

ISSUES BEFORE THE MEERUT CONGRESS

1946—how did it open out and how is it now ending? To face up to this simple question frankly and not escape a realistic answer, is the task facing all Congressmen and the entire freedom movement.

An enslaved people, out to mould their own destiny, must at every turning point in their movement face up to two basic issues:

FIRST, is our movement blasting its way forward or is it being scattered and defeated by our enemies?

SECOND, are the promises and the policy of the leadership coming true or were they illusory and unrealistic.

Without clearly understanding the actual course of our movement, without coolly assessing the results of the policy pursued, there can be no going forward for a fighting people, only groping in the dark like the lame and the blind.

THIS year opened with the Naval uprising (February); ratings, both Hindus and Muslims, drawn from various nationalities—Punjab, Pathan, Bengal, Malayal—all rose together.

And there was not an isolated action.

Throughout the country, mighty anti-British demonstrations were taking place, which none could control nor quell.

The strike wave was sweeping all before it, with the support of the rest of the people, the police had to stand by.

The thrones of the Princes were shaking, the people of Kashmir had risen with "Quit Kashmir."

The "Quit India" spirit was becoming an all-embracing movement, rising with an unprecedented tempo, the people grimly determined to enforce quit orders against the British rulers, the Princely autocrats and the Indian profiteers. This revolutionary upsurge was the natural culmination of our freedom movement after the forced suppression of the war years and against all the accumulated miseries and humiliations.

Pandit Nehru, more than once, publicly recognised this new spirit and determination of the people. Other right-wing leaders also noted it, but with fear of its being uncontrollable, and, more than once, drew the attention of the British Government that if they do not settle now, they will have to face a worse 1942.

The British ruling-class realised that Indian Revolution was on its legs more clearly than the Indian leadership. And it sued for peace, but only formally, just to gain time to get all the strings in its hand, let loose all the forces of disruption and exploit all the weaknesses of our freedom movement.

Transfer Of Power Or Fiercer In Saddle

The British Cabinet Mission came "ready to transfer power," and "help" Indian parties to settle their own differences and draft the "Constitution of Free India."

Only our Party raised the warning voice that there is no transfer of power in the British Plan, but only exploitation of Indian differences, disruption of the Indian Revolution, creation of an India divided between warring Hindu and Muslim zones and controlled by the British through their Fifth Column, the Indian Princes.

The Congress leadership thought otherwise. It saw in the British Plan "a stepping stone to Indian freedom". It silenced all criticism with the arguments that the people were up on their legs, which was true, that the Congress was strong, which also was true and that therefore the British were prepared to quit, which was just NOT true.

It is now nine months after the formation of Congress Ministries, three months after the formation of the Interim Government and it is time to ask:

Are the British on the way to quitting India, or are they more firmly in the saddle.

Revolutionary Upsurge Into Civil War

The joint Hindu-Muslim revolutionary upsurge of the first half of the year has given place to an unprecedented Hindu-Muslim civil war in the second half of the year.

This is the first biggest result of the British Plan being accepted by the Indian leadership. It is only our Party that had forewarned the country against such a calamity.

What, on the other hand, has been the thesis of the Right-wing leadership?

ship has to retreat before the British manoeuvres and at the bottom its own national following is rapidly becoming communal by the cheap and negative attitude it has adopted towards the League.

The League leadership has its own crimes to account for, but it behoves Congressmen that instead of recounting them, they should think of how illusory was the Congress Ministers' early bragging that they would stamp out riots in a few days, how easily the "revenge" mood swept the Congress following after Noakhali, how easily and unaccountably a 'Hindu Noakhali' took place in Bihar.

To dismiss them as the inevitable reaction to League communalism is to repudiate the national role of the Congress, refuse to see the mote in one's own eye, be blind to one's own failings and never come to one's true duties.

The logical corollary of the 'British-Quitting-India' thesis was the Right-wing thesis which discovered patriotism in the Indian Princes, through Sardar Patel.

The explanation was simple, though childishly naive; the Princes too are Indians; they were so far helpless under British Residents and now with the withdrawal of British power (which was taken for granted!), their Indian blood is coming to

stead of acting as friends of the Congress, are acting as puppets of the British.

They are seeking Congress blessings to their bogus reforms and Congress neutrality, while they flatten their own people but and get the reforms accepted by the Right-wing State Congress and other elements, while the British prepare new military bases in their territories.

This is the sordid reality and not the imagined picture of the British quitting India and the Princes yielding to the Congress!

Repression Against The Working-Class

The working-class strike wave for long-pending wage-increases is sought to be throttled by the Congress Ministries by such draconian anti-strike legislation as even the old bureaucracy did not dare to introduce.

The trade union movement has never faced such ruthless repression as today. The police is allowed to shoot workers and enquiry refused; Section 144 prevails in all industrial centres; mass arrests of worker militants have become an everyday occurrence.

The same inadequate, cumbersome legislation that the war-time Executive Councilors had planned and drafted, is being passed off as Congress "social legislation."

There is no talk of a living wage for the workers, taxation of fabulous profits or a drive against the blackmarket. All pre-election talk of hanging the profiteers has withered into thin

anti-hoarder movement be treated as a 'Communist' dacoity.

The Grow More Food plans are also along the old bureaucratic lines and there is no thought of inspiring peasant initiative or getting cooperative farms of the landless started on fallow lands, etc.

Most of the Congress Ministries have promised to initiate legislation for the abolition of landlordism.

The reality, however, is that the landlords, including the biggest, are fast joining the Congress, not only to get the maximum compensation, not only to be able to retain as much land as possible in their own hands, but to cover up their intensive campaign of mass ejections of tenants, to force them to increase the rents and pay fabulous nazaranas or quit the land. Peasant resistance to the zemindars' offensive is being suppressed by the Ministries as ruthlessly as the workers' strikes and explained away as shamelessly, in the name of scotching Communist mischief.

Facing Most Critical Turning Point

The Right-wing policy of compromising with the British has led to compromise all along the line, has made the national movement the victim of its enemies, who are on the offensive, while the common people are being recklessly disrupted or cruelly suppressed.

The Congress faces the most critical turning point in its long and glorious history.

● The more the Right-wing leadership believes in British imperialist bonafides, the more factional it goes against the League. Political conflict at the top becomes communal cleavage at the bottom, Hindus and Muslims get divided into two warring camps, while their leaders indulge in the ignoble game of manoeuvring with the British against each other and play more and more into British hands.

● The more certain the British rulers become of the Congress leaders abiding by the British Plan, the more uncompromising become their stooges, the Indian Princes, to bring the Congress one step more down the road to surrender, to remain satisfied with nominal popular representation and leave the Princely autocrats safe in the hands of their British masters.

● The more the Congress leadership talks of final settlement with the British instead of final struggle, the faster troop all the vested interests into the Congress to organise from within its shelter their war against the organised working-class and peasant movements, exploiting the anti-Communist prejudices of the Right-wing.

Is this India's march forward to freedom or is India becoming the plaything of the British? And we have passed through only the first stage of the Congress surrender to the British Plan!

The eve of the Meerut Congress is the ideal time for all Congressmen to take stock of the situation and call for a complete reversal of the policy that has brought us face to face with civil war and which cannot but lead deeper and deeper into the British net, and call for a policy that will improve and transform the situation.

All-Out Crusade For Peace

The first need of the situation is an all-out campaign for peace, irrespective of the attitude of the League.

The leaders have already called for peace and against revenge, but the poison of mutual hate has been preached so hard that the people no more listen to the leaders, and local leaders funk approaching the people even if they have themselves not gone blindly communal.

It is the nationalism of the Congress that is at stake to—
(Continued on Page 4)

by
P. C. Joshi

★ All-Out Crusade For Peace!
★ All-Out Drive Against People's Enemies!
★ Break With The Imperialist Plan!

First, that the British are being forced to quit India. Secondly, that they cannot but settle with the Congress, the strongest political organisation. Thirdly, that this was the time to take a firm line against the League and use the British to bring their own creation to its senses.

The League leadership thought exactly otherwise.

First, that the British were quitting India and it was only a question of who inherited what. Secondly, the League as the most representative Muslim organisation could not be left out of count, if it let the British know that a settlement with the Congress alone would not work.

Only our Party foresaw that the British plan was nothing more than a new application of the traditional policy of divide and rule, designed to use the Congress and the League against each other so that the British remain as umpires.

Events of the last few months have turned out neither as the Congress leadership had planned nor as the League had planned, but only as the British had planned and as we had forecast.

Bankruptcy Of The Servile

Today each leadership covers its retreat by pointing to the fiasco of the other side at the hands of the British. Bankruptcy of the servile could not go further.

At the top, the Congress lead-

its own and they have promised to act as friends of the Congress and as its august Working Committee advises.

The "Patriotism" Of The Princes P

It is now time to check up on the basis of what is actually happening and see whose advice is being actually followed by the Princes and their Diwans, and what attitude they are adopting towards their own people's movement.

Pandit Nehru's humiliation was not the end of the story in Kashmir. Thereafter even a Congress Working Committee delegation to restore peace was not welcome to Premier Kak.

The top Congress leaders have sent trunk-calls without number to the "Nationalist Muslim" Sir Mirza Ismail, but he refuses to go further than the Residency-planned Nizam's reforms, which are on the model of 1909 Reforms in British India, and in fact, still more reactionary. Virtual Martial Law prevails in Telengana, over 700 are in jail, civil liberties just do not exist in His Exalted Highness' Dominions.

The Travancore Maharaja and his Diwan instead of "listening to Congress advice," have jailed half the Working Committee of the State Congress, banned working-class organisations, declared the Communist Party illegal and met the popular upsurge with Martial Law.

These are among the biggest of the Indian Princes, who in-

stead, banning the Communist Party is being discussed. Indian Big Business headed by its top-leaders, the Tatas and the Birlas, is rapidly getting linked-up with British monopolists.

The Nationalist Press and the Congress leadership are significantly silent about these anti-national deals, this mortgaging of Indian resources to British capital, and the grave danger this trend represents to Indian industrial development.

On the other hand, Tatas' representative, Matthal, is inside the Interim Government and Birla is as good as a member of the Congress Working Committee—it is common talk that he is much more than its host.

Food Policy--Dittoing Bureaucrats' Plans

The country is threatened with famine and all are agreed that acute food scarcity will remain for three years and yet Rajendra Babu, the Food Member, holds out no immediate hope for the starving except the virtues of tightening the belt.

The food procurement plan is essentially the same as that of the bureaucracy: rely upon the trader-hoarders themselves to get stocks and give them whatever price they demand.

The only big change is that the whole gang of food thieves have donned the Congress mask and are corrupting the Congress organisation and Congress workers, and manoeuvring that every

PEOPLE'S AGE

TERROR IN TRAVANCORE VAYALAR

Orgy Of Rape And Loot : 24 Unions Banned

It is impossible to say today how many heroes have been killed in Travancore. The steel ring which surrounds Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer's royal preserves keeps back the truth.

The Travancore Aid Committee, Madras, estimates that thousands of innocent workers have lost their lives in the last three weeks.

Below we give the latest news which has trickled out of the State. Brief though it is, it gives a vivid glimpse of the Terror Raj of Sir C. P., which continues unabated, despite his "valiant" assertions that "everything is under control."

ON November 1, the military authorities of Ambalapuzha and Sherthala talukas declared illegal twenty-four trade unions. They include the Unions of coir factory workers, rubber workers, port workers, beedi workers, rickshaw pullers, municipal workers, press workers, mechanical workers, toddy tappers, domestic workers, etc.

These twenty-four trade unions have an aggregate membership of at least 50,000, which comes to nearly two-thirds of the total membership of the All-Travancore Trade Union Congress.

Always

Police and military are already at Always. The offices of every union have been raided, Red flags torn to pieces.

The office of the Aluminium Factory Workers' Union has been seized by the police and the building is now being used to house goondas and blacklegs.

The police are patrolling the roads, terrorising people, beating them up with the butts of their rifles.

The company bosses have supplied the police with a list of union militants, and one by one these workers are being taken to police lock-ups, where they are subjected to inhuman torture.

The main industrial centre of Always, Manjummal, where the workers have built up a strong trade union movement, has been the main centre of police zoom. A number of houses were raided. Mass arrests of workers took place. Anyone who showed

MOUNTING SUPPORT FOR TRAVANCORE

ON October 30, a big rally was held at Soundarya Mahal, Madras, to support the Travancore struggle. The rally was convened jointly by the Madras Students' Organisation, the United Kerala Committee, the Provincial Trade Union Congress, the Communist Party and the Citizens' Committee.

Greeting the heroic struggle, the rally passed resolutions pledging all-out support to the struggle for a government fully responsible to the people of Travancore.

The brutal military terror unleashed by Sir C. P. was severely condemned and a fervent appeal made to the All-India States People's Conference and the Interim Government to intervene on behalf of the people of Travancore.

At the close of the meeting, an All-Parties' Committee was set up to aid the Travancore struggle by raising funds and fighting the "iron-curtain" imposed by Sir C. P. on news from Travancore.

Students

TWO meetings were held in the Christian College, Madras, attended by over two-hundred students. Resolutions condemning Sir C.P.'s repression and appealing to the Travancore State Congress to join in the struggle for responsible government were passed.

The Presidency College Union held a meeting and passed a resolution acclaiming the struggle in Travancore.

The Kerala Samaj (Students' section) has pledged all support to the struggle.

Aid Committee Meeting

ON November 3, a public meeting was held at Triplicane Beach, Madras, under the auspices of the Travancore Aid Committee and condemned Sir C. P.'s terror. A strong procession of students and workers marched to the meeting from the People's Park, shouting slogans denouncing the brutal military regime in Travancore.

all movable property destroyed. The house has now been sealed and the military are keeping a strict watch over it.

Day by day, the unbridled atrocities of the military are growing in intensity. Nobody is safe. Breaking into houses and raping women have become matters of daily occurrence. Many people, driven to desperation, are leaving their houses altogether and going into hiding.

Forged Handbill

With T. V. Thomas under arrest, a handbill in his name is being circulated in Alleppey and other places.

"The public are suffering untold hardships since Friday last, when Martial Law was proclaimed in Ambalapuzha and Sherthala Talukas. It is necessary that the strike started on October 22 should be withdrawn"—this is the gist of the handbill.

Travancore papers have splashed this notice across their pages. But the workers refused to return.

With the Martial Law still in force, with the soldiers razing their houses to the ground and violating their women at the point of the bayonet, Alleppey's workers shall never surrender,

the slightest sympathy for them was beaten up too. Houses were broken into and women intimidated and insulted.

The workers of the Aluminium Factory are being indiscriminately discharged and vacancies filled up by blacklegs under police protection.

But the workers are undaunted. They are firmly resolved to defend the honour and prestige of their Union and their Flag.

Alleppey

The military is running riot in Alleppey.

Following the arrest of Mr. T. V. Thomas (President, All-Travancore Trade Union Congress), the military raided his house the next day. His father and sister have been turned out and

Invincible Suryapet BASTION AGAINST NIZAM'S POLICE

By Radha Krishna Murthi

The whole of the district of Nallagonda has become one grim battlefield in the war being waged by Hyderabad's police on the people of Telengana.

Two hundred villages of Suryapet taluk have become fortresses, defending the kisans from the bullets and tortures of the police.

Again and again, the police raid the villages. Again and again, the people turn them back.

Last week I wrote about some of the battles of Suryapet. Here is the latest news.

THE police has worked out a regular strategy of war. A huge force has been concentrated at Kamareddigudem—a strategic village dominating the whole area.

It was from this centre that the police went out and murdered Garlapati Ananta Reddi at Balemula on October 25 (reported in last week's People's Age).

Battle At

Tinnapuram

From here also a few days ago, a posse of the reserve police went to Tinnapuram. Their intention was to round up the village leadership. They did not find a trace of them. The bandits, exasperated, fell on the mass of the people and started belabouring them. But the gangsters were not lucky.

Suddenly fifteen hundred kisans, armed with lathis and slings, came from the neighbouring villages to the defence of their brothers and sisters. The police shouldered their rifles and got ready to shoot. But the fighting kisans raised their lathis, their slings revolved and stones whizzed past.

In a panic, the police put down their rifles and put up their hands. The brutes begged for mercy and ran as soon as they were permitted to go.

The same night, the rest of the reserve police, camping on the outskirts of the village, put their rifles on their shoulders and staged a fade out!

more and more news finds its way out of the prison-house of Travancore, the real story of the Battle of Vayalar is being slowly pieced together.

Already, despite the scanty news available, Vayalar stands out unmistakably as one of the greatest battles ever fought in India's revolutionary history.

The latest news of Vayalar is an eye-witness account, published in the Cochin newspaper Deepam. This paper represents reactionary interests and is well-known to be hostile to the cause of the working-class and to those who fought against police bullets at Vayalar.

Its intention in publishing this account is to defend Sir C.P., but despite all its efforts, it cannot hide the heroism and the glory of the defenders of Vayalar.

This is how the Deepam's eye-witness story reads:

"Vayalar, renamed 'New Moscow' by the Communists, is a place which cannot be reached by bus.

"This area was encircled by the military. Two boats plying between Ernakulam and Sherthala were requisitioned by the Government and military was brought to this 'New Moscow'....

"The military ordered the people to capitulate. The people refused. The military started firing.

"The military, seventy-four of them in all, fired to the last of their 1,700 bullets.

"With spears in their hands and stones in their bags, the people faced the police in the battle. Each one of those who fell dead, died with cries of 'Down with the Dewan's Regime,' and 'Inqilab Zindabad' on his lips.

"The people did not betray the least tendency to retreat.

"Orders had been issued forbidding the shooting of women. Nevertheless, women surged forward with sickles in their hands, and stones in their bags. They attacked the soldiers with sickles. The women were shot dead too.

"With water surrounding the place on all sides and firing being resorted to from both sides, there were casualties among soldiers as well.

"Nowhere could I find any arrangement for the removal of the corpses.

"It is rather difficult to say anything definite about the number who fell victims to the firing."

They hold meetings of their own. They sing songs to cheer their men to victory. They fight to defend themselves against the police and the goondas.

In one village, Choutapalli, when the men were absent, they themselves rallied to defend the village against a threatened goonda attack.

An End To Begar

In the thick of this life-and-death struggle the membership of the Andhra Mahasabha is mounting. In Pata Suryapet, after the heroic action of October 29, the people of fifteen nearby villages came to the local organisers and demanded that they come to their villages and organise local branches of the Andhra Mahasabha.

In almost every village, begar has gone. No more can the deshmukhs (landlords) or the village officials force the poor kisans to slave for them. Even the reserve police have to bring their own foodstuffs, hew their own firewood, cook their own food and wash their own clothes.

In Sangem, a village in Suryapet, the local deshmukh seized three-quarters of an acre belonging to a kisan as payment for half a bag of paddy! But the people were not prepared to tolerate this extortion. They took possession of the land, handed it back to the kisan who tilled it and raised a crop.

In the end, when the deshmukh came with a force of police to reap the harvest, the people of three nearby villages rushed to the field, and in five minutes reaped it themselves and stored it in the house of the kisan.

Red Signal For Autoocracy

In this battle between the police and the people, between freedom and feudal oppression, the people shall win.

The more the police try to dig their claws into the hearts of the people, the more the people hit back.

The old slumbering, backward, cringing people of Hyderabad are no more. They have risen. They have found their own strength and forged their own weapons.

icky and blew his whistle, but nothing happened. Once again the Sub-Inspector became humble and said:

"We have only come to search some houses. Please allow us to do our duty."

The people replied: "If that is so, put down all your rifles. Two of you can come in and search."

The Sub-Inspector, trembling, made a formal search and then beat a hasty retreat.

Volunteers On Guard

It is a new people which face Hyderabad's terror police in the villages of Nallagonda. In their struggle for existence, they have forged their own weapons, evolved their own technique of defence.

Today in almost all the villages, volunteer corps have been formed. In mass meetings, young and old step forward and demand that they be enrolled as volunteers.

Night schools are run, where marching songs are taught and every recruit is trained in his duties.

The entrances to the villages are guarded day and night. In the centre of each village a huge drum is kept. On the first signs of approach of a police party, the entire village is roused by the beat of the drum.

"On Guard! the devils are coming!"

Each man, woman, child rushes to his appointed stand. The village is ready to defend itself.

Women On The Battlefield

Yes, women too!

Suryapet's women—kept in chains all these years—are in the forefront of the fight against police tyranny. They stand, side by side with their men, ready with stones, lathis, every weapon of defence.

PRAKASAM'S TEXTILE POLICY

Free Rein To Blackmarket And Scarcity

In order to increase the resources of cloth production in this country and cheapen the supplies of cloth, the Government of India accepted a scheme of importing textile machinery and distributing it to the Provinces in such a way as to disperse the mills in various Provinces instead of over-concentrating them as in Bombay and Ahmedabad.

THE allocation of looms and spindles to various Provinces was laid down by a Committee on Post-War Planning of Textiles, presided over by Mr. D. M. Khatau of Bombay, and composed of textile manufacturers from all centres of the industry, some of them being the biggest Congress supporters. The Committee submitted its report in November 1945 and the Government of India accepted the plan with some changes in May 1946.

When the Interim Government was formed at the Centre, and a textile mission was going abroad to purchase and import textile machinery, the Prakasam Ministry of Madras denounced the policy of building more mills in the country.

It renounced its quota of 3,52,000 spindles, allotted to Madras Province under the scheme. The quota was immediately coveted by Mysore and other States in the South zone.

There were mild protests against this policy from a few manufacturing interests in the Province and even from some Ministers in the Prakasam Ministry itself.

Gandhiji's Disciple

People of Madras Province were surprised at their Ministry's policy of not allowing a speedy growth of cloth production in the Province and especially of yarn, because immediately there was the question of installation of spindles only.

But Prakasam justified his policy by quoting Gandhiji and came forward as a most consistent disciple of Gandhiji and supporter of the All-India Village Industries Association in banning increase in power spindles and looms in the interest of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. Prakasam thus appeared as a philosopher-champion of the handloom weavers and village spinners.

MADRAS MINISTRY ARRESTS TRAVANCORE LEADER

VERGHESE Vydler, President All-Travancore Agricultural Labourers' Union, and a member of the Executive of the Travancore Trade Union Congress, was arrested on November 4 at Calicut.

The arrest was made under a requisition from the Travancore Government, without a warrant. He is to be remanded here till extradition is obtained by the Travancore Government.

Vydler had been in Calicut for a whole week, helping to tell the truth about what is really happening in Travancore. He had left Travancore before the general strike began on October 23.

E. M. S. Namboodripad, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, has sent a telegram to Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and Premier Prakasam protesting against this illegal arrest and demanding Vydler's immediate release. Namboodripad has requested them to issue orders not to arrest political workers even if extradition is demanded by the State authorities.

by
S. A. Dange

But if one looks deeper into the composition of the Madras industry and the sources of supplies to the people, some new and interesting facts stand out.

The Province of Madras has textile mills but the peculiarity of the Province is that most of them only spin yarn but do not weave it. Madras Province has 15,60,000 spindles but only 7,490 power looms according to 1945 information.

Compare this with Bombay city with its 29 lakh spindles, slightly less than double that of Madras, and 67,000 looms, nearly nine times the number in Madras.

Too Much Yarn

Madras spins more yarn than its mills can weave. Its 7,490 looms require yarn from just 2 lakh spindles. Yarn of the balance of 13 lakh spindles is bought by the handlooms. The spinning mills of Madras live on handlooms and the handlooms live on mill yarn.

During the war, handloom cloth fetched particularly high prices and when mill cloth was controlled to some extent, handloom products were left to dictate their own price.

The mills and yarn merchants took advantage of this. Though yarn prices were nominally controlled yet most of the yarn was sold at blackmarket rates.

The greatest dictator in Madras for yarn prices are the British firm, Harveys, who alone possess one third of the total spindles in the whole Province, and who are able, through the yarn merchants, to skim the profits off the handloom weaver who is a bond holder to the yarn kings.

It is thus against the interests of the spinning mills of Madras to increase spindles at this time. For that would cheapen yarn and scale down their profits.

British Firm Gains

The biggest of the European firms as well as the other Indian spinners are not interested in spindles just now. Moreover in the new expansion, the Harveys may not get a share. They are, therefore, against having more spindles for the Province.

Thus it would appear that when Prakasam bans the import of spindles, it suits the interests of the Harveys and those spinning mills who dictate prices to the handloom weaver.

There are some who resent this Harvey dictatorship. They want their share. And so they protest against the policy of banning more spindles.

Among these are some who may have another game also in mind. They are the ones, apart from genuine industrial investors, who have bought off the handlooms, have concentrated them in their hands and do not want to be dictated by the spinning mills.

War Profiteering

During the war, when yarn prices were seven times higher than the controlled prices, the single handloom weaver, who

was always in debt to the yarn merchant or the master-weaver, could not find the money for this blackmarket price. Thousands of handlooms were then mortgaged or sold out.

Yarn blackmarket was so profitable that several small spinning mills built up sheds, installed a number of handlooms and took their quota of controlled yarn; and instead of running those looms sold the quota yarn in the blackmarket to the handloom weaver.

Even some of those mills who had power looms in Madras shut up their looms and sold their yarn to the handlooms.

This can be seen from the fact that in 1945, 15.5 per cent of the powerlooms in Madras were idle every day. In Bombay in the same year only 1 per cent of the looms were idle, while in the Central Provinces, it was 7 per cent—C.P. being another Province of handlooms—but nothing like Madras.

Small Owner Ruined

The result of the ruin of the small owner or one-two loom owner was that hundreds of Chettyars and yarn merchants have become owners of handloom factories, owning sheds with 20 to 500 looms installed in them, or holding mortgages over thousands of looms in the villages. Thousands of weavers have to surrender cloth to these merchant-cum-monopoly mortgage holders at the prices they dictate.

These new owners of big handloom interests want more yarn in their hands and would not mind a few more spinning mills but they do not want power looms.

Monopoly yarn owners do not want spindles and mono-

poly handloomers do not want looms. The two together do not want a spinning and weaving mill in Madras. They agree to put forward their selfish interests in the garb of Gandhism and the AIVIA.

There are those who chafe and protest because they have money to invest and the most lucrative and sure place of profit and investment is closed to them by this policy of shutting out new mills.

Profit-Sharks' Victory

These and some honest industrialists are those who protest.

But in this scramble for monopoly profits, what happens to the people who want cloth and cheap cloth at that? They are handed over to the profit-sharks by Prakasam's policy.

The cost of making one yard of 20s shirting of mill-made cloth comes to As. 5 p. 6. The same yard with mill yarn but woven on handlooms, costs As. 9 p. 4. And the same yard with hand-spun yarn and hand-woven on AIVIA lines costs Rs. 1-3-0, that is three and a half times the price of a mill-made yard of cloth.

Thus to discourage textile mills in India is to heap three and half times more costs on the people for each yard of cloth.

In the present conditions it means a free rein to blackmarket and scarcity and famine of cloth—a policy after the heart of the profit-mongers, a policy that hits the people.

With the best of intentions, a saint's policy serves the devil's interests!

A PATRIOT'S NOTEBOOK

Riot Monger

THE men who provoke fratricidal war today deserve to be hanged. They are guilty not only of murder, but of striking at the very heart of the battle for freedom.

There are few who will dare to shout openly:

"Kill your brother."

But there are many who are saying the same thing in a round-about way.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, Diwan of Travancore, has just issued an appeal to Gandhiji not to undertake a fast to stop the Bihar outrages. If Sir C. P. expressed his concern for Gandhiji's life, we would have nothing to say.

But this gentleman has other motives. Here is what he says:

"It is difficult to see why greater importance seems to be attached by Gandhiji and even Pandit Nehru to the outrages that have taken place in Bihar than to those that are admitted to have been perpetrated in East Bengal and other places."

And because Gandhiji, in Sir C. P.'s opinion, does attach greater importance to Bihar, Sir C. P. declares that Gandhiji "does not represent the main current of Hindu thought and unconsciously is guiding the Hindu population along a line not consonant with the genius of Indian history or Hindu civilisation."

And finally, Sir C. P. condemns Gandhiji's "insistence upon the impractical and unhistorical ideal of non-violence, the validity of which has been disproved by our Hindu scriptures."

Civilisation!

Splendid, heroic, defender of "Hindu civilisation!"

The "Civilisation", which Sir C. P. lyngly labels 'Hindu' can be seen in his own State of Travancore, where hundreds of Hindus are being butcher-

ed daily by his soldiers, Hindu women are being raped, Hindu houses razed to the ground.

From the whole of Sir C. P.'s statement, only one conclusion emerges:

"Keep up the valiant violence of Bihar. Gandhiji is anti-Hindu, because he wants the Bihar orgy to end."

Sir C. P. is not alone in saying this. Exactly the same arguments are being bandied about by Hindu goondas and their leaders all over India. They couple it with abuse-for Gandhiji and for Pandit Nehru, for daring to stop their campaign of "Revenge."

How long will such men—Hindu and Muslim—be allowed to continue to provoke the people without being called to book?

In the case of Sir C. P., the Travancore workers are heroically fighting for us all, saying with each courageous act of theirs:

"Down with the men who set brother against brother, in the name of 'civilisation' and 'religion'."

Smuts And Tragedy

HERE is a dirty gentleman, who goes quite appropriately by the name of Smuts. He is in the news, because he is being called to account before the world for his dirty deeds against our countrymen in the land he and his breed rule today—South Africa.

There is plenty we know about Smuts, but it is only after dinner that he really gets talking. And then—well, it is a regular treat!

The London Correspondent of the Indian Express, in a despatch, dated October 23, has reported back a recent after-dinner conversation between Smuts and an army officer in Paris:

"Smuts very passionately referred to what he considered the greatest tragedy of the modern world

The 'tragedy' was that the White was losing his hold over the Black."

Weep, Field Marshal, weep your eyes out: Your slaves have begun to strike out against your Imperialism—and that is "the greatest tragedy" of your miserable "world" of exploiters.

The report of the after-dinner prattle goes on:

"Smuts said: 'The East has rediscovered its potentialities and is claiming equal rights with the immediate support of the Soviet Union.'"

Terrible, terrible. Equal rights for the slaves—NEVER.

And so, continues the dirty gentleman:

"The best way to regain our lost prestige is to establish a strong anti-Soviet bloc," but "before that we must, at all costs, win over the East."

Twinkle, Twinkle

And what does "winning over" mean?

"Smuts then said with a twinkle in his eye: 'The concession to India is actuated by some such motive.'"

Attlee and Co. can shout from the house-tops that the British Plan for India shows that Imperialism is being liquidated. And in public, Smuts and his friends and leaders like Churchill, can nod their heads solemnly after Attlee.

But, after dinner, in a Paris cafe, with a bottle or two of good French wine in one's stomach, things are different. And the truth begins to peep out.

"The concession to India," Smuts says "is actuated by some such motive"—the motive to "regain" the "losing hold of White over Black."

"With a twinkle in his eye," Smuts spoke—like a naughty little boy, telling you that he has played a trick on

a doddering half-blind uncle and put salt instead of sugar in his tea.

Your eyes have a right to twinkle. We have been "doddering half-blind uncles" and swallowed your poisoned tea, accepted the British Plan in toto.

But for how long? Every day your Plan is worked, its poison spurts out in a different place—Calcutta, Bombay, Noakhali, Bihar—telling us each time:

"Throw the Plan back in the face of Smuts and his herd and wipe the twinkle out of their eyes."

Who's Boss?

THE External Affairs Department Secretary in reply to a question in the Central Assembly, has characterised the Frontier bombing policy as "the cheapest and most humane."

All these years, the British sahibs have talked in this cynical way of the slaughter of our tribal fellow-countrymen.

But today, there is a Government composed of the popular parties, in charge of the External Affairs Department. Pandit Nehru himself is the head of this Department and he has openly and repeatedly condemned the bombing policy.

Then who is this British Secretary who dares to repeat again today the same imperialist nonsense in defence of bombing?

Is this bureaucrat boss or Pandit Nehru?

The sooner these White gentlemen get the sack, the better for India. But there is less and less talk in New Delhi about their quit orders.

And so they make hay while the sun shines, puffing out their chests each time a riot breaks out and a British District Magistrate is rushed "to the rescue".

"We are indispensable," they say and smirk. The Plan is working to perfection.

"We are the bosses, as long as we can make you fight"—it's the old, old story.

Ramesh Chandra

22,000 NAGPUR TEXTILE WORKERS STRIKE

Reply To Owners' Offensive

Nagpur's textile workers, 22,000 in all, are on a general strike since November 8. This is their reply to the earlier offensive of the Tatas who had locked out 9,000 of the Empress Mill workers after the local Union had betrayed their strike only a fortnight back.

THE pattern in this battle is the same as elsewhere. The Labour Commissioner has backed the owners. Labour Minister, Gokhale, has advised the workers to resume work unconditionally while the owners have refused to yield on the ground that the strike is 'illegal'.

The heartening part of it is that it is a united fight of caste Hindu and Untouchable workers, being waged in a city which for the last so many months has been experiencing some of the worst communal tension among just these sections of its citizens.

In 1946—after six years of an unprecedented boom in the industry—the workers asked for the restoration of their wage cut of 1931-32.

As early as 1938, Shuklaji, the then Premier, had assured the workers redress and appointed a Committee. It supported the workers' case.

This was followed by the Jayaratanam Committee appointed by the Advisors' Regime in 1940. It was even more emphatic about the restoration of the wage cut. Its report was 'accepted' in 1941, but the owners treated it as just a scrap of paper.

Sharp Fall in Wages

The result of all this has been that whereas, in 1931-32, a weaver operating two looms received on an average Rs. 40 per month, in September 1946, with prices rising about 400 per cent, he drew only Rs. 23. The single-loom operator got as much as Rs. 9 to Rs. 12 per month.

The Congress Ministry which could enact the hated 'Goonda Bill' in just four hours, could not, in four months of being in office, give effect to its own promises made eight years ago.

Instead it planned a new Bill finally to deprive the workers of their right to strike.

Matters reached a bursting point on October 10, when 60 weavers struck work. Within 48 hours, thanks to the steep fall in the wages, weavers of Empress Mill No. 2 also struck.

The Labour Commissioner pointed at the law and offered to look into the cases of only the 60 workers. The owners announced deductions of 2 days wages for the 'illegal strike.'

One thousand five hundred weavers from all the mills retaliated by downing tools. Next morning the management declared a lockout. The battle was on.

The Labour Commissioner now put up a notice in the mill backing the owners "in any step they took against the illegal strike," a procedure that was not followed even under the Advisors' regime!

The bosses by now knew whom to depend upon, and they closed the Spinning Department of Mill No. 1 on the plea of 'lack of bobbins due to strike.'

The crude idea was to put the spinners against the weavers, and begin a round of trouble in this communally-torn city.

But to their shock, the spinners demanded instead compensation from them for the enforced idleness. It was a bad mood the workers were in, and the managements was forced to reopen the Spinning Department the next day.

What was the local Union leadership busy in so far? In spreading false hopes that not 60 but all the cases would be investigated. And therefore, they advised the men to "resume work."

No wonder Ruikar, the Union boss, had helped the Ministry draft its Black Bill depriving the workers of their right to strike.

Our Correspondent

If the Union leaders refused to move, Communist leader H. K. Vyas in a meeting of strikers on October 19, demanded of the union that they galvanise all the 22000 textile workers in support of this just and long-standing demand of the weavers.

He spoke the mind of the workers. Prominent strike leaders soon forced the Union President, Suryavanshi, to hold a meeting before the gate of Mill No. 1 and elect a deputation to wait on the Labour Minister—steps not taken so far!

In the next day's meeting, despite Suryavanshi's opposition, Vyas was elected on the deputation along with Suryavanshi and Balwalk.

Minimum Demands

It was agreed at the meeting to put forth four minimum demands before the Minister:

- * Jayaratanam Committee's recommendations to be immediately made effective. No more Committees to 'decide' it all over again.

- * Compensation for enforced idleness.

- * No wage cut for the 2-day strike.

- * No victimisation.

When the deputation waited on the Labour Minister Gokhale, the owner's representative, Annagiri, was cornered on all points.

But just then, amazingly enough, Balwalk agreed to postpone consideration of the issues of restoration of wage-cut and compensation, if assurance was given regarding pay for the strike-days and no victimisation.

Annagiri saw through this weakness and closed the discussion.

But the leaders' story of

betrayal did not end here. On the 20th a representatives' meeting was called. It was a stage-managed affair. It denied entry to over 50 militants and decided to call off the strike.

The workers sharply resented this decision. Next day the weavers of Mills No. 1 and 2 just refused to go in.

On the 22nd worker-leaders of important departments met and demanded a mass meeting of the Union bosses. But the latter were not so 'weak-kneed' to bend before this demand. They kept shut up for over a week. The local Communist Party alone supported the workers' democratic demand.

Goonda Attack

At last the Union bosses yielded. A meeting was called on the 27th but at 4 p.m. so that not many workers could come. They wanted to hush up the matter, but Abaji Salunke, a Communist worker, spoke and challenged them to answer why they withdrew the basic and vital demands in the negotiations.

Their only 'reply' was to give the signal to their hirelings. Vyas sought permission to speak but they refused it. Immediately after he sat down, these goondas fell upon him. With the 'leaders' coolly looking on, they beat him up and beat B. N. Mukerjee, Bansode, Baburao and other Communist organisers. The meeting was then hurriedly ended.

No wonder within hardly a week of the meeting, the owners went over to the offensive forcing a lockout and starvation on 9,000 workers.

But by now the workers too had learnt and learnt a lot from the strike.

Such was the pressure that they brought to bear on their leaders that the Union was forced to give a call for a general strike. And the strike started on November 8.

As this is being written, this great battle is being fought out and this time for victory.

Congressmen in C.P. must see the justness of the workers' case and force their Government to climb down to honour their own pledges.

ISSUES BEFORE MEERUT CONGRESS

(Continued from Page 1) day. From the Meerut Congress must go out a ringing call against fratricide, for all-out campaign for peace and for gearing the entire Congress organisation for the purpose, and for the cooperation of all parties.

The lost faith in Hindu-Muslim unity needs reviving and it can be revived, if there is the will and a grim determination, born out of witnessing the tragic results of the existing communal riots themselves.

All-Out Drive Against People's Enemies

A sharp and prompt change is needed in the present Right-wing policy of appeasing the capitalists, landlords and hoarders and suppressing working-class and peasant movements.

Instead what is demanded is a generous wage-increase, control of profits, attack on the black-market and recognition of trade unions, encouragement to Hindu and Muslim workers to fight the Hindu and Muslim bosses, thus strengthening the common people and weakening their common enemies.

Similarly in the villages, generous measures of relief to the peasants and landless labourers and sharp steps against the landlord and hoarders would strengthen the common peasants, the producers of food, and weaken the food thieves, both Hindu and Muslim.

Today it is only the organised working-class and peas-

antry that remain non-communal. The more the Congress relies upon them, aids and strengthens them, the more the vested interests, the worst riot-mongers, who finance the riots and pay the goondas, will be isolated.

Break With Imperialist Plan

The present phase of civil war is only the first fruit of the Imperialist Plan, the net result of power-politics in the battle for the Interim Government.

The Meerut Congress will be called upon to endorse the Executive's decisions, to enter the British-made Constitution-making Body.

Let no Congressman remain under any illusion what endorsement of such a step will mean: worse stages in civil war, because Congress-League conflict will go on mounting—over groups, division of India into Hindu and Muslim zones; and then an ignoble alliance with the Princes under the threat that they will stay out of the Indian union and have independent relations with the British, if their peoples' representatives are called for instead of their own nominees, and lastly, will come the surrender over the Indo-British treaty.

A fly cannot walk into the spider's net and hope to swallow the spider. It needs the broom.

The Right-wing compromisers must not be allowed to go ahead

with a policy that has already meant and will mean more and more surrender and disruption.

The Meerut Congress must call for a total rejection of the British Plan and a full-throated declaration that the Congress will draft a Constitution only on the basis of Indian independence, national self-determination and real democracy.

Bridge For Congress-League Joint Front

Such a proud patriotic declaration from the Meerut Congress will be a fatal blow at the Imperialist Plan. It will make Muslim reactionaries shake and the Muslim masses respond, it will create the bridge for Congress-League Joint Front and pave the way for a joint struggle, on the basis of a straightforward anti-imperialist appeal, allaying all just fears.

Only men of small faith will argue about where the guarantee is that the Muslim League will accept such an offer.

In answer to toadies within the League, should the Congress compromise its anti-imperialism? Because of the reactionaries within the League, must the Congress itself go communal?

Only when the Congress takes its stand on the basis of uncompromising anti-imperialism, will the present vicious circle of power-politics be broken.

Only when the Congress pledges itself to implement all the true principles of democ-

BARODA WORKERS' HEROIC ACTION

Here is a great story from Navsari in Baroda State, a story of working-class heroism, of unarmed men and women, Hindus and Muslims, jointly beating back organised goondas.

GO back a little... 2,800 workers of Mafatal Mills, Navsari, had fought and won their strike after 28 days. The owners and the State officials temporarily bent before their might but soon murderous attacks were started on workers and militants.

Police patrols were stationed inside the mills and even inside the mill chawls. Eleven leading workers were victimised.

The climax came when on October 5, Jafar, a Muslim worker, was murdered in a meeting in broad daylight by an organiser of the local Majur Mahajan.

Promptly the State authorities came down with Section 144 and curfew order. Workers were ordered to report themselves at the Police gates.

"Kill Red Flag Workers"

The workers began fighting back these attacks. But owner had his links with State officials. On October 29, he sent inside the mill over 50 hand-picked goondas armed with lathis, spears and daggers. Spinning Master Ramanlal (a Mahajan organiser) personally led them.

With an instinct so characteristic of this breed elsewhere, they placed themselves in vantage positions. Motiram Bhalya, who was arrested for the murder of Jafar, issued the battle-cry, "Finish these Lal Bawtawallas."

And the cowards attacked. Obviously their first target was the women in the Spinning Department. They closed the exits after them and started the attack. But to their horror, the women fought back and forced open an exit. Once out of the Department, they joined forces with their worker brothers.

And then, woe came unto the goondas. Like boomerangs their own weapons recoiled on them. They learnt for once what it meant to attack even unarmed workers.

The Manager and his Assistant who were giggling so far now suddenly made themselves scarce. For a few hours the mill belonged to the workers.

But then the usual aftermath followed. Police came rushing

headlong. They tried terror but could not cut any ice. So, as a last resort, when Mehendale, Union leader opposed their tactics, the Fauzdar levelled his rifle at him.

And then was revealed that working-class heroism, that highlighted October 29 in the history of Baroda workingclass.

Before the Fauzdar had made the next move Kanku Mali, a Red flag woman rushed in between hurling her challenge: "Shoot me first, if you dare." The Fauzdar was stunned. But that was not all. The women co-workers of Kanku snatched away his gun, his policemen helplessly looking on.

But if courage could not be summoned, the police relied on cowardice. Here and there they arrested workers, in all 39, among them 9 women, their 'revenge' for the day's shame. The brutes did not spare even old women of 60, young women with babies, 3 or 4 months old.

The Red flag workers hit back by organising their volunteer corps. And workers of both the local mills went on a strike, strike on and from October 29.

Accept Demands

Their meeting of October 31, one and a half miles away inside British territory, demanded release of their leaders, arrest of the goondas and murderers, withdrawal of Section 144 and the curfew order, no victimisation.

Their alternative is: Accept demands or face the strike.

Workers of nearby Bilimora have condemned this outrage by a protest strike. The B.P.T.U.O. congratulated the workers and demanded impartial enquiry into the incidents.

Meanwhile, the owners and State officials are conspiring. The former demands 'action' against the Union, and if it is not forthcoming threatens to remove his mill to British territory.

But the workers have said the last word and that is: Meet the demands or face the battle.

by H. S. Bhat

From 'Direct Action' To Interim Govt.

TWO FACES OF ONE POLICY OF SURRENDER

The decision of the League Working Committee to enter the Interim Government has thrown the League Urdu Press completely out of gear.

ON July 29 the League Council in its Bombay Session had decided to reject both the Short and Long term Plans of the Cabinet Mission; it had asked the Working Committee to prepare a plan of 'Direct Action'; titles had been renounced and in their speeches League leaders called upon the Muslims to prepare to fight the final battle of Muslim liberation.

True, Mr. Jinnah had declared that the door for negotiations was still kept open; that his aim was to "rescue the British Government from the clutches of the Congress" and that 'Direct Action' meant going to the negotiations table again, but with a 'loaded pistol' in one's hand.

But as far as the ordinary League Press and the common Muslim Leaguer were concerned, they ignored the 'door-open-for-negotiations' part of the League leaders' plan; they did not see, what the Communist Party had been pointing out throughout, that the rejection, at the end of July, by the League leadership of the British Plan, was really a bogus rejection; they did not see that the League leaders had not departed from the essentially reactionary stand which they had taken when they heartily accepted the Cabinet Mission's slave Plan in June, saying that it was 'the corner-stone of Pakistan'.

In fact, the League leaders were fighting for the retention of the most reactionary aspects of the British Plan—that is the compulsory groupings and the Viceregal veto in the Interim Government.

Reality Behind Demagogy

But in the flood of demagogy let loose by the League leadership all this was cleverly put in the background. That which came on the surface was that the Muslims had been betrayed by the British Imperialists, that there was an Anglo-Hindu conspiracy to deprive them of their just rights and that it was therefore necessary to fight both.

It was easy to deflect the anti-imperialist freedom-urge of the Muslim masses into this channel, and it is precisely on these lines that propaganda was carried off for weeks—even when after the fateful August 16 (Direct Action Day), Calcutta riots had begun, even when after the Black Flag Day (September 2), Bombay riots had broken out.

It is well-known that certain important leaders of the Muslim League said privately that what happened in Calcutta was part of the Muslim fight for freedom and that the communal strife which had broken out in the country proved the case for Pakistan.

Communal Hate Spreads

It would seem that according to these leaders, the more the communal poison spreads amongst Hindus and Muslims, the more bitterly they fight against each other, the more easily everybody would be convinced that the League's demand for Pakistan is just, the nearer the Muslims would be to the freedom of the League's conception.

On the one hand, horrified at the insane communal butchery that was taking place in the country they issued their peace appeals; on the other hand they kept up their anti-Hindu and anti-Congress barrage, laying the entire blame for the situation at the doors of the Congress.

Then came the simultaneous news of the breakdown of the Nehru-Jinnah talks and the

League's decision to join the Interim Government.

Have their leaders surrendered? Have they been betrayed? Have they made an abject compromise with British Imperialism?

These are the doubts that are expressed in the League Urdu Press—reflecting more closely the mood of the common Muslims than the semi-official daily Dawn. Thus the *Khilafat* (Bombay) wrote on November 1:

"The League has entered the Government not as a victorious but as a defeated partner. And this entry is not with a glad heart and warmth, but with a protest... We cannot understand why the League made this compromise. We await the League Council meeting. If the situation had not been so serious we would have advised the League Council to reject outright the decision of the Working Committee."

The *Zemindar* (Lahore) wrote:

Sajjad Zaheer

"What an amazing spell our Rulers (i.e. the imperialists) are able to cast on us!... Both Congress and League have agreed to obey the *Angrez*.... We are surprised why Congressmen and their Muslim supporters are taunting the League. If the League has made a mistake then it is the same which the Congress has already committed.... If, for arguments sake, we accept the charge that League has bowed down before the Congress, then the Nationalist Muslims should be glad... for the League has joined the same fraternity as they themselves...." (October 29).

Open Criticism

The *Nawa-i-Waqt* (Lahore) wrote on October 15, just before the definite news of the League joining the Government:

"Today's news tells us that the League is going to enter the Interim Government even without Congress-League agreement. If this is correct, then it is a state of affairs desirable neither for Congress nor for League. Without Congress-League settlement, League-Congress Coalition would be meaningless. Both the parties in the Government would be fighting each other and balance of power would remain in the hands of the *Angrez*.... Such a strange arrangement can only benefit the *Angrez*. If this happens, then Congress and League both would be able to think about only one thing, namely, which of the two loses more!"

Never before have the League papers had the courage to criticise openly the decisions of the League leadership. Even though very soon afterwards their tone changed, it does indicate that even the people who were duped into thinking that the League leaders were sincere in rejecting the British Plan were beginning to have doubts about their sincerity and wisdom.

The only excuse they could think out was that anyhow, Congress too had accepted the British Plan; secondly, that the riots in the country might sub-

side by Congress-League joint government; and, thirdly, that by entering the Government, the League would prevent the Congress from having its own way at the Centre.

Some even went further than this and taking their cue from the speech of the arch-demagogue of the Muslim League—Ghazanfar Ali Khan—began to say unashamedly that the League's entry in the Interim Government was part of the 'Direct Action' programme of the League!

Echoing Ghazanfar Ali

Thus, the *Iqbal* (Bombay) wrote:

"Ghazanfar Ali Khan has said that the League's entry in the Interim Government is, part of the 'Direct Action' programme. The League shall start 'Direct Action' within the Interim Government. What does it mean? It means that the League would not allow the Interim Government to function and will create a deadlock in it. It means: either come to terms with us or give up power." (October 24)

And the *Manshoor* (Delhi) being nearer to the League High Command, wrote in the same

vein, but more cautiously:

"Muslims should be satisfied that their entry in the Interim Government is in no way injurious for them. After all, what has happened is only this, that we have not started that fight now. But for the brave, the field of battle is always open. Muslims should keep themselves organised, and learn to obey and to lead whenever it is considered proper for war to be declared. It shall be declared and shall begin. The entry in the Interim Government does not prevent this. But why not try the experiment of the Constituent Assembly and see whether freedom for the Muslims can be got peacefully and in a constitutional way." (October 30).

It is quite clear that this talk of carrying on the war from within the 'enemy camp' is all eye-wash, meant to explain away the withdrawal of the threat of 'Direct Action' by the leaders which is being echoed in an abject and hypocritical manner by the League papers.

Soon we might hear that the League leaders' demand that the Viceroy must continue to exercise his veto is also part of the 'Direct Action' programme!

One Policy Behind Mask

The fact is that fundamentally the policy of the League leadership has not undergone any change ever since they started negotiations with the Cabinet Mission.

They were the first to accept whole-heartedly the British Plan in the first week of June. They were prepared to enter the Government, but it was because the British Government did not choose to displease the Congress that their plans went awry for the time being.

When they rejected the Plan in July and threatened 'Direct Action', they did it in order to bring pressure on the British Government to interpret the plan in their favour, viz., to stick to the entire original Plan.

"The Plan And Nothing But The Plan"—that was their slogan and not its rejection as they told the Muslim public.

LALMOHAN SEN

IN Noakhali's furnace of hate, in the third week of October, at Sandwip, Lalmoohan Sen, one of the heroes of the Chittagong Armoury Raid, was killed by a frenzied mob.

Sixteen years ago, as a boy of fifteen, fearlessly, with a smile on his lips, he hurled himself on the Chittagong Armoury, symbol of British Imperialism and its tyranny. Lalmoohan loved his people. He was prepared to give his young life for them.

Then came sixteen years behind the prison-walls. Lalmoohan watched the trees in the prison-yard shed their leaves autumn after autumn. The world outside changed. The prisoner in chains grew from a boy to a youth, from a youth to a man.

Lalmoohan remained true to the cause to which he had pledged himself. He waited for the day when his shackles would be broken and he could again hurl himself against the Imperialism, which was destroying his people.

At last Bengal snatched him and his comrades into their arms. The prison-gates opened.

Lalmoohan walked out on to what he himself described as "a keg of powder, which might burst into flames at any moment." Sandwip, his birth-place, to which he returned, was in the throes of Hindu-Muslim tension.

Lalmoohan saw clearly what his task was. He did not lose a single day, but brought the local Hindu and Muslim leaders together and formed a Peace Committee. Day and night without sleep Lalmoohan fought the hate, which he saw steadily growing in the eyes of the people he loved.

Others began to leave the village; to take refuge wherever they could find it. The situation was rapidly going out of control.

But Lalmoohan would not leave. He had never been afraid of death. He was not afraid now.

He was determined to protect those who were in danger, to strive to the last to fight the riot-madness, which was eating into the soul of his beloved people.

Lalmoohan died so that others might live. Lalmoohan died so that Hindus and Muslims might fight together against the British and against the British-planned riots.

There can be no greater or finer sacrifice than any patriot, any revolutionary can make for his Motherland.

Had Lalmoohan lived, he would have gone back again and again to bring the same crowd which murdered him away from the path of fratricide. He would have said, and rightly:

Many among them are our countrymen, our brothers, they are those who have fought with us for freedom before, they will fight again, they are only seized of a temporary madness, pumped into them by our common enemies—those who have seized and throttled our freedom, robbed us of our land, cheated us of our wages.

In Lalmoohan's name, we, his comrades of the Party he loved and for whose ideals he died, appeal to our Hindu and Muslim brothers, Congressmen and Leaguers:

Put out the flames of Bengal and Bihar, put them out—with your blood, if need be, as Lalmoohan did. That is the path of Freedom, that is the path of Revolution.

The installation of a Congress Interim Government, they have dominated Interim Government done their bit to restore communal peace in the country. To showed that their threat had not worked at all. The British imperialists and their stooges the Princes, began to impress on them the need of their taking what was being given to them, with the promise that once they enter the imperialist parlour, they could expect all help from them, but not otherwise.

Reverse Criminal Policy

What was latent in July when the 'Direct Action' resolution was passed has now become patent. The red glow of burning homesteads in Noakhali and Bihar loudly proclaims the disastrous criminality of the policy of the Muslim League landlords and capitalists, which with freedom and sovereign Pakistan on its lips, really misleads the valiant and patriotic Muslim masses into the paths of separation and disruption, plays into the hands of Hindu communalism, in order, finally, to hand them over to the domination of British Imperialism.

Unless this policy is reversed by common Muslims, by progressive Muslim Leaguers and awakened Muslim workers and peasants, the League leadership would continue to pursue it. So far it was from outside the Government, now it will be from inside it.

The only real alternative to the League leaders' policy of compromise is a policy of real rejection of the Plan; and joint Hindu-Muslim revolutionary struggle for a free, sovereign, democratic Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise and self-determination to all national units having a common language.

November 11

BENGAL & BIHAR—THEIR SHAME & THEIR GLORY

WHO SET BIHAR ALIGHT ? Profiteer-Zamindars' Death-Dance, British Generals Refuse Help

Communal carnage has developed a fairly wide area in Bihar. While the situation in Champā cooled down, a large part of Patna and a fairly big area covering Gaya, Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Santhal Parganas is in the grip of communal frenzy.

Party leaders and Government officials, together with public workers and police and military are frantically grappling with the situation but all is not well everywhere.

No estimate of total casualties or the total number of refugees is yet possible, according to Government and League sources respectively. The Finance Minister estimated the total number of killed at three to four hundred, which was an underestimate even at that time. It is feared that the figure has been multiplied manyfold. On the same date the Finance Minister observed that nearly 400 houses have been set on fire in Patna District alone. For the whole of the Province this figure must run into several thousands.

Refugees of the total number of 3,000 to 4,000 are being sent to Government and League camps respectively. That was two days ago.

Today the Indian Nation reports that over 10,000 special ration cards have been issued for refugees in Patna.

The number of refugees sheltered in industrial houses or unroofed in riot-affected villages must also be considerable.

On a rough estimate the total area affected would come to something between 500 and 1,000 square miles.

Behind The Riots

The forces that have swung the common people into this mad wave of fratricidal war are not too far to be seen. The Calcutta riots and the Noakhali carnage of course had their influence. But the resultant sense of indignation was channelled into communal channels by interested and communal politicians.

Most provocative editorials were written, for example by the *Southlight*, and even *Cricket* and *the Indian* were distorted. Finally came Noakhali Day (October 24 to 27), and that became the signal for rioting.

Hindu Sahitya, Arya Samaj, professors and administrators who have recently attacked Ghandi have the Congress organisation, expelled for his name to all their nefarious propaganda.

A host of printed, unprinted and type-written sheets were brought out, inciting Hindus to revenge Noakhali in Bihar. Areas of three fugal handbills incited from like the mass burning of Muslim houses, looting of their property and murder and assault.

Blackmarketeers

In Champā town, for example, notorious blackmarketeers who now wield some influence in the Town Congress Committee, are said to have become the actual leading and organising of the riot.

In Gaya District, similarly notorious rascals are said to be organising similar riots who have freely distributed money and arms to selected bands of goondas who initiated the riots.

They may have planned to disrupt the mounting wave of the anti-imperialist class struggle and divert it into disruptive channels.

Beigdar Gendry and noticed the Premier that his police would soon bring the situation under control. Having thus failed to secure any military help from the Brigadier, the Premier is reported to have rung up the Governor, who was snugly away in Ranchi. Somebody from the Governor's staff gave the curt reply that the Excellency was about to fly to Shimoga, and put down the receiver rudely.

Military Delays

Next day the Premier and Dr. Biju Patil flew to Ranchi and were understood to have contacted the Area Commander, who is reported to have promised help but gave no concrete idea of the number of troops he could provide or when. This this old General is reported to have shyly made the suggestion that the Communist Party was at the back of the riot.

Finally a small number of troops, mainly Indian, were made available from November 2, but by that time the riot spread had spread to newer and newer areas.

This denial of military help at the proper time has become the common subject of conversation in Patna's political circles, and the Congress daily *Southlight* expressed its indignation thus:

"We doubt if military cooperation is available in the fullest degree. Our impression is that all kinds of technicalities have been trotted out and have stood in the way of swift action."

The paper also condemned the deliberate silence of the Governor from the Province at this critical time (November 3).

Tragic Scenes

It was in this situation that the four members of the Bihar Government came to Patna on their way back from Calcutta. They went to hospitals and visited the refugee camp in Anjuman Khanda Hall where the Provincial League office is situated. Refugees caught Pandit Nehru by his hand and fell at his feet and narrated their tale of woe in a manner that moved Pandit so deeply that tears trickled down his cheeks.

Finding decided to stay on in Bihar and began to tour the affected areas.

Local bands of wounded and refugees are pouring into Patna and other riot-affected towns.

In some places, frenzied mobs refused to accept to Congressmen who are now touring out in an effort to stop the riot. Consequently orders for large-scale shooting are reported to have been given.

Beating and machine-gunning from the air are also being resorted to.

A section of the Muslim League leadership is seeking to utilize this communal crisis for its petty ends. Talk of forcing a Section 141 Bill on the Province is going the rounds in these reactionary circles and they are planning to bring about the centrally in the most chaotic manner.

Not only are actual refugees being brought to Patna but Muslim populations of safe areas like Kharagpore also have been persuaded to migrate. (Nov. 3).



A section of the 540-strong Hindu-Muslim blood-soaked street, Noakhali, Bihar, after the riot at Ray, Bihar, and set a ghastly example of the whole country.

BENGAL'S ANTI-RIOT WAR BEGINS Hindu-Muslim United Strikes, Demonstrations

News is pouring in from various parts of Bengal of joint militant actions of the common Hindus and Muslims against the riot policy of the imperialists.

In Calcutta itself a Citizens' Defence Service has been formed, composed of representatives from the Congress, League, Communist Party and other political organisations.

This new organisation is reported to be spreading to the various districts of Bengal. It has given a call to the people of Bengal to put an end to this fratricidal war.

It categorically points out that riots strengthen imperialism and jointly Hindus and Muslims must carry on a determined struggle against all anti-social elements.

Meeting At Rangpur

On October 26, Bhuvan Das, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Committee of the Communist Party, addressed a meeting of 3,000 Hindus and Muslims, Congressmen, League, students, workers and peasants at Rangpur.

Before the meeting, 378 Hindu-Muslim peasants marched through the main thoroughfares of the city shouting anti-imperialist and anti-riot slogans.

Showing them appealed to all to join together to defend their own localities from the goondas, to declare war against all enemies of the people and against imperialism, and march boldly together on the road to peace and freedom.

He was followed by local League leaders, who also asked the people to maintain peace and unity and jointly start the fight for freedom and food.

Rural At Darjeeling

On October 25, the whole day of Darjeeling was passed by an anti-riot general strike, de-

veloped for a demonstration of the entire people of Noakhali.

Police meetings and demonstrations have also been held in Dum Dum, Barisal, Howrah and other places.

In Noakhali itself

In the heart of the riot-affected areas of Noakhali joint Hindu-Muslim squads from the United Peace Organisation of Chittagong are taking the neighbouring villages carrying relief to the distressed people and building mutual confidence among the people of this area.

At Mahanabad, in Dacca, the goondas have led some 200 of riot and arson. The local League leaders and the police are helpless.

But under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha, the Hindu-Muslim masses are coming out in huge numbers, condemning goondas and building up joint volunteer corps to fight against them.

They have also sent a relief squad to Noakhali.

Students' Procession

On November 1, the students of all political organisations of Noakhali observed a joint strike against the riot policy of imperialism.

A huge procession with League, Congress and student flags marched through the main streets of the city, shouting anti-riot and anti-imperialist slogans.

THE STORY OF OUR DISGRACE Muslim Kisan Leader's Eye-witness Account Of Noakhali

(Excerpt from the book 'The Story of Our Disgrace' by the author of 'The Story of Our Disgrace', who has been in the Civil Disobedience movement and then Noakhali, written by the author of the book 'The Story of Our Disgrace' and set a ghastly example of the whole country.)

Press Responsibility

I noticed another significant thing—the reaction to Press propaganda after the Calcutta riots.

For the whole of September, districts were rampant and in many villages local badmashas threatened the Hindus with stories of loot and extorted money. In many cases it was taken as donations for the League. Hindu houses were in perpetual fear and were not safe even after these payments.

In villages, hoodlums at first made a general attack on Hindu houses. Even my own investigation I did not come across many cases of murder. These badmashas usually where there was resistance or against any particular target like a respected merchant or a crust socialist, against whom stood a long-standing grudge.

With the approach of hoodlums, people fled; some took shelter in bushes and in fields, a few with Muslim friends.

After this many of the Hindus returned, though they had been completely looted.

And last the usual round of arraignments, forced marriages, expropriation, etc.

Arrest took place, usually in houses or houses where the mob had any clash with the inhabitants or a particular group against the owners.

Military Raj

The military has already started indiscriminate shooting. Slowly Noakhali's villages might

see another round of terror, but the Government has taken care to see that the anger of the people is not directed against it.

Troops that are posted here are mostly Gorkhas and Rajputs, so that when the Muslims would be hit by their bullets, they would turn even more against Hindus.

The tragedy of this crusade of Hindu was brought home to me when I met a young girl of six in a village. Her name was Hansi and she said: "Dacolis have taken our all."

I asked: "Were they dacolis or Muslims?"

"The little girl flared up. "Yes, Muslims are dacolis, aren't they?"

Gold In The Ashes

I felt as if a knife had been slashed through me. The Muslim mob of Noakhali villages here not only killed their Hindu brothers, but have put a knife into themselves.

At Hatanabad I found a refugee Hindu boy standing guard. When he heard that I was a foreigner, his face changed into bitterness and he asked: "Why are you here?"

I said: "Don't you know that here in Hatanabad, Hindus and Muslims are all against the riots?"

The little boy smiled and answered: "Yes, here they are all against the riots. They are all Communists."

Despite all the ravages I felt in my wanderings through the devastated areas, I at once felt that Hatanabad has shown, so it has shown to that little Hindu refugee child, that all is not lost and that the Red flag has saved something more precious than gold, when capitalism was burst to ashes all around.



Refugees At The P.R.C. Relief Centre At Hatanabad.

INDIA'S BIGGEST STRIKE WAVE

For Industrial Peace, Curb Owners Assure Workers Living Wage

When after five years of famine and epidemics, high prices and low wages, blackmarketing and hoarding—gifts of the Advisers' regime—the Congress Ministries assumed office, the people rightly heaved a sigh of relief.

The consumer expected more goods, cheaper goods. The worker, the man who produced, expected a living wage, adequate dearness allowance to off-set the alarming rise in the cost of the daily necessities of life—in short, fulfilment of the election pledges of the Congress.

He expected his Government to take early steps to back him up in his resistance against the conditions of starvation imposed by the owners.

What happened? The Bombay Congress Ministry was the first to come out on May 22, with a statement of its Labour Policy. It talked of better housing, elimination of corruption, standardisation of wages.

But there was not a word in it about a minimum living wage for the worker, security of service, old-age pension, etc.

Instead, there was a marked "concern" over "illegal strikes," Government "made it plain to the workers" that it would show "no sympathy" with such strikes and referred to its forthcoming legislation to put down such strikes.

This was followed by the Ministries of U.P., Madras, Central Provinces, etc., coming out with similar or worse threats against strikes. The U.P. Minister, Dr. Katju even bluntly warned that Section 81A of the hated Defence of India Rules would be permanently incorporated in the legislation regarding industrial disputes.

What about a living wage? No one even so much as referred to it.

Working Committee's Seal

Those were dangerous statements, running counter to the election pledges of the great Congress.

But did the Working Committee, who drafted the election manifesto, pull up these Ministries and order them to honour their election pledges? No! Instead, very soon after this, came Gandhiji's articles in Harijan and hard on their heels the resolution of the Congress Working Committee, putting the official seal on just these dangerous trends.

The Committee roundly condemned 'labour unrest' as causing heavy material loss... to the community as well as to the working-class." But it had nothing to say about a living wage. It only talked of "a vicious race between prices and wages", thus, by implication, ruling out any suggestion of fixing a minimum living wage.

No wonder, therefore, that in this background all its requests

by the Communists. Countless strikes have been fought long after all Communist leaders were arrested.

Why then is this unrest persisting?

Simply put, is what the Indian worker gets by way of wage and dearness allowance, enough to off-set the enormous war-time rise in the cost of living?

Does the condition of the industry compel him to live on a below-subsistence wage?

A satisfactory answer to these questions will and must solve the problem of strikes.

Can Industry Pay?

Take the chart showing profits (columns 1 and 2). It speaks for itself.

Though up-to-date figures of profits are not available, the figures of profit of Bombay mills would be a good indication of the trend during the war years.

15 leading Bombay cotton mills made total profit Rs. 90 lakhs in 1940; Rs. 295 lakhs in 1941; Rs. 805 lakhs in 1942; Rs. 1752 lakhs in 1943; Rs. 1306 lakhs in 1944 (Commerce, July 7, 1945).

Taking 1939 profits as 100 all the 61 cotton mills in Bombay island with a total paid-up capital of about Rs. 3394 lakh rupees made 187.2 per cent profits in 1940; 1032.2 per cent in 1941; 2726.5 per cent in 1942; 5289.3 per cent in 1943; 3591.8 per cent in 1944. The annual average for the five war years came to more than 26 times the 1939 profits.

Is it any wonder that correspondingly the largest number of strikes have taken place in

Strikes Made Illegal

Indeed the Bombay Congress Ministry was already rushing forward with its Industrial Relations Bill, statutorily making any strike almost impossible. Not living wage, but restriction of strikes was the first item on its agenda.

And it is not alone. Ministries of U.P., C.P., Madras are also rushing through similar legislations without making any provision, or giving any assu-

by P. B. Rangnekar

rance, regarding a minimum living wage.

The Central Government too has followed the same path. Legislation to completely crush any attempt at strikes. No assurance regarding a living wage, no security of service, etc.

With this policy guiding their industrial relations, what has been the experience of these Ministries during the last four months?

The experience has been that despite the most savage and unprecedented use of force (Golden Rock, Amalner, Dhulia, etc.), despite the introduction of Section 144, despite illegalising strikes in practice, the number of stoppages are not only not less but more, after the Congress Ministries assumed office.

Obviously, therefore, something other than force is necessary, if strikes are to end and production maintained or increased.

It would be a cheap argument to say that strikes take place because Communist agitators engineer them. The mighty postal strike, the strike of Military Accounts clerks, Imperial Bank clerks, strikes of other office employees, etc., have taken place without any initial organisation

the textile industry, which has made the highest profits?

The all-powerful owners refused to have their profits curtailed—owners who are now exempted even from the Excess Profits Tax.

In the Engineering industry, where the number of strikes have been less only than those in the textile industry, the bosses, reaping huge war-profits, promptly closed their shops, no sooner did the war contracts end. That tens of thousands of workers (figures of unemployment are never compiled) were suddenly thrown on the streets was certainly not their concern.

And the Government—a popular Government—could do nothing to curb them.

So much about the "condition of the industry."

Are Prices Reduced?

Look at the chart showing the cost of living index numbers.

Only three cities are graphed, though in their Provinces these cities by no means show the highest rise.

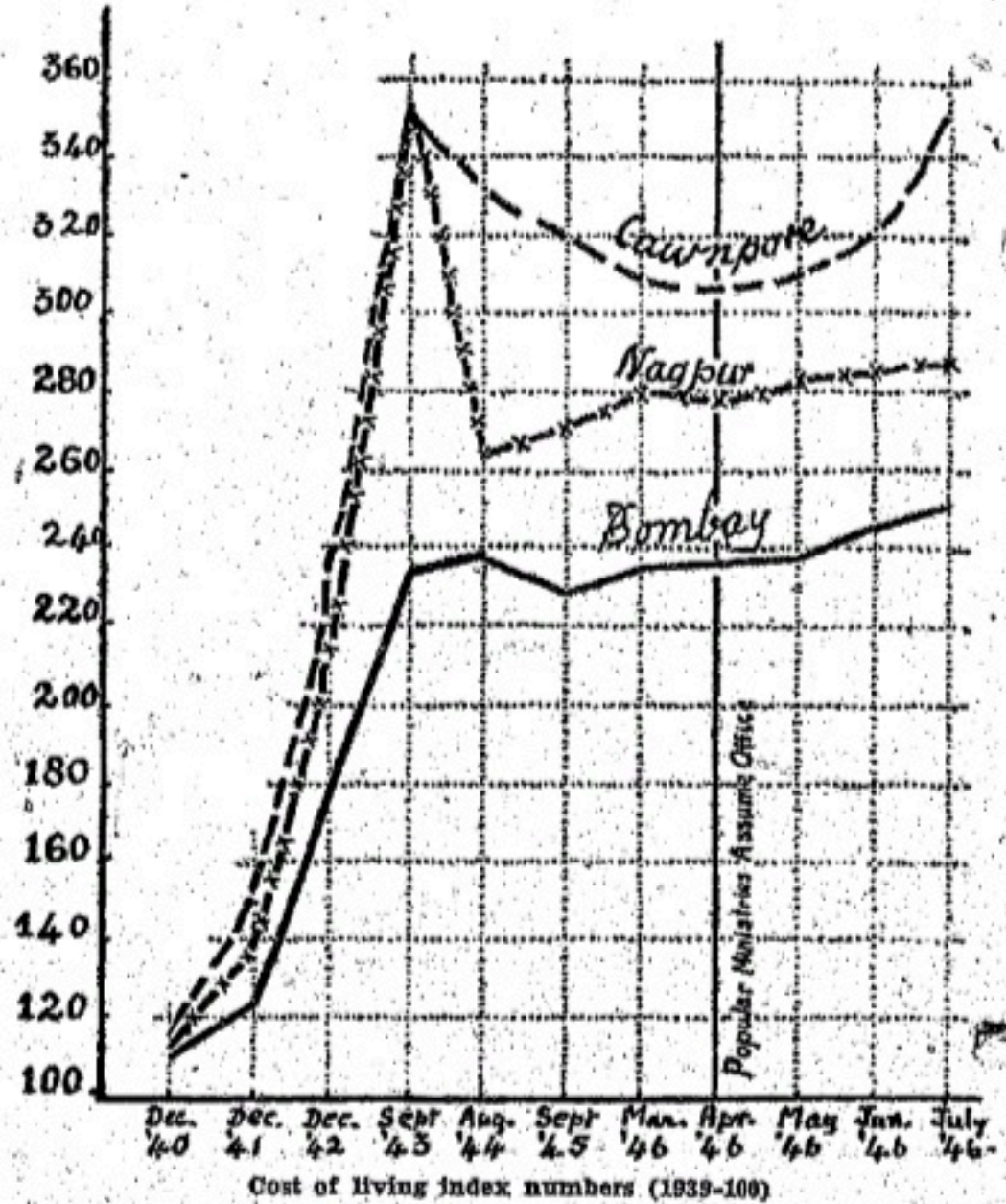
On an average the maximum prices in a year only are taken. And yet the figures for the months after the popular Ministries assumed office are at some centres the highest since the war began and are yet continually rising.

It is common knowledge that the compilation of these figures, for various reasons, has always been a study in under-statement on the part of the Government of India.

The general fall in prices for some time after 1943 was due to the introduction of price control, fixed at rates lower than the rates then prevalent. But since then they are continually rising—Advisers' regime or popular Ministries!

These are wholesale price indices. Retail prices have risen steeply, higher still in the case of every daily necessity, a large number of which have often to be bought at blackmarket rates.

As against this, the Indian Labour Gazette, although not reliable, reveals that in 1944 the rise in the total annual earnings



of the workers was a little over than any in her industrial history.

100 per cent in the case of textile, under 100 per cent in the case of Engineering, only 60 per cent in the case of Government Ordnance Factories and as low as 24 per cent in the case of mining.

As for dearness allowance, nowhere in the country did, or does, it ever off-set fully the rise in the cost of living, even if the Government compiled price-index number is taken to be correct. The highest dearness allowance in the country secured by the textile workers of Bombay (thanks to the 1940 strike) meets this rise only to the extent of 75 per cent.

Thus while the owners, without exception, have reaped fabulous profits, the workers, without exception, have suffered a heavy fall in their real wages.

To quote one instance, while the textile owners have increased their profits by 650 per cent during the war years, the real wages of their workers have fallen to 70.3 per cent of their pre-war wage, to speak nothing of the countless other hardships and the 'corruption' inside the mills, to which the Bombay Ministry's statement draws marked attention.

Or take another instance. While the number of railway workers during the war years, has increased by two and a half lakhs, the railway wage bill has remained stationary, while the Government have funds enough to increase their wages by 100 per cent, even if it were to be out of the railway earnings during the war.

Is it any wonder then that the number of railway strikes is the highest after those in the textile and Engineering industries?

Why Strikes?

The box on columns 4 and 5, compiled from the Government of India publications, shows that of India is passing through the biggest strike-wave ever, bigger national struggle.

STRIKE FACTS

Year	No. of Stoppages	No. of workers involved	No. of working days lost
1921	306	6,00,351	69,84,426
1940	322	4,82,539	75,77,261
1942	894	7,72,623	57,79,965
1943	948	7,82,152	39,40,392
1946 (upto July)	1116	15,03,757	74,96,295

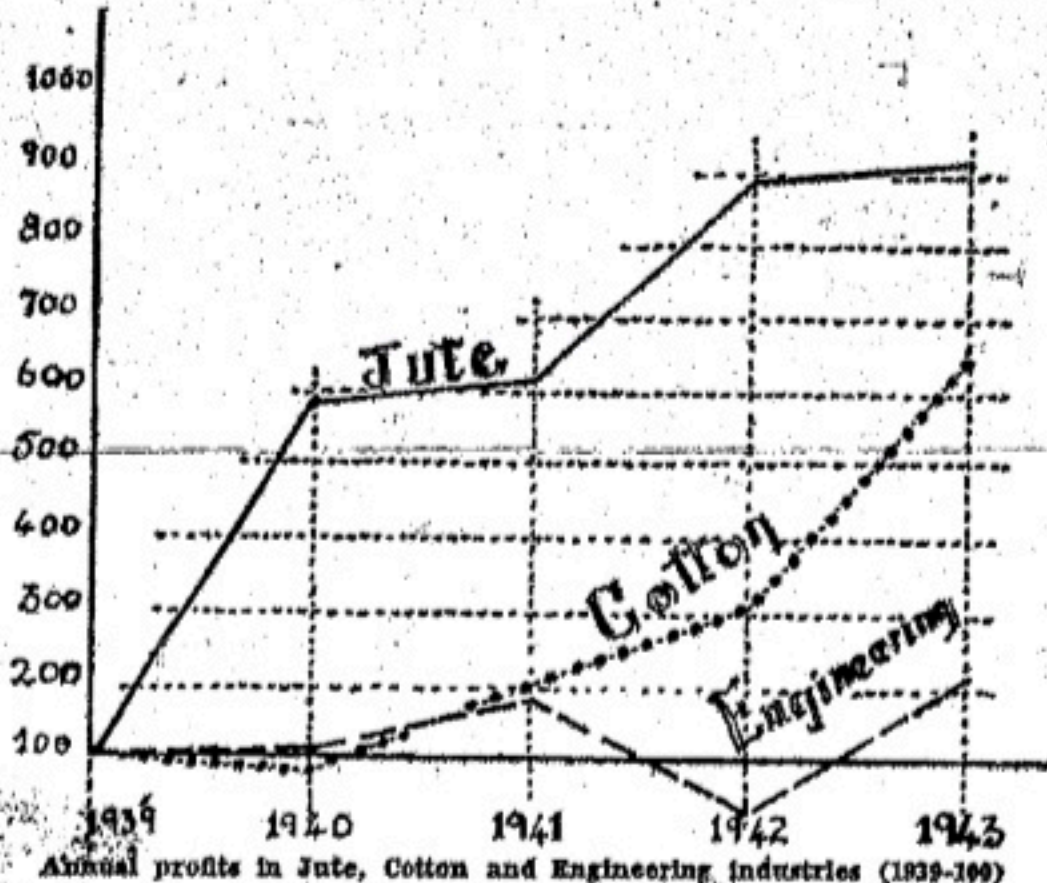
(1) Similar figures only for the four months of office of the popular Ministries (April to July 1946) are 690 stoppages, 9,28,312 workers involved and 44,86,324 working days lost, showing that wave is the rising.

This does not include figures for 14 stoppages (in July) of the giant sympathetic strike (over 4 lakh work days lost in Bombay Province, over 50,000 in Madras, about 25 lakhs in Bengal).

(2) The strike wave since July is still on the up-grade, running parallel with the rising curve of the cost of living index number. Witness these strikes: S.I.R.—40,000 workers for 28 days; Giridih—15,000 workers for 19 days; 1,50,000 workers in Travancore (being fought); 22,000 textile workers of Nagpur; general strike of Calcutta textile workers, etc.

(3) The figures in the box compiled from the far from satisfactory records of the Government of India, speak for themselves. In comparison, it must be noted that the enormous number of working-days lost in 1940 was the result of the war's first general strike of Bombay's one and a half lakh textile workers in March 1940 for about 40 days. The figure for 1943 is caused by the political lock-out of the majority of Ahmedabad's one and a quarter lakh textile workers during the three and a half months following August 1942.

(4) The above figures further do not include the mighty general strikes taking place among the non-factory employees, such as Postal workers about 80,000 on strike for over 3 weeks; Military Accounts clerks over 30,000 for over 16 days; Imperial Bank clerks—over 6,000 for 45 days; U.P. Canal workers 5,000 for 75 days; office clerks strikers in Bombay etc. Strikes among these employees are a phenomenon unheard of before in India.



● SWING TO REACTION IN USA

● COMMUNIST VICTORY IN FRANCE

IN a United States that has since the death of President Roosevelt, steadily moved towards a more and more aggressively imperialist stand, elections to Congress last week have decisively confirmed and strengthened this trend.

By them the Republicans, the acknowledged party of monopoly Big Business, have gained a clear victory, winning a majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Here are the figures:

House of Representatives	1944	1946
Republicans	192	296
Democrats	236	183
Senate		
Republicans	30	51
Democrats	53	43

Reaction Strengthened

This decisive swing to the Right must inevitably lead to a strengthening of the most openly aggressive and reactionary forces in the U.S.

During the past year, under the leadership of President Truman, in practice both American home and foreign policy has been more and more adapted to the wishes of the American Big Business.

In foreign policy Republican Senator Vandenberg has been the constant companion and guide of Secretary of State Byrnes; under their joint leadership has been followed the policy that has been called 'atomic' and 'dollar' diplomacy.

The U.S.'s possession of the Atom bomb, reinforced by an unbridled concentration on rapidly building up stocks of the bomb, has been used to threaten other countries of the world that unless they obey the dictates of U.S. imperialism, they would be destroyed.

Based on it, America's leaders have broken away from the old policy of Big Three cooperation for peace and steadily stepped up a vicious propaganda barrage against the Soviet Union.

Equally, its preponderant economic power and virtual control of the International Bank of Reconstruction has been used to bring pressure on war-devastated countries of Europe and Asia to accept American Big Business as their leader.

Towards World Domination

Simultaneously the Americans themselves have used the fourteen months of peace in strengthening their world-wide network of bases; in China they have openly intervened on Marshal Chiang's side, in return for his handing over China to the U.S. as a virtual colony; in Germany and Japan, American occupation policy has been directed to restore reaction to power, of course, under American tutelage.

The overall aim of this policy has been to strengthen the positions and influence of American imperialism, with a view to a drive for new and bigger markets for U.S. capital and goods and finally to a war for world domination.

Internally also, the administration of President Truman has followed a consistently reactionary line; the immense strike-wave that began with the end of the war, has been dealt with in a bitterly hostile manner, both through legislative enactments and through the use of police and even the military.

At the same time, by a gradual lifting of the controls on prices, the capitalist-profters have been given the line clear to raise prices to dizzy heights

and fleece the ordinary people; the vast expenditure on public works, a feature of Roosevelt's administration that checked the growth of unemployment, has been progressively reduced.

These reactionary policies of President Truman, combined with his obviously timid indecisive role (shown in his handling of the Wallace incident), naturally meant tremendous hardships for the American people, and, therefore, discontent with the present ruling party, the Democrats; at the same time it gave a free hand to the most reactionary sections in American life to whip up a fever of anti-Soviet feeling by utilising the very statements of the President himself and Secretary of State Byrnes.

Capitalising both these, the Republicans won their victory.

And this triumph will certainly mean a further strengthening of the already very reactionary policy of Truman.

Internationally U.S. policy is likely to become more and more aggressive and anti-Soviet, particularly reflected in the open use of economic power for its own political ends by refusing loans and assistance to any people unless it agrees to follow an anti-Soviet policy and to open up its country to U.S. Capital, i.e., to become an American colony; in particular open intervention of the U.S. in Chinese affairs will increase; so also MacArthur's reactionary policy in Japan will be confirmed.

Black Outlook

Internally the Republican victory has already reflected itself in President Truman's decision (November 10) to withdraw "all controls over wages, salaries and prices, except those on rents, sugar and rice."

The Republicans have already forecast (Reuters, November 7) that they will cut the income tax and the excise taxes on many luxury goods, thus helping the rich and hitting the poor.

This must inevitably lead in the near future to a deep economic crisis and a sharpening of the struggle between the progressives, headed by the Labour movement, and Big Business.

The outlook in the U.S. therefore is dark; and unless all progressive elements like Henry Wallace and Harold Ickes, two of Roosevelt's right-hand men, who together with the support of Labour won the election for Roosevelt in 1944, base themselves firmly on the strong trade union movement and come together in a solid bloc (either inside the Democratic Party, or, as seems increasingly necessary, in a new third party), there is little likelihood of the swing towards reaction being stopped in the U.S.A.

Plans of French Right

EQUALLY important internationally were the French elections, also held last week with the acceptance of the people of the new constitution. These were the elections to the first National Assembly that will be France's Parliament for the next five years.

The pre-election campaign showed clearly enough the issues at stake in the election.

In France, Big Business reaction itself is weak, because its bankruptcy was exposed during the Hitler occupation; left to themselves, the French people would have smashed their own reactionaries.

But, in the last year, because of the support these elements have got from reaction abroad, from Anglo-America with its tremendous economic and political power, it has managed to survive and increase in strength.

Therefore, in these elections,

decisive victory for the Right, de Gaulle, the neo-Fascist Republican Party of Liberty (PRL) and the clericalist Popular Republican Movement (MRP), would have meant a complete lining-up of France with the Western bloc, with the Anglo-Americans against the Soviet and democratic Europe.

This would have led to the emergence of the Western bloc, an alliance between France, Franco-Spain and Italy, under the auspices and protection of Anglo-American reaction—the dream of reactionaries ever since the end of the war.

Internally it would have led to the strengthening of the power of the big monopoly capitalist trusts which betrayed France to Hitler, a fierce attack on the conditions of workers and peasants and an intensification of the exploitation of the colonial peoples in the French Empire.

Communist Policy

On the other hand, against reaction, stood the French Communist Party, sharply attacking this plan, advocating an independent foreign policy based on cooperation with the Soviet Union and the new Europe, and putting in the forefront the need for fighting the trusts and advancing to the reconstruction of France's economy on democratic foundations; based on the nationalisation of key sectors of French industry and the improvement of the conditions of the working people.

At the same time they warned the French people of the Anglo-American attempt to dominate France, pointing out how the French request for a 500 million

dollar loan was being held up until the elections were over, and the Anglo-Americans were sure that a government subservient to them would come to power.

Reaction knew well the real obstacle in its way—and all the Right parties in France and the Anglo-Americans abroad concentrated their fire on the Communists, aiming to so destroy their strength as to be able to form an all-Right anti-Communist coalition.

In this they only intensified the tremendous anti-Communist barrage that has dominated the French political atmosphere for the last six months.

In particular, they took advantage of the division in the ranks of the workers, the division between the Socialists (who also joined the anti-Communist campaign) in a vigorous attempt to confuse the French people.

Great Victory

The results, however, show that they have failed to destroy the strength of the French Communists, in contrast the Communists have decisively regained their position as the first party of France.

Here are the comparative figures.

	November 1945	June 1946	November 1946
Left Parties			
Communists	160	154	172
Socialists	143	125	96
Right Centre Parties			
Radicals	28	41	63
MRP	150	166	163
Extreme Right			
PRL	72	72	78

Despite the triumph for the Communists, however, the criminally weak-kneed vacillating policy of the Socialists and their refusal to work jointly with the Communists, has led to a landslide against them and, therefore, a serious weakening of the strength of the Left. The position in France, therefore, remains confused.

The Communists have clearly stated that:

"The results show... manifestly the progress of the French Communist Party and can be considered as a great victory. They give the Party first place among all the political parties in the country. The Communist Party is ready to assume all its responsibilities and considers the victory as the victory for the people for the reconstruction of France and the grandeur and independence of France."

They will strive to establish a coalition government led by them, based on close unity between the Socialists and Communists and together with the Radicals, rather than the MRP, which has more and more identified itself in the last year with de Gaulle and Catholic reaction at home and the Anglo-American bloc abroad.

But the key to this still lies in the hands of the Socialists. If they refuse to work together with the Communists to form such a government, then the political situation will once more become confused, leading perhaps to a revival of the old three-party coalition (MRP, Communist, Socialist), but with greater power in Communist hands, or, though this is more

unlikely, to a coalition of the Right with Communists and Socialists in opposition.

The victory of the Communists and their strong position, however, have ensured one thing; that there can be no question of an immediate triumph of capitalist reaction in France and thus of the consolidation of an anti-Soviet imperialist Western bloc.

November 12.

WORLD LABOUR IN ACTION

● Italian Left Unity ● Philippine Labour Fights U. S. Big Business ★

ITALIAN labour's drive for higher wages and nationalisation of key industries took a further step forward on October 28 when the Socialist and Communist parties announced a "unity of action" pact aimed at labour's prime goals.

The pact strengthens the loose partnership under which Communists and Socialists have been cooperating for many months. Members of the two parties in trade unions have been working together closely ever since Italy's liberation, and this unity went a long way towards bringing about the top-level agreement.

Communists and Socialists polled about 40 per cent of the votes in the June elections and the new coalition is expected to give the Left-wing parties a good chance to win victory in next spring's parliamentary ballot.

Other goals which the parties set themselves are a purge of all remaining fascists; consolidation of Italy's newly-won democracy; social legislation guaranteeing the right to work, protecting all citizens from illness and old age, and insuring all of a home, schooling and medical aid; and a foreign policy based on collective security for peace.

This unity in contrast to disunity in France (see elsewhere on this page) has already led to significant Communist-Socialist gains in the current Municipal elections.

Polish Railway Workers

POLISH railway workers have won a 20 per cent wage increase made possible by their back-breaking efforts to restore transport, on which the rebuilding of all other industry depends.

The rail system was 70 per cent destroyed when the workers got on the job after liberation. What had not been ruined in battle or deteriorated for lack of repair was deliberately blown up or carried off by the Germans.

In July, the latest month for which figures are available, passenger trains carried over 20,000,000 people. This is over a million more than in an average month in 1938, although rolling stock is now 40 per cent less. About 2,300 miles of track have been laid and, in five months, 65 locomotive engines were built.

The wage increase is particularly noteworthy, because until now it has been the practice to lower prices rather than raise wages as output increased.

As greater improvements are made, the workers can cash in on them because the railways are now owned by the people and no single individual makes profits from their labour.

Philippine Labour Triumphs

PHILIPPINE workers have cracked some of the biggest of the U.S. industrial capitalist giants, including Ford and International Harvester, to win wage increase of from 75 to 300 per cent.

The Congress of Labour Organizations, with its 80,000 members, has led 23 strikes since the liberation, and every one has been successful.

The Manila Trading Labour Association, covering Ford employees, won Union recognition and a wage increase from 80 cents to 3.10 dollars (or Rs. 2/6 to 9/5) a day, in a temporary settlement. A demand for a further wage increase is being arbitrated.

Workers at International Harvester formerly earned from 1.30 to 4.20 dollars (or Rs. 3/15 to 13/10) a day. New wage scales, gained through a strike, range from dollars 2.75 to dollars 4.70 (or Rs. 8/4 to 14), while office workers got a monthly wage of dollars 45 (or Rs. 45).

The Philippine Communications Workers' Union, covering employees at RCA, Press Wireless, Associated Press and United Press, raised wages

of messengers from dollars 30 to 60 (or Rs. 90 to Rs. 180) a month, and of operators from dollars 70 to 125 (or Rs. 225 to Rs. 375) a month.

One of the toughest strikes, which is still in arbitration, was called against the Elizalde Rope Co., whose owner, Joaquin Elizalde, is now Philippine Ambassador to Washington. Elizalde spent the war in the U.S. and apparently learned some techniques of union-breaking. He offered to give the workers all their demands if they would join a company union instead of their own.

Rumanian Unions

RUMANIAN labour is rapidly building an impressive network of workers' cultural activities, which include 600 choirs, 200 orchestras, 500 actors' groups and 130 dance ensembles, all composed of rank and file union members.

Plans are being made for the opening of a permanent workers' theatre in one of Bucharest's finest buildings.

Some of the big unions are preparing to build complete community centres, which will include hospitals, libraries and facilities for all recreational and educational activities.

The unions already have 2,300 lending libraries, which operate not only out of workers' clubs but also in factories, villages and military barracks.

The Publishing house of the General Confederation of Labour has printed, in less than a year, 13 manuals for union organisers, 34 pamphlets and books, nine plays, four song books and two volumes of poetry. Thousands of copies of each are in circulation.

The national organ of the GCL, *Viata Sindicala* (Trade Union Life), is published weekly, 180,000 copies in Rumanian and 35,000 in Hungarian. Every trade union also publishes its own monthly bulletin in both languages.

Send Help To Riot-Victims

A LETTER TO INDIA'S SOLDIER SONS

The riots have affected us in the Services in more ways than one. So this week, instead of the usual stories of our struggles for a better life inside the forces, I want to discuss our problems in relation to the present situation in the country.

It is now two months since the riots began. Of course, like everyone else, some of us have been very directly affected. Some of our comrades have friends and relatives in riot-affected areas, and do not know what has happened to them.

But that is not all. There is the curfew and many areas in the cities have been placed "out of bounds". Thus we are cut off from our friends.

Imperialist Disruption

Our White bosses always kept us away from the people. During the RIN Mutiny days, a close link was forged between us and them. Ever since then we have been coming closer through joint actions against our common enemy—British Imperialism.

Then came the riots. With one masterly stroke our White bosses once again most effectively isolated us from the people.

Thousands of our one-time colleagues are on the streets today, facing unemployment and hunger. Some of them are in desperate straits. The agents of Imperialism, who are the main instigators of riots, exploited their conditions, gave them hopes of loot. In Noakhali some of these men prostituted their military training to help the goondas organise the attacks on harmless people. It

FORCES CORRESPONDENT

was a shameful episode. Our common people say, "These are our soldier sons. Instead of saving us, they help to kill us!"

On the other hand, our brothers in the Army are being used in the riot-affected cities of Bengal, Bombay and Bihar to terrorise our people, in the name of "law and order". On the one hand our White-bosses use our experience to spread riots and then again let us loose on the people. The result is that we are hated by everyone.

Travancore

But that is not the whole picture. Look at Travancore. Here too a large section of ex-Servicemen are in action. But they are standing by their people. They had left the Services imbued with the great urge for freedom, with a deep hatred for all oppressors. So today they are fighting against the fascist terror of Sir C. P. as they had never fought before.

These same people had fought heroically against the fascists. Then they did not know what they were fighting for. But today they know what they are up against, what they are fighting for; against Prin-

cely autocracy and for people's rule. So they fight with a hatred that they had never known before.

Unity

In the past it is through such struggles together with our people that we learnt the importance of unity within our ranks. In face of the greatest provocations and intrigues by the British we have been able to maintain our solidarity. Gossiping, rumour-mongering in connection with the riots is banned by our own un-written law inside the forces.

But that is not enough. Our worker and peasant comrades too have managed to maintain their solidarity in the midst of the riots. It was a more difficult task for them. But they have done more.

They have come forward to positively intervene in the riots, to put an end to this shameful chapter of fratricidal war. That is the story of immortal Hasanabad and Channuhani in Bengal.

Positive Action

More, they are going ahead with their joint struggles against their common enemies. Even in Bengal the workers are jointly coming out in strikes for the realisation of their legitimate demands. Together, Hindu-Muslim peasants are fighting the landlords, hoarders and profiteers.

We cannot remain silent either. We too must intervene positively to put an end to

this fratricidal war. Wherever we are employed in protecting people against goondas, we should see to it that we do not allow ourselves to be used as oppressors of these distressed people.

But most of us can help only in relief work. The People's Relief Committee in Bengal has appealed for funds. We all know that this is an all-parties' relief organisation and had done wonderful work during the 1943 Bengal famine. Then we had all responded magnificently to their call. Those were the years of war.

Appeal For Help

From distant battle-fields our comrades had sent money to the starving people. Once more we must do our best.

It may be difficult to send money direct to the People's Relief Committee at 249, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta, though military regulations do not forbid it. In such cases money should be handed over to the nearest popular organisations who are collecting funds on behalf of the People's Relief Committee or to civilian friends; don't forget to give them the address of the People's Relief Committee and ensure that the money is sent to it.

Remember we must do our best. Our people have always stood by us. We must not fail them now. We must declare, "They shall not die!"

WITH almost Churchillian gusto—and on a traditionally imperial occasion, the Lord Mayor's banquet—British Premier Attlee, on November 9, told his people that British actions in India and Burma show that they are not "antimasted by Imperialism!"

Of course, in India where we have seen British non-Imperialism busily fanning communal fires in Noakhali and Bihar, we are not going to swallow this nonsense very easily; but let us go even further afield—say Cyprus and Hong Kong—and learn just how Attlee is putting through his very non-Imperialist policy.

From Autocratic Rule To Bogus Reforms

Cyprus is a small island in the Eastern Mediterranean, with a population of three and three-quarter lakhs which is predominantly Greek by origin and language and which today demands reunion with Greece.

For many years Cyprus has been ruled by a British Governor, equipped with virtually dictatorial powers; democratic agitation whether for improvement of the people's conditions or for reunion with Greece has been outlawed; last January, the entire leadership of the Cypriot Trade Union Congress was sentenced to imprisonment for maintaining "an unlawful association" and possession of socialist literature was declared a crime.

But the Cypriot democratic movement has never been crushed; and a month ago, Labour-Imperialism decided that some show of bogus reforms had better be made—at least to prove how British Imperialism is "vanishing."

So on October 24, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Creech-Jones, announced "liberal and progressive" reforms; a Consultative Assembly was to be called, he announced, to frame these reforms; note carefully—a Consultative, not a Constituent Assembly, i.e. advisory and not sovereign, nominated and not elected.

Of course, the Cypriots have rejected these reforms—all the four political parties (three of which are right-

Around the World

Is Imperialism Vanishing?

wing) and the Ethnarchic Council (religious head of the Cypriots)—and demanded reunion with Greece.

This has not worried the British; for, as the Tory London Times complacently said:

"There is no proof that this claim is justified so far as the masses are concerned, who are far more interested in the hard struggle for a living than in politics." (October 25).

Not Love For Masses

But For Bases

Of course, all this love for the "masses" is not going to cut much ice, either in India (we have heard of it before) or in Cyprus. But still it is a good veil for Imperialism, behind which it can go on with its real plans.

These real plans amount simply to this: transform Cyprus into an armed British base to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean.

According to Reuters (October 20) "four or five ships" are arriving in Cyprus every week with supplies from Haifa and Port Said; this "is believed to indicate an intention to transfer the British General Headquarters from Cairo to Cyprus."

So also the Palestine Post reported lately that hundreds of building workers are involved in hasty military construction near Famagusta (in Cyprus), which will enable the headquarters of the British Mediterranean Fleet to be shifted to Cyprus. (This is confirmed by a Free Press Journal report of October 17).

Of course, this also means hell for the Cypriots; for according to Robertson, special correspondent of

the liberal pictorial Picture Post, "it is British rule that has made the island usurper's paradise", and:

"Cyprus is heading for trouble. Inflation is serious. Wages have risen astonishingly, but not, of course, as high as prices.... The cost of living officially given as 250 per cent above pre-war, is really 600 per cent to 800 per cent up...."

So this is the real meaning behind the love for the "masses" of Cyprus, so interested in "food" and blind to "politics". Certainly British Imperialism with its fleets, armies and aeroplanes is not vanishing as far as Cyprus is concerned!

Britain Is Saving The "Savages"

And then about Hong Kong—the port that dominates the South China seas and trade—here are some interesting facts from the Soviet fortnightly New Times (October 1, 1945).

Nearing the end of the war, even Marshal Chiang declared that "the status of Hong Kong (before the war a British Colony—M.K.)... must be rectified". (August 24, 1945).

That did not worry our hard-headed imperialists.

On August 30, 1945, a British fleet, complete with troops, sailed into Hong Kong and re-established British rule. (And let us not forget that, to our shame, a considerable number of Indian troops also were in the detachment).

In December 1945, Hong Kong became the official headquarters of the British Pacific Fleet.

In April 1946, one of Britain's prominent fire-eaters, Admiral Fraser, told correspondents that Hong Kong would remain a British base and added that enough British naval forces would be maintained in China to help to promote British trade in that country!

The Chinese were angry and Chinese correspondents cross-examined Admiral Fraser, when he was in Tokyo; cornered, he told them that the Chinese wanted British troops to remain in Hong Kong.

Fraser, it seems, lost his temper and answered that the situation in China was extremely chaotic and the Chinese were savages.

Exactly—how savage to demand back a piece of one's own country!

An Alliance Of Robbers

So it goes on, this vanishing trick of British Imperialism—by which it spreads its foul tentacles over ever more peoples.

And it should be noted that it does all this with the willing consent of its partner, American Imperialism; according to the New York Herald Tribune the U.S. has thrown overboard Roosevelt's decision to strive to end British rule of Hong Kong (August 23, 1945).

What else could it do—after all? If it insisted on the British quitting Hong Kong, then the British might ask the U.S. to quit North China, where 30,000 U.S. troops lord it today—or

Iceland, or the Philippines, or so many others of the hundreds of U.S. bases, strewn over the five Continents!

"I shut my eyes, you shut yours"—this seems to be the informal agreement between the world's two biggest robbers, British and American Imperialism!

Mohan Kaminamangalam

The Bookshelf

LENIN'S COLLECTED WORKS, Vol. XXI, Book 1. (Toward the Seizure of Power. 304 pages. Rs. 5-10.)

This volume covers the period July 16 to November 6, 1917 and contains: From the July Days to the Kornilov Revolt; The Threatening Campaigns and How to Fight It; On Road to Insurrection.

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE PATRIOTIC WAR. (Vol. 1, June 22, 1943, December 31, 1943, Rs. 18-12)

This contains all Stalin's speeches and Orders of the Day, Molotov's speeches and texts of the Treaties, Agreements made with other countries, official Tass Agency statements and denials—the whole collection fully illustrating the foreign policy of the Soviet Government during that period. (Further volumes are expected in the near future.)

THE AIMS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY As. 3.

This is Part 1 of "Marxism: An Introductory Course in Five Parts" being published by the Communist Party of Great Britain.

THE SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY OF GERMANY. (By F. Albin, with an Introduction by K. Zilliacus M.P. As. 12.)

The most significant fact for the political rebirth of Germany today is the fusion of the Socialist and Communist Parties into the Socialist Unity Party. This booklet tells of the rebirth of the German working-class movement, the historical lessons it drew from previous splits between the two parties which resulted in the disastrous rise of Fascism, of how this unity of the German workers has been achieved today and its significance for the labour movements in other countries.

FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE By William Gallacher M.P. and Phil Piratin M.P. Published by the Communist Party of Great Britain. 1 Anna.

TWELVE MONTHS WITH TITO'S PARTISANS. (By Major William Jones. Rs. 3-6.)

The author was the first British officer to parachute to Yugoslav Partisans. And this book, the first eyewitness account of the Partisans' struggle, the absorbing story of their day-day life, the incredible hardships faced and the heroic battles waged for the liberation of their country.

ATOMIC ENERGY. (By G. Volkoff and P. R. Wall. As. 12.)

The first part gives a non-technical discussion of the nature of atomic energy, the methods of releasing it and its possible peacetime applications. The second part deals with the social and political implications, the problems and the threat of atomic power.

SCIENCE NEWS, NO 1 (A Penguin Publication. As. 12.)

A regular publication, giving the lay reader a simple account of new advances in science from time to time.

ENGLISH EPISODE. (By Charles Poulsen. Rs. 5-5.)

A historical romance of the period of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in Great Britain. The author presents in moving and human terms a picture of the life of the English peasants in their revolt against the tyrannical Barons.

THE CROSS AND THE ARROW. (By Albert Maltz. Rs. 5-15.)

This novel by a well-known American writer is considered one of the most remarkable books of recent years. For its story, it takes a single unpremeditated act of sabotage in a German tank factory, and its effect upon the workers, slaves, of the Gestapo, the S.S. and the factory management; and it probes into the universal question of man's social responsibilities. A brilliantly written and exciting book.

CORRECTION

The price of Lenin's Selected Works, Volume 6 was given, by mistake, as Rs. 1-4 in last week's advertisement. The correct price is Rs. 4-4.

PEOPLES PUBLISHING HOUSE

ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Consulting Editor: G. ADHIKARI

Managing Editor: M. B. Rao

Subscription Rate (Indian): Yearly Rs. 8-; Half-Yearly Rs. 4-; Quarterly Rs. 3-.

Subscription Rate (Foreign): Yearly Rs. 12, Half-Yearly Rs. 6.

Telegrams: Peoplesage.

All cheques, Money-Orders, Postal Orders, Demand Drafts etc. to be made out in the name of KANTILAL J. SHAH.

Printed by M. B. Rao at the New Age Printing Press, 190B, Khetwadi Main Road, Bombay 4, and published by him at Peoples Age Office, 190B, E. K. Building, Khetwadi Main Road, Bombay 4.

Is Baldev Singh Building

A "TRULY" INDIAN ARMY?

"We aim at building up in a truly national way, a National Army which will be the pride of this great land of ours..." A Defence Member, Sardar Baldev Singh, in his broadcast to the Armed Forces on October 9. And every Indian would welcome this attempt.

Yet, in actual fact, is this being done? Are any steps being taken to do it?

During the war, the Army, Navy and Air Force vastly expanded; under the stress of the necessity to meet and fling back the Japanese menace, the Indian armed forces were tremendously increased in number, thousands of new Indian officers trained.

With the end of the war, obviously the wartime strength of the Army is being cut down.

The question, therefore, arises—how is this reduction in the strength of the armed forces, this demobilisation, being carried out? Is it being carried out in such a way as to ensure the building up of a truly National Army?

This page tells you just how this is NOT being done.

And it is not being done because not Indians but the British are in charge of it.

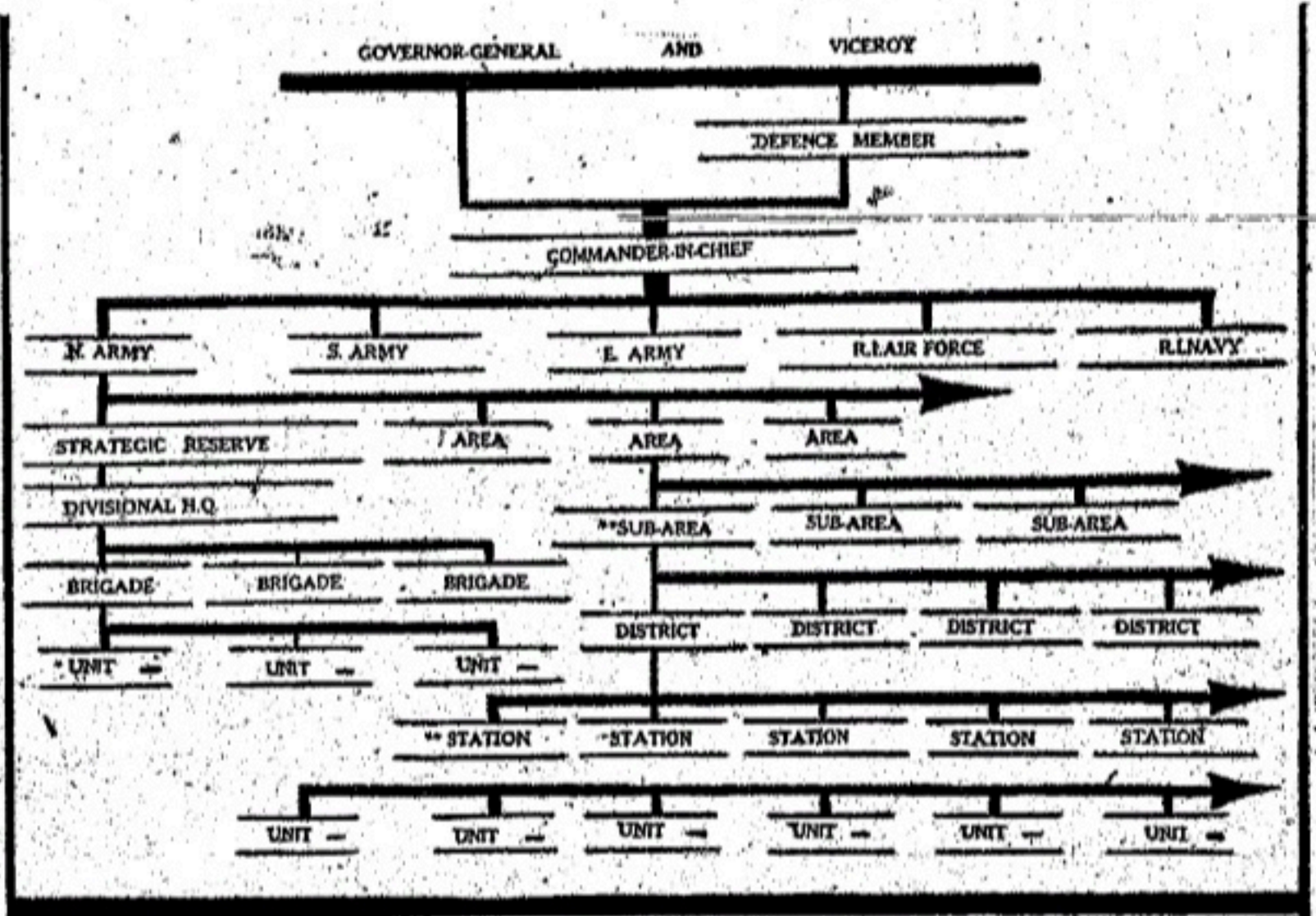
They are the bosses—of G.H.Q., the Armies (N.E. & S.)—the diagram of the Areas, Sub-Areas, Strategic Reserves and the rest.

And they are planning, not for a truly Indian Army but a puppet Indian auxiliary to a British Army, an Army which, according to Field Marshal Lord Wavell, will "still owe allegiance, in accordance with their oath, to the King Emperor, to whom I, the Parliament I am still responsible."

Read the facts on this page that tell you how this is being done,—and then demand:

- * Sack the British officers, from the Commander-in-Chief to the youngest Second-Lieutenant!
- * Withdraw British troops, every single one of them!
- * India's army owes allegiance to India's people, not Britain's King.
- * Plan demobilisation so that the experience of the war-time is used for building a real Indian Army!
- * Recruit the INA and RIN heroes to strengthen the patriotism and skill of India's armed forces!
- * Recruit foreign technical advisers, not merely British, only as advisers not as commanders!

THIS IS THE WAY TO BUILD A REAL INDIAN ARMY!



Level to which Indians have risen.

- * Only 5 p.c. of units in strategic reserve are under Indian Command.
- * One Indian has lately been in charge of a sub-area, another of an R.I.A.F. station.
- * The number of areas under each army, sub-areas under each area, districts under each sub-area, etc. varies from Army to Army, area to area.
- * It is clear from this that Indians have no key commands whatsoever. Note also that in the strategic reserves which are the units ready for battle (as opposed to the area commands which are mere garrison troops) Indians do not even command 5 p.c. of the units.

INDIANISATION OF OFFICERS SABOTAGED

Key to building a "National Army"—as anyone knows—is the Indianisation of the commanding personnel in the Army, the replacement of British officers by Indian officers in positions of authority.

Is this being done?

Army
ON the eve of the second world war, the strength of the Indian Army was 2,00,000 with 5,000 officers, of whom only 400 were Indians. By the end of the war, the strength of the Army was between 20,00,000 and 30,00,000 with 50,000 officers of whom 1,000 were Indians. According to the estimates for April 1, 1947, the future strength of the Army will be about 4,80,000 with 8,800 officers. Clearly enough, anyone aiming at a truly National Army would immediately set about demobilising the 8,000 Indian officers on the core and vast majority of the 8,800 officers needed; if further training in specialised subjects were needed for certain posts, obviously this should be readily given to these officers. Yet the plans of the present administration headed by Field Marshal Auchinleck (in his capacities Baldev Singh is a touching faith!) are that of the 8,800 officers needed, of 3,700, a minority, are to be taken, 5,100, the majority, British.

by **Subrata Banerji**

At the end of August 16,431 officers had been demobilised. Why? Why else except to make room for the 5,100 British officers so that—always of course in the false name of 'efficiency' and 'lack of Indian Officers'—Britain can remain in control of India's Army?

Air Force
There were 13 Indian Air Force officers before the war; by the end of the war this number had shot up to 1,384. And out of this number of 1,384 officers, as many as 955 applied for permanent commissions and only 107 have been accepted; demobilisation has been comparatively slower; only 142 officers had been released by the end of August.

But here too essentially the same policy prevails; far from using the wartime Indian cadre as the key cadre for the post-war Air Force, these are also being thrown out.

Navy
So also in the Navy; on the eve of the war, there were only 20 Indian officers; at the end of the war there were 2,000 Indian officers, 45 per cent of the total officer personnel in the RIN.

Yet the pre-war cadre is to be increased by only 106 officers, of whom 60 will be Indian; and by August end, 1,588 officers had been demobilised of whom the vast majority must certainly be Indians.

All this proves one very simple fact. Indianisation of the officer cadre, far from being put through, is being sabotaged, willfully, consciously sabotaged.

Of course, this sabotage is done in the name of "not impairing efficiency," but its real

objective is the retention of control in British hands. And not only this. Many of the best of India's sons from the middle-class who did go into the Armed Forces became good soldiers; war also taught them to be good patriots—when they saw the White man lord it over them and their comrades. Obviously they are "unsafe"—in British eyes. So out they go.

Again every British officer knows that thousands of Viceroy's Commissioned Officers (V.C.O.), coming from the best of India's peasant stock, are, more competent than many of them

are and admit that they could not run their units without the help of these key men; so also the ordinary rank-and-file soldier. Train them up, promote them to be officers—this should be the simple policy of a truly national government, out to build a truly National Army.

But this is not Auchinleck's policy. For him the Viceroy's Commissioned Officer cannot be trusted because his home village has turned upside down; they have become "political," no more "loyal"; the wartime Indian officer is too "independent"; far better chuck them both out and search out for young loyalists—as an Indian minority, and Britishers for the imperial majority.

Trained Gunners Demobbed
During the war, Indian Artillery expanded to a strength of 60 regiments with 83,986 men, including various types of field, mountain, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. Yet, out of this number of trained skilled men, 25,000 had been demobilised by the end of July.

Why? Was it necessary? Or is it being so arranged that the Indian Artillery will still be dependent on the British Royal Artillery that the British can argue that at least British Artillery must remain—that the British will be in command of India's God of War?

Key arm—widely recognised by every student of military strategy—of the entire armed service is the AIR FORCE.

ty. All this, of course, in the name of "efficiency." Thus the facts do not show the building up of a National Army. And they cannot, for Baldev Singh places implicit trust in the creator of this anti-Indian plan, praising him as the man "with (whose) help, we shall make rapid progress," Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck.

It is time a vigorous broom swept G.H.Q. clean of the White Knights, Marshals and Generals who yet lord it there. Let the British officers go back whence they came—that must be our demand. Demobilisation of the 42,000 British officers, proper training for the 8,000 Indians—this is the way towards a National Army!

INDIA'S ARMY—BRITAIN'S AUXILIARY?

If the officers in the new Indian armed services are to be British, what about the men? They, of course, are Indians, answer Auchinleck gleefully.

Yet, even here, demobilisation has been carefully planned, carefully planned to weaken Indian control of key branches, carefully planned to keep British in control of those branches. ARTILLERY, a key part of Army, is the God of War—many have said. One reason for Hitler's defeat in front of Moscow in 1941 was the superiority of Soviet Artillery.

Gradual Expansion
Before the war, the Indian Artillery was small in numbers and dependent, if it came to any major action, on British Artillery.

And plans for the future amount to their gradual (1) expansion (in how many years, nobody knows) to twenty squadrons; this 'expansion', in fact, is taking place so gradually that by August end 13,980 or nearly half the present strength, had been demobilised, valuable experienced personnel thrown on the scrap-heap!

This is one part of the plan for the Indian Air Force. The other is contained in confidential instructions sent to Air Headquarters in India (AHQ (I)) last June by the British Air Ministry. Details of this were published in the 'People's Age' on September 1, 1946.

This told AHQ (I) to prepare for the accommodation of a "strategic reserve" from Britain to consist of 11 squadrons by 1948 end, and 18 squadrons by 1950, 18 squadrons, of which 9 will be Bomber Squadrons.

No wonder demobilisation is going ahead so fast in the Air Force; for it is going ahead in such a way that AHQ (I) can argue:

"We must have 18 British Squadrons attached to the RIAF; otherwise India will not be safe."

And lastly comes the NAVY—meant to guard India's shores.

Everyone knows here also that the RIN is still a mere collection of sloops good for training, useless for big fighting. Are there any plans to make it better?

"Oh, yes," Auchinleck would answer. "We (the British) are giving three cruisers to India—but he doesn't say that these are three old war-ravaged cruisers, useless for anything except for children to play with!"

Yet, there are no plans for building an Indian Navy, complete with the big ships, a real navy with aircraft carriers and the rest.

Instead, out of 30,000 men in the Navy, 18,000 had been demobilised by August end.

Startling Facts

Of these the biggest demobilisation took place in March, 8,270 men in a single month; the vast majority of them were first-class trained men, natural leaders of the boys in the Navy, demobilised, not because they were unnecessary, but because they were the leaders of the great Naval uprisings of February.

This then is the position with regard to demobilisation in India's armed forces.

And the facts are enough to make any patriot sit up and think and act.



Where Sonar Bangla Lives

HERE THE RIOT-DEVILS SHALL NOT ENTER!

Hindu-Muslim Kisans' Unbreakable Unity In North Bengal

Stop mourning for Bengal. All Bengal is not Noakhali. All Bengal is not Calcutta. Sonar Bangla is not dead.

In the Press you will only read of the horrors of Bengal. And you will say—all Bengal is a heap of ashes. Hindu kills Muslim. Muslim kills Hindu. Barbarism—worse than you could ever dream of—has caught the Bengal of Rabindranath by the throat and throttled the joy out of it.

But there is another Bengal, where all her greatness shines with a new and unprecedented glory.

Here Bengali men and women are carrying forward the flag of patriotism—forward to pinnacles it has never reached before.

Here an unbreakable wall of human bodies and hearts and wills keeps out the demon of fratricide.

This is a story of this Bengal—the Bengal of the united struggle of the common people against exploitation—the Bengal which must live and grow, if India is to free herself from the imperialist stranglehold.

HERE is a belt of land in North Bengal which runs across the rivers Teesta and Domar, covering the whole of Thakurgaon Sub-Division of Dinajpur District and the three thanas of Boda, Panhagarh and Debiganj of Jalpaiguri District. Here are concentrated the biggest jotedars, each owning thousands of acres, keeping over fifteen lakhs of Adhairs (sharecroppers) in a state of practical serfdom. Among these Adhairs, flies the Red flag over its strongest base in Bengal.

This year, over this difficult belt, famine clouds appeared early and things became as serious as in 1943. Government failed to check rice prices, which at places soared as high as Rs.

50 per maund, while the authorities felt panicky, but could do nothing. Most of the prosperous jotedars, however, had stocks in hand, and even in the prevailing distress, many were stealthily exporting their stocks outside the district.

We Shall Not Die

The Adhairs decided that they would not die of famine again. Build the kisan army, the call went forth towards the end of September. And kisan volunteers surged forward; recruits joined up from village after village, and today, over the whole belt a mighty kisan army, ten thousand

strong, is on the march. It is no ordinary army. Every 'soldier' has his allocated tasks. The discipline is as strict as that of a regular army.

What is this army doing today?

An advance guard moves from village to village surrounds the gola (barn) of every jotedar, takes charge of his boarded stock and in the presence of the entire village sells it off at controlled rates to the most needy in the village. The sale proceeds are then handed over to the jotedar and the battalion marches on to the next jotedar's barn.

On Guard

Some jotedars tried to spirit off their stocks to secret dens out of the district. But the vigil of the Red kisans was ruthless.

Adhair volunteers mounted watch on every road, challenged and examined every cart and seized and sold off all hoarded stocks which they detected.

The whole belt was cordoned off by such volunteers to prevent any secret export outside.

In this kisan army, Hindu and Muslim Adhairs stand together, shoulder to shoulder, pledged to fight the battle against the jotedars.

Fighting The Poison

The jotedars tried desperately to split this solid phalanx by spreading communal poison. Again and again, their game was upset.

Some jotedars in Thakurgaon Sub-Division in Dinajpur, brought a whole contingent of Muslims from the neighbouring district of Purnea in Bihar. They planned to set them against the Red kisan volunteers, as they seized barns and thus cause a communal clash.

To the poor Muslims from Purnea they said: "These kisan volunteers are grabbing our stocks and refuse to allow any to be sent to you because they want you to starve."

The kisan volunteers understood the landlord's game. Adhair youth, both Hindu and Muslim, rushed to the Bihar border and started a terrific campaign among the Muslims who were being brought from Purnea.

"The jotedars want us to cut each other's throat by starting a Hindu-Muslim riot. From the stocks we seize, you can have whatever you want for your own needs. The jotedars cut your throat by selling at blackmarket rates. We offer you their grain at controlled rate."

The Purnea Muslims went back, happy, proud of their brother kisans, and furious with the jotedars.

At Gara in Thakurgaon, a dispute had been raging for weeks on the question of the Kall immersion ceremony; the Muslim jotedars would not allow the procession to pass by the mosque, and Hindu jotedars would not agree to any other route.

Yet no riots broke out. The Adhairs of the locality, both Hindus and Muslims, refused to be drawn into it, saying:

"If we fight as Hindus and Muslims, it is we Adhairs who die while our blood-suckers, the jotedars prosper, for they no longer will have to fear our united might."

Sahibs Fall In Line

This upsurge, united and disciplined, has come with such a bang, that the bureaucrats and police have so far not been able to do anything to break it.

In Jalpaiguri, the police at first held out threats of arrests against the kisan leaders, and also declared that they would prevent the jotedars' golas being seized. But when the tide came, they discreetly slipped away.

In Kurigram (Rangpur), food scarcity became so menacing that the local bureaucrats were frightened out of their wits. Their own anti-hoarding drive was almost a complete failure while they desperately hoped for stocks to stay off unrest.

So, when the kisans themselves forced out the jotedar's stocks, the local authorities were amazed and actually fell in behind the kisans!

Not long ago, Rangpur was a notorious centre of bureaucratic attacks against the Red flag.

But today the kisan upsurge

here has shown itself of such an overwhelming stature that the bureaucrats, for the moment at least, dare not stand against it.

This great battle has saved many lives that would have perished with hunger. And the powerful jotedars are cornered today in a manner never seen before.

Sentinel Of Unity

If any one single factor has helped to avert a flare-up in North Bengal, it is this battle waged by unlettered Adhairs' Peace volunteers in the towns could fight rumours and provocation with redoubled vigour inspired by this joint Hindu-Muslim struggle of the neighbouring kisans.

Yet, not a line about this great battle has appeared in the Bengal Press.

Compare this with Noakhali.

Like Noakhali, here too you will find a Muslim majority; here too is a deficit area with hungry kisans in a state of desperate unrest. Had the riot broken out here, it would have blasted an area four times the size of Noakhali, and a population twice as large.

Yet, while the Muslim kisan of Noakhali was goaded into a frenzy by black reactionaries, to strike with inhuman barbarism against his own brother, here in North Bengal, Hindu and Muslim kisans jointly rallied under the Red flag to defeat their exploiters—all the riot-making jotedars.

Between Noakhali in the East, and Bihar in the West, this kisan army of North Bengal stands today as a mighty sentinel proclaiming that our common humanity, both Hindu and Muslim, knows how to fight against fratricide and for freedom.

—by Nikhil Chakravarty