker in Jharia coalfields will fulfil the qualifications necessary for receiving the bonus. The bonus too is not linked with the output of the individual miners but with the output of the mine as a whole.

Finally, the Board accepted the need for raising the price of coal to cover the increased cost which accrues from the award. And a month later the Government of India raised the price of steam coal by Rs. 3-8 per ton.

So far as the award is concerned, whereas it satisfied the miners and trammers in the matter of wages, the others who did not get any increase in their basic wages were not satisfied. Then there was a general dissatisfaction because the bonus was not granted for 1946, though the Indian owners had agreed to pay 2 months' bonus for 1946 prior to the publication of the award.

But what made matters worse was the fact that the owners refused to implement the award in full and took advantage of every loophole in the award to deprive the workers of their due.

Thus, in very few collieries the wage rates have been increased in full. No colliery pays the special rates for lift and load. The Conciliation Board has not fixed the wages for workers other than the gallery face pick miners and unskilled male workers. For others the 1939 rate has been taken as the basic rate and it is upto the owners to decide what the 1939 rate was.

Because the coal owners are to pay overtime henceforward, they cut out all overtime work. Since bonus, free railway passes, cheap cloth etc. are linked with attendance, it has become a general practice with mine owners to refuse work to miners on all sorts of pretexts, so that they may not have the qualifying attendance. Many colliery owners have refused to recognise unions which satisfy all the conditions. Finally, they are carrying on widespread victimisations, dismissals etc. to provoke the miners to go on strike and give them a chance to crush the unions.

The Government has till now refused to amend suitably the Conciliation Board award, to remove the vague clauses or to force the mine owners to implement its recommendations. When strikes have been forced upon the miners through non-implementation of awards the Government, far from taking steps against the owners, has not even hesitated from resorting to brutal firing. The strike in Agarwalla and Kalyanji Manji collieries, involving 6,000 workers, continued for over one month and there was firing on peaceful miners. And the demand of the union was only the recognition and implementation of the award.

And now the mine owners have given out the threat of closing down the mines if the miners press their demand of bonus for 1946. They have already given notice to close down one

colliery where the miners refused to accept unjust dismissals; similar threats are being given to other collieries also.

After the firings in the coalfields large-scale arrests followed. Some of them were released on the 15th of August. But in Loyabad arrests are still continuing and it is said that lists of trade unionists who are to be externed from the coalfields are being prepared by the Government. The Government did not do it immediately after the Loyabad firing, because of the 15th August, but it may take place after any fresh incident in the coalfields for which the employers are giving continuous provocation.

The policy of the coal profiteers is simple: They refuse to implement the Conciliation Board award, take advantage of its every loophole, provoke the workers to strike, then shout that some trouble-mongers are behind it who are inciting strikes for political reasons even after the award, and then call upon the Government to let loose a reign of repression on the workers.

The mine owners threaten the Government that if it does not control the workers and their leaders, or if it dares to implement any plan of reorganisation of pits, they will close down the mines. They are already howling that the mines are running at a loss and unless the price of coal is raised by another Rs. 2 to 3 per ton they may be forced to close down the pits.

The Indian Coalfields Committee hesitated to recommend immediate nationalisation. But now the coal profiteers hardly leave any other alternative before the Government. Either leave the coal owners free to flout Government awards, to provoke strikes, to counter at every step reorganisation of the industry with threats of closing down the pits or take them over. As a matter of fact even the Indian Coalfields Committee had apprehensions that the coal owners might plan such revolts and that is why it said:

"If situations detrimental to national interest cannot be remedied by control, the State should intervene to acquire and operate the mines. In this category will come unreasonable failure to stow for conservation and obdurate refusal to amalgamate mines" (p. 182).

#### WHAT HAS TO BE DONE ?

To meet the critical situation that has been created by the obduracy and revolt of the coal profiteers the following steps are necessary:

a) The Government should take over all collieries which refuse to implement the Conciliation Board award in full or provoke strikes through mass dismissals or deliberately sabotage

production through refusal to give tubs or to open working places or by threatening to close down mines.

b) The Government should amend the Conciliation Board award on the basis of the BPTUC Resolution on coal, which includes among other things the demand for fixing the wages for coal workers on the basis of the Central Pay Commission Award, immediate payment of 4 months' bonus for 1946, fixation of wages for every category of worker, without leaving any room for vagueness and confusion.

At present the cost of production of coal is between Rs. 8 to 9 at the most. If our demands are accepted, the cost will increase by about Rs. 2. The price of coal at present is Rs. 14 per ton and hence, even after our demands are met, the coal owners will have a profit of Rs. 3 per ton. As a matter of fact if the agents are eliminated, the price of coal can be reduced by about Rs. 1-6 without touching the mine owners' profits. And these agents, as pointed out by the Indian Coalfields Committee, have hardly any function in these days of controls.

c) The Government should assure the miners that they will not be victimised, dismissed or paid off due to non-supply of tubs or wagons, or shortage of working places. The shortage of tubs and working places arise partly out of planlessness and partly it is due to the deliberate policy of the owners to victimise workers. It is being resorted to on a large scale these days in order to deprive the workers of their bonus.

d) It is not enough if unions are recognised. Joint production committees should be set up in every colliery in order to see that the award is being implemented in full, and also to plan the supply of tubs, opening of coal faces and haulage arrangements, to provide for special rates for difficult places, and to tackle various problems connected with the full utilisation of manpower, machines and equipments to attain the highest possible output. These committees will also keep a check on the owners' efforts to sabotage production.

These steps will eliminate the discontent of workers regarding rates, will eliminate the chances of victimisation, will safeguard workers against paying off, will give them full employment, will avoid the necessity of long waiting in the pits in the hope of getting tubs and will make strikes in the coalfields unnecessary. At the same time they will materially help to increase the output in every colliery.

e) The Government should take immediate steps for implementing the recommendations of the Indian Coalfields Committee regarding stowing, amalgamation and acquisition of mineral rights. To get these done, the Government will have to immediately appoint a central technical committee and regional production committees with representatives from the AITUC and the coal unions.

These committees should go into questions of technique, mechanisation, stowing, amalgamation, closing down of mines with small output and the concentration of manpower and equipments in mines where output is higher and the questions of tub supply, railway transport etc.

These committees should help to get machines and equipments through the Government and should also have control over the allotment of wagons and planning of coal transport.

The mines of those colliery owners who refuse to work them under the direction of these committees should be taken over by the Government.

These committees should work out the output target for each individual colliery which it will be the duty of every colliery to fulfil. The progress of work should be reviewed periodically.

f) The Government should arrange suitable transport. At the moment our railways are unable to transport the coal that is being produced. In March 1947, coal allotments had to be cut down due to shortage of transport and not due to shortage of coal. The colliery owners are shouting that coal stocks are piling up in the pit heads. Mr. J. R. D. Tata said, in a recent speech, that coal is being despatched now at the rate of 1.9 million tons per month (during the war it was despatched at 2.1 million tons per month). In 1948 our railways should be able to despatch at least 30 million tons on the basis of the output target for 1948.

## NATIONALISATION OF MINES

While the above steps should be taken immediately it is necessary for the Government to prepare for the nationalisation of mines within a year. Because when the employers are out to sabotage coal production, despite every control by the Government, they will continue to create difficulties on the basis of whatever control is left to them. Secondly, long-term plans of working the mines by sound mining methods, equipping of mines with machines, fullest amalgamation of mines into suitable units, fullest concentration on collieries where coal can be got to the maximum, capital outlay on development, stowing etc. without an eye to profit—all these will be impossible without a complete nationalisation of mines. Finally, nationalisation will give the Government a considerable income (even if the Government keeps Re. 1 per ton as profit, it can have 3 crores of rupees annually) with which the entire development and mechanisation of mines and the opening of new pits etc. can be financed. With this increase, again, the housing programme for the miners, which is being inordinately delayed, can be implemented. And housing is the biggest factor, after wages,

that will help to build up an efficient and stable labour force for the coal mines.

The colliery owners are making about Rs. 15 crores annually, but they do not utilise it either for development purposes, or for mechanisation, stowing etc., or to give a living wage and decent housing to the miners. This huge income is wasted by declaring fat dividends which have increased to 16 per cent on an average.

When we need to build our nation and develop our industries to fight famine and scarcity, the nation cannot afford such fat dividends and they have to go.

Nationalisation, or State ownership of the coal industry, however, must not be put through the British way—where the mine owners have got heavy compensation, giving them a guaranteed income for years, and the capitalist class operates the “nationalised” mines in such a way as to deepen the fuel crisis.

Nor should the nationalised industry be like the State railways in India—ridden with corruption and red-tape, because the workers have no say in the management.

The coal industry in India can be put on its feet only on the basis of State ownership without compensation, a living wage to the workers, immediate improvement of working conditions, steps towards mechanisation (including steps to manufacture machine tools required in mining operations), and association of workers in the management of the collieries through their trade unions and pit-head committees.

## LESSONS IN BUILDING THE POPULAR FRONT

**JOSIP BROS TITO**

*We reproduce below extracts from the Report by Comrade Tito to the Second Congress of the People's Front of Yugoslavia, on September 27th, 1947. It is a profound criticism of a reformist understanding of the People's Front, on the basis of the rich experience of various European Parties in the pre-war period and during the Resistance, and a clear formulation of the revolutionary tactics of the People's Front—EDITOR.*

**B**EFORE the war, the People's Front was needed for the struggle against the very great and growing danger of fascism. It was needed, in each country separately, for the struggle against reaction. It was needed for the victory of democratic forces over reaction and for the struggle against the growing danger of war, for fascism meant war: It was needed in order to safeguard national independence, for fascism represented the greatest threat to the independence of small nations. Thus, the Communist Parties in all the capitalist countries interpreted the role of fascism, at that time, I mean before the war. The truth of this interpretation was fully vindicated in the colossal tragedy of the recent war, when fascism not only enslaved the small nations, but even threatened the great powers, and subjected their peoples to the most terrible sufferings and cruelties.

But today as well—when international reaction is becoming more and more aggressive, when people are once again trying to use fascist methods, when once again all sorts of fascist voices are becoming ever noisier—the progressive forces in every land, in the whole world, must fight with all their might against reaction which wants to provoke a new world tragedy, similar to that which we have just survived. Once more, a bitter and determined struggle is needed against reaction and fascism—against the warmongers.

But this time, all the failures of the past must be taken strictly into account.

Did the People's Front respond to their tasks in the war and during the great liberation struggle? No; in some countries they did not. And why not? Because agreements were made only from above, with party leaders; because there were various parties in the fronts at whose heads were leaderships that were not merely vacillating, but were downright reactionary and treacherous, men who either fled like cowards in the most fateful hour, or went over to the side of the fascist usurper. Because of the heterogeneous character of such fronts, and their lack of a definite plan of action and unwavering determination, they were more declamatory in nature than firm, unwavering, fighting fronts which would oppose, at any time and at any cost, reaction at home and the growing fascist danger of war. One can therefore understand, but not justify, the fact that the Communist Parties in some countries did not carry out their task of organising the struggle against the occupier and the creation of truly democratic authorities. In other words, they were not in a position to rouse the broad masses, right at the beginning, and to put themselves at the head of those masses.

In so far as later on they did, in some countries, offer a certain amount of resistance to the occupier, this resistance had no unified character—for the reasons I have already mentioned; nor did it achieve the results it should have done, results which would have corresponded to the desires of the peoples. And the outcome, understandably, was that in these countries reaction managed to take power all over again.

My own deep conviction, then, is that the main reasons for such failures were:

- 1) That there was not enough determination or daring. As soon as an anti-fascist front was formed, it should have been realised that in the event of fascist aggression it was going to be impossible to wage a struggle consisting of demonstrations, and that armed struggle would be called for; and so they should have prepared for this.
- 2) That there was no faith in the strength of the people; but there were illusions about the leadership of the various parties.
- 3) That the People's Fronts lacked fighting conviction, under unified and determined leaderships, with definite fighting programmes and a clear cut definite line.

Today, many people think that the People's Fronts have become somewhat out of date, that at this stage of development they are redundant and so on. But that is wrong. Even if the People's Fronts turned out to be ineffective in some countries during the war—for the reasons I have mentioned—they are today all the more necessary; but they must be given a new content. Today, reaction is becoming more and more aggressive;

today, with the help of the reactionaries, fascism is again raising its head; today, warmongers are becoming steadily more vocal.

So, a new war danger may begin—if we are not alert, if we do not learn the lessons of the immediate past, and if we fail to undertake the most energetic measures against all warmongers, if all progressive forces fail to unite—not only in each separate country, but all over the world—in a really determined struggle against the warmongers and for peace.

The People's Fronts, then, are uniting in a front for world peace. Such a union means organised, united activity for the preservation of peace and international co-operation.

On the other hand, while the People's Fronts in the different countries may be at different stages of organisational and political development, they can be of full value for the internal development of each country only if they are in the process of gradually transforming themselves into single, unified organisations of the entire people, for the purpose of more effectively solving all the country's problems, political, economic, social, cultural and so on. That is, if they are developing to that stage, so long as they have not reached a single unified programme on all the questions of the country's internal life.

In this way, then, democracy of a new type is possible and realisable. In this way, at the present stage, it can maintain itself and develop further. In this case, the People's Fronts will gradually transform themselves into single, unified political organisations of the whole people, in which the overwhelming majority of the nation will be gathered for common ends.

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The People's Front in Yugoslavia before the war differed from the fronts in certain other countries in that it did not represent any temporary union with the bourgeois parties. It was not created by means of agreements from above between the leaders, but was created from below, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Numerically, it was not so strong as the fronts in some other countries, but it was qualitatively better. This does not mean, of course, that we neglected to call on the leaders of other parties to bring their parties as a whole into the Front. It does not mean that we declined to make agreements with party leaders who were prepared to come into the Front. No; such an attitude would have been wrong and harmful, for in that case it would have been impossible to show up such leaders to the masses as reactionaries or to tear from them the democratic mask behind which they had been hiding in order to deceive the masses. There would have been a danger—if we had made such a mistake—of our becoming isolated from the masses and if that had happened, not only the numerical

strength of the Front, but the very issue of the struggle against the occupier would have been jeopardised.

Even before the war, in our country, the most progressive elements joined the Front: the working class led by the Communist Party, the people's intelligentsia, and the progressive peasantry and townsfolk, irrespective of their party allegiance.

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The leaders of the various bourgeois parties were in the main unmasked, even before the attack on Yugoslavia, and the conduct of these gentlemen during the first days of the occupation finally lost them all confidence of the masses. The Front became a union of all progressive people, of all anti-fascists, of all who were ready to defend their country's independence, under the leadership of the Communist Party, and to fight against the occupier and his lackeys. It was because of this that the Front in Yugoslavia differed from the fronts in various other countries. It was a strong, monolithic unity, because in it there were no vacillating or reactionary leaders.

After the occupation, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia issued a call to arms. More and more the great masses of the people responded to this call. Even those who had not been in the Front until that moment answered that call. Every patriot in the land answered it. Now, all who loved their country were assembled together in the Front, and all who were ready to fight against the occupier and the national traitors. And those who were menaced by the Ustashi knife, or, later on, by the Chetnik dagger—they especially responded to the Party's call.

The People's Front now acquired a new character; much broader and with greater responsibility. Its programme was enlarged by several new points: for instance, war against the occupier and against the national traitors, the brotherhood and unity of the peoples of Yugoslavia, the organisation of National Liberation Committees, and so on. This programme went on being broadened and filled in the longer the war continued and the more territory was liberated. Now the Front, led by the Communist Party, gradually became responsible for the organisation of new State authorities and of a new State; for the Front, as a political organisation with a defined programme, became the mainstay of the new authorities which were created to replace the old. With its fighting, democratic programme, the People's Front of Yugoslavia, led by the Communist Party, gave a new, truly democratic character to the new authorities. This democratic character was gradually completed and perfected through the representatives of the Front in the Federal People's Assembly and in the National Federative Assemblies.

Immediately after the war the Front, tempered in the struggle and politically still further strengthened through the rich

experience which it had already acquired, set about mastering new and difficult tasks: the final organisation of the new State on the ruins of the old and incompetent one, the reconstruction of the country, etc.

When one bears in mind that the reaction at home and abroad did its utmost to restore the old order in Yugoslavia on the model of existing western democracies—only then can one see how great were the difficulties attending the creation of the new Federal People's Republic, a State with a new, more just, social order. But here, too, the Front played an enormous part. It was the force on which we relied whenever certain western powers attempted by means of all sorts of threats to force upon us the old rulers, the regime of the old type, the regime which was so hated by our peoples, the regime of Grol, Macek, Subasic, and others.

The elections for the Federal Assembly showed the enormous vitality of the Front as a political organisation of the whole people. The results of the elections for the National Assemblies represent one of the biggest victories of the Front, for 95 per cent of those who had the vote under the new laws voted for the new Yugoslavia and for the Front.

Thanks solely to the existence of such a Front, was it possible in so short a time to create a new State power from the bottom up, so that it could function correctly under new conditions and amid new social relationships. Thanks solely to the Front, was it possible, despite all obstacles, to achieve political stability so quickly.

Our country emerged from the war ruined and devastated. The wounds which the occupier had inflicted upon our peoples were so grave that under the old political and economic conditions it would have taken a decade to heal them. But the Front brought to the task of reconstruction the enormous working, creative *elan* of our people, the fire of our youth, the self-sacrifice of the workers, peasants, and people's intelligentsia. Thanks only to the Front, was it possible to establish our transport system in so short a time, to build up shattered bridges, railways, inland waterways and marine communications.

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The Communist Party was the initiator and organiser of the Front, even before the war. Today, accordingly, it has a leading role in the Front. Moreover, the broad masses of the people have entrusted it with that role. Has the Communist Party any other programme outside the Front? No, the Front's programme is the Party's programme. Why then make a distinction between the Communist Party and the other parties and the Communist Party and the Front?



As the vanguard of the working class, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia acquired the role of the leader of all the progressive democratic forces, both during the war and now, in the peaceful building up of our country. Up to the formation of the new State under the conditions which I have described, the Communist Party was not only the vanguard of the working class, but also the leader of all progressive forces which were fighting together for a single defined end, that is, for the expulsion of the occupier, the destruction of the quislings, and the creation of the new State. After the formation of the new State, the Communist Party becomes the leader in the entire field of social development: in building up the People's Authorities (i.e., the organisation of the State), in reconstructing the country, in economic and cultural life, etc. It fulfils this role as a constituent part of the Front, for it is the leading part of the Front

## BURMA AFTER THE MURDER OF GENERAL AUNG SAN

*We give below the political resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Burma on July 30, 1947 on the situation facing the Burmese people immediately after the murder of General Aung San and his colleagues. Since this resolution was passed, the situation in Burma has considerably changed, particularly with the signing of the Anglo-Burmese treaty and the breakdown of the unity negotiations between the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League and the Communist Party of Burma. We hope to print in the near future the later resolutions of the Communist Party of Burma on the new situation in Burma*

—EDITOR.

**T**WO momentous events have taken place in our national life within the last ten days.

- 1) The assassination of Bogyoke Aung San and his ministerial colleagues.
- 2) Declaration of the Nu-Attlee agreement and the formation of a Provisional National Government in place of the former Governor's Executive Council.

The British imperialists were compelled to agree to these concessions, because there was no other alternative for them. At the same time, they wanted to nullify them. So, the assassination of the national leadership and imperialism's attempt at a rightist **coup d'etat** was its last desperate step.

But these have **changed** the entire political situation in our country and hence a **new orientation** has to be given to our policy of "final seizure of power."

Why the new situation?

1. (A) The last desperate attack on the national movement by British imperialism has begun with the assassination of Bogyoke.

(B) Today, momentarily the people no longer feel the same confidence in the AFPFL leadership and also in the Gov-

ernment as they had felt, when Aung San was at the head of affairs.

Hence, the people want Communist-AFPFL unity at any cost to save the national movement, and also to lead them forward towards the final goal. Their concrete suggestion for unity is that the "Communist Party and AFPFL must come down in their respective demands and unite." The people urge upon the Communists to get into the Government also and make the ministry stable.

2. By the Nu-Attlee agreement, a formal but serious concession to the national demand has been wrung out from British imperialism.

On the one hand, this has brought about a new situation, in which if we play a positive and correct role we can lead the people into a national war supported by the entire nation against the British imperialists. "This kind of war for the fatherland has been taking place in many colonies and semi-colonial countries, i.e., Philippines, Indo-China, Indonesia, India, Iran, Greece, etc." (Political Affairs—March, 1947.)

On the other hand, if we do not change our tactical line there is every danger that not only our Party will be completely smashed, but also our entire national movement will be shattered into pieces, making it possible for the imperialists to rule our country indirectly for ever.

Hence, under the new conditions, it becomes imperative for the Communist Party of Burma to immediately change its tactical line.

## BRITISH IMPERIALIST AIMS VIS-A-VIS OUR NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Today British imperialism has been compelled to leave off direct rule and resort to indirect rule, by making formal but serious concessions to our national demands and at the same time, it is trying to sabotage that from within, in order to continue its rule.

At the same time, we must frankly admit, we had so far minimised the value of the concessions that have been gained by the national movement. If that was not so, we could have beneficially utilised these concessions in certain respects to a certain extent, for the development of our common national movement.

If we divide the period from September '46 to July '47 into three phases and study the British imperialist game vis-a-vis our national movement and also the concessions that have been wrung out by the national movement from the unwilling hands of

the British imperialists in each phase, we shall clearly see why this final change has to be made.

## FIRST PHASE

The spontaneous workers', employees', police and peasants' struggles reached their climax in the September '46 uprising. This upheaval immediately made the imperialists retreat, before the movement could assume the character of a national war against British imperialism. Hence, the imperialists took the initiative to negotiate with the national leaders in order to retard the national revolt. Since the movement could not lead to a final clash with imperialist rule, thanks to the compromising role of the national bourgeois leadership, and because imperialism had begun to negotiate with the national leaders right from the beginning, the concessions gained by the national movement were very little.

a) AFPFL leadership had to share power with the toadies in the Executive Council on 50% basis.

b) Promise of more power for the Executive Council was given by Rance, once the leaders entered the Executive Council.

In effect, the power gained by the national movement in the Executive Council was nothing more than that of the Paw Tun Government. At the same time, since the popular leaders were in the Executive Council the character of the Executive Council had definitely changed from that of the previous one.

But this must be recognised that this upsurge compelled imperialism to forsake its direct and open rule over us, with its repressive machinery, as it was doing before. It made imperialism to go behind a popular screen, in order to carry on with the assault against the national movement. This was because the gathering momentum of the national revolt was about to challenge the very existence of imperialism if it continued its open and direct rule.

From September onwards, the imperialists resorted to every kind of repressive measure to check the national revolt. The national leaders also, by means of compromises and disruptive moves, tried to checkmate the people's movements.

But because the basic contradictions between imperialism and the people remained as serious as before, and because the national leaders had not got any serious concessions from the imperialists, the people began to march forward with a greater tread. The upsurge continued with increasing strength.

The reflection of the people's upsurge manifested itself in Bogyoke's public statements, etc. He categorically declared that

his government would resign if promise of independence within one year was not given by the British. He threatened the British Government with armed revolt. In the armed forces and in rural areas, serious preparations for armed actions were made by POVs\* and Socialists.

In January, the upsurge assumed a higher form of struggle than even in September, i.e., armed struggles of PVOs and Socialists, etc. In the background of this armed struggle, a general strike of industrial and other workers broke out in many places and particularly at Rangoon.

## SECOND PHASE

Imperialism faced with a more serious national upsurge than in September was now prepared to concede more to the national demand. The national bourgeois leadership also, true to their tradition, became prepared for a compromise instead of leading the upsurge to final assault.

Aung San-Attlee agreement made the following concessions:

a) Election to Constituent Assembly as envisaged in the White Paper Plan was given up. Direct election to the Constituent Assembly on adult suffrage basis was conceded to.

b) Governor's Executive Council was to be composed of members only from the AFPFL.

c) Financial autonomy other than the finances concerning the Project Boards, was given to the Executive Council.

d) No interference of the Governor in the day-to-day activities of the Executive Council, i.e., promise to function as a "Dominion Government by conventions".

After the agreement, the PVOs were allowed to be armed which had been resisted by the imperialists till then.

Hence, this was the period from whence began the **last stage of direct rule** by imperialism. After making these concessions imperialism tried to nullify them by other means.

Taking advantage of the national split, imperialism secured more powers from the popular executive council for the bureaucracy. As the mass struggles led by the Communist Party developed more and more, the frightened right-wing leadership also began to rely more and more on the bureaucracy. Unprecedented repressive laws were passed, which armed the bureaucracy to terrorise the workers' and peasants' movements everywhere. In this period the British military rained bullets from their machineguns, etc. on our unarmed peasantry under the Devil's own plan called the "**Operation Flush**".

By means of the slave conditions associated with the British loan, imperialism succeeded in maintaining its stranglehold on our national economy.

By encouraging reactionaries among the minorities, British imperialism tried to foster separatist movements in many places. This way they wanted to further disrupt the national movement.

But in spite of the imperialist designs, and their intrigues, the imperialists failed to suppress the upsurge. As a matter of fact, the upsurge began to gather greater momentum day by day. AFPFL election campaign roused our freedom-loving people. And particularly our campaign for national unity for final struggle prepared a larger section of our people than before for an uncompromising struggle against imperialism. When the people in general began to get disillusioned with the national leaders, they began more and more to come towards struggle.

The entire working class and the middle class employees including police, teachers, etc. were on the verge of a general strike. The ABTUC had fixed up August 15 as the date to start the general strike in spite of Aung San Government's disruptive role. Countrywide peasant actions, unheard of previously, were about to begin. The ABTUC Session at Kyaukse had informally fixed up August 15 as the day from when an all-Burma campaign against Dominion Status was to begin. A large section of the army was about to revolt. A big section of the navy was about to start a mutiny.

Thus, the country was preparing for a much bigger upheaval than in September 1946 or January 1947.

The reflection of this uncompromising upsurge was manifested in the sayings and doings of the national leaders themselves:

a) The Constituent Assembly in unequivocal terms demanded complete independence outside the British Empire.

b) Bogyoke began to say more and more that he "would lead the country to struggle if by January 1948 independence was not granted."

c) For the first time after September, Bogyoke categorically stated in public meetings as well as in the Constituent Assembly that "Nobody had the power to go against the decisions of the January 1946 Congress resolutions."

In his last speech on July 13, he once again reiterated what has been said above.

d) After election, the national leadership had to lessen their anti-Communist crusade, and before his assassination, Bogyoke showed definite indications for unity with the Communists.

All these gave more courage to the general masses of our people and they longed for an immediate struggle against imperialism.

\* Members of the People's Volunteer Corps organised by Aung San.

### THIRD PHASE—PLOT TO STAGE A RIGHTIST COUP

Faced with this unprecedented strength of the national liberation movement on the one hand and its own crisis at home on the other, imperialism negotiated with the Goodwill Mission led by Thakin Nu and reached an agreement.

British imperialism was having its own internal trouble. After the second world war it had come out much weaker politically and economically than before. By the terms of loan agreements, American imperialism, Britain's imperialist rival, was swallowing up all her imperialist bases. The growth of the British labour movement also no longer supported imperialism in keeping the colonies in slavery. Among the New Democracies in Europe it could find no support for its policy of colonial oppression and exploitation.

Hence, British imperialism still wanting to retain its empire has to resort to desperate means. It can no longer directly rule the colonies in any of its old forms. It is therefore that with the Nu-Attlee agreement has begun the period for **indirect rule** of imperialism in our country. This indirect rule they intend to carry on by making serious concessions to the national demand on the one hand, and on the other hand they want to sabotage it from within through the bureaucracy, military chiefs, vested interests, British monopoly concerns and by means of treaties, etc.

The gains are the following:

- a) Admission by imperialism of the sovereign status of the Constituent Assembly despite its limitations.
- b) Positive promise for transfer of power by a certain date, i.e., towards the end of 1947.
- c) Formation of a formal Provisional National Government by the AFPFL, functioning as a cabinet and by convention no longer responsible to the Governor, (by convention responsible only to the Working Committee of the AFPFL). The Governor is to function as a constitutional head by convention. The Status of Councillors was raised to that of Ministers, with the Prime Minister at the head.

On the other hand, although the Constituent Assembly has declared that Burma will not remain within the British Empire, the Nu-Attlee agreement still includes the phrase: "Should the **final decision** of the Constituent Assembly be that Burma is to become an independent state outside the British Commonwealth." This shows that imperialism will desperately try in the interim period to create such conditions which will compel Burma to remain within the Empire.

The cold-blooded murder of the entire national leadership is a direct and desperate attack of the imperialists on the

national movement for the fulfilment of that very imperialist design. By means of this **coup d'état** they intended to bolster up the reactionary Saw-Sein-Maw gang into power, which would obey their dictation like slaves. In this way, they could check Burma from going out of the Empire. The fascist **coup d'état** was definitely engineered by the Tory section of the imperialists, with most probably the silent consent of the Labour imperialists. This was executed by the Saw-Sein-Maw gang in conjunction with British military chiefs and bureaucrats in Burma, the British monopolists in Burma and a section of the Burmese bureaucracy (e.g., Tun Hla Aung, etc.).

At the same time, just before the assassination, the growing demand of "AFPFL-CP unity" by the national movement which was forcing the AFPFL leaders to unite with the Communists had to be stopped. This is because the national unity today would mean liquidation of the imperialist rule. Hence imperialism on the one hand attempted the rightist **coup d'état** and on the other hand tried to put the blame for this on the Communists so that the national movement could be still more disrupted without any hope of unity in the near future. This is evidenced from the fact that immediately after the assassination of the leaders, imperialist news agencies spread the news abroad that the national murder was done by the left parties in order to stage a **coup d'état**. Later UPA reports from London openly stated that it was the Communists who were responsible for the assassination. It is authentically learnt that the British military chiefs of the Burma Army deliberately spread the lie in the ranks that the assassination was done by the Communists.

Although the prompt initiative of the proletarian party has checked the immediate designs of the imperialists, thereby saving the country from disaster, there is yet every danger that this attack on the national movement will be repeated over and over again in the interim period, through Saw-Sein-Maw rebellion, political assassinations and with various kinds of political and military intrigues. It is quite possible that under the pretext that the ministry is unstable, imperialism may later on force the AFPFL leaders to take in Ba Maw into the ministry. That may be one of the main reasons why no action has been taken against Ba Maw. The PVOs may be disarmed under the pretext of civil war in the country. The present composition and character of the Burma Army may be changed by pressure from the British military missions, etc., which will be sent to Burma soon.

Then, again, why formal Dominion power in the interim period was not given to the Nu Government, if analysed, can be seen, was for the same purpose as is shown above.

Imperialism wanted to have a direct say in all important matters concerning the military and the economy of our country in the interim period. So it was by convention, that the Nu

Government was to function as a provisional government. The very fact that Attlee categorically stated that the maintenance of law and order was British concern and had asked for military aid from India to quell the rebellion in Burma immediately after the assassination, shows the correctness of our contention.

But later, under pressure from Thakin Nu due to our intervention, in the House of Commons debate five days ago, in answer to questions, Attlee changed his tone and said that British forces were to stay in Burma for three reasons:

- 1) External defence;
- 2) To safeguard British possessions and their economic interests;
- 3) To help Burma Government when needed.

By this, Attlee, afraid of the national mood today, had to openly admit the real power of the Nu Government which had been won, although it was only by convention. This also proves our other contention that with the background of people's mighty upsurge that is existing today, the national movement can get real concessions from the imperialists, if we play a positive role.

The reason why Thakin Nu also had refrained from pressing for formal Dominion power for the Executive Council was because the people did not want to hear even the term "Dominion", not to speak of accepting Dominion form of Government for the Executive Council. So, when he got an assurance from the British that the provisional government would function without the Governor using his veto power by convention in good faith, he was satisfied.

In the interim period, the British imperialists will also try to further disrupt our national movement indirectly through reactionary Sawbwas (Shan chiefs) demanding separate states, like the Karenni chiefs.

Communal riots between Karens and Burmans and other minorities will be fostered. Already, Karens are fighting with arms against Burmese population in Eastern Taungoo. By inciting communal riots, imperialism will try to check the national war against itself. Already, imperialist agents are trying to foster up Indo-Burmese riots in Rangoon.

The British have to resort to direct means in all these respects, because the British have no such fifth column as Burmese Big Business, through whom pressure can be brought upon the popular ministry, as is the case in India. By means of direct provocation and disruption of the national movement, the British imperialists want to create such a situation in Burma, through the help of the bureaucracy, military chiefs and toady vested interests, by which slave conditions can be imposed on the Anglo-Burmese treaty, when the transfer of power is finally made. In this way, imperialism will try to keep Burma indirectly

enslaved and make Burmese independence, which will be won, only **formal forever**, like Egypt, Iran, Iraq, etc.

With the above ends in view, the bureaucracy, vested interests and other agents and allies of imperialism are desperately trying today to stop AFPFL-CP unity, at all costs, which alone can save Burma from the above dangers.

Hence it becomes the immediate task of the proletarian party to save the national movement with all its might, ruthlessly isolate the imperialist agents and its allies from the people, smash the British imperialist designs once and for all, and carry Burma forward to complete **freedom** from imperialist slavery.

## CONCLUSION

The Communist Party of Burma is fully confident that the imperialist designs and intrigues can be decisively defeated with AFPFL-CP unity. The agents and the reactionary allies of imperialism have almost no social basis. They are the enemies of our people who place profit and self-interest above patriotism and the national interest. The very economic crisis that imperialism is accentuating daily, will further rouse the common man against imperialism, its agents and its allies. We are confident that the national movement will not tolerate any compromise of real independence if it is kept fully informed and mobilised. The fact that Socialists, PVOs and other rank and file of the AFPFL are also keeping January 1948 as their target, to start armed struggle for seizure of power, despite the check by the bourgeois leadership, gives us the confidence that we can build up a United National Front in the interim period for the final clash against imperialism.

For the very reason, the rank and file masses of the AFPFL today intensely desire AFPFL-CP unity. Circumstances have compelled the AFPFL leadership also to try for unity with the Communist Party.

But we must also not fail to understand that the bourgeois leadership talk of unity today, because they are in a crisis and are as yet unstable. Due to mass pressure, they cannot also stop us from uniting in the bases. At the same time, delay to implement our decision will offer time to the bourgeois leadership to get stabilised, when once again they will fight against unity with all their might. That will once again make it extremely difficult for us to get top and base unity at the same time.

At the same time, we must not forget the consequences which will develop, if AFPFL-CP unity is not immediately achieved. This will make our entire people frustrated, and with a greater assault from the imperialists on our people, which is

inevitable, our entire national movement will be smashed. This will only make our national leadership to rely more and more on imperialism for independence and on the bureaucracy to maintain law and order, and to create the most fertile ground for imperialism to impose its slave plan of **permanent indirect rule on our country.**

Hence, we must strike the iron while it is hot, build up the United National Front for national war against the hated British imperialists and achieve **real independence** for our glorious motherland.

### OUR IMMEDIATE POLITICAL SLOGANS

**Turn the formal Provisional National Government into a real one!**

**Assert the right of the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign one!**

**Turn the formal independence into a real one!**

## OUR FAULTS AND OUR WEAKNESSES

**MAURICE THOREZ**

*We reproduce below extracts from the Report made by Comrade Maurice Thorez, General Secretary, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France on 29-10-1947. Starting with a bold self-criticism of certain recent errors of the French C.P., Thorez proceeds to draw invaluable lessons from the French experience of Popular Front tactics in the prewar years and in the period of Resistance to Fascism*  
—EDITOR.

**W**E do not shut our eyes to our faults or our weaknesses. As disciples of Lenin and Stalin we examine our own activity from a critical point of view.

"The attitude of a political party towards its mistakes", said Lenin, "is one of the most important criterions for judging whether this party is serious and if it truly fulfils its obligations towards its class, and towards the working masses. To recognise openly its mistake, in discovering the causes, in analysing the situation which gave birth to it, in attentively examining the means of correcting this mistake, this is the mark of a serious party, this is what is known to it as fulfilling its obligations to educate and instruct the class and then the masses." (Lenin: **Left-Wing Communism — An Infantile Disorder.**)

The Central Committee pointed to the gaps, the mistakes, in the Party activity, in its diverse organisations and different posts to which the confidence of the masses had called them.

We find the root of these mistakes in the tardiness of the Central Committee itself, in stating and clearly defining the nature and significance of the changes brought about in the international situation and, notably, in the regrouping of the imperialist and anti-imperialist forces under the direction and in the interests of the United States.

Consequently, we have not underlined, from the beginning, and with the necessary vigour, that we had been thrust out of the Government only on the express orders of American reaction. And we exposed our flank to the manoeuvres of Leon Blum and Ramadier who wished to make out that the divergencies bore

exclusively on the question of salaries and prices. We allowed something to be put forward which was only a pretext to remove us from the Government.

On the other hand, even when we had a justification for denouncing our eviction from the Government as being a violation of the laws of parliamentary democracy—as a new indication of the crisis of bourgeois democracy, which the capitalists throw overboard the minute it can be utilised by the working class—we allowed the impression that it was more or less an ordinary ministerial crisis, whilst it really meant a brutal intervention by American imperialists in French affairs.

As a result of this initial mistake we did not, from the beginning, ruthlessly expose the conduct of the Socialist leaders and of the different parties of the Government as being a veritable ignominy, a shameful betrayal of the national interests.

This has resulted in indecisions and wobbling of our group in the National Assembly, criticised by the Central Committee in its last session: abstention in place of a resolute hostile vote against certain Governmental statements (vexing measures on the peasantry, the agrarian constitution); insufficient denunciation of the municipal electoral law of Depreux-Barrachin, in the illusion that we were cultivating the attitude of such or such a group, without taking into account the new situation in France and in the world. During a certain period, the Party seemed to hesitate in its opposition to a Government which so gravely failed to recognise the interests of the country. We have appeared sympathetic towards the complaints of the Socialists and others who reproached us with wishing to put a check on the granting of American credits and of bringing prejudice against our country, in short of not behaving as patriots.

The hesitations of the Central Committee and the Parliamentary Group hindered, in a certain measure, the rapid mobilisation of the democratic working masses against the Ramadier Government and his luckless policy. They nourished the opportunist tendencies, condemned last month by our Central Committee, and expressed themselves in our under-estimation of the working-class forces and fear of the mass movement—when the duty of the Communists, says our September resolution, “is to place themselves resolutely at the head of the popular movement with boldness and a spirit of responsibility” and when the Communist Party’s mission is to uplift, educate, organise and guide the movement of the working class and toiling masses.

## EXPERIENCE OF THE POPULAR FRONT

One could ask at this point if we have learnt to draw the lesson of all our past experiences, in order to instruct the Party and

the working class and to seriously educate our cadres. Had we, for example, sufficiently made clear to the Party and the masses the defects of the Popular Front and the causes for its final collapse, to prevent the workers from going through a similar disappointment?

The chief defect of the Popular Front of which we had the happy initiative and which had some very positive sides, was that it became a simple entente at the top. We had advocated the democratic election of committees in the factories and localities. We had advocated the holding of a National Conference composed of delegates elected from the lower popular assemblies. The Congress itself could have elected a National Committee charged with looking after the application of the programme of the Popular Front. The committees of the National Front were well elected in a number of workshops and localities, but we did not manage to conquer the unyielding opposition of the Socialists and our other partners in these elected committees and at the convocation of a sovereign Congress. Little by little, the Socialists and the Radicals emptied the Popular Front of its content of fight for bread, liberty and peace.

By reason of the exclusive phrase “entente at the top” we had admitted into the Popular Front the presence of individuals who only thought to betray the movement at the first opportunity, such as Daladier and Paul Faure. That is why the Popular Front was impotent against “non-intervention” and against the “pause” of which Leon Blum and the Socialist Party took the initiative. That is why the Popular Front was impotent against the Munich betrayal, perpetrated by Daladier with the approval of the Socialist leaders. That is why the Popular Front disintegrated little by little to collapse completely with the advent of war.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RESISTANCE

We had said and expected these things well before 1939. Did we take account of this in the organisation and direction of the Resistance? It must be recognised that we did not.

We had been the first, and for a long time the only ones, in a Resistance which for us did not commence on 18th June 1940, but dates from the struggle conducted by the working class and Republicans (with the CGT and the League of the Rights of Man) against non-intervention, against Munich. We pursued the French Resistance in the sombre period of the phoney war when Daladier and Bonnet, with the aid of the Socialist Party which struck against our Party, divided the trade unions and hunted down our militants, in order, more surely, to open the way to Hitler’s armies. We were the FIRST to enter into combat

on our native soil for the independence and rebirth of France, at a time when the other parties were collapsing in shame and confusion.

From the first months of 1941 Frenchmen of all opinions and beliefs were placed in the Committees of the National Front, with their multiple and flexible forms of grouping, in the workshops, localities or on the plane of professional activities, then with their groups of Franc-Tireur and French Partisans. The Socialists, Catholics and Communists were not in the Committees of the National Front or in the FTP as representatives of their parties or beliefs; they were there as combatants, fighting effectively against the German invaders and against the Vichy traitors. We can state that after having rendered immense service to the cause of liberation, the National Front, by reason of having its roots in the people, is the only movement of the Resistance which succeeded in surviving.

Unfortunately, we later on accepted that the National Front, instead of being formed out of the representatives of the lower committees and their military organisations, be constituted by direct representation of parties and various groups, like the Popular Front had been. With the additional aggravating circumstance that these parties, save ours, carried the heavy responsibility for the disorders of France and, besides, their action of Resistance was practically nil. In fact these parties and groups and their representatives on the C.N.R. thought less of the organisation of the actual struggle against the invader than of the situation in France on the morrow of liberation. In accordance with, and under the direction of General de Gaulle, they placed their apparatus of Resistance not against the Germans and the Vichyites, but against the wishes that the French people would not fail to express after liberation.

General de Gaulle, who declaimed against the parties, did all he could to give life to certain ones with the aim of opposing them to ours, the Communist Party, the only one which had really counted in the Resistance. Likewise de Gaulle did everything to liquidate the regional and departmental committees of the liberation. The Congress of the CDL of the southern zone, held in Avignon, had opened such perspectives of redressment and national revival that de Gaulle and the various groups adhering to the CNR made haste to extinguish a movement which frightened them and threatened to overthrow them.

We must consider it a grave fault that we tolerated in the organisation and conduct of the Resistance the same faults which had proved fatal to the Popular Front and which revealed as pernicious for the national liberation movement.

More or less camouflaged behind the groups adhering to the CNR, more or less "white-washed" or "cleared" by the CNR, reaction has had the audacity to come back into the saddle.

Today, assembled behind de Gaulle, reaction is pushing its offensive against the working class and the Republic.

### TO ORIENTATE MORE TOWARDS THE MASS

Our conclusions must be to unite all the workers, all the Republicans, in view of the defence of their immediate interests, their liberties, in view of new assaults of fascism and to preserve the independence of France; we must orientate ourselves more towards the masses. We must remember that the unique front is action. Conversations, agreements between groups and organisations have no reason to be made unless they reinforce action against the enemies of the people and the Republic.

The positive experience of the National Front can help to find new forms for the assembly and action of the popular masses. Already, in many workshops in the Parisian region, workers have elected Committees of Defence of the Republic. It is equally possible to constitute such committees on the local scale, and to unite all the Republicans, Communists and Socialists, free-thinkers and Catholics in order to face the fascist danger and to defend the constitution ratified by the people against the would-be dictator. The workers and the Republicans understand that "revision" signifies aggression against liberties and against the social laws favourable to the workers and all unfortunates. General de Gaulle would like to liquidate the nationalisations, and the Works Committees, to suppress the social insurance, militarise the trade unions, frustrate the working class in its rights and in a general way to deprive Frenchmen of the liberties for which so many heroes died.



# LESSONS OF THE YUGOSLAV REVOLUTION

EDVARD KARDELJ

*We print below extracts from the Report by Edvard Kardelj, representing the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, to the conference of the nine Communist Parties at Warsaw, entitled "The Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the Struggle for the Independence of the Yugoslav Peoples, for the People's Power, for Economic Rehabilitation and Socialist Reconstruction of the Economy". The Report makes profound generalisations concerning the character of the Yugoslav Revolution ("interblending" of the democratic and socialist revolutions), the nature of the new democratic State in Yugoslavia, (a "specific Soviet form of democracy"), and sharply combats certain reformist formulations concerning the people's democracies which have been current in recent times.—EDITOR.*

**I**T was necessary to break and destroy the old, hated power which oppressed the people in the interests of the exploiters. It was necessary to guarantee that the New Yugoslavia would no longer be a prison of the peoples—as the old one was—but a State which would be built up on the basis of self-determination and equality of all its peoples... It was necessary to give the workers, peasants and all working people the guarantee that they would be able to build a better life for themselves than they had had in the old Yugoslavia. It was necessary to prove all this in practice to the masses of the people on liberated territory.

That is why the old State apparatus was immediately torn down to its foundations and a new form of State power created everywhere on liberated territory. The slogan of the National Liberation Front was: All power on liberated territory—insofar as this was not limited by purely military needs—belongs to the National Liberation Committees, that is, the people should take it into their own hands: the peasants, workers, all working people and all honest patriots.

Comrade Tito, speaking of the People's Committees, said:

"That was a form of people's power which was known to the peoples—known because they have waited and yearned for it for a long time, have carried it in their heart. It was precisely that form of power which best corresponded to the interests of the peoples of our country..." (Marshal Tito: Report to the Second Congress of the People's Front of Yugoslavia.)

Having much in common with the Soviets, the National Liberation Committees were built up in accordance with the actual conditions in Yugoslavia and according to the specific developments of our national liberation uprising.

It is quite clear that the National Liberation Committees, as well as certain revolutionary-democratic measures which they put into effect, infuriated the traitorous anti-democratic cliques in our country, who were ready to ally themselves even with the Devil in order to wrest that powerful weapon from the hands of the people. On the other hand, the National Liberation Committees swiftly gained great popularity among the people. During the war they played a tremendous role in consolidating the working masses of our country around the National Liberation Front led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. It was this strength and popularity of the National Liberation Committees, i.e., the true people's power, which made possible the decisions taken in Jajce on November 29th, 1943 by the Second Session of AVNOJ (the Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia), as the supreme organ of the people's power on liberated territory. This session proclaimed the removal of the emigre Government from power, banned the dynasty from returning and made Yugoslavia a federative State on the basis of national equality. It also finally confirmed the National Liberation Committees and the whole structure of State power which was based on all of them, including AVNOJ, as the sole legitimate organ of all the peoples and of the State power in the country. This step greatly raised the prestige of the people's power and marked the final turning-point in the balance of forces in favour of the National Liberation Movement and the people's power.

It can be said that the development of the national liberation uprising and the people's power in Yugoslavia represents a specific example of the linking up of a national liberation war with a democratic people's revolution under the leadership of the working class striving in its development to a higher socialist form.

## ROLE OF WESTERN IMPERIALISM DURING THE WAR

The fourth factor in our victory was our clearly defined relationship with our allies in the war. The entire policy of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the National Liberation Front was directed towards strengthening the unity of the anti-Hitler bloc as a precondition to the victory over the fascist invaders. In spite of this, however, we did not refrain from publicly criticising all that which it was necessary to criticise in the relations between the allies, so that the masses of the people would have a clear picture of the position and relationship of forces. It was exactly because of this that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia could without difficulty throw off the influence of certain opportunist tendencies which appeared in the final phases of the war. Some people were ready to believe that after the war there would begin a period of peaceful, parliamentary development of imperialism, and not a period of the further sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism with all its internal contradictions—a period in which, at the first opportunity, the reactionary imperialist forces would again attempt to free themselves from the pressure of the democratic forces and to untie their hands for new imperialistic expansion, if not hampered by the democratic forces.

## ARMED UPRISING THE BEST TEACHER

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia shattered these illusions during the war and immediately after it. The peoples of Yugoslavia freed themselves of such illusions by their own experiences. In this respect the armed uprising was the best teacher. It was most clearly seen at the front as to who was a truly sincere friend and who was not. Had there not been an armed uprising of our people, they could not have possibly seen this, they could not have exposed the pseudo-democratic phraseology. The masses of the people, however, knew of the reasons for the very poor help in arms given to the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia by the Western allies, and had to pay with their own blood for the support which the Chetniks of Draza Mihailovic and other traitors received from abroad up to the last day of the war. They saw many instances of insincerity on the part of the Western allies during the war and closely followed the insidious political manoeuvres of certain imperialist circles regarding the Second Front. All these and other bitter experiences taught the masses of our people not to judge the allies by their words alone but also by their deeds.

That is why our peoples had no illusions regarding the imperialist "democracy", or the "improvement" of imperialism.

On the other hand, the masses of our peoples, on their own experience, were daily convinced of the great liberation role of the Soviet Union and its unselfish help to our liberation struggle. Our peoples saw that the Soviet Union was bearing the brunt of the war and closely followed its unselfish policy of helping all enslaved peoples. That is why they understood that the struggle of the Soviet Union was in full measure their own struggle. It was precisely during the war that our peoples best understood that the fraternal alliance between Moscow and Belgrade was the basic guarantee of their independence.

## PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY — TRUE AND FALSE

In addition to this, all these facts taught our peoples something more. They taught them to differentiate between the genuine democracy and genuine democratic power, and the formal, alleged "democracy" and false "democratic" power.

Opinions, for example, were expressed to the effect that every Government in which the Communists participated was already a Government of the new, people's democracy. Such a view is naturally wrong and very dangerous. Rich experiences show that the reactionary forces were often prepared to cooperate with the Communists in a Government as long as they felt weak, but as soon as they felt stronger they were ready to trample upon all democratic principles and all parliamentary forms only to free themselves from the control of the working class and of the working people as represented by the Communist Party. Precisely for this reason the democratic forces in Yugoslavia, headed by the Communist Party, took steps to safeguard the people's power from all possible attacks by the various imperialist agents and the various anti-democratic and reactionary plots. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia maintained the view that the new, people's democracy began where the working class, in alliance with all the other working masses, held the key positions in the State power, which guaranteed the stability of the people's democratic power and which could prevent the imperialist reaction from wresting from the people the democratic achievements of their liberation struggle. Naturally, the calumniators—the agents of imperialism—clamoured and are still clamouring that this is dictatorship. Our peoples reply, however, that it is only the safeguarding of the genuine people's democracy and our national independence from your anti-democratic plots and dictatorships and from your imperialistic expansion.

The policy of the Communist Party was victorious. The reactionary forces in the service of foreign imperialism were routed,

while the enormous majority of the people's masses had already, during the war, firmly united in its People's Front, headed by the Communist Party.....

### NEW FORM OF STATE POWER — THE SOVIET FORM

The old system of State power was destroyed not only as far as its internal substance and personnel were concerned, but in form as well. What is essential in this change is the fact that the people's power, founded on the People's Committees and enjoying their active support, is a higher type of democracy as compared with parliamentary democracy. One sometimes hears from poorly informed people that the new democracy is actually an old parliamentary democratic form with a new substance. As far as Yugoslavia is concerned, such an assertion does not correspond to reality. What is characteristic for the development of people's democracy in Yugoslavia is precisely the fact that it did not develop along the lines of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. The people's democracy in Yugoslavia is the result of a persistent and bloody struggle for the national liberation and independence of our people—a struggle in which the process of people's democratic revolution developed simultaneously.

**It is actually a specific form of Soviet democracy which corresponds to our conditions and to the specific conditions of the development of our national liberation developed simultaneously.** It is for this very reason that in the defence of our people's power such a unity of our working people has been attained that is unprecedented in the history of the peoples of Yugoslavia.

### CHARACTER OF PEOPLE'S COMMITTEES

All the administrative territorial units in the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia and in its people's republics (towns, cities, districts and regions) are governed by the people of these territories themselves through their organs of power, that is to say, through the People's Committees, which they elect every three years by direct and secret ballot. The People's Committees govern all affairs of local significance and, at the same time, also carry out on their territories the tasks of general significance, in keeping with the instructions issued by the higher organs of the State power. They are, therefore, the sole and the highest organs of the State power in their administrative territorial units. Thus a higher type of self-government has been embodied in our People's Committees, which differs radically from the self-government in the countries of bourgeois democracy.

Together with the National Assembly and the Presidium of the people's republics, that is the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia, and with the governments of the people's republic and the Federal Government, the People's Committees represent the unification of the State power, the unification of the system of the new, people's democracy which stands incomparably higher than any bourgeois parliamentary democracy, not only in substance but also in form.

Thanks to the fact that already during the war the old State apparatus had been completely crushed, a mortal blow was dealt to the enemy, since this deprived him of every possibility of influencing the State power even indirectly. We were able to build up a new apparatus within a relatively short time precisely because we were able to rely on the experience and cadres which the national liberation uprising and the development of the National Liberation Committees during the four years of war had given us.

### PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT — ORGAN FOR SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

We consider the building up of the new State apparatus as one of the most important and greatest victories of the People's Front and of the Communist Party. This victory, to a great extent, facilitated the speedy organisational consolidation and ultimate strengthening of the people's power after the liberation, despite the stubborn attempts of the remnants of the routed enemy of the people, supported from abroad, to wrest from the people the achievements of their heroic liberation struggle.

In addition to this the New Yugoslavia, immediately after the national liberation, unhesitatingly embarked upon a course of speedy realisation of the national and democratic demands of the peoples of Yugoslavia, already proclaimed in Jajce in 1943. Yugoslavia soon grew up into a federative republic of free peoples with equal rights. The enemies of the people were thus deprived of one more weapon with which they had held the masses of the people in subjugation.

These victories and the structure of the People's Front were the foundation on which the People's Republic was built. Today it represents the unity of the working masses headed by the working class. **The people's Government reflects the interests of the working masses, it is the organ of these masses in their struggle against the capitalistic remnants and for the construction of socialism in Yugoslavia.**

## INTERBLENDING OF DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS

Having achieved such big victories, the peoples of Yugoslavia were able to pass on to the next stage of their struggle: laying the foundation for building socialism in their country.

Such a policy on the part of the Government was inevitable. A situation in which the working class in alliance with the other working masses holds power while the basic economic resources are in the hands of the overthrown capitalist bourgeoisie, cannot last long.

Therefore, it is clear, that the Government, which is the reflection of this alliance of working people headed by the working class, could not restrict itself merely to liquidating the various feudal remnants and capitalist monopolies but had to adopt a clear course leading to the general elimination of capitalism and the construction of socialism in Yugoslavia.

The process of the development of the people's democratic revolution interblended with the socialist forms which have today become predominant. Whoever attempts to raise a wall between these two forms of parallel development would only prove that he is either badly informed or that he mechanically applies the teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

The National Liberation Committees, already during the war, introduced a series of measures which considerably weakened the economic position of the traitorous capitalist reaction. It is understood that after the liberation and strengthening of the people's power the New Yugoslavia unhesitatingly set out upon the road of socialist reconstruction.

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