

# WITH GANDHIJI IN NOAKHALI

## Military Raj, Bureaucratic Ordinances, Communal Opportunism Undermine Heroic Efforts For Hindu-Muslim Unity

The question that is uppermost in the minds of all in Noakhali and Tippera is: what is going to happen to the huge army of refugees? It appears everywhere, and practically every hour, I have heard it being asked during nearly a fortnight's tour with Gandhiji.

IN Calcutta, the Relief Commissioner quoted the number as 50,000 in refugee camps, but here on the spot, the general impression is that it is about one lakh, for a very large number has already gone to other districts.

In the refugee camps, the condition is appalling, with bad and irregular diet and epidemics almost on the point of breaking out. With winter approaching, relief workers fear worsening of the conditions.

### Three Theories

Talking to different people here, I have gathered that three theories prevail on the question:

● First is Gandhiji's own approach: more than once in the after-prayer addresses, he asked the refugees to go back home, provided one good Muslim and one good Hindu stands as guarantor for each other's conduct in their respective villages.

During his first address at Dattapara, one refugee got up and said with visible emotion, that he differed from Gandhiji, because when 50 good Hindus and 50 good Muslims had not been able to save them, how could they rely on one good Hindu and one good Muslim?

After visiting some of the villages and meeting more refugees, Gandhiji realised the magnitude of helplessness and fear.

He then began appealing repeatedly, on the one hand to the Muslims to repent and assure security by building up the burnt houses, and, on the other hand, to the Hindus to have the courage of non-violence and not rely on military and police.

Later Gandhiji said that the League would have "naturally" to supply good Muslims, and it is believed that this was the point he hammered, when Suhrawardy met him this week.

As a practical demonstration of individual courage and non-violence, he has undertaken his trip into the interior with only two assistants in his desire to stay with the Muslims. It is something in the nature of a challenge to the Bengal League, that while he is infusing courage into Hindus and himself risking his life, it is the League's turn to provide "good Muslims."

There was even a suggestion of Satyagraha before. In one of his addresses, he said he would lay down his bones, if Muslims did not give him food.

### "Resistance Pockets"

● The second theory about refugees is that "pockets of resistance" should be built by concentrating the Hindu population in one contiguous sector in a village or by planning new colonies of settlers consisting entirely of Hindus.

Holdings of this view talk in terms of "simultaneous military and civil life." Shyamaprosad in a statement on November 22, said:

"When a particular community is in microscopic minority they should be helped to remove to the neighbouring villages, where the people of their community live in large numbers."

It is said that Gandhiji disapproves of this line.

● The third theory urges the Hindus to resettle either in West Bengal or other Hindu-majority Provinces. It is reported that the Maharajahbira of Burdwan has offered land for East Bengal refugees to settle in Burdwan.

What is the Bengal League's attitude to this burning question?

### Our Special Correspondent

On November 19, I interviewed Mr. Suhrawardy at Noakhali. Asked about the results of his recent tour, he said he had addressed meetings, and Muslims had given him "an emphatic assurance" regarding the safety of their Hindu neighbours, but rehabilitation had been retarded so far, because volunteers from outside are spreading panic among refugees and persuading them to leave their villages.

Mr. Suhrawardy added that

by the reactionary League agents who are the real riot-mongers, that it was the Hindu volunteers who were responsible for the excesses and the misdeeds of the military.

### "Resign!"

The anti-Suhrawardy wing of the local League is making a great row over it. A number of Muslim National Guards have been sent to affected areas "to take steps against this". Needless to say, this can only result in the worsening of Muslims' attitude towards the Hindus.

On November 21, a number of Leaguers demanded from Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed the withdrawal of the military. It is reported that Mr. Shamsuddin instead of asking them to create confidence among Hindus as the only way for the withdrawal of troops, pleaded lack of authority over the military, at which the Leaguers demanded the resignation of the Ministry.

There is no doubt this is going

charge of the stocks by paying harvesting charges. Where opposition is likely from the local people, collective fines would be imposed.

From talks with local officials, it seems that this Ordinance will make things worse; already unlawful harvesting of unripe paddy for fodder is taking place in a number of areas. It is feared that the Ordinance would provoke the hooligans to gather or destroy paddy from refugees' fields before the arrival of Government Supervisors.

Also wide apprehension persists about corrupt deals by officers over the output and the price of the harvest, which is not unnatural, in view of the admittedly rampant official corruption in Bengal.

The Ordinance will foil arrangements for harvesting already made between a number of refugees and their friendly Muslim neighbours. This will also create difficulties in har-

riot Congress, League and Communist leaders of three centres—Noakhali, Choumuhani and Feni—worked unitedly to check it from spreading to the eastern half of the district and did succeed in doing so.

It was their Choumuhani Joint Relief Committee which opened the first refugee centre with 10,000 rupees collected from Hindu and Muslim residents alike.

But when the Central Relief Rescue and Rehabilitation Committee was formed by Congress and Mahasabha leaders, the Leaguers were excluded because of Shyamaprosad, its guiding star.

### Pawn in Hate Game

League leaders retaliated by organising a Muslim Relief Committee to defend arrested Muslims and to look after their families. They, it seems, look every arrested Muslim without discrimination as heroes and lavishly treat them.

It is in this tragic context that the fate of the victims of Noakhali is almost becoming a pawn in the game of mutual hatred indulged in by both sides.

On the one hand the Bengal League leaders are hardly doing anything to discharge their responsibility as the majority community to create confidence in the terror-stricken minority, merely relying on bureaucratic measures which divide the people all the more.

On the other hand Gandhiji, despite his request for "a good Muslim and a good Hindu mutual guarantors" has not succeeded in turning the face of Congressmen away from thoughts of doing without Muslims and towards joint Hindu-Muslim efforts; more than once we have asked ordinary Congressmen here, what would happen to the "Quit India" demand, if the military is demanded everywhere, and we have found that he would just feel uncomfortable and answer with a smile.

### Hope And Challenge

But it is not a stone wall all along the line.

On November 20, the very day the Harvesting Ordinance was announced, news came that 300 Hindu-Muslim kisans including refugees, had already formed into a Volunteer Corps and set out to harvest Aman crop in the affected zone.

Just a tiny beginning but it inspires hope and throws out a challenge—a hope for our people and a challenge to our leaders.



At Hasanabad. A Volunteer Post On The River

Gandhiji's tour had failed to produce any good effect due to the volunteers who are proceeding along with or in advance of Gandhiji and put up false cases before Gandhiji and spread panic among the villagers. He said: "These volunteers are fooling the old man."

League papers like the Azad of Calcutta and other League Ministers have come out with attacks on the volunteers. There is no doubt that the refugees, at least the peasants, are all anxious to return to their villages, and it is absurd to accuse the volunteers of having succeeded in dissuading them to do so.

The real reason is that the refugees, despite their tremendous attachment to their land and homes, do not feel confident about going back. In the face of the lack of any appreciable condemnation of hooliganism on the part of League leaders, this is quite natural. Minister Shamsuddin Ahmed, in one of Gandhiji's prayer meetings, condemned the atrocities, whereupon the Azad openly attacked him.

### Military Raj

Maulana Akram Khan, on resigning from the Bengal League presidency, attacked Suhrawardy in a Press statement for being indulgent to Hindus, and held him responsible for the misfortunes of the Muslims.

Posting of military has not helped to create confidence, and on the contrary, it has worsened the relations between Hindus and Muslims.

To the simple Muslim kisans the military's presence and actions are represented

to be the major slogan of reactionaries inside the League.

### Sahib's "Plans"

The hand of the bureaucracy is clearly seen from two of the latest announcements of the Government.

First, the Relief Commissioner Gurner in a Press conference declared on November 18, that refugees will be asked to vacate the camps within one week after which their rations would be stopped. The District Magistrate would see that all refugees return, who come from areas where there has been no incident, from areas where he thinks there is sufficient police and military, and from areas where law and order, according to him, is restored.

Only those whose homesteads are destroyed would be exempted. This has created fresh departures from the camps to outside stations and even to Calcutta.

As a matter of fact with the arrival of the military in villages, many Hindus who had stayed on, started evacuating as life is becoming more and more difficult with growing Muslim bitterness.

In his Press conference in Calcutta, Gurner made it clear that the District Magistrate would have sole charge in the matter, and there was no room for non-official consultation or advice.

### Harvesting Ordinance

Secondly, on November 20, the Government announced another Ordinance, by which Special Supervisors will arrange for harvesting paddy on the lands of refugees, who can later take

vesting by Hindu neighbours or relations who have remained behind.

The threat of collective fines will embitter relations, involving as it does penalisation of friendly and honest villagers as well.

In this arid desert of complete communal estrangement, even the little oasis of mutual brotherly help is being scotch-ed. During the height of the

## STOP THE CIVIL WAR! Hasanabad Inspires All Bengal

The militant unity of Hasanabad still continues to inspire the people of the neighbouring districts. 2,500 Hindu-Muslim volunteers guard the road from Barura to Hasanabad. Refugees are streaming in here, mostly from Noakhali.

FOLLOWING the example of 500 representatives from various unions was recently held at Muzshiganj. The delegates appealed for peace and condemned the riots, which led to the continued presence of the Wavell and his troops in the country and hamper the fight for freedom.

At Comilla too, Hasanabad has inspired the students to collect funds for the relief of riot-affected students and to maintain joint life through clubs and libraries.

At Noapara, on November 11, at a meeting of over 500 Hindus and Muslims, a joint relief committee was formed to help the riot victims of Bihar and Noakhali.

At Kishoreganj, over 1,500 Hindus and Muslims assembled at a meeting to protest against the murder of the aged mother of a Communist worker. Congress, League and Communist leaders who addressed the meeting condemned this murder and demanded the punishment and expulsion of all anti-social elements.

### Peace Conference

The Communist Party's call to celebrate November Day met with good response in Mymensingh. On November 11, at a joint meeting, Hindus and Muslims resolved to stand firm against the British provocation to riots. A peace conference attended by

### Students Together

At Domar in Rangpur, over 250 Hindu and Muslim students came out on the streets and marched through the streets with Congress, League and Student flags. A joint meeting was later held, and addressed by HPSF, SC, and Muslim Students' League leaders.

At Latmenabat, Martyrs' Day was observed jointly by Hindu and Muslim students, with strikes, demonstrations and mass meetings.

Joint meetings have also been held and peace committees established in many villages of East Bengal like Paikra, Charindur, Khempur and in 14 Parganas, Pabna and Hooghly.

# S.I.R. WORKERS INDICT ADMINISTRATION

## Miserable Conditions Of Work, Deliberate Attacks On Trade Unionism Corruption And Gross Inefficiency

After the historic S.I.R. strike, the Railway Administration launched a relentless campaign of victimisation against the workers. This campaign culminated in the sending of a "charge-sheet" by the General Manager to the S.I.R. Labour Union informing them that he intended to withdraw the recognition accorded to the Union in 1938 (see column 5).

We publish below the reply sent to this charge-sheet by M. Kalyanasundaram, the Union's President.

**I**n the first place I feel strongly that your letter quoted above is against the assurances given by the Hon-ble Member for Railways Mr. Asaf Ali to the effect that he would not "countenance any victimisation."

Withdrawal of recognition of the South Indian Railway Labour Union, the only representative organisation on this Railway with a membership of over 30,000, commanding the loyalty and confidence of the entire mass of workers, would amount to mass victimisation of the workers' right to make representation through the organisation, in which they have faith.

This is an act of victimisation, because the Union led the Strike which was provoked by the Administration. In this connection I wish to invite your attention to Rule 1 of the "Rules for Recognition of Associations of Non-Gazetted Railway Servants." It reads as:

"Recognition when granted will not be withdrawn without due cause and without giving an opportunity to the Association to show cause against such withdrawal."

As per this Rule the burden of showing "due cause" for withdrawing recognition is on the Administration.

**Vindictive Attitude**  
But the Administration has not made out any "due cause" except expressing some personal views and making vague allegations. It is also required that an opportunity should be given for the Union to show cause against the withdrawal. This cannot be considered as an adequate opportunity, especially when a decision is to be made on such a vital issue. The Administration has neither made out concrete charges nor given sufficient opportunity.

The hurry with which the Administration has proceeded to withdraw the recognition of the Union, bears ample testimony to their vindictive attitude, and also shows that they are anxious to crush the workers' instead of endeavouring to restore normal conditions and paving the way for lasting peace.

However, let us examine the allegations made by you in paras 2 and 3 of the letter quoted above. It is true that one of the objects and reasons is that the contracting parties should endeavour "to promote a feeling of mutual trust and goodwill between the S.I. Railway Administration and its employees." The Union is prepared to stand by this even today.

**Think Again**  
But I should like to refresh your memory and remind you of one other object, viz., "to safeguard and promote the status, prospects and interests of the employees."

It is obligatory on the part of the Administration to create conditions necessary for achieving both the objects without prejudice to the interests of the employees. You have expressed the view that the relationship has been deteriorating from what it was before recognition was accorded to the Union.

As you are aware, recognition was accorded to the South Indian Railway Labour Union in December 1938. To the best of our knowledge, and we have ample evidence to show that, only discontent and bitterness were prevailing among all sec-



Subramaniam, Vice-President, explaining to women the extent of damage at Union Head-office, Golden Rock.

tions of Railwaymen even before that date. The conditions of service, wages and the behaviour of the officers were such that no cordial relationship could have existed.

The South Indian Railway had the unique distinction in having the lowest scale of pay for all categories of staff barring perhaps the officers, in the whole country. This was the period of wage-cuts and adversely revised new Grades, which affected a large section of the workers.

Nearly 16,000 workers were drawing less than Rs. 14 a month and were without Provident Fund facilities.

More than 50 per cent of the staff were getting an average of less than Rs. 20 per mensem.

In Golden Rock Workshops and Out-Depots all the daily paid staff were oppressed by the block-in-promotion which is continuing even today in a slightly modified form.

Hours of work were miserable. For 10,000 Gangmen, an eight-hour day and weekly rest were secured only in 1943. Even though hours of Employment Regulations were introduced, there was terrible discontent due to its defective application. Unpaid overtime work was extracted in the Loco Shed due to want of adequate

staff. Even today this has not improved.

In the matter of promotions also there was a lot of corruption and favouritism due to absence of well-defined rules. The Trade Test was made a farce and a network of Brokers' organisations existed both in Golden Rock and on the line, in all the departments.

With regard to the officers, they were absolutely indifferent to the interests of the Railwaymen and exploited them for their selfish ends.

There was enormous pilferage of railway materials, by doing private jobs without work orders, and removing materials without sale orders, etc. by officers and Foremen.

(Mr. Kalyanasundaram then refers in detail to a number of cases, which had actually been brought to the notice of the Administration by the Union, but on which no action had been taken and the guilty officers had not been brought to book.)

In addition to this, the system of punishment was also an endless source of discontent and disaffection.

This (the old system of

concerned the life and death of the workers.

The Railway Administration threw to the winds its responsibility to society and turned a deaf ear to all the representations made by the Union to restore the right of compulsory enquiry. This was the main cause of the recent strike.

The number of paid-holidays was the lowest on the South Indian Railway—viz., 12 days in a year, and there was no holiday for any of the Muslim festivals.

### Against Unionism

Another reason for the estrangement of relationship is the hostile attitude of the Railway Administration to genuine trade unionism in the South Indian Railway. Even at the time of granting of recognition to the S.I. Railway Labour Union, the Administration imposed humiliating conditions, even contrary to the provisions of the Trade Union Act of 1926.

The freedom to elect an office-bearer of their own choice was long denied to the workers because the terms and conditions required that only Rail-

### GENERAL MANAGER'S CHARGE-SHEET

The S. I. Railway Labour Union was recognised by the S.I. Railway Administration in December, 1938, one of the objects and reasons for this recognition being that the contracting parties should endeavour to promote a feeling of mutual trust and goodwill between the Administration and its employees.

It is my view that far from there having been any improvement in the relationship which existed between the Administration and its employees before recognition was accorded, there has, in fact, been steady deterioration.

Not only had discipline, efficiency and out-turn, particularly in the case of the Golden Rock Workshops, considerably deteriorated, but in particular the history of the Golden Rock workshops over the last year has been a continued record of breach of discipline and flouting of authority.

I have come to the conclusion, therefore, that no useful purpose is likely to be served by continuing recognition of the Labour Union, and the purpose of this letter is to ask if you are able to show cause why it should not be withdrawn. In the meantime there will be no communication between the Administration and the Labour Union, except on the level of this office and your Central Executive Committee.

Yours faithfully,  
(Sd.) J. F. C. REYNOLDS,  
General Manager.  
Trichinopoly, September 24, 1946.

Let me recall the message you have given to the workers of this Railway after the war was over in which you have praised the services of the workers.

At the time of the serious coal crisis, it was our Union which gave a call for saving coal. The workers responded in all the centres. They worked beyond duty hours to salvage the coal from the Loco Yards. A perusal of the Confidential Reports submitted by the Fuel Economy Officer (District Mechanical Engineer F. and M.) will prove this statement.

### Serve The People

A dispassionate reference to the resolutions passed in all the Conferences and rallies of the Union will show that the Union has been endeavouring to inculcate a spirit of service to the people in the minds of the employees.

The aim and the policy of the Union is to create the necessary conditions for ensuring quick transport and efficient service to the people. This has been put into practice very effectively and you yourself had to acknowledge this fact in many instances.

You have made particular reference to the history of the Golden Rock Workshops during the last year.

The behaviour of the officers must be examined for this. They were openly fomenting trouble inside the shops. Cases of wrongful punishments have increased in this period.

Due to six years of war, changes have occurred in the nature of work in the conditions of Locomotives, Rolling Stock and the Tools. The officers and the supervisory staff do not care to look into the difficulties of the workers.

The Union has been representing to you since 1943 for constituting Joint Production Committees. The Administration has been reluctant to associate the Labour Union with matters concerning production, claiming that such questions were part of internal Administration.

I am glad that you have now begun to realise, at least for the purpose of calling for an explanation, that the trade unions HAVE a share in maintaining discipline, efficiency and turn-out although you have turned down all the offers of the Union to do this till now.

It is not the policy of the Union to interfere with the turn-out or to encourage indiscipline and inefficiency.

Under these circumstances, I have to state that there is no cause, moral or factual, for withdrawing the recognition of the Union.

punishment—Ed.) was replaced in 1945 by the New System of punishment called the "Discipline and Appeal Rules" (D.A.R.), based on the State Railway Establishment Code.

This system gave some amount of protection to workers from being unnecessarily harassed due to the whims and fancies of the officers, as compulsory enquiry of witnesses and defence with the help of another Railway employee was provided for, before ordering the removal from service of the employee.

In a large number of enquiries, the officers failed to prove their complaints against accused employees by observing the procedure prescribed in the D. A.R. So the officers did not like this restriction on their autocratic powers.

They raised a hue and cry that discipline and efficiency could not be maintained. The real fact was that they considered the compulsory enquiry as an obstacle to their old ways of dealing with the employees.

### Main Cause Of Strike

The Railway Administration also readily obliged them by arbitrarily suspending Clause 1709 (ii) without any previous information to the workers and their Union. It was merely a question of prestige for the Railway Administration, but it

way employees should be office-bearers.

Even when Railway employees were elected as office-bearers, no facilities for discharging their duties to the Union were given. There was no protection against transfer of office-bearers. It was a trick to strangle the growth of the Union.

Comrade K. Anandan-Nambiar was forced to resign his job in the Railway when he was elected as the General Secretary, because of his anomalous position.

When this attempt had failed, the Railway Administration launched a vigorous plan to encourage rival unions. Even bogus unions were granted recognition. Today there are four other organisations which have been recognised by the Administration.

The question of discipline, efficiency and turn-out has been raised in para 3 of your letter. The cry of "indiscipline, inefficiency and 'Go-Slow'" is not based on facts and is only intended to safeguard the selfish interests of the supervisory staff and the officers.

Even for the Administration, this is a mere camouflage to cover their new offensive policy of withdrawing all the small concessions which they were forced to grant during the period of war.

# BROTHERLY UNITY IN CHITTAGONG

## Hindus And Muslims Together Welcome Armoury Raid Heroes

By Niranjan Sen

another rumour had been spread that Ananta Singh had managed to despatch a cart-load of bombs to teach the Muslims a lesson.

The three heroes were thus worried that their homecoming might not turn into an occasion for another bitter clash between Hindu and Muslim brothers:

clashes, talked of them all the time. At the Congress office, a big reception was given and Sjt. Jatin Rakshit in welcoming them urged them to lead them all in the freedom's battle.

### Differences Forgotten

At the League office, the Muslims surged forward in hundreds in greeting. The reception was so overwhelming that even the reactionary leaders who only a few weeks before led an attack on the Communist Party office could not stay away but had to join in the reception.

Many individual leaders met them and greeted them. Among them were Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta, Sjt. Atul Dutta and Maulvi Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, the veteran Nationalist Muslim leader.

### Hindus And Muslims Flock

Political differences mattered little when it came to receiving the Armoury Raid heroes.

But when the three comrades went round the villages, the scenes of many of their battles with the Government sixteen years ago, almost an upsurge of Hindus and Muslims took place. Wherever they went, thousands turned up to meet them and to listen to whatever they had to say.

At Hablasdwp, Hindus and Muslims thronged in large numbers shouting, "Hindu Muslim Ek Ho"—just at a time when in the neighbouring district of Noakhali, one was pogromming the other.

Hindu wives, with their faces covered, came with sandalwood, blowing conch shells. Mothers brought their children to have them touched by these legendary heroes.

### Mother's Blessing

At Dhalghat, Muslim kisans came to the meeting and as the comrades spoke urging

Hindu-Muslim unity, one could see simple kisan heads nodding in approval.

It was here that the revolutionaries fought a pitched battle with the military, and it was here that the martyr Ardhendu Dasidhar's mother came and blessed Ananta and Ganesh with the words: "Free the country and avenge my Ardhendu's death."

At the Muslim village of Dengapara, Muslim kisans had themselves raised pie collections among the villagers and insisted that the comrades should visit them. Here even Muslim women—wives and mothers of kisans—stood by the road to have a look at these heroes. Muslim speakers spoke feelingly, asking the heroes to lead the country and get rid of the communal poison from the country.

come back, but the three comrades continued with their tour, carrying the message of brotherly peace and exhorting Hindus and Muslims to join in freedom's battle. While Noakhali burnt next door, Chittagong saw Hindus and Muslims closer together evoking the memory of the great battle that her revolutionaries fought in the past.

### Waiting For The Day

At one place I remember Ambikada asked villagers not to waste kerosene in illuminating their houses in their honour.

Prompt came the reply: "We have been waiting for this day all these years. We can do with a few more dark nights, but tonight we must light the lamps." And I felt within myself that



Ambika Chakravarty

SINCE my return from Chittagong, I have been asked more than once why it was that the flames of Noakhali were kept out of Chittagong, where communal disturbances actually broke out as early as August 16.

Tension and provocation were not lacking, yet just at the time when Noakhali passed through hell, Chittagong was swayed by a wave of brotherly amity, as the Hindus and Muslims almost vied with one another in welcoming the great Armoury Raid heroes back.

On October 8 when lights had already gone down in Noakhali, I set out for Chittagong along with Ananta Singh, Ganesh Ghose and Ambika Chakravarty, returning after sixteen long years in prison.

### Secret Leaflet

Already dark indications threatened to mar the joyous homecoming: a secret leaflet had already been distributed in Chittagong warning the Muslims that the Hindus who had fought at Jalalabad were no cowards and would avenge the wrongs done by the Muslims;



Ganesh Ghose

Our entry into Chittagong district was announced by the shouting of "Armoury Raiders Zindabad" at Sitakund Station at the far end of the night by a group of students who had been up all night awaiting our arrival.

At Pahartali at dawn, Hindu and Muslim railway workers thronged the station to greet the heroes.

Chittagong station itself seemed to be draped in Red flags, a huge concourse of Hindus and Muslims, students and workers assembled, despite ban under Section 144.

For the first time I realised that not all the brotherly hatred can wipe off the memory of these heroes, so endeared are they in the hearts of every son of Chittagong.

During the next two days in the town, wherever the three went, people flocked, and, forgetting the recent communal

getting the recent communal



Ananta Singh

At Fatehabad, Hindus and Muslims all came to the meeting which was presided over by a local Muslim Maulvi. A Muslim Leaguer who was Ananta Singh's class-mate in school, donated Rs. 20 to the Release Campaign Fund.

Everywhere tremendous cheers greeted the speakers when they pledged to fight communalism and to get other prisoners out. At Kellsahar an Azad Hind Fauj officer organised the volunteers for the reception.

After a few days I had to



Niranjan Sen

these three comrades have indeed helped to light the lamp of brotherly unity in Chittagong.

And as, standing on the sacred soil of Jalalabad Hill, where they once fought the British, they took the pledge to carry on the fight, I knew that the lamp of unity shall one day grow into the torch of freedom's battle in which not only they, but thousands of Chittagong's common men and women, both Hindus and Muslims, will come forward to take their part.

### Waizul

WHEN in the years to come, free Indians will write the history of today, they will not forget the name of Waizul, Calcutta tramway worker... patriot.

On August 16, "Direct Action" Day, Waizul protected the lives of thirty Hindu tramway workers, who took shelter in his mess in Park Circus.

On the 17th, the situation became desperate. The goonda gangs had discovered that Waizul and his friends were sheltering the thirty Hindus. News came that an attack was being planned.

Waizul's friends suggested that the refugees should leave by the evening, and somehow, risking their lives, reach safer areas.

But Waizul would not hear of it, for he knew that for the Hindu workers to go out in that locality at that time, was to invite slaughter.

### As Long As I Live

"You shall not leave" said Waizul. "As long as there is a breath of life in our bodies, nothing will happen to you. First they shall take our lives and only then yours."

This thirty were saved, they lived. Today they remember vividly every moment of those days in Waizul's mess. And above all, again and again, come to them Waizul's heroic words... "As long as there is a breath..."

Waizul not only saved thirty lives. He built a new corner-stone for the crumbling edifice of Hindu-Muslim unity.

In the white heat of communal frenzy, one could point to Waizul and say:

LOOK, PATRIOTISM, UNITY, LIFE.

### Sword Against Sword

But the men who talk so glibly of fighting the sword with the sword when it comes to battling with our own brothers, and talk of peace and love and non-violence when the Navy boys rise against Imperialism, or the people of Kashmir and Travancore and Hyderabad rise against the bul-

## A PATRIOT'S NOTEBOOK

lets of their masters—these men forget Waizul.

And by their stupid, criminal, billeted tongues they allowed our enemies—the British and their lick-spittle zamindars and blackmarketeers—to take hold of their own following and turn it to the path of hate and murder.

Yes, they forgot Waizul.

In Bihar were killed his two brothers; of the rest of his family no trace has been left; his home, his few belongings were destroyed, looted.

Why, WHY?

What sword had Waizul taken up, that his brothers had to be murdered? All the communal demagogues of the world will have no answer to this question.

If Waizul were not Waizul, he would never forget, never forgive; he would hate from now on all those of the religion, in whose name his brothers were murdered.

### Waizul Is Waizul

But Waizul is Waizul... a patriot, a Communist.

He will do what he did on August 16 again and again. He will risk his life a hundred times again to save his Hindu comrades.

Waizul knows that in reality his two brothers were killed not by those who hold the murderous knives and lathis, but by the hate and frenzy which is being pumped into our people by the British.

Waizul knows that the people can and must come back to their senses, out of the deadly grip of the communalists on both sides, who have been created and are being kept alive by Imperialism.

There are hundreds of Waizuls—Hindus and Muslims—deathless heroes, who are laying down their

lives for unity, who refuse to swallow the communal poison being sternly served up to them by their leaders.

And when these heroes succeed and turn the tide, and bring Hindus and Muslims together in the last mighty battle against Imperialism, then and only then will Waizul and his real consolation for the loss of his loved ones, and know, in practice, that his great sacrifice has borne fruit at last.

### Green Stems

WAIZUL, the first tiny green shoots of the plant you sowed are pushing their tender stems out of the ashes.

In the heart of Noakhali is Lakshimpore Thana. It was one of the storm-centres of the Hate. Today out of its silence a new voice has spoken—spoken to all Noakhali, to all Bengal, to all India—spoken and challenged.

"We shall drag the name of Noakhali out of the mire—YOU do your job. Together, forty crores of us, help our Motherland to lift up its shame-filled head again."

On November 18 at Lakshimpore, the local Muslim workers of the Kisan Sabha called a public meeting. Over a thousand people Hindus and Muslims—attended.

This is the new voice they heard—a voice which will grow stronger and stronger and drown the cruel clangour of communal separatist ones and for all.

### A Song Of Peace

Nasir Ahmad Bhayjan, the local kisan leader, who presided, told of the way the British had always incited civil war, not only in India, but also in other countries, as they did in Arabia through the British agent Lawrence. He concluded his speech

with a ringing call for unity between Hindus and Muslims.

UNITY... it was like a breath of cool, fresh breeze trickling into a poison-filled chamber.

A Muslim kisan volunteer sang a song of peace.

PEACE... die one thousand Hindus and Muslims looked at each other. They were moved in a way which no one can describe in the utterly inadequate language of words.

A leaflet signed by twenty-one Muslims of the area, has given a firm call against the riots.

"Through mutual help and cooperation between Hindu and Muslim neighbours, confidence has to be brought back", runs the appeal and asks the people to banish revenge and through love, carry forward the Peace Campaign, "a battle for truth and justice."

Little green shoots in the arid ash-battered desert of Noakhali... but little green shoots GROW.

These shoots are strong and healthy—they will grow. It is that knowledge which will put the sun back in the sky for all those who in today's grim darkness see no way forward.

### Victory For Unity

IN today's atmosphere, it is true that men like Waizul—whether Hindus or Muslims—have a tough battle to fight back the frenzy of their own community. They will be labelled traitors, spat upon, perhaps even beaten or killed.

When even Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru can be abused by Hindu communalists for condemning the Bihar outrages, and Congressmen stomach that abuse with their heads down, then it is clear that communalism is on top—the preacher of unity and peace is battling uphill across a million obstacles.

But those who persevere, win. From Wymensleigh, in East Bengal, has come a story, which will warm the heart of anyone.

Here in Kishoreganj, the local Muslim Communist leader WALI NAWAZ, fought the riot tension day and night. Boldly he went to his brother Muslims—who are the majority community—and told them:

"The men who provoke you against the Hindus are your enemies, by whatever name they call themselves, however important they may be. The Hindus are our brothers."

The communalists fought Wali Nawaz and did their utmost to light the Noakhali spark here too. But they failed.

Not only that. The people, instead of flying at Wali Nawaz's throat, calling him a traitor to his community, rallied round him.

In the last elections to the Bengal Assembly, Wali Nawaz stood as a Communist candidate from this very constituency. The separatist communal trends were so strong, that Wali Nawaz had to withdraw his candidature. The League candidate romped in.

### Votes Tell A Story

Today, after two months of tireless campaigning for unity against separatism, Wali Nawaz has just won the local Municipal elections, securing 179 votes. The next candidate, secured 148 votes, the League supporter secured 61 votes and the Forward Bloc 43.

Wali Nawaz won, unity and peace won against hate, communalism, disruption. The cries of "Muslims in danger," "Hindus in danger" routed.

The strong voice of "Hindu-Muslim Ek Ho" found an echo in the honest Bengal hearts of the voters. They sent Wali Nawaz into the Municipal Committee.

We can hold our heads up. Our people's hearts are beating still, battling for India, for freedom.

Ramesh Chandra

# ON THE BRINK

**"SWORD FOR SWORD"**, this flamboyant declaration by Sardar Patel, emerges as the only practical lead from the Meerut Congress. All resolutions, all other speeches are reduced to mere words. And no other slogan could be more suicidal.

The poisonous fruits of the British Imperialist Plan are no more just a Communist forecast. They are evident in the countrywide round of riots, with about 450 killed in the Meerut District alone. (Premier Pant's own admission in the Congress Session). And not in the riots alone.

A first-rate political crisis was maturing inside the Interim Government itself. The Viceroy was exploiting Congress-League conflict not only to get back the initiative in his own hands, but to direct the very course of events.

Pandit Nehru openly admitted that twice they were on the eve of resigning from the Interim Government, and stated that the Viceroy is "removing the wheels of the Cabinet coach one by one."

The issues before the Meerut Congress were simple. Would the crisis be turned against the British Government, or intensified as an internal national crisis?

The immediate provocation came from Mr. Jinnah's threat to boycott the Constitution-making Body, and the Right-wing Hindu communal elements inside the Congress leadership, represented by Sardar Patel, immediately came on top.

## Civil War, Not War Against Imperialism

All eyes were turned away from British Imperialism towards the Muslim League as the main enemy. Sardar Patel has come out as the Hindu Jinnah.

It will be criminal folly to underestimate the gravity of the danger in which the country stands today—ON THE BRINK OF CIVIL WAR AND AT THE FEET OF LORD WAVELL.

"Today the fight is not with the British Government, but among ourselves." (A.P.L. November 21). Those are Sardar Patel's own words.

The common people, both Hindus and Muslims, are doomed to another round of civil war. Lord Wavell has again got busy and so has the British Cabinet. The leaders will spit more poison against each other and ultimately the British will give another award which will pave the ground for more quarrels.

This is just what the Cabinet Mission's Plan was desired to achieve, and this is exactly what is happening.

Hell for our people, blind alley for the Congress. It is a complete fiasco of the Right-wing policy: "The British are prepared to quit. We can indulge in mutual killing."

In reality, it only results in the British staying longer by exploiting our differences, and masking themselves as the only neutral force that is holding India together!

The Nationalist Muslims writhed with pain, as Sardar Patel spoke. They could see more clearly than anybody else that Sardar Patel's policy is plain Hindu communalism.

In noble words, Maulana Azad forecast that "the Congress will perish", if it went communal, but he offered no policy for Hindu-Muslim Joint Front.

The Nationalist Muslims were demoralised; no non-Muslim Congress leader of any importance rose to repudiate Sardar Patel's policy, which made no discrimination between the League and the Muslims.

The Congress Left saw that the Right-wing policy was leading to the British door, and more, that it was the direct result of accepting the British Plan. But apart from talking in the abstract about 'struggle', they had no practical alternative lead to offer, because they themselves accepted the Right-wing thesis that the League was the agency of the British Imperialists!

The patriotic agony of the Nationalist Muslims, the critical attitude of the Congress Lefts, these are the two elements, that must gather strength to challenge rapidly the forces of compromise and communalism, that won at the Meerut Congress.

No decision is final these days: it is a period of chronic political crisis.

## Passive Towards New Round Of States Struggle

The bankruptcy of Right-wing policy was patent on another sector—the States. The fond hopes of the Right-wing compromisers that the British are quitting, paramountcy will go, the Princes will settle with the Congress—had been blown sky-high.

The Princes were not listening to the advice of the Congress, but the Political Department. Their 'reforms' were as much bogus democracy for the people as the Plan of their British masters was fake independence for India; and for the same reasons and as part of one composite plan of the British Imperial rulers for our country as a whole.

The Meerut Congress protested against Princely autocracy, noted the hand of the British, expressed sympathy with the State subjects—all welcome though belated recognition of the real forces at work, but not yet any serious recognition of the urgent duty involved.

Martial Law was declared by the biggest British puppet, the Nizam, just when the Congress was in session and it had been tried out in Travancore already.

Not only had a new round of States' peoples' struggles begun, despite the Right-wing brake, but it had reached a new stage of militancy and self-reliance.

But there was no mention of martial law, no pledge of solidarity actions in their support. The Left called for such support, but was steam-rolled by Pandit Nehru himself.

The Congress was kept committed to a passive attitude.

The Princes desire nothing more: it gives them time to flatten out the people before they come to the Constitution-making Body to negotiate with the Indian leaders.

'Blood for blood' in the Hindu-Muslim conflict and appeal to the British rulers to be just; silence and patience when the police and army of the Princely Autocrats are shooting, burning, and raping their own resurgent subjects.

## Authoritarian Organisation

Such is the ignominious end to which the Right-wing policy has already brought us, and worse is to come. The leadership realises that its policy would not be popular, though no serious challenge to its leadership is yet coming, because of the sense of loyalty to the organisation.

It is therefore out to amend the Congress Constitution in a very authoritarian direction, by which mass membership will disappear and only "workers" (that is, those whom the established leadership certify) will be eligible to be elected as delegates through electoral colleges; open sessions will go and elections will be held not yearly, but once in three years.

The leadership could not make better provisions to ward off every challenge from the Left, throttle rank-and-file opinion and make the Congress its pocket organisation. A compromising disruptive policy can be carried only through an authoritarian organisation. Such is the logical link between the political and organisational policies of the Right-wing.

The Congress Left needs more boldness and less vacillation, more clarity and less confusion; more support to actual struggles and less talk of struggle in the air; more contact with the League Left and less abuse of the League; repudiation of anti-Communist prejudices and not merely repetition of Communist-phrases.

This is the way to a Joint Action of Lefts of all popular parties for fighting the riot-wave, supporting popular struggles, jointly denouncing the Imperialist Plan, jointly demanding Joint Front and Joint Struggles and jointly turning the tide against the British Imperialist rulers, and for the freedom, equality and prosperity of all Indians, both Hindus and Muslims.

# GURKHAS STRIKE FOR PEACE AND UNITY

On October 29, Darjeeling saw a mighty Anti-Riot General Strike and hartal—an event which marks a new chapter in Gurkha history.

IN Darjeeling district, there never has been any Hindu-Muslim problem, in the sense in which it exists in the rest of the country. The Muslims are only 3 per cent of the population and have always had very close relations with the Gurkhas. But the men who want riots want them to spread everywhere.

On October 23, a nationalist newspaper reporting the Noakhali riots gave a prominent headline to a piece of news which stated that "inhuman atrocities, such as forcible conversion, were perpetrated on the Gurkhas living in Noakhali by Muslims."

This news created a flutter among those who read it and the story spread like wild fire among the mass of Gurkha people also.

The All-India Gurkha League (AIGL) and the Congress decided to hold a joint meeting on October 27, in order to protest against the Noakhali riot. The repercussions of such a meeting could be disastrous.

And therefore immediately the Communist Party appealed to the leaders of the AIGL and the Congress to hold an all-parties meeting instead to protest against Noakhali and the Imperialist policy of "Divide and Rule". But certain rabid communal and chauvinist elements prevented the calling of this joint meeting.

## Communal Demagoguery

The result was that the meeting on October 27, for the most part, consisted of demagogic anti-Muslim speeches, inflating the atrocity stories, and one important speaker even openly hinted at reprisals for Noakhali on the Muslims of Darjeeling.

The meeting declared a hartal on October 29, ostensibly against British Imperialism, but which would have ended, if not counteracted in time, in an anti-Muslim riot.

Immediately the local Communists held a meeting on the same spot and warned against the provocateurs and appealed for unity, counteracting the anti-Muslim poison spread by the rumours and the speakers.

On October 28, from morning till night, Communist squads went to different bustees and held 15 street-corner meetings, covering over 5,000 people. Their appeal was for an anti-imperialist hartal and for Hindu-Muslim and plainsmen-hillmen unity.

## Complete Strike

This campaign changed the entire atmosphere of Darjeeling. By the night, the anti-imperialist tempo reached its peak. Muslims agreed to close their shops also, thus ensuring unity.

This completely unnerved the wooden-headed bureaucrats, who at 6.30 p.m., promulgated a ban on meetings and processions under Section 144 for the next day, the 30th October, the day scheduled for the hartal.

But despite all the bureaucrats' efforts, on the 29th morning, Darjeeling witnessed an unprecedented scene. Not one shop opened, not one car, bus or bullock cart moved.

The Indian banks were closed. The Imperial and Lloyds Banks opened, but the attendance was nil, and so they too had to close. The schools and colleges were empty.

The court was deserted and so were the Post, Telegraph and Telephone exchange offices—a few who attended were hooded out by picketers who showed remarkable courage and discipline. The municipal clerks and workers struck work completely.

No one paid any heed to the much-vaunted bureaucratic order under Section 144.

The railway station became the main centre of activity from early morning. All traffic was held up by picketers.

Army trucks were stopped at the station. The Deputy Commissioner sent a message that, ration cars, ambulance and hospital cars should be allowed to pass. The people agreed to let ambulance and hospital cars pass after a thorough search, but refused to let other cars pass.

At about 12-30 p.m. an army truck with armed police pickets drove towards the station at top-speed menacingly brandishing their firearms at the people.

But the Communist volunteers remained firm. As the truck drove past at a speed of fifty miles an hour, it nearly killed two of the volunteers: Mira Sen, a girl student and Ramprasad, a tea-garden worker.

After this, the people built barricades of huge stones and iron bars and continued to defy the military.

## Sahib Sues For Peace

By noon, the Deputy Commissioner began sending emissaries for peace and even offered to withdraw the order under Section 144, if the parties agreed not to take out a procession. This offer was summarily refused.

And at last at 1-30 p.m. the courage, discipline and unity of the people forced the bureaucracy to eat its own words and withdraw the order under Section 144, unconditionally.

It was decided to take out a procession and that it should start from the railway station.

Procession after procession, men, women and children belonging to all communities and all parties, spontaneously gathered at the railway station and by 3-30 p.m. the crowd swelled to over 4,000. And as

this mighty concourse of people marched past the Market Square, it seemed that the whole of Darjeeling was out in the streets.

As the procession marched on, more and more joined and by the time it had reached the bazar, it was already over 5,000 strong. The Tricolour, the red and green Gurkha League flag and the Red flag were seen flying together at the head of the procession.

A few trouble-makers in the procession shouted some anti-Muslim slogans in front of the Masjid. But their voices were drowned in the mighty chorus of anti-Imperialist slogans:

"Down with British Imperialism!"

"Down with the British policy of Divide and Rule!"

"Hindu Muslim—Unite!"

"Quit India!"

## Burrows! Go Back

Parading the main streets of Darjeeling, the procession marched towards the Government House, the sacred, sanctimonious abode of the Lat Sahib, and for ten minutes demonstrated in front of it shouting: "Governor Burrows—Go Back to England!"

It was a pity that after this glorious united procession, the Congress and Gurkha League leaders refused to hold a joint meeting though nearly ten thousand gathered at the Market Square expecting that such a meeting would be held.

On the insistence of the vast crowd which had gathered, the Communist leader Ratanlal Brahma, who had led the day's demonstration, spoke for a few minutes before the people dispersed and called on Darjeeling to carry forward the unity achieved.

Many of those present felt that a new period for the Gurkha people of Darjeeling had begun—a period of a full-fledged anti-imperialist war, in which the Gurkhas will stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of India.

# INA TO LAUNCH STRUGGLE?

Direct action for the release of the Indian National Army prisoners, who were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment by court-martial is contemplated by the INA organisation.

THERE has been a great deal of talk of the INA Enquiry and Relief Committee in INA circles at Mittie, Punjab, in a circular, says: "It is my desire and the desire of officers by the Interim Government, most of my colleagues that the Punjab member of the All-India INA Enquiry and Relief Committee, who was recently in Lahore, told me: 'It is two months since the National Government came into office in Delhi. We hoped that the Government led by Jawaharlal would immediately release all our officers and soldiers who have been court-martialled and sentenced. Why should they rot in jail, when the Interim Government talks of nationalising our army? They will be the best personnel for our national army.'"

Those officers and other ranks of the Azad Hind Fauj, who want to accompany the leading batches and are determined to fast to death for the achievement of our goal of independence must send their names to the District INA Enquiry and Relief Officers, who in turn will submit final lists to Bradlaugh Hall by December 31, 1945."

Explaining the demand, Col. Gulzara Singh says: "Unless these officers and soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj are released from the jails and taken back into the Indian Army, the propaganda about the 'nationalisation' of the Indian Army is fake and is just meant to mislead the public. If the Commander-in-Chief insists that the most patriotic elements of the Indian army must be forced to rot in jail, it has been reported in the entire press that the delay in the release of the INA men is due to the refusal of Churchill to sign their release orders—Editor, then let the C-in-C resign."

"The Azad Hind Fauj wants to know whether it is the Interim Government or the Commander-in-Chief, who is getting or going to guide the destiny of India."

It is stated that if these demands are turned down, 30,000 INA men would march to Delhi with the "Delhi Chalo" slogan, and start direct action for the fulfilment of their demands.

Amisa Bose of Calcutta, contradicted the 'rumour' to this effect and said that there was no truth in it. But Col. Gulzara Singh, Officer-in-Charge

of the INA Enquiry and Relief Committee, said that the INA men were not in jail but were being held in the battle in Burma.

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of the INA Enquiry and Relief Committee, said that the INA men were not in jail but were being held in the battle in Burma.

By Our Correspondent



# 25,000 TEXTILE WORKERS ON STRIKE IN HYDERABAD

Twenty-five thousand workers of the six textile mills at Hyderabad, Aurangabad, Gulbarga, Nanded and Warangal in Hyderabad State have declared a general strike. They have begun the struggle to end their inhuman conditions of work and starvation wages, to earn a right to human existence.

**T**HE wages drawn by the textile workers are miserably low. For instance a worker at Aurangabad gets on an average Rs. 14-8 per month. A woman worker gets as low as Rs. 6.

The dearness allowance, during the entire war period, has never exceeded 75 per cent of the wages, while the cost of living has increased by over four times the pre-war level.

The textile workers have been making repeated efforts for settlement for over a year and half. After a long time, the State appointed a so-called "Conciliation Board". The Board met the owners and the workers and submitted its 'report' after a long time.

The State authorities have not published these reports yet, and are said to be seeking to modify the findings of the Board.

The workers' patience was well-nigh exhausted. The Textile Sub-Committee of the All-Hyderabad Trade Union Congress resolved to launch a general strike after 21 days' strike-notice from November 11.

## Repression Begins

No sooner had the strike notice been served, than the Government launched its offensive.

Syed Makhdoom, President, Aurangabad Girni Kamgar Union, and others were arrested: Makhdoom Mohiuddin and Raj Bahadur, President and Secretary of the All-Hyderabad Trade Union Congress, the presidents and secretaries of other Unions and many other trade union workers were forced to go underground.

In addition to these mass arrests, warrants of arrest against 200 trade union workers are pending still. On top of all, the State declared the strike illegal.

The owners were not sitting idle either. Simultaneously, at all the mills, 'concessions' were announced on the eve of the strike. But the workers only spat on them.

Then began terror. Goondas hired by the Aurangabad mill owners molested the women workers.

## Down The Tools

But despite all the repression unleashed by the State and the owners, the workers struck.

● 12,000 workers at Hyderabad downed their tools on November 11.

● 3,500 workers of the Osman-shahi Mills, Nanded, struck work on November 11. Hindus, Muslims, Untouchables—all are united behind the Union.

● The workers at Gulbarga and Warangal are on complete strike. At Gulbarga even the clerks have joined in. Police is patrolling the mill area. Three workers were arrested, but later released on bail.

## CORRECTION

We regret that owing to certain telegraphic errors, certain mistakes appeared in the names of the Muslim leaders of Burdwan whose statement on Noakhali was published in our issue of November 16.

Mr. Shah Ahmed Khan is not the President of the District Students' League, but of the Students' Federation.

Maulvi Abdul Hayat is Vice-Chairman of the District Board. The names of Syed Abdul Gani and Syed Qulsum Mohiuddin were distorted in the course of transmission. We apologise for these mistakes.

● Because the notice could not be served in time, the strike at Aurangabad commenced on November 15. So great is the tempo among the workers that even the jobbers are thinking of joining the strike!

As at other places, Reserve Police has been posted in the mill area to afford protection to the "loyal" workers. Military lorries are plying the streets.

The rising tide of the working-class battles is sweeping other industries and centres

also. A strike is impending at Shahbad Cement Factory. The Hyderabad Allwyn Metal workers have served a strike notice.

## State Servants Too

Even the Government departments have not remained unaffected by this new upsurge.

The workers of the Electric Department, the P.W. Department and the Telephone department went on a protest strike on November 13 against the delay in announcing the findings of the Conciliation Board.

Municipal and drainage workers went on another protest strike.

Throughout Hyderabad State, the workers are rising to end the poverty and squalor imposed on them under Nizam Raj.

# MADRAS HARBOUR WORKERS WIN

Over three thousand stevedore and shore workers of Madras Harbour have won a memorable victory after a three-day strike beginning from November 13. The strike was led by the Madras Harbour Workers' Union (Red Flag).

**N**O sooner the strike began, the reserve police virtually occupied the entire harbour area. The Malabar Special Police, the butchers of the Golden Rock and Coimbatore workers, patrolled the streets.

But the workers hurled defiance at them. They took out processions and held mass meetings. The strike was spreading to other sections every day.

On November 15, Mr. D. G. Jadhav, the Government of India's Regional Labour Commissioner, arrived in Madras. An agreement conceding most of the demands, was signed by Iyengar, General Secretary of the Madras Harbour Workers' Union, and the Chairman of the

Employer's Association. The White Sahibs, who were arrogantly refusing to deal with the Red Flag representatives, were made to eat their words.

The terms of agreement were:

- The owners were forced to grant a wage increase of annas eight per day to all categories of workers.
- Hours of work have been reduced from 13 to 9½ hours, pending investigation.
- Wage-cuts for providing "compensation" (under the Workers' Compensation Act) have been abolished.
- No victimisation.

# WORKING-CLASS ON THE MARCH

## Rajak Mills, Bangalore

**F**IVE thousand workers of the Rajak Mills, Bangalore, are out on strike since November 19, against the offensive of the owners to crush their Union.

Following the dismissal of a woman worker, the workers had resorted to a stay-in-strike. They resumed work on the 20th.

But the management declared an illegal lock-out the same day and suspended 30 active Union workers, including office-bearers.

The workers hit back by a total strike.

The Labour Department of the Mysore Government, played the tune of the owners and declared the strike illegal.

But the workers stand firm. They are resolved to fight till they win their demands:

- Cancel suspension orders.
- Reinstatement of dismissed woman worker.

## Kolar Strike Continues

**T**HE strike of the Kolar miners continues, following the firing on November 4 (reported in last week's People's Age).

On November 20, the Registrar of Trade Unions, declared the strike illegal. But the workers stuck to their guns.

Their demands are:

- An open enquiry into the firing.
- Immediate release of the two arrested Union office-bearers, Govindan and Vasan.
- Lift the ban on Vajravelu Chetty, President, Mysore Miners' Labour Association to enable him to go to the mining area.

Since meetings are banned in the Kolar Goldfields, a meeting was held at Budugur, in the adjoining British territory, on November 23.

Nearly 1,500 workers, including women were present. The audience

stood for two minutes in memory of those who had fallen victims to police firing on November 4, and resolved amidst cheers to continue the strike.

## Victory In Sambalpur

**A**FTER a strenuous battle for 40 days, the management of the Birla-owned Orient Paper Mills, Sambalpur, has been forced to concede its workers' legitimate demands and end the lock-out they had imposed.

On September 24, the Orient Paper Mill Garage Employees' Union asked for increase in wages, Dearness Allowance, reduction in working-hours from 12-18 hours to 8 hours a day; holidays and other facilities.

The owners replied by a lock-out from October 6, and later served dismissal orders on all employees on October 21. They hoped to ply the trucks with new hands.

On October 27, as the trucks came out of the garage, the workers lay flat before them. All the threats of arrests by the police were of no avail. The garage authorities' plans were foiled.

The same story was repeated on the 29th. Public help came pouring in, Rs. 400 were collected on the spot.

The Sambalpur District Congress Committee intervened at this stage. The workers agreed to abide by their decision. But the management refused to recognise the District Congress Committee.

The climax was reached when on November 14, meetings and processions were banned and the President of the Garage Employees' Union and others were gagged.

The people defied the bans. Students came out of their schools and colleges, 2,000 stood by the workers. The police made indiscriminate arrests—66, including 34 students.

This enraged the student community.

Students, including girl students, came rushing in a procession. They

# Police Raj In Coimbatore

## MASS ARRESTS, SEARCHES

**A**FTER the brutal police firing in Coimbatore on November 11, the police have let loose savage terror against all Red Flag Unions in the town.

The Coimbatore Mill Workers' Union, the Brooke Bond Tea Workers' Union and the Communist Party have to function virtually underground today. Mere attendance in these offices has been made a ground for arrests and court proceedings.

On November 13, a police van swooped down on the Communist Party office and arrested the entire lot of eleven workers who were there. Six workers were arrested coming out of the union office on the same day.

The police raided the office of the Brooke Bond Tea Workers' Union and arrested the entire Executive Committee—32 persons in all—who were peacefully conducting a strike ballot within the union office.

A worker named KUNHIRAMAN and his wife, both working in the Stanes Mills, were arrested, leaving their three children, including a baby, helpless at home with no one to take care of them.

The arrests are aimed at removing the entire trade union leadership in the town—both textile and non-textile. The police are contacting the local blackmarketeers and other anti-social elements for the names of militant workers to be arrested.

These workers had been fighting these blackmarketeers in the past and today they are being handed over to the police by these very elements. The mill-owners also have submitted a list of all worker and trade union militants in Kaleswara and Somasundam Mills and Brooke Bonds.

## Reserve Police At Mill-Gates

At the mill-gate reserve police stand in two files. As marked militants enter the mill, the police arrest them and take them out. When Kaleswara Mill workers resisted this police terror and went on a stay-in-strike on November 19, demanding the release of their leaders and withdrawal of the police, the mill was locked again.

The total number of workers arrested so far amounts to 121. have all been kept in Ramnad, including ten of them who have been seriously injured. Their cases have been posted to November 25. A number of charges have been framed against them including attempts at unlawful assembly, rioting with deadly weapons, etc.

The police are entering and surrounding villages where the Red Flag is strong, and are making a house to house hunt for leaders of the Red Flag Union.

In Tiruppur, a textile centre in the suburbs of Coimbatore and a stronghold of the Red flag, fifteen workers have been arrested and let out on bail.

The identity of the twelve worker-martyrs killed on the 11th is still being kept a complete secret from the public. No one knows where, how and when the dead bodies were disposed of.

## Sympathetic Strikes

The workers' anger against these excesses is reaching a boiling point. An indication of this is the fact that workers of Sarada Mills, Podanur, who are Congress-minded, went on a stay-in-strike for one and a half hours protesting against Coimbatore firing and police excesses and demanding adequate bonus.

In spite of repeated representations by the Madras Provincial Trade Union Congress and the textile unions of Coimbatore, the Ministry has taken no steps to intervene and check the mill-owner-police terror.

conciliation Conference called by them could not come to any decision, because the Managing Director of the Company sent instructions literally defying the Ministers' attempts at settlement.

Congressmen, Leaguers, Communists, students—every section of the people supported the strike and condemned police zulum. And at last on November 20, the management was forced to come to a settlement and to agree to Arbitration.

## Ujjain Lock-Out

**T**HE clerks of the textile mills at Ujjain went on strike on October 16, demanding wage increase, etc. After ten days the owners declared a lockout in all the mills and ten thousand workers were thrown on the streets.

This was the third time the owners had locked out the workers within a period of six weeks.

The State authorities as usual are siding with the owners. This time they have posted military guards with machine-guns at the mill-gates. Every day military is being imported from Gwalior. Savage terror has been let loose in the labour area and police and military are patrolling the streets.

By November 18, they had arrested over one hundred militants and trade union workers.

But all the terror has not been able to break the morale of the workers. With fresh enthusiasm, born out of a grim determination to fight to the last, they are coming forward to challenge the State authorities. They are peacefully demonstrating in the town demanding that the mills be reopened immediately.

They are backed by all sections of the people. The State Congress has also declared its support.

## Cement Owners Heaten

**A**FTER 26 days' relentless battle, a settlement has been reached between the Assam Bengal Cement Company Labour Union, the Company's delegate and the Labour Commissioner.

The owners have been forced to restore the pre-strike conditions inside the factory and agree to the reference of all the workers' grievances to an Arbitration Board.

The 700 workers employed in the factory had been demanding a wage-increase, with a minimum wage of Rs. 35; one month's salary as bonus and Provident Fund facilities. They served a strike notice, but withdrew it at the Labour Commissioner's intervention.

After the Company had flouted the award of the Labour Commissioner, the Union served the strike notice again and the strike began on October 15. On the eighth day, the Company declared a lock-out.

It was a clear case of an owner-provoked strike. Yet police pickets were posted at the factory-gates from the very first day. The police arrested and beat up workers and ejected many from their quarters.

On November 1, sixteen days after the strike began, the Labour and Supply Ministers of the Assam Government came to Chittak. The Con-

# WORLD LABOUR IN ACTION

## ● AGREEMENT IN INDONESIA--A RESPITE ● CRISIS MOUNTS IN KUOMINTANG CHINA

**A**FTER fifteen months of heroic resistance to Anglo-Dutch imperial attempts at reconquest of Indonesia, the Indonesian Republic by its agreement with the Dutch signed last week, has forced the imperialists to call off their war and to recognise the authority of the Republic over the main territories of Indonesia, the islands of Java, Sumatra and Madura.

Of course, this agreement signed after six weeks of negotiations, presided over by the British imperial envoy, Lord Killearn, does represent a considerable compromise of the original demand of the Indonesians for complete independence.

What are its terms and what does it amount to?

### Agreement's Terms

First of all (Article I) comes the recognition of the "de facto authority" of the Republican Government over Java, Sumatra and Madura. The rest of Indonesia (Borneo, Celebes, Bali, etc.) however yet remain under Dutch rule.

Second (Articles II to V) is the agreement to form by January 1, 1949 a United States of Indonesia (USI), comprising both the present Indonesian Republic and the Indonesian areas under Dutch rule, whose constitution will be determined by the Constituent Assembly.

It should be noted, however, that there is no explicit pledge that the delegates to this Assembly will be elected by universal suffrage; rather the agreement states that they will be "democratically nominated" representatives whose "method of participation" will be determined not only by the Indonesian Republic, but also by the Dutch Government—an easy loophole by which they can manoeuvre their own stooges inside the Assembly.

Thirdly, while this USI will be a "sovereign democratic state" (Article II), it has already compromised its sovereignty by agreeing in advance (Articles VI to VIII) that it will enter (again by January 1, 1949) a "Netherlands-Indonesian Union" composed of the USI and Holland with the King of Holland as the "Leader of the Union"; this Union will be concerned with "foreign relations, Defence and as far as necessary, finance, as well as subjects of an economic or cultural nature."

### Economic Grip

Fourthly, (Article XII), the Indonesian Government recognises the claim of all non-Indonesians to "restitution of their goods"—i.e. agrees to hand back to the Anglo-Dutch Capitalists their ownership of the key factories, mines and oil-wells of Indonesia, thus enabling them to get a grip on Indonesian economy.

Fifthly (Article XV), instead of an explicit pledge from the Dutch to withdraw their troops, we are told that "both (1) parties shall proceed to reduce their armed forces."

Finally (Article XVI) in case of disagreement over the carrying out of the agreement, either a Chairman of "a neutral nationality" (Lord Killearn!—M. K.) or the President of the International Court of Justice will decide.

This agreement clearly represents a compromise—and means that the Indonesian Government has retreated considerably from its original demand—the recognition of all Indonesia (Java, Sumatra, Madura, Celebes, Borneo, etc.) as

a sovereign Republic, independent of Holland and the Dutch Crown.

This, in fact has been virtually recognised by the Indonesian leaders themselves.

Ryen Merdeka, semi-official paper, has commented that "there are many loopholes which may lead to a new form of colonisation"; the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Information has explained clearly that "accepting the draft agreement does not mean that our struggle has ended." (November 18).

### Battle Goes On

So also, according to the Indonesian radio, a member of the Working Committee of the Temporary Parliament has warned that "there should be no premature optimism because the agreement contains more points of advantage to the Dutch than to the Indonesians."

In view of this, the Anglo-Dutch imperialists will certainly try their hardest to use this agreement—particularly during the immediate future before January 1, 1949—for fresh intrigues to reconquer and achieve the total domination of the Indonesian people, to use the "loopholes" to achieve "a new form of colonisation."

The agreement, therefore shows both the weakness and strength of the Indonesian freedom movement—which has forced the imperialists to stop armed attacks but has itself been compelled to compromise on the fundamental demand for independence, thus still allowing imperialism opportunity for intrigue and disruption.

Thus the battle for Indonesian freedom, therefore, must still go on, for it is clear that this full freedom cannot be won without a fresh round of struggles against the machinations of Anglo-Dutch Imperialism.

### Kuomintang Offensive

**W**HILE China's Kuomintang-dominated National Constituent Assembly was continuing its farcical meetings in Nanking last week, the real issues at stake in China were being fought out in North China on the battlefields.

In the north-west, the Kuomintang (KMT) armies, commanded by General Hu Tsungnan, who heads the extreme anti-Communist right-wing among Chiang's generals, were massing for an attack on the Communist headquarters at Yen-an; in Nanking itself, despite denials by official KMT sources, it is believed that this attack is going to be the prelude to an all-out KMT campaign directed to smash the Communists.

In Yen-an however the Communists appear to be calm and confident. They have evacuated all non-combatants and are preparing for a bitter resistance.

The Liberation Daily, Communist daily in Yen-an, wrote scathingly about the proposed offensive of the KMT, commenting that Chiang's plan of operations was "madness" and like "smiling before sunset."

"If we continue," it concluded confidently, "what we have been doing during the past months, in the not too distant future we shall be able to enter the phase of full-scale offensive for the final victory of the resistance."

This confidence of the Communists arises from their know-

ledge of the growing weakness of the KMT.

### Military Crisis

On November 5, the Communist delegation at Nanking announced that during the last three and a half months of civil war, the KMT armies have lost in killed, wounded and taken prisoners over four lakh soldiers, virtually twenty per cent of their total effectives—apart from an enormous amount of guns, rifles, revolvers, etc.

In addition Chiang's own economic situation is steadily worsening. According to Professor Wu Chee-yuan, writing in the liberal *Ta Kung Pao*, on October 27, KMT China is spending far above its resources; its expenditure for the first five months of 1946 was 15,000 billion Chinese dollars, while revenue was only 2.5 billion dollars! And of the expenditure no less than 80 per cent. has been on waging the civil war.

### Inflation

Professor Wu explained that Chiang has been making up his deficit by issuing more and more notes, which can only lead to steep inflation and a financial crash.

Thus though temporarily Chiang is yet able to take the offensive (though even here the Communists are not quiet for they have launched an offensive in Manchuria), there is no doubt that he cannot last out for long with his present policy, that is only leading KMT China to military and economic collapse.

November 25.

### Rumanian Election Victory

**T**HE National Democratic Front in Rumania, which includes the Socialists, Communists, Peasants' Party, the progressives of the National Peasants and National Liberals and commands the solid support of the Trade Unions, scored a resounding victory in Rumania's General elections last week.

The figures were:

	Seats
National Democratic Front	348
National Peasants	32
Popular Union Party	29
National Liberals	3
National Peasant Democrats	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>614</b>

Nearly 88 per cent of the electorates voted.

The elections therefore are a resounding victory for the NDF and in particular represent approval of its forward agrarian policy (abolition of landlordism) and its action in nationalising the key industries; equally it is a resounding blow to the opposition that is closely linked to ruling imperialist circles in Britain and the U.S.A.

### Bulgaria's Communist Premier

**T**HE world famous Communist leader of Bulgaria, Georgi Dimitroff, hero of the Reichstag Fire Trial when he fearlessly fought the Nazis in 1933, and later General Secretary of the Communist International, became Bulgaria's first Communist Premier last week.

Following on the general elections at the beginning of the month, when inside the Fatherland Front Coalition which won a big majority, the Communists gained the big majority of the seats, the former Premier, Kimon Georgiev, resigned and Dimitroff

was asked to form the Government. The new Government consists of nine Communists, four Agrarians, two Zveno Party leaders, two Socialist-Democrats and one independent.

### Manchurian Democracy

**R**ENT is a negligible item in the budget of 25,000 "poorest people" in the North Manchurian City of Harbin today under the administration of a Communist-led democratic Government. They have been given houses through a cooperative known as the "Poor Folk's Society."

The society, which has branches in each of Harbin's 12 wards, admits to membership "those whose food and clothes are insufficient." The young it distributes are registered in the occupant's name. He pays no rent but only the bills for water, electric light, fire protection and janitor service. This amounts to 2 per cent of the average wage, or about 30 cents a month.

The houses were originally built for Japanese civil service employees. They are solid brick 2-storey structures divided into 2-room apartments. The rooms are well-lighted, arranged in Japanese manner with half of each floor elevated into a mat-covered platform for the family bed. Each apartment has a toilet and bath.

### Free Housing

The Japanese were sent back home from this Communist-led area. The 15,000 rooms they vacated are paradise for the newcomers. Some of the slums from which the families had moved had been awful. Water flooded the yards and seeped through broken walls and broken roofs; outdoor privies leaked drunkenly over water. No self-respecting farmer would have used those places for his pigs.

## ★ INSIDE THE FORCES ★

### Blind Discipline

**A** REIGN of indiscriminate punishments has been let loose on the Indian Airmen of the RIAF Record Office and CAO at Red Hills Lake, near Madras.

Within a fortnight, more than 14 people have been "put on a charge" on false pretexts and heavily punished.

Here are a couple of examples. IND15513 LAC[CLK]GD(4) B. D. Pandey was awarded seven days confinement to lines on September 31, "for wilfully stating a falsehood to Flight Lieutenant Joseph."

Pandey's only crime was that he had come back a few minutes late for food one night. P.Lt. Joseph had refused to allow him to have his meals, and Pandey had boldly asserted his right to be given his dinner. So he was immediately put on a charge.

This is the kind of blind discipline, which servicemen demand should come to an end, before the army can truly be called national.

### Misappropriation

IND29440 LAC[CLK]GD(4) Murgesan was awarded 14 days confinement to lines for: (1) "failing to comply with an order by Sergeant Pyle" and (2) "for making an improper remark to Sergeant Pyle."

This is what actually happened: Murgesan had found a good table lying among a heap of firewood. He took it to his billets for the use of the men. Sergeant Pyle spotted it and ordered that it should be taken back to where it came from. Murgesan argued that it served a better purpose in the billets.

The White sergeant was furious: "It is none of your business. We shall use it for firewood, if we like." Murgesan still insisted. The Sergeant shouted at him, "I will put you on a charge."

The Indian airman could hold himself no longer: "I am not going to

do it," he replied. "What are you going to do about it?" And so he was punished.

The White bosses can destroy Government property, bought with the money of the Indian people and yet no serviceman may complain. In this the National Army that Pandit Nehru asks our patriotic youngmen to join?

### No Political Questions

**T**HE 501 Main Supply Depot, at Kalyan, had a "durbar" recently. About 150 Indian other ranks, some Viceroy's Commissioned Officers, and four officers, two British and two Indian attended.

In the Indian army a "durbar" is supposed to be regularly held in every unit to enable the common sepoys to place their grievances directly before their officer.

On this occasion, the sepoys put various questions about food, fresh fruits, family accommodation, canteen facilities and legal and other aid to families of sepoys separated from their homes due to the requirements of the service.

The White Officer, commanding the unit, Major Sparr, came out with the usual replies of "under consideration", "action will be taken", or "nothing can be done."

Finally one asked the question: "What have you to say about the nationalization of the Indian Army?"

Major Sparr promptly replied: "Oh! Your pay question will be settled. I think favourably, according to the new code under consideration."

### Withdraw British Troops

The sepoy made his question more clear: "When will British troops leave India?"

Now the White Officer was visibly annoyed. He dismissed the "durbar" with the following words: "We owe all soldiers and we should not discuss politics."

This is how the Indian army is run. No satisfactory reply to genuine

grievances of servicemen. And if they want to know when they can independently take over the defence of their own country, their foreign bosses rebuke them for discussing "politics".

### Obey The King

**W**HITE officers in Indian units are forcibly bringing home to our sepoys that they still owe allegiance to the British King.

During a recent Hindu festival, His Hindu sepoys of 4 IERME at Kirkee were refused leave. Though they were observing a religious fast, they were given extra fatigues. Their White officers refused to listen to their request for a holiday.

Finally, thoroughly tired, the boys stopped work. The Brigade Ordnance Warrant Officer dismissed the parade.

Next morning, they were all marched to the Commanding Officer and charged with disobedience.

For two days the officers discussed the situation and then five of the men were awarded 14 days R.I. as ringleaders.

The C.O. addressed the men and warned them:

"I want blind obedience to the King and I am here to maintain law and order on his behalf."

### Coolie Work

During the 14 days in prison, the lives of these boys were made miserable. All their personal belongings were taken away and not returned even after release. They received no medical attention and were given fatigue duties, though this was contrary to the instructions of Daily Order Part I, No. 1730 of August 2, 1946. Further they were made to work as coolies in officers' bungalows.

The Interim Government must put an end to such treatment inside the armed forces. The Indian sepoy must be accorded a better life in the Forces.

—OUR FORCES CORRESPONDENTS.