



Polling Scene in Andhra. At the Red Flag Booth of Communist candidate, P. Sundarayya, in Kistna. (Photo: SUNIL JANAH — See Report on Page 12).

VICTORY FOR GURKHA COMMUNIST

Congress - Planters' Candidates Lose Deposits

THE Red Flag has scored a historic victory in the Darjeeling Tea Garden Labour seat in Bengal. RATANLAL BRAHMAN—Communist candidate and undisputed leader of the Darjeeling Gurkhas—won the seat by polling 1,118 votes while both his rivals, the Congress and Independent candidates (backed by the British planters) lost their deposits. The Congress candidate polled 76 votes and the Independent secured 126 votes.

RATANLAL won this victory after a battle in which the Congress and the British planters joined hands and helped each other against the Red Flag; and Ratanlal was even barred from entering the tea-gardens, his constituency!

Here is a brief account of the eve-of-poll set-up there and the polling day scenes.

British tea-planters and the British army have held the Gurkhas of Darjeeling in a deadly grip for 150 years. Tea-garden workers not only work but also live inside the British-owned plantations which are scattered all over the hills.

British Planters' Terror

On the eve of these elections, the British planters—assisted by the local officials—went all out to prevent any contact at all between tea-garden labour and the Communists. Their reign of terror in their private 'kingdoms' was reinforced by the British-made 'law' which gives them the right to get arrested anybody who enters their gardens on a charge of 'trespassing.'

There was no terror, of course, against the Congress or the Independent candidate. The White planters brought both the anti-Communist candidates right inside their gardens and ordered their workers to vote for either of them but never for the Communists.

But the Gurkha Communists were not taken by surprise. They did not stand around helplessly, wringing their hands in despair. Instead, they made an underground entry into the gardens and roused the Gurkha voters.

A certain Mr. Smyth-Osborne, Manager of the Soom Tea Estate Co., Ltd., put the British planters' point of view in a letter addressed to the Darjeeling Committee of the Communist Party banning the entry of Communists into his garden.

After a lot of hypocritical nonsense about the workers' 'right' to 'free elections' without any 'interference' from the planters, Mr. Smyth-Osborne made it clear that he and his friends would go to any lengths to ban the entry of Communists into the gardens, because of the following 'reasons':

"In the first place, I have to remember that it is the avowed aim of your party—as set forth in your party manifesto—to take the Tea Gardens from their rightful owners and for this purpose to stir up the labourers against the employers... I can hardly be expected to provide facilities on the garden property to assist you in your task of taking that property away from its rightful owners."

"In the second place," he held out the threat of violent persecution of his workers, by pretending that there was a lot of "opposition" from among tea

STOP PRESS
DANGE DEFEATS EX-MINISTER NURIE IN THE BOMBAY TEXTILE LABOUR CONSTITUENCY. FULL STORY NEXT WEEK.—(Ed.)

★
The Press has completely blacked out the election results in the Darjeeling Tea-Garden Labour Constituency where there was a united front between the Congress and the British planters to defeat the Communist candidate RATANLAL BRAHMAN. The full story of this election given on this page will tell you why this result was suppressed by the news agencies and the Press.—Editor.

★
Two more Bengal Communists have scored big victories over their Congress opponents. JYOTI BASU defeated Prof. HUMAYUN KABIR in the B. & A. Railway Trade Union constituency. RUPNARAIN ROY polled 35,000 votes, the highest for Scheduled Caste seats, in the Dinajpur constituency. (Detailed election results next week).

garden workers to the Communist Party so that "violence might result if Communists entered the gardens"!

The tea-garden workers have themselves answered back the insolence of the White bosses and the Congress leadership which chose to take their help to fight the Red Flag.

Congress - Planters Axis

The British managers tried their level best to keep the workers 'engaged' even on the polling day. The manager of the Pandam Kaman garden, for instance, ordered all his workers to accompany him on the polling-day on 'shikar' in the hills. Gurkha workers walked off telling the White manager to his face, "We are not your slaves. You won't catch us going anywhere on that day except to vote!" They tried other tricks too. It was announced that food-rations would be handed out on the polling day and if the workers did not take them on that day, they would lose a week's rations. The workers said, "Go to hell. We won't take rations but cast our votes in the 'paddy box' to a man" (Ratanlal's emblem was a sheaf of paddy).

Smyth-Osborne himself ordered his workers to vote for the Independent or the Congress candidate—BUT IN NO CASE FOR RATANLAL, ON PAIN OF EXPULSION FROM THE GARDENS, BAG AND BAGGAGE.

The Congress candidate—a disreputable pigmy against the Communist giant, Ratanlal—also sang the same tune:

"If you don't vote for Congress," he warned the workers, "the Congress Ministry that is coming will cut your rations still further."

While Communists were 'banned' from entering the gardens, the Congress candidate was invited by the British planters themselves who arranged their 'election meetings' for them. But as soon as he got to speak, the Gurkha workers would start singing in chorus: 'Vote khoshao dhanko bakshala' ('Vote in the paddy-box').

Terror Defeated

Why were the British planters and their Congress friends so panicky? Simply because the Communists were not wasting their time and betraying the Gurkha workers by just wringing their hands in despair.

Despite the planters' ban—and the officials' refusal to force them to allow free elections—they entered all 12 gardens around Darjeeling and took the call of the Red Flag to more than 3/4ths of the voters.

The Congress candidate went on a conducted tour arranged by the British planters. The Communists went and worked underground—sheltered by the plantation workers.

Three Communist organisers and Madan Kumar Thapa—Secretary of the District Students' Federation—whose organisation had given him the right to work for the Party of his choice in the elections—were arrested on a charge of 'trespassing' on the 2nd of March. Three more were arrested on the 7th. But workers' pressure forced the local officials to let them out on bail. On the 12th of March—five days before the election the Communist candidate himself was arrested on the same 'charge'.

Polling Day Scenes

But the work went on under—
(Continued on page 11, col. 2.)

PEOPLES AGE

AIRF's Call For Strike Ballot

Rly. Board Bosses Provoke Transport Crisis

THE attitude of summary rejection taken up by the Railway Board on the demands of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation (A.I.R.F.) in respect of retrenchment of staff, living wage, and dearness allowance, and its refusal even to appoint an adjudicator have caused grave disappointment all over the country. The A.I.R.F., having explored all avenues, has now given a call for a 'strike ballot' to be completed by the 25th April. A situation is fast developing when the henchmen of British monopoly capital in India would force a complete dislocation of the country's transport causing grave repercussions in view of the rapidly worsening food situation.

An average railway worker in India gets anything between Rs. 11 and Rs. 18 per month. The dearness allowance granted to him has been far short of the needs of the situation. He has been suffering untold hardships all through the war. And now about 3 lakh workers are facing retrenchment.

The A.I.R.F. at its Madras Session in October, 1945, suggested a sixteen-point programme to the Railway Board, which, if implemented, would have put an end to all unemployment and meant better life for the workers and their families, better conditions of travel for the public and development of heavy railway industry in India.

Pitching Rly. Workers Against Public

But the Government have declined to show any concern for the workers no matter what happens to the country's transport. While presenting his 'last' budget in the Central Assembly, the Railway Member, Sir Edward Benthall, ridiculed the idea of any consideration of the A.I.R.F. proposals and tried to drive a wedge between the workers and the general public; pitching the demands of the workers against the comforts and interests of the travelling public, so that the latter may not support the former.

While trying to prove that the proposals of the Railwaymen are impracticable, he stated that to meet the demands of the A.I.R.F., viz., Rs. 36 basic monthly wage plus dearness allowance, an extra provision of Rs. 78 crores would have to be made (Rs. 57 crores per annum more to meet the revised scales of pay and Rs. 21 crores to meet the additional dearness allowance). Sir Edward said:

"Where is this money to come from? If you are going to be generous to the railway staff, then the public have got to pay it either in the form of increased rates or increased fares."

Asked by a correspondent as to why the Board did not give three months' bonus to the workers, as recommended by the Managers of different Railways, a member of the Railway Board is reported to have remarked: "The cost would have been 17 to 18 crores and then the Board would have no money left for postwar amenities to the third class passengers."

What exactly are the facts? Are the alternatives really: either increased wages to workers or relief to the people? Are the Railways bankrupt financially, with a perfectly smooth administration?

Financial Position Of Railways

Let us first see the total earned by the Indian Railways during the war. We find that including the expected earnings for 1946-47 (i.e. Rs. 177 crores) the total earnings of the Indian Railways since 1939-40 have been Rs. 1,314.72 crores. Their total operating expenses for the same period have been Rs. 731.89 crores (Rs. 125.73 crores for 1946-47). After paying the interest charges, the net surplus has been Rs. 357.89 crores. Ac-

tually the surplus has been much more than this, because a huge sum spent on capital outlays during war time (which should normally have been taken from the Depreciation Fund) has been included in the current expenses.

Indian Railways have made a total gift of Rs. 202.04 crores to the revenues of the Central Government (Rs. 32.00 crores in 1945-46 and 12.22 crores for 1946-47). Rs. 130.17 crores have been allocated to the Depreciation Fund, Rs. 17.11 crores to the Railway Reserve Fund and Rs. 15 crores to the Betterment Fund.

Thus Indian Railways have been the most prosperous concern during the war years and it is here that the condition of the workers has been worst.

Is The Fall In Earnings Inevitable?

Sir Edward Benthall opposes the demands of the workers and the public because he fears a fall of Rs. 48 crores in the earnings of the Railways in 1946-47 (from 225 crores in 1945-46 to 177 crores in 1946-47). Ascribing this fall in earnings to a fall in the military traffic, he utilises it to deny all amenities to the third class passengers and any wage increase to the workers. He prides himself on the Railways having "stood the test of war" and probably sees no room for improvement anywhere. It does not enter his head, that the Railways have stood the test in spite of him and his Railway Board—the credit solely goes to the Railway workers.

Further it never strikes him that the development of Railway transport does not need the preconditions of war. It can be developed during peace-time also—but only if Railways are managed in the interests of India and her people and not in the interests of the British Imperialists. What is required is a will to industrialise India.

State Of Our Railways Under The Board's Raj

India's Railway transport is very deficient. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1929 estimated that India possessed one mile of railway line per 7894 persons as against 469 in the U.S.A. and 605 in the Union of South Africa. And since then the situation has worsened—whereas our population has gone up by over 4 crores, railway mileage has increased only by about 1,000 miles.

We have thus to increase our mileage immensely to break the isolation of the villages. And what plan has the Transport Member to do it—none except starvation and retrenchment of workers. The Railway Member has dropped his construction programme of 2,800 miles of new lines at an estimated cost of Rs. 60 crores and made a provision for only 2 crores in his 'marvellous' budget.

Indian Railways have no industry yet for the manufacture of rolling stock, engines etc. Not only have new constructions to be done, the rolling-stock affected by undue wear and tear caused during the war has to be replaced. During the war, a passenger train carried 32% more load and a goods train 84% more load than the pre-war load. Engines had to run more than double the pre-war distance before they went into the shed. And the plan that the Transport Member has for

replacing this is to continue importing engines and wagons from Britain and prevent the growth of a Railway industry in India. Advanced contracts at unreasonably high prices for the supply of 1,400 engines and 50,000 wagons have been entered into with Britain.

The Transport Member has ascribed the high operating costs to a rise in the prices of coal. But obviously the Transport Member would not like to extend state control over the collieries because most of these form the base of British capital in India. At present Railways own collieries producing only 2½ million tons of coal per year as against their consumption of 9 million tons.

Competition & Inefficiency

Big economies can be effected in the expenditure of Indian Railways. Indian Railways are managed by the British bosses and most of them are drawing very high salaries. No attempt

has been made to Indianise the Railway services.

According to the Indian Chamber of Commerce "instead of replacing 1,800 odd non-Indians at the top coming from the country of the War Transport Member by the nationals of this country, an additional 214 posts provided for in the Budget estimates for 1946-47, several of which carry a salary of over Rs. 1,000 per month, have been mainly filled by non-Indians." And Sir Edward Benthall has the cheek to ascribe this only to "sheer accident"!

Railway administration in India is another name for corruption and inefficiency and just a little tightening of control over management can mean a saving of crores to the exchequer.

An implementation of a real rehabilitation programme will increase the efficiency of Indian Railways, check the fall in their earnings, keep up the level of employment, create better conditions of travel for the people and living for the workers.

Bait For Congress And League

But the Transport Member and his Railway Board true to their masters do not think on these lines. They still believe in exploiting Indian Railways in the best interests of British capital—deny a living wage to workers, amenities to third class passengers, and threaten the public with a rise in rates and fares.

For this bankrupt and blind policy the Railway Member even tried to secure the support of the Congress and League M.L.A.'s by telling them that they had better be cautious, for they would be face to face with the same difficulties when they came to power 'tomorrow.' He said:

"These were not matters on which the present Government could make immediate commitments. Some of the questions were for deep consideration and by the new Government."

Our answer to Benthall is that we have always known that the (Continued on Page 11, Col. 1.)

A PATRIOT'S NOTEBOOK

INA Men's Rejoinder To Anti-Communists

TWO weeks ago, twelve INA prisoners (two Punjabis and ten Malayalees) on their way to Cannanore Central Jail (being transferred from Rajahmundry Jail) passed through Calicut. As soon as the train reached Calicut station, they began shouting slogans: "Communist Party Zindabad." There were a number of Congress boys at the station to "receive" them. These boys were rather taken aback to hear the INA prisoners shouting "Communist Party Zindabad." They went up to them and started rebuking them for it. The usual tirade was poured out—that Communists are traitors, that they want Subhas Bose to be hanged and so on.

Pat came the answer from the Malayalee INA boys: "We don't need you to teach us who Communists are, we know them. We knew them before, we knew them in Rajahmundry Jail. It was K. P. R. (Gopalan) who led us in the recent hunger-strike at Rajahmundry jail for our rightful demands, it was K.P.R. who successfully agitated for our transfer from Rajahmundry to our home taluq, Cannanore."

That shut up the Congress boys, they quietly packed off and slunk away from the station!

Glancy-Real Maker Of Punjab Coalition Ministry

SO a Unionist-Congress-Akali Ministry has at last come to 'power' in the Punjab. In the Ministry, there are 3 Unionists, 2 Congressmen and 1 Akali.

One is amazed to find a thoroughly discredited and bankrupt Unionist pup of 10 in a House of 175 being conceded 3 seats in the Ministry by the Congress High Command as against 2 seats for the Congress with a strength of 52.

I understand the real story behind this is that Glancy (the real master of the Unionist Party) categorically told Khizar not to go into the Coalition without getting 3 seats in the Ministry, otherwise he would be "of no use"! Glancy knows Khizar is a boob, so he wanted two more to buttress him. Khizar duly conveyed Glancy's order to Maulana Azad—and the Maulana bowed to it and accepted the terms!

The real Ministry-maker in the Punjab was, therefore, not the Maulana, but Sir Bertrand Glancy.

Tug Of War In Madras Congress For Premiership

A BIG tug-of-war is going on inside the Congress in the South for the Premiership of the coming Madras Ministry. After the temporary eclipse of Rajaji, the Tamilnad Congress has no outstanding leader able to hold and lead the team and therefore the Tamilnad Congress Assembly Party has to look to Andhra or Malabar for a Premier.

Inside the Tamilnad Congress, there are 2 factional groups, one led by the President, Kamaraj, and the other led by the Muthuramangal-Bhaktavatsalam group. Backing Kamaraj is the Press boss Goenka and Chockalingam of the Tamil daily Dinakaran. This gentleman, who was once Rajaji's supporter, got permission for his paper through the recommendation of the toady Ramaswamy Mudaliar, and as the price for it, is said to have given the undertaking that he would support the cause of "non-Brahmin Congressmen." From then on, he shifted his devotion from Rajaji to Kamaraj!

The Kamaraj group is supporting Madhava Menon of the Malabar Congress for Premiership, while Muthuramangam & Co. are backing up Prakasam of Andhra.

Inside the Andhra camp, there is the anti-Prakasam group led by Gopala Reddy, who is trying to strike out an independent path.

The acting Governor of Madras, Sir Henry Knight, seems to be fully enjoying himself at the expense of the honour and prestige of our National organisation. He recently interviewed both Kamaraj and Prakasam. And then came Gopala Reddy who has asked for a separate interview with the Governor!

I only hope it will not end in their asking for the "impartial award" of the Governor as to who should be Congress Premier. Are these not days when we are taught not to doubt British good faith and to respect British awards?

Politicals Refused 'PA' In Dacca Jail

We wanted to send copies of People's Age to Security Prisoners in Dacca Central Jail. Last month, the first copies sent were returned with the following letter from the Jail Superintendent:

"You are hereby informed that the paper—People's Age—cannot be allowed to persons in detention.

"So, you are requested to stop issuing the paper to this jail in future."

As Others See Us

I WAS interested to read in the March 9th issue of Swafantra (Khassa Subba Rao's new political weekly published from Madras) an account by him of P. C. Joshi's election meeting at Madras, at which he was present. There were quite a few points in Joshi's speech with which

Khara violently disagrees; but here is the final impression left in his mind of the meeting:

Congress-Communist Leaderships Contrasted

"Communist propaganda seems to depend far more on convictions and ideas than on expertness of talk and the graces of oratory.

"Mass predisposition in favour of revered leaders has its dangers. The crowds that greet Gandhi and Nehru are taken off their feet by their own idolising fervour to such an extent that they are left defenceless; they tend to accept ideas and suggestions put forward before them without proper independent scrutiny. Lower down, the Gandhian glamour is marketed to their own advantage by many minor priests, of no particular worth in the Congress temple....

Against this tendency," the Communists have been waging a hard struggle. Communist faith is built round ideas and not personalities. Nowadays Communist leaders like Joshi and Sundarayya of quite average ability as speakers, are able to command huge audiences running into thousands, of whom many come from long distances to listen to them. A new public is being born with its mind turned towards ideas, a public capable of criticism and discrimination, of judging for itself what will advance its interests best, of sensing intelligently humbug camouflaging as public spirit."

Communists And The People

"This public is one of under-dogs. It is ill-represented on the electorate. Communists have given to it hope, a faith to live by, and the energy, grit, organisational skill, propagandist zeal, capacity for hard work, indifference to money and careers, and above all, readiness and resourcefulness in taking up local grievances and fighting oppression and exploitation of various kinds, evinced by them, have been endearing them to an ever-increasing circle of grateful beneficiaries. The technique of mass contact originated by Gandhi with personal benevolence as impetus is by the Communist Party being perfected on scientific lines with social revolution and liquidation of oppression as its driving force. It is a party of zealots susceptible to all the intolerances, dogmatism and fallacies of fanaticism, but its ruthlessness is redeemed by a certain broad humanitarian outlook, radicalism and freedom from superstition that invest it with a powerful appeal to the most progressive spirit of the age. If there are prigs in the Communist Party, there are also saints disguised as realists.

"The inconsequence of rhetoric for the purposes of the Communist Party is illustrated in the position occupied by Joshi. He stands exposed to concentrated attack by all the propertied interests in the country now wooing the Congress for an alliance against social and economic revolution. Joshi's political and historical importance springs from this fact."

-N. K. Krishnan

Imperialist Move To Partition Assam

N. E. Frontier Prov. As New Strategic Outpost Of Empire

A SINISTER PLAN TO PARTITION ASSAM AND create a North-Eastern Frontier Province, to be held directly under a British Agent, as a new strategic outpost for the protection of the British Empire, is being hatched by the Imperialist bureaucracy in Assam. It is an old plan, but has recently been revived and actively worked for after the Provincial elections.

THE PLAN IS TO CARVE OUT THE HILL REGIONS OF ASSAM SUCH AS THE KHASI, GARO, NAGA, NORTH CACHAR HILLS, THE MANIPUR AND CHIN HILLS INTO A SEPARATE PROVINCE TO BE HELD AND ADMINISTERED DIRECTLY UNDER A BRITISH AGENT.

MY PERSONAL TALKS WITH SOME OF THE HILL TRIBAL leaders at Shillong reveal that the Imperialist agents for the Tribes, Mr. Mills and Mr. Lam with different Hill Tribal leaders and trying to win their support for this plan.

It is reported that the whole plan has been worked out in detail, and now the Imperialist agents are trying to secure the support of the Hill Tribe leaders to agree to this separation under the plea that this would help them to build up their own life in their own land under the "benevolent leadership" of the British. It is also reported that they are holding out "promises" of democratic local self-government and financial help.

An Old Game Of The British

It is an old game of the Imperialists to hold these hill tracts under their control under the plea that this is necessary for the "defence" of the plains. Even now they are keeping some of these hill districts separated from the Provincial administration.

Till today the hill tracts such as the Balpara Frontier tract (560 sq. miles), the Sadia Frontier tract (3,200 sq. miles), Lakhimpur (394 sq. miles), the Naga Hill district (4,293 sq. miles), the Lushai Hill district (8,092 sq. miles), North Cachar Hills (1,890 sq. miles) are kept excluded from the 1935 Constitutional reforms.

These tracts are administered by British agents directly responsible to the Governor of Assam. There are hill areas such as the Garo Hills, Mikir Hills, Khasi Hills, which are partially excluded from the present reform.

The Imperialist plan to create an India's eastern border an outpost of theirs similar to the one on the North-West has been there in the air since as early as 1928.

This is what an I.C.S. Officer wrote in 1928:

"A hill division, comprising all the backward tracts of Assam might be constituted with a Commissioner directly under the Governor who for the purpose of the hill division would be in the position of a Chief Commissioner directly under the Government of India. This division would have an entirely separate budget. Its revenue would consist of all the receipts from the backward tracts, plus an annual grant from the Imperial Government sufficient to cover the difference between the revenue and expenditures."

This Civilian writer also suggests that "the second alternative is that a separate North-Eastern Frontier Hills Province should be formed to comprise as many of the backward tracts in Assam and Burma as could be conveniently included in it."

Another British officer argued in 1928:

"In the interest of the plain district, which will merely be retarded in development by being tied to the backward hills and still more in the interest of the hills themselves (sic!), the latter should be withdrawn from

policy of ignoring what is just in the demands of the Tribal organisations and of failing to satisfy the Tribal people that their just political and economic rights would be guaranteed in a free India has driven them anti-Congress. This is exactly what the Imperialist agents are banking upon to carry through their plan.

For example, in the elections, in the Khasi Hills, the Khasi elders and different Hill leaders had put up Mr. Khongple as their trusted candidate. But the Congress put up a rival candidate, the Rev. Nichols Roy, and this candidate was returned not through the support of the Tribal people, but mainly through Assamese and Bengali votes.

During the elections, acute bitterness between the Hill peoples and the people of the Plains (Assamese, Bengalis etc.) came to a head. The defeat of Khongple, despite the vote of the majority of Khasis for him, increased the anti-Congress prejudice of a certain section of the Tribal leaders.

Soon after the elections were over, some Bengal middle-class youth met Mr. Aow, the leader of the Nagas and told him: "Well, however you may try, you cannot drive us out. The Congress has won and we have come to stay."

It is this spirit of domination of the Plains people, fostered by sectarian Congress policy, which is today driving the Tribal leaders into the arms of the British and is exploited by them to trick the Tribal people into believing that their interests would be "safer" in a separate Province under the British.

Responsibility Of Congress Leadership

Just after the elections, it is reported that under the active support of Mr. Khongple, some Khasi leaders are organising the Khasi people into a move for separation. They have already held meetings of the Khasi people on this issue. Some Khasi leaders have also met the Governor, most likely on this issue.

In the meantime, as reported, Mills and Lambert are meeting Naga leaders separately and together in order to fan the flames of their prejudice against the Plains people and make them agree to separation.

The tragic part of the whole situation is that some of the Hill leaders have been led to believe that separation, with the aid of the Imperialists, would help them to build up their own life in their own homeland!

The Congress leader, Sgt. Gopinath Bardoloi, has rightly nailed down the sinister Imperialist move of separating the Hill region from the Province of Assam as the biggest danger to the Assamese people as a whole. But Congress leaders have not yet come out with a concrete plan of how the Congress can help the brother people of the Hills politically, economically and culturally.

This has resulted not in a joint anti-Imperialist front of the Hills and Plains peoples for common freedom, but alienation and division between the two.

The Congress has neither defined the Hill peoples' political and economic rights nor has it come out with a declaration explaining what status they would have in a free India. It is the failure of the Congress policy in this respect that is strengthening the hands of the Imperialists to carry through their reactionary plan.

Exclusive

by
Netai Ganguly

the reformed constitution altogether as soon as possible."

Exploiting Congress-Tribal Differences

After the recent Provincial elections, British agents have become active in trying to push through the Imperialist plan. These elections have released bitter communal and sectarian passions which the British are fully exploiting. The Congress

Behind Cabinet Mission

Modified 'Coupland Plan'

By wire from C. S. Subramaniam
Madras, March 21.

It is understood that when the Viceroy saw the editors of important papers at Delhi last month, he talked to them on the food problem and also sounded them on the Cabinet Mission.

According to the editor of a leading paper in Madras, it is stated that the British Government seem to be intent upon pushing through a modified Coupland Plan. The Coupland Plan is based on the river-basin scheme. The present offer is likely to be on the basis of two Federations with the Princes remaining outside and having their own Federation, if they choose. Above these two Federations, will be set up a Confederation at the Centre. The Princes may directly join this Confederation at the Centre. Redistribution and redivision of the Provinces will take place to get the Congress and the League to accept this proposal.

The powers of the Confederation will be roughly along the lines proposed by Gandhiji at the time of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks in September at Bombay.

It is understood also that Pethick-Lawrence and Alexander will return to England sometime after the preliminary "negotiations" are over. The main work of the Mission will be done by Cripps who is very hopeful of persuading the Congress leadership to accept the proposals.

People's Books
And Pamphlets

★
INDIA

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By G. Adhikari

As. 4.

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★

Rural Bengal In Ruins

By Bhowani Sen

As. 2.

Dealing with all the aspects of the collapse of Bengal's rural economy, telling us what is to be done for its rehabilitation and by whom. The author is the leader of the Bengal Communists, basing himself on the practical experiences of the Party and the people during the great famine.

★

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By B. T. Ranadive.

As. 3.

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RUTHLESS REPRESSION TO CRUSH FREEDOM-STRUGGLE OF ANDHRAS

THE NIZAM'S REGIME IN HYDERABAD STATE HAS launched a ruthless offensive against the people's movement in the State. It has started with the ANDHRA CONFERENCE, which with an organised membership of over one lakh is the biggest single people's political organisation in the State.

THE ANDHRA CONFERENCE REPRESENTS 90 LAKHS OF Andhras of Hyderabad State who form 55% of the State population and inhabit a well-marked area called Telingana. In this national organisation of the Andhras of Hyderabad State all political groups, Communists, Nationalists and others, work together on a common platform of defending people's interests and of fighting the tyranny of the jagirdars, feudal landlords and corrupt officials.

Panicky at the growing strength of the Andhra Conference and the bold fight it is putting up against corrupt feudal and reactionary elements in the State, the Hyderabad Government has released a reign of terror against it.

Shri B. YELLA REDDY, the General Secretary of the Hyderabad State Andhra Conference, and likely President for the next year, has been interned in his home-village of Galey Pally, Sirsilla taluqa in Karimnagar district. Only a few days ago some other workers of Karimnagar district were interned. There are rumours that many more are going to be interned soon.

Report of the terror campaign which has been launched in Nalgonda district for the last two months and of the way the Andhra Conference workers had been beaten and insulted openly by Police officials have already appeared in previous issues of People's Age.

Torture: False Cases

The torture inflicted on Andhra Conference workers in Jangaon-taluqa, Nalgonda district, the inhuman beatings in the lock-up, outrageous behaviour of pouring urine in their mouths and other worse barbarous acts are just examples of this repressive policy. The rowdies of oppressive zamindars and the local Police officials help in all this.

Throughout Telingana, cases are proceeding against more than 200 workers of the Andhra Conference.

Andhra Conference workers are beaten by the rowdies of feudal exploiters and arbitrary cases are launched against them. False cases of theft, decoity and attempts at murder are among these. The Taluqdar of Nalgonda district actually toured the district and instructed the local officials to institute cases against the Andhra Conference workers under any pretext.

The charges are in most cases groundless, and the courts themselves are dismissing them.

All Sections Protest

This terror campaign has not only failed to beat down the workers and the people, but on the other hand it has steered the workers and won greater support for the Andhra Conference. Public men of all shades of political thought, and organisations of the various sections of the people, have protested against it.

A committee of prominent public men like, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar Saheb (editor of the local Urdu daily FAYAM), Mr. Akbar Wafaqani (a Muslim Leader), Swami Ramananda Teerath (member of the Standing Committee of the All-India States' People's Conference), Dr. N. M. Jaiscoarya (son of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and President of Hyderabad Friends of the Soviet Union), Mr. Digambar Rao Bindoo (President of the Maharashtra Conference, the organisation of the Maharashtra people of the State), Mr. N. Raghavender Rao (General Secretary, N. S. Railway Em-

ployees' Union, and others are preparing to tour the districts which have suffered most under the terror campaign and enquire into the situation.

Fleeing The Poor Peasant

What the State authorities do not like, however, is the way the Andhra Conference is defending the interests of the poor peasants. The Conference is fighting the policy of the authorities of fleecing the poor peasant, and of appeasing the landlord-hoarders and blackmarketeers. It is fighting official corruption.

It is fighting for a policy of just procurement unlike the State authorities, who, in the name of "procurement," want to give a free hand to the rich to fleece the poor.

Here is how the State authorities are carrying on their "food policy."

In the name of voluntary purchase of grain in Karimnagar district, the officials just burst into the poor kisans'

none, because all these three years, it is the Andhra Conference which has fought for direct procurement of food grains by the Government and for Government-distribution of grain in scarcity areas through rationing.

When the State Prime Minister toured Karimnagar district, kisans in their thousands demanded the release of their leader, Shri B. YELLA REDDY.

Authorities' Bogus Plea

To cover up its anti-democratic drive, the State bureaucracy is putting forth the plea that action is being taken against the Andhra Conference leaders because they are "obstructing the Government's food policy." This brazen lie will deceive

HOW BIHAR COMMUNIST CANDIDATES WERE DEFEATED

BOTH the candidates put up by the Communist Party in the Behar elections have been defeated, losing their deposits. Together, they polled 4,195 votes as against 45,375 polled by their Congress opponents.

It was more than an ordinary defeat, of course. But Congressmen call it a 'walk-over'.

It was a strange kind of 'walk-over' when lathis, knives and daggers had to be used, to say nothing of active Police backing; when the 'insignificant' Communist candidate, KARYANAND SHARMA, had to be removed out of the way by a murderous attack, personally supervised by the District Congress leaders one month before the polling day.

Above all, it is difficult to explain how thousands of ballot papers marked 'in support of KARYANAND SHARMA, should have disappeared mysteriously from the ballot box. This too was part of the disgraceful tactics used to secure a 'walk-over' for the Congress.

Terror Against Kisans

The truth is these were no ordinary elections. It was a straight war by landed vested interests acting as Congressmen against Behari kisans behind the Red Flag.

KARYANAND SHARMA was contesting the important landlord-Congress leader of Behar, SRI KRISHNA SINHA, ex-Premier of Behar. Sri Babu had handed over his election machine to an unscrupulous band led by the Secretary of the District Congress Committee, NANDKUMAR SINHA, and by a member of the Provincial Congress Committee, SHYAMA-PROSAD SINGH.

The attack on Karyanand Sharma was only their first criminal blow. Backed by zamindars, who are literally blood-thirsty in these parts, and by Police officials—they let loose all the village riff-raff and the zamindars' private armies of lathials to place pro-Communist kisans inside their private lock-ups, to break up Communist meetings and jathas.

The notorious zamindar, Chandrachud of Ullao, for instance, was one of the two chief canvassers for Sri Babu. The second was the Honorary Magistrate of Monghyr (notoriously pro-British).

From Our Own Correspondent

Sri Babu's polling agent was the Manager of Amawan Raj and one of his election offices was located in the Amawan House. A fleet of trucks, supplied by the Birlas and loyalist zamindars (overnight turned 'Congressmen'), was placed at the disposal of the Congress machine.

Horses and elephants further added to the show of Congress might. Zamindars' lathials, patwaris and other agents turned up in large numbers to stampede the kisans into the Congress booths. Communal racketeers of the Yadav community were also bought up with money to swell the Congress vote.

In fact, the Congress did much more than merely use unprincipled methods to make their victory sure. They took this as the opportunity to hammer together a cast-iron alliance between every section of village reaction and the Congress—directed against the kisans and the Communists who fought with the cry of "Land to the Kisans."

Sri Babu did not leave the Police out of his happy family either. He used his position as ex-Premier and Premier-to-be in the coming Congress Ministry to get Section 144 and a ban on the carrying of lathis within 500 yards of the booths enforced. This disarmed the Red kisans in advance and took away their protection against zamindars' lathials acting as Congress storm-troopers.

They planned out systematic assaults on the Communists at every polling booth on one day or another. When the Communists defended themselves—they ran to their friends the Police for 'help'. In this way, they got seven of our workers arrested in Darbhanga; another one was arrested at Begusarai on a charge of 'rioting'.

In Lakhisarai, they went so far as to put two bundles of lathis and spears, in one of the rooms of the local Registration office compounds and then

houses and take away whatever is there, while leaving the big zamindars free to trade in the blackmarket. At some places, the poor peasant, to save himself from being beaten and insulted by the officials, even purchased paddy at Rs. 25 per bag in the blackmarket from zamindars, and sold it to the Government at Rs. 18 per bag!

In Warangal district corrupt officials have not taken any action against a big landlord who owns 1-1/3rd lakh acres of land, and possesses 8,000 maunds of millet; they have let him get away with it all into the black market even though the Andhra Conference workers drew the attention of the authorities to it.

"Obstruction to food policy" is just an excuse for smashing up the people's movement in the State.

Real Reasons For Attack

The main reasons for this all-out attack on the Telingana people's movement are in fact the following:

- The Andhra Conference is carrying on a relentless struggle against the feudal landlords and jagirdars in the State and rousing the down-trodden and the oppressed against medieval feudal exploitation, and thus blowing up the very base of the native autocracy.

- The Andhra Conference has been fighting the corruption and bribery of the officials, who naturally do not like its phenomenal growth.

- The Andhra Conference has been campaigning day in and day out to foil the game of the Imperialists, who in unity with the feudal autocracy intend to strengthen their strangle-

From Our Correspondent

hold over the State people and prepare a base for themselves to strengthen their position in India as a whole, under the mask of an "Azad and Greater Hyderabad."

The Andhra Conference is striving to unite all sections of the people to defeat this Feudal-Imperialist conspiracy to detach the State People's Movement from the Freedom Movement of the Indian people and smash it in isolation under the pretext of the ruler's 'Treaties with the Crown.'

- The Andhra Conference has been exposing the Imperialist designs of using the Princely regime to annex the Northern Circars and the Ceded Districts—part of the homeland of the Andhras in British India—in the name of 'Treaty Rights', 'Outlet to the Sea' and 'Greater Hyderabad.'

- As against their reactionary designs, the Andhra Conference has been voicing the demand of the Hyderabad State people, that only they should have the right to shape their destinies and frame their constitution, through a Constituent Assembly, elected by the entire adult population of the State.

- It was the Andhra Conference that defeated the Government game of parading all its henchmen before the British Parliamentary delegation, to give a colour of united public support to its plan of an 'Azad and Greater Hyderabad.' The Andhra Conference deputation submitted to the representatives of the British Parliament, a detailed memorandum on the autocratic rule in Hyderabad and exposed the reactionary designs behind the slogan of 'Azad and Greater Hyderabad.'

These are the real reasons and not 'obstruction to food policy,' why the State regime has embarked on a policy of ruthless repression against the Andhra Conference.

Resist Princely Autocracy

It is high time that the National Congress, and the All-India States People's Conference realised what is happening in Hyderabad State and came forward to defend the democratic rights of the States' people. The attack on the Andhra Conference is only the beginning of the attack on the entire people's movement in the State.

It is the urgent duty of all patriotic sections inside the State, of the All-India States People's Conference and of the National Congress, immediately to launch a campaign to resist this policy of the Nizam's regime and make them change it.

brought the Police to 'unearth' the 'conspiracy'. These rooms were just behind our camp and the Congress leader Rajeswari Babu demanded the arrest of the Communists by the Police.

Trickery

Side by side, were arranged obscene exhibitions round the polling booths, to attract the 'attention' of the 'ignorant kisans'.

At Kharagpur they got a drunkard to sit near a tree, not far from our camp, to pour abuse at the Communists.

At Monghyr, they brought a District Board school teacher, who dressed himself up like a woman and began to dance with a gang of kids shouting 'Holi hai'. Congressmen walked round enjoying the 'fun'. 'Immoral' kisans were being 'diverted' from the serious business of voting by 'moral entertainment'!

Generally speaking, they banked on terror and unprintable abuse against the Communists. But in those compact regions where the Communists are strong they tried to trick the voters for the Red Flag into voting for them. It so happened that the Congress was allotted the red box at the booth. So they told Red kisans that the red box was for the Red Flag!

Bogus Voting

But even their worst methods did not get them a big enough poll. They got no more than 30% to 40% of the voters even from those areas where the Red Flag has been barred entry. So they went in for bogus voting on the largest possible scale to swell their 'plebiscite' against the Communists.

A prominent Congress leader has admitted to us that Congress votes were only 60% to 40% genuine. Several 'respectable' zamindars, Congress workers and boys from the Students' Congress were caught red-handed trying to record bogus votes and detained in the Police lock-up as a matter of 'form'. Congress leaders stood with the voters' slips in their hands which they offered to anybody who would vote Congress.

Several times, undisguised males were caught with voters'

slips bearing registration numbers of women voters in their hands.

Voting slips of the dead were used on perhaps the most extensive scale of all.

There could be no effective check on this bogus voting because of the alliance between the Congress and the polling officers and the Police. Presiding officers at most of the booths refused to act when we challenged bogus voters, who passed through the booths en masse.

All junior polling officers openly asked for votes for the Congress. At least one presiding officer firmly took sides against us all through—he was related to Sri Babu's polling agent.

Our Ballot Papers' Fate

But even then, we were sure of saving our deposit by a good margin. Some Congressmen who were present at the booths also admitted that we were not being over-optimistic. But a Police Inspector told us we should not be so sure of our ballot papers 'remaining in the boxes till the time of counting.'

This provides a clue to the mysterious disappearance of thousands of ballot papers from our ballot boxes. To quote just one example: at Sheikhpura, we polled nearly 2,000 votes on our slips alone. But there were only 1,000 when the boxes were opened!

(Continued on page 9, col. 1.)

POLICE, POLLING OFFICERS, MANAGERS AID CONGRESS AGAINST RED FLAG

By wire from Nikhil Chakravarty Calcutta, March 24.

ON the afternoon of Saturday, the 23rd, the election for the Howrah Labour seat began. It is learnt that the Red Flag candidate, BANKIM MUKERJI, polled more than his Congress opponent, SIBNATH BANERJI, on the first day of the election which is to continue on Sunday also. Sibnath's men became desperately infuriated to find workers en masse coming to vote for the Red Flag, and with the help of goondas and with the open connivance of the Police they tried to sabotage the polling itself.

At Bally Polling centre, 90 per cent of the votes were polled by the Red Flag. The Polling Officer refused admittance to a Red Flag woman Polling Agent and openly helped the Congress. The Policemen on duty also began to ask the workers to vote for the Congress and tore the Red Flag slips, snatching them from voters. Sibnath's volunteers attacked Communist girls, actually pulled them by the hair and showered obscene remarks. When the workers resented this, they started pelting stones which led to a fracas. A gang of Congress volunteers attacked the Red Flag First Aid Centre, attacked the women there and broke Dr. Subol Bera's head. Armed Police appeared and the Police Sub-Inspector pointing to the Communists shouted, "Sala log ko maro," and immediately Police and Congressite volunteers pounced on the Communists. Within a few minutes the Police began shooting, as a result of which several persons were wounded.

The Police also raided the neighbouring bustees and assaulted workers indiscriminately. Communist worker, Joy Deb, received serious stomach injury. The local Communist worker Haru's head was broken. The Polling Agents, Basanta Banerji, Sanat Das and Chandi Chatterji were also injured. The Police also arrested Amar Mukerji. It is learnt that two Red Flag workers were kidnapped and kept tied in the local Protiva Club, but the Thana in this area refused to enter our complaint reporting the incident.

United Front Against Red Flag

At Belur Iron and Steel Works Centre, Asoke Dutta, Manager of the mills has been appointed as the Presiding Officer. This man without any pretence of hiding it was openly canvassing for Sibnath. He ignored all protests by our Polling Agent against false voting and even allowed a Sikh supporting Sibnath to enter the Polling booth and assault our agent. When further protests were of no avail, our two Polling Agents left the Centre in protest. After this Sibnath's men literally took possession of the Polling Centre and indiscriminate false voting was recorded.

At Bellilos Road Centre, trouble arose because a Congressite tried to snatch Red Caps from workers' heads. But the Police appeared and chased Red Flag supporters and kept the way clear for Sibnath's men. At the Zilla School Centre, nearly 2,000 school boys and Bhojpuri durwans seized the polling booths and refused entry to Red Flag supporters. The Police all through kept aloof.

At the Bharat Jute Mill Centre, the Polling Officer himself was a Mill Officer. With a posse of durwans and babus he openly intimidated the voters and standing in front of the ballot box, openly told the workers that if they voted for the Red Flag, their life would be endangered. Red Flag camps were not allowed to be established near the polling centre.

At the Sibpur Dinabandhu School Centre, a huge number of male and female voters assembled to vote for the Red Flag. Seeing this, Sibnath's men resorted to goondalism, but failed.

When Sibnath arrived on the spot, he was found openly hobnobbing with the Police Officers and a little later, a lorry load of armed Police was posted in front of the Red Flag camp.

At Ghusuri, when we approached some of the goondas acting for the Congress, they said, "We have been paid to do these things. We don't care for the Congress or anybody."

Conspiracy Being Hatched For Sunday

Despite this combined offensive of the Mill Bosses and the Police in support of the Congress, Bankim got a tremendous ovation from the workers wherever he visited the polling centres. But the Congress is openly preparing for widespread goondalism for Sunday's elections when besides Howrah, polling for all Labour seats in Calcutta, Barrackpore and Hooghly will take place.

Indications of such an action are already seen. On Saturday at about 8 in the evening, 25 young men attacked Communist leader SOMNATH LAHIRI'S commune at Serpentine Lane. At that time there were no male members present in the commune, only 8 women were there. The gang showered most vulgar and obscene abuse on them and came upstairs shouting, "Communist Party Dhamsa Hok," and told the girls, "We have been sent by the Congress to destroy the Communist Party." They broke open the door and tried to attack the girls. But the girls valiantly defended themselves and chased the scoundrels out.

On Saturday night, Congress boys destroyed the Red Flag polling camp at Ballygunge, Jagbandhu School. When a gentleman of the locality protested, he was also beaten. But the workers soon arrived on the spot and immediately got down to reconstruct it.

Congress circles, however, are deliberately spreading the yarn that Communists are responsible for all these disturbances. KALIPADA MUKERJI, Secretary, Bengal Congress Committee, has issued a statement on the Howrah incident, accusing the Communists, without making any investigation. It is clear that this is their way to secure votes for the Congress candidates in Sunday's elections for the Labour seats.

Against Ration-Cut In Bengal ONE AND A HALF LAKH WORKERS' STRIKE

By wire from Nikhil Chakravarty Calcutta, March 23.

The working-class of Calcutta's industrial belt in Barrackpore, Hooghly and Howrah including more than 20,000 coal miners of Asansol and Raniganj have gone on strike protesting against the cut in ration that has come into operation throughout Bengal from the 18th March. The number of workers involved in the strike action comes to nearly one lakh and a half.

THE strike began from the 20th March and spread rapidly from mill to mill. At the time of writing, the strikers are fighting unitedly and courageously in spite of all provocative attempts by the Police, and the disruptive tactics of the Congress Labour candidates.

The electric supply workers of Calcutta have refused to buy any ration until the cut in ration is cancelled. The railway workers in Kancharapara have gone on a stay-in-strike.

Ever since the announcement of the cut, thunderous discontent prevailed throughout the working-class and innumerable deputations from different workers' unions went to the Government's Labour Department and point-blank told the Labour Officers that they would not tolerate any cut in their rations till a popular Ministry came, reviewed the food situation and chalked out its line to tackle the food problem.

The workers demanded that if the cut in ration had to be introduced, then the Government must force the employers to give increased Dearness Allowance to buy supplementary food.

The strike action of the workers once again unmask the unprincipled opportunism of the Congress "Labour" leaders.

Opportunism Of Congress Labour Leaders

Ever since the announcement of the cut, Congress workers led by the Congress Labour candidates have been going round with big posters quoting Maulana Azad and Gandhiji calling upon the workers to accept the ration-cut. On the 20th when the workers in Jagatdal went on strike, Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar, one of the Congress Labour candidates, happened to be there, and under his inspiration a military lorry fitted with microphone went round appealing to the workers to accept the cut in ration and get back to work.

When the rising protest of the workers threatened to defeat their propaganda, they were forced to change their talk. Today this very Dutt Mazumdar has come out with a statement supporting the demand of the workers and describing the previous attempts by his own supporters to get the workers to accept the cut as "Government mischief"! The story is being now put out in the working class centres that Dutt Mazumdar has wired to the Viceroy and has demanded that the cut be cancelled!

M. A. Zaman, another Congress candidate, who has been going round all these days asking the workers not to kick up a row about food, was seen going round making extravagant promises to the workers.

Communist Labour leaders Jemal, Chaturai, and Bankim Mukerji have declared their full and unequivocal support for the just demand of the workers and are organising big rallies demanding immediate reinstatement of the old rations.

Swadhinata's Warning

The Communist daily Swadhinata writing editorially on 22nd March says that the situation is becoming critical everyday and warns the bureaucrats that if they hope to crush the workers—relying on the fact that Congress leaders are supporting the cut in rations and Congress Labour candidates are doing their best to disrupt the unity of the workers—they are living in a fool's paradise. Swadhinata declares that no cut in ration will be tolerated till the formation of a popular Ministry in the Province.

The bureaucrat had deceived the people. At night a public meeting was held, and the next morning there was a complete hartal throughout the city. All shops were closed, not a tonga, not a lorry moved.

The biggest anti-imperialist demonstration in Hoshiarpur's history—15,000 citizens—marched to the Police Station and surrounded it.

The Deputy Commissioner, arrogant as ever, tried to be rude to a deputation of College girls which met him demanding the release of the leaders. The girls rebuked him sharply when he dared to call those whom he had arrested "goondas". The insolent sahib asked one of the girls her name and address. Having got a rebuff, that "she belonged to the village where his daughter was married," the Deputy Commissioner had the temerity to slap her. Immediately the girl caught him by his tie and gave him half a dozen sharp blows with her chappal. The Deputy Commissioner rap,

(Continued on Page 11, Col. 5.)

Food Battle In Punjab Towns And Villages

WHAT THE PEOPLE ARE DOING

• Save Stocks From Hoarders • Fight Officials' Connivance

(From Our Lahore Correspondent)

With the immediate prospects of an India-wide famine, and the expected failure of the Punjab wheat crops due to failure of winter-rains, hoarders in the non-rationed areas here have already become active. They are hiding their entire stocks and creating conditions of artificial scarcity with a view to minting money.

In this game they find their natural ally in the panicky bureaucracy, who have always opposed rationing and procurement, and now faced with a difficult situation are issuing all sorts of absurd orders. In their craze to take a census of stocks, they are banning the sales of wheat. What has happened in Jullundur, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur is typical of all other towns and villages where such orders are being passed.

IN JULLUNDUR district, village officials went from house to house and created such a scare that not a single person was willing to volunteer correct information. The kisans thought that their entire stocks, hardly sufficient for their own needs for the next two months before the new crop comes in—would be confiscated. The desperate kaminas (agricultural labourers) started buying for their own use at as high a price as Rs. 13-8 per maund from the village bania, the real hoarder. Not only did this real culprit raise the price, he did not even declare his stocks. For example, in Nur Mahal mandi, every single trader got to know a day in advance that registration of stocks was to take place. At night each bania sent his cartloads into nearby villages and hid them.

In LUDHIANA, the Civil Supply Officer stopped the sale of wheat, pending investigations regarding the amount of stock held by each dealer! The dealers promptly stopped selling atta also—with the result that for two to three days, there was starvation among the poor.

Joint Citizens' Committee Gets Results

On the 21st February, news came that in Kalserganj mandi

400 bags of wheat were lying waiting to be exported from the city. Immediately a procession of 3,000 workers and women marched to the spot. They demanded the distribution of the grain, but the officials refused and instead called in Jathi Police. The people were determined to secure the grain—Police or no Police. There was every possibility of a clash. At this moment, Congress and Communist leaders reached the spot, met the Deputy Commissioner and made him distribute ten bags of grain there and then.

Till now, Congress and League leaders had been meeting the authorities separately to place before them the grievances of the people with regard to food. But now a joint Committee representing Congress, League, Ahrars, and Communists has been formed, public meetings held and a huge women's procession demonstrated in front of the Civil Supply Office.

The result of all this has been that the Deputy Commissioner has climbed down, opened up a number of depots, promised to supply wholemeal atta, and handed over the distribution of ration cards to the Citizens' Committee. The people having gained confidence through this victory are now agitating for an increase of

the ration from 6 ch. to 8 ch. per head per day.

Lathi Charge And Arrests

IN HOSHIARPUR, on the 27th of February, a stirring procession of 1,500 hungry people led by the Communist Party marched round the city and demonstrated in front of the grain depots, all of which had been "reserved" for Government servants by a fantastic edict passed a few days earlier.

The procession marched to a hoarder's shop where 500 bags of wheat were surrounded by a crowd of women. With the Police and the Additional District Magistrate looking on, not daring to stop them, the crowd peacefully sold a large portion of the wheat at controlled rates. The Police threatened to lathi-charge but dared not. Finally the Magistrate arrested the Communist leaders, Thakar Waryam Singh and Attah Rakha Chaman.

But Hoshiarpur's citizens, conscious of their new strength, were not prepared to tolerate Police repression. Women and girls from every part of the city thronged to the Police Station, demanding the release of the leaders. From another side, thousands of citizens marched on the Police Station. The Police lathi-charged and arrested four more Communist leaders: Bhagsingh Sajjan, Piarasingh Jandal, Niaz Mohammad and Ved Prakash.

But the people refused to move, squatting firmly in front of the Police Station. Finally the Deputy Commissioner promised that he would release all the arrested persons, and at the request of the local Congress leaders, the crowd dispersed.

Biggest Anti-Imperialist Demonstration

But the Deputy Commissioner went back on his promise to release the leaders, though he reduced the bail demanded from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 50 each.

CITY'S HARTAL, WORKERS' STRIKES

Congress - League Leaders Refuse To Lead People,
Allow Free Rein To Police Terror

By wire

New Delhi, March 25.

YESTERDAY, the Police arrested for the third time Communist leader BAHAL SINGH under the Defence of India Rules. (See earlier report below on this page). Bahal Singh had been bailed out on March 16, for reasons of health. He was taken into custody on Sunday night, six hours after the Cabinet Mission's arrival in New Delhi.

To understand the Government's blind vindictiveness and the Congress leaders' exasperation with the Delhi Communists, it is necessary to know what happened in Delhi before, during and after "Victory Day" on March 7.

The people of Delhi were greatly moved by the stirring demonstrations in Bombay, Calcutta, and Karachi in support of the RIN Ratings, but they were greatly disappointed at the Congress and the League organising no protest action in Delhi. No mass meeting or hartal was called either by the Congress or the League against Police and Military zoom all over the country. The Communist Party organised a protest rally on the 25th February. It called upon the people, particularly the workers, to boycott the Victory celebrations and to observe V-Day as a Protest Day against Military atrocities on the citizens of Calcutta, Bombay and Karachi.

Congress - League Against Positive Action

The Congress and the League also had given a call for the boycott of the Victory celebrations but their call was meant to be merely symbolic and they had never intended to use the occasion for a mighty protest action of the people of Delhi. The Communist Party's call, therefore, unnerved them and both the Congress and the League started campaigning against any positive action on Victory Day.

The Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee issued a Press statement and a poster asking the people to boycott the Victory celebrations but not to participate in any strike or demonstrations organised by any political elements in Delhi, meaning thereby the Communist Party.

The Hindustan Mazdoor Sewak Sangh propagated among textile workers against the strike, spreading the absurd slander that the Communists wanted the strike because they wanted to lead the workers to join the celebrations which were being boycotted by the citizens!

The Communists, they said, had received orders from the Government for this purpose. Shopkeepers were instructed by the Congress to keep their shops open and not to observe hartal under any circumstances unless called upon by the Congress to do so.

Inside the Provincial League Council an anti-strike resolution was passed by 19 votes against 18 although the Muslim masses were for strike. As a protest against this decision of the Provincial Muslim League, its General Secretary, Anis Hashmi, resigned his office.

People Ready For Action
Despite these decisions of the Congress and the League, the masses behind them were bitterly indignant against the Government's repressive policy and its determination to proceed with the Victory celebrations in Delhi against the unanimous opposition of the citizens both Hindus and Muslims.

While the workers in practically every industry wholeheartedly supported the Communist Party's call for strike, some confusion was caused among Hindu and Muslim shopkeepers by the attitude adopted by the Congress and the League.

Encouraged by the attitude of the Congress and the League, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi issued orders asking the shopkeepers to keep open their shops

till midnight on Victory Day, and officials began putting pressure for illuminating the shops. In utter disregard of popular feeling the authorities erected arches in Chandni Chowk, Delhi's main bazar, and decorated them with electric bulbs. The Deputy Commissioner overruled the elected Municipal Commissioners' objection against illuminating the Town Hall and Clock Tower in defiance of public opinion.

It was in this atmosphere that the Communist Party called upon the merchants and shopkeepers of Delhi and New Delhi to observe complete hartal and stand solidly with the working class to protest against the mailed-fist policy of the British Imperialists.

The Communist Party also called a mass rally at 11 o'clock on the 7th at Urdu Park. The Congress and the League an-

nounced no rally but the Congress leftist groups consisting of the Forward Blocists and the Congress Socialists announced a hunger parade on the Gandhi Grounds.

On the evening of March 6, the Police seized the Communist Party's poster announcing hartal and meeting on the 7th, but hundreds of fresh posters were written by hand and another was printed overnight.

Response To Call Of Communists

Popular response next day was tremendous and opened the eyes of the Government and the National leaders. Delhi had never seen such a complete strike since the Khilafat days. All the Hindu and Muslim shops in Delhi and New Delhi were closed. All transport was suspended and there was complete strike of the municipal and factory workers. Only the Delhi Electric Supply and Tramway Co. (D.E.S.T.) Power House was running according to the previous decision of the Union not to cause inconvenience to the public.

As scheduled, a mammoth mass rally was held at Urdu Park at noon, under the auspices of the Communist Party. SHAKIL AHMED, member of the Provincial Committee, presided, and speeches were made

condemning Police and Military repression in Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, etc.

While the meeting was in progress, news reached us that people in Chandni Chowk had destroyed and burnt Victory arches, and smashed electric bulbs meant for illumination. After the meeting was over, the Communist Party sent squads to ask the people to remain peaceful and desist from burning, etc.

But the people were bitterly indignant over Government's action in decorating bazars and celebrating Victory Day in the teeth of popular opposition. Meanwhile, the Police had made lathi charges and tear-gas attacks, and clashes started between the Police and the people.

Military Called Out

The Military was called out and the situation became tense every moment. The people would not even listen to their leaders. Their reply was, why all these illuminations, decorations and Union Jacks except to spite us and make fun of our slavery?

It was in this situation that the Military let loose terror upon the people. The people retaliated by burning down Government property and setting fire to the Town Hall and the Reserve Bank on which flew the Union Jacks. But was it pure "goondaism" as Government and Congress leaders alleged? It cannot be

More Than 40 Delhi Communists Arrested

REPRESSION WORSE THAN IN 1942

By wire

Delhi, March 24.

With the British Cabinet Mission arriving to-day for the much-advertised aim of giving India freedom, the Delhi bureaucracy's campaign of terror and persecution continues unabated against the people of Delhi. Indiscriminate mass arrests, started since the anti-Victory Day demonstrations on March 7, continue. Over 120 persons have been arrested so far, together with another 60 for alleged violations of the curfew order. Many more are being harassed and further arrests are expected.

DELHI has never experienced such repression in recent years. Even the 1942 repression in Delhi pales before the present one when it is considered that these arrests are for a single day's demonstrations.

How indiscriminate the arrests have been, is shown by the fact that a warrant was issued for the arrest of a person who had died long before the Victory Day!

The bureaucracy's main fire is concentrated against the Communist Party which has suffered most because of the determined part played by the working class in boycotting the Victory Day celebrations and organising protest strikes.

Communist Party Singled Out

Over 40 members and sympathisers of the Party have been already arrested; the latest addition being MOHAMMAD YAMIN, member of the Provincial Committee, who was arrested last night, although he was in Lahore on the 7th March in connection with the DEST workers' adjudication. The bail demand of BAHAL SINGH and RAMCHANDRA SHARMA, Communist leaders arrested in connection with the Abdul Rashid Day demonstrations were cancelled and both have been re-arrested.

The arrested persons are being treated as criminals and have been placed in 'C' class and are not allowed even to interview their relatives and friends. Bail is not being allowed and every obstacle is placed to secure release even for ballable offences.

BHAGAT SINGH KIRTI, prominent Sikh Communist leader, was released after furnishing a security of Rs. 10,000 for a simple case under Section 107, Cr. P. C.

MADAN GOPAL, leader of the Municipal workers was illegally detained for 3 days after the court had accepted bail.

ISMAIL, MITRA, and ABDUL WAHID, arrested with nine other tram workers, were ordered to be released on bail, but all the three were rearrested under Section 38, D.I.R.

The Police officials are making desperate efforts to arrest every available Communist and prevent arrested ones from coming out. The court had accepted bail for Bawa RAMCHANDER, Secretary, Textile Mazdoor Sabha, and issued release orders, but the Police re-charged him with a non-bailable offence and stopped his release. He is still in jail, unaware of the offence for which the Police want to prosecute him.

RAMCHANDER TIAGI, ex-President of the Textile Mazdoor Sabha, was arrested along with 16 other Textile workers' leaders for organising a strike in the Textile mills, but these 17 together with NISHANATH MANNA, Communist correspondent, are being tried for alleged rioting and other offences. All of them have been refused bail.

Congress Attitude Encourages Bureaucracy

This is how the battle has been going on between the Communist Party and the local officials during the last 18 days. But undaunted by the vindictiveness of the Police, the Com-

munist Party is organising the defence not only of the Communists, but of non-Party patriots who are being equally harassed by the local bureaucracy.

The Government in its game of terror and persecution is greatly helped by the shameful attitude adopted by the local Congress leaders and Press. While the bureaucracy is thus running riot in the city under their very noses, Congress MLAs are scrupulously keeping mum. No word of protest has been uttered yet by Mr. Asaf Ali, the local Congress President, or Sjt. Jugal Kishore Khanna, the Provincial Congress Secretary. Mr. Asaf Ali's statement issued on 8th March, contained not a single word against the Police repression, but was a one-sided condemnation of the people who participated in the strikes and demonstrations.

Maulana Azad, President of the Congress, addressed Delhi Congress workers a few days after Victory Day. He too uttered not a single word against the wanton repression or indiscriminate arrests, but only directed his rebuke against the people. Mr. Asaf Ali was even against bringing an Adjournment Motion in the Assembly on 8th March. He only agreed under pressure from the League benches.

This attitude of the local Congress and top Congress leaders has naturally been taken by the Government as an indication that they are free to do what they like provided they discriminate between Congressmen and others. During the first hasty round-up, 5 Congressmen too were arrested. They have been released on bail, and one of them told me that cases against them are likely to be withdrawn.

Several leaders of the Congress leftist group have been arrested, and they will have to stand for trial, because they are not being supported by the official Provincial Congress Committee.

The main attack of the Government, however, remains against the Communist Party and the Trade Unions.

overlooked that no private shops or property was looted. Popular wrath was directed against Government and Municipal buildings, because of the Government policy of repression.

The responsibility for the destruction of the Town Hall must be placed upon the Deputy Commissioner whose blind bureaucratic policy of insisting on decorations in defiance of unanimous popular opinion resulted in so much loss of life and property.

Why must the Government force celebrations over Delhi when every man, woman and child was strongly opposed to them?

The Government had already decided against an Infantry parade in Old Delhi, but it wanted to take through the city tanks and mechanised armoured columns. The blind bureaucrats, however, had reckoned without the popular determination against the parade. Defying death and unmindful of the presence of armed troops, the people spread bricks and other road-blocks over the route of the parade near the Red Fort.

Two Youths Shot Dead

It was here that the Assistant Army Provost Marshal shot dead two youths. I was present at the scene. On one side of the two dead bodies was armed Military ready to fire, while on the other was a large crowd of people refusing to move away till the dead bodies were delivered to them. Ultimately, both the bodies were handed over to the people on Military stretchers, and they were brought to Urdu Bazar near the Jumma Masjid. In front of the Communist Party Office the corpses were covered with Red Flags and taken out in a procession.

Over one lakh people followed this procession which was headed by two large Red flags. At the Clock Tower, the Congress and the League flags were brought by some people. When this mammoth procession carrying all the flags and shouting anti-British and Hindu-Muslim unity slogans reached the Fatehpuri mosque, it was attacked by the Police with tear-gas.

I saw one tear-gas squib hit one of the corpses. The Communists and others who were carrying the corpses took them into the mosque followed by many of the processionists. From the mosque, the corpses were sent to their relatives. They were buried the next day, and again about 40,000 followed them to the burial grounds. Meanwhile had come indiscriminate arrests of political leaders and workers the vast majority being Communists.

Hearing about firing in the city, the workers of the D.E.S.T. Power House struck work in protest and what was to be the night of illuminations in Delhi, turned into a night of black-out, when the whole of Old Delhi was without electricity for two consecutive nights. The D.E.S.T. workers, including tram workers, refused to resume work till their arrested leaders were released or at least bailed out.

They resumed work on the 9th when the Company definitely promised them that they would get their leaders released at least on bail. The tram workers resumed work only on the 11th when orders for release were actually passed and the Agent himself had given bail on behalf of the Company.

Hindu - Muslim People's Solidarity

The unique picture of this anti-Victory demonstration was that Hindus and Muslims were everywhere together in equal numbers. They fought together and died together.

On the 7th March, the blood of Hindus and Muslims flowed together in Delhi and through their united will and sacrifice, unarmed citizens of Delhi stopped armed columns of British Imperialism from driving into the city. The people of Delhi shall never forget the 7th of March.

After such a humiliating defeat, the Government was naturally furious and vindictive, but the people ask what has happened to our leaders who are not raising a finger to defend the people against Police terror. The Hindustan Times, leading Congress daily, owned by the Brits, has persistently refused to write anything against the local repression. The only thing it did was to blame the Communists, whom it accused of creating trouble on account of the Russian situation! The Nationalist Muslim daily Ansari wrote similarly in its issue of the 29th March placing the responsibility for acts of arson, etc., on the Communists.

But all this stuff was meant for Government consumption who welcome these allies in their anti-Communist drive. They were meant to show the Government that Congress is "playing the game" with them and will not "create any trouble" for them—the fundamental policy of the Congress High Command today.

Quite a different tone, however, was adopted by the Congress leaders when they were facing the common people of Delhi. Thus Aruna Asaf Ali addressing a mass meeting on March 19 on the Gandhi Grounds told the people that they should never believe that the Communists had done anything on Victory Day! The Communists, she said, were with the Government celebrating victory that day! The people boycotted the Victory celebrations "at the call of the Congress"!

In front of the Government, place the responsibility upon the Communists, but in front of the people, take credit for the Congress—this seems to be the Congress leaders' policy today.

The people, however, cannot be deceived so easily because they know that there are over 40 Communists in prison and in hospital, while Congress leaders are busy preparing for negotiating with the Cabinet Mission.

Not only that, Communist boys are being daily arrested, while defending workers and citizens against Police terror.

BOYCOTT OF BRITISH-ORDERED, FASCIST-CONTROLLED ELECTIONS

THE GREEK ELECTIONS ON MARCH 31 WILL SETtle nothing simply because the vast majority of the Greek people will have nothing to do with them.

The British talk of 'handing back' Greece to its people after the elections is all eye-wash.

THE MAJOR FORCE IN GREEK POLITICS, THE EAM—WHICH includes the powerful Communist Party, the ELD Socialists, the Union of Democratic Clubs and Left Liberals led by ex-Foreign Minister Sofoulis, are all boycotting the so-called 'elections'.

Apart from the fact that the EAM led Greek resistance to the German occupation army and made war against the British forces a year ago, its present strength is indicated by demonstrations of 200,000 held at Athens not long ago.

In fact, no one wanted elections without radical changes in the whole machinery of elections, and in the atmosphere of the country except the Fascist gangs who want a Monarchist dictatorship and the British Imperialists entrenched in Greece, and determined to run it as a British colony under cover of a Monarchy.

Even the present Government of Sofoulis did not want it. The Monarchists could not force them to hold the elections. Premier Sofoulis stated on February 12 that the Allied observers in Greece (British, French and American) would fix the dates and judge proper conditions for holding fair elections.

The Allied observers then declared publicly that they were only 'observers' and the Greek Government would have to take the decision. Even the Daily Herald, organ of the Labour Party, writing on the 27th of February, had to admit: 'The Greek Cabinet is now unanimously in favour of postponement.'

But BEVIN sent an order to the Regent of Greece on February 20, banning any further postponement of the elections beyond March 31, the date fixed by him; and he has stuck to his guns ever since.

But the Greek cabinet is only a rubber-stamp for the British, and Premier Sofoulis has toed the line despite vehement opposition even from his Ministers. Eleven members of the Greek cabinet out of a total of 36 had resigned by the first week of March on this issue, and three more had publicly stated their case against elections on March 31.

It is a clear case of Bevin rushing through fake elections to show the world that the Fascist-Monarchist dictatorship has got the 'democratic' approval of the Greek people.

Why Boycott?

All the same, it is true that powerful democratic parties don't lightly boycott elections. What has driven the Greek democratic parties to take this stand?

A compelling practical reason is that "four-fifths of the State apparatus of the Judiciary, Police, Gendarmerie, Army officers and the administration belong to the 'X' (Fascist-Monarchist storm-troops) organisation, as admitted by Premier Sofoulis himself, speaking to the representatives of the Greek Trade Union Congress in the beginning of January. He added that the 'X' organisation 'is an obstacle to all Government measures'.

The same charge has been made by the 14 Ministers who have resigned from the Sofoulis Government.

The 'X' elements in the State apparatus, in fact, have shielded the reign of terror by small armed bands of the 'X' organisation which has gone on ever since civil war in Greece was 'officially' ended in December 1944.

by
Arun Bose

The Greek Communist paper, 'Rizopastis' towards the end of February 1946 gave a balance-sheet of the Fascist terror in Greece in 1945. It listed 1,192 democrats as murdered by the 'X' bands, well over 6,000 seriously wounded, 73,000 arrested. The EAM delegation to Britain and Moscow stated that over 400,000 democrats and former guerillas who fought the Germans and the British are still hiding in the mountains.

The climax of this Fascist terror was reached in the attempt by the 'X' forces to seize Kalamata on January 20, 1946. They were a small band of 300 or so who raided the offices of democratic organisations, took hostages and murdered half-a-dozen of them. There were 580 Police and Gendarmes in the town, but they refused to do anything to stop the 'X' hooligans or to arrest them.

Colonel Papadopoulos, who was in command of the forces sent to 'suppress' the 'X' rebels, was a leader of German-controlled 'Security Battalions' which fought the Greek guerillas during the German occupation.

Sofoulis admitted later that Papadopoulos and his forces did nothing in Kalamata except have a champagne party with the rebels!

The bulk of the Kalamata 'rebels' are still at large and were reported to have taken 20 more hostages early in February, and murdered three of them.

Democrats Kept in Jail

Side by side with this terror goes the refusal to release democrats who were to be released in an 'amnesty' according to the 'cease fire' agreement signed between the EAM and the British in December 1944.

British papers have periodically advertised a 'general amnesty for 80,000', etc. But the Minister of Justice, Mavros, gave the 'official' figures early in February 1946. Only 400 out of the 16,000 prisoners had been released according to the 'Decongestion of Prisons' law of December 10, 1945.

But the Fascist-Monarchist forces have not depended solely on the reign of terror to keep their grip over Greece. They have made careful preparations to prevent even those democrats who are still free from voting.

They have made water-tight arrangements for their 'victory' in the elections by faking the electoral registers.

Official figures announced in December revealed about 2,000,000 on the rolls as against only 1,200,000 in 1935. And yet, since 1935, there has been a fall in population, no extension of the franchise, and there are tens of thousands in jail and 200,000 democrats are in hiding in the hills.

The truth is that the 'X' elements in the Government apparatus and the Army and Police have 'cornered' the electoral rolls in hundreds of ways and enrolled bogus 'voters'. Hundreds of examples with actual names and addresses have been quoted in the Greek Press and by cabinet ministers (including

Premier Sofoulis before he formed his Government last November).

Presidents of four villages in the Euboea region, for instance, have refused point-blank to enrol democrats on the rolls.

A War Ministry official in Athens was quoted as refusing to hand over certificates for bread ration cards to EAM soldiers now discharged from the Army. The reason is that ration cards have to be shown to get oneself enrolled.

Even Maben, the UNRRA Director in Greece confessed at a Press Conference in London last December: 'UNRRA can't protect people from arrest. . . . If people had no ration cards before the fighting last year, they may not have them now.' There was such an outcry, in fact, that the Sofoulis cabinet unanimously introduced a bill authorising the preparation of a new register last December. But the Regent—on orders from Bevin—refused to pass it—according to the London News Chronicle.

Converting Greece Into Colony

But the EAM and its democratic allies can make mince-meat of the Fascist-Monarchists, were it not for the iron hand of the British Imperialists protecting them.

The real position of Greece at present is that it has been reduced to the status of a British colony where over 70,000 British troops—with the aid of well-armed Greek Fascists—maintain their hold.

The plain facts are:

*1) No change in the government has taken place since December 1944 without the consent of the British Ambassador, Leeper.

*2) A British Police Mission, under Sir Charles Wickham, has 'supervisory' powers over the Greek Gendarmerie and Police.

*3) A British Military Mission under General Rollins dictates policy on military matters.

These two Missions have assisted the butcher General Scobie who acted as the military dictator in Greece in December 1944 under Churchill's orders, and remains the head of the British forces under direct orders of Bevin.

These 'Missions' have reduced the Sofoulis Government to a gang of 'yes-men' no better off than the Viceroy's Executive Council in India. On every single question, the Greek 'Government' has to function on orders from the British.

It was so in the case of 'purging' the Army and Police of Fascist collaborators. It was the same in regard to an amnesty.

The British have banned the inclusion of democratic elements in the Government.

Finally, Bevin directly intervened to prevent any revision of the electoral rolls and any postponement of the elections to break the Fascist terror and have democratic elections.

But it was at the end of January 1946, that Bevin pushed through his final stroke to 'com-

plete the colonisation of Greece,' as the EAM spokesmen put it.

An 'Economic Agreement' was announced. It granted a £10,000,000 loan to Greece and in return brought Greek economy finally under the complete control of the British. The terms of the 'Agreement' enforced a rigid control for a period ranging from 18 months to 2 years.

The clauses were:
*1) A Currency Committee to be set up with British and American members on it which could take decisions only unanimously.

*2) At a time when the UNRRA index of the cost of living shows a rise to a figure of 10,000 (compared with the 1940 index number of 100), the prices of UNRRA goods sold to the Greeks was to be raised further.

*3) An 'experts' Mission to 'advise' the Greek Government on financial, economic and industrial matters.

*4) 'British advisers will be appointed to work for certain Greek Ministers and be responsible to the Greek Ministers concerned'.

There was no mention of repayment by the British of masses of paper currency they had borrowed from the Greek Government to pay for their occupation force.

Struggle Against British Yoke

In short, Greece has been reduced to the status of a British colony in the Mediterranean, and Bevin and his under-studies have blurted this out in the past—although Bevin denied any such intention at the UNO debate on Greece in London.

At the Labour Party Conference in 1944, before the Labour Government was formed, Bevin said so bluntly: 'The British Empire cannot abandon its position in the Mediterranean.' His Under-Secretary, MacNeill, made the same point clear in an off-the-record talk, on January 9, 1946, to the 'Second Wednesday Club' in London: 'Britain must not lose Greece as she' (Continued on page 9, col. 5.)

DELHI RIAF STRIKE

Complete Unity In Ranks

THE STORY OF THE SIX-DAY STRIKE OF THE MEN in the R.I.A.F. stationed at Delhi was suppressed almost all over India. Yet it was a 'great strike', remarkable for its complete solidarity and discipline.

IT BEGAN ON FEBRUARY 15—COVERING THREE CAMPS, 1,200 men in all. Like other strikes in the R.I.A.F. it arose both from the wide discontent at racial discrimination inside the service and also from the desire of the men to express their solidarity with their people in the struggle for India's freedom.

By the end of the second week of February, the commanding officers of the units realised that something 'disturbing' was happening—and on the 14th, they addressed their men and tried to persuade them that all was well. The only result of this was that every airman became conscious of the impending strike—and from the 15th morning, the strike began.

Friday 15th

Every single Indian airman joined the strike—including the senior non-commissioned officers and all attempts of the officers to persuade them to go back to work failed. Their demands were simple and reasonable.

- *1) 20 per cent of the basic monthly pay as gratuity.
- *2) Deferred Pay as under rules framed.
- *3) Leave with Pay—as promised by I.A.F. authorities but not yet implemented.
- *4) War Bonus of 150 per cent of monthly pay—per year of service.
- *5) After discharge, pension of 40 per cent of basic pay until re-employment.

Saturday 16th

The next day the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief—Sir Roderick Carr—himself came down to the camp to persuade the N.C.O.s to go back to work. He threatened them harshly—saying that if they did not go back to work, he would take serious action against them. Of course he made no attempt to find out their real grievances and demands—nor did he see the other men.

Sunday 17th

But on Sunday, it became clear that the senior N.C.O.s were panicky and would probably go back to work. Some of the strike leaders went to

From Our Own Correspondent

see Mr. Asaf Ali and other Congress leaders; the latter, as has become customary for them, began by rebuking them for starting the strike! The strikers retorted sharply and finally the Congress leaders agreed to do their best and went so far as to advise that they should continue the strike for two or three days till something was achieved. The strikers were encouraged and decided to carry on.

Monday 18th

On Monday, the N.C.O.s went back to work, but the rest stood solid. Some officers of the Resettlement Department came to the camp to persuade them to return to work, arguing that their grievances were being looked into by an Inter-Services Enquiry Committee—on which the R.I.A.F. was represented by Wing-Commander Mukerji.

Immediately, all the airmen told the Resettlement officers—that they had no confidence in the Wing-Commander. This man, they said, had made himself unpopular by his anti-Indian attitude; and in particular they bitterly criticised W.C. Mukerji because when a general increment of pay for men in the R.I.A.F. was announced he opposed it—on the grounds that he could get any number of educated graduates (particularly from Bengal) on Rs. 20 or Rs. 25 a month!

In the evening, the news came that the question of their grievances had been raised in the Assembly by Dewan Chamanlal but the reply of the War Secretary, Mason, was on the old lines—that an Inter-Services Enquiry Committee had been set up!

Tuesday 19th

In the morning, the Congress leaders assured the strikers that they were moving in the matter.

In the afternoon, some officers came and argued that Indians could not be given the same pay as Britishers as India was too poor! One boy retorted: "India is poor because you are

here. If you go, India will become rich and afford to reward its sons well for the services they give."

W.C. Mukerji also came to the camp; he abused and threatened the men with reprisals, prison, beatings and the rest; but this only resulted in further strengthening the strikers in their resolve.

In the night, mysterious unsigned pamphlets appeared threatening that if within twenty-four hours the strike was not called off, severe disciplinary action would be taken against all of them.

Wednesday 20th

The next morning, however, a general meeting was called and the strikers after a heated debate once more unanimously decided to continue the strike.

In the afternoon, the strike leaders met the Congress leaders again and they advised the calling off of the strike—assuring that they would do their best in the Central Assembly for the men. The strike leaders returned.

In the afternoon, they were met by a popular Indian officer, F.L.T. J. E. Lewis who assured them that there would be no victimisation; British and Indian airmen would be treated on the same basis as far as local amenities were concerned and a reply would be given to their other demands by March 2.

In view of the assurance of the Congress leaders and the statement of F.L.T. Lewis, the strike was called off at 4 p.m.—on its sixth day. The next morning just as every man walked out of work on the 15th, every man went back to work, unitedly on the 21st.

After The Strike

Since the strike ended, nothing has been done to satisfy the real basic demands of the strikers. The Air Officer Commanding Sir Roderick Carr addressed all the men and delivered the usual sanctimonious homily—full of threats, and saying nothing about their just demands.

Inside the Assembly also, the Congress leaders as yet have not been able to achieve anything towards fulfilling their assurance to the strikers.

In contrast, Wing-Commander Mukerji who does not possess the confidence of a single Indian in the Air Force has been promoted to Group-Captain—a slap in the face for all Indians in the services and outside.

Thus since the strike ended nothing has changed. And there is no doubt that among the Indian Air Force men discontent is growing at the complete disregard of the promises made to them both by the authorities and the Congress leaders.

Treading Hitler's Fatal Road ?

By Cable

Moscow, March, 11.

ON MARCH 5, CHURCHILL DELIVERED AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL SPEECH AT FULTON, MISSOURI. FOR SEVERAL DAYS ALREADY THE SPEECH HAS ENGAGED THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD PRESS AND, OF COURSE, ONE MUST NOT UNDERESTIMATE ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

CHURCHILL is a very prominent figure in current history and one who has not retired from the scene—today he prefers to act under the pseudonym of the Labour Government.

Under cover of this pseudonym he does not act with his former finesse and skill and is even clumsy at times.

But things are just what one would expect them to be when Churchill is about. Is manner so important after all? Diplomacy is not a ballet and it is not important how an actor dances, whether he is graceful or clumsy; the important thing is what motivates the dance.

Under Bevin the theme is still an old one; arousing suspicion against the Soviet Union, raising alarm at the supposed "aggressions" of the Soviet Union, organising hostile blocs and making our neighbours hostile to us on our southern frontiers, where a deadlock has been reached and a bad deadlock at that.

'Irreconcilable Ideologies'

Churchill's speech was constructed in the following way:

The Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the United States and Great Britain, on the other, have different and irreconcilable ideologies. The Soviet Union has subdued Eastern Europe; its might is a threat to liberty; the Anglo-Saxon race is an epitome of liberty and—this race should, therefore, unite in a huge war effort to stem by force the Soviet "expansion" and propaganda.

Comparing Eastern Europe to those fortunate nations which enjoy the paternal rule of the British Government, Churchill exclaims: "Here are the file-deeds of freedom which should be in every cottage home."

We would hardly see that it is very comfortable or "free" in the homes of Bombay, Delhi, Alexandria, Calcutta or Cairo that is, where not tens but hundreds of millions of people live under the British rule.

Mr. Churchill is also satisfied with the liberty and true security of the individual that is to be found around the Spanish "home." In the whole of Churchill's inspired hymn to liberty there was not a single word of condemnation of the Spanish gangster.

Nor could he have said anything about Franco who was inflicted on the Spanish people by Hitler, Mussolini and Lord Plymouth and who continues to torture thousands of unfor-

BIHAR DEFEAT

(Continued from page 5.)

This is how we lost our deposits as well as our seats. The best fighting elements among the kisans in this region have already had their eyes opened by the forces that acted for the Congress victory. They now want to build up the Communist Party as their independent fighting force—the only guarantee that the Congress won't act as the landlords' tool and get away with it.

One of them put it in a nutshell with the remark: 'The Congress sowed sixty years ago and is now reaping the harvest. We are sowing now and the next harvest will be ours'.

by Academician
Eugene Tarle

tunates in his dungeons because he is supported by Churchill's firm hand.

We now have documentary evidence of the fact that Franco himself regarded his immediate removal as inevitable in the event of victory for the "freedom-loving" nations.

His 'Love' For Greece

Churchill went on to say that their duty did not include interfering in the internal affairs of countries that they had not conquered during the war.

Greece was not conquered, but they got busy, nevertheless, with tommyguns and even brought naval artillery into play in order to force on the Greek people a Fascist monarchy which they so hate!

At one time you justified the use of arms and armed intervention in Greece by the statement that Greece is in the Mediterranean and occupies a position of importance to Britain and that you, therefore, had to keep your people there at all costs.

The Greeks could not make head or tail of this. They thought they were the Greek nation and not British subjects. If they did not want to understand what was there to do except to pour shells on them from destroyers?

The English-speaking nations must be ruled by the constant thought of the unswerving goal and simple decisions, the Fulton orator informs us. What is true is true. The Greeks have experienced the splendid simplicity and undeviating nature of Churchillian decisions. What could be simpler than the undeviating gunfire on demonstrators (especially unarmed demonstrators)?

In general, all these arguments are crowned by Churchill's expression of satisfaction at the happy state of the subjects of His Majesty who, let it still be remembered, live in the shadow of the Magna Carta, the Habeas Corpus Act and other great scrolls of law. All these ideal principles are put into force, you see, in all British possessions. Without flickering an eyelid the orator actually said that: in all countries of the British Empire.

Speech Of 1918

What, indeed, was the whole of this Fulton speech? It was a typical agitation of the 1918 brand—a dream that the Russian Revolution and the Soviet system can be swept off the face of the earth if sufficiently big effort were made with one foul swoop. Perhaps Churchill will remember what came of these sweet dreams in those days. Surely, he does not think that repetition of this gamble holds any attractions?

There is plenty of argument in Churchill's speech and it is put forward with heat such as nobody has succeeded in achieving since the death of Doctor Goebbels.

It is not only the temperament of the Fulton speech which brings back memories. The main difference—and this is purely external and of secondary importance—is that the former Berlin curses against the Soviet

Union were addressed to both Anglo-Saxon powers, while the present Fulton fulmination was addressed to America only because, in the firm conviction of the speaker, there is no need for propaganda in Great Britain and that everything has already been done there so, that further propaganda would be like knocking at an open door.

The content of the inspired Fulton sermon is the following.

The Russians are spreading communism in a considerable part of Asia and Europe. They are apparently threatening the peaceful progress of the British Empire and all those free and happy homes that we spoke about above. They are preventing genuinely free elections in the Balkans, so that there are genuinely free elections only in Greece.

In Churchill's opinion the Soviet Union is preventing real democracy in the Balkans. And the Soviet Union has cut off the whole of Eastern Europe with an "iron curtain," so that nobody knows what is going on there. It would be different if Poland were ruled by real democrats like Raczkievich or Sosnkowski! Or if Mihailovich were in Yugoslavia! Or Radescu in Rumania! Or Tanner in Finland! Everything then would be as clear as daylight.

Where is "Iron Curtain"?

Of course, it sometimes happens that the "iron curtain" has to be used in a state's own zone despite even the Magna Carta. For example, when it is not quite the thing for neighbours to get curious and see what German battalions are being supported in the British zone in Germany: could not a commission be sent there?

If a commission cannot be sent there perhaps it could be sent to Indonesia to find out why forty thousand Indonesians have already been killed and why they are still preventing with machine guns and hand-grenades the establishment in their country of "happy and free homes"?

If it cannot be done in Indonesia perhaps we can take a closer look at Anders' army (the Polish emigre army still supported by British funds, at present in Italy)?

But no, in a moment the iron curtain comes down in front of the curious and perhaps even hits one of them awkwardly on the head (as was the case when an undesirable visitor recently took a look at Anders' army).

Apart from Eastern Europe and the "iron curtain," there are other reasons why it should

be constantly recommended that the United States should argue with "new weapons of one type" in her relations with the Soviet Union.

First, the Soviet Union spreads Communist ideas. True enough, Churchill does not produce one single concrete fact and could not produce one—but that is not important. He has the idea that if the Soviet Union does not spread its ideas openly it certainly wants to spread them secretly.

Secondly, the Soviet Union is a menace to its neighbours. It is, therefore, necessary to deal firmly with it and not to adopt conciliatory tactics for "Russians only respect strength."

World Reactions

We already know many of the comments which the world Press has made on Churchill's speech. All are agreed that it is a sharp, a completely open and deliberately provocative challenge to the Soviet Union, and that, if such a challenge should meet with any success, it would only lead to worsening of the already tense situation.

They differ only in the way they qualify its nature and deliberate provocation. Some praise it for its determined nature; others say that it is "untimely." The third group is dissatisfied with the fact that Churchill is so fully confident that the United States is willing to serve as a new buttress to the already tottering prestige of the British Empire and is willing to put out the unextinguished fires that are burning in various parts of that Empire—in Egypt today, in India tomorrow and somewhere else the day after.

Some of the publicists who have already commented on Churchill's speech were perplexed and confused at the persistent statement that this common Anglo-Saxon challenge to the Soviet Union which he is propagating must be put into effect at once, while they still have a monopoly of new types of weapons (Churchill would like to believe and to convince his listeners that they still have the monopoly).

We think that under no circumstances does England want to fight. Great Britain today is not the land of Churchill or even of those diplomats who, from lack of experience, believe that if you hammer the table with your fist ungrudgingly it is very helpful in diplomatic conflicts.

And if Britain, the Britain of the people, democratic intelligent Britain, does not want to be scared by foolish phantoms

and does not want to be drawn into any new catastrophe on the basis of invented fears, then it is hardly likely that America, which is farther removed from these phantoms than Britain, will be scared by the prophetic cries of Mr. Churchill. . . .

Soviet Is Determined

The Soviet Union in saving herself and, in saving the whole of the European continent and Great Britain, split rivers of blood and suffered soul-rending torment, such as even parts of Europe which suffered most did not even dream of. I say this because I am in a position to study all those documents which an ordinary newspaper reader does not come in contact with (especially those who do not live nearer than Fulton).

We SHALL NOT permit a repetition of 1941 and we shall not permit even the most modest preparations for attack on our borders.

We know full well: first, that the Soviet Union is not striving for world domination of which we are accused by Churchill who naturally does not believe such nonsense himself.

We also know that the Soviet Union is firmly determined to ensure the security of all its frontiers and, secondly, in the effort to achieve this legitimate and necessary aim, the Soviet Union WILL NOT submit to any threats, to any cunning or to brandishing of any new weapons, be they of one or diverse types, but will go her own road without turning aside; she will not encroach on the interests of other nations and will not retract from her own.

Today the dangerous and incorrect words—"the Russian people respect force; let us show them that we are strong" have crept into several English newspapers.

Upto now whoever has tried to make a show of force to the Russian people has invariably lost the game. Nothing annoys the Russian people more than an attempt to scare them. Churchill knows better than many people that Hitler buried himself and his Third Reich in just such an attempt. Why does that orator of Fulton call on the two great Anglo-Saxon peoples to tread this fatal road?

SITUATION IN GREECE

(Continued from page 8.)

would lose Italy and Turkey as well!

The EAM and the democratic forces have therefore made it clear that they want postponement of the elections and complete withdrawal of British troops in order to give the people of Greece a chance to break the Fascist terror once and for all, hold democratic elections within two months and begin the task of reconstruction.

They raised this demand at a mammoth demonstration in January, 1945, at Athens at which the Democratic Front of the EAM parties, the ELD Socialists, the Union of Democratic Clubs, was formed. They have also the support of Left Liberals led by Sofianopoulos and 14 Cabinet Ministers. This mammoth demonstration was attended by 250,000 Greeks, even according to understated estimates published in the British Press.

The democratic movement for Greek freedom has since demonstrated its strength again in the widespread general strike in January this year which involved even Civil Servants, all transport and communication workers and even UNRRA workers, and those working in British establishments.

The election farce on March 31 will settle nothing. Those who support the elections, will in fact, vote for British enslavement. Those who boycott it are determined to fight it tooth-and-nail until the British are forced to quit.

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The strike marks a glorious landmark in the history of our National Movement. This publication contains the story of the strike, an account of the upsurge in Bombay in its support, the statements of the Central Naval Committee, of S. A. Dange and the article by Dr. G. Adhikari, reprinted from PEOPLE'S AGE, summing up the lessons of the historic events which took place in Bombay from February 21 to 23.

(Six Annas)

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★ Anglo-U. S. Hullabaloo On Iran
★ British 'Treaty' With Transjordania
★ Imperialist Intrigues Among Arabs

THE latest news (March 26, morning) about the Iran issue coming up before U.N.O. is that discussions have been postponed twenty-four hours "to obtain official confirmation that Soviet troops are evacuating." (Moscow radio on March 24 announced all Soviet troops would evacuate Iran in five to six weeks "if nothing unforeseen happens.")

This announcement comes at the end of a long propaganda war of nerves pursued by the U.S. Government—backed by Britain.

U. S. Pressure

By the 16th, the big barrage about "Soviet troops marching on Teheran (first started by the U.S. State Department)" was nearing its end, though the final deathblow to these lies was given later by the Persian Premier himself on the 23rd when he "categorically denied reports that fresh Soviet troops have entered Iran since March 2." (Bombay Chronicle, March 24).

But in place of this barrage, came a new one—first, that the Iranian Government was intending to put its case before U.N.O., secondly, it was "learned authoritatively" that the U.S. had given an ultimatum to the Persian Government that it would raise the question if within 24 hours, Iran did not raise it.

On March 17 and 18 there was no further news; then on March 19 the U.S. State Department refused to "confirm or deny" whether there was an ultimatum or not; in contrast the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Prince Firouz, roundly denied the existence of an ultimatum!

Then on March 20, the news arrived that Iran had presented her case to U.N.O. through her Ambassador to the U.S., M. Hussain Ala. But this again soon developed into a mystery for the Iranian Premier on March 24 emphasised that he expected to settle the differences with the Soviet "by negotiation," and sharply rebuked M. Hussain Ala for his letter to the U.N.O. Secretary-General as "unauthorised."

Why The Propaganda

What do all these reports and counter-reports amount to?

First of all that the U.S. Government—backed throughout by the British, has been working its hardest to build up a big anti-Soviet scare over Iran; particularly it has concentrated on bringing pressure on the Iranian Government to break its direct negotiations with the Soviet; and to allow Britain and the U.S. to intervene in U.N.O. in order to defend Iranian 'independence'!

The real reason however has not anything to do with the independence of Iran; for it is virtual British suzerainty over Iran that has for the last thirty years made a mockery of its independence. In fact, as Reuter

confessed in a dispatch of March 25, the real reason is the fear of the "reduction of British and U.S. local influence."

But it is clear that the Soviet is not going to allow this to happen so easily; negotiations are already going on between the Soviet and Iran and from present reports, it looks as though they are likely to succeed.

And the Soviets' request for a postponement of the meeting of the Security Council for sixteen days is to allow these negotiations to continue and reach a conclusion; in contrast the British and the U.S. oppose a postponement because if the meeting is postponed the negotiations might prove successful and their chances of intervention to cause trouble between Iran and the Soviet be destroyed!

Fake Change

THE British last week announced with a big fanfare that "a new Muslim State came into being" when "a treaty of mutual alliance between Britain and Transjordan was signed on March 22."

But this treaty while formally it recognises the independence of Transjordan, in fact continues the old domination in a new form, for Britain's main needs in Transjordan are military and strategic and special clauses are there in the treaty to safeguard these needs.

First, mutual assistance if either country becomes involved in war, which means, as the clause goes on to explain, "grant of communication facilities by Transjordan to Britain."! Secondly, the grant of facilities for protection of the British oil pipe-line running through Transjordan from Kirkuk in Iraq to Haifa in Palestine.

Thus the new treaty safeguards both British military and oil interests in this area.

The new treaty therefore carries forward the tradition of the old mandate, whose constitution was described thus:

"The constitution selected has proved in harmony with Great Britain's interests. It is an instrument that serves the ends of British policy in the important matters of strategy and communications and yet the native Government intercepts many of the attacks which would inevitably be directed against Great Bri-

tain, if she were to attempt to administer the country directly, and greatly mitigates their vehemence." (HANS KOHN, Nationalism and Imperialism in the Middle East, p. 174).

Put badly, all that the new treaty means is that Transjordan will continue to "serve the ends of British policy."

Reactionary Bloc

And it has already begun doing this. No sooner was the ink dry on the treaty when Emir Abdullah, Transjordan's ruler and most important Arab agent of the British, put forward his old plan for a closer union between Iraq and Transjordan "which would give these two (states) an armed force of over 50,000 which will be distinctly superior to any other local force in the Middle East." (Free Press Journal, March 19.)

This clearly is a move to consolidate a reactionary pro-British bloc right in the heart of the Arab world.

But inside Iraq itself, there is no doubt that Britain is not having everything her own way.

The Iraq Premier says that there is no Kurdish problem in Iraq (March 24) when only ten days before, the Baghdad Government, reported Reuter, sent reinforcements of six fresh battalions to Iraqi Kurdistan—the usual autocratic "cure" for democratic upsurge.

So also the Hindustan Times special correspondent on March 5 reported that, considerable opposition to Britain's interference is growing in Iraq, one paper indicting Britain's biggest friend, General Nuri as-Said, President of the Senate, as only in power with the help of "British bayonets."

As usual, the Government described its critics as "Communist-inspired" but the correspondent writes that, the "papers which the Premier undoubtedly had in mind are edited by very capable and sincere journalists whose passion for freedom and the advancement of Iraqi interests, would hardly persuade them to dance to any foreign tune." (March 22.)

This is the real reason then for British anxiety regarding developments in Iraq; they know that if Iraq goes democratic, it will affect the entire Middle East. This is why they are both trying to prevent the victory of Iranian democracy and also to consolidate a reactionary bloc in Iraq and Transjordan as a barrier to democratic advance.

—March 26.

VICTORY FOR GURKHA COMMUNIST

(Continued from page 1.)

ground and the sturdy Gurkha workers rose to a man to come forward in defence of the Red Flag. Their red caps were their emblem and the kukris (Gurkha daggers) tucked in the waist was their answer to anti-Communist terror.

Sunday was the polling day (March 17th). Whole Gurkha families sat up all Saturday night putting the finishing touches to their victory preparations. There was a great scramble for red caps which were in short supply. They solved the problem by tying round their heads any reddish cloth with the hammer and sickle marked on it.

At dawn on Sunday, Gurkha men and women drew up in marching order in the gardens—wearing red caps and kukris. Nobody would touch even a cup of tea (which marks the beginning of a new day in the tea

gardens). Where was the time? Suppose the delay led to some complications? They were going to cast their votes first and then think of tea and food.

The columns of the Red Flag began the march. They climbed 3,000 to 4,000 feet, walked 5 or 6 miles and took up positions at the polling booths by 8-30 in the morning. They had deliberately turned up one hour early to mount guard against any attacks on the Red Flag booths.

Voting began. Within three hours Ratanlal's box at the Kutchery booth was packed and a new box was brought. As the news spread outside the booth, cries of 'Malla Bage Zindabad' rent the air (Malla Bage means 'the second son of the Brahman family').

By four in the afternoon, news from all the booths added up to the total—Ratanlal had trounced his opponents—made them lose their deposits.



Imtiaz As He Was

IMTIAZ KHAN

IMTIAZ KHAN, beloved Communist leader of 20,000 seamen of Bombay, breathed his last on March 15, as a result of a murderous attack staged by him to have been made by serang's goondas.

This was the third attack of its kind made on Imtiaz Khan in the last few months. This time, the assassin's knife dug deep into his stomach cutting into the liver and the intestines. After four days of hard struggle, Imtiaz Khan succumbed to the deadly wounds.

Ever since 1936, when Imtiaz started his political career his life had been one of hairbreadth escapes from the Police, and of continuous fight against Imperialism, now open, now underground. Thrown into jail several times, dogged by the O.I.D. all the time, physically attacked by the enemy's agents, Imtiaz kept the Red Flag flying under all conditions, and carried on the fight.

For the last one year Imtiaz Khan had been working in the Bombay Seamen's Union. He breathed new life and spirit among the seamen and organised them all—the Pathans, Punjabis, Goanese and Malabar—under the Red Flag. He carried on an incessant struggle against bribery and corruption so rampant in the ports and on the ships. His work had struck terror into the hearts of all the corrupt officials and serangs. Many a time their goondas had attempted to murder him.

Hundreds of Pathans and other seamen came to join his funeral procession, which was led by S. S. Mirajkar, Communist President of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress.

Speaking at his grave on behalf of the Bombay Committee of the Communist Party of India, Oke said:

"Imtiaz followed in the footsteps of the great martyr Husain. Like Husain he fought the forces of evil and injustice. Imtiaz died for a cause which is bound to tri-

The election volunteers at last felt relieved and settled down to have a cup of tea and a bite. They had not eaten all day.

Later on, the procession of the Red Flag began with Ratanlal Brahman. Gurkha women led the procession—sturdy and sturdily with their faces shining with joy. Then came Ratanlal in a red cap, and the others with him. Passers-by would gape at the procession and burst into cheering when they heard that their 'Malla Bage' had won!

umph one day. Imtiaz lives in the heart of all those who fight for this cause."

K. B. GOLWALA

K. B. GOLWALA, the third victim of anti-Communist butchery in Bombay within one and a half months, died on the night of the 25th of March. He was murdered by jobbers and goondas of a mill in Colaba in an attack on Communist election propagandists on Saturday, March 23rd. The ruffians had been hired by the Congress to smash the Communist election campaign for the Bombay Textile Labour seat. He received a savage blow on the head which split his skull open. He fought against death for two days without ever regaining consciousness.

One of the first among Parsi youth to dedicate his young life to the revolutionary movement for freedom and Socialism, Golwala is the first Parsi martyr in the fight for freedom.

One of the best-loved figures in the Student movement in India for several years, he was the Manager of The Student, the journal of the All-India Students Federation—the only students' paper run entirely by students with a wide circulation all over India.

For the last two months, he had plunged himself fearlessly into the Communist election campaign in Maharashtra and Bombay.

He died as he lived—a soldier in the army of the Red Flag. Young Communists all over India and veteran workers for whose cause he fought give him their salute and will avenge his death. His martyrdom will bring a new generation of Parsi youth into the undying movement for freedom in this country hallowed by the blood of a thousand martyrs.

PUNJAB FOOD BATTLE

(Continued from page 6.)

In a chastened frame of mind, to his office!

At three o'clock the sahib gave in, faced by the determination of the people. He announced at a meeting of over ten thousand citizens, to which he was forced to come, that he agreed to the following demands:

- * Government officials and other citizens to receive an equal share of wheat—"reservation" of depots or priority for officials to be abolished.
- * 17 depots to be opened;
- * Wheat ration to be raised immediately from 1½ chhatacks to 3½.
- * The arrested leaders to be released on the 5th March.

After this victory, an all-Parties' Food Committee has been formed. But unfortunately the local Congress leaders are refusing to join the Committee, on the plea that they have received no permission from their "High Command"! It seems they have learnt nothing from the historic battle which the people have waged unitedly against the insolent Deputy Commissioner.

WHO SUPPORTED THE CONGRESS

-- WHO THE RED FLAG

ANDHRADESA went to the polls for the Provincial elections from 19th to 23rd March.

Said a Bezvada worker proudly to me: "Never in his life had the Congress to face such a fight and that by a party which could work legally only for three years." He was right. But there was more to it. No Party had to face odds so terrific as our Party.

If the tallest among all-India Congress leaders had carried on an incessant "traitor" propaganda against the Party, the Andhra Congress leaders had for months plugged the foulest slander campaign against our members. In spite of it, our Party's programme and policy rallied four to ten times the people that Andhra's Congress leaders could get to listen to their abuse and slander.

Joshi's rallies a fortnight ago made the Congress leaders more panicky. Frantic appeals were made to Pandit Nehru and Sarat Bose, etc., to come post-haste to Andhra and help the Congress win the elections. They could not come but sent their personal appeals to Andhra voters.

PANDIT NEHRU gave the same old slogan, "A vote for the Congress is a vote for freedom."

SARAT BOSE, in his usual cocksure manner said, "I regard the Communists as the enemies of our freedom"; and having expressed his opinion thought he had finished us.

The old forged circular re. a Joshi-Maxwell "secret pact" was printed and distributed in thousands of copies. Even after Masani's attempts to revive it in the Assembly had ended in a fiasco and for honest men it was obvious enough that our Party was neither in the pay of nor in secret pact with the Government, the redoubtable Dr. Patlabhi issued a statement that the Government had admitted "the letter."

Congress - Zemindar Alliance

The Congress alliance with the worst zemindars was plain for everyone to see in Andhra.

On the 18th, the Raja of Chalapalli, one of the many zemindars whom the Andhra Congress leaders have embraced, issued an appeal asking all Andhras to vote for both the Congress candidates in East Kistna. The emphasis was necessary because while the Congress Harijan candidate Kurmaya was Chalapalli's hereditary, the other candidate Seetha Mahalaxamma was the nominee of Ramanah Naidu.

This Naidu was an old Justice, a National War Front patron and leader of the Khapu (Naidu) community. He also appealed to all and sundry to vote for both the Congress candidates, i.e., his own and Chalapalli's.

The Raja of Munagala, Dr. Patlabhi's bosom friend, gave Rs. 10,000 to Kaleswarrao for expenses in the election fight against the young Communist Trade Union leader, POTHARAJU, who is contesting the Bezvada Urban seat.

He also gave Rs. 5,000 to Chitti, the Bezvada town Congress leader, who contested the Labour seat.

The zemindars of Vuyyur and Elamarra gave all their cars to Veeraraghaviah, the Congress candidate, for West Kistna.

All this was apart from the big funds that Dr. Patlabhi received from Sardar Patel, boss of the Central Parliamentary Board.

about this influencing and terrorising of voters.

At the Pedatummidu polling centre, as soon as our car stopped, poor peasants and Harijan landless labourers crowded round us and complained that the village Karnam was sitting near the booth and telling voters, "I can see through the bamboo wall into which box you are throwing your voting paper. Take care."

VASU, our candidate, went in to complain against the Karnam and I told a gutty peasant to hold group meetings of batches of our voters and tell them they had no need to fear the Karnam. If he tried any oppression in the village the next day, we would fight it back.

along had been paid for their votes and when one of our volunteers shouted out, "Your vote in the Red box to fight the zemindars," some of them shouted, "Yes," till the Congress agent angrily shut them up!

At Mandavali, Congress volunteers and kids led by goondas physically blocked the way to our voters. They influenced the shop-keepers to refuse tea or beedies to our voters and when we reached there, our volunteers told us the whole story.

We were in a minority here and this is how the Congress behaved where it felt strong. When we offered to get them beedies, etc., from the next village, our peasant voters said, "No, no! We will stick it out with water even for three days if necessary. We will show them they cannot cow us down!"

At Putrala, the zemindar, Butchi Naina, had so fixed up matters that not one house would give us either a room for an election office or water to drink. We set up our election office under a bullock cart, brought Red volunteers from outside and sup-

Our masses of peasant and Harijan voters came as if for a festival with Red flags and bands and cast their votes in the Red box against the village oppressors and exploiters.

At Khamampadu, one of our peasant voters having voted was returning from the booth leading his young five-year-old son by the hand. A Red peasant met him and said: "You seem to have cast your vote. I can see it from your shining face. You look as if you were the zemindar's Amra Mohudu (Zemindar's Bap) at which the entire mass present roared with laughter."

At Tiruvur a bangle-seller and a Red Flag supporter told me: "There is a lot of goondagiri here. It rests on six pillars. Four of them are the Mokassadar and his three brothers, the other two are two big 'Komti' (Vaiyya) blackmarketeers. We will knock them off quite soon."

But in hundreds of cases our poor peasant and Harijan supporters in areas where the Red Flag is not very strong were too afraid to openly vote for us. The Karnams, munsiffs and zemindars have too strong a grip over their life. The Congress agents knew this.

At Kodali, for instance, a line of five bullock-carts came, each sporting as many as five Tricolours! They went into the booth, voted and as they left, a Congress polling agent remarked: "Rape their mothers! Look at their faces. You can see they have voted in the Red box. If they had come with fewer Tricolours, there was some chance of their giving the Congress some votes. The cheats!"

At Chalapalli the Raja and his entourage came to vote. Our volunteers greeted him with "Down with the zemindari system." "If you want the zemindari to be finished, vote in the Red box."

Congress volunteers greeted him with, "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai," "Raja Garu ki jai."

What I saw in several polling stations, however, made me sad. The abuse and hoiganism in the name of the Congress drove many of our peasants anti-Congress. At Mandavali, where the Congress supporters were abusing and terrorising our voters, a peasant said in disgust: "Their mother! This is the Congress. Where is Gandhi-garu and where is this Congress? Tchee!"

New Andhra's Heroic Battle

In almost every polling station a section of poor peasants and Harijans were going bitterly anti-Congress. For they saw that the moving spirits in the Congress booths were just those fellows who daily oppressed them in their villages.

Nevertheless, the fight for the four seats in Kistna district, and for the Ellore Women's seat, were hard fights. The elections have proved one thing: that the Red Flag in Andhra could withstand the continued onslaught of the Congress prestige, zemindars' power, blackmarketeers' money, and official terror. It made it clear that the new Andhra of the common people had fought well against heavy odds and would grow.

Vested interests vs. toiling Andhras

Officials Behind Congress

In a coffee house at Gudivada, three or four polling officials sit discussing. One says, "The Communists have got a good hold on the people. But what can they do? The Congress is rich and powerful. It is coming into power on April 1, as Prakasam says. Even officials will try and help the Congress." Another says, "Oh! No! It is not so easy. These Communists are a real terror. If any official does some hanky-panky, they are not the people to sit quiet and be afraid," and so on.

In a few places our polling agents were mature comrades who protested against the officials trying to induce or influence voters and stopped it. But in a vast majority of polling booths, the official issuing the ballot papers would add the advice, "Put it in the yellow box." The yellow was the ballot box of the Congress and the Red, that of the Communist candidate.

Many of them simply had to, because Sjt. Prakasam had gone up and down Andhradesa openly threatening everyone that those who neglected to do their duty by the Congress would have to pay for it when the Congress came into power.

The same Congress that had driven the fear of the British from the hearts of our people, was now planting the fear of the Congress instead.

Village Leeches' Part

The Karnams and Munsiffs, the village Revenue and Police bosses were all over-zealous in doing their duty by the coming Government. They not only went round intimidating the peasants in the villages but came and squatted at the polling booths.

I went round all the polling centres in East Kistna district, in the Nuzvid and Tiruvu taluqs in West Kistna district, etc., and personally heard complaints. Such complaints were heard at

several polling stations. At Vadali, I heard that Harijans were being terrorised by the Munsiff, and so on.

A Battle Against Bossdom

From the above, the picture is now clear.

The election in Andhra is not a fight between the Congress and Communists. It is a battle of the New Andhra of the common toiling people against the whole weight of bossdom, political, feudal and official.

It was no easy fight that the Party had to face. But it fought this battle remarkably well, so well that all honest men admitted that never had the Congress to fight so hard nor did it ever fight with the help of such dirty allies and still dirtier weapons.

Even anti-Communists openly admitted that they had to strain every nerve. Among themselves they confessed that if there was adult suffrage nothing could stand in the way of the Communists sweeping the polls.

For the fact is that though the landless labourers (who are solidly behind our Party), constitute 40 to 50% of the village population, only 15% of them have the right to vote. The Congress had not only the masses of the people, but all the money, power and the Press on its side; as for us not even our whole mass could vote. But still these odds were not sufficient for the Congress leaders. Here are the tactics they adopted.

Congress Tactics

All the bus services had been engaged by the Congress. All available lorries were pressed into service. Many lorries, there were as many as ten for Bezvada alone, were used only to carry around some goondas and a lot of kids who were taught the slogans "Traitors to the August Revolution must be crushed." The Communist white ants must be crushed, jeering at our voters and volunteers, etc. The processions taken out consisted mostly of a score or so of boys led by a few goondas.

One worker-kid in Bezvada was a clever fellow. He went up and talked friendly to one of the Congress boys and said, "The Red Flag gives us eight annas each for joining in the procession. I think it is too little." The Congress kid replied, "Oh, that is four annas more than what I get. We procession boys get four annas, but the boys who are in the lorries get Rs. 5 because they have to shout the whole day!"

Having got the secret out of the boy, the Red kid rushed back breathlessly and gave us the complete rates at which the Congress had hired these slogan-shouters.

In the East Kistna wet land area, I heard that votes were bought at Rs. 10 each and in West Kistna, the dry area, for Rs. 5 each. On the way to Putrala I saw a well-dressed man herding a number of people into a Congress lorry. On inquiry I found that he was an idle hanger round the law court of Tiruvu, who now took the lucrative job of securing voters for the Congress. In many cases such middle-men got four out of the five rupees paid for each vote!

This area is dry, waterless, with land full of date palms and wild berries. It is probably the most backward tract in Andhradesa bordering on the Nizam's Telangana districts. The Congress voters being herded

plied them food and water from the next village. In these areas, there is a real big terror of Mokassadar as the chhota zemindars are called here.

In spite of all these tricks, the Congress felt it necessary to resort to bogus voting. The most glaring instance was the one at Pedapallaparu. This is a Red stronghold. Congress agents had little genuine votes and wanted to make it up by bogusing. A Khapu woman was sent in to bogus the vote of a Harijan woman. Our polling agent objected. She and the Congress polling agent maintained that she was a bona fide Harijan woman. I arrived there in the midst of this deadlock.

We would not withdraw our objection nor they the bogus voter. Suddenly one of our polling agents got a bright idea. He called a photographer to him and said loudly: "I will accept that she is a genuine voter if she agrees to my taking her photo and publishing it and her name in the papers that she is a Harijan woman." She went pale and edged towards the door. Finally the Polling Officer could see that she was a bogus voter and asked her to go away and not risk arrest.

Our Masses And Spirit

Our masses and our volunteers were a clear contrast to the Congress. Any honest man could see that while Congress volunteers shouted, "Crush the Communists," we shouted, "Down with blackmarketing."

WEEK IN REVIEW

(Continued from Page 2.)

In the present international set-up, this Army of Occupation, retained in the name of "Defence of India," is intended to build up India as an anti-Soviet base and get Indian vested interests as camp-followers of the aggressive foreign policy of the Labour Imperialists. This is the price demanded of India in return for a compromise with out vested interests.

The indications are already there of this nefarious plan.

A "high-ranking British military officer" (who naturally enough is not eager to disclose his name) has recently stated to the Orient Press that Britain wants to convert the North-West Frontier Province into a British base against the Soviet Union.

And the man who has been sent to the Frontier recently as the new Governor of the Province is none other than Sir Olaf Caroe, who till recently was Secretary to the Govt. of India External Affairs Department and is known as a leading anti-Soviet "expert" among the New Delhi bureaucracy.

It will be remembered that at the time of the Simla Conference, it was Olaf Caroe who was busy spreading the scare that the Soviet is out to seize the port of Karachi and wants to invade India from the North-West; a canard that was taken up and featured in certain sections of the Nationalist Press.

Our Special Political Correspondent's report in last week's People's Age on the Casey-Con-

gress talks last December revealed that the Congress leadership know and are prepared to acquiesce in the British plan of building up India into an anti-Soviet base, as the price for a "settlement." There is a clear hint of this in what Maulana Azad said in his Press interview at New Delhi on March 18.

"We stand on the threshold of a new age. Events in world history and the high tension all round have brought about a situation in which India has acquired a strategic position which is absolutely focal."

Events that occur in the neighbourhood of India are bound to have repercussions straightaway in India and we know where a great tension exists. It is next door to India.

"An independent India today would be a great guarantee of peace throughout the world and will stem the tide of ambitions all round."

Stripped of its vague phraseology, this is nothing but a paraphrase of the Imperialist-cooked theory of "the Soviet peril" to India and an offer to the British that in return for a settlement the Congress would play its part in letting them use India "to stem the tide" of Soviet "ambitions"—that is, for anti-Soviet aggression and as a key base for protecting their Empire in the East.

Is the Congress leadership going to pay this price of letting India be used as a tool for Imperialist reaction—in return for a settlement which would be sham "independence"?

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