

**DOCUMENTS OF
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
IN INDIA**

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List of Abbreviations used

- CI — The Communist International
- ECCI — The Executive Committee of the Communist International
- CPI — Communist Party of India
- LM — The LABOUR MONTHLY published from London
- CPGB — Communist Party of Great Britain
- CPC — Communist Party of China
- INPRECORR — International Press Correspondence of the Communist International
- BCI — Bulletin of the Communist International
- INC — Indian National Congress
- AITUC — All India Trade Union Congress
- AIWPP — All India Workers' and Peasants' Party

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THE IMPERIALIST ALTERNATIVE

G. Adhikari

INTRODUCTION

This article outlines the dangers ahead for our people, if, Congress-League unity is not achieved in time; it outlines just what is Imperialism's plan for India's future.

This plan is the Cripps-Coupland Scheme for the permanent and double vivisection of India which leaves the supreme overriding power of British monopoly capital intact. It was hatched by the notorious imperialist ideologue, Professor Coupland who visited India in 1942.

It is interesting to note that Coupland's Mission to India was given a strictly academic garb. A Professor of "Colonial History" in the University of Oxford, he came to India under the auspices of the so-called Nuffield College Endowment. His Report, the 700-page volume on *The Constitutional Problem of India* referred to in this article is known as the Nuffield Report.

But it is an open secret that Coupland's was a political mission, inspired in all probability by Mr. Churchill himself. His job was to work up the background material and the blueprint for the postwar solution of the constitutional problem in India, the main outline of which was already contained in 1942 in Mr. Churchill's pronouncement and the Cripps' declaration of April of the same year.

There is a special reason why Professor Coupland was chosen for the job. The national and communal question in India was now no more one of separate electorates and of the proportion of seats in Provincial and Central Legislatures in a single State. The question had now become one of national homelands and carving out of independent states.

Professor Coupland had previously distinguished himself by 'solving' a similar national problem of partition and national

independence—much to the satisfaction of his imperialist masters, for he was on the Palestine Commission of 1936-1937.

What was the issue in Palestine? It was the question of ensuring national independence to the Arabs while guaranteeing the rights of the Jewish national minority, who had their holy places in Palestine and who shared the common homeland with the Arabs. The Arabs wanted the British Mandate to terminate so that they might get their national independence. The British were bolstering up artificially the question of a Jewish national home in Palestine, and under its cover were seeking to hold their grip over the country and its oil resources.

The Arabs and Jews failed to reach an agreement to join together to win back their common homeland from the British and settle their own affairs on the basis of equality, self-determination and common well-being. That is why the British imperialists came out with their Palestine Commission and their peculiar partition solution.

To Reginald Coupland goes the credit of evolving the amazing 'solution' laid down in the Palestine Report of 1937. According to this, there was to be a separate Arab State and a separate Jewish State, both 'independent' while between them was to be a third wedged-shaped area which was to continue under permanent British Mandate with the object of protecting the Jewish holy places.

It was clear that this meant neither independence to the Arabs nor to the Jews, but the permanent bossdom over both of the imperialists. No wonder that both the National Congress and the Muslim League condemned this imperialist solution of the Palestine Commission in 1938.

Coupland's Palestine report remained a dead letter. They dared not implement it; but the Palestine problem remains yet unsolved. Coupland's India Report too must be given a decent burial, for India's constitutional problem can and must be solved by the joint action of India's two great patriotic parties, by the common effort of her millions of sons and daughters.

"If war is to be possible anywhere in the years ahead, if it is not effectively outlawed by a world-wide collective peace system, it would clearly not be impossible in a partitioned India."

Who do you think said this? You would say, it must be some ardent Nationalist who genuinely feels that conceding Mr. Jinnah's demand for Pakistan can only mean civil war in the India of the future. No sir, it is no ardent Indian Nationalist who said that, but a true blue-blood Tory Imperialist—Professor Reginald Coupland.

When we Indian patriots discuss Pakistan among ourselves, we usually think in terms of two alternatives: unity or partition. Shall it be an India with one centralised Federation-State with complete autonomy to provinces or shall it be an India partitioned into two or more independent and sovereign states?

Often in our vehement partisanship of our respective points of view, we tend to forget that there is a third party yet in possession, which has its own independent plans. First we had Linlithgow talking of the 'Geographical unity of India.' Then came the Cripps Scheme promising self-determination to Muslim majority provinces. And now we have Coupland shaking his head wisely and saying—Partition would mean civil war.

Our countrymen are often deceived by this superficial indecision of our rulers, their assumed impartiality on the question of Pakistan. Imperialist authorities are often quoted in the discussion on Pakistan, both for and against.

What is utterly lost sight of is the fact that the Imperialists have their own clear-cut analysis and solution of the whole question.

Since the failure of the Gandhi Jinnah talks, the country is more sharply divided into two camps than ever before. Unity versus Partition is the issue of discussion between the two. Mutual faultfinding proceeds along the well known lines :

Gandhiji stood unflinchingly for unity of India. It was Jinnah Sahab's insistence on absolute partition that led to the breakdown, say the Congressmen.

Mr. Jinnah stood unflinchingly for the just demands of the Muslims to become free and independent in their homelands. It was Gandhiji's refusal to make this the basis of joint-front that led to the breakdown, say the Leaguers.

REAL ALTERNATIVES

In this fever heat of mutual fault-finding we tend to forget one simple fact. The real alternatives before the country are not Unity of India (one state) versus Partition (or two or more states). These are only the two aspects of the same problem—the problem of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity.

The question is whether we find a people's solution to the problem, which will be the basis of a Congress-League joint-front for freedom or whether we allow an imperialist solution to be imposed upon us in the absence of the former.

A people's solution which will enable us to win the freedom of our country in the form of a brotherly alliance of independent states, or an imperialist solution which will mean the continuance of British imperialist monopoly over a doubly vivisected India—such are the real alternatives which face our country.

For if we do not forge unity now to seize the initiative for framing our own constitution, laying down the basis for creating a free and democratic India, we will be asking for an imperialist communal award. Last time, i.e., in 1932-34, when the Hindus and Muslims failed to come to an agreement, it was the imperialists who imposed the Communal Award upon us. Superficially it appeared to do justice to the Muslim demands and to the demands of the minorities.

Certainly it gave the Muslims statutory majority, in those provinces where they were in actual majority. It gave them separate electorates.

But under the same plea of protecting the minorities, the 1935 Constitution gave a safe place to British monopoly interest both in the provinces and in the Centre.

The representation given to the "European minority" was not calculated in terms of their actual number but in terms of the monopoly capital they controlled, thus really hitting against the interests of both Hindus and Muslims. The British interests together with the Princes were to be used at the Federal Centre to be formed for the purpose of retaining imperialist monopoly. Such was the shape of the Communal Award of the 1935 Constitution.

The new communal award this time is going to be still worse. Throughout the world the progressive forces and the freedom-loving people are on the march. Wherever people have united together as

in France, Yugoslavia, Italy and the Balkans, they are in a position to do away with the vested interests and the imperialists, and shape their own future on the bed-rock of freedom and democracy.

A similar opportunity awaits us if we forge our unity now to win National Government and be in a strategic position to shape our own constitution in company with, and with the support of, the progressive peoples of the world.

If, however, we fail to do this, imperialism will impose its solution upon us and this will be a constitution which will be the constitution of a slave and disrupted India. Cripps and Coupland have already cooked up a constitutional scheme which is to be imposed upon us and which is both a mockery of Pakistan and a hoax on independence.

CRIPPS' PROPOSALS

The Cripps declaration said to the Congress : You want independence and Constituent Assembly. Here you are. After the war, there will be new provincial elections and the provincial assemblies elected will form a single electoral college and they will elect the constitution making body. This will be joined by the representatives of the Princes, and the Constitution which they frame will be the basis of a treaty between England and India. India will have the right to be a free and equal member of the British Commonwealth or to quit it if she so wishes.

This is the 'independence' and 'Constituent Assembly' which the Cripps Scheme offers.

To the Muslim League, Cripps said : Oh! You don't agree with the idea of the Constituent Assembly. You fear that the constitution framed by that Assembly will mean Hindu domination. All right. The provinces where the Muslims are in a majority will have the right of secession. These provinces can separately elect their own constitution - making bodies and have a separate treaty with His Majesty's Government. You can have your Dominion Status or independence separately.

To the States and Princes, he said : you can send your representatives to the Constituent Assembly. If you don't agree with the constitution framed by that body, we shall use our power to see that your "treaty rights" are not tampered with. We may offer you better treaty terms.

To racial and religious minorities he assured : we shall use our power to see that justice is done to you.

Such is the constitution of 'free India' and such is the 'Pakistan', that is implicit in this declaration. That was just the reason why it was rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim League.

The plain meaning of this is: If our two great patriotic parties do not unite, forge a joint front and set in motion a democratic upsurge to end deadlock and win freedom it is the imperialists who will seize the initiative to impose upon our country disruptive and slave constitution. In it there will be a 'Pakistan' but not the Pakistan of Mr. Jinnah's conception.

It will not be Pakistan and Hindustan that have been born out of a voluntary agreement between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, friendly States governed by the peoples, best friends and neighbours of each other; but it will be Pakistan and Hindustan which will have hundred unsolved communal problems within their bellies and which will look with bitterness and suspicion at each other. And Imperialism obviously means to benefit by this bitterness and friction.

And on top of all this will be the existence of the Princely States, kept up by the power of British Imperialism to be the permanent halter round the necks of both Pakistan and Hindustan.

Thus the perspective which the Cripps type of Communal Award promises us will be an 'Independent India,' which will be shaking on its legs because it will have been subjected to a permanent and double vivisection and thus helplessly dependent on British monopoly, for all time.

Thus the Cripps' scheme meant then and means today :

(1) That British monopoly will remain;
(2) That people's power will be disrupted by all-round dissensions;

(3) That even the present administrative unity of India which enables us to build up an all-India countrywide freedom movement will be no more and our freedom movement will be cut up into bits.

COUPLAND'S ANALYSIS

Professor Reginald Coupland has elaborated this plan in the third part of his 700-page tome called *The Constitutional Problem in India*. He has expatiated upon the constitutional future of India

with the air of an erudite and impartial research worker. The plan and its explanation is written with a special eye to the uninformed and often misinformed public opinion in Britain.

Let us look at his analysis. The learned Professor summates "both the sides" on every issue such as partition, the Princes, the future Centre and so on and pretends as if he is arriving at a well-considered scientific conclusion. It is sometimes good to look at the face of our national movement in this curved mirror of imperialist analysis a hundred-fold and they appear more crooked than they are, while all the good points disappear.

In Coupland's analysis the whole development of the Congress during the pre-war and war years is seen as nothing but the growth of Hindu vested interests, seeking to dominate the whole of India after the departure of the British.

In the Muslim League, Coupland sees nothing but the awakening and reviving pride of an old lost Muslim Empire, the desire among Muslim leaders to win it back from Hindu domination.

Neither the broad and mighty all-India freedom movement behind the congress is in his picture nor does he recognise in the growing freedom movement led by the Muslim League, the powerful national awakening of the Muslim people, yearning for independence in their homelands. These popular forces simply do not exist for this Tory representative of imperialism.

His analysis of the Pakistan movement is summed up in the words : " a complex of pride and fear." Pride because it is yearning for the Muslim Empire and the fear is of prospective Hindu domination in free India. The Congress movement for him is a vicious conspiracy to oust the British from India, and the League an equally oppositional force which will not bend to imperial designs.

PAKISTAN DISTORTED

The way in which Coupland sums up the case for Pakistan should be an eye-opener to all patriots. The Pakistan urge is depicted by him as a desire for a Muslim Empire behind which he reads the Pan-Islamic idea.

He suggests that Pakistan may like to enter as a " Fifth subscriber to the Saadabad Pact" between Turkey, Iraq, Persia and Afghanistan. " Since it is only her unnatural marriage with Hindu

India that has hitherto compelled her to turn her back unit, should she not seek a divorce?"—he asks mischievously. That the Muslim people while they wish to be free and independent in their homelands, want to live in good neighbourly relations of equality and fraternity with Hindustan and that the Muslim Leaguers have often enough repudiated the 'bogey of Pan-Islamism'—does not disturb this ideologue of imperialism whose stock-in-trade is: **DIVIDE AND RULE!**

He fixes the boundaries of Pakistan on his own. According to him North-West Pakistan will consist of the present provinces of Sind, North-West Frontier, and the Punjab, minus Ambala division; North-East Pakistan will consist of the present provinces of Assam and Bengal, minus the Burdwan division.

Then he proceeds to point out how the Sikhs will be the major obstacle to the realisation of North-West Pakistan and that there will be a 'civil war' if they are coerced. Similarly, he points out how Bengali Hindus will resist the inclusion of Calcutta in North-East Pakistan and if it is not included then the North-East Pakistan would become a 'rather dubious proposition.'

That the Congress and the League could arrive at an amicable agreement between themselves and with the other people concerned on the question of boundaries is possibly beyond the ken of this Tory Machiavelli.

This is not all. Coupland then goes to suggest that even then the Pakistan so formed will not be strong enough to defend itself. The wise Professor shows it out of the figures of the present Budget! But what of mutual assistance for defence? "It is inconceivable that the Hindus would pay the Muslims to defend them," says this insufferable busybody. He gloats over the prospect that if partition "proves to be unavoidable, everyone will hope, but no one will be certain that Hindu resentment at it will not harden into active enmity". Then he goes on to talk of the 'war in a partitioned India' as quoted at the beginning of the article.

This is how Coupland poses the problem. It is axiomatic to him that Hindus and Muslims will never come to a solution of their problems on their own. A common Centre is no longer possible. Pakistan carved out would have new seeds of conflict. It would be weak, partitioned India itself would be weak and helpless.

REALITY IGNORED

Coupland's whole case is based on wishful thinking. He is not the objective inquirer that he pretends to be. He was an imperialist emissary sent out by his masters to find 'facts' to bolster up the Cripps' Scheme as 'the postwar solution' of the Indian constitutional problem.

It does not occur to this hardened imperialist ideologue, that the Congress and the League both represent freedom movement of the Indian people who are seeking to come together for a joint effort for freedom and are bound to succeed in spite of one failure. It does not occur to him that the moral and material resources of our people, who have a proud 50 year-old national movement to their credit, are immense. When these are once released by the double key of patriotism and unity, they will upset all petty-fogging statistical calculation.

Questions of boundaries, economic self-sufficiency, strength and defence—will be solved on the basis of equality and in the spirit of mutual assistance and comradeship as between brothers in the common holy war for freedom. All this is not heard of in Coupland's world.

All the same, the wily professor has succeeded in deceiving a number of Nationalist opponents of Pakistan by his pose of 'impartial observer.' Many of these gentlemen quote Coupland against the Muslim League! A recent publication called *Pakistan—the Problem of India*, by Dr. Shaukatullah Ansari uses many citations from Coupland to 'refute' the League case. This arises because our National-minded opponents of Pakistan think that it is a demand bolstered up by the British. The sooner all patriots realise that Pakistan is the freedom demand of the Muslim League and is as much anathema to the Imperialists as the freedom of India, the better it will be for unity.

KEY POINT—PRINCIPAL

This will become clear when we examine the Coupland plan further. In Coupland's scheme Pakistan does not come about as a result of an agreement and joint-front between the Congress and the League. It comes about as an imposition from above by the British. The Princes, says Coupland, would not agree to join either Pakistan or Hindustan.

If Congress and League cannot unite together on the basis of Pakistan and mutual assistance and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Hindustan, and if they cannot unite to forge a common democratic policy vis-a-vis feudal pryncedom, then the imperialists are surely going to use the Princes to continue what Gandhiji calls the 'permanent vivisection of India,' and to perpetuate their monopolist domination.

This is just the key-point of Coupland's scheme. He has thought it all out in a neat pattern which fits in pat with his masters' dream of a renovated post-war Empire in the East.

Princely States, he says, may form a separate, dominion having direct treaty relations with Britain! Then he discovers that the States form a continuous territory in a big patch extending from Kathiawar and Sind across Rajputana, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin. Coupland visualises a separate dominion based on these States—a Princistan, if we may call it so!

His mouth waters at the proposal of a large tract of contiguous territory between Sind and Orissa being more or less completely at the disposal of the Empire through a 'treaty' with the respective States. Such a States-Dominion might not only have a 'Defence treaty with the British, but might also ask for British assistance in the development of its armament and other industries! He thinks such an arrangement would not seem undesirable from the British side from a purely military point of view :

"A group of aerodromes occupied by British airmen in the heart of India would accord with the strategic needs of the British Commonwealth."

The reference is to the rings of aerodromes which are in Jodhpur, Gwalior and in the other States of Central India. This is how Coupland dreams of using the Princely States in the post-war 'independent' India, to safeguard British Empire's strategic air routes to its regained Eastern Empire.

RIVER-BASIN THEORY

How does Coupland justify the creation of a number of independent states? The urge of different nationalities to be free and independent in their homelands, the desire to have complete

freedom to shape their own destinies and their own National cultures, in a free India—these things do not count with this apologist of imperialism. States are formed to suit the political and strategic exigencies of imperialist rule; but you cannot, of course, say that. So a pseudo-scientific scheme of river-basins has been invented to justify the chequered pattern of States which is to form the basis of the revised Cripps' Plan. Coupland tells us that this scheme came as a brain wave to an industrious Census Officer in 1941!

According to this scheme, North-West Pakistan is supposed to form a regional state of the Indus river basin, Bang-i-stan, Composed of Bengal and Assam, is supposed to be the regional state of the Brahmaputra and Gangetic delta. The Hindustan State of U.P. and Bihar is supposed to be the regional state based on the Ganges River basin. Then comes the Princistan in the Rajputana and the other areas and finally the Deccan. These last two do not fit into any river basin!

'AGENCY CENTRE'

How is this crazy pattern of States to be put together and for what purpose? It is obvious that there cannot be either a federation or a confederation. The 'independence' of 'Pakistan' and of the other States has to be preserved. Only a weak centre is possible. So we have what Coupland calls the 'Agency Centre'. This is the new constitutional gadget, specially invented for our benefit.

This 'weak' Agency Centre will have three subjects under it: (i) Foreign Affairs and Defence; (ii) External Trade and Tariff policy; (iii) Currency. Is it very difficult to see what such a 'weak' Centre, controlling these key powers, means for an India artificially cut up as described above? No, it is not.

With the strong British base in Princistan, with the people and country arbitrarily divided up, the 'weak' Agency Centre will be no thing but the strong-hold of British monopoly interests capable of holding up the progress and development of the entire country in the interest of British Imperialism. "Agency Centre" would be only another name for the continuance of Whitehall domination.

The perspective which the Coupland-Cripps Scheme opens out before us, if we do not unite, is a disrupted India with civil war flaring up between its various parts. In fact, this is the perspective which Coupland himself visualises as will be seen from the

quotation at the head of this article. Thus the British army and British power would be required to act through the 'weak' Centre to keep such an India together.

It must be clearly recognised that the alternatives before India to-day are not what the average Congressman supposes : "a United India or India disrupted through Mr. Jinnah's demand for Pakistan." The real alternatives are a united India in the form of a brotherly alliance of Free Pakistan and Free Hindustan achieved through a joint-front between the Congress and the League and ensuring a free and happy life for our people.

Or, a permanent and double vivisection of India in which there will be neither free Pakistan nor free India, but the continuation of slavery and disunity in the worst form under the continued spell of British imperialist rule.

(Reprinted from *People's War*, Vol. III. No. 20, November 12, 1944).

CONGRESS AND COMMUNISTS

P. C. JOSHI

After Gandhiji's release when he wrote to the Viceroy repudiating the sabotage campaign and seeking honourable settlement and again when he wrote to Mr. Jinnah accepting the principle of self-determination and seeking Congress League agreement for national freedom, the common talk among patriotic circles was that Gandhiji was saying what the Communists had been preaching in his absence.

After the failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah meeting when Congressmen of some provinces passed resolutions excluding the Communists there was the inevitable confusion but not much surprise. Ever since August 9, after the arrest of the Congress leaders, the Congress Socialists and their allies with spoke in the name of the Congress, had done so much foul propaganda against the Communists that the Congress minded people are not half as much surprised by the recent moves to exclude communists as they were over Gandhiji's lead earlier.

It would be obvious nonsense to suggest that Gandhiji had been bagged by the Communists or that he was too old and unwell to think clearly and boldly as the Congress Socialists were suggesting for a while in those days

But it is obvious enough that the national mind is in a state of great confusion and the national movement has never passed through such a chaotic stage as after August 9.

Gandhiji is out, but other Working Committee leaders are yet in; the people are in great distress, but the patriots feel helpless; the fate of the world for generations to come is being decided by this war, but India's destiny is not in the hands of her own leaders. There is today the obvious need to hang together, to think our hardest and do our best.

I.

BACKGROUND

When in such circumstances we Communists find our fellow Congressmen disowning us it is no light matter for these Congressmen nor us Communists nor for that matter for the people, the common parents of both. It is a decision of vital importance not only for the Congress, but for our country itself.

Any honest person who knows both the Congress and the Communist Party will admit :

(1) The Congress is the greatest national organisation of the country which has grown to its present greatness by uniting within its ranks the various patriotic elements in the country and by serving the people.

(2) The Communist Party is the best organised and most disciplined Party in India. Outside the Congress Socialists nobody is more anti-Communist than Sjt. S. K. Patil, the Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. In moving the resolution for our expulsion he openly said that our sense of discipline and selflessness was something he envied.

(3) The cream of our youth from the patriotic intelligentsia, both Hindu and Muslim, is being drawn to our Party. If Sjt. S. K. Patil envies our organisational skill, Sjt. K. M. Munshi envies our brains too:

“....The Communist Party in India is very compact, led by brilliant and determined experts in Communist propaganda and techniqueIts discipline is superb” (Sjt. K. M. Munshi in *The Social Welfare* dated 10th November, 1944.)

(4) It is through our Party that the best sons of the workers and the peasants and the student youth not only learn to become the organisers of their Trade Unions, Kisan Sabhas and Student Unions respectively, but rise to positions of political leadership as well.

(5) No Party in India has a larger number of women organisers of all ages from Grandmas to young girls.

(6) All the other Left organisations thrown up in the thirties have collapsed in the forties; only our Party has grown and on its own right become the third political force in the country, after the Congress and the League.

When such is the Congress and such our Party, who will gain if Congressmen and the Communists fall apart—none but the enemies of both. India needs us both. If we start fighting each other, how are we fighting for India's freedom? The one who fires the first shot is guilty of shooting his own brothers in the army of Indian liberation and splitting the front of Indian freedom. There is nothing easier in a slave country than to fight each other; we have been doing that and that is why we remain enslaved. It is much more difficult to fight for freedom, build a broad-based army of freedom's fighters inside an all-in front.

It is the Congress that planted the banner of Indian freedom; it is from Congress leaders that we got our early lessons in patriotism and it is today Congressmen who want to deny us the privilege of fighting shoulder to shoulder with them for the cause they taught us to accept as our main aim in life. To us the Congress is our parent organisation, its leaders our political fathers, its followers our brothers-in-arms.

In common tradition, age is supposed to be mellow and youth impatient, younger organisations sectarian and the older tolerant. Today, when our elders in the Congress suddenly want to dicide to cut us off without even asking us to explain ourselves, we deem it our privilege to beseech:

Think again, over and over again, about what you are doing. Ask us anything and we will try our best to set your doubts at rest. If we differ, we must discuss over and over again for the simple reason that we cannot afford to fall apart.

We have patience because we have faith not only in our own patriotism but also of our fellow Congressmen, because we know we have to fight only prejudice in their minds and establish the bond of patriotism. We are patient even though we are the youngest party in the country, because we have fought prejudice all our young lives. We had to fight the prejudices of others against Communism in making our Party what it is today. We know from our own experience that the battle against prejudice and for patriotism can never be lost and also that winning it is a hard and long task.

What is it then that the Congressmen bring up against us and because of which they want to part company?

II.

OUR CRITICS

Our critics can be catalogued under two heads :

First, there are those who take their stand on 'fundamental differences'. They seem to think that there is nothing in common between Indian nationalism and Communism and that their unity is impossible; for them the very fact that we consider the present war as people's war is conclusive enough.

The second lot of critics are far more specific. They charge us of 'stabbing the Congress in the back' (S. K. Patil) by not carrying out the August resolution.

Furious thinking is going on among Congress workers. After coming out of jail they are all trying to review the period that followed August 9, to be able to evaluate the role of various groups in the Congress and determine the future tasks of the Congress. In this sense it is a very healthy sign, a desire to think, discuss, understand and act. It is in this spirit that I am also writing this article, with a view to explain our viewpoint, learn theirs so that we may all come to correct conclusions.

Let me take up the 'fundamental differences first'. We Communists are not ashamed but very proud of our Communism which inspires us to fight for the greatest cause of mankind—a world socialist brotherhood of free and equal peoples. There is only thing that makes us blush, that our ancient people are slaves today. There is only one duty that Communism teaches us, to liberate our country before we can establish socialism. There is only one task which our Party teaches us, to build in alliance with our own fellow-patriots a United National Front for Indian freedom. There is only one claim we Communists make, that our policy is patriotic and we endeavour our very best to carry it out. There is only one request we make to our countrymen, judge us by what we say and do, and not by what you 'think' Communism means.

III.

INDIAN NATIONALISM AND COMMUNISM

Those who say that there is nothing in common between Indian nationalism and Communism are either ignorant or are falsifying the recent history of the Indian national movement itself.

Indian Communism is born out of the Indian national movement itself. The founders of our Party were the workers of the 1919-20 movement, either in the Congress or the Khilafat or from earlier terrorist groups.

The very first issue that our Party took up was that the aim of our national movement must be declared to be complete independence. In the twenties, the argument of the national leadership was that Swaraj was undefinable; the reality was a lurking hope that Dominion Status within the British Empire was more easily attainable and better.

When we pressed that elementary demands of the workers and peasants must be accepted by the Congress as its own, we used to be told that this would weaken the Congress because the Capitalists and the landlords would get scared and line up behind the Government, which would accordingly get strengthened. We used to be assured that the interests of the toilers were safe in Congress hands and that they would get all that we asked for and more after Swaraj had been won.

When we used to argue that accepting workers' and peasants' demands was necessary to strengthen the Congress itself and that Swaraj could not be won without the active and conscious participation of workers and peasants, we were asked not to be cheeky but to have faith in Gandhiji and not to repeat parrot like what we had read in foreign books.

We did our best to practise what we preached. We dug ourselves in the workingclass and organised the mightiest strike struggles that had yet been known in our country and founded the militant mass Trade Union movement. We organised study-circles and made the radically inclined youth pro-Socialist. We killed the prejudice that Communism could not take root in India and silenced those of our elders who used to chide us with being tall talkers.

In the thirties we had the great satisfaction of seeing the Congress accept step by step what we had been preaching for all we were worth in the twenties.

On the first day of the year 1930, after the Congress ultimatum of one year for Dominion Status expired, the Congress made Complete Independence its own creed at the Lahore Congress.

After the failure of the 1930 movement, the Congress passed the resolution on Fundamental Rights, accepting all the basic demands of the toiling masses.

After the failure of the Second Round Table Conference and the second Civil Disobedience movement of 1932-34, under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress took a path and re-orientated its policy in a manner to which we Communists gave our whole-hearted and unqualified support. Nehru wanted all anti-imperialists to accept the Congress as the main national organisation of the country and help to build it up as the United National Front of the Indian people. We demanded that to make this aim real, the Congress should agree to the collective affiliation to itself of mass organisations like the Trade Unions and the Kisan Sabhas. Nehru himself agreed but the rest of the national leadership did not.

However, under his inspiration the Congress and the Trade Union and Kisan workers began working together and Congress Committees began taking greater interest in the movement of the toilers and in supporting their daily struggles. This unity strengthened both; there was an unprecedented growth of Trade Unions and Kisan Sabhas and Congress membership reached records which made earlier figures look really small. The national movement as a whole became stronger. Our Party did all that it was capable of to build up the Congress organisation and strengthen its alliance with other mass organisations.

Because we discharged our patriotic duty towards the Congress and our people, our Party which used to be considered a working class sect began to develop more and more as a really vital and fast rising political force. Before the war began, we had already become the leading Party of the Left; when Bose tried to disrupt the Congress, we fought him out even within Bengal itself; when Jai Prakash Narain tried to fight us, he lost his entire party to us.

After the war broke out, the problem of the safety and liberation of our Motherland became an urgent issue. Power was in the hands of the bureaucrats and the dire need of the hour was that the patriotic leaders of our people should be the government of the land. But the unfortunate situation was that the two main political organisations stood divided. In recent years, the Congress

had grown phenomenally, but so had the League. The mass of Congressmen were yet hugging on to the old picture of the League when only sections of the Muslim upper classes were in it.

We were the first to see and admit a change in its character when the League accepted complete independence as its aim and began to rally the Muslim masses behind its banner. We held a series of discussions within our Party and came to the conclusion in 1941-42 that it had become an anti-imperialist organisation expressing the freedom urge of the Muslim people, that its demand for Pakistan was a demand of self-determination and that for the freedom of India an immediate joint front between the Congress and the League must be forged as the first step to break imperialist deadlock.

When we first began to agitate for Congress-League unity, the cheap gibe hurled at us was that we were advancing an impossible slogan only to escape joining the coming 'national struggle' ourselves. Two years later, after the failure of struggle, serious patriots began seeing that Congress-League unity was the only practical way out. When Gandhiji and Jinnah Saheb did meet in September '44 to come to an agreement, there was as much popular interest in and enthusiasm for it as there was for starting the 'struggle' two years earlier, in the August 1942 meeting of the A.I.C.C.

I am not citing the above facts to suggest that the Communists gave the lead and the Congress followed it. I know that Congressmen changed through their own experience, acquired during the various nation-wide mass movements. All that I suggest is that our acceptance of Marxism gave us Communists the understanding to see earlier what Congressmen themselves saw later on. In fact, we very often discuss among ourselves and inside our Party that if our Marxism knowledge was better and if our Party was stronger, i.e., if we were better Communists than we are, how many trials and tribulations we could not have saved our nation and how much faster could we not have made our national movement grow.

I am referring to the above facts only to answer our critics who are shouting, that we Communists are an alien force inside the Indian national movement. What does the course of our national movement, which I have briefly sketched out above, show? That

far from being aliens inside it, we are an integral part of it; that far from pulling it back, we have been trying to push it forward; that rather than divide it, we have been trying our hardest to unite it more and more.

Today the main items of the platform of the national movement—~~independence, democracy and self-determination~~—have become household words. Twenty years of programmatic controversies lie behind and all who care for truth will admit that the Communists have always been among the first to preach what the whole Congress subsequently accepted as best for the country.

Does it all prove that we are aliens inside the Congress as our critics suggest or that we are bold and virile children of the Congress as we claim to be?

IV.

WE CANNOT VERSUS WE CAN

Most Congressmen concede the above after they have given some thought to recent history, but then they come up with the question: the real trouble began when you started calling the war people's war. They are right. The only problem is how to discuss the issue so as to lead to mutual understanding.

I have not the place in this article for a fundamental treatment of the issue. When we say it is people's war, we are characterising a world historic event and if I briefly begin explaining how the entire course of the Indian national movement must be changed with the change in the world situation, the Congressmen will tell me that I seem to care more for the world and less for my own country. When he says that it cannot be the people's war as long as India remains slave and I go to the root of his nineteenth century world: Britain's difficulty is India's opportunity, and call him a narrow-minded nationalist with an outmoded outlook, he thinks I am being abusive.

When fellow fighters for freedom differ about a world-shaking event, the best way out is to put their mutual understanding to the simple test of practice and see how we both have been defining our duty to our country from our understanding of the world.

When Hitler attacked the U.S.S.R, the Congressmen said we cannot help the Soviet, we can only offer moral sympathy. More than three years are gone by and is it not apparent now that it was

not a question of helping the Soviet, that the Soviet was able to help itself and much more ? How much of what Congressmen thought about the U.S.S.R. is gone with the wind?

When the Japanese stood at our doors, the Congressmen said we cannot defend our country if there is no National Government. Even Nehru's anti-Jap utterances during 1942 ceased being popular. The leadership of the Congress ultimately did evolve a lead to liberate the country? Where does our country stand today?

When the food crisis began, most of the Congressmen said we cannot co-operate with the Government. Is it not clear as daylight that it has meant in practice leaving the people to their fate, at the mercy of the bureaucrats and the profiteers?

When Hitler attacked the U.S.S.R., we saw the issue as World Fascism versus World Freedom, we said it was not a question of our helping the U.S.S.R., but of getting the help of the freedom-loving peoples of the world for our own freedom. Our voice was too weak to persuade our fellow-patriots to wage the battle of Indian freedom within the framework of the rising world front against Fascism and for freedom. We live to see our own freedom movement going to pieces while in every other country of the world it is going forward by leaps and bounds.

When the Jap armies stood at our door, we said that the great menace to our country was also the great opportunity before our patriotic parties to forget the differences of the past and unite for a National Government of National defence. However, the sense of danger did not make the leadership of our major patriotic parties advance towards each other, but look towards the British rulers for unilateral settlement. The imperialist rulers naturally cancelled the claims of one with the claims of the other.

When the economic crisis led to high prices, starvation and epidemics, we said it was time to sink political differences and unite for the single purpose of serving the people. We argued that if our patriotic parties roused public conscience against the hoarders and profiteers, they would stop the rot in our own social life, which was at the mercy of a small section of Indian traders and industrialists who were literally minting millions out of the misery of the entire Indian people.

We also argued that starvation and suffering is not inevitable if our patriots rouse the people for self-help. We showed by our

own example that where the patriots can mobilise the people the local burcaucrats can be made to listen.

The war is the all-embracing issue. Whether we like it or not, everybody's fate is being decided through it and all that is happening is because of it.

We think that because the Congress leadership took up a negative attitude towards the war, so they were inevitably driven towards a negative political policy as well; good words but no action, and giving a "We cannot" to every issue that mattered: We cannot join the battle for world freedom until we are declared to be free; We cannot defend our country until the British quit; we cannot stop our own countrymen from hoarding and profiteering unless we become the Government. In short, expect others to create conditions for us—just what *never* happens in real life and just how history is *not* made.

We think our understanding of the war was correct and therefore, we could suggest a positive policy for our own country. Our faith in our policy has grown because we find the rest of our fellow patriots themselves groping their way towards it.

India had to pass through two years of hell and Gandhiji and Jinnah Saheb had separately to suffer the insolent sermons of Linlithgow and Wavell before they thought of meeting each other. They did not succeed, but who does not want them to meet again to succeed the second time. Thirty-five lakhs had to die in Bengal before the patriotic leaders of Bengal agreed to work together for relief through the Bengal Medical Relief Co-ordination Committee under Dr B. C. Roy, and before Sjt. Kiron Shankar Roy circularised to all the district Congressmen to join the Government-sponsored Food Committees.

By adopting a negative attitude towards the war the other Congressmen came to 'We cannot'. By adopting a positive attitude towards the war, we came to 'we can'. Without wishing to be rude I ask: Which attitude is based on greater faith in our people, which attitude is more in keeping with the Congress tradition itself?

It is as youngsters in the Congress that we learnt to love our people and to have unbounded faith in our national movement. But when we find the elderly leaders of the Congress arguing that because we consider it the people's war, we are going against our people, and because the war effort is in the hands of a foreign

government, since we say support the war, we seem to have gone over to it, we have to tell them that politics is not as simple as the school-master's logic.

Let them stop using phrases like the people's war, which they do not understand, let them point out a single thing we want the people to do which is against the people, let them point out a single thing we want the national movement to do which is unpatriotic by the standards of people's welfare and political morality that the Congress itself has set up and we will answer them to their satisfaction.

Communism is a world-historic outlook; we accept it because we think that such an outlook helps us to understand the course of events in our own country better. People's war is our way of understanding the significance of the present world war. We do not expect non-Communists to agree with us in our characterisation of the war. We know that the British enslavement of our country clouds the issue.

Let any patriot judge us on the basis of the national policy we advocate and above all, on the basis of the practical work we do among the people. He may differ from us, but he will not call us unpatriotic and will marvel at how we can continue serving the people despite all the difficulties of the situation.

A very familiar charge against us is that we opposed the 8th August Resolution. We wholeheartedly agreed with the main part of the resolution; its flaming anti-Fascism, its declaration of sympathy with the cause of the United Nations, the unqualified pledge to organise both armed and non-violent resistance to the Jap aggressors and the demand for National Government.

Very few active Congressmen except those that came to the A.I.C.C. Session know of the actual amendments we moved, because immediately afterwards they were arrested. We are printing them at the end of this article with relevant passages from the Official resolution to help Congressmen make up their minds.

The first amendment is about the constitution of a free India. Maulana Azad called Sajjad Zaheer, one of the Communist A.I.C.C. members, and assured him that Gandhiji wanted to see Jinnah Sahab immediately after the A.I.C.C. meeting and we should not bind Gandhiji's hands by our amendments. We took the stand that good

wishes could not get national unity. Self-determination was either a just and democratic demand or it was not, and if it was, as we thought it to be, then there was no question of bargaining with Mr. Jinnah. Gandhiji should go to him with the offer of self-determination, including the right of secession, and then alone would there be good chances of Congress-League agreement.

We pressed our amendment with the same faith with which we used to our amendment about the workingclass and peasant demands, for we knew the cause of the oppressed is just and the Congress that stands for justice to our country could not indefinitely go on denying justice to the Muslims.

Our amendment was defeated, but we explained our point of view with the conviction that the more persistent we were in explaining the Muslim demand to our fellow Congressmen, the sooner would Congressmen accept it.

Gandhiji could not meet Jinnah Saheb then. Linlithgow did not let him, but when he did go to meet him after his release, he went after accepting the principle of self-determination to serve as the basis of discussion as we had wanted him to do two years earlier.

Let Congressmen carefully read our amendment and see that it contained nothing more than what Gandhiji himself conceded to Jinnah Saheb during the negotiations, except that we gave a scientific definition of nationality as the unit that could claim and exercise the right of self-determination.

Our second amendment was about the operative clause; we wanted the 'threat of struggle' to be given up and replaced by a decision to forge Congress-League joint front to rouse our 400 millions together.

We are reprinting the clause of the original resolution and also our amendment. (See page 12.)

A fellow Congressman may differ from us, we know it was not popular then, but neither Pandit Jawaharlal, who moved the official resolution nor Sardarji who seconded, nor any other A.I.C.C. Member, the Congress Socialists included, called it anti-national or against the spirit or tradition of the Congress.

Gandhiji spoke before the conclusion of the Session and complimented the Communist A.I.C.C. Members on the courage of their convictions.

Gandhiji himself never got the chance to implement the resolution, but when he did get the chance to lead the nation again, after his release, he did two years later what we wanted the Congress to work for in August 1942, to achieve Congress-League United Front. Does this show that we are anti-Congress, or that we are really good sons of the Congress who can think for the country as a whole, keep our heads cool even when passions are running high, face unpopularity by relying on the patriotism that burns inside the Congress and the people?

Let us recall where the operative clause led the country. It is no use saying now that the Government launched a sudden offensive; it is not a test of political leadership, but real *naivete* to have expected anything else. It is no use saying now that the Congress Socialists and others went beyond Congress principles; what they were likely to do was common knowledge and should have been foreseen. The popular phrase then was 'short and swift struggle,' and the reality turned out to be a grim and demoralising tragedy. Only we, Communist Congressmen, forewarned against the consequences.

Should we expect from our fellow Congressmen recognition of our political foresight or damnation for non-participation in a 'struggle' which every Congress leader worth the name, from Gandhiji downwards, declares was not the Congress struggle?

V.

AFTER NINTH AUGUST

Most congressmen become familiar with what happened after their arrest when they get released, but they only hear prejudiced reports about what we said and did in their absence. For their benefit, I am reprinting extracts from Gandhiji's letters, Maulana Azad's published letter to the Viceroy and my own statements, writings and from the editorials of the *People's War*, the official organ of our Party, on the most vital political issues such as responsibility for the crisis, character of the 'struggle', deadlock and the way out (*See Appendix.*)

After the arrest of the national leaders, there was no official lead from the Congress; we, with the rest of Congressmen, had to do the thinking and acting on our own. When we wrote what we

are quoting now, neither we nor the country knew, what Gandhiji was writing to the Viceroy, nor Maulana Azad on behalf of the Working committee. Any dispassionate person reading the extracts together today will see a clear family resemblance; not only the arguments used, the sentiments expressed, but very often the words used are the same. This was so because we are good sons of the Congress and our Party has taught us to be able to do our political thinking on our own.

We fixed the responsibility on the Government for provocation that set the country aflame through the arrests of the leaders.

We did our very best to prevent the campaign of violence and sabotage from spreading and rescued as many youngmen as we could from the clutches of its organisers.

We unmasked those who were misusing the Congress name and seeking popular support by calling it Congress struggle. It was the toughest job we had to tackle before Gandhiji's letters to Linlithgow became common knowledge.

We struggled to see that partiotic anti-British feeling did not become defeatist pro-Jap feeling after the struggle failed.

We fought the Government slanders against the Congress of being pro-Jap by popularising its anti-Fascist declarations as widely as we could.

We answered back the Government charge that sabotage was Congress-organised.

The British official propaganda outside India was so strong and the confusion among freedom-loving peoples so great, that after 9th August India was left with very few friends. Through our brother Communist parties the world over, we sent meassages and news to clear the name of the Congress and popularise the national demand. India's cause was widely popularised through the Press and platform of every communist Party and the demand for a National Government supported as one that was in the interests of all freedom-loving nations. In fact, if anybody abroad campaigned among their own people for full support to India's demand, it was the Communist Parties of those countries.

Within India we kept up a ceaseless agitation for the release of the Congress leaders and for a National Government.

Among the Leaguers we popularised the slogan, no Pakistan possible except through agreement with the congress, and among

congressmen, no National Government without Congress-League unity on the basis of self-determination and thus made them face up to each other's demands. This is how we tried to make them both think in terms of national unity.

We have a right to ask released Congressmen : What would you have done if you were out? And we expect the answer : Just what you did !

Our conscience is so clear because we have done our patriotic duty right. Just because it is so that the Congress Socialists who up to the publication of Gandhiji's letters used the Congress name and authority against our policy and activity miserably failed. We not only stood our ground, but grew in influence and strength.

We have explained our policy about the 8th August Resolution and its sequel. We expect every congressmen to concede that on every single issue of importance ours has been a patriotic stand whether he himself agrees with it or not.

Now let us have a look at the policy of the Congress Socialists and their allies who have done their utmost to slander us among fellow Congressmen and who as every one knows have taken the lead in seeing that the Communists are excluded from the Congress.

VI.

LEADERS OF THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CRUSADE

We have an immense mass of their illegal pamphlets, handbills and other literature, but I will quote only a few of the prize gems of their foremost leaders.

"It would be mean and cowardly to attempt to show that the national struggle that started on 9th August 1942 had not the authority of the Congress." This is not from Tottenham's pamphlet but Jai Prakash Narain in his *Second Letter to All Fighters for Freedom*, as late as October 1943. This is six months after the publication of the Gandhi-Linlithgow correspondence, in which Gandhiji put the responsibility for what happened on Government repression and repudiated Congress connection with the campaign of sabotage and violence.

The *Ninth August* edited by Achyut Patwardhan and Ram Manohar Lohia and called by them the 'fortnightly organ of the Indian National Congress' wrote on January 26, 1944: "For our

primary self-interest as well as for Swaraj our path leads to a relentless war against Britain's war efforts." This paper glorified every act of sabotage and violence within the country and of Bose's Army across the border.

The Congress in its 8th August Resolution stood for the victory of the United Nations against the Axis and wanted National Government for India so that India might play her rightful role in fighting for a free world. Jai Prakash Narain on the other hand put his faith on Russia yielding to Hitler, China collapsing before Tojo and Bose coming to India. Listen to his own words :

"I believe and I do not mind saying so publicly that unless there is a shift in the international situation—a Russo-German Pact, a Sino-Japanese Peace, a major reverse of British arms, war on Indian soil—we cannot do anything big."

Also :

"No outside help "by itself" can free us. We must be ready in the event of an Axis-Allied clash in India to seize power ourselves. Only if we are ready to make this attempt can outside help, such as Subhas's National Army, be of value to us and Tojo be prevented from annexing India."

The simple line was : Let us keep the sabotage campaign going and get ready to make revolution the moment Bose gives the orders, his Army will finish the job. Bose's master, Tojo, was neatly kept out of the picture.

Congressmen knew Bose as an unprincipled opportunist who had to be thrown out of the Congress. Jai Prakash prepares the ground to welcome him back by dressing him up as a patriot with these words :

"It is easy to denounce Subhas as a Quisling..... But Nationalist India knows him as fervent patriot and as one who has always been in the fore-front of his country's fight for freedom. It is inconceivable that he should ever be ready to sell his country."

Let us now see what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has to say on the subject :

"We parted company with Bose many years ago. We have drifted further apart and today we are very apart. It is not good enough for me to realise that the way he has chosen is utterly wrong, a way which I not only can't accept but must oppose if it takes

shape. Because any force that may come from outside, really comes as a dummy force under Japanese control.

"Fighting will be done by the armed forces. We will have to take up guerilla warfare." (April 12, 1942.)

Let us also take up Gandhiji's views on the same subject:

"I have never attached the slightest importance or weight to the friendly professions of the Axis Powers. If they come to India, they will come not as deliverers but as sharers in the spoil. There can, therefore, be no question of my approval of Subhas Babu's policy." (June 21, 1942.)

After Gandhiji's letters to Linlithgow were published our agitation for the release of the leaders and for ending the deadlock found ready response among the Congress-minded public. Here is Jai Prakash's answer, which says that the best place for the Congress leaders was inside jail and that deadlock was the best guarantee of future freedom :

"As soon as Mahatma Gandhi, President Azad, Pandit Nehru and others are out of prison the world would forget India. The pressure that deadlock exercises over those who guide the destinies of the world would go peacefully to sleep—rightly thinking that the Indian question was settled for the time being and would not become pressing again till the mad Gandhi took it into his head to march his flock once more to prison. Pandit Nehru released from jail might make statements which American correspondents might lap up with avidity, but there would be no strength behind those statements, despite the beauty and grace of their expression. Nehru imprisoned is a greater problem for the Roosevelts and Churchills than Nehru proliferating nobly-worded statements and casting his spell over the envoys of great nations..... The deadlock is the best guarantee of our success in future." (Jai Prakash in his *Second Letter to all Fighters for Freedom*, Oct. 1943).

Congressmen who were out of jail know that when the food-crisis first began the Congress Socialists wanted food-riots as part of their "freedom-revolution" plan. When Bengal famine came they at first made fun of the idea of organising a relief campaign.

When Gandhiji came out they called his Gelder interview surrender to Imperialism but lacked the guts to say so openly. They left it to their student boys to see if their slogan could be popularised among the youth.

When Gandhiji went to meet Mr. Jinnah they were the most annoyed and took the defeatist and disruptive line that the meeting would never succeed and Mr. Jinnah would be exposed.

When Congressmen began being released they contacted as many as they could, from the highest to the lowest, and poured slanders into their ears; the Communists were paid by the Government, they opposed and sabotaged the national struggle, they exploited the absence of the Congress to become strong themselves, they must be thrown out of the Congress, etc. etc.

It only takes a little time for Congressmen to see that the stories about Government subsidy and acting as police agents are just lies and to brush them aside with the easy argument that all this is part of the mud-slinging between two Left groups. But quite a large number of Congressmen are taken in by their political arguments about the failure of struggle and of plans for the future. It is just because Congressmen are in a thinking stage, reviewing the past and making plans for the future that we ask them to consider the matter from all angles.

Let them read the extracts from the writings of Jai Prakash etc. together with what Gandhiji and Maulana Azad have said and let them say if there is anything in common between Congress policy and the Congress Socialists.

Let them read what they wrote side by side with what we wrote on responsibility for the national crisis, on ending the deadlock and in fact on all the major issues that cropped up after 9th August and let them decide who expounded the Congress policy more correctly, who defended the Congress honour better, who acted the good Congressmen and who the bad.

Let them remember that the Congress Socialists have deliberately charged us with the foulest crimes a patriot can be guilty of without having cared to prove it. The Congress Socialists knew they were lying when they lied.

They organised the sabotage campaign, we opposed it.

They used the name of the Congress, we used only the name of our Party.

They want the Congress leaders to remain in jail, we agitate for their release.

They want deadlock to continue, we want it ended.

They oppose National Government as surrender to Imperialism, we campaign for it.

They oppose Congress-League Unity, we work for it.

They call our policy pro-British, in order to cover up their policy which has been pro-Jap.

We have no doubt that the more Congressmen think the more readily they will agree with us, and the more they work among the people the sooner they will see our worth and also theirs.

In the meanwhile let them remember that the persons who are the loudest in demanding the exclusion of the Communists are the same persons who misused the name of the Congress, who cannot stand on their own before the people and who slander fellow Congressmen. This coincidence is not accidental.

VII.

CONGRESS TODAY WITHOUT A POLICY

It was first an enigma to us how released Congressmen could be so blind to the good work we did in their absence and which according to us has been in the best anti-Fascist and patriotic traditions of the Congress, and therefore why they should be so manifestly unjust to us as to want us to quit the Congress.

Deeper thought has led us to the conclusion that the demand for our exclusion is only one of the symptoms of the deep crisis that has overtaken our national movement. Congressmen openly admit that they feel frustrated and cannot see their way. What they do not see is that the whole national movement is in a blind alley and the Congress is without a real policy except the traditional one which no more fits with the new international and national situation and therefore leads nowhere.

The official Congress policy for the present phase of the national movement is contained in the 8th August resolution. It contained a basic contradiction between its declared aim and the course of action suggested.

The aim was an effective defence of India and its freedom, viz., "Free India will become an ally of the United Nations sharing with them the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom."

The course of action suggested was "a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale."

When India herself was in peril and the United Nations were engaged in a life and death struggle, a mass struggle within India could not but become a mass campaign of economic and political

sabotage, going both against the defence of India and the war-efforts of the United Nations. That this was so proved in reality. Gandhiji, not explicitly but implicitly, sees this contradiction when he comes to the conclusion now that there can be no mass Civil Disobedience during war-time.

It was because of this contradiction that the British Imperialists could hide their own unwillingness to part with power and to slander the Congress as being pro-Jap and insincere.

It was because of this contradiction that a handful of Congress Socialists could run away with the Congress machinery after the arrest of the Congress leaders and could successfully palm off their sabotage-campaign as the national struggle sanctioned and authorised by the Bombay A.I.C.C.

This contradiction has cost the country dear, as the events of the last two years bear out. We have not so far discussed this aspect of the problem. When our fellow Congressmen were in jail and Government repression was rampant, to do so would have been to play into the Government's hands. We rigidly observe the good Congress tradition not to discuss our internal differences unless there is a pressing practical need to do it and never at a time when they are likely to strengthen the hands of the foreign Government. It was enough for us these two years to protest against Government repression and demand Congressmen's release, rouse the people against deadlock and popularise Congress-League unity, ourselves go into the people and serve them through food and relief work.

When Congressmen are being released, it is inevitable that they should review the past two year period and discuss the policy that the Congress should adopt to end the deadlock and serve the people. These discussions are following the beaten track and nothing that corresponds to the needs of the situation, nothing that will make the Congress play a decisive role in ending deadlock is coming out of these discussions. The greatest weakness is that the Working Committee which led the Congress for 20 years is yet behind the bars. Gandhiji alone has to fulfil the very difficult role of the entire national leadership, that is to say, without the aid of his old and trusted colleagues.

Congressmen left without a leadership are thinking hard, but along old traditional lines. A fair summary of the dominant trend would be the following:

British Imperialists are winning the war and therefore they do not listen to us.

Jinnah is an impossible communalist, he won't come round: he hopes to get a higher price from the British.

Communists did not join the 9th August struggle and thus betrayed the Congress.

Food work and epidemic relief will lessen the internal pressure on the government and any way the bureaucrats won't let us do anything.

When they discuss among themselves as to what should be done, they come to the conclusion that nothing is possible during war-time, except that the Congress should be reorganised. It is here that the Congress Socialists butt in and demand that the Communists should be excluded.

Let us see the implications of such a line of thought.

A theory is made that settlement between Britain and India is not possible because the British imperialist rulers do not want it. But since when have the British imperialist rulers become the makers of history for the Indian patriots? Could there be a worse demonstration of the slave mind? In the year 1944 even an ordinarily educated person has begun to see the very close interdependence between countries. If there is no settlement with India, the British people will have to bear a greater burden of the war-effort and for a longer period. The war against Japan will be a longer war. If there is no settlement with India, the British people will have to go back to mass unemployment and the dole in the post-war period; a prosperous post-war Britain can be built up only in alliance with a free India with its expanding market and growing needs of machine tools for its industrialisation.

If we cannot win a National Government in war time, our merchants and industrialists will become a gang of soulless profiteers and racketeers, our peasants in deficit areas will get totally ruined, our youth will know only frustration, our entire race will become enfeebled through epidemics. If our patriotic leadership cannot get the destiny of India in its own hands we are doomed to a period of political disruption, economic ruination, moral degeneration.

If what is in the crying interests of the British and the Indian peoples cannot be won, what is our political leadership for? They cannot say it cannot be done, their job is to think out how to do it.

A belief continues to be held that the League is a communal organisation and that Mr. Jinnah is pro-British. But what is the

reality? Mr. Jinnah is to the freedom-loving League masses what Gandhiji is to the Congress masses. They revere their Qaid-e-Azam as much as Congressmen do the Mahatma. They regard the League as their patriotic organisation as we regard the Congress. This is so because Mr. Jinnah has done to the League what Gandhiji did to the Congress in 1919-20—made it a mass organisation.

This is so because just as in one simple slogan, “Swaraj,” Gandhiji gave expression to our freedom urge, so Mr. Jinnah through the slogan of Pakistan has given expression to the freedom-urge of the Muslims, for absolute independence in their own homelands.

We do not expect a Congressman to readily admit all this, but we do expect him not to deny the patriotism of other but try to understand how it expresses itself for them; we do not expect a Congressman to claim the monopoly of patriotism for himself. If the Congressmen go narrow and sectarian, who will act the generous unifier of all patriotic elements in our unfortunate country? If Congressmen abuse the League or refuse to understand its phenomenal growth and just demands they are denying their own responsibility as members of the foremost national organisation. Claiming patriotism for oneself and denying it in others is the simplest thing to do. But has not the Congress tradition been its opposite?

A theory is advanced that food or relief work is either not possible or not desirable or both. It is not possible because the bureaucracy won't let us do it. It is not desirable because it involves co-operation with the Government and will strengthen it.

Now let us look at experience, past and present. It is true the bureaucrats do not look with favour on any Congress activity, but have the bureaucrats ever been able to stop constructive work by Congressmen, except when it has been directly a part of the Civil Disobedience programme? Today, wherever Communists exist, we are doing food and relief work and win the gratitude of the people. Wherever we are strong and the local bureaucrat good and honest, we are able to get even government co-operation; where we are weak and the local bureaucrat unhelpful we do what little we can on our own.

Theorists sitting in their rooms do charge us with strengthening the Government, but the people among whom we work bless us for struggling our hardest to help and save them.

When our Congress elders say that as long as the bureaucrats exist, food and relief work can not be done, all we can say is that they are endowing the bureaucracy with an omnipotence which it does not possess; our elders just do not see what they can do and what no one can do and what no one can prevent them from doing.

When our Congress elders say that food and relief work will strengthen the bureaucracy, all we can ask is how service of the people can strengthen the bureaucracy, and again, has it not been the Congress tradition that service of the people matures the patriotic worker and strengthens the nation?

Statements to the effect that the British won't listen, that Jinnah is impossible and nothing can be done till the war is over, only express an outlook of negation and utter defeatism. They do not embody a political policy, they just express lack of any policy.

Such sentiments are very common among those Congressmen who think that the "national struggle" failed because it was not organised. From "nothing can be done now" they came to the conclusion "organise for the future post-war struggle." Politically it means a policy of sitting tight and practically it becomes the slogan: "Organise." Now obviously there is no organisational work possible without a sound and practical political policy. But if the political outlook itself is negative, the organisational plan too must turn out as a plan for disruption.

I will take the worst case of these "Organise-wallas", viz., Sjt. S. K. Patil, who has printed an amazing document, *A Note On the Organisational Reconstruction and Future Programme Of the Congress*.

"In my view the Congress must develop closest contacts with all important elements of society, whether organised or not."

He mentions them as workers, peasants, students, shop-assistants and others and he wants Congressmen to organise them "on the three basic principles of one United Congress, one Leader and one Programme." Besides Sjt. S. K. Patil, other people, whom all decent men loathe, have mouthed this slogan. If Sjt. Patil thinks that organisational totalitarianism is going to succeed inside the greatest democratic organisation of our people—the Congress—he is sadly mistaken.

His basic political understanding is expressed in his own words:

“We believe that the nation is behind the Congress and whatever does not specifically belong to any other party or group belongs to the Indian National Congress. This is a dangerous way of looking at things and surely it does not make for efficient working of our institution. This attitude of self-complacency is increasingly corroding our institution from within, while other parties and groups are getting more powerful at our expense. We must be more positive in our relations to society. *The correct way according to me, of measuring our strength is to regard that whatsoever is not with us is against us. (Italics ours.)* That way, there is no chance of being deceived.”

This is self-righteousness and sectarianism running riot.

From the above, it should be no wonder that Sjt. S. K. Patil, who calls himself a Gandhiji has become the greatest friend of the Congress-Socialists, and he calls his alliance with the Congress Socialists the achievement of Congress unity and wants the Communists not only to be thrown out of the Congress but no Congressman to associate with us at all. What he has been saying in informal Conferences and talks with Congress workers, bluntly put is as follows :

The last struggle failed in Bombay because the Communists dominated the working class and therefore the workers did not strike. But the Communist influence cannot be easily destroyed, because the Communists are remarkably disciplined and hard-working. Congress workers must become like them, go into labour and organise it so that it does not betray the national struggle next time. The Congress will produce the cash and give guidance.

The Congress Socialists have agreed to produce the workers and Sjt. S. K. Patil has agreed to produce the rest.

There would be no occasion to bother much if it were only a Bombay phenomenon, or if Sjt. S. K. Patil were an exception. But anti-Communist prejudice prevails in a majority of Congressmen. It is born of the post-August events. A vast mass of Congressmen look upon the August movement in the same way as they do the 1920 and 1930 movements. They are very angry with us for not joining it. The Congress Socialists, with their allies, exploit the released Congressmen's genuine doubts about our policy to fan their prejudices and lead them into an anti-Communist organisational plan.

But we do hope to be able to establish brotherly relations with the other Congressmen, to discuss all differences, clear all doubts and get them to admit that we are as patriotic as they are, though we may differ on this point or that, and there is room for us, as there has always been, in the broad bosom of the Congress, in the struggle for freedom, provided we accept its democratic discipline, which we have always done, which our Party itself demands of us that we observe. *A Communist is nothing if not a genuine patriot, disciplined and tireless.*

We do not sneer at the desire of Congressmen to strengthen the Congress and organise the masses. That is exactly what we have been looking forward to in their absence. To us it will mean the restoration of normal political life in our country. We are the happiest to note a genuine desire among a larger section of Congressmen to organise the masses. This is just what we ourselves stood for inside the Congress. We know it will make the Congress and the people stronger.

We agree that any group of Congressmen has a perfect right to hold an informal Conference and keep us out of it. But we claim for ourselves, with a clear conscience, all the rights of Congressmen, as we are ready in all seriousness to discharge all our duties. We are confident that when the Congress begins to function normally, we cannot be kept out of it. No clique can win against our selflessness. No prejudices will win against our patriotism. When the Working Committee is out, I would be very glad to stand in the dock before them, and let them judge us on the basis of our post-9th August policy and work.

We have greater faith in their intellectual integrity, political maturity and sense of democratic discipline than most Congressmen. I do not expect them to write to Lord Wavell denying Congress responsibility for what happened after 9th August and then throw us out of the Congress for not participating in that very activity. We have said or written nothing which we need deny. We have done nothing of which we are ashamed. If anything, we regret that our voice has been too feeble, our legs too weak.

Even in their informal Conferences, released Congressmen elsewhere have not gone so far as in Bombay, where they have even banned association with the Communists. Congress leaders

of U.P. want us to stay out of their *ad hoc* units as long as the present 'critical time' lasts, but they not only agree to, but actually want us to co-operate with them, e.g. in Detenu Relief, Kasturba Memorial etc. That under Sjt. S. K. Patil's leadership such a resolution was passed shows not only the Congress Socialist inspiration behind his political outlook, not only what a ruthless machine-man he is to push such a proposal through, but also how far the anti-Communist prejudices of Bombay Congressmen have gone that they acquiesced in it.

If released Congressmen do not co-operate with us over issues which both of us consider to be good work, who will suffer but the people, who need today more than ever before every patriotic son of theirs to work for them. If Congressmen begin believing in political untouchability, what will things come to in our country? We hope Congressmen elsewhere will not only not repeat the Bombay resolution, but appeal to Bombay Congressmen to be reasonable and rescind it when they meet next.

We will heartily welcome Congress workers into the Trade Union and Kisan movements where we are ourselves working. The more organisers become available the stronger these organisations will grow, the more they will be able to serve the interests of the masses concerned, the stronger our national movement will become. But we would expect the new enthusiasts for mass organisations to respect the principles and tradition of the All-India Kisan Sabha as Pandit Nehru did. If, however, under Congress Socialist inspiration, some Congressmen think of starting rival mass organisations, we will try to explain to them how it will lead not to organisation but to disruption.

The vast mass of the organised workers and peasants respect the Congress as their own *national* organisation, but they also love their Trade Union or Kisan Sabha as their *class* organisation. If any rival trade union or Kisan sabha is started, they will naturally resent it very strongly and consider it an attempt to disrupt their existing organisation and unity. If there are Congressmen elsewhere like Sjt. S. K. Patil who want to start rival mass organisations just because they are anti-Communist, the result will be disastrous.

Where we are strong, no attempt at starting rival organisations will succeed. Sjt. S. K. Patil has been trying it for the last 10 years

in Bombay and he has not succeeded. More men and more money will not get the job done. He cannot get more young men nor more money than what Achyut Patwardhan & Co. poured into the workingclass area immediately after 9th August, to get the workers on strike, etc. in those hectic days. If the game is tried again, we will have once again to explain to the workers to have patience and that all Congressmen are not like them, that these are bad days for our country.

Sjt. S. K. Patil's "New Organisational Plan" will turn out as serious a fiasco as the "Freedom Revolution" of the Congress Socialists at an earlier stage. We have enough hard jobs on hand, he would only have created one more for us, to defend the unity of the mass organisation and prevent the militant workingclass from developing anti-Congress prejudices because of the disruptive activities of some Congressmen who think they are organising the masses by beginning with the disruption of what mass organisations already exist.

Where we are weak and rival mass organisations are started by some Congressmen, the result will be that the vast unorganised mass will join neither the organisation in which we are working nor the one they start. The masses have an unerring way to judge their real friends and a very simple test : They will ask, if you really want to serve us why cannot you unite among yourselves? In such places, there will not only be disruption of the little that exists, but intensified demoralisation of the masses who will consider us both as two rival groups who are more interested in quarrelling with each other than in really organising and serving them.

Must political failure lead to organisational disruption or must it give rise to deeper political thinking, greater unity of the Congress and harder work among the people?

We Communist Congressmen endeavoured to act up to the best traditions of the Congress.

We draw inspiration from the great days of 1919-20 and the tradition of Hindu-Muslim unity represented by Congress-Khilafat alliance when we work for Congress-League unity to-day.

We draw inspiration for our work among the workers and kisans from the writings and speeches of Pandit Nehru in the thirties.

We draw confidence against the present day sectarian and

totalitarian trend among Congressmen from the fact that if the plan for a "homogeneous Congress" did not succeed in 1934, it is not likely to succeed in 1944.

We know that anti-Communism has spread among Congressmen. We consider that it has mostly sprung from genuine misunderstanding and it is our task to remove it; and partly that it is the result of vile slander-mongering which must come to its own miserable end. Against anti-Communist prejudices, we will put our patriotic policy and Congressmen will melt. Against the disruptors we will defend ourselves and we know they cannot win.

APPENDIX

RESPONSIBILITY FOR 9TH AUGUST

GANDHIJI

1. Gandhiji in the course of his letters to Linlithgow wrote :
"The wholesale arrests of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. . ."

—He underlined the same point when he summed up his reply to Tottenham's pamphlet with the words :

"I have endeavoured to show that no special stage for a mass movement was set or contemplated because of my proposal for British withdrawal, that violence was never contemplated by me or any Congress leader, that I had declared that, if Congressmen indulged in an orgy of violence, they might not find me alive in their midst, that the mass movement was never started by me, the sole charge for starting it was vested in me, that I had contemplated negotiations with the Government, that I was to start the movement only on failure of negotiations and that I had envisaged an interval of 'two or three weeks' for the negotiations.

"It is therefore clear that but for the arrests no such disturbances would have taken place as happened on 9th August last and after, I would have strained every nerve first to make the negotiations successful and secondly, if I had failed, to avoid disturbances

"....The Congress leaders were desirous that the movement should remain non-violent.... Whatever violence was committed by people, whether Congressmen or others, was therefore committed in spite of the leaders' wishes."

MAULANA AZAD

2. IN his letter to Linlithgow on behalf of the Working Committee, recently published, Maulana Azad wrote:

“I wish tomake it clear that so far as we are concerned, both as individuals and in our corporate capacity, speaking on behalf of our organisation, your charge that the Congress organised a secret movement is wholly false and without foundation....

“I would suggest to you to consider what the result in India might have been if the Congress had deliberately instigated and encouraged violence and sabotage since the Congress is widespread and influential enough to have produced a situation a hundred times worse than anything that has so far happened

“... I would like you to consider what the effect on the Indian people must have been if all that has been done on them on behalf of the Government since our arrest and how large numbers of people must have been driven to desperation.”

P. C. JOSHI

3. ON the morning of August 9th, 1942, a few hours after the arrests P. C. Joshi issued the following statement on behalf of the Communists fixing the responsibility for the crisis on the Government and reminding people that a call for negotiations and not struggle had been given at the Bombay A.I.C.C. It is to be noted that this interpretation of the August stand—was given by the Communist Party at a time when a self-appointed “A.I.C.C. Directorate” set up by Sjt. Achyut Patwardhan and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, were saying the Congress had given a call for mass struggle in the Bombay A.I.C.C. It will also be seen that this statement takes the same political stand as that contained in Gandhiji’s first letter to Linlithgow written five days later (August 14th).

Joshi said :

“The insolent imperialists have struck the first blow. The Congress kept the door for negotiations open. The bureaucratic Government has answered it with the arrest of the entire national leadership and worse. The Government is the provocateur, it has let loose forces of anarchy, and in their blindness, it seeks to create an anti-national anti-Congress front.

“The way the Government is going means hell for our beloved country, bloody repression provoking spontaneous riots. Trampling our national demand under foot will transform patriot anti-British feeling into defeatist profascist sentiments. In the name of national defence, the Government is weakening the very factors on which successful national defence depends. The way the Government is going means another Burma in India.

“We Communists firmly believe that the lead for struggle given by the Working Committee was not the path of national struggle but of national suicide. Nevertheless, the national leaders, backed by the vote of the A.I.C.C., had expressed their eagerness to strive for settlement to the very last moment. It is the insolent alien Government that has precipitated the crisis.

“We Communists will do all we can to force the Government to retreat. We will rally the people to demand the unconditional release of the national leaders and immediate negotiations with the Congress for National Government and Indian freedom. We will do all we can to ensure that our great national movement does not go up in the flames of anarchy. The Government has set our house on fire; only the people can save the country from ruin and destruction.

“We appeal to every fellow countryman and every people’s organisation to rise to the occasion. Today our very patriotism is on trial. The bureaucracy seeks to bury and destroy the organised national movement, our only weapon against the fascist invaders. We must foil the Government’s game of forming an anti-Congress front. Our united voice demands immediate release of the Congress leaders and starting of negotiations to meet India’s National Demand. This is demanded in the common interests of the Indian people and of the people of the United Nations. Every day lost is a day gained by the fascist aggressors.”

Within a week, as police violence and growing people’s anger brought chaos and the first signs of sabotage appeared, the Editorial of the *People’s War* (dated 16th August) wrote:

“The blitz of brutal repression let loose by the imperialist bureaucracy has set the country aflame. It is an attempt to goad the accumulated anger and discontent of the people into unorganised and spontaneous outbursts and then meet them with lathi, bullets

and tear gas Who are responsible for this monstrous crime against India and freedom-loving humanity? Mr. Amery and the die-hard gang who have always revelled in instituting blood-baths for the Indian freedom movement, who forced disasters on the British people by their pro-fascist appeasement policy...

".... We appeal to all fellow Congressmen to realise the following and find their way to patriotic duty :

" (1) The Congress has not actually given the call for non-violent mass struggle. The appointed sole leader was arrested before he could prepare the country or give a lead.

" (2) The A.I.C.C. has passed no programme of civil disobedience to be followed in case of the leaders being arrested.

" (3) Neither the Congress nor Mahatmaji has given the call for anarchy and senseless violence. These acts are anti-Congress and anti-national."

ON SABOTAGE

GANDHIJI.....

1. In his letters to Linlithgow and his reply to Tottenham's pamphlet, Gandhiji repudiated sabotage again and again.

-He wrote to Linlithgow in January 1943 :

"Of course, I deplore the happenings which have taken place since 9th August last. But have I not laid the whole blame for them at the door of the Government of India? This however I can say from the house-top, that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been. You may not know that any violence on the part of Congress workers, I have condemned openly and unequivocally...."

-He repeated this in his reply to Tottenham's pamphlet and condemned specific forms of sabotage in criticising Sjt. Mashruwalla's instructions in the *Harijan* after August 9th, on "interference with bridges, rails and the like.": "It is dangerous to put it before the masses who cannot be expected to do such things non-violently."

MAULANA AZAD

2. IN his recently published letter, written on behalf of the Working Committee, Maulana Azad wrote on the charge that "the

campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions circulated in the name of the All-India Congress Committee.”

“.... We can state with authority that the A.I.C.C. at no time contemplated such a campaign and never issued such instructions, secret or other We are convinced that no Congress organisation and no responsible Congressman or Congress woman can be actually engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism responsible Congressmen cannot possibly encourage in any way bomb outrages and terroristic acts.”

P.C. JOSHI

3. P. C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, in an appeal in the *People's War*, dated August 23rd, 1942, wrote:

“In the name of India's defence, an alien government is engaged in destroying the *political* factors that alone can make successful national defence possible.

“....Provoked by the government's action, our patriots, in the name of Indian freedom, are out to destroy the *practical* means and weapons of national defence.... To play with Indian production, tamper with Indian transport is to help the fascist invaders and not fight for India's freedom.

“It is to forget every word of Maulana Azad's rousing speech at the A.I.C.C. that Indian freedom can wait, but not Indian defence. ... What we say here is nothing more than a summary of the Bombay A.I.C.C. resolution itself.

“....Our appeal to all Congress patriots is: Turn your face against sabotage, that is destroying India's defence and will get us not freedom but Fascism, put your shoulder to the job of uniting all parties and organisations.... This is your patriotic responsibility, you belong to the premier national organisation of our country.”

ON DEADLOCK

GANDHIJI

1. From August 12th onwards, Gandhiji wrote again and again to Linlithgow 'to end the impasse', 'release the leaders', 'to explore ways and means of conciliation'—till he came out with his concrete proposals of a Provisional Interim Government in his interview to Gelder and his letter to Wavell just before the Gandhi-Jinnah talks.

"PEOPLES'S WAR"

2. IN the very first issue of the *People's War* after August 9th the Editorial carried the appeal : "Lift the ban on the Congressstop repression, release the leaders, negotiate with the Congress for a National Government."

The *People's War* (July 16th 1944) immediately after the Gelder interview, hailed it as a 'master-stroke' and wrote: "Taken together with Rajaji's formula on self-determination, now publicly endorsed by Gandhiji, it brings us as if with one stroke, in sight of the end of deadlock."

COMMUNIST STAND AT BOMBAY A.I.C.C.

1. ON TRANSFER OF POWER—OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

"The A.I.C.C. therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one. With the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units and with the residuary power vesting in these units, the future relations between India and Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it."

WITH COMMUNIST AMENDMENT

“The A.I.C.C., therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India’s independence, a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one *in which every federating unit, comprising of more or less homogeneous sections of the Indian people, having a contiguous territory as the homeland to which it is attached by historical tradition, having common language, culture and psychological make-up and common economic life would have the right as an equal and free member, to autonomous statehood, accompanied by the right of secession from the Federation.* The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people’s united will and strength behind it.”

OPERATIVE CLAUSE—OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

“The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian Government which

dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity.

“The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India’s inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

“The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of the movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

“Lastly whilst the A.I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A.I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on a mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India”.

WITH COMMUNIST AMENDMENT

“The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels no longer justified in holding to policies of inaction and passivity, and that it must now take initiative in building the United National Front of Parties and sections of the people, who want to secure India’s immediate freedom to meet the present peril and who are prepared to

participate in or support the formation of a provisional national Government, which will undertake the organisation of armed as well as non-violent people's defence against the Fascist aggressors in closest co-operation with the United Nations and their armies.

"The Committee therefore, resolves:

"(1) That it is absolutely essential in this hour of grave emergency to achieve all-in national unity for the purpose of forging mass sanctions to secure the end of British domination and the installation of a Provisional National Government, and with this end in view decides to make an earnest effort to effect agreement and joint front with the Muslim League. That the Congress is pledged to such a Federal Constitution of a free and United India as would guarantee to the federating units based on territories with more or less homogeneous population, with common historical tradition, language, culture, psychological make-up, and common economic life, autonomous statehood with the right to separate, should be a sufficient base for agreement for a united front and for the installation of a joint provisional national Government.

"(2) That the Congress and the Muslim League having achieved unity should bring all parties in India together, securing the broadest possible support for the national demand and demonstrating to the peoples of the United Nations that entire India stands united and agree in a practical scheme for the immediate installation of a provisional national government pledged to organise armed resistance to the aggressors in co-operation with the armies of the United Nations.

"(3) That simultaneously the Congress and the League take initiative to launch a joint front campaign of people's mass mobilisation to organise countrywide mass demonstrations, and rallies demanding immediate transfer of power and the installation of a provisional national government, to inspire and instruct the masses in the spirit of national resistance to the aggressor and to fight pro-jap sentiments, to organise joint people's effort to defend and protect the people, co-ordinating it with similar effort of the authorities wherever they serve the interests of the people and resisting them where they are coercive."

JOBS FOR ALL

B. T. Ranadive

1. Post-war Unemployment

BEFORE THE ELECTIONS ARE OVER AND POPULAR PARTIES TAKE power in the provinces and at the Centre, India will be in the midst of an economic storm, unprecedented in its intensity and magnitude.

Thanks to the criminal irresponsibility of the bureaucratic Government, which has done nothing to meet this impending crisis, India is faced with unemployment, loss of jobs and income and destitution for not less than five million persons. They include demobilised soldiers, industrial workers, agricultural labourers and educated middle-class.

At a conservative estimate of three members per family, the loss of jobs of these five millions will affect not less than one and half crores of our people. One and a half crores without incomes—fifty lakhs without jobs—such is the prospect that the close of the war holds out before us.

Apart from the suffering and misery in store for those directly affected—the wrecking of middle-class and working-class homes—this huge army of unemployed, without resources and purchasing power—is bound to affect the entire economic structure. It is bound to depress wages in all industries—far below the pre-war level. It is bound to depress the salaries earned by the black-coated clerical workers beyond endurance so that every earner is brought into the vortex of the impending crisis.

In short, unless immediate steps are taken to meet this new menace, the vast mass of our people is immediately threatened with drastic reduction in their earnings, and salaries. The vested interests will not be slow to take advantage of the situation to push down wages, to play the unemployed against the employed; to force the workers into bitter strikes and compel middle-class clerks to submit tamely to the logic of the new situation.

The spectre of destitution and unemployment hangs today over every middle-class and working-class home. Unless it is

removed, there can be no long-term planning for prosperity, nor any successful fight against the imperialist exploitation of our people.

The five million who are threatened with unemployment consist of soldiers from the army, industrial workers, agricultural labourers and educated middle-class who bound employment in offices and concerns directly or indirectly connected with the war.

It is estimated that in the course of the next year or so, between two and a half to three million soldiers will be demobilised.

According to Sir A. Dalal, Government of India Member for Planning, in the course of about 8 months the demobilisation plan will register a fall in the army strength of about 8,50,000 men

This will be followed by the bulk of unskilled labour employed by the army on defence works. Thus in eight months there will be two million released from the army alone.

The service personnel of the Central and Provincial Governments is expected to release one million more in addition to the demobilised soldiers.

Industries are expected to release a million workers—since it is estimated that the number of workers has increased during the war from two to three millions.

Unorganised industry is estimated to release another half a million—making the total of five millions

The stupendous task confronting the country can be judged from the fact that the number of persons threatened with unemployment constitutes two and a half times the total number employed in industry in the pre-war years. To find jobs for five million, to reorganise economic life so that they are not thrown on the streets, is the immediate major problem before all parties.

Only by solving this problem of the transitional period can India go forward to a planned economy—to a planned utilisation of her resources promising prosperity for all. The problem of rehabilitating the five million persons is the acid test of all plans which seek to build a prosperous future for our country.

The figure of five million given above is no doubt an underestimate. Nonetheless it indicates the gravity of the problem in a country where the total number of workers employed in industry was previously only two millions. It means that the problem can be solved only if the employment capacity of our industry is increased $3\frac{1}{2}$ times its pre-war level.

Are there any alternative avenues of employment available for those who return from the front or are thrown out of industries? There are none unless we compel the Government to radically change its policy. There are none if the present policy is allowed to continue.

The two million soldiers who are being demobilised are sons of peasants and agricultural labourers drawn mostly from the Punjab and South India. Their incomes, miserable though the wage paid to the Indian soldier are, supplemented resources of their starving families; they will no longer have these incomes. They will not be in a position to aid their families. On the contrary they themselves will be a burden on them.

Can they be absorbed by agriculture? Not easily. The soil of India as it stands today is already overcrowded. It is estimated that there are already nearly 15½ million more adults on land than it can support.

While the cultivation of new lands will give some relief, there is no doubt that unless our agriculture is completely revolutionised, new areas opened, there is no prospect of this surplus labour being settled on land. Other avenues must be found for them immediately. We have perforce to turn to industry to see whether it can reabsorb all the surplus labour released as a result of the end of the war.

If we turn to industry the picture is still more gloomy.

It has been British policy to keep India industrially backward. Under it, while large-scale industry has developed, though at a snail's pace, the total industrial population actually declined in the course of the last thirty years. The decline is both absolute and relative as can be seen from the following figures :

Year	Numbers employed in Industries
1911	17.5
1921	15.7
1931	15.3
1941	16.0 (estimated)

This 'decline' of industry is an eloquent comment on the backwardness of Indian industry. It shows that large scale industry is developing so slowly that it is not even able to absorb those thrown out of employment by the break-up of small industry.

II. Imperialist Policy During The War

THE WAR DID RESULT IN SOME INCREASE IN INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT.

	1939	1942
	<i>(in thousands)</i>	
Railway	700	1000 (estimated)
Textile	817	965
Engineering	148	224
Minerals and Metals	55	82
Food, Drink and Tobacco	97	121
Chemicals, Dyes, etc.	56	73
Paper and Printing	44	49
Wood, Stone and Glass	52	82
Hides and Skins	13	30
TOTAL	1982	2626

Note - This excludes the figure for the mining industry which has remained comparatively stable. It should also be noted that these are figures for 1942 and there has been considerable expansion in many industries since 1942.

This increase of less than a million is very small compared to similar increases in other countries.

Behind this small increase in industrial employment lies the British policy of hostility to industrial development in India. Afraid of losing India as a colonial market and of her industry becoming a competitor to British industry, afraid that such development will free India from her economic dependence on Britain, British Imperialism has openly used its political power to obstruct the growth of Indian industry and perpetuate backward economic conditions.

It has been particularly hostile to the development of heavy and basic industries which would free India from dependence on British industry for machinery and other vital goods. At every stage it has sabotaged the establishment of heavy industry and pursued the policy of keeping India just a producer of raw materials. It knew that it could exploit India only by keeping it backward; that it could drain profits worth crores of rupees out of India only by forcing her to buy articles of British manufacture and preventing her from developing her own industries.

This same selfish and anti-Indian policy was pursued vigorously during the fateful war years also. Looking to their own profits, to the future safeguarding of their market, the imperialists cynically brushed aside all considerations of defence and victory over the Axis and carried on with their policy of sabotaging industrial development.

In the East, India had become the base of war. She was described as the arsenal of the East. In the very interest of defence and a quick victory over Japan it was necessary to develop heavy and iron and steel industries, to manufacture automobiles, locomotives, aeroplanes, chemicals—industries which would have satisfied the major war needs and could have been converted later for producing capital goods for producing means of production in peace-time.

But the imperialists obstructed this development at every step and sabotaged the development of heavy industry even though it meant risking defence and prolonging the war. They offered hypocritical excuses to justify their policy.

When the Eastern Group Conference met in India in 1940 to pool all the resources of the Eastern countries of the Empire, it pursued this same policy under the dictates of British and other capitalists. Under the hypocritical plea of avoiding duplication among Empire countries, it would not allow India to develop machine, aeroplane or any other heavy industry. The manufacture of aircraft was made the special privilege of Australia in the Eastern Group countries under the plea that Australia was already doing so.

This selfish attitude, which amounted to a sabotage of defence, was sharply exposed again in connection with the recommendations of the American Technical Mission under Dr. Grady which visited India in 1942. That Mission came when India was facing acute danger of invasion and her industrial backwardness constituted one of the biggest obstacles in the way of her successful defence. The American Mission made certain recommendations to overcome this backwardness and put them before the Government of India. The Government not only turned down the recommendations but did not even publish them.

The British vested interests would not allow India to develop her industry and be independent of British exports; nor would they tolerate the incursion of American capital—the American finger in the Indian pie.

What was left for India? To manufacture buttons, blankets, tents and small ammunition. Yet the Secretary of State for India boasted in the House of Common in 1940 that "India will soon be self-sufficient in something like 90 per cent of her supplies" though that 90 per cent consisted solely of clothing, tents, and similar articles.

As Dr. Lokanathan, the well-known Inaian economist, said :
 "The contrast between India, Australia and Canada has been striking. Starting from an initially worse position than India, Australia increased her steel production rapidly and within two years was able to manufacture aircraft, wireless, and other articles directly through Government effort and also by inviting British, American and other industrialists to set up factories to replace imports. In Canada the Government created seven Government-owned Corporations, four for manufacturing planes, shells, rifles and instruments, one for procuring machine tools and two for purchasing vital war commodities. In India even the manufacture of locomotives already recommended by an Expert Committee for which blue-prints were ready was given up at the last moment on the ground that it was desirable to import them from abroad."

Similarly, the Government of India turned down the proposal for the establishment of an automobile industry in December 1940 when the Government was in need of automobiles of all kinds. The ostensible reason was that difficulties had been created by war—though the proposal had been before the Government for nearly five years.

The Government's policy was scathingly described in the following words by the *Eastern Economist* (August 31, 1945) :

"During the war we were asked to do plenty of odds and ends but never the whole thing, so that our country can really make all things but by parts only. We can repair ships, can also make small craft, but never the whole big thing. During the war we repaired 6,500 ships representing tonnage of nearly 40 million plus defensive equipment in proportion, but we did not develop all this into a regular ship-building industry. We had an aircraft assembling plant turning about 70 planes a month. The country was also making dashboard instruments, aluminium, Hurricane and Spitfire tanks and parts of the aeroplane but never the whole thing. We could dismantle it. The *Hindustan Aircraft Limited* started as a

manufacturing concern, changed over from manufacturing to servicing. The story in Ordnance and Steel factories was just the same. We could make everything and yet nothing. We were just general suppliers of anything and everything, menders, repairers of all things on earth, but the makers of none. We had no system, no plan. Rather there was a plan—clear-cut and thorough—to prevent the industrialisation of this country in the post-war period.”

This is the real story behind war-time industrial development. In these last six years when almost every big nation in the world made huge strides in industrial production, India was denied the development of basic industries—coal, iron and steel, machine, chemical, ship-building etc. and prevented from building industries which could have been easily converted after the end of the war into producing peace-time goods and thus could have considerably augmented India’s national income. India was kept on the short ration of producing accessories with the result that now she has hardly any new resources to convert for peace-time needs.

Whatever little industrial expansion was there, was attained by working multiple shifts on the existing machinery and not by installing new machinery and expanding the means of production. This is true of the textile industry, of iron and steel and of practically every big industry.

In the United States during the war there was cent per cent increase in production which was achieved by increasing the number of machine tools from 1.1 million to 1.7 million, i.e. a 50 per cent increase in the number of machines. In Great Britain production increased by two-thirds. This was achieved by utilising 25 per cent more machinery.

In India, on the other hand, while industrial employment increased by 30 per cent, the increase was almost entirely achieved by increasing the use of the pre war stock of equipment. “Thus the railways absorbed about 3,00,000 extra men but there was no corresponding increase in railway mileage or stock of equipment. Similarly the factories absorbed three-quarters of a million more men but there was no commensurate over-all increase in plant capacity.” (*Eastern Economist*, October 12, 1945).

The end of the war, therefore, finds us without additional machines to turn to increased production for peace-time needs and offer additional employment. In America they have at least 50 per

cent more machines; in Britain 25 percent more. We have only our pre-war stock of machines to provide employment for three times the previous number of workers. Those being released from the army, from work connected with it, from war-industries have thus no avenue of employment left.

The policy of British Government has not only created the grim spectre of unemployment, it has also deprived us of the remedy against it. India will no longer have the luxury of repairing ships or assembling plants; of making nuts and bolts or glass and textile stores. The imperialists no longer require it. Those who besied themselves in these occupations must go on the streets. Thanks to imperialist strangulation of industries, India cannot offer any other employment nor produce any other materials. She has been denied the wherewithal to produce anything except those things required by her masters.

III. Indian Capitalists Mint Money

THIS POLICY OF DELIBERATE STRANGULATION OF INDIAN INDUSTRY has heaped repeated disasters on India.

The Government would not increase the productive capacity of the country; at the same time it made demands on existing industry to supply the huge needs of the army, thereby, creating shortage of civilian goods all over the country and conditions of widespread blackmarketing and hoarding of all commodities.

To finance the war-purchases of th British Government, the Government of India resorted to atrocious inflation, thus sending prices to giddy heights and throwing unjust war-burdens on the people. There would have been no need for all this had the Government come to an understanding with the British to import capital goods in exchange for the finance supplied here. Instead the Governmnet deliberately allowed Sterling Balances to accumulate in England and refused to purchase capital goods in Britain. Thus the imperialists exploited India both through high prices and through denial of industrial development.

Thanks to this policy, extortionate prices, blackmarketing and hoarding became universal, intensifying the shortage of food and cloth and other vital commodities and adding to the suffering of the people.

The climax was reached with the Bengal Famine when three and a half millions died in Bengal alone of sarvation and hundreds

of thousands fell an easy prey to epidemics and diseases because of their devitalised condition.

If the people died like flies and suffered as never before, the imperialist policy offered a golden opportunity to the capitalists, traders and merchants to garner unheard of profits. This was the imperialist way of paying compensation to the vested interests for the choking of further industrial development. It was also a very important method of imperialist war-finance : allow the capitalists to reap huge profits so that a good part can be drained away to the imperialist treasury by way of taxation, Excess Profit and other taxes.

A drunken orgy of profiteering was let loose on India. The vested interests were given full scope to loot the poor Indian—the peasant, the worker and the middle-class clerk.

How huge were the profits reaped can be seen from the following. A special article in the *Eastern Economist* of June 29, 1945, gives the following figure about Cotton Textile Dividends :

Year	No. of Companies	Profits in Thousands of Rupees	Index Number Base: 1928-100
1928	58	1,23,02	100.00
1939	61	1,98,64	154.6
1940	63	2,86,95	220.1
1941	60	6,81,35	489.1
1942	75	11,09,78	760.7

The profits increased from nearly two crores in 1939 to eleven crores in 1942 : that is to say they increased five times.

By 1941 they had already increased to nearly seven crores, i.e., more than three times in 1939.

The same shameless exploitation is revealed by Mr. M. H. Gopal's figures giving industrial profits since 1939.

AVERAGE NET PROFITS PER CONCERN

(In thousands of rupees)

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
Jute	108	643	667	968	1,002
Cotton	608	443	1,249	1,904	3,921
Tea	73	86	156	184	286
Sugar	430	616	523	688	939
Coal	185	167	198	177	230

Engineering	4,281	5,728	7,681	1,547	9,637
Banks	—	1,239	2,420	2,339	—
Miscellaneous	472	493	1,542	1,860	1,891
All Kinds	422	536	1,192	1,092	1,380

INDEX NUMBER OF AVERAGE NET PROFITS
BASE : 1939—100

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943
Jute	100	590	617	896	926
Cotton	100	73	205	313	645
Tea	100	118	214	252	392
Sugar	100	143	122	160	218
Coal	100	88	107	95	124
Engineering	100	115	180	36	225
Miscellaneous	100	104	326	394	401
All Kinds	100	127	282	259	327

By 1943, the profits in rupees per concern in the jute industry had risen from one lakh to ten lakhs; in cotton textiles from six to thirty-nine lakhs; in tea from 73,000 to 2,86,000; in sugar from 4,30,000 to 9,39,000; coal from 1,85,000 to 2,50,000; engineering from 42,81,000 to 96,37,000.

That is, since 1939, the profit in the jute industry increased nine times; in cotton six times; tea three times; sugar 50 per cent; engineering nearly 100 per cent.

No wonder people starved; no wonder cloth, sugar etc. became out of the reach of the people. While the people starved and died, the capitalists fattened on their sweat and reaped undreamt—of profits.

No wonder also that the capitalists like Birla denied that there was any inflation and got impatient of whatever farcical control was left.

The figures given above are based on admitted profits. But who can gauge the private, black-market profits? If these are taken into account, then the real and enormous burden borne by our people to fatten the capitalists and finance the imperialist loot become evident.

This is how the parasitic imperialist war-economy worked against the people, against the masses, against the country, while it

enabled imperialism to finance the war and give the Indian capitalist undreamt-of opportunities to exploit and loot their own people. The vested interests joined hands with the imperialists in a war against the people and outdid all their previous records. What was death for the people was *diwali* for them.

IV. Government Policy After The War

THE WAR HAS ENDED BUT THE IMPERIALIST HOSTILITY TO INDUSTRIAL development continues with unabated shamelessness. Post-war imperialist policy is dictated by the one consideration of finding room for the much-needed exports of British industry. It is summarised in the following words of the London *Financial News* :

“Many Indian industries which have mushroomed solely owing to war-time unobtainability of imports will be gradually squeezed out as Britain’s export capacity revives unless of course the Indian Government grants to them uneconomic tariff protection regardless of Indian population’s buying standards.”

Instead of more employment and more industries, here is a threat of the closing down of war-time industries, to satisfy the export greed of British capitalists.

This policy is being pursued today in the name of importing goods to relieve scarcity in India. Manufacturers of a number of articles like textile stores, engineering material and glassware have raised their protest against the Government’s failure to grant them adequate protection and fulfil the pledges given during the war period.

One of the first things which the Government did through the Hydari Mission when war was nearing its end, was to decide to liquidate progressively the war contracts with Indian firms and place war orders in Britain. The process is to be completed in 1946 when all war-materials would be supplied by Britain.

The Mission which visited England in March-April arranged for British imports worth Rs. 26 crores in 1945 and Rs. 48 crores in 1946.

The Communique giving the results of the Mission is revealing. So far as machinery, etc., is concerned, it only talks about considerable headway being made in regard to procurement and despatch of coal mining machinery etc; while in relation to consumers’ goods, it describes the results as satisfactory. The finished consumers’ goods, it describes the results as satisfactory.

The finished consumers' goods include such items as baby foods, vegetable seeds, bicycles, drugs and medicines, stationery items, sewing machines, toilet requisites of all kinds, hardware, glassware, electric household goods. Many of the goods are being produced here. There is no doubt also that there is scarcity of these goods.

But the government's sincerity in wishing to remove scarcity would be accepted if they had insisted on the import of capital goods and machinery either to produce these or other goods along with these goods themselves. The fact is that though the Government of India have given repeated assurances that they will not import goods which will compete with goods produced here, still their practice is to squeeze out newly-started industries so that Britain captures the Indian market.

But this is not all. The traditional hostility to the development of heavy and new industries continues as before. This is seen today in the failure of the Government to arrange for the imports of capital goods, of means of production for Indian industries. In spite of the vast Sterling Balances at the disposal of India, in spite of the fact that she has got rich raw materials to offer in exchange, the Government is not yet able to arrange for the import of capital goods under the specious plea that the capacity of British industry is fully employed in meeting other orders.

Leave aside machinery for heavy industry, even textile machinery which India requires to keep her textile industry going is denied to her. The Industrial Mission which visited England returned empty-handed saying that there was no chance of getting textile machinery before two years. The Government of any other country would have used its bargaining position its sterling resources, its possession of raw materials, to arrange for securing capital goods for starting new industries. It would have refused to import consumers' goods unless an equal amount of capital goods was supplied by the country concerned.

But not so the Government of this country. It is obvious that no rapid reconstruction of the country, no provision of jobs for the millions threatened with unemployment is possible unless this policy is defeated and a free and planned flow of capital goods to build new industries and reinforce old ones is ensured.

The controls which Government have established during war-time are successfully utilised today hamper industrial growth. In the

course of the war the Government took steps to control capital issues for new concerns in the name of fighting inflation. Under it new concerns could not be floated without Government sanction and sponsors of such concerns had to apply to the Government for it.

The object of the Government in establishing this control was frankly to force funds into Government loans, "to prevent the growth of mushroom companies which stand little chance of survival in the post-war period and other undesirable practices such as reconstitution or recapitalisation of concerns on the basis of their present abnormal profits to the detriment of our indiscriminating public." It was, of course, stated that there was no intention of retarding sound investment and production for civilian needs. But the reference to mushroom companies and the fact that the control was to be exercised by an irresponsible Government, hostile to industrial development, reveals the real objective behind these fine words.

A National Government would have used this power in the interest of our people to set up priorities for different industries and allowed only capital issues for those industries for which there was immediate need. But the present government of India use it only further to obstruct industrialisation. This is what *Eastern Economist*, organ of India business, writes :

"Months pass before an application which is tossed from one department to another is disposed of. The persons who sit in judgement are frankly not qualified to judge the merits of the individual applications and yet the demand for associating some unofficial agency to advise the department has not been met. Permission is denied to a new company which desires to produce even the most useful and essential articles of civilian consumption. Only those companies which proclaim their intention not to do anything but only to confine themselves to handing over the capital to Government for investment are acceded permission.

"Even the floatation of these long-range concerns is hedged in by so many conditions that they have to labour under a great uncertainty. The planner of a new project does not even know definitely whether he would be able to produce at all at any stage. This uncertainty is further increased by the fact that the Government has started taking decisions as to which factory is to be put up by whom and where. There is no real plan, no planning authority, no National Government and yet these measures inevitably leading to

nepotism and corruption are being adopted. Added to these uncertainties are the registration of the import of capital goods and securing of import licences which one has to cope with. In all these controls almost every department of the Government of India has its say. The uncertainty thus is complete. And no wonder that one feels shy to invest his money in a new enterprise." (Page 786, June 15, 1945.)

The policy of the Government aggravates and intensifies the crisis further by its dog-in-the-manger attitude in regard to Indian trade with America. To keep India as her close preserve, Britain is doing everything in her power to see that we do not purchase capital and other goods from America even though the U.S.A. is in a position to offer these goods to us. This she is able to do by virtue of her imperialist overlordship, which gives her a strangle-hold over India.

In the course of the war India, through her trade and exchange with the U.S.A. has acquired substantial dollar resources, with which she can buy machinery and other commodities in America. But Britain is not releasing these resources. In the name of husbanding the empire's common resources for greater war-effort, she collared these resources thus virtually debarring India from buying any machinery in the U.S.A. She continues the same policy today. After repeated protests, she sanctioned a miserbale sum of 20 million dollars for 1944 and another 20 millions for 1945. This allocation not only falls far short of India's requirements, but also forms a very small part of the dollars earned by India and forcibly taken for the Empire Dollar Fund. Not need, but selfishness comes in the way of releasing these dollars since Great Britain has now more than 3,500 million dollars in gold as security on deposit in the U.S.A.

This robbery of Indian dollars constitutes another big obstacle in the way of Indian reconstruction since it shuts us off from buying in America which, with its expanded production, is able to supply us with up-to-date machinery.

V. Big Business And Imperialism

THE IMPERIALISTS REALISE THAT IN SPITE OF THE MANY OBSTACLES put in the way of industrial development, some progress is bound

to take place. While they are generally opposed to development of heavy industry, they at the same time want a lion's share in investment and control in whatever direction development takes place.

The Indian businessman, on the other hand, is also not averse to joint concerns since such concerns will have less obstacles and greater patronage from the Government. Thus Sir Ardeshir Dalal, one of the signatories of the Tata-Birla Plan, suggested the formula that while control and management of industry should remain in Indian hands, they would be prepared to work on the basis of 70 per cent Indian and 30 per cent British capital.

It is already reported that Lord Nuffield, one of Britain's biggest automobile magnates and the Birla group in India have come to some agreement about launching a new post-war concern; this Nuffield-Birla combination emphasises the same joint front of British and Indian vested interests. As a result of a conference held on June 20 between Mr. Birla and the principal executives of the Nuffield organisation, arrangements were also made for the interchange of British technicians and Indian skilled and semi-skilled workers. Of course, it is said that "Nuffield will get a fair share of the profits but the control will remain entirely with the Birlas."

The danger of a joint front between the British and Indian vested interests to exploit India according to the convenience of British Imperialism is today real. The Indian businessmen will not hesitate to sacrifice big industrial planning for petty concessions today.

All the more so since the imperialists are in a position to apply the screw to force them to come to terms. The imperialist vested interests have the upper hand today. They are in possession of the State machine and are in a position to flood Indian markets with consumers' goods while shutting off import of capital goods. They still have the power to exercise various controls, like license on capital issue which can virtually veto the opening of new concerns, without their certificate of priority for shipping, for orders, no machinery can enter India; and above all they hold the key to the existing economic structure since it is today mainly supported by the enormous State expenditure for defence purposes. If that expenditure falls precipitately, nothing short of an industrial collapse will result.

The imperialists are using all these instruments to force Indian capital to come to terms with them and give up their plan of independent industrial development ; they want them to agree to such development as would least harm British interests and at the same time they demand the senior partnership in the joint exploitation of Indian resources. Left to themselves the imperialists would have nothing to do with the development of heavy industry, chemicals, etc, and confine themselves to minor industries and projects like road-making. But they know the pressure for industrial development cannot be resisted outright. Hence their manipulations to divert it into channels least harmful to British interests.

Notwithstanding therefore the glib phrases uttered by government spacemen about planned industrial economy and about developing India's resources, the policy of the Government continues to obstruct industrial growth in spite of the menace of unemployment for lakhs of workers and middle-class employees. The Government at the same time uses all its powers to beat down the industrialists into coming to terms with them by offering them concessions and claiming a share in them for the British. The presence of Sir Ardeshir Dalal, one of the authors of the Tata-Birla Plan as Planning Member of the viceroy's Council is an indication of the compromise that is being hatched.

The Government wants the industrialists to accept a policy of minimum development. It is not a policy of providing more jobs, more avenues of employment, more incomes for the people, but one of ensuring destitution and starvation in lakhs of working-class and middle-class homes. It is the same policy of colonial exploitation which, through inflation, caused the Bengal Famine and suffering all over India, the policy of keeping British profits safe at the expense of the Indian people and thrusting imperialist burdens on the shoulders of the Indian people. It threatens to smash our economic life and if allowed to go unchecked between now and the elections, it will lead to such economic convulsions that no popular ministry will be able to stop them. It will only discredit the popular ministries and cause immense suffering to our people.

The fight against this policy, against this monstrous plan whose execution will thrust new burdens on our people in the shape

of unemployment, loss of income, etc., must be a major plank in an electoral programme. It must be the common programme of all parties.

In this fight, the Indian vested interests themselves will have to be consistently fought and their policy of a sell-out must be defeated. We have already seen that, for immediate advantages, they are attempting to strike a deal with the British capitalist which will give him added vested interest in India and at the same time hamper industrial growth. This must be prevented at all costs both in the interests of industrial development and of Indian freedom itself.

Apart from this the Indian capitalist will act as the open enemy of our people in his search for profits. Once unemployment increases the employer will not resist the temptation of mass dismissals to enforce wage-cuts and thus add to the imperialist attack. He will be an instrument of sowing destitution and starvation all round. He will do this just to keep up his inflated profits.

We have seen that he has been reaping enormous profits during the last six years. Most of the owners of textile mills have in one year made profits double their entire capital. To keep up this high rate of profit, they will start a war against the workers, their clerks and other employees.

The profiteering mill-owners of Ahmedabad have led the assault by cutting the Dearness allowance of the workers. Others are following suit. The capitalists of the textile industry of Bombay and Ahmedabad, the Birlas of India, who pose as patriotic financiers and before whom even a section of Congress leaders bends the knee, have proved to be the worst profiteers and an utterly selfish lot, the most shameless robbers of their own people. In the coming period they will do their utmost to pass the burden of the crisis on to the workers and the middle class and seek Government and police help to crush the workers' resistance.

The result of their selfish policy will be nothing but widespread strikes, fights and struggles. The vested interests foresee these big battles and they are preparing for them by whispering that the Communists have started fomenting strikes now that the Congress Ministries are likely to be in power. This lie is re-echoed even by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, without any serious thought being given to its implications.

The capitalists, by exploiting anti-Communist prejudices, are seeking the help of the Congress to damn the workers' resistance to new burdens. They are concealing the fact that these burdens are the results of imperialist policy and of their own selfishness. They want Congressmen to support them in executing the imperialist policy of destitution and unemployment.

Their game has to be exposed. They must be prevented from plunging the country into strikes by their policy of wage-cuts. They dare not effect these cuts if all parties warn them and stand behind the workers.

As industrialists they also have several complaints against the Government which are genuine. All obstacles to industrial development must be removed. But what they want is the uncontrolled right to exploit the Indian people in their own interest and they are trying to pass this off as national obligation, national service and industrialisation of India.

No relief is therefore possible if the initiative is left either to the Government or to Indian vested interests.

VI. Defeat Imperialist Policy

The imperialist policy of throwing India to the wolves can be defeated only by an all-round attack against its economic policy. It can only be defeated by people's unity, by the united demand of all political parties.

The present position of economic helplessness and the impending disaster are due to the criminal failure of the Congress and the League to unite and form a National Government to take charge of the economic nerve centres of the nation. Had that been done even at the Simla conference, we would have been in an invincible position to protect our own people.

Today the one and universal demand must be to force the Government to change its present policy of perpetuating backward economic conditions.

The first steps in the direction of fighting the economic crisis consist therefore in :-

(1) compelling the government to use its bargaining position to arrange for the import of capital goods from Britain;

(2) using our Sterling Balances which amount to £1,500 million to pay for them;

(3) releasing India's dollar resources immediately to arrange for the purchase of capital goods from America;

(4) immediately regulating India's import policy in a way which will protect Indian industries which have developed during the course of the war.

This will clear the ground for fighting the crisis. A systematic plan for giving priorities for certain types of capital goods will have to be made

The immediate requirements in this direction are :

(1) coal-cutting machinery to raise coal production so that present shortage of coal, which hampers industrial activity, is overcome :

(2) additional machinery to transform our existing workshops including railway workshops to produce locomotives, boilers and other machinery required by accessory industries;

(3) then comes heavy machinery to build automobiles, trucks or for manufacturing machines or expanding iron and steel production;

(4) and lastly the import of sufficient machinery to replace old machinery in old textile mills, etc.

There is no doubt that many of the engineering workshops which have developed during the war ; railway workshops and war plants producing rifles and ammunition, with slight changes or additional machinery, can be converted for peace-time purposes, either to produce goods of house-hold necessity, such as sewing machines, or capital goods for smaller industries. The repair and job shops built for war purposes need not be closed down. To put them on peace-time production, the shops may require either additional machinery or only a change in the process with slight adjustments. The Government intends to scrap them altogether in pursuance of its hostility to industrialisation. It must be stopped from doing so.

Unless the vast numbers employed in the railways and other industries are kept employed, unless provision is made for expanding industries, tens of thousands of middle class and working-class families must starve and die.

It is obvious that it will take time to put even this programme into practice. Some months must pass before the government moves

and secures capital goods and these goods are utilised to provide jobs for our people. But we are faced with immediate mass-massacre. As we have already said, according to Sir Ardeshir Dalal, the army alone will release a million men in the coming eight months

VII. Jobs Through Public Expenditure

THE MORE THE WAR RECEDES INTO THE BACKGROUND ALL THE ACTIVITY concerned with the maintenance of foreign and Indian troops—the building of aerodromes, roads, supplies to the army—comes to an end releasing lakhs of men.

The British and U.S. Governments had to spend millions of rupees in India in order to maintain their armies at fighting strength and with proper supplies. This expenditure employed lakhs of persons. Now that it has stopped these lakhs are rendered jobless to trek back home from the jungles of Assam and the Arakan Road

They together with the industrial workers released from munition plants and engineering factories must be provided with jobs immediately.

Clearly enough the permanent solution which will provide jobs for all is the opening up of new factories and the planning of fresh industrial development ; but this will take time ; fresh capital goods have to be imported, the resistance of foreign capitalists has to be broken down, and that too only if a people's government determined to put through a plan of industrial expansion comes to power. The question thus arises—what is to be done in the interim period, before all this is achieved?

The only way is to compel the Government to maintain public expenditure at a high level so that jobs are provided for all during the transition period ; so that mass unemployment does not take place all over India leading to monstrous wage-cuts.

If we look at the war years we will find that it was Government expenditure on war that led to increased employment. It was the Indian tax-payers' money for the most part that maintained 3.84 million soldiers ; gave new employment for labour work concerned with the army and created additional employment in industries and transport for middle-class and industrial workers.

The colossal expenditure incurred by the State can be seen from the following :

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE
(In crores of rupees)

	Central Govt. Expenditure	Recovfer- able War Expenditure	Prov. Govt. Expenditure	Total
1938-39 ..	85.15	—	85.76	170.91
1939-40 ..	94.57	4.00	89.22	187.79
1940-41 ..	114.18	53.00	95.18	262.36
1941-42 ..	147.26	194.00	103.48	444.74
1942-43 ..	289.05	325.48	118.18	732.71
1943-44 ..	441.84	377.87	153.85	973.56
1944-45 ..	512.65	439.53	208.05	1,160.23
1945-46 ..	517.63	488.80	191.74	1,198.17

The item "Recoverable War Expenditure" shows the amount spent by the Government of India on behalf of the Allied (British and other) forces. It will be seen that expenditure by Government has increased nearly nine times since 1938-39. It has reached the colossal figure of 1,200 crores of rupees.

It is mainly through this expenditure that the millions of soldiers and workers were kept in their jobs. If with the end of the war, this expenditure is suddenly stopped, as it surely will be, if the matter is left to the discretion of the alien Government, then nothing but a calamitous collapse in middle-class and industrial employment will take place, causing all-round economic disaster.

The question is why should not public expenditure be utilised to keep up our industries now at work as it did during war-time. Why should public money not be utilised for purposes of rebuilding India and removing her backwardness, for giving bread and jobs for her people?

A National Government will have to do the job. A popular Government which fails to spend from public funds for this purpose will be turned out of office the next day.

It is natural that there should be a fall in the defence expenditure of the Government. The pre-war expenditure for 1944-45 was Rs. 456 crores. For 1945-46 the budgeted defence expenditure is Rs. 412 crores. While the expenditure is bound to

go down now that the war is over, it need not create economic crisis if public expenditure is increased on productive undertakings. If the Government can find finances for fighting the war, it certainly can find finances for building the peace.

The immediate and precipitate fall is going to be registered in the item 'Recoverable War Expenditure' which for 1945-46 was estimated to be Rs. 488 crores. This is the amount expected to be spent for the British government by the Government of India over the British Army. Now that the war is over, British purchases in India on behalf of the Army will go down, and the entire expenditure will be drastically reduced. The Government of India have no control over this expenditure; their responsibility, therefore, becomes all the more greater.

What can the Government be compelled to do in the present circumstances?

Pending the import of capital goods and the starting of new industries, the Government must undertake public works which will be a great national asset in the coming years. Such public works will afford immediate employment to thousands and at the same time create natural assets of great value. The immediate undertakings which the government can undertake without waiting for capital goods from abroad are house-building, road-making, railway extension and conversion of war plants and work-shops to peace-time production.

In India with the abominable housing condition of industrial labour, and the general shortage of housing—the need of a housing programme is obvious. These scandalous housing conditions cost us thousands of workers' lives and affect industrial efficiency. To meet the needs in cities itself will require a huge outlay. It is estimated, for instance, that if the labourers in the jute industry are to be properly housed, it will entail an expenditure of nearly six times the paid-up capital of the industry.

The need for cheap and well-ventilated middle-class housing is also great.

Both these will require a heavy programme of public expenditure which will keep our workers engaged, ensure cheap housing for the middle and working classes and stop the present rackrenting by landlords. It will also provide for future

developments when, under a national plan, industry begins to expand rapidly and the population of cities and towns increases by leaps and bounds.

The Government's plan of housing consists of expansion of some office accommodation and building quarters for their own employees. What we must have is a really national plan for urban and rural housing. The Government cannot advance the excuse of scarcity of capital goods for operating this programme. No capital goods need be imported from abroad for them and yet houses can be built in India with the Indian tax-payers' money who will at the same time be saved from destitution.

The road and railway extension programmes also do not need much imported equipment. It is estimated that both in the case of the railways and roads, only 4.5 per cent of the total cost consists either of imported material or imported equipment.

Both for railways, road and house-building purposes, and for fitting some of our engineering works and workshops, the Government can purchase from the war surpluses belonging to the U.S.A. It is estimated that the U.S.A. has at its disposal war surplus goods amounting to not less than Rs. 100 to Rs. 125 crores. The Government is averse to buying them since it affects British interests. It must be forced to give up this hostility and compelled to buy whatever is needed for Indian reconstruction.

The entire money required will not have to be raised through public taxation. A part of the money will have to be secured from private sums and a National Government can easily do it.

The obstructed development of industry has accumulated good reserves in the hands of business and commercial firms. Besides, there are the Excess Profits Tax and Income Tax refundable amounts in the hands of the Government. Also, there are the depreciated and reserve funds of the railways and other commercial establishments.

It is estimated that the Excess Profits Tax and Income Tax refundables come up to nearly Rs. 150 Crores. This amount is deposited with the Government. There is no reason why it should be returned to the private capitalists. It is coined out of people's sweat and toil and should be made available either for immediate spending on public works or for financing nationalisation of industry.

It is estimated that the depreciated and reserve funds of the railways and commercial institutions amount to not less than Rs. 150 crores. This can be used for replacement of machinery, expansion of plants, if possible, and keeping up the level of employment.

In addition there is a lot of hidden money with those who have been profiteering in black-markets and who minted crores. All such money can be traced and confiscated to the State.

In countries like Britain or the U.S.A., the small savings also form a good part of the nation's reserve. In a poor country like India, on the other hand, small savings do not play an important role. Thus in the United States in December 1944, out of the total liquid holdings of 193.6 billion dollars, only 66 billion belonged to businessmen while 127.6 billion were personal holdings.

In Great Britain small savings exceeded £1,000 million for four years.

In India, on the other hand, small savings increased from Rs. 135.35 crores in 1939-40 to Rs. 175.25 crores in 1944-45 or by only Rs. 40 crores, 8 crores per annum.

If all these reserves are fully mobilised, as a National Government should be in a position to do, quite a good part of our capital for reconstruction can come from private reserves, leaving the public exchequer to fill in the gap. How big that gap will be is a question for experts to decide. Probably for a couple of years at least it may be anything between Rs. 500 to 300 crores—which Government must find to spend on public works.

Along with these immediate financial measures, Government must be compelled to take on the following measures :

1. Reduction of hours of work to eight a day and 44 hours a week.
2. Provision for a month's leave with full pay in the year.
3. Introduction of minimum wage scales—and legislative prohibition of wage-cuts.

These measures will be necessary to keep more people at work and to prevent attacks on the standard of living of working-class.

VIII. For Freedom And Planned Prosperity

INDIA CANNOT FINALLY SOLVE HER PROBLEM OF POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT unless she plans an orderly development of her resources for the prosperity and happiness of her people.

That problem is colossal for it is first and foremost one of the transformation of a country held in feudal backwardness by imperialists into an industrialised country—wherein the interests of the common man, of the people come first.

The immediate objective of such industrial planning can be a quick rise in the standard of living of our people; a reasonable figure to aim at would be the raising of the present scale of living by one hundred per cent in the course of next fifteen years or so.

This is possible only if all the present handicaps against industrialisation are removed and India enters upon an ambitious project of all-round development. Such a grand effort can only be organised by the State—by a Government of the people. Such a plan, therefore, must be drawn up and implemented by a Government of the people's choice.

The immediate requirements of such a plan are :

1. Development of key industries, such as chemicals, iron and steel, and machine-manufacturing plants, which will make India more and more self-sufficient as regards capital goods;
2. development of ship-building industry and railway transport—manufacture of locomotives and rolling stock in India;
3. development of lighter industries producing consumers' goods;
4. a big housing programme meeting the needs of the people;
5. development of large-scale agricultural and hydroelectric and irrigation projects.

These changes cannot be introduced without a radical transformation of the agrarian system—the abolition of landlordism. They cannot be introduced by private agencies either. They form the programme of building a free India in which everyone will have a job and will be assured of a decent standard of living.

The programme, therefore, can only be undertaken by a people's Government of a free India. Such a Government must exercise full control over industries so that the fruits of industrial development are shared by the common man.

Its programme must include :

1. Nationalisation of key industries—chemicals, iron and steel machines. These must be owned and controlled by the State so that it gets a complete grip over the industrial situation.
2. Nationalisation of mineral reserves like mines, quarries, etc; to develop these must be State responsibility.

3. State control over lighter industries which will have to be developed according to plan, though they may be developed by private agencies.

4. All profits to be controlled.

The Wealth resulting from this must be equitably distributed. Hence the State must ensure the following rights for the workers :

1. Guaranteed minimum living wage;
2. decent housing;
3. social security measures like unemployment benefits;
4. an 8 hours day and 44 hours' week;
5. one month's leave in a year with full pay;
6. provident fund and old-age pension.

To implement these rights, the workers must be ensured legislative protection for organising Trade Unions and provision must be made for their recognition by the employers. The latter must be compelled to enter into agreement with the workers' organisations on conditions of same. The Trade Unions must be utilised as participants in the building of a new India by creating labour enthusiasm and increasing the efficiency of the workers.

The right to Trade Union organisation and recognition, the right to strike and democratic liberties and legislative provision for the above rights must be granted to the workers if the fruits of industrial development are not to become the monopoly of a few capitalists.

For the workers, there is no future unless a planned development of our resources takes place. There is no employment, no new avenues unless India is rapidly industrialised. With 15 million surplus adults on land, with war-time industries throwing out thousands, with the agrarian workers drawing a wage of only 4 annas or so, there is nothing but loss of employment and wage cuts for them unless they demand the rapid development of industries and become their conscientious builders.

We have got large cash reserves to begin the transformation. In the sterling reserves which amount to the huge sum of 1,500 million pounds, we have got sterling cash reserves to purchase capital goods abroad. The Government of a Free India can certainly start purchasing a huge quantity of capital goods abroad.

At least half the sum can be utilised to purchase out all foreign concerns like mines and factories owned by British capitalists. It is estimated that the amount of foreign capital on private account

that had been sunk in India is between £300 to £700 millions. These concerns can be forthwith taken by the State and nationalised. They will give us a good grip over vital industries like coal. The profits accruing from them will form part of our further capital.

The Communist Party believes and works for this huge transformation of our country.

It demands a war against our economic backwardness that is poverty and destitution and squalor for the workers and peasants.

It stands for a planned development of India's resources under the control of the State, so that India's production of necessaries increases by leaps and bounds, making plenty for everyone possible.

It is not prepared to trust its fate in the hands of capitalists who profiteer at the expense of the people. It demands nationalisation of key industries, control of profits and secure economic conditions for workers.

It fights against unemployment, loss of jobs and misery. It is convinced that given unity of purpose and will, none need be jobless in our land, none remain without a living wage; on the other hand with the complete acceptance of the above demands, we can easily double our national income and ensure better conditions for all.

It asks all people, workers, peasants, middle class employees to rally for a planned national development, for unitedly fighting unemployment, for security of wages and jobs.

The planned assault against the poverty and destitution imposed by imperialist rule can be organised only by liquidating Imperialism and establishing a free Government of the Indian people. Only a successful national revolution, which liquidates feudal landlordism and removes all obstacles to industrial progress can plan a war against our age-long poverty. The Communist Party fights for such a revolution, against Imperialism and landlordism, for power to the people and ensuring rights of livelihood and a decent standard of living for all. It calls on all sections, workers, middle class, peasants, to join in the great battle against poverty which can be only won by ending imperialist rule itself.

THE NEW SITUATION AND OUR TASKS

Resolution of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of India, Passed at its
meeting in December 1945

(Passed by the Session of the Central Committee on 16-12-45)

THE Central Committee reviews in this session its own last inner-Party Resolution and the Electoral Blue-print in relation to the nature and tasks facing the Party in the new period.

The purpose of this resolution is to positively re-state the main character of this new period and programmatic slogans of the Party and state the main mistake in its last resolution.

I. FEATURES OF THE NEW PERIOD

The post-war period in India is the period of an unprecedented opportunity to make the final bid for power and of the greatest danger of internal disruption through strife among our major parties.

The opportunity arises from the unparalleled hatred of all sections, all classes, all generations of our people against British rule due to the denial of power, war-time Government repression, war-time increased miseries of the people and the exposure of the utter incompetence and thorough corruption of the Government apparatus from top to bottom. The greatest and most ardent desire of our peoples is to get rid of British power here and now by any and every means. They are hungering for a political lead, they are looking forward to be led into action. There is greater political interest than ever before.

The danger arises from the fact that this mounting hatred against British rule, which is shared by all sections of the masses and the rising spontaneous outbursts of the toilers in the factories and on land against unbearable post-war economic conditions, instead of being unified into a united front of struggle against imperialism is being led into suicidal channels of mutual strife.

This danger rises from the political strategy which the leaderships of the main political organisations of our country, the congress and the Muslim League, are following, namely of seeking a unilateral compromise with the British Government, of rousing their masses against each other and of lining up with their own vested interests for the purpose. The result is that the anti-British sentiment is not being transformed into a joint front for Indian freedom, the freedom urge of the Hindu and Muslim masses is being disrupted into rival Hindu and Muslim camps.

This chauvinistic consolidation of Hindus and Muslims in hostile camps and the lining up of the respective leaderships with their vested interests accentuates anti-Communism in both the camps. The result is that the efforts of the Communists to give a unified lead to the spontaneous struggles of the toilers are being disrupted by the leadership creating the danger of the working class and peasant movements being smashed in isolation instead of being unified with the patriotic upsurge.

The great pride of Congress masses in their own organisation is being transformed from anti-League prejudice into anti-Muslim sentiment, from anti-Communist prejudices into internal disruption of the Congress itself and Congress struggle against the Communist Party.

Similarly the newly awakened sense of Muslim solidarity behind the Muslim League is being transformed into Islamic revivalism, the fear of Hindu domination into anti-Hindu hatred, love for the freedom of their own homelands as Pakistan into the demand for partition of India with unjust territorial claims.

In short, the policy of the leaderships of our two main political organisations is not bringing freedom nearer but reviving chauvinistic ideas, dividing our people more and more disrupting our freedom movement and canalising their freedom urge behind the compromising policies of their own leaderships and the isolation of our Party and the smash-up of the working class and peasant movements built up by us.

It is in such a situation of great possibilities and great dangers that the Party has to play its role.

For a new orientation in the new period the first thing to realise is that the post-war period has nothing in common with the war period or any other earlier period of our freedom

movement and the Party from top to bottom has to completely reorientate itself for the new period.

The main characteristic of the period is that it is a new period in which our freedom movement can successfully make the final bid for power relying on the anti-British freedom urge of an unprecedented mass of our people, of all nationalities and all classes. The main danger of the new period arises from blind and fratricidal policies of the leaderships of the two main political organisations of our people. The gravest danger facing the Party is either to become the tail of either of the two leaderships or get isolated through the mass campaign they are unleashing against one another. This danger however can become real only if the Party follows either a tallest or a vanguardist policy and does not play its own true role.

What every Party Member must realise and what is the main responsibility of the Party leadership is to evolve a new programme for the new period, a new strategy and outline correspondingly new tactics.

TRENDS INSIDE THE PARTY

In the Central Committee discussions as always happens when the Party enters a new period, different trends have revealed themselves inside the Party. The first minority trend is purely sectarian which bases itself entirely on the elemental upsurge that is already visible in the new post-war period, glorifies it and suggests tactics of the period that we applied in building up the initial working class movement in period 1929-34. It glorifies working class action only to cover up the isolation of the working class to which such a policy inevitably leads. It seeks the glory of debating with the national bourgeois leadership from a distance and hopes that the patriotic masses will come over to our side. It also leads to the adoption of a narrow strategy of class vs. class and Left vs. Right instead of the correct strategy of national unity vs. national disruption.

The second minority trend is one that wants new constitutional formulas for the coming electoral battle to be able to argue with the Congress and League leaderships that it is a better plan than theirs for Indian freedom. This trend understands the strategy of the United National Front exactly as in the war

period, namely as organisational unity of patriotic organisations with the only difference that we now work for the unity of Congress, League and Communist Party instead of Congress and League as before ! It carries forward the war tactics of "no strike" into the post-war world. This is the tallest trend in practice and liberal-reformist in policy.

The large majority is confused and is groping its way towards a new orientation in party policy and tactics.

The first caution every leading Party Member in the C.C. and the P.C.s should observe is to understand the main slogans of the party and not indulge in schematic thinking which is a spontaneous echo of present day problems plus a remnant of the strategy and tactics of some earlier period. The first duty of every party leader is to study his own living experience, study the developments in the political camp of his own national homeland and the concrete tasks on his own front. This is the only way he can usefully contribute in formulating the policy for the new period and learn to apply the strategy and tactics of this period correctly.

The party characterises the post-war period as a period of the final united struggle for Indian freedom if the party of the proletariat can fulfil the role as unifier of the freedom-loving masses or alternatively the national bourgeois leaderships of the Congress and the League will surrender to the Imperialists creating a situation in which spontaneous outbursts would be turned into civil war or class war and thus inflicting a disastrous set-back on our struggle for freedom.

II. PROGRAMME, STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE NEW PERIOD

The party programme for the present period is a programme for the achievement of immediate national independence from British domination and guarantees the freedom to all Indians in their national homelands, voluntarily united together into one great Indian union of completely free nations.

The economic programme of the Party is a programme for the common prosperity of the vast majority of the Indian people and for the destruction of the present day poverty.

The aim of the Party is to build a free and prosperous India that shall be a great power in the comity of nations and play a liberating role in Asia and a progressive role in world politics in alliance with all truly democratic forces, and against world Imperialist reaction.

The new strategy of the Party is to work as the builder of a new United National Front in the form of a Congress-League-Communist joint front basing itself on the just demands of the Congress and League, firmly eschewing the unjust claims made by their leaderships, as a true expression of the freedom and unity urge of the common people behind these two great organisations, despite the present day sectarian policies of their leaderships. The main strength of the party is derived from its being the organiser of whatever working class and peasant movements exist in our country which are the living embodiment of the joint organizations of Hindu and Muslim masses and constitute the mass democratic base behind the Party.

The first and most major task of the Party is to strengthen its own base and seek an alliance with the democratic following of the Congress and the League on the strength of the patriotic, just and practical programme of the party and its daily practical work in common interest.

LEAD NEW MASS STRUGGLES

The new tactical line of the party is based upon the realisation that the war period of "no strikes" is over and that the party must take the foremost lead in organising not only partial struggles of the workers and peasants but also anti-Imperialist mass protest actions and it must fearlessly intervene and participate in every spontaneous outbursts of popular fury against British rule and police terror and thus give the new rising spontaneous mass upsurge a sense of its true direction and effective organisational leadership and prevent the factional game of the Congress and League leaderships of turning mass discontent against each other instead of against the common enslavers- the British rulers the common exploiters, the profiteering black-marketeters or the feudal parasites in countryside.

This is the only way the Party can prevent spontaneous outbursts being turned against each other instead of the common

enemy. This is the only way the Party can prevent the Congress and League leaderships from fanning the flames of popular discontent to keep up their mass following and hide their tactics of preparing the ground for unilateral settlement—that is, a new surrender to the British Government, while letting the police quench the popular fire. This is the only way the Party can prevent its own isolation and prevent the formation of rival Congress, League and Scheduled Caste mass organisations of workers and peasants—that is, keep its own mass basis intact against the inroads of alien sectarian bourgeois influences.

In the new programme, strategy and tactics the Party must guard above all against vanguardist mistakes, against unorganised actions and Party leaders must take the foremost part in studying every new situation carefully and take personal responsibility for guiding every single action under the guidance of their own Party unit and in consultation with the next higher unit.

The greatest need of the hour is for the Party leadership to re-educate itself for the new period and remain ever-vigilant in the rapidly changing situation and go ever nearer to our own masses and look out for the masses and democratic elements in the periphery of our own organised bases and study the mood and criticism of the neutral members of our common mass organisations. This alone will enable them to remain leaders in the new period and fulfil their difficult responsibilities competently and effectively.

ELECTIONS—IMMEDIATE ISSUE

There is no time to go in for a deep study or long term review of the present period because of the coming elections. Other Parties are entering the election battle on their own old traditional Party slogans and their whole campaign is planned both against each other and also deliberately to pull our party behind themselves and against the other or to squeeze us out of political existence and break our links with non-Party masses; and they are supremely self-confident because we are the youngest force in our country's political life.

All that has happened ever since the end of the war and all that has been so far revealed of the characteristics of the new post war period in our country confirms the belief of the Party

leadership that its decision to contest the election is sound, — to save its own political existence, to preserve the common mass bases built up by it and to earn the respect of the open-minded neutral masses for its patriotic programme and prosperity plan.

THE PARTY LEADERSHIP HOWEVER NOTES THAT THE PARTY MEMBERSHIP YET CONSIDERS THE ELECTION BATTLE AS AN ORGANISATIONAL BATTLE FOR ITS EXISTENCE AND NOT YET THE ISSUE OF LIFE AND DEATH FOR THE PARTY AS A POLITICAL FORCE AND AS LEADER AND ORGANISER IN THE WORKING CLASS AND PEASANT MOVEMENTS AND AS THE MAIN LEVER FOR BUILDING THE UNITED NATIONAL FRONT IN THE NEW PERIOD.

III. AGAINST IMPERIALIST PLAN—OUR FREEDOM PLAN

The inner-Party discussions so far held enabled the Party to formulate its freedom plan more accurately and concretely in relation to the post war Imperialist plan for our country.

The principles of the post war Imperialist plan for our country are contained in the Cripps proposals which have been repeated in subsequent pronouncements by the British Government. The full blue print of the Imperialist plan is contained in the Coupland plan which is based on continuing British hold over India through three formally free Dominions. Hindu, Muslim, and Princes linked together by some sort of a common loose centre which the British Imperialists would be able to use to keep their hold over us and the preservation of their Imperialist economic interest in India, safeguarded by a new economic treaty which may replace their existing safeguards.

The Imperialist tactical line is contained in Lord Wavell's latest Calcutta speech which is based on perpetuating the continued disunity of the Congress and the League and on using one against the other, a line which calls upon the Congress leadership not to indulge in struggle demagogy and the League leadership not to indulge in communal demagogy and calls upon both to realise the danger of spontaneous economic outbursts in the new period and offers to negotiate with both and sermonises to both to come together.

On this basis Wavell claims for the British Government and the British interests a role in the leadership for settling the Indian

problem, that is, he seeks the role of the Arbiter of our destiny.

The immediate political slogan of the Party is :

—Against the Imperialist plan;

—Against any unilateral negotiation with British Government which can only end in surrender;

—For a common plan for immediate Indian freedom;

—For the path of united struggle for Indian freedom.

The first step in the British Imperialist plan is to deny the elementary principle of democracy by bringing into existence a constitution—making body without adult franchise; secondly to deny the very principle of Indian self-determination by refusing to make an unequivocal declaration recognising complete Indian independence; thirdly to deny self-determination and democracy to the people of Indian States and perpetuate the division of India.

The central slogan of the Party is the demand for the immediate transfer of power to the Indian people through an All India Constituent Assembly which recognises the sovereignty of the people of every natural national unit in India and is composed of delegates from the Constituent Assemblies of these units elected on adult suffrage. This includes the right of self determination of the people of the Indian States so that they may frame their constitution through constituent Assemblies elected by adult franchise and reunite with the people of their nationality in the contiguous unit or units of the present British India, if they so desire.

We recognise the freedom urge behind the Pakistan demand. Our stand would guarantee complete self determination to national units with Muslim majority and enable them to form a separate federation if they so desire.

We will appeal to them to see the injustice of the claim of the League leadership for six provinces as greed for neighbouring homelands and reliance only upon British-made boundaries.

We will also appeal to them to see that this separate federation of Muslim majority units should agree to join a common Indian Union for the purpose of defence and economic reconstruction in mutual interest and to enable India to play her role in Asia and the world for freedom, peace and security.

Our Party stands for a voluntary union of sovereign national states of the great family of Indian nations on the basis of complete democracy within each and utmost help to each other, the more advanced helping the less advanced through a common federal centre.

We would appeal to the Congress masses to see that unless they recognise the unconditional self-determination of every natural and national unit in India they would not be able to forge an all-in front of freedom to assert self determination of India as a whole from the British.

We guarantee to the Sikhs that in regard to the territories in which their historic homelands lie, they would be able to exercise their right of self-determination together with the rest of the population of that territory.

We stand for a united and free Bengal in a free India. Bengal being the common homeland of Bengali Muslims and Hindus should be free to exercise its right to self determination through a sovereign Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage and define its relation with the rest of India.

We will demand in the next Provincial Legislative Assemblies that no popular Party walks into the Imperialist trap but all together evolve a common plan for Indian freedom. During the elections we shall rouse the Indian people popularising our just solution and appeal that all parties should agree to put their differences to the people when the leaders cannot agree among themselves and demand from the British universal franchise and the unfettered right of the exercise of self determination for the constitution making of a free India and for a voluntary treaty with Britain.

We will explain how a joint front can be built here and now by applying the principle of self-determination to our own national problems for the settlement of Hindu-Muslim differences and by recarving the boundaries of our natural homelands artificially disrupted by British rule, so that everyone of our people is able to take share deciding for itself between the programme of different parties and in making its voice heard in the formulation of the programme of freedom and prosperity.

Our central endeavour in the elections shall be :

Firstly to rouse the people against British domination and for justice among themselves.

Secondly to get the people to judge different parties fairly.

Thirdly to see in our freedom programme the most natural expression of their own true freedom urge and its concrete application for building a new life of themselves through their own endeavours.

Our Party shall not only rouse the people against mutual strife and sectarian propaganda but also popularise the prospect of a great united freedom struggle as the final all in struggle for power through the acceptance of the freedom plan put forward.

IV. FOR PROFITEER- -FREE TOWNS AND JOBS FOR ALL

The Party does not go beyond the principles of industrial national reconstruction already accepted by the Congress and the League of nationalisation of key industries and control of major industries.

The specific contribution of the Party consists in applying accepted democratic principles of national reconstruction to the specific conditions of our national economy as it has been transformed during the war-period, through the narrow selfish aim of the British Imperialist bourgeoisie who have thwarted Indian industrial development and the greed of the Indian bourgeoisie who organised most large-scale hoarding. The British bourgeoisie held back the development of our economy, the Indian bourgeoisie went in for war profiteering and the two together have brought untold misery of scarcity of all vital necessities of daily life for our people.

In the new phase of post-war crisis the industrial economy is threatened with a new acute crisis and mass unemployment, if the British Imperialist political plan succeeds, whose economic counter part is an alliance between British Big Business and their Indian Brothers through a new economic treaty between Britain and India and the British High Commissioner to come to represent and safe guard existing British economic interests in India and represent British interests in India with the new Provisional Indian Government. By this simple trick the British Imperialists propose to remove, if possible, the problem of safeguards in the new Indian Constitution.

The industrial aim of the Party will be realised by working out concrete measures to apply the following principles in our national industrial life :

- The most rapid industrialisation of our country
- Nationalisation of key industries
- Control of all major industries
- Control of all Capital resources
- Planned co-ordination between the development of large—scale and cottage industries for the maximum growth of both.

PRACTICAL MEASURES

The practical measures that the Party will press on any new popular Government will be to pass Peoples's Ordinances to ensure the following measures :

(1) Seize all British capital, plantations, industrial concerns, mercantile firms in lieu of British Government's refusal to part with India's Sterling Balances.

(2) No return of the EPTA Reserve.

(3) Illegal Riches of the War Profiteers to be confiscated and mobilised for people's needs after proper investigation.

(4) No retrenchment, and the guaranteeing of minimum wage to all industrial workers. Reconversion of all war-time factories to production for peace-time needs and thus maintain the existing level of employment.

(5) Rapid introduction of social legislation to ensure more jobs for educated middle class youth and open and era of new enlightenment for the working masses of the towns.

Only two alternatives face the vast majority of townsmen, either a united struggle for jobs for all and growing prosperity of our country or mass unemployment of the working class and middle class and all at the mercy of the profiteers.

STRATEGIC AIM

The strategic aim of the Party is :

(a) To concentrate fire on the profiteers primarily the British but not excluding the Indians.

(b) Smash the growing alliance between British Big Business and their Indian class brothers.

(c) Build the unity of the working class with all sections of the middle class, technicians, all sections of employees and intellectuals, small traders etc.

(d) Strengthen the organised working class unity itself to embrace all sections of the working class in the mass organisation and make a new drive to start Trade Unions of hitherto unorganised workers.

The path that the leadership of the congress and League is following is to embrace their own profiteers and rouse not only the middle class but endeavour to engulf the working class as well in their fratricidal campaign against each other. This will make not only the task of national reconstruction but the introduction of immediate anti-profiteer measures very difficult in the period ahead.

The path the Party seeks to follow is to make an unprecedented effort to strengthen its own working class base make an approach to the Congress and League mass following on the basis of its anti-profiteer people's slogans and thus lay the basis for a new democratic alliance at the common base among the people and help to strengthen the drive for the new United National Front.

V. NEW VILLAGES—LANDLORD—USURER AND HOARDER—FREE AND FOOD FOR ALL

For the reconstruction of our agrarian economy the Party seeks to carry out the democratic programme of the destruction of all vestiges of the medieval feudal order, especially parasitical landlordism and usury.

The Party not only preaches in general terms but today seeks to apply its programme of new democracy to the chronic agrarian crisis in our rural areas under imperialist-feudal domination which has become intensified a thousand-fold during the war years.

The traditional feudal and the new capitalist exploiters of the village, the absentee landlord, the unscrupulous usurer, and the greedy trader have all become as never before, much stronger through hoarding and black-marketing and hold the entire village at their mercy and the local officials in their pockets through bribery. On the other hand the mass of the village poor have become poorer and are being uprooted from their own ancestral homesteads.

Only two alternatives face our rural economy.

Either immediately remove the 3 traditional leeches from the living body of the village toilers or face a period of chronic famines and destruction of normal village life.

One is the way of chronic famines, the other of food for all.

One is the way to new life, the other of death slow or fast.

One is the way to rebuild and save our villages, the other to see them disintegrate, and witness the destruction of all hope for the village toilers and the domination of the corrupt and selfish over the entire village.

In its propaganda, the Party shall concentrate its entire fire on the village parasites who have also been always British toadies and expose not only their anti-national and anti-people past but also the complete corruption of the village administrative apparatus which they have brought about. Our Party shall rouse not only its own but also the Congress and League masses to the grave danger of these feudal parasites and rural hoarders getting inside the Congress and the League while their top leaderships seek to divide the village folks among themselves.

The Party shall preach in its electoral campaign the urgent necessity of any new Popular Ministry undertaking in hand the task of national rural reconstruction on the fundamental principles of democracy and destroy the grip of the anti-national feudal landlords and usurers and the greedy hoarders on village life.

FUNDAMENTAL LAWS

The Party shall pledge that it shall demand that any new Popular Ministry shall pass within its first year three new fundamental laws to ensure the birth of new free villages.

(1) A LAND ACT ensuring abolition of landlordism (*vide proposals in the Blue-print*).

(2) AN ANTI-USURY ACT abolishing usurious money-lending to the agriculturists and artisans and guaranteeing credit to peasants and artisans through Co-operatives which shall be based on democratic control and which will mobilise the credit resources of the present money lenders at a suitable rate of interest.

(3) AN ANTI-PROFITEER ACT, abolishing the new monopoly-grip of rural wholesalers over people's food and

peasants' needs and introducing large-scale "Sales-Purchase Co-operatives" run on a democratic basis and not ruled over by the bureaucracy.

IMMEDIATE MEASURES

The Party shall demand that new Popular Ministries pass People's Ordinances for the immediate introduction of following measures so as to give no time to the vested interests to rally their forces and fight urgently needed relief.

(1) Agricultural Income Tax on all agricultural incomes of statutory landlords leaving them not more than Rs. six thousand of the rentals received by them per year.

(2) Immediate strengthening and democratisation of the Co-operatives movement and subsidising of Sales Purchase Co-operatives by declaring and guaranteeing fair price for agricultural produce and ensuring industrial goods to villages at non-blackmarket fair rates.

(3) Fallow land of the Zemindars and Government to landless and poor peasants.

(3a) Substantial reduction of rent and guaranteed minimum wage to agricultural labourers.

(4) Immediate arrangements for training peasant youth in new methods of agriculture and for running rural Co-operatives and new cattle-breeding farms.

(5) New schools and hospitals, and immediate prospect of new jobs for the educated village youth.

STRATEGIC AIM

The main strategic aim of the Party is to isolate the today anti-national parasites and profiteers even though they are wearing a patriotic mask today and rally vast majority of the village people starting from the small zeminder and rich peasant upto the landless untouchable labourer on the main plea that our plan ensures the prosperity of all on the basis of justice to all and the only condition is that all who contribute socially useful labour in running the village are brothers among themselves and must unite against the common enemy—the 3 leeches, the Landlord Usurer-Hoarder's Combine.

The tactical line that the Party follows to bring about the above democratic alliance which should endeavour to embrace

the mass following of the Congress and the League and their local workers and also non-Party village leaders from every walk of life is by following measures :

(1) Make a real non-Party approach in its mass agitation in terms of the interests of the village as a whole.

(2) Strengthen its own Kisan Sabha base by expanding Sabha enrolment both ways from middle peasant downwards to embrace the entire mass of poor peasants and landless labourers and to bring in the majority of middle-peasants and the best of the rich peasants. Make the Kisan Sabha the living embodiment not only of the mass of peasants but led by the best of the peasants and the foremost fighter for the needs of the entire village and main organiser of its future life.

(3) Rouse new democratic consciousness in the village by breaking the links of the rich and middle-peasants with the 3 leeches and rousing their sense of justice to see the need of giving primary importance to the needs and demands of the poor and landless in all relief and reconstruction measures.

(4) Seek the aid of all patriotic enlightened and democratic elements in the village not only in its daily constructive work but win them over to participate in different aspects of Kisan Sabha activity.

VI. SELF CRITICISM

Most of the time of this session has been spent in self-criticism and reformulating and sharpening the main programmatic slogans for the Elections. What have our discussions in terms of the happenings in the period between our two meetings revealed?

In one word the last resolution only embodied a partial understanding of the new post-war period and carried forward the remnants of the people's war period in the new post war period as happens when the Party has to make the transition from one period into another.

(a) It carried forward the understanding of the war period into the analysis of the post-war world. This led to the illusion of peaceful development and underestimating the role of the social democratic leadership of the Labour Party which could not but trail behind its own imperialist bourgeoisie once the war was over and the camps of Progress and Reaction began regrouping themselves.

(b) It carried forward the national outlook of the war period into the new period. The central task during the war period was acceptance of self-determination by the leadership of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League against British-imposed deadlock. In the post-war period the situation became how to rouse the people directly for asserting independence and self-determination against the British domination and implementing the same principle in our own future development and for the solution of our present differences.

It did not squarely face the task of reformulation of a new freedom programme for the new period. It formulated the freedom programme not in a manner as will unite all freedom-loving forces to smash the imperialist plan but by mechanically and not objectively applying the principle of self-determination. It escaped the real controversy of one Constituent Assembly demanded by the Congress and two Constituent Assemblies demanded by the Muslim League by formulating the slogan of 17 Constituent Assemblies which voluntarily decide the next step. Thus the immediate issue of asserting self-determination against British domination got thrown in the background and ours appeared as a sound but utopian solution.

(c) It carried forward the strategy of war period into the post-war period.

—It mechanically extended the slogan of Congress-League unity to Congress-League Communist unity which was not understood as a new strategic slogan for a new period but as mere extension of the same old war strategy. It made no sense when Congress and League leaderships were violently rousing their following against each other and Congress leadership was launching a frontal offensive against our Party and the League leadership deliberately isolating League progressives.

In the war period Congress-League unity was real struggle, the only way to break British-imposed deadlock and win a National Government. In the post-war period a united plan for final struggle for power became the main strategic task of the period.

—To miss the above led to a series of mistakes :

(i) The underestimation of the mounting anti-British sentiment among all sections of the people—and of the rising wave

of workers' and peasants' struggle arising out of post-war economic conditions.

(ii) Lost initiative to the anti-Communists.

(iii) Under-estimated how rapidly neutral masses will fall prey to the demagogy of their own leaderships.

(iv) Looked upon anti-Communism only as an extension of war-time frustration and prejudices, which we answered in terms of being unfair to us and by putting on a superior moral tone.

(v) Under-estimated the rightward swing of the Muslim League leadership.

(vi) The last session failed to work out any guiding slogans that will help local units to work out a new tactical line in face of struggle demagogy by the Congress leadership and the spontaneous outburst of a new strike-wave.

No new lead was given either on partial struggles or on anti-Imperialist campaigns organised by other parties.

VII. DECISION

The Polit Bureau in consultation with local C.C.M.s to immediately draft and despatch 2 documents ;

(1) Manifesto for the Elections.

(2) An Inner-Party Letter for the ranks.

The Inner-Party Letter should help to orientate the ranks towards studying the new policy documents with a new outlook. It should popularise following ideas :

(i) The post-war period is a *new* period. Clean out remnants of the past but don't start speculating about the future

(ii) The new period holds out only two alternatives:
Can political India make a final bid for Indian freedom and all-round democracy here and now?

Or will the freedom movement as we have known it ever since the mutiny and which has grown from stage to stage will destroy itself in mutual strife and unable to solve the acute problems facing it?

(3) The specific feature of the new period is that it marks the end of the bourgeois-led freedom movement in channels of factional strife, separate spontaneous struggles and is rapidly going into the direction of compromising with British Imperialism.

It is the responsibility of the Party to save the national movement and become the inspirer, initiator and organiser of a new period in our national awakening.

Ours is the responsibility to expose the illusory hopes of the Congress and League leaderships for a unilateral settlement with the British Government, ours the job to act as the connecting link between the Congress and the League for a new United National Front that can and must make the final bid for power from the British rulers.

(4) The Election battle is only the first round of the battle.

(5) Our organised working class and peasant support are the existing bases for the new United National front and our natural allies are the Congress and League masses in our own localities.

(6) Our weapons are the following :

(i) *Ideological* : New freedom and prosperity programme of the Party which is the application of Marxism to our own country, which alone embodies the freedom and democracy urge of our people and which alone can be defended and not assailed on the basis of our own and generally accepted freedom and democratic principles and which transforms existing national sentiment into a new patriotic programme which must echo as just and practical in the heart of the Congress and League masses both.

(ii) *Strategic* : The reformulation of the basic strategy of colonial movement as the United National Front, as Congress-League-Communist unity which embodies the freedom, democratic and unity urges of our common people in one single thread.

(iii) *Tactical* : We must be in the forefront of all struggles and be their foremost organisers.

—Political actions against police terror and the Imperialist acts of the British rulers.

—Economic partial struggle of the workers, peasants and all sections of our suffering people.

We must be the first to stop war among brothers, whenever there is a fratricidal struggle among brother peoples, we must stand in between and stop it, e.g. communal riots, Congress-League conflict, League and Nationalist Muslim conflict, etc.

THE INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

E. M. S. Namboodripad

By the time Jayprakash Narayan and other socialist leaders started functioning as an underground centre of the AICC the struggle had already become shattered. The centre in a statement issued in November 1942 said that "our ranks have been depleted: our resource, in the form of local assistance in rural areas, and active enthusiastic support from village youngmen have been reduced by repression". In spite of this, the leaders of the underground organization firmly believed that the Indian masses were solidly with them. So they chartered a programme of action to make the struggle more wide-spread and more democratic. The programme included the following.

1. The peasantry should refuse to pay the land tax and obstruct the revenue and police officers to collect the tax. Even a military invasion should be rendered ineffective by flight into the jungles.
2. Non-sale of food-crops and cattle.
3. Non-acceptance of paper money.
4. Emphasising upon the people; the danger of food and cloth famine.
5. Organization of Swaraj; Panchayat and boycotting of revenue or police officers.
6. Roads, and telegraphs and railways to be destroyed to defeat the British military.

But the programme remained only on the paper. This was not because the people were loyal to the British or they were opposed to the Quit India struggle, but because the government had succeeded in suppressing with arms all demonstrations of protest during the one and a half months following 9th August. A general feeling spread among the people that it was futile to fight the British.

However, while the struggle within India was being suppressed, certain developments were taking place outside the country, which culminated in the formation of the Indian National

Army, its attempts to enter India under the leadership of Subhas Bose and its final defeat.

When Subhas Bose left India secretly in January 1941, Japan was not a party in the Second World War. Germany was making preparations to attack the Soviet Union under the cover of the no-war pact it had signed with it. Hitler was waiting for an opportunity to attack Britain and the countries under its possession after defeating the Allied forces in Europe. Therefore, Bose first went to Germany where he established relation with the German Foreign Minister Ribbontrop and the Fascist rulers in Italy, and started making regularly anti-British propaganda on the German radio. This evoked two different reactions among the politically conscious people in India. Among those who had adopted an anti-Fascist outlook, thanks to the systematic propaganda carried out by anti-Fascist organizations in India including the Congress, Bose's activities evoked opposition. They were disturbed by his friendship with the Fascist forces. At the same time, another section expressed sympathy with his activities. Their hatred towards the British rulers was stronger than that towards the Fascist forces.

The entire course of the war changed before long. During the initial months when the German forces made rapid advances, a general impression was created that the Soviet Union would be defeated in the war. This too helped to create two reactions. It created sympathy towards Germany and Japan. The second reaction was the feeling that Germany and Japan together were crushing the British and India could utilize that opportunity to win freedom. Both these reactions were found reflected on the people at large and particularly among the ranks and leadership of the Congress.

The Congress leadership participated in the talks with Cripps as a compromise between these two outlooks. At this stage, the sympathy towards the Soviet Union and China bore more weight with the leadership. But as the talks broke down, the joy over the advances being made by Germany and Japan as well as the feeling that India would be able to take advantage of the situation and gain freedom became stronger. Even in the midst of their talks with Cripps, the Congress leadership had maintained that in spite of their sympathy to the Allied powers, they would not be able to participate in the war efforts of the British as long as they continued to hang on to power in India. Even in the Quit India resolution, the Congress reiterated its sympathy to the Allies.

While this was the situation within the country, among the Indians living abroad there was a wide-spread feeling of admiration for Germany and Japan in their victory in the war and the optimism that India would be able to utilize the new world situation and gain independence. Even those living in countries occupied by Germany and Japan, who had anti-Fascist feelings, did not express them. Thus, Berlin and Tokyo became the centres of the Indians who were eager to wage an anti British struggle.

Berlin was the main centre of such activities until Japan declared war on the United States and Britain. With Japan's entry in the war and its triumphant march over many Asian countries, the centre was shifted to Tokyo.

Rash Behari Bose, an Indian revolutionary who had left India during the First World War was living in Japan as a Japanese citizen. On his initiative, a conference of Indians was held in Tokyo from 28th to 30th March 1942, in which the Indian Independence League of the overseas Indians was formed. Following, a larger conference was held in Bangkok from 15th to 23rd June in which 100 delegates representing Indians living in East and South-East Asia participated. Rash Behari Bose was elected president of the Indian Independence League. The conference hoisted the Indian tri-colour flag and declared the immediate attainment of complete freedom for India its objective.

The Conference through a resolution invited Subhas Chandra Bose, who was then living in Germany, to Asia. Accepting the invitation, Bose reached Tokyo in June 1943 and took over the presidentship of the Indian Independence League from Rash Behari Bose.

Meanwhile in December 1941 Japan invaded Malaya and defeated the British forces there. A number of soldiers were taken prisoners of war. A small party of Indian soldiers led by Capt. Sohan Singh who escaped from the advancing Japanese forces surrendered finally after wandering in the forest for a few days. The Japanese officers held talks with Sohan Singh and suggested to him to form an "Indian national army" out of a selected number of Indian prisoners of war and march to India in cooperation with the Japanese forces to end the British rule there. Sohan Singh accepted the suggestion. This was how the Indian National Army (INA) was formed with Indian prisoners of war. In accordance with the

decision of the Bangkok conference a Council of Action was set up with Rash Behari Bose as the president and Sohan Singh as the minister of defence and the commander-in-chief of the Army. However, the activities of the Council were hampered for several reasons and it was only after Bose arrived and took up the leadership that they could be carried out smoothly. .

As Subhas Bose took over the leadership of both the Council and the Indian National Army, a new wave of enthusiasm swept over the Indians in the Japanese occupied countries and even over a section of nationalists in India. It may be noted that after his taking over of the leadership, the name of the Council was changed to "Provisional Government" on October 21, 1943. The feeling became widespread among the nationalists in India and abroad that the INA and Provisional Government were safe under a leadership which was capable both of liberating India from the British rule with the assistance of Japan and of preventing Japan from establishing its domination over the country thus liberated. It was also widely believed that the anti-British underground movement led by Jayprakash and other socialist leaders was going to achieve final victory with the offensive actions of the INA forces led by Bose.

The initial activities of the INA were such as to create this impression. Bose was determined to maintain independence of the INA and the Provisional Government from the Japanese government and its military bosses. A number of biographical notes and reminiscences contained instances of Bose having taken strong position against the actions of the Japanese government which did not correspond with his ideas.

The consciousness spread among the INA men that far from being the mercenaries of Japanese masters, they were rising as the national army of India. In addition to the former prisoners of war, a section of the civilians trained by them also became an integral part of the INA. This enlarged INA with Bose as its supreme commander fought and marched ahead. More than 4,000 among them were killed in actions and finally they were able to set foot on the Indian soil in March 1944. The Japanese ruler Tojo declared that Japan was resolved to extend all means in order to help to expel and eliminate from India "the Anglo-Saxon influence" and enable India to achieve "full independence in the true sense of the term".

But by the time they were able to reach about 150 miles inside the eastern borders of India, the course of the war began to change. The INA's first target was Imphal. However, they could not achieve the objective because the Japanese failed to reach the necessary supplies and materials. Meanwhile, the monsoon set in preventing their further advance. The British, on the other hand, used the opportunity to regroup their forces and made a successful counter-attack on the Japanese and INA forces as the monsoon withdrew. This marked the beginning of the end of the Japanese army and the INA.

Thus, both the Quit India movement inside India and the INA offensive outside India aborted. The British were able to suppress the Quit India struggle using its police and military forces. They were also able to defeat Japan and recover Burma, Malaya and Singapore with the support of the anti-Fascist forces all over the world and with the military aid and cooperation from the Allies including the Soviet Union and the United States.

But the Quit India struggle and the activities of the INA had shaken the foundation of the British rule in India. The former remained in a subdued state ready to erupt at the first opportunity. The experience with the INA provided the warning that even the Indian soldiers who had been regarded as mercenaries of the British might turn the direction of their guns at an appropriate moment. When the INA trial began in the court, the ire of the people including that of the Indian servicemen rose high. The country-wide protest against the trial clearly showed that if the British were to hang on to power arrogantly with the claim that they were successful in suppressing both the movements, not only the people of India in general but even the armed forces under the British control would rise against them. This was confirmed by the mutiny organized subsequently by the naval ratings in Bombay.

It was under these circumstances that the British decided to restart negotiations. Details of these negotiations will be given in the later chapters. However, it is necessary here to find an answer to the questions why did the 'August revolution' fail and why did the INA crumble after registering partial success in the initial stage.

1. The Quit India struggle was not built upon the organized strength of the masses, no matter how wide a support it had received. It was the same leadership which had been arguing that any mass

struggle was contrary to the principle of non-violence that now called upon the people to adopt any method they considered appropriate in the Quit India struggle. Even this call was subject to the principle of non-violence! Therefore, as Jayprakash and others pointed out later, the absence of an organization strong enough to wage the struggle disarmed the people.

2. The Quit India struggle failed to create even a ripple among the armed forces maintained by the British. Like their English counterparts, the Indian soldiers continued to act in accordance with the orders given by their superiors. There was not one minor incident of insubordination anywhere in India during the 1942 struggle as was witnessed in Peshawar during the 1930 *salt satyagraha*. Mutiny in the organized armed forces is an important element in the success of any revolution. As Lenin stated, without immobilizing the armed forces no major revolution had succeeded and will not succeed.

3. The INA was the first indication of the fact that the British Indian armed forces would not act as loyally as before. What made the INA a strong willed military force was the fact that a section of the Indian army turned against the British and thousands of civilians turned themselves into trained soldiers under such a popular leader like Subhas Bose.

4. Even at that stage, the Indian soldiers who were deployed against the INA were acting loyally to the British rulers. Neither the organizations of the Quit India movement nor the INA was able to "immobilize" it. Added to this was the fact that in Europe in the west and in Asia in the east, the Fascist forces were facing one defeat after another. All this led to the final defeat of the INA.

Two events which took place towards the end 1945 played a significant role in raising post-war anti-imperialist storms: the INA trial and the decision of the government to send Indian soldiers to Indonesia, Indo-China and other South and South East Asian countries. In organising huge demonstrations against these acts, Communists, Socialists as well as the ranks of the Congress and the League played active roles.

With the defeat and surrender of Japan, the INA consisting of about 20,000 officers and men came under the control of the British. The British government charged them with failure to fulfil

the obligation of loyalty to the British and decided to try them for treason. As indicated earlier, the Communist Party or even prominent Congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru had no sympathy to the decision of Subhas Bose to help the advance of Japan by forming the INA. But none of them questioned the sense of patriotism of Bose. In fact, anti-imperialists had greatly appreciated the cooperation extended by the former army officers and men to Bose and other patriots who were led by the great objective of liberating the country from the British. Therefore, when Col. Shah Nawaz Khan, Capt. Dhillon and Capt. Sehgal, who played the most significant roles in the INA were tried and sentenced to a long period of imprisonment, the people considered it an attack on the anti-imperialist movement. Demonstrations against the sentence were held throughout the country and the government resorted to all repressive actions including firing to disperse the demonstrators. But braving these repressive actions, the people surged ahead. These protest actions took the highest form in Calcutta where workers struck work for several days bringing the electric power stations, transport, water supply, etc. to a standstill. People raised barricades in the southern parts of Calcutta and set military vehicles on fire. The Governor of Bengal deployed the military to bring the situation under control.

Despite these repressive Measures, there was no let up in the people's actions until Sarat Chandra Bose, brother of Subhas Bose and a top Congress leader, gave a call to stop all demonstrations. Bose assured the people that the INA officers who had been sentenced would be released and that the Congress would strive to gain national independence through "lawful and non-violent means".

Anti-imperialist demonstrations demanding the release of the INA leaders were also held in many other places like Bombay, Mathura, Delhi, Meerut and Peshawar.

In the clashes that occurred in the course of these demonstrations, 40 people were killed in Calcutta and 23 in Bombay, several hundreds were injured in police actions all over the country.

Disregarding the people's actions in protest against the INA trial, the British authorities went ahead with their decision. In February 1946, Capt. Abdul Rashid was tried, which again led to

a wave of protest demonstrations in Bengal. This time the appeal to stop the demonstrations came from the newly elected Chief Minister of Bengal, H.S. Suhrawardy.

While the leaders of the Congress and the League were engaged in the bargain with the British rulers to achieve their respective demands, the people were expressing protest against the government's decision to send the Indian troops to Indo-China and Indonesia on the pretext of completely liberating the Japanese occupied countries after Japan's defeat in the war. In each of these countries the people had already set up their own national revolutionary government in place of the imperialist rulers who had fled before the Japanese invaders. Communists like Ho Chi Minh and comrades in Indo-China, and non-communist nationalists like Dr. Sukarno in Indonesia and Aung San in Burma were leading these revolutionary governments. The British government was trying to use the Indian troops to suppress these revolutionary governments and restore the British imperialist domination in Burma, Malaya and Singapore, the French in Indo-China and the Dutch in Indonesia.

Demonstrations in protest against this were held all over the country. Port workers in Bombay and Calcutta refused to handle the shipments of military supplies and food to the troops in Indonesia. The leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League openly protested against the government's actions. The Congress leaders called upon the people to observe 25th October as 'South East Asia Day'.

Formation of I. N. A. and Trials of I.N.A. Prisoners

"After his fast of 1943, Gandhiji did not fully recover his health, and, in April 1944, he fell seriously ill. The Civil Surgeon at Poona declared that Gandhiji was not likely to survive his illness. The British Government decided thereupon not to risk his death in jail. Another factor that influenced the British decision during this period was the role of the Indian National Army. The INA, under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, had participated in a Japanese offensive on India's northeast frontier and were in control of 51,000 sq. miles of Indian territory, comprising Manipur and

Excerpts From : "A History of Indian Freedom Struggles" written by E.M.S. Namboodripad. 1993 Edition, pages 486, 467.

Aishevpur. The British hoped that Gandhiji's release would create sufficient goodwill among Indians to induce them to co-operate with the British in facing the new threat arising out of the action of the Indian National Army and its ally, Japan. Yet the government would not take prompt steps to release Gandhiji and other Congress leaders, since the Mahatma would not withdraw the 8 August Resolution. ”

“ It was during this period that the officers of the Indian National Army were put on trial in the Red Fort in New Delhi. The trial began on 5 November. Captain Shah Nawaz Khan, Captain P.K. Sehgal and Lt. Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon were court martialed because, while they were prisoners of war, they had left the Indian Army and joined the Indian National Army founded by Subhas Chandra Bose. According to the British, they had waged war against the King Emperor. But, in the eyes of the Indians and the Congress party, they were patriotic sons of India. The whole country was excited by this trial. The slogan, JAI HIND, of the Indian National Army became a common term of greeting between Indians from this time onwards. The court found the accused guilty and, according to the law, they were sentenced to transportation for life, but such was the intensity of emotion and anger created in people's mind that the British bowed before the public opinion and the Commander-in-Chief pardoned the INA personnel.”

FOR THE FINAL ASSAULT

*Tasks of the Indian People in the Present Phase
of Indian Revolution*

1. A NEW PERIOD

The Indian freedom movement has entered into its final phase. The mounting mass battles against imperialism herald a period of the struggle for power by the people and the final liquidation of imperialist rule.

This is proved by the following new unprecedented features of the mass revolutionary upsurge that has gone on mounting since the 'Release INA' demonstrations and mass resistance to imperialist terror (in November 1945 and February 1946).

- The masses face police and military repression with a death-defying abandon and deliver counter-attacks against the police and military (Calcutta INA demonstrations in November 1945 and February 1946).

- The RIN struggle, the strike in the RIAF and other armed forces, the strikes among the police, all these show that the idea of national resistance against imperialism is maturing in the minds of the men of the Indian armed forces.

- The fraternisation between the people and the army, the country-wide protest strikes in support of the RIN mutiny, the refusal of the Indian military to shoot the people and mutineers on many occasions foreshadow new forms of mass struggle.

- The huge and unprecedented strike wave is already marked by total and country-wide strikes in individual industries and can develop into a general strike of all industries which can lead to all-in militant struggles locally.

- The militant hunger marches of peasants and the taking possession of grain stocks of hoarders by starving peasants and the taking over of fallow land of landlords by land hungry peasants (in certain districts of Bengal) are the beginnings of

new peasant struggles against landlordism which may develop into big local battles against intolerable conditions of serfdom and zamindari zulum.

● The rising political mass struggles of the States peoples against the rule and repression of Princely autocracy, exemplified by the epic struggle of the Kashmir people, are the beginning of a new round of States peoples' struggles to end the rule of Princes.

Compromising Policy of Leadership

This upsurge, however, is taking place when the bulk of our people is divided into two hostile camps, led by the Congress and the Muslim League, which continue to have an immense hold over the people. It is because of this hold and the compromising policy pursued by both leaderships that they are in a position to retard and disorganise the growth of the revolutionary struggles.

In pursuance of their policy of compromise the Congress and League leaderships detach their following from the growing struggles, refuse to extend and support them and thus disrupt the rising wave.

In pursuance of their policy of bringing pressure on each other through reliance on imperialism, they rouse communal feelings, set their followers against each other, leading often to communal riots. They thus create disruption and demoralisation among the people at a time when the masses themselves are spontaneously uniting for common struggle.

While all sections of the common people, throughout the country and belonging to all parties, are being drawn into common battles, the sharp division and hostility between the followers of the Congress and the League, accentuated by the disruptive and compromising policies of their leaderships, act as a retarding force on the spread of the common battles.

While the idea of national resistance is spreading among the ranks of the army and the police, the main weapons of imperialist rule, the leaderships of the major parties are doing their very best to check and sabotage all popular struggles.

While the question of the final ending of imperialist rule by the people taking power into their own hands comes on the agenda, the leaderships of the Congress and the League are

pursuing policies of compromise with imperialism and are fighting each other and seeking British alliance against each other in the division of that power.

The leaders are able to do this because they still have immense influence as the traditional leaders of their respective organisations. This is today a big obstacle to the growth of revolutionary forces, which can only be overcome by patiently disillusioning the masses about the policy of their leaderships.

The alternatives before the people are two :

EITHER imperialism is able to crush this upsurge, thanks to the compromising policies of the bourgeois leaderships of the Congress and the League;

OR, the Party of the working people is able so effectively to intervene in the situation with correct political slogans, programme and strategy, as to transform it continuously in the direction of developing, extending and unifying these expressions of mass discontent counteracting the retarding influence of the bourgeois leadership, and thus setting the stage for the final struggle for power.

Slogans For A New Joint Front

The new situation demands of the Party that it boldly leads all popular struggles, develops the initiative and the fighting capacity of the masses draws into them masses belonging to all the parties, and helps to bring into being a NEW joint front of the Indian people (Congress, Muslim League, Communist Party) united behind the slogans :

- **QUIT INDIA.**
- *All power to the people.*
- *Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise with proportional representation and self-determination of national units and the programme of democratic revolution.*

2. IMPERIALIST POLICY

BRITISH imperialism has emerged out of the second world war weakened internally and internationally. In its desperate struggle for survival it is trying out the dangerous strategy of building a Western Bloc, in alliance with the United States,

against the Soviet Union and the forces of revolutionary democratic advance in Europe, and against national liberation movements in the Middle East and Asia.

India, its biggest colonial base, occupies a key place in this strategy. But in India its very rule is endangered by the growing revolutionary upheaval. Its very machinery of power is becoming unreliable.

New British Plan and Policy

That is why the new British policy and plan to consolidate its rule in India, is to placate the bourgeois leadership—both of the Congress and the League— draw it into alliance with the Princes, and thus create a new basis for its domination and a new facade from behind which to launch a crushing offensive against the rising revolutionary forces.

The Constitution-making Body it has set up is in accordance with this plan.

If it succeeds in drawing into it the Congress, the League and the Princes, and if at all this body finishes its labours, it will produce not the constitution of an independent and democratic India *but one in which British domination will be based on the one hand on establishing an alliance between the Princes and patriotic parties and on the other on perpetuating the differences between these parties.*

During the period in which the Constitution-making Body is working, *it will be an instrument of diverting the attention of the masses from the issue of the real struggle for power and of creating issues to divide Hindus and Muslims, thus encouraging communal disruption.*

Essential part of this imperialist plan is an Interim Government at the Centre which is sought to be formed by bringing in both the Congress and the League together. As conceived by imperialism, it is to be based on Congress-League conflict so that it remains permanently weak vis-a-vis imperialism—while it can be used as a convenient screen and weapon to disrupt the growing national revolutionary forces.

Imperialism hopes to carry through this plan. It hopes that the Congress and League leaderships pursuing the narrow and selfish interests of their respective vested interests will seek

separately compromise with imperialism and the Princes, which can only intensify their internal differences instead of solving them.

Imperialist Game Can Be Foiled

The neatly laid plans of imperialism which are based on the bringing together of such conflicting elements will not necessarily succeed.

The growing upsurge, if properly led and united by the Communist Party, can yet build a unity of the common people in struggle which will defeat the compromising and disruptive policies of the leaderships of the Congress and the League.

The growing support by the people of British India to the struggle of the States peoples against autocracy can yet frustrate and defeat the attempted alliance between the Princes and the Congress and League leaders.

3. POLICIES OF CONGRESS, LEAGUE LEADERSHIPS

THE national bourgeois leadership of the Congress relying upon the tremendously increased mass backing and prestige it has won since 1942, is using the potential threat of struggle against the background of the new revolutionary upsurge to secure a compromise favourable to itself out of the imperialist plan.

- * It turns its back upon mass struggles. In return it hopes that the British will offer it favourable terms.

- * It uses its influence over the States peoples' movement to compromise with the Princes by coming out openly against States peoples' struggles.

- * It has failed to bring the common Muslims into the common movement because it has refused to recognise the right of self-determination of the people of linguistically and culturally homogeneous national units as the basis of forging lasting Indian unity.

It rightly opposes the compulsory groupings in the imperialist plan but itself wants to take advantage of the plan to impose a compulsory union denying self-determination to nationalities.

It seeks to coerce the bourgeois-feudal leadership of the Muslim League into compromise by using British pressure against the League.

Compromising Policy of the Congress

It covers up its anti-struggle, compromising and disruptive anti-Muslim policy by its demagogic pledges about Indian independence, Indian unity and democracy.

It promises that its policy will soon bring about a free Provisional Government at the Centre and an Independent India out of the present Constitution-making Body.

Exactly the opposite is going to be the outcome of its anti-struggle and compromising policy. *Its bankruptcy will be revealed to its following as events unfold.*

There will be deadlock after deadlock in the Constituent Assembly if and when it meets.

The Interim Government if it comes will be one of compromise which would be unable to solve the pressing problems of the people but will, time and again, be faced with the task of suppressing the people's struggles.

The Muslim League leadership enjoys the support of the bulk of the freedom-loving Muslims. It has aroused and united the anti-imperialist upsurge among the Muslim masses but has misdirected the same in a separatist consolidation.

It claims to stand for the independence of India, but demands a separate Muslim State in the North-West and the North-East areas (Pakistan), containing some 40 per cent non-Muslims, without the democratic vote of the people of those areas and denying self-determination to the nationalities contained therein.

League Obstructs Building of Joint Front

It makes this undemocratic demand a condition precedent to its joining the struggle for independence, it bargains on this basis with the Congress and puts up an opposition to imperialism, *but in reality it hopes to gain its demands from imperialism by obstructing the building of a joint front for freedom.*

It accepted the Cabinet Mission's plan because it hoped to use compulsory groupings as a stepping stone to Pakistan and division of India with the aid of the British imperialists.

In this its policy runs parallel to that of the Congress which has accepted the plan in order, with Britain's help, to get the compulsory union of all India and thus frustrate the plan of Pakistan.

Though it has now rejected the plan and is threatening struggle for Pakistan, it is still aiming at the same compromise with imperialism, based on compulsory groupings and the Viceroy's award about the Interim Government, which denies power to the people.

As events unroll the contradictions between the democratic freedom urge of the common Muslims and the bankrupt compromising and disruptive policy of the leaders of the League will come to the fore, more and more disillusioning the Muslim masses.

Thus both the Congress and the League leaderships instead of turning to the people for a democratic decision on the question of Pakistan and the unity of India and joining hands for joint struggle against imperialism, infact turn to imperialism for a separate compromise against each other and thus only clear the way for the success of imperialist designs.

But the imperialist plan to build a reactionary united front of the Princes and the bourgeois leadership of the Congress and the League in order to impose their constitutional scheme of division and imperialist domination will not necessarily succeed.

True, the bourgeois leadership of the Congress and the League reflecting the interests of the most powerful section of the Indian vested interests seek compromise with imperialism and want to put a brake upon the revolutionary upsurge.

But the fact is that both these leaderships are also answerable to the vast mass of the common people whose rising anti-imperialist militancy creates conditions to prevent such a compromise.

In the course of the imperialist efforts to impose the plan, acute differences will arise between imperialism and either of the leadership alternatively.

Imperialism will seek to divert each such conflict into a Congress-League deadlock, into Hindu-Muslim division, in order to create conditions for the imposition of its plan.

The Communist Party will utilise all such occasions, first, to expose the reactionary anti-freedom, anti-democratic and disruptive nature of the plan, and secondly, to show in every case a positive way forward based on the joint action of the Congress and the League to smash the plan and move towards a joint struggle for independence.

This perspective holds good even if an Interim Government is formed with both or with only one of the parties, for even then the conflict between imperialism and the leaderships of the Congress and the League would not have been finally eliminated.

4. COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE IMPERIALIST PLAN

THE Communist Party totally rejects the Imperialist Plan. It brands it as an imperialist manoeuvre to smash the growing mass upsurge, to split the freedom movement and to perpetuate imperialist feudal rule in a new form.

It exposes the proposed Constituent Assembly as a fake and not a sovereign body, an imperialist trap beset with imperialist awards, which can therefore produce only a constitution of Indian slavery and division, and nothing else.

The Party will expose it from within through its single representative from stage to stage, using every conflict which will arise therein to show its undemocratic and non-sovereign character and by bringing in positive proposals of Congress-League joint action to break it up.

The Party will expose the Imperialist Plan of the Interim Government as a government of compromise and surrender to imperialism.

Such a government whether composed of one or both the major popular parties will be weak vis-a-vis the Viceroy and will be sought to be used by him as a convenient cover from behind which to hit at the growing revolutionary upsurge.

Our Party will warn the parties against entering such an Interim Government.

But if it is actually formed, the party will endeavour its utmost to prevent it from going further down the road of compromise and surrender by rallying the people in joint front demonstrations to demand of it :

- * Establishment of full civil liberties throughout India;
- * The withdrawal of British troops;
- * No police and military interference against workers' strikes for better wages and living conditions;
- * No suppression of peasant mass actions against the landlords and hoarders;
- * Support of mass demonstrations against imperialist rule; and—
- * Positive measures that mean war against profiteers, blackmarketeers and landlords.

The exposure of the bankruptcy of the Imperialist Plan as events develop would certainly lead to a growing disillusionment of the Congress and League rank and file with the plan. But this will not lead automatically to the emergence of the joint front for united struggle for independence.

5. THE CENTRAL POLITICAL SLOGAN

IN order to win the Congress, League and other parties (especially of the minorities like the Scheduled Castes, Sikhs, etc.) for a joint front for a united struggle for independence, democracy and self-determination, the Party raises the following central slogan :

All power to the people—for a constituent assembly based on adult suffrage with proportional representation and complete self-determination to every national unit.

Simultaneously, the Party places before the people a programme of democratic revolution which will guarantee freedom and liberation to all peoples, land for the peasants and jobs and decent living for all.

It will raise the slogan : prepare for the final struggle for power and call for a joint front of all the patriotic parties (Congress, League, Communist, etc.) for that struggle.

Programme Of Democratic Revolution

The CENTRAL SLOGAN of a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage is indissolubly linked with the preparation for the struggle for power and with the strategy of the united front of the Congress, the League and the Communist Party.

FIRST, the Constituent Assembly visualised is quite distinct from the one proposed by imperialism and comes into being in the free atmosphere of a successful struggle by the people and transacts its business without the intervention of imperialism.

SECONDLY, it is based on the great principle of self-determination of nationalities, which will ensure that the Constituent Assembly will be the assembly of the delegates of all those national units (redemarcated linguistic, cultural homogeneous territories) which wish to join to form a single Union State.

It would be free to any national unit in India not to send its delegates to the common Constituent Assembly, but to form its separate sovereign State if a plebiscite of the entire adult population of that unit results in a vote for separation.

This would enable the question of Pakistan and unity of India to be decided by the democratic vote of the people. At the same time it would guarantee equality and freedom to the people of every nationality which joins the voluntary Indian Union.

Such a clear-cut definition of the Constituent Assembly would afford a just and democratic basis for achieving the joint front for the final struggle for power.

THIRDLY, it is based on the most democratic principle of election, viz., on adult suffrage with proportional representation, which will not only ensure that instead of vested interests it is the voice of the toiling masses which will predominate, but will also guarantee that minorities get just representation.

Other main items of the programme of democratic revolution are as follows :

Abolition of Princely Autocracy

- **Abolition of Princely autocracy in the Indian States.**

Complete self-determination to the peoples of the 'Native States' through a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage to decide the question of the future status of the Ruler and to establish the sovereignty of the people.

It will also decide whether a part or the whole of the territory is to be rejoined with the adjoining Province inhabited by the same nationality.

This would not only mean the end of autocracy in the 584 Indian States but also the reunion of the people of single nationalities in consolidated national territorial units, which are at present cut into different Provinces and States by the artificial boundaries imposed by imperialism.

- Abolition of landlordism without compensation, and land to the tiller.

- Confiscation of all British capital in India and nationalisation of all key industries, big plantations mines, and means of transport and communication.

Rights of Workers and Minorities

- Fundamental rights of workers—
 - * An 8 hour day;
 - * A 40 hour week;
 - * Social legislation, guaranteeing living wage and security against unemployment, sickness and old age;
 - * Free compulsory education;
 - * Decent housing at Government and capitalists' expense;
 - * Free provision for health;
 - * Right to work;
 - * Right to organise;
 - * Trade union recognition and right to strike;
 - * Equal pay for equal work;
 - * Adequate maternity benefit;
 - * Abolition of forced labour.
- All interspersed minorities in the new national units formed will have the rights regarding their language, education and culture guaranteed by statute and their infringement would be punishable by law. All disabilities, privileges and discrimination based on caste, race or community (such as untouchability) would be abolished by statute and their infringement would be punishable by law.

- Government of Free India take a programme specially designed to speed up the advancement of all backward communities and tribes, in economic welfare, education and culture, so as rapidly bring them to the level of the rest of the population.

6. Key Significance of Self-Determination

THE significance of the principle of self-determination of nationalities in our programme of democratic revolution must be clearly understood especially for building Hindu-Muslim unity in the struggle for independence and power, and to counteract the disruption caused by the policies of the Congress and League leaderships.

Self-determination of nationalists is not just a question of whether a national unit separates or not. On the contrary, it is a great revolutionary unifying principle, which guarantees real freedom and democracy to the people of each nationality in Independent India.

Self-determination of nationalities means the bringing together of the common people of the same nationality, Hindus and Muslims, to fight against imperialist - feudal regime, against Princely autocracy and landlordism.

Self-determination of nationalities means the bringing together of the common people of all nationalities in the common struggle for INDEPENDENCE from British imperialism for that is the precondition for winning self-determination.

Self-determination of nationalities means the unity of the nationalities in India to form a voluntary Union to build common economic life and people's well-being on the foundation of equality, freedom and democracy.

The Communist Party fights to build Hindu-Muslim unity by bringing the Hindu and Muslim workers and peasants together in their common class organisations to fight for their living conditions and by fighting for self-determination of nationalities.

The Communist Party exposes the policy of the Congress leadership denying the right of self-determination to nationalities as undemocratic.

That policy reflects the urge of Indian big business to compromise with imperialism in order to inherit from it the monopolist grip over the economic and political life of entire India thus denying to the peoples of different nationalities the right to shape freely their own life and to build a really free and voluntary Indian Union.

It is a policy of compromise with the Princes, of denying self-determination to the people of States, which frustrates the

natural desire of the peoples of different Provinces and States belonging to the same nationalities to reunite in single national units, and thus to end the artificial and arbitrary partition of India imposed by imperialism.

At the same time the Communist Party realises that the ordinary Congressman and masses following the Congress rightly oppose the partition of India on a religious and undemocratic basis and correctly desire a single Union of democratic and free India in which the people of every nationality would be autonomous.

The Party will make every effort to show them how the acceptance by the Congress of the right of self-determination of nationalities to the point of secession essential to convince the common Muslims that the Union would be voluntary and for mutual good and that peoples of linguistically culturally homogeneous units would be free to shape their own destiny, thus creating the basis for a Congress-League joint front for common assault on imperialism.

Similarly the Party will popularise the consistent application of self-determination to the States under the slogan, "*End of Princely Autocracy*", so that the struggle of the States peoples opens the way to their freedom and to their re-union with their brothers of the same nationality.

The Party's Stand in Regard to Muslims

The Communist Party will expose the undemocratic demand of the Muslim League for a separate Muslim State in the six Provinces, without reference to the people, and denying self-determination to the people of the nationalities in that area, as reflecting the policy of the Muslim bourgeois feudal vested interests who are seeking a compromise with imperialism for a share of administration in a divided India.

The Communist Party realises that the bulk of the Muslim people see in the demand for Pakistan the demand for their freedom and look upon the Muslim League as the leader of their fight for the freedom of the Muslims in an independent India.

The Party will appeal to the burning anti-imperialism of the Muslim masses to make them see that neither freedom nor democracy for the common Muslims can be won until they make

their organisation to join the common struggle for independence, without making the acceptance of Pakistan a precondition, but by agreeing that the question shall be decided by the democratic vote of the people on the basis of self-determination of national units—without the intervention of the foreign power.

The Communist Party will seek every opportunity to bring the Muslim masses into common anti-imperialist demonstrations.

The Party must make special efforts to bring the Muslim workers and peasants into the common class organisations and into the struggles for their demands and thus forge Hindu-Muslim unity of the toilers as an unbreakable weapon, which will finally defeat the disruptive policies of the bourgeois leadership of the Congress and the League.

Only the policy of National Self-determination will ensure freedom, democracy and independence to all peoples including the common Muslims and will be the basis for building the joint front for the struggle for winning an independent INDIAN UNION, guaranteeing full and free development to the peoples of all nationalities.

7. Strategy Of Joint Freedom Front

THE Communist Party realises that the present revolutionary upsurge can be developed into the all-in final struggle for power and the carrying through of the democratic revolution only when the majority of our people are rallied for the revolution.

The National Congress represents the main stream of the independence movement of the country.

The Muslim League has behind it the bulk of the anti-imperialist freedom-loving Muslim masses.

And the Communist Party leads the bulk of the organised workers and peasants.

A joint front of the three main patriotic parties—Congress, League, Communist Party, and other popular patriotic parties is thus essential for developing such a final struggle and guaranteeing its success.

To build such a front is the key task of the period. Failure to achieve it will lead to the petering out of the revolutionary upsurge, ending in demoralisation and disruption.

The Communist Party, therefore, measures its success in partial struggles also by how far these struggles teach the

Congress and League masses to reject the compromising policies of their leaderships and to work for the common aim, by bringing pressure on their own leaderships to build a joint front.

The Party seeks to achieve this by boldly leading partial struggles and uniting all sections through them, by exposing the compromising policy of the two leaderships and by popularising and appealing for a joint front.

The Party realises that the visible demonstration of joint front in every local and partial struggle is the most powerful appeal for building it on a national scale and hence the Party tirelessly works for it in every struggle.

In directing the struggles, in its agitation and propaganda, while the Party ruthlessly exposes the policy of division and hostility pursued by Congress-League leaderships towards each other, while it fights against their plans of compromise, at each stage it advances such slogans, gives such directives as will accentuate the process of disillusionment with the compromising policies of the leaderships, and thus enable the masses under the influence of these two organisations to take the next step forward.

The Party has no illusions that the joint front can be built by merely appealing to the bourgeois leaderships. *The joint front will be achieved by making the masses move for it in spite of the leaderships.*

It is built in the measure that the Party is able to establish and extend its political leadership in the ever-widening sweep of common mass struggles, in the measure that the Party is able to disillusion the masses about the sectarian, disruptive and compromising policy of the leaderships, and rouse in them the will to fight against the British Imperialist Plan and for the realisation of the essential tasks of the programme of National Democratic Revolution.

Left Joint Action

In radicalisation of the Congress ranks and the growing disillusionment with the compromising policy of the Congress Right leadership is seen in the enormous growth of Left elements who honestly want to fight compromise and stand for struggle. Quite a large number of these are being attracted to Marxism.

From the ranks of the Left elements comes the proposal for Left unity which expresses the desire for a common front of

action of Left elements, including the Communist Party, against the compromise that is being hatched.

The Communist Party attaches great importance to the proposal because it displays that Left elements are getting disillusioned about the Rightwing bourgeois leadership and because they are also releasing themselves from the grip of disruptive anti-Communist propaganda.

In the conditions of today when both sets of leaderships are pursuing a path of compromise, it is essential that all Left elements who are opposed to the Imperialists Plan must come together to rouse the people to the danger ahead.

Basis For Left Joint Action

The Communist Party appreciates the desire of Left elements to bring about the joint action of all those who want to fight compromise and proposes that the basis for joint action should be as follows :

- Support to all partial struggles of workers, peasants, employees and students.
- Support to States peoples' struggles.
- Reject the Imperialist Plan.
- Forward to the joint struggle of the Indian people for power.

The central slogan of rallying the entire people for the joint front must be Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage with proportional representation and self-determination of nationalities.

The Communist Party knows that the main Left parties do not yet accept the slogan of self-determination of nationalities. *The Communist Party is, however, prepared to have joint action with the Left elements on anyone or all of the above points.*

At the same time the Party will continue to persuade them to join hands with it in campaigning for self determination for nationalities, for this is the only democratic basis on which the unity of Hindu and Muslim masses can be forged for the final struggle.

The Communist Party makes this proposal for joint action because it wants all those who today fight compromise to join

hands to rouse the entire people against the Imperialist Plan and speed up the building of a joint freedom front that will rally the entire Indian people and unite their major parties for the final struggle for power and independence.

But the policies pursued by the leaderships of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) and the Forward Bloc constitute today the main obstacle for the realisation of such joint action.

Disruptive Policies of CSP, FB Leaderships

The CSP as well as the Forward Bloc leadership, though it talks of resisting the Imperialist Plan, in practice follows the plans of the Right.

They outbid the Right in its anti-Communism and thus help the compromising bourgeoisie to split the forces of anti-compromise.

They join hands with the Congress leadership in starting rival unions, which oppose strikes, and thus help the Right to disrupt the growing struggles of the working class.

They take an opportunist attitude towards strikes and hinder the growth of mass action.

On the working class front, their aim is not so much to rally the workers against the capitalists, against compromise but to join hands with all to fight the Communists.

They follow the same policy on the kisan front.

This policy thus disrupts the growing struggles of the people and disorganises the struggle against the new Imperialist Plan.

On the vital question of national unity also the leaderships of both the CSP and the Forward Bloc follow in the wake of the compromising bourgeois leadership and deny self-determination to the national units. They denounce the League as pro-imperialist and will have nothing to do with it. Here again, their policy disrupts the joint front, makes joint struggle impossible and strengthens the hands of the compromisers and British imperialism.

While both the leaderships of the CSP and the Forward Bloc claim allegiance to the principles of Socialism, their anti-Communism leads them to the open support of the rival trade unions of the bourgeois leadership and to splitting of the unity of the working-class.

In their international policy, they follow in the wake of the agents of British imperialism and international reaction in their denunciation of the Soviet Union and of the achievements of revolutionary democracy in the countries of Eastern Europe and Asia.

The Left elements must see the wide gap that separates the outlook of the CSP and Forward Bloc leaderships and their own aspirations to fight compromise. So long as that outlook persists, joint action as proposed by us will be rendered difficult.

Nonetheless, the Communist Party puts forward this proposal for joint action before the Left parties and all Left elements opposed to compromise, because such action will facilitate the task of rallying the entire people of the joint freedom front, for the defeat of the British plan and for the final struggle for power.

At the same time the Party wants to make it quite clear that compromise cannot be fought by formation of a bloc of Left parties.

Such a bloc, on the other hand, would be a definite hindrance in the path of rallying the entire Congress for the policy of the joint front.

It would lead to the illusion that the Right-wing leadership can be replaced by the factional manoeuvres of the Left bloc within the Congress.

This, again, would lead to the underestimation of the role of the independent working-class and peasant movements and of the Communist Party in the task of winning the masses for the programme of democratic revolution and joint front.

It is for joint action to fulfil these tasks that we invite all Left elements, for that is how the fight against compromise can be led forward.

Left In Muslim League

The Communist Party realises that the position of the Left inside the Muslim League is very weak. There is, of course, a rapidly growing number of consistent anti-imperialists who are dissatisfied with the feudal-bourgeois compromising leadership of the League and want to lead the Muslim masses in the fight against British imperialism.

But these Left elements within the League cannot make headway against the compromising policy of the bourgeois-

feudal leadership of the League unless they accept and popularise the following principles and policies as the rallying slogans of the Muslim masses.

- The policy of the leadership of relying upon imperialism and of bargaining with the Congress leadership for gaining the Muslim demands, is totally abandoned and repudiated. The question of Pakistan and unity of India must be decided by the democratic vote of the people on the basis of self-determination of nationalists without the intervention of British imperialists.

- The League joins in the struggle for independence, withdrawal of British troops and the end of Princely autocracy unconditionally.

- The League supports all common struggles of workers and peasants for their basic demands and helps and strengthens the common class organisations—trade unions and kisan sabhas.

- The Muslim peasantry of Bengal, the Punjab and Sind are helped in particular in the common struggle against landlordism.

The communist party believes that the left in the Muslim league would, through its own experience, realise that only activity and development on the above lines will bring the Muslim masses into common struggles for power, for the freedom of all Indians, and for securing all the just demands of Indian Muslims.

8. Leadership Of Mass Actions

THE main lever of the Party for preparing for the struggle for power, for strengthening the Party and mass organisations, for bringing the Party forward as the builder of joint front struggles on all sectors, counteracting the disruptive influence of the bourgeois leadership, is the correct developing of struggles of the working-class, peasantry and States peoples, and the advancing of correct slogans for these struggles.

The leadership of both the Congress and the League either sabotage these struggles or disrupt them from within. In either case their policy leads to division of the masses.

The Communist Party by giving bold and militant leadership to the mass struggle counteracts disruption and builds unity.

The Strike

Strategy For Today

Strike strategy today is determined by the new situation on the working-class front. Under the present worsening conditions of life and labour and of great and spontaneous political awareness among the working-class all over the country, even a spontaneous local strike gets the support of the other workers and the common people, and thus tends to develop into a battle of the local toiling and common people against the vested interests and bureaucracy.

Workers fight the strikes today with such totality of united support and such abandon as have not been seen before.

This spirit of organisation, class solidarity, and determined and united fight for decent wage and living conditions has spread to all sections of workers including bank employees, clerks, primary teachers, police and Government employees.

The tremendous response to the preparation of the all-India railway general strike, as well as the experience of the all-India postal strike prove this.

Growing Class Solidarity Among Workers

Further the readiness with which the workers come out on sympathetic strikes (e.g., to support postal strike) and respond to the call of political protest strikes (e.g., RIN and arrest of Pandit Nehru in Kashmir) is a proof of the tremendous spontaneous growth of their class solidarity and political awareness.

The Party has been lagging behind this spontaneous development and has hesitated to give a bold and courageous lead to develop the spontaneous strike wave.

The Communist Party recognises that the situation is rapidly leading to general strikes in industrial centres in whole industries and seeks to lead them, developing the militant initiative of the working-class to resist their suppression.

The Party realises that an all-in strike action of all industries for basic demands will bring the working-class activity to the highest pitch and unite the entire class in the common fight.

The Party organises political protest strikes against repression and in support of the States peoples' struggles, etc., and prepares the working-class for the political general strike as part of the popular struggle for power.

In organising and leading the strike wave from stage to stage in this way, the Party must actively build mass unions and extend and consolidate the base of the Party among the workers. This will end the influence of the bourgeoisie over the working-class and consolidate the main fighting force of the Indian people in the final phase of the Indian Revolution.

Kisan Struggles—New Direction

The peasantry is lagging behind the working-class in this phase of mass upheavals. But even the peasantry is beginning to take to militant actions against landlords, hoarders, money-lenders, etc., as has been shown in Midnapore, Basti, etc.

Such mass actions of the kisans are bound to grow in militancy. The very intensity of food crisis, the shortage and high prices of essential commodities, official atrocities in the villages and landlord oppression will force them to take to more and more militant actions.

The Communist Party supports these mass actions and will organise the kisans to with-stand the severe repression that they will have to face; it will mobilise the non-kisan elements in the villages and in towns in support of these kisan struggles and help to link up the kisan, working-class and other people's struggles; it will do its best to make the Kisan Sabha a powerful instrument against the Imperialist Plan and for building free, democratic villages.

Party Will Back Resistance to Anti-Kisan Measures

Thus, while demanding that prompt agrarian legislation be enacted by the Ministries, the Party will support peasants' resistance to eviction, peasant initiative to get landlords' fallow lands for cultivation, no-rent struggles when the peasant cannot pay the rent, etc.

While supporting every measure of equitable distribution of food, just procurement and rationing, and while using Food Committees, Co-operative Societies, Local Self-Government institutions, etc., to make them of utmost use to the people, the Party will support resistance to unjust anti-kisan measures like excessive procurement from poor peasants.

In areas where people are starving, it will demand that the hoarders' and Government's stocks be handed over to the people for distribution.

While agitating for legislative and administrative action for irrigation facilities, seeds, manure, etc., the Party will also support kisans' initiative in getting possession of and in using sources of irrigation owned by the landlords and the Government and stocks of seed, manure, etc., owned by hoarders.

In leading and organising the kisan struggles the Party will see to it that the edge of these struggles is directed against landlords, usurers and bureaucracy, and that they bring about the greatest possible unity of the village people against the enemies of the people.

Wherever possible the Party must organise fraternal solidarity actions between workers and peasants in localities, peasants supporting workers with grain donation, workers supporting kisan actions by strikes, etc.

States Peoples' Struggles

Despite the anti-struggle policy of the dominant leadership of the Praja Mandals and even the sabotaging endeavours of the Congress High Command from outside, spontaneous struggles are breaking out in the Indian States.

Great dissatisfaction prevails in the ranks of the Praja Mandals over the compromising policy of their leaderships and over the moves of the Congress High Command to negotiate with the Princes, while simultaneously forcing the All-India States Peoples' Conference itself to lower its demands.

The central slogan which the Communists must raise and popularise within and without the Praja Mandals and among the masses is :

"Quit Autocracy"—Constituent Assembly for each State based on adult suffrage to decide the future of the Ruler, the constitution of the State, and the question of its union with India.

It is wrong to consider that this slogan would isolate us from the Praja Mandals. On the other hand refusal to popularise this slogan among the middle leaders and rank and file of the Praja Mandals, and among the masses through our independent kisan and working-class work, will be refusal to fight compromise with imperialism and with the Imperialist Plan.

The Communists in the States must raise a broad-based movement for civil liberties, agitate against the bogus constitutions which the Princes are foisting upon the people; protest against any nominated representative being sent even to this Constitution-making Body, raise the demand for a Constituent Assembly for each State based on adult suffrage to frame the Constitution of the State and to join in the real All-India Constituent Assembly.

The Communists in the States must concentrate their main attention on organising the struggle of workers and peasants for their urgent demands and for the civil liberties of the people and develop a joint front with the local Praja Mandals and other popular organisations.

It is through these struggles and by popularising the central political slogan among the masses, participating and supporting them, that we win over the rank and file and middle cadre of the Praja Mandal to these slogans.

Our aim is to remove the stranglehold of the compromising leadership of the Praja Mandal and to create conditions for the launching of broad-based struggles in every State as in Kashmir.

Students' Unity And Struggle

Students took the initiative on an India-wide scale in the first post-war demonstrations for the release of the men of the INA and in solidarity with the naval mutiny.

Even young school students and girl students have displayed unprecedented mass heroism in clashes with the imperialist police and military. Hindu and Muslim students ranged behind the Students' Congress, the Students' Federation and the Muslim Students' Federation fought side by side in these great actions.

For the first time in our history, mass labour-student solidarity is being built up through students' strikes of solidarity with working-class struggles. Side by side with this, the mass of students are increasingly taking up the fight to solve the burning problems of students' life and education.

The Communist Party welcomes this unity in action of our fighting youth. It welcomes united political strikes by students, and strikes and demonstrations of solidarity with workers', peasants' and States peoples' struggles.

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It entails great importance to mass fraternisation between workers, peasants and students which heightens revolutionary consciousness and opens a new chapter in our national movement

The Communist Party firmly believes that the intolerably restricted facilities for education and for a full cultural and social development; reactionary, outmoded and often anti-national teaching in schools and colleges; and the prospect of unemployment facing every educated youth have made the crisis in students' life so acute that only militant mass action can bring about any real change.

The Communist Party, therefore, supports the mass students' struggle for a better education with the following main slogans:

- Democratise our educational system! Ban anti-national imperialist indoctrination in schools and colleges in any form!
- Immediate expansion of both college and school education—with adequate wages and decent living conditions for teachers—for speedy advance to universal education and to provide trained cadre for national reconstruction.
- Immediate steps must be taken to bring education within the reach of all with special facilities in the shape of grants and scholarships, etc., provided to poor students drawn from backward communities and nationalities.
- Guaranteed employment for all educated youth.

9. Role Of The Party

A mighty historical responsibility rests on the shoulders of the Party and its 50,000 members. The revolutionary phase into which India's freedom struggle has entered demands of them that they throw in every ounce of their strength to ensure that imperialism's evil plan of crushing the Indian Revolution is frustrated and instead the mighty post-war revolutionary upsurge is led forward to forge the joint freedom-front of the Indian people for the decisive struggle for power.

FIRST and foremost, the Party must prove and improve its capacity of leadership of mass struggles, developing in them to the fullest the fighting initiative of the masses while maintaining the unity of the mass. It must use these struggles to build *united mass organisations*—T.U.s and Kisan Sabha units, defeating the moves of the disruptors.

SECONDLY, the Party must make special effort to draw inside the Party hundreds and thousands of politically awakened militant fighters from all sections of the masses, but especially from workers and peasants, who participate in these struggles and to transform the Party into a mass party of the working people.

THIRDLY, the Party must come forward as the political leader of the masses—making mass political education of the fighting masses, especially round the central political slogan and the programme of democratic revolution, its key job. (*Mass pamphlets for all sections of the people on the burning problems of the day.*)

FOURTHLY, the Party must undertake the mass political education of the entire Party membership, in the programme and policy of the Party, in the basic principles of Marxism and Leninism, in the practical organizational work in the mass organizations and in the Party organizations, through graded schools for different strata of Party members.

To the extent the Party fulfils these organisational tasks, to that extent it would be able to come forward as the organiser of this new phase of the Indian Revolution and lead it to victory.

FOR THE FINAL BID FOR POWER THE COMMUNIST PLAN EXPLAINED

P. C. JOSHI

(Published in 1946)

INTRODUCTION

Indian freedom is on the final agenda of the day.

Outside India freedom-loving humanity is on the march and not one honest man in the world of to-day says that India must not be free; they only ask : "Why is not India free ?"

Within India the hatred against the British rulers and the urge for freedom within every Indian heart was never stronger than today. This is true of all classes, all generations, men and women, all over our vast country.

The imperialists know that their days of domination over our country are over. And they admit it in their own way.

For two generations after they conquered our country they felt convinced that we Indians were not civilised and that it was their mission to civilise us. They used to call us "the white man's burden". This is how they glorified their own greed and slandered us in the eyes of the world.

To our grandfathers they said that they were helping us to become fit for self-government. By now they had changed their old tune and they said that our civilisation though great was not good enough, and that we must learn from them the way to live in the new world.

But today they dare not talk that language. All of them—whatever political brand they may be, Tory, Liberal or Labour—admit our right to be free; but they challenge us to agree among ourselves about the shape of Indian freedom.

Our major political parties, the Congress and the Muslim League, which have a great hold over the people, the same parties which have roused among them the freedom urge, are today lined up against each other, with apparently irreconcilable differences. Both talk in the name of freedom, both talk in the name of justice and both talk in the name of people. Only a fool

would say that they are not freedom-loving parties, that there is not some justice in what they say and that they do not speak for the people. But seeing only this much is not yet seeing the way forward.

COMMONSENSE PRINCIPLES OF PATRIOTISM

Our Party is the third and the youngest party, it is a party with a real hold over the people, guided by principles on the basis of which it has built up whatever influence it has among the people. It is a party that raised its arm against the British rulers from the very day it was born and which has 64 of its members still serving life sentences, having between them suffered nearly 800 long years in jail.

It is our Party alone which says, not only to the people whom it leads, but to everyone—to all parties—to all the leaders:

1) Fighting each other in a slave country is not fighting the common enslaver; if Indian fights Indian, how does it help towards making the British quit ?

2) If one slave fights another, it is the common master who will intervene and gain; if Indian fights Indian, it is only the British rulers who will gain.

3) After 60 years of political awakening, to put the entire blame on the head of another party is to be unjust inside the family of Indian patriotism. When this happens inside a common family in daily life, everyone says that the family is doomed. This happens when one sees only the justice of one's own side and only the injustice of the other's and is unable to come to a solution which is acceptable to the entire family.

4) If all freedom-loving Indians understand freedom alike, if the fear of domination goes from the hearts of the few, and black suspicion goes from the hearts of the many, all will fight together against the common enslaver for final liberation.

In a slave country as long as the minority fears domination by the majority, and the majority suspects the minority of treachery against the country, the country can never be free; the only result is that the common enslaver continues to rule over both the majority and the minority by playing one against the other.

When the country is itself divided, its foremost leaders—who awakened their own people and mean a lot to them—lose faith in each other's *bona fides* and unwittingly play into the hands of the common enemy.

CONGRESS, LEAGUE AND COMMUNIST PARTY

Let us get to the bottom of our differences.

The Congress stands for complete independence for India as a whole. It demands self-determination for India but refuses to apply self-determination among Indians themselves. This leads the Muslim League to suspect it of seeking Hindu domination under cover of the slogan of Indian freedom.

The Muslim League demands self-determination for Muslim-majority homelands but it claims more than the Muslim-majority homelands and refuses to define their relationship with the rest of India. This makes the Congress suspect it of treachery and disruption under cover of the slogan of Muslim self-determination.

The Congress stands for the unity of India but cannot unite all freedom-loving Indians. It does not put forward proposals for an Indian Union that will be based on the freedom of all. This makes it lose the support of Muslims more and more instead of gaining it more and more for freedom's battle.

The League puts forward what is in essence the just demand for self-determination but it puts it forward in a separatist form—as partition, and demands territories which are not its own. This rouses the mass of non-Muslims against it, particularly those of them who live within the Muslim-majority areas.

Our Party supports the Congress demand for self-determination against Britain but expects the Congress to pledge to implement self-determination in the future framework of independent India as well. Leaders of Congress immediately turn round upon us and call us anti-national supporters of the League.

Our Party also supports the Muslim demand for self-determination but insists upon just boundaries and puts forward plans for a really voluntary and free Indian Union, instead of a partitioned and divided India. The leaders of the League fall upon us and suspect us of breaking Muslim solidarity and of playing the Congress game.

Our Party in its Election Manifesto has put forward a plan for Indian freedom on the basis of unfettered freedom of all Indian homelands. This pamphlet is an endeavour to explain that plan.

I. OLD ILLUSIONS

The more India's political parties fight each other, the deeper will our people get divided and the longer will the British rulers stay in our common motherland.

The more our parties fight each other the more eagerly will they appeal to the representatives of the British Government to settle our internal problems.

Just at present the leaders of the Congress are saying that they are only fighting anti-national opposition to the Congress now and that if the British Government does not settle with the Congress, they will fight the British power next. But they are only saying half the truth. For the reality is that they fight other parties in order to show *their strength* and get the British to settle *with them alone*. They are nursing the same old illusions about a unilateral settlement with the British, illusions which have never materialised.

When the leaders of the League say that they are fighting the Hindu opposition now and that they will fight the British next for Pakistan, they are imagining that the British rulers will satisfy the Muslim demand quicker than their Hindu brothers; they too are nursing the same dreams and the same illusions about a unilateral settlement.

When a family falls out and the brothers look towards the outsider, that family is doomed; and this is all the more so when the outsider happens to be the common enslaver. This happens in very backward villages when a peasant family falls out and goes to its common landlord for *nyaya* (justice) against each other; every other family in that village says that this family is doomed.

Why must the leaders of our main parties behave like credulous peasants in a serf village ?

They do so because they have not yet lived down their old liberal illusions about the British Government. The great growth of their influence among their own people has given them more self-confidence, but unfortunately this has only made them more

insolent towards each other while they remain hopeful about the British rulers. They are in the grip of old world ideas and cannot formulate the freedom principles that will unite all freedom-loving Indians into a single army of Indian freedom, that will destroy British rule in our land and build up a free India—an India whose very description today ought to rouse every single Indian and make him see that his freedom is guaranteed and that he would only be escaping his own duty if he does not join up in the battle for his own and his brothers' freedom.

TRAGIC ILLUSIONS

The tragedy is that neither the history of the Indian freedom movement nor the latest declaration of the British Government leave room for any hope of unilateral settlement by the British with either the Congress or the League.

Lord Wavell, in his speech to the Associated Chambers of Commerce—mouthpiece of British Business in India—said :

“There are various parties to the settlement who *must somehow or other reach a measure of agreement amongst themselves*—Congress; the largest political party in India; the minorities of whom the Muslims are the most numerous and most important; the rulers of Indian States, and the British Government. The objective of all is the same—the freedom and welfare of India.” (*Times of India*, December 11, 1945).

Attlee, Premier of the British Labour Government declared in a speech at Mansion House :

“Ever since the Cripps Offer in 1942, India's complete freedom has been there for the taking. *The only obstacle so far, a very grave obstacle, has been the failure of Indian Communities to agree among themselves*” (*Times of India*, November 10, 1945)

These statements are as clear as was Lord Wavell's broadcast convening the Simla Conference, when the leaders of India's main organisations, Congress and League, read their own separate hopes into it, not the plain meaning of the words meant for both.

They do the same today. As at Simla so today the leaders of both the Congress and the League are supremely self-confident that the British Government will settle with them and they will

realise their ideal despite the opposition of the other party.

Each leadership is so wrapped up in itself that it is proceeding as if the British imperialists have no plan of their own; as if each of them by itself were infallible and all-powerful—and each thinks the other side is all black.

Not on a single point are they right. This should be patent to all who hate the British enslaver as an enemy should be hated, who love a fellow-Indian as a real brother should be loved and who are prepared to think with their feet firmly on our own earth.

It is not because these leaders are unpatriotic that they are fighting each other. The tragedy is that each is convinced he is right and that the other party is wrong.

In fact each represents only half the truth. Neither side represents the full truth.

INDIA—ONE NATION ?

When the Congress says that India is one nation it does express the unity of all Indians against British domination and when it wants independent India to preserve its unity, it is also expressing a desirable idea, but *when* the concept of 'India, a nation' becomes the basis of denying our own internal differences and leads to war among ourselves—there is obviously something wrong in such a concept.

By using the concept "India is one nation", the Congress leadership cannot explain why Muslims have been going apart from the Congress more and more—unless they go to the extent of calling the Muslims less freedom-loving than the Hindus. This would not only be a lie but a flat denial of the history of the Indian freedom movement itself and of the role Indian Muslims have played in the anti-imperialist freedom movement of our country, not only under the Congress banner but also under their own.

By using the concept "India is one nation", Congress leaders will not be able to explain the very serious differences among Congressmen themselves.

For example, it is an open secret that sharp differences exist between Maulana Azad who wants the Congress to declare for self-determination and leaders like Sardar Patel and Acharya

Kripalani who are up in arms against such a proposal. No one dare charge the Maulana with being communal; why then do such differences arise ?

The concept of India being one nation cannot help us to understand why the biggest demand of the Andhra Congress leaders today is : Since Rajaji, a Tamilian was the Premier of Madras last time, an Andhra should get the premiership this time!

Nor does it help to explain why even a member of the Congress High Command, Dr. Pattabhi, should be received with black flags and brickbats by Oriya Congressmen who shouted the slogan, "Enemy of Oriyas, Go Back !"

Such instances could be multiplied. In order to say that all Indians must stand together against British rule, it is not at all necessary to say that India is one nation. Sticking to such a concept only multiplies problems instead of helping to solve them; it blinds one to reality and rouses fears of Hindu domination.

MUSLIMS—A NATION ?

Similarly the League slogan that Muslims are one nation is equally untenable. To the Muslim mind it expresses both their urge for freedom from British rule and their fear of Hindu domination if Indian freedom was based on the principle of simple majority rule.

But when the concept of Muslims being one nation becomes the basis for denying that there are any needs or interests common to both Hindu-majority and Muslim-majority homelands, there is something very wrong with the concept.

In fact, on the basis of this concept, that Muslims are one nation, the League leaders cannot even explain the history of Muslim awakening either in the past or even the living experience of the present.

Why was it that the sturdy Pathans of the Frontier Province, who built up their own movement of revolt against British rule, allied themselves with the Congress, instead of with the League? It was because they saw that it was only together with the Congress that they could overthrow British rule and establish a free Pathanland of their own.

Can the concept—Muslims are one nation—enable the League leaders to understand the new national awakening of the Kashmiris 82 per cent of whom are Muslims and which is embodied in the Kashmir National Conference led by Sheikh Abdullah ? The Conference demands self-determination for Kashmiris, supports self-determination for Muslim-majority homelands, and yet feels itself more akin to the Congress than to the League.

The slogan—Muslims, a nation—will not help a Leaguer to understand even the events inside the League itself.

For example, why was it that on the eve of the Gandhi-Jinnah meeting, the Bengal Provincial Muslim League passed a resolution in favour of a United Bengal which would exercise its sovereign will and decide whether to join Pakistan or Hindustan or to join neither, and instead remain completely independent ? Why was it that the Provincial League sent its resolution to the Congress leader, Kiron Shankar Roy to discuss it among themselves ? Why was it that the Bengal League told the Qaid-e-Azam that he should not break off with Gandhiji on the issue of Bengal and that the Bengalis would be able to decide their own fate ?

Or again, why was it that when Mr. Jinnah went to Quetta in July 1943, the Baluchistan Provincial Muslim League while expressing confidence in him, nevertheless, passed a resolution appointing a committee to go into the details of "Baluchistan being maintained as a *separate province* after its amalgamation with the three other units of the North-West Pakistan, namely, Sind, the Punjab and the N.W.F.P." (*Hindu*, July 3, 1945)

Thus neither the concept of India as one nation, nor that of Muslims as one nation can help towards a real understanding of our past history or our present problem of achieving Indian unity— but, rather, both concepts only build further barriers between the Congress and the League and hinder the achievement of unity for the final battle.

A FAMILY OF FREE NATIONS

The Communist Party puts forward the concept of India as a family of free nations. We think it is the correct understanding of our own history and the most desirable future for our country.

It expresses our freedom urge against the British and our unity against British rule today; it opens out the prospect of building up our country into an independent country that will be a great power in the new world of today, play a peaceful and *liberationist* role and build up people's prosperity in a vast sub-continent through modern Indian democracy. It guarantees every section of our people free development of their own choice.

The British conquered us at a stage in our historical development when we were already advanced from tribes to peoples but our various peoples had not yet become modern nations. They used our feudal rulers to make us fight against each other and conquered us all one after another, sector by sector, people by people.

When we awoke against British rule and for our own freedom, different trends arose in the realm of ideas inside our Renaissance and inside the camp of our freedom struggle.

In the realm of ideas, two trends arose one revivalist, another liberal; and this happened both among the Hindus and the Muslims.

The revivalist explained the success of British conquest by giving the reason that our religion had become decadent under the Indian rulers and religious leaders of that time. We needed, they went on to argue, a reformed and purified religion to be able to get back the moral fervour to fight for freedom.

The revivalist gave us national pride and anti-imperialist hatred by glorifying our won past from ancient days to our downfall, and by exposing British decadence in our own country. The form was religious but the content was anti-imperialist. The call for freedom struggle among the Muslims came in the earlier days from the Wahabis and later from the Deoband Ulema. Among the Hindus we had Bankim, Swami Vivekanand, and others. Even *Vande Mataram* has religious form and imagery.

The liberal trend stood for the introduction of new modern ideas and wanted us to adopt reason and not faith for understanding life; it stood for modern education, liberal-democratic ideas and a democratic future for our feudal country. They wanted us to learn what was new and good from the British to be able to change the old in our country and modernise her. If the Muslims had their Sir Syed Ahmed, the Hindus had their

Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The form was modern, the content democratic, but their practice was one of educating our own people and appealing to the British people to make the British Government act more justly towards India—in a word, constitutionalism.

But we see from the agitation today that the very persons who brought us from the past to the present are liquidating and going back on *their own* past and are unable to lead us forward.

On the League side, Mr. Jinnah who stood for secular politics, for rescuing Muslims from the religious demagogy of the maulvis and maulanās and popularised Pakistan as democratic rule, has now gone back on all that. He now allows Pakistan to be popularised as Islamic rule, lets the League leaders use religious reactionaries to fight Nationslist Muslims and permits League agitators to preach bitter hatred of the Hindus.

For example, at the special session of the League at Calcutta in 1938, Mr. Jinnah said :

“We have to a certain extent freed our people from the most undesirable reactionary elements. We have in no small degree removed the unwholesome influence and fear of a certain section who used to pass off as maulanās and maulvis We have to carry on and maintain the policy and programme of the Muslim League on a political plane.” (April 17, 1938).

Yet in October 1945, he sent a message of greetings to the newly formed Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam consisting of the most reactionary, toady maulvis. Their main slogan is to establish *Koranic* rule, their main job to fight the old Jamiat and the Nationalist Muslims by the use of the worst religious demagogy.

On the Congress side, the same leaders who preached Hindu-Muslim unity all their lives have come to a stage when they dare not fight the Muslim seats in the name of the Congress. On the other hand they denounce us who stand unfalteringly for Hindu-Muslim unity as agents of the League and thus they surrender to the Hindu Mahasabha more and more and go back even on their own past declaration of self-determination for Muslim-majority areas. Their appeal to the Hindu electorate is that if they want Pakistan fought vigorously, if they want to defend the rights of the Hindus, they must support the Congress. This is the main Congress slogan in Muslim-majority areas.

Thus both the leaderships of the Congress and the League today are resurrecting the old revivalist propaganda—this time, however, they do it not to rouse their following against the British, but to rouse them against each other.

But the worst tragedy of all is that the leaderships of both the Congress and the League look towards the British Government as the Hindu and Muslim Liberals of old did.

Even after the failure of the Simla Conference, when it was quite clear that Wavell had rejected not only the League claim to represent *all Muslims*, but also the Congress claim to represent *any Muslims* at all, the Congress leadership's faith in the imperialists was not shaken. Maulana Azad, Congress President, wrote the next day to the Viceroy thus :

"Now that one chapter has ended and our minds, as well as yours, are turned to future possibilities of finding a way out, honourable to all concerned, and leading to the objective of Indian freedom, these obstacles to co-operation cannot be ignored." (Letter dated July 15, 1945, from Maulana Azad to Wavell. Unpublished correspondence distributed at the A.I.C.C.).

So also with Mr. Jinnah, the League President. Even though in his December 1944 speech Lord Wavell, assuming the role of a political physician, warned against the 'surgical operation' of Pakistan and rejected the League claim at Simla, Mr. Jinnah's faith in British gentlemanliness was unshaken. If anything, it increased.

Lord Wavell's speech on December 10, 1945, at the same Associated Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta, was welcomed by Mr. Jinnah because Wavell had said that the British Government "sincerely wish the Indian people to have their political freedom and a government or governments of their own choice." This fanned Mr. Jinnah's faith all the more and he said:

"The second feature that strikes me is that His Excellency is beginning to understand the political situation in India I wish he would next time make it still more clear that the division of India is inevitable and that it is the only solution of India's political problem I have always maintained that the various minorities constitute an important element in the political life of this country and they should have their voice heard in the settlement that may be arrived at and justice should be done to them." (*Hindu*, December 18, 1945).

How easily the leaders of our main political organisations forget all the hard knocks that facts give them and rely on the sweet words that Wavell dangles before them! Both rely on Wavell, the Congress President for an "honourable way", the League President for a "just settlement"!

To campaign against one another and to have faith that the British Government would agree with one against the other is not to have lived down one's own constitutionalist illusions and is to play straight into the hands of the imperialist rulers. To do this is to play straight into the hands of the imperialist rulers. To do this is to have participated in the Indian freedom movement in vain. To do this is only to war among brothers and not fight the British rulers. To do this is not to realise one's own aim, but to ensure one's own defeat and continued enslavement. To do this is to forget all the lessons of our past history.

II. HINDU-MUSLIM DIFFERENCES—IMPERIALIST MANOEUVRES

Hindu-Muslim differences in general and Congress-League differences in particular have become today the crux of the Indian problem.

It is no use closing your eyes to them. It is no use saying: "Oh, these are religious differences, and as modern life develops uniting the people with common economic and political urges, they will automatically disappear."

The job of the freedom movement is to understand their political nature and how they have evolved in the course of the development of modern life in our *multi-people* country. The job is to settle them on a just basis so that the common freedom goal and programme thus evolved satisfy the aspirations of each section of the people and bring them in the common fighting front for liberation.

Whenever we have failed in this job it is the imperialists who have exploited our differences and done their worst to deepen them. The imperialists have used our differences to split our people more and more, divide the freedom fighters more and more, so as to be able to rule safely and longer over us all.

If we look back on the history of our freedom movement we find that we have failed more often than we have succeeded

in uniting the forces of our country against the imperialist manoeuvres to divide us.

The result is that at a moment when our powerful freedom movement stands at the threshold of the opportunity to make the final bid for power—at such a moment we find it sharply divided into two hostile camps. The over-whelming majority of the Muslims of the country is united under the banner of one organisation, the Muslim League; while the rest of the country is solidly behind the National Congress.

Conflicting ideals divide the two camps. Each condemns the ideal of the other as a betrayal of the common freedom struggle, and as calculated to secure one's own domination and to deny the freedom of the other.

WHY OUR DIFFERENCES

How does it happen that our freedom movement has come to this disastrous pass, at a time when its strength and sweep are greater than ever before? How does it happen that the knot of Hindu-Muslim differences has become more tangled than ever before?

It is, of course, a common place truth to say that the British imperialists exploited our differences at every stage of our freedom movement and made us fight among ourselves. But the point is to find out why our freedom movement and the leaders failed to get to the rock bottom of the Hindu-Muslim differences—why they failed to apply the common principles of justice and democracy for the common freedom of all.

It is so because we have not yet been able to come to common ideas to work out basic principles and the main strategy of the Indian freedom movement itself.

The ideal of freedom is as yet only an urge within our breasts expressing our hatred of British rule; it has not yet become a new democratic consciousness which could enable us to define the shape of the freedom we all desire.

That is why our freedom movement yet remains divided, it expresses the great urge of our peoples to be free but is not yet backed by principles that would unite our people more and more and make the freedom front broader and broader. That is why each time we fail against British rule or fail to come to agreement

among ourselves, we begin blaming each other.

We want our people to cut the gordian knot of Hindu-Muslim differences, to avert the disaster of a third Communal Award, which would divide our country, split our freedom movement and perpetuate our slavery. That is just the reason why we briefly review and re-learn the lessons of the past—why and how in the earlier phases of our movement we failed to forge unity and defeat the earlier imperialist manoeuvres and awards.

SOURCE OF CONGRESS-LEAGUE DIFFERENCES

It is the grip of the ideas of 19th century British liberalism—of the reformist bourgeois democracy—on the older leaders of the freedom movement of both the Congress and the League which is responsible for a great deal of confusion on the Hindu-Muslim question. Another source of confusion on this question is the fact that our older leaders instead of understanding India and its people in terms of their own peculiarities and in terms of their special forms of modern development, have tried to do so in terms of pre-conceived notions and false analogies drawn from other countries.

We see this very clearly in the very beginning of Congress-League differences in the first phase of our freedom movement. At the beginning of this century, when our freedom movement was limited to the educated middle-class in the cities and when our goal was no more than responsible government under the tutelage of the British, our leaders had faith in British justice and in the principles of British democracy. We were demanding representative institutions. As a basis for our demand we accepted the British bourgeois principle that the right of vote should belong to one who can exercise it wisely, meaning only the men of property and education ! Our early leaders, both Congress and Muslim, tacitly accepted then the British institution of franchise based on property and education as good and just in principle. But in practice the Mussalmans soon found that this principle would go against them.

In those days the development of modern life in different parts of India was far more unequal than it is today. The growth of trade, commerce and education had begun much earlier in Bombay, Calcutta and in Madras—in the Hindu-majority areas,

than in the Muslim areas of the north. In the days of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, for instance, the Muslim share in university education was only 3.65 per cent (in 1882, *Hunter Commission*).

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the pioneer of Muslim renaissance, opposed the demand for representative institutions, as put forward by the Congress at that time. He was as much as his Congress contemporaries a devotee of the British bourgeois principle of giving the right of vote only to those "who were *prima facie* capable of exercising it wisely and independently" (his speech in the Supreme Legislative Council on Local Self-Government Bill, 1883). But he contended that unless that principle was suitably modified to suit Indian conditions, the Muslims who were less advanced in education and wealth, would get an unjust representation even in areas where they formed the majority. This led Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Muslim leaders after him to demand protection from the British through the power of nomination and later through separate electorates.

The Congress leaders and the Hindus took their stand on the restricted franchise based on property and education and argued, apparently on the basis of "democracy", that efficiency and worthiness alone should be the test in elections and not religion or community. They stood for joint electorates. Thus arose the controversy of joint versus separate electorates.

JOINT VS. SEPARATE ELECTORATES

Joint electorates are, of course, a truly democratic method of building modern life. An electoral system based on joint electorates emphasises the common and overcomes sectional and other differences. But the real root of the trouble was not joint electorates but the vicious principle of restricted franchise based on property and education. It is this latter which worked against the Muslims in the backward areas and gave them an unjust representation. It was for the Congressmen and Leaguers jointly to devise safeguards to remedy the unjust effects of restricted franchise and confront the British with a united demand for wider franchise. Congressmen and Hindus ignored this injustice to the Muslims and stuck to the restricted property and education franchise in the name of "democracy". The Muslim leaders who also took their stand on property and education franchise turned to the British for nominations and separate electorates.

The question could have been solved within the framework of joint electorates by Congressmen and Muslims making a joint demand for widening the franchise and by insisting upon proportional representation. But the Congress and Hindu middle-class leaders did not want to give away the advantage of property and education electorate while the Muslims sought British protection through nomination and separate electorates. Thus instead of a Hindu-Muslim joint front against the vicious British principle of restricted franchise, we got division among ourselves and gave the British the chance to drive the wedge of separate electorates amongst us.

Honest Congressmen even now solemnly tell us that the seed of communalism was sown in Indian political life by the British when they introduced separate electorates in response to the demand made by the "command performance", the deputation led by the founders of the Muslim League to the Viceroy in 1906. Thus it was, they say, an "Anglo-Muslim conspiracy". But this is only half the truth the other half being the failure of Congress and Hindu leaders to make up or remedy the injustice which the restricted property franchise imposed upon their Muslim brothers.

At every successive stage of our freedom movement we have met with such a failure. In this first phase, when responsible government under British tutelage was the common goal of our freedom movement, the crux of the Hindu-Muslim differences was the question of representation in the councils. Was it going to be through joint or through separate electorates? The British awarded separate electorates. The award solved nothing. Congressmen even today curse it. Muslim Leaguers consider it a blessing. Our freedom movement failed to find a common solution in terms of justice among ourselves, in terms of joint life and true democracy. Even today we have no clear and common understanding of this question.

In those days—as at present—the Hindus cursed the Muslims for separatism and alliance with the British and the Muslims accused the Congress of Hindu domination. The British succeeded in their game of *divide and rule*. Why? Because the Congress and the Muslims failed to solve jointly their differences on the basis of justice among themselves and true democracy.

The question of joint versus separate electorates assumes a different aspect as soon as it is raised in the context of adult suffrage. Given adult suffrage the Muslims have always been ready to accept joint electorates with reservation of seats. But even this reservation of seats on communal basis perpetuates communal and religious divisions. The best method of doing justice to every minority without perpetuating communal divisions is 'proportional representation' which would guarantee to every group which can muster sufficient votes at the polls adequate representation in the elected bodies. Thus adult suffrage, joint electorates and proportional representation is the democratic, correct and just way to ensure representation in all elected organs—governmental and administrative—to all groups and nationalities in this multi-people country of ours. Joint electorates with reservation of seats or separate electorates only divide the people on the basis of existing differences which had then a religious form and which were thus perpetuated. This the British were naturally quite eager to do. They gave us the Minto-Morley Act which introduced separate electorates.

But adult suffrage and proportional representation was unknown to the British constitution, and it was the British constitution that was primarily regarded as the model of democracy by our leaders. Their own political leadership was based on British liberal ideas. The political text-books that our Congress and League forefathers read in their youth were those which preached the principle of one people, one nation, one state, and therefore when one sought to apply it to our national life, the other instinctively recoiled from it. Though they themselves considered it essentially just in principle, the Muslim leaders pleaded that it went against their interests at the time.

BRITISH IDEAS AND INDIAN LIFE

Thus liberal elements, both in the Congress and the League, sought to apply or qualify the democratic ideas they had learnt from foreign British text-books. They did not seek for new principles of justice, based on the actual state of Indian life, on the Indian people as they were, for the growth of Indian democracy and for achieving Indian freedom.

The older generation of our political leaders must clear its heads of most of the nineteenth century ideas, the younger generation must understand the actual development of Indian life, and must study not only the democratic movement of Britain which evolved as a single people, single nation, but also that of the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia which have built a new democracy by uniting as brothers several nations. Unless we do this we will not be able to apply true freedom principles or lay the foundation of a real Indian democracy forthwith but will only drift further and further apart from our goal with each side blaming the other for the delay in achieving freedom.

When the head does not understand the problem aright, the heart beats the wrong way and the hand is lifted against the wrong person.

Whenever a difficult situation arises, whenever Congress and League fail to form a joint front, each looks towards the British for a solution of the problem as they did at the end of the last war. The British, in the role of arbitrators, only intensify the dispute and in the name of safeguarding the minorities, take more arbitrary powers of interference into their own hands. Such are the lessons from the past, confirmed by the experience of the present.

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY—LUCKNOW PACT

In 1916, the political prophets were saying that the end of the war was in sight. General political consciousness both among the Congress and Muslim masses was increasing.

An extreme revolutionary wing, both Hindu and Muslim, which had gone abroad had formed a Provisional Government of India at Kabul, to fight the British and free India. Its leaders were Raja Mahendra Pratap, Maulvi Obeidullah Sindhi, Maulvi Barkatulla, V. Chattopadhyaya (brother of Shrimati Sarojini Naidu), etc.

Inside India also the need was felt for a joint front to take more power from the British. The old leadership led by the Aga Khan was pushed into the background and a young progressive leadership—Maulana Mohammed Ali, Maulana Azad and Mr. Jinnah—began to dominate the Muslim League and move towards unity with the Congress. The effort was fruitful and both the

Congress and the League held their sessions at Lucknow in 1916 to ratify the Pact they had agreed upon.

The Pact made a joint demand that India be raised to "a self-governing state, as an equal partner with equal rights and responsibilities as an independent unit of the Empire," that on the executive councils of the Governor-General and the governors, Indians should be at least one-half the number; it demanded enlarged membership with elected majorities in the legislatures, etc.

The Congress leaders accepted separate electorates for the Muslims and agreed to extend this to the C.P. and the Punjab, where they did not exist under the 1909 Act. In the provincial councils Muslims were allotted more seats than under the Minto-Morley Act. In Bengal and the Punjab, the Muslims were to get only three-fourths and nine-tenths respectively of the seats they would be entitled to on a population basis, though even this was a big increase on what the 1909 Act had given them. In Bengal it was an increase from 10.4 to 40 per cent, in the Punjab from 25 to 50 per cent. At the Centre one-third of the elected Indian members were to be Muslims, and as nearly as possible reflecting their strength in the provincial councils. A final cultural and religious safeguard was also provided to the effect that if a bill affecting a community be opposed by three-fourths of the representatives of the community, then it would not be proceeded with.

Although this agreement marked a big step forward, its basis was one of expediency, and it was therefore regarded as a compromise of their principles by each side. The Congress leaders thought they were making a concession to Muslim separatism by conceding separate electorates. The League leaders pointed to the fact that they had foregone their just right to have their majorities in Bengal and the Punjab, and had also agreed not to contest seats in the general electorates, a right conceded to them by the 1909 Act. Today Congress leaders like Sardar Patel openly say it was wrong to have made that compromise. But at the time both Congress and League leaders felt greatly enthused that agreement had been arrived at.

The League leaders attended the Congress session and Lokamanya Tilak answered the criticism of those who spoke at

that time as Sardar Patel does now. He said :

“It has been said, gentlemen, by some that we Hindus have yielded too much to our Mohammedan brethren. I am sure I represent the sense of the Hindu community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much.....*when we have to fight against a third party, it is a very great thing, a very important event, that we stand on this platform united in race, united in religion, united as regards all different shades of political creed.*

That is the most important event of the day.”

The Congress leaders in turn attended the League session presided over by Mr. Jinnah. Surendranath Bannerji, the father of Indian nationalism, Gandhiji, and others were there, and Sarojini Devi and Bipin Chandra Pal actually participated in the deliberations.

Mr. Jinnah replied to the criticisms of separatism and lack of freedom urge among Muslims thus :

“It appears to me that the reproach of ‘separatism’ sometimes levelled at Mussalmans is singularly inept and wide off the mark when I see this great communal organization *rapidly growing into a powerful factor for the birth of united India. A minority must have, above everything else, a complete sense of security before its broader political sense can be evoked for cooperation and united endeavour in national tasks.* To the Mussalmans of India that security can only come through adequate and effective safeguards as regards their political existence as a community.” (P. 876, *Mohammed Ali Jinnah* by M. H. Saiyid, Lahore, 1945).

CONGRESS-KHILAFAT STRUGGLE

The Indian freedom movement, however, had moved forward to the mightiest joint front against the British in the Congress-Khilafat upsurge. Mahatma Gandhi and the Ali Brothers became its leaders “as two eyes of the common mother”. The slogan of Swaraj was widely popularised.

Today when the final bid for power is on the agenda, it is well to remember that the Muslims though far less advanced than the Hindus were the first to raise the flag of complete independence.

It was the Khilafat leaders who were the first to demand that Swaraj be defined as complete independence. It was at Ahmedabad in 1921, that Maulana Hasrat Mohani made this demand, and it was Gandhiji who led the opposition to it saying that "It (the demand) has grieved me because it shows lack of responsibility."

It was the Muslim League at its Amritsar session as early as 1919 that passed a resolution calling on the Muslims of India not to join the Indian army !

In June 1922, a joint session of the Khilafat and the Jamiat working committees at Lucknow passed resolution that "the best interests of India and the Mussalmans demand that in the Congress creed the term 'Swaraj' be substituted henceforth by 'Complete Independence'."—(*Minutes of the Central Khilafat Committee.*)

It was the Congress leadership in those days that pleaded that they could not do so as it involved "a fundamental change in the Congress constitution."

It was only at the Madras session in 1927 that Congress accepted that goal under pressure from radical elements led by Pandit Jawaharlal, but this was nullified the very next year when the report of the committee presided over by the elder Nehru accepted Dominion Status as the goal. So strong was—and, unfortunately, still is—the liberal faith of India's leaders in the British imperialists.

It would be well to remember now, that in spite of their small numbers, in spite of their worse economic conditions, the Muslims collected one crore of rupees for the Khilafat movement—as much as was collected for the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

It was the Muslim leaders, the Ali Brothers and Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni, who boldly preached sedition to the army and were sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment for it.

And let us remember that the Moplah peasants of Malabar, rising spontaneously against landlord and imperialist oppression battled fearlessly showing marvels of heroism, capacity for struggle and sacrifice. So also the Pathans of the Frontier in 1930 who rose on their own against British rule.

When Gandhiji called off the Non-Cooperation movement (February 1922) all the Khilafat leaders protested against this,

wanted the anti-imperialist movement to develop and, in fact, gave a call for one crore Muslim Satyagrahis to fight for freedom. (*Minutes of the Central Khilafat Committee.*)

It was Gandhiji and the Congress leaders that rubbed this militant patriotism.

It is well to remember all this, because many Congressmen are today ignoring this big revolutionary force and imagining that the Muslims are not necessary for achieving our freedom.

During the great postwar upsurge Muslim League, Congress and Khilafat leaders functioned as one team. Toadies and reactionaries were swept aside and the Muslim leaders went in for co-operation with the Congress and to get it to agree to the just demands of the Muslims. There was no fear of Hindu-majority domination then.

After this movement was called off, there was an atmosphere of tremendous frustration. The Congress formed the Swaraj Party and decided to work the 1919 Act. The imperialists utilised the chance to the full. Communal riots began. Communal reactionaries came to the fore. The anti-Muslim *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* movement was started by reactionary Hindus. On the Muslim side the anti-Hindu *Tanzim* and *Tabligh* movement began. Each was racing to convert as many as possible from the other camp into his own religious fold.

Nevertheless, the best patriots among Congressmen on the one hand and the Muslim League and Khilafat on the other were trying to find out a common basis—a national pact—on the basis of which a constitution of free India just to both Hindus and Muslims and the others could be based.

SEARCH FOR A NATIONAL PACT

Our freedom movement had reached a new stage. Its leaders were no longer thinking in terms of a responsible government under British tutelage. They had behind them a countrywide united mass struggle for Swaraj. They wanted to frame their own constitution and take the entire governance of the country in their own hands. However, both the Congress and Muslim leaders had illusions about the British. They thought that if the Congress, the League and the other parties could jointly frame an agreed democratic constitution on the model of a British Dominion, the British would not be in a position to refuse it.

Congress leaders thought in terms of a thoroughly democratised all-India constitution, wherein the governors and the governor generals would be constitutional heads and the provincial and central administrations would be responsible to democratically elected legislatures. The main issue between Congressmen and Leaguers now was no more the electorates. The Muslim leaders thought in terms of redemarcation of provinces so that homogeneous Muslim provinces like Sind, Baluchistan and the N.W.F.P. were created and received the same democratic administration and autonomy as the rest. They demanded adequate representation at the Central Government.

The central demands of the Muslims as formulated then were:

1) That the Muslim majority areas which were submerged, like Sind, in larger units or kept backward by the British imperialists, like Baluchistan and the N.W.F.P., should be formed into *separate provinces* on an equal footing with the other provinces in British India

2) That the Muslim majorities in Punjab and Bengal should be fully reflected in the legislatures of those provinces

3) That in the Central Legislature and Government, the Muslims should get at least one-third representation.

Practically the entire Muslim leadership, whether of the Congress, Khilafat or Liberal Leaguers like Mr. Jinnah, backed these demands. In March 1927, an overwhelming majority of them also agreed that if these demands were unequivocally conceded, they would lay the basis for dropping separate electorates and adopting joint electorates.

The A.I.C.C. accepted these demands and in December 1927, the Madras Session of the Congress virtually endorsed it

Meanwhile, the British had announced that the all-white Simon Commission would go to India to study whether India was ripe for constitutional progress. They were quite confident that the Indians could not do much, for—as Birkenhead, then Secretary of State, gleefully declared—“Hindus and Muslims cannot unite.”

Against this insolent imperialist challenge, the Congress and the Muslim League joined hands to boycott the Simon Commission. That unity needed to be carried forward to forge a joint Swaraj demand on the basis of the Hindu-Muslim agreement

already reached. Hindu and Muslim communal reactionaries and toady elements, who were cooperating with the Simon Commission, now began to attack this agreement.

But the progressive in both the camps could not hold on to their agreement for long. The basis of their unity was expediency—not any common just and democratic principles. The Congress conceived the Swaraj constitution in terms of a one-nation democracy after the British model, with a centralised government and a limited autonomy to the provincial administrations. Thus when the Nehru All-Parties' Committee sat down to draft the constitution, they were more keen on making their draft approximate to a British Dominion constitution than on seeing that it fulfilled the Muslim demands. The crux of the Muslim demands was that the constitution should be federal and not unitary, that the provinces should have the fullest autonomy with residuary powers resting in them.

The Congress and the Hindus thought in terms of a unitary constitution and a strong Centre, which they hoped to inherit from the British. They suspected the Muslim demand for a federal constitution and complete autonomy to provinces as a dangerous, fissiparous and separatist tendency. The Muslims on the other hand suspected in the Congress insistence on a strong Centre and denial of residuary powers a desire for domination.

BREAK AT ALL-PARTIES' CONVENTION

At the All-Parties' Convention in December 1928 at Calcutta came the final break-up. Every case had been taken to make the scheme acceptable to the British but Muslim objections were ignored and the scheme was pushed through, thus alienating the Khilafatists like the Ali Brothers and the Leaguers like Mr. Jinnah. Thus was disrupted the unity that had been achieved in action and which could have been further developed for the final struggle for freedom.

Why did our freedom movement fail to forge Hindu-Muslim unity at this point ? For two reasons—firstly, because the leaders had more faith in the British imperialists than in their own brother people; and secondly, because they failed to solve their differences on the basis of common principles of justice and democracy in terms of the concrete reality of our national

set-up. The Congress leaders and the Hindus were treating India as if it was one homogeneous nation. They considered the Muslim demand for Muslim-majority provinces as a separatist and disruptive demand. Muslims themselves put up their demand on the basis of a religious community and not on the basis of national units.

In reality pre-conceived notions prevented the leaders from seeing the simple fact that India is not a homogeneous nation like England or France but a family of nationalities. Each nationality has its own language, culture, historical tradition etc. Independence and freedom of India must mean the freedom and guarantee of full and equal development to each nationality. Hence the free Indian state should be a willing union of sovereign autonomous states. The only way of creating a strong Centre would be by autonomous units willingly parting with part of their sovereign rights for the purpose.

This is, in fact, the basis for a just and a democratic solution of the Hindu-Muslim question in India. It is significant that as early as in 1926, an Indian Muslim revolutionary, Maulana Obeidulla Sindhi had come to the same conclusion. He saw the Soviet Republic after the Revolution, and while in exile in Constantinople devised a constitutional scheme for India which he called "Sarvarajya" constitution. For north India he recognised the following distinct nationalities with their separate languages : Sindhi, Baluchi, Pustania (Pathanland), Western Punjab, Central Punjab, and Kashmir. The main features of his solution were 1) self-determination to national units; 2) India to be a willing union of sovereign national republics; 3) abolition of landlordism; 4) nationalisation of key industries.

But the leaders who met at the All-Parties' Conference in 1928 did not have these principles of revolutionary democracy to guide them; nor did they try to see India and her peoples as they really are and not through pre-conceived notion.

The failure to achieve unity in 1928 was a great turning point in our national history. It led to a train of events which culminated in the British imperialists imposing the 1932 Communal Award upon our country which only accentuated the differences.

The leaders went back into the arms of their own reactionaries. The pro-British reactionary group led by Sir Mohammed Shafi now found the Ali Brothers by their side. Mr. Jinnah also went back, more convinced than ever before that it was useless to expect justice from the Congress leaders.

Only a section led by Dr. Ansari remained with the Congress. When the Congress wanted to start the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930, Dr. Ansari pleaded for a prior pact with the Muslims, but in vain. So when the movement began, though Muslims participated in it, they were far fewer than in 1920. The big upsurge of the Pathans in the Frontier and the Kashmiri Muslims were spontaneous movements of their own, not directed by the Congress, though they merged with the general upsurge.

ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE AND THE COMMUNAL AWARD

When the Civil Disobedience movement was called off, and after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the Round Table Conference brought up the question of agreement once again, Gandhiji representing the Congress had faith that in view of the mass influence of the Congress the British could not but come to a settlement with it. The British on the other hand, (and it was a Labour Government at that time too), said that if the Indian parties came to an agreement they would implement it with due regard to their "existing obligations".

All the unsettle issues came to the fore. A frantic attempt was made to present a united front.

In the Minorities Committee the Muslim leaders suggested that the boundaries of the Punjab province be revised so as to exclude the predominantly Hindu Ambala division, and give the Muslims a clear Muslim-majority area. This was rejected. The question of full representation for the Muslim majority in Bengal could not be settled. The pressure of the Sikh and Hindu Mahasabha leaders told ultimately and the parties appealed to the British Premier to arbitrate, each hoping that he would be "just".

Herein the role of the British stands out quite sharply. They gave the Communal Award, the main features of which were :

1. The Muslim demand for majorities in Bengal and the Punjab was conceded but *only against the Hindus*, not absolutely.

2. In Bengal, where Muslims are 55 per cent and Hindus 43 per cent of the population, the Award gave 48 per cent seats to the Muslims and 39 per cent to the Hindus. And to the Europeans, who were microscopic minority in the 7 crores population of Bengal, it gave 10 per cent of the seats because, forsooth, "though small in number (they have) great commercial and industrial interests"! That is how they gave a little to each and kept the decisive power in their own hands through the balance of power that the Europeans had.

3. In the Punjab too the Muslims who formed 57 per cent of the population were given only 49 per cent of the seats, the Hindus got 27 per cent seats for 27 per cent of the population and the Sikhs who are 13 per cent in the population received 18 per cent of the seats. The Award also assured the Muslims that if they got the three landlord seats they could get a 51 per cent majority !

4. The Muslim demands for safeguarding of cultural and other rights, which the Congress had all along conceded was now taken over by the British and added to the Governor's special powers, thus increasing the arbitrary powers of interference by the Governor-General and the Governors.

5. Sind was separated from Bombay and the N.W.F. Province was constituted a separate Governor's Province.

Such was the Communal Award. It solved no problem. It left dissatisfied both Hindus and Muslims, and kept them at each other's throats. Bengal and the Punjab were made into permanent problems neither to the interest of the Hindus nor the Muslims.

Both Hindu and Muslim leaders realised what a disaster the Communal Award had meant for both the communities. Both realised the need for a joint front against the imperialist game.

At the Allahabad Unity Conference in December 1932, even the Mahasabha leaders like Pandit Malaviya and Dr. Moonje accepted the Muslim demands viz., 1) for a federal government of full provincial autonomy with full residuary powers; 2) Sind, N.W.F. Province and Baluchistan to be separate provinces; 3) Muslim majorities in Bengal and the Punjab to be fully reflected in the Legislatures, etc. and 4) 32 per cent representation be given to Muslims at the Centre, etc.

The Muslims in turn agreed to joint electorates, the method being so modified as to ensure that a candidate for the election gets at least a stated minimum percentage of votes of the communities.

But this pact was attacked by the toadies like Sir Mohammed Shafi and the communal Hindu leaders from Bengal. The Congress leaders gave up the fight and the Muslims leaders gave up hopes of settlement.

Maulana Mohammad Ali died a broken-hearted man. As for Mr. Jinnah he left India soon after the Nehru All Parties' Committee broke up and settled down to practice in London.

In the second phase of our freedom movement when the common objective had advanced to Swaraj in the form of Dominion Status, the Hindu-Muslim differences as we have seen centred round new issues. The main issue then was the creation of Muslim-majority provinces and giving autonomy to them like the rest and the sharing of power at the Centre. Once again the absence of an agreement between the Congress and the Muslims brought in the imperialist Communal Award of 1932. It solved nothing. Congress and the League were unable to arrive at a national pact to replace the Communal Award. They failed to find a common solution in terms of justice among ourselves, for a joint front for freedom based on true democracy.

A common platform could not be forced for opposing the 1935 constitution and resisting the imposition of the imperialist federation which was proposed. Congress and League both opposed the imperialist federation but failed to agree upon a common plan of Indian independence, in the form of a voluntary federation of autonomous provinces with residuary powers resting in them. Instead the Communal Award only intensified the conflict. While the Congress rejected the imperialist federation, the Muslim League began to demand two federation and the basis was thus laid for the separatist demand of the next period.

FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALIST FEDERATION

Then came the new situation in 1935 when the British imperialists were trying to impose a federation, which would preserve their old autocracy, while seeming to concede democracy to Indians. Their plan was to dominate the Central Assembly

through their own puppets—the Princes—in whose hands the decisive balance of power was to be given.

In the debate on the New Bill for India Lord Reading assured the Tories that they would lose nothing by conceding this new Act. For, he said :

“What is it we have most to fear ? There are those who agitate for independence for India, for the right to secede from the Empire altogether....It becomes important, therefore, that we should get what *steadying influence* we can against this view.... There will be approximately 33 per cent of the Princes who will be members of the legislature with 40 per cent in the Upper Chamber.” (P. 401. *India Today* by R. Palme Dutt).

Baldwin in the course of the same debate categorically laid down the imperialist ethics thus : “So long as Indians are divided we have *the right to rule them.*”

Both the Congress and the League leaders were opposed to such a federation.

Mr. Jinnah—who was prevailed upon to return to India in 1934—and Rajendra Babu, therefore met in January 1935 and came to substantial agreement. It was agreed that the Hindu and Sikh opposition be won round before ratifying it in the Working Committee of the Congress and the Council of the League. The Punjab Hindu communal leaders opposed this and the talks were abandoned in March; their joint statement said that in spite of earnest efforts they had NOT found a solution which would “satisfy all the parties concerned” and “that communal harmony and concord are essential for the progress of the country and we can only hope that forces will arise which will make a future attempt more fruitful.”

Another attempt at agreement had failed, once again on the question of Punjab. But it is well to remember that at the time (1935-37), both Congress and League were agreed that there should be an all-India Centre.

The difference reflected the crux of the problem. The Congress goal was of a Centre formed by a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage while giving the minorities the right to elect delegates through separate electorates. But the Congress was going ahead with the slogan of “Down with the Slave

Constitution" to win the elections, hoping that once returned as the strongest party the British Government must settle with it.

The League goal as adopted in 1937 was, "the establishment in India of a *federation of free democratic states* in which the rights and interests of Muslims and other minorities are adequately and effectively safeguarded." (Lucknow Session of the League, 1937).

But the League, newly reorganised by Mr. Jinnah, was also going in for elections, to gain as many seats as possible and use this for further negotiations.

Both the Congress and the League contested the elections and in provinces like the U.P. they even came to an understanding not to contest against one another. The Congress swept the polls. The League re-organised by Mr. Jinnah after his return from Europe was new and weak and did not score substantial successes.

But even in U.P. when the question of forming a ministry came up the Congress leaders refused to form a coalition with the League, on the pretext of having a "homogeneous cabinet". They offered to the League members places in the ministry provided they dissolved their party in the Assembly, their Parliamentary Board outside, signed the Congress pledge and submitted to Congress discipline. These were the terms offered by Maulana Azad, member of the Congress Central Parliamentary Board to Mr. Khaliqzaman, leader of the U.P. Provincial Muslim League.

Once again there was no agreement. The League leaders went back into the arms of their own reactionaries. In order to have ministries amenable somewhat to the League and aid it in its pressure politics Mr. Jinnah came to agreement with pro-British premiers like Sikander Hyat Khan and unprincipled careerists like Fazlul Huq. It is significant that Sir Sikander had stipulated that while he would support the League in all-India politics, the League must not interfere in the internal politics, of the Punjab and in the doings of the Unionist Party. They thus gave the name of their ministries to the League and the League gave them its label and handed over the League leadership in the province into their hands.

HITTING OUT AT ONE ANOTHER

Repeated failures were hardening the attitudes of both the Congress and the League leaders. Each started hitting out at the other. Pandit Nehru ridiculed the League demands and doubted its anti-imperialist *bona fides*. He said :

“What does the Muslim League stand for ? Does it stand for the independence of India, for anti-imperialism ? I believe not.....May I suggest to Mr. Jinnah that I come into greater touch with the Muslim masses than most of the members of the Muslim League ? I know more about their hunger and poverty and misery than those who talk in terms of percentages and seats in the councils and places in the State service.” (January 10, 1937; p. 147, *Eighteen Months in India* by Jawaharlal Nehru).

To this Mr. Jinnah replied with equal bitterness and blindness. In his presidential address at the Lucknow session of the League he said :

“The Muslim League stands for *full national democratic self-government for India*..... There are some who talk of complete independence. But it is no use having complete independence on your lips and the Government of India Act, 1935 in your hands.... The present leadership of the Congress, especially during the last ten years, has been responsible for alienating the Mussalmans of India more and more by pursuing a policy which is exclusively Hindu, and since they have formed the government in six provinces where they are in a majority they have by their words, deeds and programme shown more that the Mussalmans cannot expect any justice or fairplay at their hands. Wherever they are in a majority and wherever it suited them, they refused to co-operate with the Muslim League parties and demanded unconditional surrender and signing of their pledges.” (*Indian Annual Register*, 1937. Vol. 1, p. 403.)

The germ of his Pakistan conception was already there when he said “on the very threshold of what little power and responsibility is given, the majority community *have clearly shown their hand that Hindustan is for the Hindus*, only the Congress masquerades under the name of nationalism, whereas the Hindu Mahasabha does not mince words.”

That is how the Congress and League leaders—failing to understand the problem, falling to come to an agreement—

blamed each other for the mess in the country. Bitterness was blinding them; the Congress leaders accused the League of being pro-imperialist, the League leaders accused the Congress of being Hindu in reality, and nationalist only in words.

WAR CRISIS AND PAKISTAN RESOLUTION

With the outbreak of World War II, the freedom movement of our country enters into its final phase. The demand is now raised : Recognise independence here and now; let the Indian people decide their constitution through a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage. The Congress leaders raised this demand because they realised that imperialism had now entered its final crisis and the Indian freedom movement could now make the bid for power. But, as always, they hoped to gain immediate concessions and share of power by mere threats, so they left scope for bargaining.

The Congress leadership threatened non-cooperation in war, but demanded present freedom, i.e., substantial share of power in the Centre in return for cooperation in war. It adopted the policy of non-embarrassment of war effort but resigned from provincial ministries and hoped for settlement on its own terms.

The Muslim League which was re-organised by Mr. Jinnah in 1936 had by now become the most powerful organisation of the Muslims. Since 1924, the Muslim patriotic movement which had emerged in the earlier period out of the Congress-Muslim joint front for Swaraj had been going to pieces, the reason being the successive failures of our freedom movement to achieve a Hindu-Muslim national pact to re-forged Congress-Muslim joint front for the common demand of independence. In the period of general mass-upsurge, the new League of Mr. Jinnah—which came out with a fairly progressive election programme in 1937 and with an Independence Resolution in its Lucknow Conference (1937)—became the focus of a new patriotic awakening of the Muslims. But this is only one aspect of the growth of the New League. The other aspect comes into existence because of the failure of our freedom movement in this period to re-forged Congress-Muslim unity by solving the issues which had come up in the earlier period.

Congressmen and Hindus had failed to understand the real meaning of the repeated insistence of the Muslims on the demand of sovereign autonomy of the Muslim-majority provinces like Sind, Frontier, Baluchistan, Punjab, etc. The sound core of this demand was the just aspiration of these nationalities to freedom in their homelands. Muslims had not yet begun to formulate their demand in a separatist form. In 1928, after the failure of the All-Parties' Convention, the All-India Khilafat Conference demanded that independent India should be a union of independent republics after the U.S.A. model.

In 1937 the Muslim League defined its goal of independence as a "federation of free democratic states." In the period after the formation of provincial ministries when the whole country was condemning the proposed imperialist federation, a Congress-Muslim joint front could have been forged on the basis of the slogan of a voluntary and democratic federation of sovereign and autonomous states. But, as we have seen, the Congress-League negotiations of 1937-39 never came to anything. Failure to achieve Congress-Muslim understanding led to Muslim frustration and it was this frustration which was eventually distorted into pronounced separatism which became the marked feature and the other aspect of the new Muslim League.

After the outbreak of the war, the League leadership too begins to play a parallel bargaining game with imperialism. It offers cooperation in war, pledges non-embarrassment and hopes for separate settlement on its own terms.

The Viceroy plays the traditional game of playing upon the differences, rejects the demands of both parties and says that the parties should agree among themselves first on the composition of provincial governments and then come to him with an agreed plan regarding the Centre.

The Viceroy insolently demands of both the Congress and the League a joint surrender. But unfortunately the Congress and the League are unable to join together in an agreed common challenge.

Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah meet.

Pandit Nehru was agreeably surprised to find that Mr. Jinnah also stood for freedom. He said :

“Does the Viceroy imagine that Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League are opposed to.....the declaration of India as a free country ? If so, I fear he is very much mistaken. I found to my pleasure that in regard to objectives Mr. Jinnah and I had a great deal in common.....” (*Indian Annual Register*, 1939, Vol. 2, p. 417.)

But the tragedy was that they were not able to evolve any common principles which could be the basis of settlement. The talks broke down because each felt there was a limit even to expediency.

The repeated negotiations during this period broke even at the start, the Congress saying that the Muslim League would be regarded as one of the many parties representing the Muslim minority, Mr. Jinnah contending that Congress represented no Muslims at all and was only a major Hindu party.

Every time the Congress and the League failed to come to agreement, their attitude hardened towards one another, from hopes of mutual agreement they were becoming more convinced that it was impossible and were looking to the British for final settlement.

The League leaders had convinced themselves that in an all-India Centre the Congress would dominate even the Muslim-majority homelands.

The Congress at Ramgarh demanded complete independence and a Constituent Assembly based on adult suffrage.

The League at Lahore passed the resolution demanding complete freedom for Muslim-majority zones to be carved out and constituted into independent states.

To justify this demand for a separate state, Mr. Jinnah put forward the theory that Muslims are a nation. But it was a theory that came into conflict with facts even at the very start and the resolution therefore declared that “the constituent units (of Pakistan State) shall be autonomous and sovereign”.

Speaking in support of the resolution Mr. Jinnah outlined how he himself had come to the Pakistan Resolution. He said :

“We stand unequivocally for the freedom of India. But it must be freedom for *all India* and not freedom of one section, or, worse still, of the Congress caucus and slavery of Mussalmans and other minorities.” (*Indian Annual Register*, 1940, Vol. 1, p. 309.)

That is the history of Hindu-Muslim differences, a history of the growth of our problem. As it is clear, repeated attempts failed because neither side understood our own development and attempted to apply or qualify British liberal ideas to Indian reality. It was this that kept both the Congress and the League apart, led to their losing faith in each other and to pinning their hopes on the British rulers.

CRIPPS AND AFTER

In 1942 comes the new phase, with the greatest danger for India and the need for the British to conciliate the Congress without any concessions. The same old game of dangling hopes before both, using the Princes and withholding power was followed.

Cripps promised everything to everybody: to the Congress an all-India Union, to the League, right of a separate Union through non-accession and to the Princes no interference with their autocratic rule.

The British Viceroy spoke of geographical unity to get round the Congress but assured the Muslims that no constitution would be forced on them so that they may not lose faith in partition with British help. The British imperialists thus got round both.

All were asked to agree and each was assured that no agreement would be forced upon him. They kept the Congress in jail and the League out of the war, though it had tried for unilateral settlement through an offer of cooperation.

It was only after the failure of the August movement, and the refusal by the British to give a proper share of power in the Central Government to the League that Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah came together, but they failed to come to any settlement. Gandhiji suspected Pan-Islamism behind the formula "Muslims—a nation". Mr. Jinnah saw only a striving for Hindu domination when Gandhiji argued against separation and thought that Gandhiji was ready to concede self-determination only in words.

When the Congress leaders came out and the Simla Conference was announced, hopes of unilateral settlement were revived in both the Congress and the League. They went to Simla and the Congress leadership turned its back on whatever advance the Gandhi-Jinnah talks had registered.

The League in turn rejected the Bhulabhai-Liaquat formula. Their hopes turned to dust and only the country was humiliated.

Today each is going full tilt for the other.

To face the general electorate, the Congress steals all the anti-League thunder of the Mahasabha. In the Muslim electorate it backs all those who are prepared to fight the League.

The Muslim League, in order to win seats, admits any Muslim, even the worst toady, if he agrees to fight the Congress. The desire for unity with the Congress gets transformed into growing hatred for it as the disruptor of Muslim solidarity, as determined to dominate over the Muslims and deny them their just right.

The League launches its electoral campaign more as an anti-Hindu than as a freedom campaign. Religious obscurantism is revived. Toadies get into key positions.

The Congress visualises independent India as a single state—a union of autonomous provinces, with complete protection of culture and religion for every minority. It demands that the constitution of free India be framed by a Constituent Assembly elected by adult suffrage.

The Muslim League visualises independent India as an alliance of two separate independent states to be formed by dividing India into two zones—a northwestern and eastern zone in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority (Pakistan) and the rest of India (Hindustan) in which the Hindus are in a majority. It demands two separate constitution-making bodies for Pakistan and Hindustan respectively.

Each suspects the other. Neither the leadership of the Congress nor the League leadership has any faith left in Hindu-Muslim unity. Twenty years ago both the Congress and the League leaders considered Hindu-Muslim unity as the indispensable pillar of Swaraj. Today the Congress leaders beg the question and say that Hindu-Muslim unity is an impossibility till the British quit ! And the League leaders consider the Hindus and the Congress greater enemies than the British !

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on justice among ourselves, democracy and freedom for all—according to which the different parties agree to put their points of dispute to the verdict of the people. The Congress demands one constituent assembly based on adult suffrage for the whole of India. The Muslim League will have none of it and demands a separate constitution-making body for the Muslim-majority areas.

Instead of a common front of freedom agreed on a common plan to assert the will of the Indian people as a whole to end British imperial domination of our country, we have two warring camps and the set-up of a civil war. The imperialists are once again preparing to give another Communal Award which is a plan of permanent partition of our country into a Hindu Dominion, a Muslim Dominion and a Dominion of princely autocracies—all under the paramountcy of the British-Dominated "Agency Centre".

But both the Congress and the League leaders are blind to this. They are fighting to win electoral majorities and look towards the British for unilateral settlement !

AS OUR ENEMY SEES US !

It is worthwhile recalling what the country's rulers think of the Congress and the League, to see ourselves through the eyes of our enemy.

Professor Coupland analyses the whole development of the Congress during the pre-war and war years as nothing but the growth of Hindu vested interests seeking to dominate the whole of India after the departure of the British.

In the Muslim League the same worthy sees nothing but the awakening of imperial ambitions for the revival of the lost Muslim Empire, the desire among Muslim leaders to win it back from Hindu domination.

Our enemies take the worst features of our movements as the whole movement. They lay thick the worst part of the deeds of Indian leaders, and the vast mass of people behind the Congress and the League just do not exist in the imperialist picture.

The Congress criticism against the League in the election meetings or in the Congress press, and the exposure of the

League proceeds along the same lines as the imperialist analysis above mentioned.

The same is true of the League agitation and press about the Congress. Once again the concentration of fire is on the worst sayings and doings of the leaders of the other side and no attempt is made to understand or explain their own policies to the millions of people behind the other party.

To conclude, this bird's-eye view of Congress-League differences, reveals the following :

1) In their political ideas the leaders of both the Congress and the League are more like 19th century British liberals, than true 20th century Indian democrats.

2) In their agitation among their own masses they do not even hesitate sometimes to rouse the worst passions and revive the most chauvinistic ideas.

3) When it comes to dealing with the British they show more faith in the common master than in their own brother.

The total result is the big mess that is the common India of us all today.

They have not been able to transform the basic earthly urge of their own peoples into a freedom programme for the freedom for all on the basis of justice to all and for a joint struggle against the common enslaver.

III. THE NEW IMPERIALIST PLAN

Today, India's leaders are forgetting the bitter lessons of the past, are fighting each other and fail to see the new way by which the imperialists want to carry on their old game of "Divide and Rule".

Our ancestors lost our native land to the British conquerors by failing to understand their game and by letting them exploit our own differences.

The present leaders are committing the same error. One has only to attend any of the election rallies addressed even by the foremost and best leaders of the Congress or the League—for example, the Qaid-e-Azam himself on the one side, and Pandit Nehru on the other—and one will find that the entire appeal to the people is to trust them and help them to win and they would do the rest. They are asking for a vote of confidence and that is

all. They give no answer, not even a formal one to the very unfortunate question : How is that they have been unable to realise their own aim so long despite the unquestioned confidence of the people ? In their speeches nothing is said about the British aim or game today except that British rule is doomed and Britain must deal with them.

One should have thought that the leaders of enslaved India would give their foremost attention to analysing the British imperialist policy to keep us enslaved today and would bother themselves the most about strengthening the army of India's freedom fighters. But this is just what is not happening inside the Congress and the League. If by voting confidence in the leaders, if merely by trusting them a people could be free, the problem would be very simple indeed.

Our Party alone puts in the forefront of its agitation not claims about its own worth, not even its differences with other parties, but the need to overthrow British rule. Our Party alone coolly analyses the British imperialist plan today and suggests an Indian counter-strategy for our struggle for freedom.

A DIABOLICAL PLAN

This is how our Election Manifesto puts it :

“The Communist Party concentrates all its fire against the imperialist rulers of our common motherland and considers it a crime to waste one word or lose one comrade in internal factional warfare.

“The only call of our Party is : *Indian must not fight Indian but all Indians together must fight the British enslavers !*

“The Communist Party reminds all Indians that through the policy of *divide and rule* the British conquered our ancient native lands, through *divide and rule* they have ruled over us all for 200 years and through *divide and rule* again, they plan to stay longer.

“*The Communist Party seeks to rouse all against the new imperialist plan of dividing up India and keeping it jointly and severally under their own control.*

“Against the rising hatred of the growing mass of the Indian peoples, against the awakening conscience of the freedom-loving peoples of the world, the British imperialists have come

to realise that they can no longer keep India enslaved or Indians divided in the same old way.

"Their sovereignty over India, their old order within India, are doomed. Before all Indians rise like one man to make them quit our country and refashion with our own hands the social order they have imposed over our peoples, our rulers are planning to change their old regime in their own way and to suit their own interests.

"Their plan is to divide India into a HINDU-MAJORITY DOMINION and a MUSLIM-MAJORITY DOMINION, whose constitutions are drafted separately in cooperation with the British Government; simultaneously they plan to keep PRINCELY INDIA in independent treaty relations with the British Crown.

"They thus hope to canalise and split the great popular awakening represented by the movements led by the Congress and League and keep their own hold intact, indirectly, through their traditional stooges—the Princes.

"It is a cunning plan for the permanent dismemberment and a new form of enslavement of our motherland." (*Election Manifesto of the C.P.I.*)

This comes to the British imperialist ruling class very naturally as they are adepts at the game of combining sweet sugary words with the foulest cunning. They have not bossed over the modern world for over 100 years in vain. It is the concentrated experience of the oldest and the most adaptable ruling class in the world that has played havoc with continents, enslaved whole nations and successfully struggled against liberationist movements the world over.

IMPERIALIST STRATEGY

Their aim is simple enough : they have no intention to let India regain her independence.

Their strategy too is equally traditional; to play one Indian party against another.

And they hope this way to stay on top in India. They are as supremely self-confident about succeeding as the Congress and League leaders are about their own success.

If we do not want to fool ourselves with illusions, we must understand imperialist policy first. Only to see world imperialism

doomed and British imperialism tottering—like Pandit Nehru—and fail to see what is imperialism's own plan for survival, is to shut one's eyes to reality.

The Cripps declaration did not give anything immediately but purported to give to the satisfaction of the then British Government a post-war plan of Indian freedom. Subsequent British governments have reiterated the Cripps offer.

In a statement made in the House of Commons simultaneously with Lord Wavell's broadcast on June 14, 1945, Amery said :

"The (Cripps) offer of March 1942 stands in its entirety without change or qualification.....But they (the British) are willing, to make possible some step forward during the interim period if the leaders of the principal Indian parties are prepared to agree to their suggestions....." (Official hand-out at Simla).

When the Tories were kicked out of office and the Labour Government came into power, Mr. Attlee reiterated the old policy, thus :

"The broad definition of British policy towards India, contained in the Declaration of 1942, which had the support of all parties in this country stands in all its fullness and purpose. (He reiterated the gracious speech from the Throne that) 'In accordance with promises already made to my Indian peoples, my Government will do their utmost, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, for the early realisation of full self-government in India'." (*Times of India*, September 20, 1945).

In his latest speech to the British Associated Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta on December 10, 1945, Lord Wavell once again assured us that the British Government desires Indian freedom and will help to realise it for us :

"I can assure you unreservedly that the British Government and the British people honestly and sincerely wish the Indian people to have their political freedom and a government, or governments, of their own choice." (*Times of India*, December 11, 1945).

But knowing the British imperialists as we should, and knowing our own freedom aim as we do, let us get a few issues quite clear.

There is no declaration of Indian independence by the British Government—no unqualified willingness to transfer power, either to any Indian party or to the elected representatives of the people.

PACIFYING CONGRESS

To appease the Congress a declaration was made by Cripps that the Constitution-Making Body was free to secede from the British Empire if it so desired, but all the British governments then and ever since have expressed the hope and confidence that India will ever remain within what they call the British Commonwealth of Nations.

To appease the Congress further, and create illusions that the British may agree with the Congress as against the League, they made declarations about wanting to preserve the unity of India and help it in achieving the same.

The draft declaration brought by Cripps stated that the British Government had made the proposals

“for the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India. *The object is the creation of a new Indian Union.*” (*Bombay Chronicle*, March 30, 1942).

Amery, announcing the Simla Conference in the House of Commons debate, reiterated that

“the ideal to which we have always looked is that of an All-India Union in which the States would play their full part” (*Hindu*, June 15, 1945)

Pethick Lawrence, the Labour government’s Secretary of State for India, who is boosted up as a great friend of India, made a speech in the House of Lords on December 4, 1945 in which he threatened that the British Government would put down any unconstitutional struggle for freedom and said that a parliamentary delegation was being sent to

“convey in person the general wish and desire of the people of this country that India should speedily attain her full position as an *independent partner state* in the British Commonwealth, and the desire of Parliament to do everything within our power to promote the speedy attainment of that objective.” (*Times of India*, December 5, 1945).

And finally Lord Wavell himself dangled hopes before the Congress leaders of an interim Centre by saying that the British Government and himself as their agent

“will do our best to secure agreement, to help India to *form a constitution*, and to secure the support of the principal parties

in the Central Government so as to enable them to bear a full share of responsibility for administering the country during the interval before the change of constitution can be made." (*Times of India*, December 11, 1945).

PROMISES TO LEAGUE

To appease the League and create in its leadership the illusion that the British Government was more likely to listen to it than the Congress leadership they have done two things: one, declare that they will be no party to forcing a constitution on any unwilling party and, two, provide the mechanism for separation.

The Cripps formula conceded:

"(1) The right of *any province* of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to *retain its present constitutional position*.with such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire. His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution, *giving them the same full status as the Indian Union*."

Amery, speaking in the House of Commons announcing the Simla Conference on June 14, 1945, said:

"It is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce any change contrary to the wishes of the major Indian communitiesNone of the changes suggested will in any way prejudice or prejudge the essential form of the future permanent *constitution or constitutions of India*." (Official printed hand-out of speech).

Pethick Lawrence declared in the House of Lords:

"It is the firm conviction of His Majesty's Government that it is *by and in consultation with*, directly elected representatives of the Indian people that decisions as to the future governance of British India should be taken." (*Times of India*, December 5, 1945).

Attlee, the Labour Premier, declared:

"India's complete freedom has been there for the taking ever since the Cripps Offer in 1942. The only obstacle so far—a very grave obstacle—has been the failure of the Indian communities to agree among themselves." (*Times of India*, November 10, 1945).

And last of all, Wavell in his Calcutta speech cited earlier said that the Indian people could have "a government or governments of their own choice."

The British Government's acceptance of Muslim self-determination is as bogus as its acceptance of Indian self-determination. On the basis of the constitution-making body that they have planned, they are confident that Bengal and the Punjab can never vote for separation.

The Cripps Plan for a constitution-making body is to combine the lower houses, i.e., all provincial assemblies, into one Electoral College from which delegates are to be sent to the Constitution-Making Body on the basis of proportional representation.

The position even in provinces where Muslims are in a majority is as follows:

<i>Province</i>	<i>Muslim Population in percentage</i>	<i>Total seats in Lower house</i>	<i>Muslim seats</i>	<i>Percentage of Muslim seats to total</i>
Punjab	57%	175	86	49%
Bengal	55%	250	119	48%
Sind	71%	60	34	57%
N.W.F.P.	92%	50	36	72%
Baluchistan	87.5%	(Has no elected House at all)		

As regards the right of separation, the Cripps proposals say that if 80 per cent of the Assembly decide on no separation the question is finally settled. If it was 60 per cent or less, then the minority can challenge a plebiscite. One has only to look at the distribution of seats in the Punjab and Bengal to see that on the basis of the present boundaries and the existing franchise, even though the League secured everyone of the Muslim seats in the Punjab and Bengal assemblies it would not be able to get a vote for separation, because it would still be less than 50 per cent of the total seats.

The League is thus expected to keep hanging on to the British Government not only to achieve the separation of Muslim-majority homelands but also to obtain the most advantageous boundaries.

PROTECTION FOR THE PRINCES

To keep themselves safe and within India they have declared that the Princes shall have to be parties in the Constitution-Making Body and that no constitution can be forced on them, that their present status cannot be changed except through the will of the Princes themselves.

All the declarations whether made by the Tories or by the Labour Government were unanimous in insisting that the States rulers should continue in undisturbed control of their people and that their sacred rights should not be infringed.

The Cripps proposals offered to the States that chose to come into the Constitution-Making Body the right to *appoint* (not elected by the people) representatives to the Body in the same proportion to population as the elected delegates of British India and with equal powers.

Cripps, in fact, in the press conference categorically said, "The scheme did not contemplate any forced change in the constitution of any Indian State and the British Government would not compel any of the Indian States to join." (*Bombay Chronicle*, March 30, 1942).

At the time of the Simla conference, Amery, while saying that the ideal was an All-India Union in which the States played their full part, reassured the Princes by emphasizing the determination of the British Government:

"No interim advance therefore must in any way pre-judge the question whether the ultimate settlement is based on a united or divided India or *affecting the existing position or the future freedom of choice of the States.*" (House of Commons debate, *Hindu*, June 15, 1945).

The Labour Government declaration said :

"After the elections, the British Government would hold discussions with representatives of those elected and *of the Indian States* to determine the form which the Constitution-Making Body should take, its powers, and procedure." (*Times of India*, September 20, 1945).

And last of all in his Calcutta speech, Wavell said:

“There are various parties to the settlement who must somehow or other reach a measure of agreement amongst themselves—Congress, the largest political party in India; the minorities of whom the Muslims are the most numerous and the most important; *the rulers of Indian States*; and the British Government. The objective of all is the same—the freedom and welfare of India.”

Every single Indian knows the nature of the Princely India. It is a worse prison for the people than British India. And the Princes are Indian only by birth, they are British puppets in reality. They would not last one day if their British master were not there to protect them from the wrath of their own subject and the hands of their countrymen outside their states.

To appease the freedom-loving world the British imperialist say that they have agreed to give India freedom and only asked Indian to agree among themselves.

To keep India looking towards them and not unite with each other they make promises to all, declare that they are sincere and serious about Indian freedom and that they would let no obstacles come in the way and that they only want Indian to agree among themselves. Now they have become so generous as to declare that even if the Indian do not agree among themselves they will let no obstacles stand in the way and go ahead with their own plan of Indian freedom.

What the British award would be every Indian ought to know from what we have quoted above, but if it's not clear enough we would ask every serious minded freedom fighter to read Professor Coupland's book, *The Constitutional Problem of India*. It contains, though in academic language, a very clear statement of the British imperialist view of the Indian problem and the way they expect to solve it to their own advantage, a way clearly foreshadowed in the official declarations quoted above.

The Princes have their time-honoured treaties with the British Crown and Britain, of course, must respect them. The Princes suspect India's political leaders of playing with their sovereign powers and their divine rights and which, of course, the British are by honour bound to respect. The States can therefore have a separate Dominion if they choose and retain direct treaty relations with Britain.

PRINCESTAN—BRITISH BASE OF OPERATIONS

Professor Coupland makes no secret of how the imperialist rulers propose to use these puppets and their territories.

He points out the fact that the States form a continuous territory in a big patch extending from Kathiawar and Sind on our west coast across Rajputana, Central India, up to the Orissa States on the eastern coast and from Kashmir in the north via Rajputana through Hyderabad, Mysore, on to Cochin and Travancore in the extreme south, and he visualises a separate Dominion based on these States—a sort of "Princestan."

He points to the prospect of the biggest tract of Indian territory—from the Himalayas up to Cape Comorin, from almost Karachi to near Calcutta—being at the disposal of the British Empire by way of a "treaty" with the respective States.

Such a States Dominion, if it does not agree to go inside the Indian Federation and federate with the rest of India, could have not only defence treaty with Britain but also ask for assistance in the development of its armaments and other industries; and, he says, a "group of aerodromes occupied by British airmen in the *heart of India* would accord with the *strategic needs* of the British Commonwealth."

Indians of all shades of opinion ought to know what this means. In plain words British garrisons and British aerodromes would remain in the States so that in case of need they can serve imperial needs within India and also help Imperial Britain to play her enslaving role in the whole of Asia.

And there is more to it than this. It also means that the British imperialists propose to dump their capital and build British industries within the States in case the rest of India did not want British capital or made conditions unacceptable to British finance capital. It would also help British industrialists to escape from all the customs and bans that the Indian Government may decide upon.

WELCOMES HINDU-MUSLIM CONFLICT

Professor Coupland does not think that the Congress and the League will ever come to agreement and he fixes the boundaries of Pakistan on his own. According to him North-

Western Pakistan will consist of the present provinces of Sind, the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab minus Ambala Division, while North-East Pakistan will consist of the present provinces of Assam and Bengal minus Burdwan Division, i.e., it will have Calcutta but not the rest of the industrial region of coal and iron in the east.

Such boundaries of Pakistan would, he says, be acceptable to the League leadership. But, in fact, only an unjust and undemocratic Muslim will take this as an acceptable solution. He ought to see that if the Sikhs are pushed into North-West Pakistan against their will, North-West Pakistan will not be a peaceful and happy land but a cockpit of civil war, like Central and Eastern Europe after the last war.

Similarly, Eastern Pakistan would also not know peace but only war between the Assamese and the Assamese tribes that inhabit Assam on the one hand, and the Muslims on the other. It will mean an unquenchable civil war between the Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims themselves.

Professor Coupland is not blind to these dangers. He goes on to argue that Pakistan will not be strong enough to defend itself. And he proves it by the figures of the present budget ! That is, he takes it for granted that in the Pakistan of his making the Muslim landlords will remain sucking the Muslim-majority homelands dry and those areas will remain invariably poor.

There is another argument that he puts forth. He says that the vast majority of Hindus are opposed to partition—

“And that being so, *it seems impossible* that.....the relations between the Hindu and Muslim States would be cordial or that the former would be willing to help the latter to pay for the consequences of what they had done.....In any case the separated States would have their separate forces *for it is inconceivable that the Hindus would pay the Muslims to defend them.*” (Coupland, page 95, Part III.)

He says that even when Pakistan is formed it will not be strong enough to defend itself. He gloats over the prospect that if partition “proves to be unavoidable, everyone will hope, but no one will be certain, that Hindu resentment at it will not harden into active enmity.”

And what next ? He goes on to talk of "War in a partitioned India". "If war is to be possible anywhere in the years ahead, if it is not effectively outlawed by a world-wide collective peace system, it would clearly not be impossible in a partitioned India."

The argument of this imperialist professor runs thus :

If Indians do not agree among themselves India may have to be partitioned. If India is partitioned there may be war between them. If there is war it is not only bad for India but for the security of the whole world.

Therefore Britain must guarantee the security of India, the security of the East, nay world security itself, by remaining here and keeping the peace in future India.

A Princely India as a strategic base, an economic and military dumping ground for the British, a Muslim India resulting from partition and thus giving the British the moral right to stay and keep the peace, and a Hindu India formed of the rest of India provided the other provinces are agreeable—this is the picture Coupland presents.

DOMINATION THROUGH 'WEAK CENTRE'

How is such an India to be held together ? Because of the unbridgeable differences among Indians themselves they may neither agree to federate nor confederate and the 'independence' of Pakistan and the Princes will have to be preserved. Only through a weak Centre it can be possible. So we have what Coupland calls an "Agency" Centre. Such a "weak Agency Centre" will have three subjects under it according to Coupland's plan :

- 1) Foreign Affairs and Defence,
- 2) External Trade and Tariff Policy,
- 3) Currency.

The Leaguers should think for themselves what will happen to the sovereignty of Pakistan. Congressmen should know it more than anybody else what such a Centre with equal participation of "independent" Princes will mean and whose purpose will be served. And the sop thrown to the Congress is that Indian unity would be preserved and there would be some sort of a Centre.

Every Indian's blood must boil at such a prospect and all must think of how to struggle against it and make the future of our own destiny not the one proposed by Professor Coupland and his masters of New Delhi and Whitehall.

Professor Coupland is not just an academic professor though he has written a 700-page book which he calls factual, objective and all that; nor is he a mere busybody.

He is considered the ace British constitutional expert on the Colonies. He is Professor of Colonial History at the University of Oxford and he was commissioned to study the Indian situation in a strictly 'academic' garb under the Nuffield Endowment. The Nuffields are among the biggest motor magnates of Britain and the new partner of the Birlas.

Coupland was called upon to join up the Cripps Mission as an adviser, he is the respected non-official adviser of the India Office, and he was again called upon to advise when Lord Wavell went to London. He is always at the disposal of the British Government.

To this same professor goes the credit of producing the *Palestine Report* of 1937, according to which there was to be a separate Arab State and a separate Jewish State, both "independent", while between them was to be the third wedge-shaped area under permanent British mandate with the object of protecting Christian holy places.

The prospect of India divided up into three or more Dominions, severally and jointly controlled by the British imperialists—this is the grim prospect ahead for India.

Our Party alone is alive to the grave danger and in its Election Manifesto warns against the coming imperialist plan of "New Slavery"

All indications, which only the blind can ignore, go to show that the danger is becoming more and more real.

The more Indian parties tear themselves away from each other, the more they hope that the British Government will side with one against the other, the firmer becomes the voice of the British imperialists.

Wavell in his latest speech at Calcutta, said :

"I repeat that it is our earnest wish and endeavour to give India freedom; but we cannot and will not abandon our

responsibilities without bringing about some reasonable settlement." (*Times of India*, December 11, 1945.)

Such was his provocative insolence, his self-confidence that with major Indian parties fighting each other, the British were in a position to dictate and sermonise.

The tone, the spirit and the very words of the Tory Viceroy were found in the Labour Minister Pathick Lawrence's pronouncement on India when he said :

"The Government of India cannot divest itself of the responsibility which rests upon it and upon all provincial governments of preserving law and order and of resisting any attempts to resolve the constitutional issue by force." (*Times of India*, December 6, 1945.)

LAYING THE TRAP

The British rulers know that the only way to put through their plan is to make it appear that they are friendly to every party, and to seem to give each as much as possible, while actually they keep all to themselves.

From this has come the new policy of our British rulers; Wavell who refused to see Gandhiji in 1944 is now only too eager to meet Congress leaders like Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru. Tributes to the Congress, such as the "largest political party" in India and expressed eagerness to preserve the unity of India are dangled before the Congress leadership.

The "Wavell-is-sincere" myth that began at Simla is going strong even now. In spite of thunder about the "coming struggle" and the glorification of the I.N.A., etc. Pandit Nehru met the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief at New Delhi. The British rulers were friendly and the response on the part of Pandit Nehru and the Congress leadership was spontaneous. Panditji soft-pedalled glorification of the I.N.A. The brutal firing on the student demonstration in Calcutta took place but the Gandhi-Casey and later the Gandhi-Wavell talks yielded immediate fruit, the widely-supported demand for a non-official enquiry into the shooting was quietly given the go-by.

The British rulers play their traditional game of threats on the one hand and cajolery on the other. The Congress leaders have not yet given up their traditional faith in the imperialists.

Not that Wavell left much room for it. In his speech at Calcutta on December 10, he criticised the Congress leaders' attitude to I.N.A. and praised those soldiers who had remained steadfast in their loyalty to the British Crown. Addressing his remarks to the Congress leaders who had glorified the I.N.A. men, Wavell said :

"Whatever your political views, if you cannot acclaim the man who prefers his honour to his ease, who remains steadfast in adversity to his pledged faith, then *you have a poor notion of character which is required to build up a nation.*" (*Times of India*, December 11, 1945).

Ridiculing the Quit India demand Wavell said that achieving political freedom

"is not a simple problem, it cannot and will not be solved by repeating a password or formula. 'Quit India' will not act as the magic 'sesame' which opened Ali Baba's cave. It cannot and will not be solved by violence." (*Times of India*, December 11, 1945.)

SURRENDER TO INSOLENCE

Wavell's insolence enraged every Indian. For sermonising the Indian leaders and ridiculing the Indian demand, one would have expected the Congress Working Committee would rebuke him sharply and uphold our national honour and our freedom demand.

All the Congress leaders had indulged in tremendous demagogy on the August struggle, they had glorified it as a spontaneous revolution, they had denounced the Communists as 'traitors' who had betrayed this movement. At the Bombay A.I.C.C. there were blood and thunder speeches, not a word about non-violence had crept in there.

At Calcutta, after their private talks with Wavell and his public ridicule of their attitude, the Congress leadership surrendered to Wavell's insolence. They passed a resolution reaffirming the old principle of non-violence and said that while many acts of heroism were to the credit of the people—

"there were acts done which could not be included in non-violence.....(The policy of non-violence adopted in 1920 continued unabated) and that such non-violence does not include the burning of public property, the cutting of telegraph wires, the derailing of trains and intimidation." (*Times of India*, December 12, 1945).

The Congress President, Maulana Azad described this as "the most important resolution". So it was. It was an assurance to Lord Wavell that the Congress leadership was not going to try to solve the problem of Indian freedom by methods which the British rulers did not like.

On the I.N.A. men also a resolution was passed, which for the first time said that sympathy and aid for the under-trials "do not mean that the Congress has in any way deviated from its policy of attaining Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means." The I.N.A. men were no more martyrs and national heroes persecuted for their patriotism by the British, their defence was put on the mundane plane of civil liberties, and of aid to the distressed.

The vast mass of Congressmen have been left dazed and puzzled by all this. But these turns and twists of the Congress leadership should not be regarded as a mere relapse to constitutionalism. What has to be realised is this : If the Congress leadership just waits upon the British Government hoping for a settlement, what is in store for our country ?

SERMONS TO LEAGUE

It is a similar policy that the British rulers adopt with regard to the League. In his speech at Calcutta in December 1944, Wavell ridiculed the League demand and said :

"If she (India) is still tossing with the fever of political faction, or if her political doctors decide that she must undergo a major surgical operation, such as Pakistan, she may miss the opportunity.....for greater well-being and greater happiness in this great land." (*Hindu*, December 15, 1944).

Wavell warned that whatever be the constitution, defence must be adequately provided for and advised, "I do not believe that your condition calls for a serious operation."

In the recent speech at Calcutta, Wavell lectured to the League leadership, warned them *against communal demagogy* and said :

"We have to avoid this (civil strife). We have to agree between ourselves. We can agree if we are really determined to do so."

"*Hindus and Muslims have got to live together in this great land.*"

He warned both the Congress and League leaderships and said it would be a grim tragedy for India and the world if "an atmosphere of racial and communal hatred is allowed to prejudice the discussions which are to take place next year, and if violence results from that atmosphere." (*Times of India*, December 11, 1945.)

The Muslim League leaders, after being assured that no constitution would be forced on unwilling Muslims are being lectured to give up communal demagoguery and are threatened that the British Government *would maintain civil peace*, etc.

WHO WILL BENEFIT ?

The simple question every Congressman and every Leaguer should ask himself is : How does anyone gain, even his own aim, the way the situation is drifting ? India's leaders remain blind to the imperialist game and fondly hope that it will be easier to settle with the representative of the British power once they have shown their strength in the elections.

This way only the British imperialists succeed in carrying through their post-war plan of imposing a constitution, which no more remains a possible danger but gets practically implemented.

This way only Indians get damned in the eyes of the world for being irreconcilably opposed to each other. It will be too confusing for foreigners to understand and they will fall a prey to the imperialist lie that the British Government is "helping" to find a way out.

This way by lining up against each other now, we lock ourselves out of each other's heart for good, and will neither realise our separate nor our common aims.

Every freedom-loving Indian should expect the British imperialists to play the game they are playing and manoeuvre their hardest to keep us divided and enslaved.

All Indians Hindu and Muslim, Congressmen or Leaguers, will be able to serve the cause of our common country and see better their way to fight for our common as well as separate aims if they see :

1) It is the present division among ourselves, among India's main political parties that gives the first opening to the British imperialists to drive their own wedge deeper and deeper into our

own country against the aims of us all. The *present division* among freedom-loving Indians would get transferred into *permanent dismemberment* of India.

2) It is the present liberal illusions of the Congress and the League leaders that make them nurse old illusions about the British Government and not learn anything either from our past history or even from their own Simla experience.

3) The present illusions would inevitably become the basis of future helpless surrender to the imperialist plan.

All living indications are not only disturbing but alarming.

INSIDE THE CONGRESS

Anyone who knows anything about Congress leaders of the provinces and right up to the topmost in the Working Committee, ought to understand the meaning of giving up "revolutionary" language.

The all-India leaders are thinking of nothing more than how to get majorities in as many provinces as possible, how to get money from their own seths and rajahs to finance the campaign against the other party.

The provincial leaders are busy with nothing else except quarrelling among themselves as to who should be the ministers, whose agent should lead which Congress committee, and who should be where.

All are certain that the British Government would settle with the Congress or at least not yield to the League in the Constitution-Making Body. They war against the real Congress Left-Wing, that is our Party, but they are getting as many old pro-British capitalists and landlords as they can inside the Congress, and even many Hindu Mahasabaites—despite their toady past—are being returned to the assemblies on Congress ticket. It is not the reactionaries and the vested interests who are being used, it is they who are exploiting the Congress name.

Nobody cares to think what is going to happen to the Congress if 25 years after leading the first mass upheaval of 1920 they are only concerned about counting the number of M.L.A.s returned to the British-made constitution-making body. How is all this anything but a return to discarded liberalism and the way of surrender to the British imperialist plan as unavoidable

though unfortunate ? Here are two examples of the kind of speeches Congress leaders are making.

Speaking at Vizagapatam on November 26, 1945, Syt. Prakasam, President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, famous as the "Lion of Andhra" and mentioned widely as the "Coming Premier of Madras" said :

"We have now *got Swaraj* in the form of elections. These elections are not of the same type as the previous ones. This brings Swaraj. We are going to have our own ministries. That body will enjoy complete independence....."

HAVING assured his audience that Swaraj was coming through the elections Syt. Prakasam praised Lord Wavell for bringing the elections. He said :

"The present Viceroy is *very good*. He saw the strength of the Congress for the last three years and that is why he went to England and brought about the Simla Conference."

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, a member of the Congress High Command, speaking at Bezwada on December 2, 1945, said :

"We, old people, are determined to get you independence and *we are getting it too*. But we fear that you cannot preserve it.....All those who do not wear Khadi are those who do not want the British to quit. *Swaraj will automatically come when cent per cent Indians wear Khadi.*"

Such instances can be multiplied from each province. This is how Congress leaders are preaching slavish sentiments; this is how in the name of Swaraj through ministries the Congress leaders are preparing the people for surrender to the British plan.

INSIDE THE LEAGUE

Similarly the leadership of the League thinks of achieving the sovereignty of Muslim-majority homelands by effecting the division of India; it does not think of realising it by achieving the self-determination of the whole of India against the common British enslaver. It is thus inevitably led to the door of the British rulers themselves, asking them to effect the division of India—which in fact cannot realise sovereignty of Muslim-majority homelands but only make more secure British domination.

If the Muslim considers not only the British but also the Hindus as his enemies, then the more this point of view, of

getting the British to divide India, is put across the more it becomes necessary to key up anti-Hindu agitation. It leads to denouncing the Muslims who are not with the League as agents of the Hindus just as the Congress denounces those not with it as agents of the British.

This further leads to getting inside the League not only all shades of Muslim reactionaries, not only as many British toadies as possible, but almost anyone who will agree to fight the Congress. Thus the Muslim stooges of the British imperialists come into the League only to take the Muslims to the door of the British masters.

But this way leads neither to the freedom of India nor to the freedom of Muslim-majority areas but only arrays Hindus against Muslims and vice versa and enables the British to come in as arbitrators, i.e. get the chance to play their game.

Let there be no doubt that all the glorification of one's own strength in the hope that the British will settle with one against one's own Indian brother cannot but become unwittingly playing the British game. Why should the British rulers listen to one party, especially to the demands of any section of the Indian people? They have their own aim and their own plan to keep us all under their own domination.

These are bad and heart-rending signs but the imperialist plan of post-war Indian slavery need not succeed if all freedom-loving Indians wake up to the coming danger and instead of taking sectarian pride in their own organisation, see the common aim of us all. Instead of seeing only the justness in one's own claims let us ask ourselves how it is that one's own brother does not see their justness? Instead of damning our own brother and waiting for the British rulers to accept our demand, let us think out how to make our aim part of a common plan for the freedom of all Indians, for final struggle by all of us against the common British enslavers.

Our Party puts forward principles that should unify our aims, and proposals that should band us together as one freedom army against British rule and for the freedom of all Indians.

IV. FORWARD TO AN INDIAN FREEDOM PLAN

Our Party offers an *Indian Freedom Plan* which is based on the best traditions of the freedom movement, not only of our own

country, but of the entire world.

Our Party offers a *freedom strategy* which is in the best traditions not only of our own freedom movement but also of the freedom movements of other countries.

OUR FREEDOM AIM

The crux of our freedom plan is to make the Indian demand against British rule not only a morally unanswerable case but a practically irresistible freedom movement, and for this we must apply the same principle of self-determination among ourselves.

In other words, the freedom of India should mean not only freedom from British rule but must embody the freedom of all Indians, not only in words, but in reality.

It is not enough to hate British rule. Even before the Great Mutiny of 1857 our martyred ancestors had come to hate the British conquerors, a hate which has only grown more and more during the subsequent experience of three generations. But if our freedom movement even today is nothing more than just preaching hatred against British rule, how do we carry forward the great heritage of our martyrs?

Our Party transforms the hatred of British rule into a positive programme of Indian freedom. This is how we pay homage to those who taught our people that the British imperialists should be given no quarter in our country. They came as conquerors, they stayed as usurpers, and they remain today as enslavers.

The test our Party wants every Indian to apply to its programme is the one that it applies to the programme of every other party. It is that the freedom programme to be real should embody the freedom of all, rouse all freedom-loving Indians, must unify their ranks and inspire them with the will to fight.

It is only our Party that preaches freedom in its strictest and real sense and makes it mean the freedom of all Indians. It does not denounce those who differ from it, as the leadership of the Congress is doing, nor does it preach hatred of one's own brother, as the leaders of the League are doing.

Our Party appeals to every serious fighter for Indian freedom to see that:

If the Congress refuses to apply within a free India what it demands from the British, it cannot hope to get the confidence of

those freedom-loving Indians who are outside the Congress, but will only rouse their worst fears.

If the League cannot make Muslim self-determination a part of Indian self-determination it can never get the support among Hindus for the self-determination of Muslim-majority homelands but will only rouse their worst suspicions.

If our main political organisations differ about the very meaning of freedom, it only shows how much more we have to think, explain and understand each other—before the last and final battle for the liquidation of British rule in India and the liberation of our motherland can begin and can become successful.

FREEDOM STRATEGY

The strategy for the freedom struggle that our Party puts forward is the strategy of building up a brotherhood of all freedom-loving Indians.

Such a brotherhood cannot be built merely by preaching brotherhood or only by explaining our common interests or by pointing to our common slavery under British rule.

It must be based on the solid earthly foundation of justice to all our people, it must guarantee unfettered free development of every people towards the freedom of their own imagination and creation.

The fraternal unity that we preach is not a moral sermon about brotherhood but a call for a united front against the British enslavers that alone will develop that strength in our people today that will enable them to defend and preserve their hard-won freedom.

A true freedom strategy must always unify and not divide our people. When the strategy of any party instead of leading to the liquidation of our differences leads to the disruption of our political and social life, we do not call it a freedom strategy. It is in fact doing the very job that our British masters would like get done.

We work for the adoption of a strategy of United Front against British imperialists, not only to overthrow British domination but also to realise the aim of seeing a free India emerge as a family of free nations.

Thus there is an integral connection between our strategy and aim.

The achievement of a united front against British rule today is to assure the emergence of a free India as a united family of free and equal nations tomorrow.

OUR CONCRETE PROPOSALS

The aim of universal freedom plus an all-in freedom strategy demands that we must get out of the deadlock in which the Indian freedom movement finds itself today.

It must avoid the pitfalls that keep the Congress and the League divided among themselves and which makes each rush towards the British for a unilateral settlement.

The Congress demand for transfer of power combined with its refusal to extend it and share that power with other Indian people, its demand for freedom from British domination, without simultaneously making it the freedom of all peoples, leads it straight to seeking a unilateral settlement with the British government and to fighting other India parties.

As the greatest freedom organisation and the most influential among the people, it begins to think that it is the only inheritor of power after British rule, the only leader of the people, and not the elder brother in a great patriotic family that has to be kept together and for a joint struggle to realise its destiny. The very strength of the Congress becomes the basis of sectarianism in its leaders, the very justice of its demand against British rule becomes the basis of blindness to the just aims of other who differ from it.

The demand of the League for the partition of the country in order to be able to win sovereignty for Muslim-majority homelands makes it also seek a unilateral settlement with the British government. For, it argues, if the League is strong enough among the Muslims, is it not the dominant Hindus who will oppose self-determination for the Muslim peoples? The League fails to see the simple truth: why should the imperial power that denies self-determination to India as a whole, agree to unilateral self-determination for the Muslims?

Our Party has put forward concrete proposals as its programme in the elections. It supports the aims of the Congress and the League where they are just. It rejects the claims of both where they are unjust, completes what is incomplete in the programme of each, and thus offers a basis that should unite both for the realisation of

their respective aims in the joint struggle against the common enslaver.

FREEDOM FROM BRITISH, JUSTICE AMONG OURSELVES

The Election Manifesto of our Party puts forward the following proposals:

“The Communist Party translates the above principles of freedom into the following concrete proposals, for which it seeks universal support:

“1. Immediate declaration of Indian independence by the British Government.

“Transfer of power to a real All-India Constituent Assembly which will draft the terms of the Quit India treaty and ask the British Government to accept the treaty or to face the united struggle of all the Indian people.

“2. The delegates of the All-India Constituent Assembly shall be elected by 17 sovereign national constituent assemblies based on the natural homelands of various Indian people, viz., Baluchistan, Pathanland, Sind, Western Punjab, Central Punjab, Hindustan, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnatak, Andhra, Kerala, Tamilnad, Orissa, Bengal, Assam and Bihar—and carved out of the existing artificially made British provinces.

“These seventeen national constituent assemblies shall be elected by universal adult franchise.

“3. The right of full self-determination shall also extend to the people of Indian States not only as their inalienable right, but as an essential part of the plan of real Indian freedom for the final liquidation of British rule and its princely agents.

“Exercise of this right will enable the people of every State to decide their destiny and to rejoin their own brother peoples of British India in their own free homelands.

“The delegates of the All-India Constituent Assembly shall have no more authority than that of plenipotentiaries.

“Full and real sovereignty shall reside in the national constituent assemblies who will enjoy the unfettered right to negotiate, formulate, and finally, to decide their mutual relations within an independent India on the basis of complete equality.

“Theirs shall be the final responsibility to raise and construct the constitutional structure of a free India through their own free

will, in the atmosphere of their own creation, and as they desire to realise their own and the common interest best.

“The Communist Party guarantees to the Sikh people that in regard to the territory in which their own historic homelands lie, they would be able to exercise their right of self-determination together with the rest of the population of that territory.

“The Communist Party stands for a united and free Bengal in a free India. Bengal as the common homeland of the Bengali Muslims and Hindus should be free to exercise its right of self-determination through a sovereign constituent assembly based on adult franchise and to define its relations with the rest of India.”
(Election Manifesto of the C.P.I.)

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF COMMUNIST STAND

It should be clear where our Party supports the Congress and where it supports the League, and also where it differs from both.

We are one with the Congress in demanding immediate transfer of power from the British Government.

We are one with the League in making the demand on the basis of self-determination among Indian people.

We do not support Congress refusal to apply self-determination to our own political future.

Nor do we support the League when it demands unjust boundaries, like six provinces, or in its demand for partition as the only guarantee of solvating for Muslim-majority homelands.

What is specific to our proposals and what differentiates them from the exclusive demands of the Congress or the League is the following:

1) We are all for asserting Indian sovereignty against British rule but we stand for doing this in such a manner that the assertion of our sovereignty against the British also embodies the sovereignty of all our peoples and gives them the opportunity to decide their own future relations through their own free will. No ready-made plans are imposed on them.

2) We do not make the demand for the sovereignty of our peoples the basis to split our country before we join hands in demanding sovereignty from the British power. Self-determination as separation was the nineteenth-century concept of sovereign

freedom. Self-determination as the basis to unite as brother people and overthrow the common enslaver is the twentieth century concept. The former became the basis of capitalist development and then aggressive imperialism. The latter was the basis not only for the establishment of Soviet democracy but also for the liquidation of national animosities in the new Europe of today.

We put these proposals for serious discussion by all Indian freedom-lovers and we hope that all will see that our proposals offer a just basis to all our Indian parties to realise their own aims as they see them, regardless of whether they consider these proposals wrong or consider each other wrong.

“This is the way our Election Manifesto puts it :

“In the way out that our Party suggests all solutions are possible of fulfilment.

“The League is free to plead for and get a separate sovereign Federation of Muslim-majority areas living in friendly alliance with a sovereign Federation of Hindu-majority areas, but not inside a common Indian Union.

“The Congress is free to plead for and to get a Federal Indian Union based on autonomous but not sovereign units.

“Our Party is free to plead for and get support for a voluntary Union of sovereign national states, on the basis of complete democracy within each and the utmost help to each other, the more advanced helping the less advanced through a common federal Centre.

“The only condition for acceptance is that the people must support the solution that each Party puts forward. And when Indian parties, based on solid support among the people, differ, the only way out consists of serious negotiations among them, with the will and determination to come to lasting agreement among ourselves and start the final battle of our common liberation against our common enslaver.” (*Election Manifesto of the C.P.I.*)

Who will deny that our parties differ! And when popular parties differ what other way out is there except the verdict of the people, unless the popular party is prepared to reject the right of the people to decide and refuses to accept its verdict !

There is no other democratic way out, unless we are prepared to war among ourselves, that is, to cut our own throats to realise what we consider to be our just aims.

PROBLEM OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

No sovereignty for India is possible nor sovereignty to any section of our peoples unless we learn how to apply the democratic idea to our national life, i.e., how to realise the sovereignty of the peoples. They are logical principles that embody both the freedom and the democratic urge of the people.

The problem has been facing us ever since the birth of modern India, ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Whenever leaders of modern India demanded freedom from the British Government our British rulers have replied that we were yet backward and warring among ourselves, that we were not yet a modern nation, we could not organise and run democracy, etc. We could not be trusted with the vote except those few of us who came from the upper classes and had been educated by the British rulers in their own educational institutions.

This is how the British defended their denial of power to the Indian people when the present-day Indian freedom movement was born. When the Congress was founded, it put forward the demand of an awakened India for a representative democratic government, and argued that if the system was good for Britain, it could not be bad for India.

Because of the growing strength of the Congress in which the Hindus—more advanced both educationally and economically—were in a majority, the demand came from the leaders of modern awakening among the Muslims—from no less a person than Sir Syed Ahmed—that the principle of “one man, one vote” was not suited to India, because it led to Hindu majority domination and was unfair to the Muslims. This was the seed that has today become the Congress-League deadlock.

The issue is: What is the best form of democracy for us and what should be its basis! Sir Syed, like all other leaders of Muslim awakening after him, both admired and feared the Congress.

Founders of our renaissance movement thought in terms of religion because that was their way of thought then. It made them look to their own past glory and inspired them to rouse national pride and made possible our freedom movement and our renaissance. But if we, their descendants, do nothing but repeat their mantras then, in conditions of today, we become reactionary

chauvinists, only glorify our own past and preach hatred against our own brothers only to grovel in the end before the common enslaver. We must turn our minds towards the future in terms of the life and urge of our own peoples, their own true historic past, their own real freedom to be won through their own hands and to be exercised through their own free will. Such is the concept of self-determination of modern Indian democracy that is behind the proposals of our freedom plan.

DEPRIVED OUR LIBERTY, DISRUPTED OUR PEOPLE

The British rulers in their own cunning way used one Indian people against another through their feudal chiefs and with the aid of their army; they managed to get some to actively aid them, and others to remain neutral. With the strategy of "divide and rule" the British not only conquered India but they also split up every single people by leaving one section of the people under their own feudal princes, while bringing the other section under the new British sway—a process which Gandhiji once called the "permanent dismemberment of India."

Let us cast a glance at the map of India.

In the Madras Presidency there are four peoples kept together, the Malayalees, the Tamilians, the Andhras and the Kannadigas—and all the four are further split up.

The Malayalees live in one British district and the two native States, Cochin and Travancore.

The Andhras are partly under the British in the Madras Presidency (200 lakhs) in the eleven districts of Circars and Rayalaseema, while 90 lakhs of Andhra people are ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

The Kannadigas had the misfortune of being divided up into four main parts, in the British provinces of Madras and Bombay, and the big native States of Hyderabad and Mysore, where the main part of the Kannadigas live. This is quite apart from the Kannadigas in Bombay Presidency being cut up into bits under small native States like Jamkhandi, Mudhol, Ramdurg, Akhalkot, etc.

The Maharashtrians of whose fighting capacities the British had bitter experience, have also been cut up into several bits. There are 55 lakhs in Berar and C.P., over 36 lakhs in Hyderabad State. I

crore in the Bombay Presidency, while in the heart of the Maharashtra homeland several small princes and princelings are preserved and fully 19 lakhs have been kept under them.

The Gujaratis have been artificially welded with the Bombay Presidency, which is dominantly Maharashtrian. And they too have been cut up and innumerable number of princes have all been preserved. Forty-six and a half lakhs live in British Gujerat while the rest have been distributed over 18 States of Western India Agency, three more agencies of Kathiawar, 15 States of Gujerat itself and so on. The ridiculous limits to which the British went can be seen from the fact that there is one State in Gujerat, the Surguna State, that has a total population of 18,292 !

The same is true of every single one of the other provinces. This is how our people were cut into bits and their life disrupted by the British conquerors.

THE GROWING NATIONS OF INDIA

We Communists say: Let us get back to the India as it was before the British conquered us and on lines along which we were ourselves growing.

Our concept of seventeen free homelands inhabited by the peoples of Baluchistan, Pathanland, Sind, Western Punjab, Central Punjab, Hindustan, Rajasthan, Gujerat, Maharashtra, Karnatak, Andhra, Kerala, Tamilnad, Orissa, Bengal, Assam and Bihar within a free India is the most natural one for the free development of our people and the only way to solve all our difficulties and liquidate our differences. Rather than dividing up India it creates the basis for building a happy India.

It is as criminal to seek to preserve the unity of British made India as it would be to split up the unity of India.

Just when our peoples were becoming modern nations, the British conquered us and disrupted our national development.

The concept of homelands comes most naturally to us Indians. It is there within all of us. Its image rises before the mind's eye when we close our eyes and think of our own homes and freedom.

It is no accident that it is the vision of the homeland that moves us emotionally to positive creative tasks while it is the hatred of British rule that comes foremost in our mind when we think of freedom.

It is no accident that we call our homeland *Desh* or *Rashtra* or *Mulk* in our own languages.

It is no accident that the great Bankim sang of *Sapth Koti* (seven crores - Bengalis) when he sang of freedom.

It is no accident that when Poet Tagore sang *Jana gana mana* he sang about "Punjab, Sindh, Gujerat, Maratha, Dravida, Utkal, Banga" nations.

When we think of our native homelands, we think of building them up, developing them and building up prosperity there.

Our modern languages were born there, our modern culture has grown there and if one looked at the boundaries of these homelands a little closer one will see that most of them have natural geographic boundaries with each other and constitute fairly self-sufficient economic units with distinct economic traits.

These 17 peoples are much more than cultural units. They are growing nations. They consist of our peoples as they were till the British came and conquered and disrupted them.

To think of India as inhabited by one, and not several people, is not to understand our own history aright. To think of India's future as a family of equal people is to see at once the most natural way for our common advance.

To see India as inhabited by different people to whom sovereignty must belong as their own iralienable right and to struggle to unite them into one family of free nations, is the only way to struggle both for Indian freedom and Indian unity.

To make Indian freedom mean the freedom of all Indian people, is to make Indian unity the creation of the sovereign people themselves.

This is the way to understand our own past and our own present differences, to fashion the way forward for our future freedom and voluntary unity.

Such is the way to settle our own differences, but also the League's fear of domination by the Hindu majority and the Congress' suspicion of disloyalty by the Muslim minority. This is the way forward for all to freedom for all in the great family that is our common motherland. This is the way to win for ourselves our rightful place in the vital councils of the world.

This is the way to bring Indian democracy into being, not by seeking to import, nor by merely opposing the British brand, but

by building up our own Indian democracy of the freedom-loving Indian people for the freedom of all our people.

This is the way to make the people decide their own destiny, according as each chooses for itself, as also the way to grow together as a great joint family.

V. THE ONLY SOLUTION

The earnest appeal our Party makes to all Indians is: Whatever be our differences, let us not today get away from certain fundamentals that are already our common heritage.

1) Let us never forget our hatred of the British imperialists but keep it burning within our breasts. The more we put faith, open or veiled, in the British rulers, the more we become guilty of betraying even the memory of our common martyrs, both Hindu and Muslim.

2) Let us keep our urge for freedom alive and claim no monopoly of freedom sentiment for ourselves. To fail in this is not to help fellow fighters for freedom with whom we disagree to understand our own viewpoint better, but in the name of unity to walk straight into the arms of our own toady reactionaries.

3) Let us keep alive our faith in each other. The more we lose it, the more we fall into the arms of our common British masters.

The memories we rouse, the appeal we make, the warning we give, must find a spontaneous echo in the heart of every freedom-loving Indian.

But there are thousands of our friends and also honest critics of our Party who honestly ask us: What can you do when the two major parties of our people, the Congress and the League, have fallen out among themselves!

It is not just a question of two major parties shamelessly quarrelling among themselves and a third minor party helplessly trying to intervene and getting kicked about by both. The strength behind our plan is not only the strength of our Party but much more—all that is common to our Party all freedom-loving parties, and also what is distinctive to our Party alone.

1) We respect the Congress and the League as a younger member of the family respects the elder members, but we also know that soon after the elections the illusions both of the Congress and the League leaderships about the British Government setting with

one over the heads of the other will burst inside the Constitution Making Body - just as they did last time, at the Simla Conference. These very leaders of the Congress and the League would then have the alternatives sharply posed before them—either to surrender to the British plan or to turn against it and towards a settlement among themselves. They have always nursed illusions about the British Government, but they have always turned towards each other whenever their own fond calculations about the British have come to nothing.

We have as great a faith in the common people following the Congress and the League as we have in the people that follow our Party. It is the elementary seriousness about their own aims of both the Congress and the League leaders and the irresistible urge for freedom in the Congress and the League masses that is our capital too. Even if today we cannot make sense to them, what we say today, all must accept tomorrow—just because the only alternative to our proposals is the success of the British imperialist plan, and—with its success—new slavery for our country, deeper division for our people and newer problems created for our common movement.

2) We are the third and the youngest party, but we are carrying forward the best in the common traditions of both the Congress and the League—their own heritage of Hindu-Muslim unity. We are endeavouring to realise today what our grandfathers, Hindus and Muslims alike, fought for in the Mutiny of 1857. We seek to achieve in our life-time what our fathers dreamt of in the joint Hindu-Muslim upsurge of 1920.

We get all the necessary strength to say that we shall carry forward the great heritage of our past because we have succeeded in building up joint Hindu-Muslim mass organisations of workers and peasants in their own trade unions and kisan sabhas.

It is only these organisations built by us with our own toil during the last 25 years that are the living embodiment of Hindu-Muslim unity in our land today. If on the one hand Hindu-Muslim differences have grown in our political movement, joint Hindu-Muslim mass organisations have also grown in strength and influence during the same period. If one is a dark side of our political life, the other is a bright one.

Our Party has preserved the heritage of the past, our Party has kept the torch of Hindu-Muslim unity burning in the ranks of

our own people, among organised workers and peasants; and when we say that we will struggle against the darkness that Hindu-Muslim unity burning in the ranks of our own people, among organised workers and peasants; and when we say that we will struggle against the darkness that Hindu-Muslim conflict means for our country's future, we are pitting light against darkness, the new against the old, mutual brotherhood against hatred of one's own brother.

Must we ask, or must others answer the question: which must triumph in the end!

3) Our Party has undying faith in the freedom instincts of the mass of people behind the Congress and the League. Ours is the only Party that accepts the just aims of both the Congress and the League as readily as it rejects their unjust claims against each other.

Just because we accept and fight for—as our own aim—the Congress demand of Indian self-determination against British domination, we earn the moral right to appeal to every Congressman :

How can you, the foremost freedom organisation of our people, the main champion of Indian self-determination against the British rulers, refuse to apply self-determination among the Indian people themselves?

We cannot be answered in terms that they are taught to think about the League; we cannot be told that we are toadies, because our Party was born with the demand of complete independence on its lips. They cannot call us medieval reactionaries, because we are the founders and organisers of the working-class and peasant movements in our land, and by common acceptance we are the most modern and serious section within our freedom movement.

We are the only non-Muslim organisation that has voluntarily accepted and popularised the demand of the Muslim peoples to be sovereign in their own Muslim-majority homelands. We have done this despite the suspicions of the League leadership about our Party and despite slanders against us in the League press. Every serious Leaguer knows it and respects us for this in a manner that he respects no other non-Muslim. No Muslim can look us in the face and say that we have not suffered and fought for his cause more than he has himself done in that section of our freedom movement to which he himself had no access because of the way our people stand divided among themselves today.

In the name of the same justice which moved us to accept his right of self-determination, and consider the demand of six provinces as unjust, in the name of our common freedom, we shall appeal to him to see that our slogan of free homelands within a free motherland means at once the acceptance of his own demand for sovereignty in his own homeland and at the same time it wins for him the support of all freedom-loving Indians, only in case he gives up the demand of partition at the hands of the British rulers and agrees to fight shoulder to shoulder for common freedom in alliance with his freedom-loving brothers. Partition of India and new slavery for Muslim peoples will come through reliance on the British rulers. Free homelands including free Muslim-majority homelands within a free India, shall emerge through the common battle of Hindus and Muslims and all.

4) We know that the best both within the Congress and the League are not speaking up: but they have gone neither blind nor deaf. They are feeling helpless before the rising religious chauvinist avalanche within their own organisations.

The Congressmen will find Communists born of patriotic Hindu parents standing up to anti-Muslim demagogy wherever they live and work, and making themselves heard in the name of Indian freedom itself.

The Leaguers will find the Communists born of truly Muslim parents standing up to chauvinist poison among Muslims, and making themselves heard in the name of justice to Muslims and appealing for justice for the rest and the common cause of us all.

Our Party shall rouse the sense of justice among ourselves when rank injustice is being preached by those who should know better; propaganda is being made which will lead nowhere but to our common doom.

Our Party shall hoist the banner of truth and fight lies and slanders against each other as doggedly as it defends its own honour, its own flag, and its own programme. We do this irrespective of our differences with the Congress and the League, irrespective of their attitude towards our Party. Such phenomena have never been seen in our national life before and our effort cannot go in vain, and is not going in vain. The best in the Congress and League already know that we are fighting to save the best within both. The more we fight, the more we stick to our ground, the more we

popularise our proposals. the more shall all Congressmen and Leaguers see that we are their best brothers, ours is their own true voice, and more—ours is the common voice of all.

5) Our fraternal attitude towards the Congress and the League, our call for justice among ourselves, our ceaseless adherence to truth and decency in our political life - all come from our own revolutionary urge to clear the way for the final battle of Indian liberation.

We, the Indian Communists, are born within these very freedom movements of our people; and when we advance today the slogan—"Indian freedom must mean freedom of all Indian peoples", we seek to rouse not only the urge to fight, which is already there, but to make possible a front of freedom so that all may join hands to wage successfully the final battle for our common liberation, with the determination of the *Dharmayuddha* of our Hindu ancestors, with the grimness of the last battle of Indian Revolution—as in the dreams of our terrorist martyrs.

This is how must be fought today the greatest battle our country and our people have seen, the battle that all want to fight here and now.

And such a last battle, despite the present seeing differences between the Congress and the League leaderships, will have to be fought by all Indians if we are to live to be free, if we want to shape our own destiny.

We place the freedom plan of our Party as our immediate practical and just programme before every freedom-loving Indian. We offer in our Election Manifesto the programme of struggle for free towns rid of the profiteers and for new life for all our people to be fought for by the organised working class in alliance with the revolutionary middle class.

Similarly, we offer the programme of free villages, rid of famine-manufacturers and blood-suckers of our people, zamindars, mahajans and hoarders; we put forward a programme of struggle for new life in our villages to be fought for by the organised peasantry in alliance with vast majority of the rural middle class in the villages.

The one aim of our Party is to translate for every section of our people their own urge for a new life and immediate liberty into a fighting programme for the realisation of their own desire, the

dream of their own ancestors, and for the future of their own children.

We rouse the best and noblest in every Indian for his country, for his homeland, for his town, for his village; in terms of his own freedom, his own life.

Our appeal will rally every Indian who is true to his own past, and the more he loves his own life, the more he will be prepared to fight for a worthy future for his own children.

Our appeal to more serious among our freedom fighters is to live upto our past traditions and not to destroy them with our own hands. Let us carry them forward and enrich them, pass them on as a proud heritage to those who will come after us.

Our party warns against the war among fellow Indians and calls for a united war against the British rulers.

Our Party gives the call for our last battle against the British rulers, against our common shame, for our common glory.

In the name of our martyrs, for our children, for immediate freedom against British rule !

For justice among ourselves !

For the most sacred cause of Indian Revolution !

APPENDIX

ELECTION MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The Communist Party seeks your hearty co-operation and active support for its programme of :

- 1) *Immediate freedom from British Imperialist domination.*
- 2) *A united struggle of all freedom-loving Indians bound together in a joint front of all popular patriotic organisations.*
- 3) *People's welfare based on the real equality and sovereign freedom of all our peoples.*

I. INDIAN MUST NOT FIGHT INDIAN

The Communist Party is the only party that does not malign or raise its arm against other patriotic organisations. It patiently works for brotherly understanding with and between India's main political organisations, the great National Congress and the

influential Muslim League, despite the present serious differences, despite the heat of the electoral battle.

The main endeavour of the Communist Party is to help to liquidate differences among freedom-loving Indians and build a United Freedom Front to begin the final battle of Indian freedom. fulfil the mission of our countless martyrs, realise the dream of our elders, for our youth to fight like warriors and our children to grow to manhood and womanhood in free and prosperous homelands of glory, greatness and true happiness.

'Divide and Rule'—Always British Game

The Communist Party concentrates all its fire against the imperialist rulers of our common motherland and considers it a crime to waste one word or lose one comrade in internal factional warfare.

The only call of our party is : Indian must not fight Indian but all Indians together must fight the British enslavers !

The Communist Party reminds all Indians that through the policy of *divide and rule* the British conquered our ancient native lands, through *divide and rule* they have ruled over us all for 200 years and through *divide and rule* again, they plan to stay longer.

The Communist Party seeks to rouse all against the new Imperialist plan of dividing up India and keeping it jointly and severally under their own control.

Against the rising hatred of the growing mass of the Indian people, against the awakening conscience of the freedom-loving people of the world, the British Imperialists have come to realise that they can no longer keep India enslaved or Indians divided in the same old way.

New Diabolical Plan of Slavery

Their sovereignty over India, their old order within India, are doomed. Before all Indians rise like one man to make them quit our country and refashion with our own hands the social order they have imposed over our peoples, our rulers are planning to change their old regime in their own way and to suit their own interests.

Their plan is to divide India into a Hindu-majority Dominion and a Muslim-majority Dominion, whose constitutions are drafted separately in co-operation with the British Government:

simultaneously they plan to keep Princely India in independent treaty relations with the British Crown.

They thus hope to canalise and split the great popular awakening represented by the movements led by the Congress and the League and keep their own hold intact, indirectly through their traditional stooges—the Princes.

It is a cunning plan for the permanent dismemberment and a new form of enslavement of our motherland.

The basic principles of their plan and the broad outlines of their strategy are contained in the Cripps' Proposals (1942), the Wavell Offer (1945) and the subsequent announcements of the British Labour Government which only paraphrase the earlier Tory declaration.

Their tactical line is based upon the blind belief that Indians can never agree among themselves and that our two major political organisations, the Congress and the League, will never come together. It is this belief that gives them confidence that the initiative to frame the new constitution for India will necessarily pass into their own hands.

The first step has already been taken by the ordering of the coming elections as they wanted, viz:

- (i) On the present franchise which denies the vote to 70 per cent of our adult population:
- (ii) On the basis of the existing provinces with the artificial boundaries created by themselves.

The next step, already declared, will be to call upon the new legislatures to elect delegates to a constitution-making body of their own choice. They know that the vast majority of the delegates will be from the Congress and the League.

Relying upon the inability of the leaderships of the Congress and the League to come to any agreed settlement, they hope to stage a longer and bigger Simla show, parade Indian differences to the whole world, and finally take upon themselves the responsibility to give the final award.

The full blue-print of this diabolical award is contained in the book, "The Constitutional Problem of India" by Prof. Reginald Coupland who is considered to be their greatest expert on colonial constitutions and is the respected adviser of the India Office and came to India as the Secretary of Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942.

Such are their manoeuvres, calculations and plans to damn Indian patriotism as bankrupt throughout the world and win for themselves the moral right and opportunity to impose a British-made constitution and create one or more puppet states in India.

It will bring new slavery under British domination and not Indian freedom—this is the aim of the British Imperialists to-day.

Not Salvation But Shame

Against the Imperialist plan of new slavery and permanent partition of our country, the Communist Party pits its entire strength.

The Imperialist plan will succeed if the leaderships of the Congress and the League continue to cling to the illusion that the British Government will settle with them over the heads of the other.

The British Imperialists will settle with none, only use one against the other and impose their own solution, denying real self-determination to all. It is in this way that they hope to escape having to quit India and instead to continue as India's real rulers—behind a new cover and in new robes.

It will be the shame of all Indians, salvation for none; it will result in the realisation of the fundamental aim of neither the Congress nor the League but only in the victory of the British Imperialists.

Checkmating Imperialist Plan

The Communist Party offers just principles as the basis for a United Indian Plan against the British Imperialist Plan.

The appeal of the Communist Party is to the undying urge for freedom of all Indians; the immediate aim of the Communist Party is the achievement of the freedom of India.

The Communist Party puts forward two strategic slogans to foil the Imperialist plan, based on true freedom-principles, which should be acceptable to every freedom-loving Indian.

Firstly, turn your back on the British rulers. Stretch out your hand towards your Indian brother.

No freedom-loving party should seek unilateral settlement with the British Government, for this will lead either to the humiliation of the leaders of that party or to the surrender of its aims.

Secondly, for the successful assertion of the Indian right of self-determination against British, make a simultaneous and unequivocal declaration that you will apply the very same principle among Indians themselves.

It is in this way that the Communist Party seeks to make the aim of freedom of India mean the freedom of all Indian peoples and thus eliminate the fear of domination among the minority peoples and the suspicion of treachery among the majority peoples.

Fear of Hindu domination can keep back the Muslim brothers from joining the battle of Indian freedom and suspicion of Muslim disloyalty to the cause of Indian freedom can keep the Hindu brothers away from unity with the Muslims; and this will continue as long as the freedom of one does not mean the freedom of all, to the common satisfaction of each.

II. THE INDIAN FREEDOM PLAN

The Communist Party translates the above principles of freedom into the following concrete proposals, for which it seeks universal support :

1) Immediate declaration of Indian independence by the British Government.

Transfer of power to a real All-India Constituent Assembly which will draft the terms of the Quit India Treaty and ask the British Government to accept the treaty or to face the united struggle of all the Indian peoples.

2) The delegates of the All-India Constituent Assembly shall be elected by 17 sovereign National Constituent Assemblies based on the natural homelands of various Indian peoples, viz., Baluchistan, Pathanland, Sind, Western Punjab, Central Punjab, Hindustan, Rajasthan, Gujerat, Maharashtra, Karnatak, Andhra, Kerala, Tamilnad, Orissa, Bengal, Assam and Bihar and carved out of the existing artificially-made British provinces.

These seventeen National Constituent Assemblies shall be elected by universal adult franchise.

3) The right of full self-determination shall also extend to the peoples of Indian States not only as their inalienable right, but as an essential part of the plan of real Indian freedom for the final liquidation of British rule and its Princely agents.

Exercise of this right will enable the people of every State to decide their destiny and to rejoin their own brother people of British India in their own free homelands.

The delegates of the All-India Constituent Assembly shall have no more authority than that of plenipotentiaries.

Full and real sovereignty shall reside in the National Constituent Assemblies which will enjoy the unfettered right to negotiate, formulate and finally to decide their mutual relations within an Independent India, on the basis of complete equality.

Theirs shall be the final responsibility to raise and construct the constitutional structure of a Free India through their own free will, in the atmosphere of their own creation and as they desire to realise their own and the common interest best.

The Communist Party guarantees to the Sikh people that in regard to the territory in which their own historic homelands lie, they would be able to exercise their right of self-determination together with the rest of the population of that territory.

The Communist Party stands for a United and Free Bengal in a free India. Bengal as the common homeland of the Bengali Muslims and Hindus should be free to exercise its right of self-determination through a Sovereign Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise and to define its relation with the rest of India.

People Will Decide

In the way out that our Party suggests all solutions are possible of fulfilment.

The League is free to plead for and get a separate sovereign Federation of Muslim-majority areas living in friendly alliance with a sovereign Federation of Hindu-majority areas, but not inside a common Indian Union.

The Congress is free to plead for and to get a Federal Indian Union based on autonomous but not sovereign units.

Our party is free to plead for and get support for a voluntary Union of sovereign national States, on the basis of complete democracy within each and the utmost help to each other, the more advanced helping the less advanced through a common Federal Centre.

The only condition for acceptance is that the people must support the solution that each party puts forward. And when Indian parties, based on solid support among the peoples, differ, the only

way out consists of serious negotiations among them, with the will and determination to come to a lasting agreement among ourselves and start the final battle of our common liberation against our common enslaver.

Dangerous Illusions

The Communist Party warns one and all that instead of the above just way out the leaderships of our two great parties are denying the claims of each other, slandering each other and nursing the illusion that it is easier to settle with the British Government than with each other.

Each of our two great parties hopes that the British Government will listen to it because of its own strength; each lacks faith in its own brother and each does not see its own lack of reason; and in this way both parties not only play into the hands of the British but also fail to realise their own aims.

This will happen again in the constitution-making body just as it happened at Simla and has been happening *always*, every time the problem of an Indian Constitution has been discussed for the last twenty-five years, viz. :

Indian leaders cannot solve Indian differences and the initiative passes to the British rulers to give an award. They give the award that suits them best and an award that keeps us at each other's throats, more than ever before.

The Communist Party by its concrete proposals is not only suggesting a practical way out of a difficult situation, created by the rival claims of the Congress and the League, it is also simultaneously putting forward a *basic* and *final* solution based on the principles of democracy, which are also true to our Indian tradition.

Restore Sovereignty

The Communist Party says:

Restore sovereignty to the people as the people were in their own natural ancestral homelands, before the British conquerors disrupted and divided us.

The people are neither an idea nor a collection of individuals. They live in their homelands where their language has grown, where they seek to make and change their lives for the better, develop their own culture, live their own life and carve their own destiny.

The Communist Party with its slogan of free homelands within a free India offers the most natural solution whose implementation will lead to the free development of all our peoples in the way they themselves desire.

The Communist Party's solution does this because it restores to the peoples what belonged and must belong to them—their right to sovereignty in their own homelands.

The conscious aim of our Party is to build Indian democracy and freedom out of our soil, from within our national homelands and through the hands of the very people that inhabit them. This way alone in brotherly co-operation can we all raise and build up India as a great family of free nations.

No aim can be nobler or greater. It is a battle to win back the lost heritage of our ancestors and to enrich and pass on the great heritage to our descendants.

Bare Justice—Vital Need

No solution can be more just because it is based on the Indian people as they are. The judgment lies in the hands of every single adult who will decide the future of his own homeland and the place of his homeland within a free India.

The Communist Party's solution is based on undiluted justice and the most scientific principle of self-determination. Our solution is inspired by an undying faith in Indian brotherhood, with the single aim to make the freedom of India the freedom of all Indian people.

The Communist Party hopes that every Indian will see that this is the only way of being just to one another and thus the only way of building a united front of all freedom-loving Indians for the final battle against the British enslavers and for Indian freedom.

The Communist Party places before every Indian the image of free India.

The Communist Party appeals to every Indian heart that stirs at the call for justice among ourselves and at the call for battle against the British with the slogan:

One for all, all for one.

The Communist Party works its hardest to solve our own differences and escape the shame of the new form of slavery now being planned by our British rulers.

The Communist Party's biggest single aim today is to get all freedom-loving Indians together for the final battle for Indian liberation.

III. FOR FREE TOWNS IN FREE INDIA

The British rulers have kept our country industrially backward, as their exclusive market.

The Indian capitalists, both manufacturers and traders, became profiteers and black-marketeers and betrayed their own people in the worst days of our country's crisis during the last six years of war.

Only love of profit moved them.

Their own people they only exploited of their labour and cheated them of their daily needs.

It will be a crime against our country's future to leave India's economy in the hands of Indian capitalists, not only in a free India, but even for one single day longer.

An unprecedented post-war industrial crisis looms ahead. Fifty lakhs of our people are threatened with unemployment, five times the number that died in the Bengal famine, according to Government's own figures. Every working-class and middle-class home will be shaken to its very foundation.

The Communist Party turns the attention of all honest Indians, industrial workers and the employees in the towns to the criminal deeds and secret manoeuvres of the Indian capitalist-profiteers.

(1) As the political leaders of India are looking to the British rulers and not towards each other, similarly the leaders of industry are carrying on deals and have become tied up with the biggest concerns of British Big Business; for example the Birla-Nuffield deal has already been settled; Nuffield is among Britain's biggest motor magnates; the deal between Tatas and Imperial Chemicals has also been fixed; Imperial Chemicals is Britain's Empire-wide chemical monopoly.

Many more such arrangements are being secretly negotiated but are not yet public knowledge.

(2) These same lovers of their own riches and bloodsuckers of their own people are getting inside India's main political organisations, the Congress and the League, to ensure that their interests would be safe when Popular Ministries come to power.

Thus, on the one hand, they are selling the country's economic future to their own bigger brothers of British Big Business. On the other, they are seeking to guarantee the safety of their ill-gotten profits by becoming even members of our patriotic organisations.

It is only the Communist Party that is wide awake to these dangers. It is only the Communist Party that is out to expose and fight them.

Basic Principles of Industrial Reconstruction

The Communist Party advocates the most rapid planned industrialisation of India to proceed under the direct guidance of the People's State on the basis of the following basic principles :

- (1) Nationalisation of all key industries, like chemicals, iron and steel and coal mines.
- (2) Control of all major industries.
- (3) Planned and even development of industrial resources in all Indian homelands.
- (4) Planned co-ordination between the development of large-scale industry and cottage industries, for the maximum growth of both within each homeland.
- (5) Control of all capital resources for the rapid development of the country according to plans made for the people's welfare and the country's development by the People's State.
- (6) The long-term and the short-terms plans made by the People's State to be implemented through free and equal co-operation between the representatives of the State, Management Labour.

The Communist Party shall campaign ceaselessly and fight tirelessly for the following immediate proposals to be implemented by Popular Ministries through administrative and executive orders.

The Communist Legislators shall advocate free use of People's Ordinances by the new Ministries to break down profiteers' resistance and carry through the following measures:

- (1) No retrenchment but jobs for all.
- (2) No wage-cuts but a decent living wage for the workers.
- (3) 8 hours' day and 44 hours' week.
- (4) Immediate recognition of Trade Unions.
- (5) Recognition of the right to strike.
- (6) One month's holiday with pay.

- (7) Old-age pensions.
- (8) Maternity benefit for women workers.
- (9) Free primary education for all children.
- (10) Good trade schools for all youth.
- (11) Cheap and decent houses for all families.
- (12) Free hospitals for all the sick.

Before nationalised industries and control of capital resources give the requisite resources to the People's State to finance new plans of development, the Communist Party shall press on the new Popular Governments, immediately to carry out the following measures:

(1) Reconvert war-time industries to peace-time industries through workers' co-operation.

(2) Seize all British capital, plantations, industrial concerns, mercantile firms in view of the British Government's refusal to part with India's Sterling Balances.

(3) No return of the E.P.I reserve fund of the profiteer capitalists. (See footnote).*

(4) Illegal riches of the war profiteers to be confiscated and mobilised for people's needs after prompt investigation and summary trial through open and impartial tribunals.

In pressing for the implementation of these measures the Communist Party shall work unceasingly to see that all legal obstacles and all reactionary resistance are overcome by the prompt and drastic use of People's Ordinances against the enemies of our country and of our people.

Strategy And Aim

The Party of the Red Flag shall rouse the entire working-class behind its programme of :

- ridding our towns of profiteers and hoarders;
- building up our economy for people's needs;
- struggling to change the shape of our towns so that they become free and prosperous towns in a free and prosperous India.

* In addition to the 80 per cent of the net profits that the Government took as Excess Profits Tax (E.P.T) and Income and Super tax, the Government as an anti-inflation measure passed an ordinance directing that 19/64th of the remaining profits should be sized as a Reserve to be returned after the war (with an interest of 2 per cent plus a Government contribution of 6²/₃ per cent) to the Company or manufacturing concern. This is the Reserve Fund of the E.P.T. which we demand should not be returned to the capitalists but be used for India's industrial development.

The Communist Party shall seek the whole-hearted co-operation and close alliance of the middle-class and shall struggle to build its alliance with the working-class.

Only through such an alliance can both these sections of the toiling people of the towns fight for their common good against the common enemy, the capitalist profiteers who are mortgaging our economic future to British monopolists and seek to lull and divide the people by getting inside people's organisations.

Workers and middle-class intelligentsia!

Together to break the British Imperialist stranglehold on Indian industry!

Together to foil the conspiracy of the British monopolists and the Indian profiteers!

Together to bridle capitalist profiteers!

Together to battle for free towns, in a free India!

This is the only road to build new and flourishing towns in our great land, towns inside which new life will pulsate, all will have jobs useful to society, all will have the means to live a civilised life.

IV. FREE VILLAGES IN A FREE INDIA

The British conquerors imposed on our villages the Zemindari system and introduced on top of it their own capitalist system.

To be able to suck India they created in every Indian village the three leeches; the idle zemindar who became the symbol of utter uselessness to the village, corruptor of its life and toady of the British; the Indian usurer, symbol of greed for peasants' land, the new controller of the future; the tricky trader who specialises in buying his produce at the cheapest price that he has to give and in selling the villager the goods from the town at the highest price he can force out of him.

These three leeches over the village, supported and protected by the British administration with its won law, police and courts, have devastated our villages; they have made one-third to one-half of our rural population landless and have brought about a position where food production has grown less and less and the land of plenty, of which our ancestors sang, has become the land of famine where we all suffer.

The Bengal famine was no sudden outburst, it arose directly from the gradual evolution of the way our daily village life is going under British rule aided by these three village leeches.

For it is these three who keep the village down; they link the village with the foreign market in the interests of their British masters and profiteers of British Big Business; they do it to further their own selfish interests, to continue to live their life of corruption, greed and wanton luxury.

Through unprecedented hoarding and land-grabbing during the war years, these three leeches have become fatter and stronger than ever before. Through bribery, the officials of the British Government are literally in their pockets and therefore the whole village lies at their mercy.

Serf Village of Today

No peasant land is safe.

No peasant elder knows what price he will get for his crop and how he will carry on the next season.

No peasant Ma knows how long the honour of her own daughter is safe at the hands of the goondas of these parasites and brutes.

No peasant youth has any chance of good education and of a life of creative endeavour for himself.

Inside India's villages today only devastation and darkness reign. And with no regular and growing supply of food for all, the prospect of chronic famine faces the townsmen.

The Communist Party pleads with all its strength that the longer these three leeches are allowed to stay in our villages, the sooner will our villages become burning ghats, the sooner will more and more and worse and worse famines face the people in the towns.

Warning And Call

The Communist Party warns all honest men in towns and villages that these leeches who have so far acted as the agents of the British, both against our freedom movement and for the exploitation of our villages are today getting inside the two main patriotic parties of our people; this is how they hope to be able to exist longer and to carry on their life of greed, lust and luxury undisturbed by the people's anger and the people's strength.

The Communist Party is convinced that the very existence of our people both in the towns and the villages demands that an immediate reconstruction of our rural economy be undertaken without further delay.

Three New Laws

The Communist party pledges to the people that it shall not rest till the new Popular Ministries pass within the very first year of coming into power three new democratic laws; only the enactment of these laws and their rigorous application will end the domination of the feudal parasites, black-marketeers and usurers, over the economy of the village and ensure the entire people their daily food, thus preventing the calamity of new famines.

A Land Act, ensuring,
abolition of landlordism;
nationalisation of land so as not to leave any individual holding of above 100 acres;

redistribution of land through elected democratic Committees; these Committees working in co-operation with agents of the People's State, will aim to transform uneconomic holdings of the poor peasants into consolidated economic holdings and to make large-scale co-operative farming possible.

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An Anti-Usuary Act, ensuring,
abolition of usurious money-lending to the agriculturists and the artisans:

guaranteed credit to the peasants and artisans through co-operatives; such co-operatives shall be democratically controlled and shall mobilise the credit resources of the peasant money-lenders at a suitable rate of interest.

An Anti-Profiteer Act, ensuring,
elimination of the profiteer from trading in people's food;
abolition of the monopoly grip of rural wholesalers over people's food and peasants' needs;

introduction of large-scale Sales-Purchase Co-operatives, run on democratic lines and not ruled over by the bureaucracy; these Co-

operatives shall guarantee the peasant a fair price for his surplus produce and made available to him his daily necessities at cheap rates.

Immediate Measures

The Communist Party shall demand that the Popular Ministries use all steps, administrative and executive and pass People's Ordinances for the immediate introduction of the following measures so that the vested interests get no time to rally their forces and the toiling people of the villages get their urgently needed relief.

(1) All available fallow land whether of the landlord or of the Government to be given to the landless labourers and poor peasants for producing food grains;

(2) Guaranteed minimum wage to agricultural labourers;

(3) A substantial reduction of rent for all tenants with uneconomic holdings in order to stabilise their own family economy and to encourage and intensify food production;

(4) Immediate strengthening and democratisation of the co-operative movement; this must be done by the People's State by:

(i) subsidising sales-purchase co-operatives to fight the village black-marketeer;

(ii) declaring and guaranteeing a fair price for agricultural produce;

(iii) supplying industrial goods to villages at non-blackmarket fair rates;

(5) New and more schools and hospitals in the rural areas and immediate prospect of new jobs for the educated village youth;

(6) Immediate arrangement for training peasant youth in new methods of agriculture and for running rural co-operatives and new cattle-breeding farms;

(7) Big statutory landlords to pay over and above land revenue, a steeply-graded agricultural income tax; this must be levied on all agricultural incomes, leaving them not more than Rs. 6,000 of the rental received by them per year.

The above measures are only the beginning towards fundamental village reconstruction. They do no more than give badly needed and prompt relief to the poor peasant and the landless labourer; they get from the parasitical landlord a portion of his ill-gotten gains; it is with this that all honest villagers will begin the

battle for village rehabilitation and for production of more food for the people.

Against The Three Leeches

The Communist Party shall rouse, as an integral part of the battle for India's freedom, the entire village against its worst and traditional enemies, creations of British rule.

The Communist party puts forward its agrarian programme as guaranteeing the safety, security and prosperity of all sections of the village who toil and labour and who agree to work their hardest for the common good of their own village.

The Communist Party shall not touch the small zemindar or the rich peasant but shall open before them the prospect of becoming the best of the farmers and cattle-breeders, reputed members in their own village. It shall not allow them to go the way of the traditional leeches but shall appeal to them to use their leading position in the village to start a new life of useful labour and co-operative effort.

The Communist Party shall unite every section of the toiling peasantry whose true interests our programme will reflect.

The Communist Party shall appeal to the peasantry to support the demands of landless labourers, to build and preserve the unity of the village, to gather unconquerable strength against the enemies of the village.

The Communist Party shall appeal to the landless labourers to seek unity with the peasantry in the common interest of the battle against the three leeches, their own worst oppressors.

The Communist Party shall seek the support and alliance of every decent element in the village, teachers, doctors etc., in rebuilding a new village.

The Communist Party shall rouse and unite the entire village:

Against the three leeches!

For new life in every village!

For new struggles of united villagers against the enemies of the entire village!

For free villages in a free India!

V. COMMUNIST PARTY APPEALS:

To Worker-Peasant Brothers

The Communist Party appeals to all workers for support as the organiser of their own Trade Unions, in the name of the unity

of their own class, for the coming mighty battles and in the honour of their own Red Flag.

The Communist Party appeals to all peasants and agricultural labourers for support, as organisers of their own Kisan Sabhas, in the name of their own Red Flag, for an unending round of new and great battles against the enemies of their own village and for building up a new and happy life in the very village of their fore-fathers.

Workers and peasant elders! Only your Party is putting forward the best sons of your own class as its candidates and they are the majority among Communist candidates; among them are Hindu and Muslim, Touchable and Untouchable, Sikh, Gurkha, Garhwali, Manipuri, Bengali, Malayali, Andhra, Tamil, Kannadiga and Maratha.

To Untouchable Humanity!

The Communist Party appeals to millions of Untouchables wherever they live that through the battle of our Party for new villages and new towns, they will gain the most as the most oppressed section of our people.

The Communist Party assures them that it shall always fight against every form of social oppression, from which they suffer and for securing equal economic and political status for them in the government of the country.

In implementing the programme for settling landless labourers on fallow land, the Communist Party shall insist that Untouchables, who form the large bulk of landless labourers, be given first and special attention.

To Mothers And Sisters!

The Communist Party appeals to all women with the confidence that they will see in the programme of our Party the prospect of new and happy homes for themselves here and now and a life of purposeful endeavour for their sons, brothers, husbands and for which they must actively work in every way open to them.

The Communist Party is pledged to fight for complete equality for women in the laws, economy and political life of our country.

To The Youth!

The Communist Party as the youngest Party of the land makes a special appeal to the youth with the confidence that they will see

in the programme of our Party the hope of a new life, better than their own fathers visualised; with the confidence that their fresh minds will respond to true freedom principles and their hearts will echo the urgent call for the final freedom struggle.

The Communist Party is pledged to fight the spectre of unemployment; it is pledged to fight for growing opportunities of creative labour for the youth of our country in rebuilding our national life on new democratic foundations.

The Communist Party shall pay special attention to the needs of the youth; it shall fight for more and better education, more scholarships, more democracy within educational institutions and more facilities in every way for youth of all classes to live the life of their dreams in the service of our people.

To The Freedom-Loving Intelligentsia!

The Communist Party appeals to the revolutionary middle-class to see in our Party the unifier of the middle-class with the working-class in the towns and the peasantry in the villages, in the common interests of both and for the cause of the people and against the enemies of the people.

It appeals to them to see in our Party the propounder of the true democratic principles in our own national life, the unifier of all patriotic forces in our country: the party which has only the single object of saving our people at all costs and despite all differences; the party which is unceasingly working to one end—that of bringing together all to fight shoulder to shoulder the final battle for the liberation of our motherland.

To All !.

The Communist Party alone does not abuse any other party but puts forward the basis for uniting all freedom-loving Indians.

The Communist Party alone does not look towards Lord Wavell but faces its own brother parties.

The Communist Party alone makes no exclusive claims to patriotism and wisdom.

The Communist Party alone offers a programme and makes concrete proposals that should unite here and now all freedom-loving Indians and their parties. It readily admits the just aims of all and firmly denies all unjust claims. It appeals to all to apply the

principles of freedom all round, on the basis of justice to all for the cause of all, freedom against the British and freedom among ourselves, and the establishment of People's Raj all over our vast country.

The Communist Party has the one single aim of uniting all freedom-loving Indians inside one Freedom Front for the final battle for Indian freedom and for the emergence of India as a great family of free nations; an India that shall play a liberating role in Asia and a progressive role in world politics, in alliance with all freedom-loving democratic forces and against World Imperialist Reaction.

VOTE COMMUNIST!

*Against the British Imperialist plan.
For a truly Indian plan.*

VOTE COMMUNIST!

*Against war among freedom-loving Indians.
For unity of all freedom-loving Indians.*

VOTE COMMUNIST !

Against the illusion of unilateral settlement with the British Government.

For united struggle against British domination.

VOTE COMMUNIST !

For Congress-League-Communist united front for the final battle of Indian liberation.

VOTE COMMUNIST !

For free villages, free towns, free homelands in a free India.

VOTE COMMUNIST !

With the image of Indian martyrs in your heart, remember that the earliest living Indian revolutionaries, the Ghadar Babas of the Punjab, the comrades of Bhagat Singh, the Chittagong Armoury Raiders and all the young leaders of the terrorist upsurge of the thirties in Bengal, are within the ranks of the Communist Party.

FOR THE CAUSE OF INDIAN REVOLUTION, IN THE BATTLE FOR INDIAN LIBERATION !

—Central Committee of the Communist Party of India.

TOWARDS A PEOPLE'S NAVY

PREFACE

WE are printing in this pamphlet the memorandum submitted by the Communist Party to the Royal Indian Navy Enquiry Commission.

Many will ask why the Communist Party of India, a political party, should have submitted a memorandum on this question.

And the answer is simply this :

Firstly, the R.I.N. is manned predominantly by Indians, sons of our people; and therefore their conditions and life, their present and future are our concern, as they are the concern of every other political party in the land.

Secondly, with all India united behind the demand that the British shall quit and India should be free and equal to Britain, the demand has found widespread support among our own countrymen of our Navy—particularly expressing itself in their own demand that conditions and pay of the men of the R.I.N. should be the same as those of British navy.

This struggle of the men of the R.I.N. for equality with the Royal Navy is a part of our country's struggle for freedom and thus must be supported by every freedom-loving Indian.

Thirdly, with Indian freedom on the agenda of the day, the time also approaches when the Indian Navy will no longer be a British instrument to defend British domination of India, but an Indian instrument to defend Indian freedom, and as such, the Communist Party has every interest in seeing that this instrument is sharp, efficient and ready.

This is why we demand that the Navy which in the past was carefully sealed off from our people and our people's movement, should be closely associated with the people and be responsive to the needs and demands of the people.

This is why the Communist Party is interested in the R.I.N.

We, therefore, sought in our memorandum to direct the attention of the Commission to all the urgent problems that prevent our lads

in the R.I.N. from becoming efficient defenders of their country; simultaneously we sought to mobilise the people behind the demand of the R.I.N. boys for better conditions, for ending racial discrimination and for equality between the R.I.N. and the R.N.

For we know that not only must India be free but conditions of service inside the R.I.N. also must be radically altered if the Navy is to become a sure defender of India's freedom, and is to become a people's Navy.

May 29, 1946

P. C. Joshi

Introduction

The general strike in the Royal Indian navy was the logical outcome of the way in which the R.I.N. has been built and administered in the entire period of its history.

Meant to be not a Navy to defend a free India but a Navy that was only to assist the Royal Navy in protecting British rule in India, it was throughout kept isolated from the life of our people; men serving in it were despised by their officers as inferior mercenaries who were Britain's slaves to be pushed around as the "superior" British liked; every attempt to improve their conditions was met with fierce repressive measures; no room was left for education, discussion and participation in the normal life of our people; physical conditions—food, amenities, etc.—were often intolerable, and far below what the recruiting officers normally promised.

With the beginning of World War II, three great changes occurred.

First, the freedom-movement of our people spread to the farthest corner of our land, leaving none untouched, inspiring all with the determination that India's subjection must be ended, and Indian freedom must be won.

Secondly, the needs of war itself meant a tremendous expansion of the R.I.N.—from a complement of 2,300 to over 30,000; the result was that hundreds and thousands of young men entered the Navy—young men who were as fired with the conviction that their young men were jealous of their self-respect and proud of their admitted skill and capacity; young men who thought the Indian Navy offered them opportunities for learning and improving themselves, and would give them the money their families needed badly.

Thirdly, in the stress of war, Indian ratings were more and more thrown together with British ratings, both in ships and shore establishments; the former soon found that they were as competent (or more) in the jobs they had to do as were the British—and this was particularly so in the communications section where, by common acknowledgement, Indians are outstanding. Yet, while seeing in practice that the ordinary British rating was no better than himself, the Indian rating, on the one hand, had to endure untold humiliations at the hands of the British rating; on the other, he also saw that men doing the same jobs as he was doing as competently as they, were receiving well over twice his pay and also many amenities and extra allowances (travel; leave etc.), which he himself was denied. Naturally his gall rose at this, and increasingly he began to fret and revolt against such a state of affairs.

But while the Indian ratings had become more self-confident and therefore quick to take offence at the slightest act of ill-treatment or discrimination, the ways of the officers and the authorities remained the same.

Throughout the entire six year period of war, the discriminatory and unjust treatment (see instances below) continued, leading to numerous strikes in the entire Navy.

But not only this, the repressive political policy and chaotic economic policy of the Government of India led to rapid increase of anti-British feeling in the R.I.N.; the arrest of the leaders of the Indian National Congress, the fierce and inhuman repression after August 1942, the Bengal Famine, the widespread economic chaos throughout India in 1943-44—all these made the ordinary rating, like the rest of the Indian people, more and more hostile to the foreign authority which still continued to rule over him, causing him and his people untold suffering.

With the end of the war these pent-up grievances and anger came up to the surface fast: outside the Navy in India itself, the ordinary rating learnt of the rising demand for immediate freedom; he heard too the leaders of the main popular parties declaring that freedom must come or India will revolt.

At the same time with the trial of the chief organisers of the Indian National Army, anti-British feeling reached a new peak, and the Indian ratings in the Navy were affected by it in common with the rest of our people.

So when finally the strike started on February 18, it was the result of years of frustration and anger, both at bad treatment inside the Navy and at the British Government's refusal to grant India freedom. Bad food at the *H.M.I.S. Talwar* was only the spark that lit the explosive hatred of years of suffering and anger.

It is certain, therefore, that the only solution is a radical reorganisation of the entire Navy—to make it a Navy of the Indian people and not of the foreign British Indian Government and to change the conditions inside the Navy so that they correspond to the desires and needs of ratings who are today an integral part of our people and whose fight for decent conditions is an integral part of our people's fight for freedom.

This memorandum puts forward what the Communist Party believes to be the most elementary and simple changes that must be put through if the Navy is to be transformed into a Navy of the people.

Racial Discrimination

Most acute of all grievances of the Indian rating was his complaint against racial discrimination.

Many of the Indian ratings are educated lads, matriculates, intermediate students, etc. Very soon after joining the navy they found that while many British ratings were intellectually less well-equipped than them, the latter often treated them contemptuously and insultingly.

In addition, their pay was far less, amenities almost nothing in comparison, and in numerous minor matters they were reminded that they were persons belonging to a country not yet free.

Here are only a few instances of this—and they are only given to buttress hundreds of instances given by the ratings in evidence before the Commission.

1. *Travelling.* (a) O No. 14179 V. K. R. Chandra, telegraphist, was working for a time with the Royal Marines; very competent at his work, he participated in three important landing operations in Burma.

In August 1944, he was travelling second class from Bombay to Colombo along with a number of R.I.N. ratings.

But at Talaimainnar, the Railway Transport Officer, a Britisher, refused to let him continue his journey in the second

class; the reason given was : "Indians are not allowed to travel in the second class!"

(b) In January 1945, when three R.I.N. WT operators and two R.I.N. signalmen were travelling on board S.S. *Barjora* from Bahrein to Bombay, the R.I.N. WT were given third class passages, the R.I.N. second class.

There are numerous examples of such treatment.

2. *Accommodation and Amenities.* (a) In Bahrein in the Persian Gulf, R.I.N. ratings were hearded together in crowded barracks without even a single chair to furnish their room: in contrast, R.I.N. ratings were given tables, chairs etc.. and more spacious accommodation.

(b) In July 1945, on board the S.S. *State Empire* and S.S. *Ruys* (a Dutch ship), going from Bombay to Cairo, when a film was put on the screen, no R.I.N. rating was allowed to attend.

(c) In Trincomalee, in November 1944, R.I.N. ratings from M.M.S. 129 (C.O. Lt. Merret, R.I.N.V.R.) tried to enter the N.A.A.F.I. canteen (as there was no other canteen), they were thrown out of the canteen.

(d) In April 1945, ratings of M.M.S. 129 first suffered the same fate at a N.A.A.F.I. canteen at Kyak Pyu in Ramree Island, they were refused commodities at the usual price and only after the intervention of the Commanding Officer, were allowed to buy—but only at a higher price.

Here again, these are only a few examples of such bad treatment and lack of amenities—in comparison with that available for R.I.N. ratings.

3. *Pay:* it is well known that R.I.N. ratings get paid worse than any other Navy, and in particular less than half the R.I.N. ratings. The excuse given is that the Indian budget can afford no more.

In fact, no R.I.N. rating and no freedom-loving Indian will accept this excuse.

The Indian budget is unable to afford a rise in the pay of the R.I.N. rating because the standard of living of the people of India continues to remain low and so also the national wealth—which, as everyone knows, is due to the fact that India yet remains a slave country and the Indian people have not the right to control their own resources and direct their own economy.

So long as this prevails, no R.I.N. rating will accept the inferior rate of pay for doing the work in a Navy which does the same job (defence of imperial interests) under, what is to him, the same authority as the R.I.N. rating. Rather, he will justly demand to be paid the same, and that any difference that the Indian budget is unable to stand, be paid out of the funds of the Admiralty in England.

Of course in an independent India, which is working to build her wealth and prosperity, the Indian rating would no doubt be prepared to tighten his belt, conscious that he is doing it in the national interest; equally he will come forward eagerly to do this, believing rightly that the Navy of an independent India will be an *Indian Navy* for the defence of *Indian* shores and the *Indian* people—a Navy in which it will be an honour to serve, whatever may be the scales of pay, necessarily small in view of the Indian people's struggle to build our prosperity; and he will share the conviction that his own scales of pay will increase with the rising standard of the Indian people and the development of Indian economic resources under the free Indian Government.

In fact, the root cause of discrimination in all fields and the bitter feeling engendered by it, is the subject status of India today. There can be no doubt that a free Indian Government will guard the interests of her naval sons far better than the present alien government; equally, with India free, the British rating will behave respectfully to his Indian colleagues.

4. *Recruitment of British Officers and Ratings.* It is also true that a great deal of trouble arises from the fact that there are both Indians and British in the Indian Navy. And this inevitably leads to clashes between the two.

The post-war Indian Navy is also to have a majority (two-third—134 out of 200) of British officers. This has led to natural discontent both among Indian officers and ratings.

In fact, there should be no further recruitment of British officers or ratings and the existing officers and ratings should be discharged.

If technically proficient officers are needed and there are *no* Indian officers with the requisite technical skill or experience, in that case, British or other foreign naval officers should be recruited—but not as a part of normal recruitment but as special technical instructors, with no executive authority and rank. They

should, as it were, be paid instructors, with their own special rank. This will certainly obviate conflict between Indian and British, since under such conditions there will be no British officers whatsoever and only technical aides with no executive power.

Thus the communist Party makes the following suggestions :

A. PAY

1. As long as India remains slave, Indian armed forces remain under the control of a British Flag Officer and a British Defence Member—or a Defence Member who though an Indian, is in reality only a British puppet (as is the case with the present Indian members of the Executive Council), the pay of the R.I.N. ratings be raised to that of the R.I.N. ratings, the difference between the present pay of each being made by the British Government.

2. When India attains freedom or when the Indian Navy is headed by a civilian Defence Member, member of a popular government—based on India's main popular parties and thus responsible to the people—the pay should be decided by the Legislature, to which clearly the Defence Minister is responsible.

B. RECRUITMENT

1. Recruitment of British officers and ratings to the Indian Navy be immediately stopped and all British ratings and British officers at present in the Navy be discharged within a period of six months.

2. For technical instructors (gunnery, radar experts etc.), individuals from Navies of any country (e.g. U.S.A., U.S.S.R., France as well as Great Britain) be taken on contract for a limited period: they will have *no executive authority* but will merely act as instructors in a particular branch. Thus the question, of their use of position to cause injustice will not easily arise.

If these two main recommendations are carried out, we are confident that other matters—travelling, amenities, etc.—can also be settled, so that the Indian rating gets the comforts, amenities and food etc. that he deserves. In any case, any harsh treatment by superior officers—British or Indian—should be sharply punished.

Food, Clothes, Travel

That dissatisfaction with the food in the R.I.N. is widespread has already become clear from the evidence given before the Commission.

This seems mainly due to two reasons.

1) *The corruption among the supply staff.* In places, like Castle Barracks, the supply staff usually issue whatever rations etc. they like; when ratings make complaints, the regulating staff disregard them because the supply staff virtually bribe the former by giving them what they wish.

This can only be avoided by the appointment of special anti-corruption welfare officers at N.H.Q. itself.

If more than 10 members of any unit make any complaint about corruption, then this N.H.Q. special officer (who will clearly be unconnected with local racketeers) should compulsorily enquire into the complaint.

And if the complaint is proved, the officer or rating concerned must be summarily discharged and in bad cases, court-martialled. Punishment should be swift and vigorous.

2) The cooking is often very bad because such men are employed who have had no previous experience of cooking. It is essential that cooks for the R.I.N be carefully chosen from men who know their job. Also enough assistance should be given to the cooks so that rice, dal, etc. are effectively cleaned—which is not the case today.

3) The rations themselves must be improved.

A major complaint of South Indians is that though they are rice-eaters they are given *chappatis*; they must be given the food they are used to, and on which they thrive.

4) *Clothing* : A very justifiable complaint of the rating is about the issue of clothing. Normally in the Navy, clothing is issued on two occasions—on going into the service and after six months (or after completion of training, whichever is later). Some of this clothing can be kept by the rating, some can be kept by him after six years' service, some has to be returned.

The Officer-in-charge puts up on the clothing-history-sheet of each rating the articles issued to the rating on his joining the service and later on—with name and number of the rating.

This sheet is never shown to the ratings when they join the Navy and the boys too do not ask for it because they do not know anything about it. The result is that often it has been found that the officer-in-charge has filled in many articles which were not issued to the rating and when the rating came to know about those articles and asked for them, he was shown this sheet and was told that the

articles had been issued to the ratings; yet the clothing-history-sheet will always show that in every case all the articles were issued to the ratings.

This can be stopped only by a copy of the clothing-history-sheet being kept by the rating himself, and everything that is entered on the official sheet being entered on the rating's personal sheet.

Secondly, there should be no compulsion to return clothes after they have been issued. The rating needs the clothes, he serves his country, well, he should be allowed to keep them. Again after years of use, his old clothing obviously can't be given to anyone else, will not be thrown away. There is no argument for confiscating them from him.

5) *Family Allowances.* Apart from the question of his pay as compared with the pay a R.I.N. rating gets, the R.I.N. rating gets no family allowance when on leave. All these must be given to him.

6) *Travelling.* In the present overcrowded state of railway travel, the least that should be made available to the ordinary rating is intermediate class travel warrants when going on leave, transfer or release.

Secondly, very often when naval ratings are being moved locally, they are not given adequate transport, though with a little effort, this can usually be arranged. This should be made compulsory.

Thirdly, particularly in Bombay, liberty boats are too few; they must be increased so that an adequate number are available.

Release And Resettlement

The most burning grievance of all is the complete failure of the authorities to evolve any effective scheme of resettlement.

The ordinary R.I.N. rating is fully conscious that when he is demobilised, it is no use relying on the Navy to get him a job—despite all its colourful and generous promises about resettlement.

It is, therefore, essential that certain immediate guarantees be made to the men :

First, that as the fighting sons of India, they have a right to State assistance after demobilisation.

Secondly, that they will be given special assistance (financial, housing, etc.) until they actually do get jobs.

Thirdly, that they will be given special facilities to get technical training to enable them to become machinists, etc.

But most important of all is the framing of a full resettlement scheme for men demobilised from all the three services which can only be a part of a general plan for economic development and assimilation of this labour force, much of which is valuable and trained.

Unless this is done there is no doubt that discontent—justifiable discontent—about their future will continue to agitate the ratings and will lead to renewed trouble inside the Navy.

Civil Liberties

1) *Books, meetings.* The R.I.N. rating must be given full liberty to read any books and newspapers that he wishes. Cases of persecution because of certain political books being found, are not rare—many having been punished by warrant.

We consider that so long as an R.I.N. rating does his duties will and efficiently, he should be allowed, while on liberty, to read anything he wishes.

He must be allowed to attend any political meetings he wishes and also to express his views at them.

If this is not done, books and newspapers that the Government don't like will certainly circulate clandestinely and eventually the virtual ban on them will only lead to another explosion.

Thus there should be complete freedom to read books and papers of any political or social colour and freedom to attend political meetings while on leave or liberty.

2) At present, under a special order of Lord Louis Mountbatten, no rating is allowed to subscribe to any fund—charitable, social or political—unless the Naval authorities give him permission to do so. This order is clearly a limitation of his rights as a citizen and should be rescinded; the rating should be allowed to subscribe to any fund to which he wishes to subscribe and to which subscriptions from ordinary citizens are invited.

3) The Naval authorities must give the ratings liberty, and encourage them to organise their own discussion groups, debates and parliaments—where they can freely express their own political and social opinions and hear the opinions of their mates. This is allowed in the armed services of Britain and, wherever freely allowed, has proved a real means to awaken the soldier or sailor to his responsibility to his people and country.

On the other hand, restriction of such rights only leads to secret and hole-in-corner discussions which may also, one day, break out into open revolt.

4) The Naval authorities must see that the R.I.N. Ratings Club like the Fleet Club in Bombay, is run democratically by a committee of ratings with an executive officer-in-charge who is responsible to the ratings.

Only this will stop the corruption and inefficiency in the club, for the ratings know best how to safeguard their own interests.

5) The ratings must be allowed full civil rights regarding voting. During the last elections, ratings could only exercise their franchise by taking leave and going home, at their own cost, to vote. In future, arrangements should be made (e.g. as in the British Navy) for the rating to send his vote by post.

Only intimate contact between the people and the ratings, will transform the Navy into a real people's Navy—that is in touch with, and responsive to, the people's mind and mood.

6) Immediately, as a first step, all ratings, arrested or convicted because of the events of February, should be released and given back their old work, rank and pay. The continued incarceration and punishment of these men is a living proof to the entire personnel of the R.I.N. continues, nothing has changed. The first step towards changing the R.I.N. is the release of all convicted and under arrest.

In addition, all men dismissed, discharged or leased early on account of their activity in the February days, must be given the chance to rejoin the service.

Conclusion

The Communist Party strongly feels that the carrying out of these recommendations are the minimum necessary to ensure the decent human standards that are considered normal in the Navy of any free democratic country in the world.

Such changes, in fact, are the very minimum necessary to make the Indian rating feel himself a part of the Indian people's Navy and not the Royal Indian Navy of British imperialism.

Most important of all—and we re-emphasise it here again—is the need to change the entire outlook of the administration of the R.I.N.

Till today the men who run the R.I.N. have been foreigners, our alien rulers. They have been interested in the Navy only as an auxiliary weapon of imperial defence—when necessary to be used against the Indian people.

Therefore, they strove to create a wall between the people and their sons in the Navy.

They failed—as they were bound to—and the mutiny came.

Today the R.I.N. must be changed from the armed force of imperial might into the armed force of the Indian people and it is towards this end that our recommendations have been framed.

Communist Party and The Mutiny

Finally, we would like to briefly outline the activity and position of the Communist Party during the mutiny.

1. "THE COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANISED THE MUTINY"

On two or three occasions (e.g. the evidence of Commander Jefford) attempts have been made by officers appearing before the Commission to point to the Party as the instigator of the mutiny. The allegations have not been supported by any facts whatsoever and are totally untrue.

Of course, among the ratings of the R.I.N. there are men with Communist sympathies as there are Congress and League sympathisers also. And in common with the rest of the men, they took part in what was a movement embracing the entire personnel of the R.I.N. But these individual sympathisers received no instructions from the Party; they acted on their own as did all other ratings.

2. "THE COMMUNIST PARTY SUPPORTED THE MUTINY"

This accusation is one that can be levelled at all the 400 million peoples of India; and to the extent they are guilty, so is the Communist Party, which is part of our people. Everyone in India "supported" the mutiny in that everyone thought the mutiny justified by the appalling conditions in the R.I.N. and felt that the mutiny behind the demands for equal pay, better treatment etc., was a part of the common freedom battle.

The Communist Party also feels that, and it is a fact that but for the mutiny the Enquiry Commission would never have been

appointed and all the grisly stories of injustice, discriminations, cruelty etc., would never have seen the light.

The Communist Party never concealed its views. Through D. S. Vaidya, its Bombay Secretary, it issued a leaflet on the 19th February, asking the people to support the strike. Through G. Adhikari, the Editor of its paper, it called on the people of Bombay to participate in a general strike and hartal on February 22—to reply to Rear-Admiral Godfrey's insolent threat to destroy the Navy and India's sons who manned it.

During those critical days the Communist Party always *openly* said and did what it thought right and just. And we feel today that our actions helped to prevent the destruction of the R.I.N and its personnel and led to the eventual settlement.

Our regret is that the settlement was broken by the authorities who after promising that there would be no victimisation, arrested and victimised the main strike leaders.

We regret also that by ourselves we were too weak to prevent this, while unfortunately we could not rally other stronger parties to back us in our attempts to save these men.

Thus, we confidently justify all that we did on those days and say that we are proud that we put all our strength behind our brothers of the R.I.N.—thus helping to prevent their annihilation and to pave the way for the appointment of the Enquiry Commission.

Appendices

STATEMENT ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 22ND
BY G. ADHKARI, EDITOR, *People's Age*.

CITY COMMUNISTS CALL FOR HARTAL
BOMBAY, February 22.

G. Adhikari, Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party has issued the following statement :

Every Indian will condemn the brutal attempt of the alien Government to suppress with blood and iron the attempts of the men of the R.I.N. establishments in Bombay to obtain redress of their just and urgent grievance. Every Indian will resent the arrogant "Submit or Perish" threat given by the Flag Officer Commanding to these brave men.

On behalf of the Communist Party of India, I appeal to all parties and all our people to refuse to allow this brutal suppression of our brothers in the Navy and Air Force and to observe tomorrow (Friday) a complete hartal in all shops, schools, colleges, and mills—as a mark of their disapproval of Government repression and to demand immediate cessation of repression, the opening of negotiations, and the satisfaction of the just demands of the strikers.

STATEMENT ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 23RD
BY G. ADHKARI, EDITOR, *PEOPLE'S AGE*.

ADHIKARI DEPLORES TERROR REGIME

BOMBAY, February 23.

G. Adhikari, Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party has issued the following statement :

Workers and citizens of Bombay by their complete solidarity in the hartal and strike have shown that they fully sympathize with the brave actions of the men and the ratings of the R.I.N. and support their patriotic demands.

The same arrogant imperialists who have denounced the R.I.N. men as "mutineers" and have threatened to destroy them unless they submitted, have yesterday rained cold and calculated murder on thousands of citizens of Bombay who dared to support the fight of these men for equality and justice.

British soldiers paraded through the streets in armed cars and shot indiscriminately and vindictively at crowds, especially when they were at their thickest, and without the slightest notice. They have thus murdered several innocent workers, men and women in Parel among whom is our comrade Kamal Dondé of the Parel Mahila Sangh.

The days when bren-guns, tanks and bombers could terrify India are gone for ever. If power-mad imperialists think they can retain their rule by staging a Jallianwala Bagh week in our fair cities, they are sadly mistaken. These blood-baths will only enable us to cement our unity and determination to end the regime of terror.

I appeal to all parties to unitedly call a general hartal and strike to give a peaceful expression to our protest against Friday's military atrocities in Bombay. Let a citizens' Peace and Relief

Committee be formed to give relief to the wounded and to the families of the killed.

Let the leaders of the Congress in particular, take up the issue of thousands of R.I.N. strikers in the ships and the various establishments all over India, which has now become as important as the question of Azad Hind Fouj, and see that it is settled on the basis of justice and without any discrimination.

LEAFLET ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 19TH BY D. S. VAIDYA, SECRETARY OF THE BOMBAY COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA.

SUPPORT THE DEMANDS OF NAVAL RATINGS! PROTEST AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND BARBAROUS TREATMENT OF INDIAN BOYS!

Yesterday 5,000 men in the Indian Navy went on strike. Among them are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, men from all provinces of our great country, speaking all languages. They all stand united behind their demands.

Every Indian knows that the conditions of our brothers in the Navy are very bad. Racial discrimination dominates every branch of the service, the pay is very low, food is often uneatable.

It is also a fact they although thousands of these men are due to be demobilised in the near future, no arrangements worth the name have been made for finding them adequate and satisfactory employment in civil life after demobilisation.

Worst of all is the maltreatment of the Indians by superior officers, particularly British officers. There are terrible tales of this—particularly one instance when a sick man was forced to do labour which resulted in his death. There are also stories of suicides and desertions, many of which are said to spring from such maltreatment.

This is why they have put forward the following demands :

1. Decent food and adequate rations.
2. Action to be taken against the commanding Officer of H.M.I.S. *Talwar* for abusing Indian ratings.
3. Maltreatment of ratings by officers, to stop.
4. The same facilities that the ratings in the Royal Navy get—regarding pay, travelling, family and children's allowances—should also be given to R.I.N. ratings.
5. Speedy demobilisation, resettlement and gratuity.

6. The rule that clothing kit should be returned at the time of demobilisation, should be cancelled.
7. Indianisation of officers in the Indian Navy should be carried through immediately and no new British officers should be recruited into the Indian Navy.
8. R. K. Singh (a victimised rating) should be immediately discharged from Arthur Road Jail.
9. Immediate release of all political prisoners, including I.N.A. prisoners.
10. Immediate withdrawal of all Indian troops from Indonesia.
11. Impartial judicial enquiry into the police shootings that have taken place all over India.

Everyone of our countrymen knows these demands are just. Everyone will surely respond to our appeal that all India must unitedly support these demands, that differences of party and policy in other fields should not be allowed to come in the way of support of these demands of our 5,000 brothers.

We appeal to leaders of all political parties in Bombay to support these demands, particularly we ask the Congress and League leaders to take up the issue in the Central Assembly and see that the demands of these men are met.

Let the Government on its part realise that no vindictiveness against the 5,000 will be tolerated by any Indian, whatever the party to which he may belong.

Let the Government immediately set in motion the machinery to satisfy the demands of the men on strike.

For the unity of all citizens of Bombay and people of India, behind the demand of the 5,000!

D. S. VAIDYA
Secretary,
Bombay Committee of the
Communist Party of India.

A NEW CHAPTER IN DIVIDE AND RULE

R. Palme Dutt

INTRODUCTION

We are printing here the pamphlet written by the famous British Communist leader, R. Palme Dutt, on the Cabinet Mission's award and subsequent events in India.

Palme Dutt, known to thousands as the author of three great classics— "India Today", "Fascism and Social Revolution" and "World Politics", Editor of the "Labour Monthly" ever since its birth—had never visited India till this year. The imperialist Government was afraid of his 'contaminating' influence and refused him a passport; he had to do his work for Indian freedom—a cause always near his heart—through his books, writings and speeches in far-away England.

This year, however, the long-awaited chance did come; the cabinet Mission was to visit India for negotiations; the London "Daily Worker" commissioned Dutt as its correspondent to cover the negotiations; and by the beginning of April, Dutt had set foot in India.

He stayed throughout the negotiations; he also toured India and learnt at first hand of the growing movement of our people. He watched the tragedy of Delhi and Simla when three Englishmen humiliated forty crore Indians, playing off League against Congress and Congress against League.

And at the end of June, he heard the self-satisfied trumpeting of the Cabinet Mission and its echoes in the British press—that it had done its best, it had brought Congress and League together, India's feet had been firmly placed on the road to freedom. Dutt knew this to be a lie, but he knew that many in England might believe it—such was the power of the imperialist monopoly press.

This is why he wrote this pamphlet—to tell his people in England that the Cabinet Mission had not solved the Indian problem or given freedom to India but only framed a new machinery of

slavery which would mean greater suffering for our people and the people of Britain.

We are publishing it because Indians too can learn from this pamphlet just what has been the result of the Mission's visit to India; they can learn and be convinced that they must fight against this mischievous award if their country is to move towards freedom.

July 13, 1945

G.ADHKARI

“We are giving India freedom—only the Indians are so divided among themselves they won't take it when offered.”

THIS is the general picture conveyed to the British public about the Cabinet Mission's Plan for India and the subsequent difficulties that have arisen.

Is this a true picture? On the contrary, it is very misleading. Very few Indians would recognise it. Public opinion is being misled about the true situation in India. It is important that this true situation should be understood in time, before events bring an unpleasant awakening.

It is the purpose of this short survey to prove :

1. The Cabinet Mission's Plan does not give freedom to India.
2. British Imperialism is not yet quitting India.
3. The internal divisions among Indian political organisations are no excuse for refusing independence to India, any more than in the case of any other country.
4. The fight for Indian freedom has still to be won.

CONFLICTING VIEWS

AT the Labour Party Conference in June, 1946, the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, declared :-

“We ask for others the freedom, we ask for ourselves. We proclaim this freedom, but we do more than proclaim it. We seek to put it into effect : witness India.”

Similarly the Chairman of the Labour Party, Professor Laski, declared in an interview published in the Indian Press on May 23, 1946 :

“It is the biggest abdication of power in modern history in a non-violent way made by any imperialist power to any people, and I hope Indian nationalist leaders will appreciate this offer made on a gold platter.”

This view of the new constitutional proposals for India has received wide publicity in the world Press, and especially in the Anglo-American Press, which has been lost in admiration at British self-abnegation.

On the other hand, this view has by no means been accepted by Indian opinion.

The official News-Letter of the All-India Congress Committee, representing the largest organisation of the Indian national movement, on June 1, 1946, published its verdict on the Cabinet Mission's Plan and declared it to be

"not much better than what even Messrs. Churchill and Amery were willing to concede in March, 1942....

The independence that has been promised is so hedged in with restrictions that it is a misnomer to call it by that name.

The so-called Constituent Assembly will have the semblance, but not the reality of a sovereign body....

In the jungle of restrictions, reservations, safeguards, and the balancing of one interest against another, it is difficult to visualise a clear and complete picture of a free and independent India.

The communal and feudal interests have been the main props so far of the British Imperial game in India. To try to maintain them as permanent and effective features of the so-called independent India gives rise to a plausible suspicion that the British Government are unable to break away from the traditional policy of their predecessors."

And the Secretary of the Indian Communist Party, P. C. Joshi, has described the Plan as

".....a British Imperial plan to preserve India as their greatest colonial basea constitutional plan that will accentuate Hindu-Moslem differences and enable their own stooges, the Princes, to play a key role ...a scheme to prevent a statute of independence being passed and to keep the Indians permanently warring among themselves."

What is the reason for this extreme divergence of views between British official self-praise and widespread Indian dissatisfaction?

Does the Cabinet Mission's Plan represent the final abdication of British imperialism in India recognition of Indian independence?

Or does it represent the last of the long series of attempts of British imperialism to evolve a constitutional compromise, so as to adapt itself to new conditions and the rising Indian national demand, while retaining the essence of its power and domination?

Do the new proposals represent Indian freedom? Or do they only represent a facade and show of giving India freedom, nullified in practice by the impenetrable jungle of qualifications, restrictions and limitations?

Are the limitations the inevitable consequence of Indian communal and political divisions? Or are the divisions being skilfully utilised and fostered in order to prevent Indian independence?

These questions are of vital importance for the British Labour movement and democratic opinion, which is committed to the principle of Indian freedom.

WHY INDIA DEMANDS FREEDOM

It is recognised on all sides today that the justice and urgency of India's claim to independence can no longer be denied.

Having fought to maintain our own freedom from foreign rule, and to win back the freedom of the European nations from foreign occupation and rule, how can we defend the continued foreign occupation and subjection of India?

The war demonstrated anew the bankruptcy of imperialism in India. In the height of the war crisis, with the enemy on its borders, India with all its resources could not produce a single motor engine or aeroplane. Such was the outcome of two centuries of British rule, with the strangling of industrial and economic development in the interests of British big trading and monopoly concerns.

In the social conditions of the people the outcome is no less appalling. The average length of life of an Indian is under 27 years as against 56 years for an Englishman. The national income is estimated at 2d. a head per day. Wages range from 6d. a day for an unskilled woman worker (often even less for agricultural workers) to about £1 a week for the top level of skilled workers—with prices three times pre-war level. Over the main range of unregulated industry there is no labour legislation or protection; tiny children labour long hours for two or three pence a day. There is no

unemployment insurance, health insurance or provision for old age. Housing in the cities reveals overcrowding in slums without equal in the world, with tiny single-room tenements, without light or air, occupied often by several families, even as many as twenty or thirty persons in one tenement, and averaging, according to the latest Bombay return, seven per tenement. Education is lacking for the majority of the people; over four-fifths are illiterate.

The conditions of the peasantry, the vast majority of the people, are the worst of all. Overcrowded on the land, through the lack of industrial development, they struggle to cultivate minute holdings with primitive equipment. Loaded down with the exactions of the landlord, the tax collector and moneylender, who take the greater part of their produce, they can barely maintain life. Underfeeding and disease are chronic. The Bengal famine killed one and a half millions, according to the official estimate—three millions, according to unofficial estimates. Today a worse famine has begun.

Politically, the bankruptcy of imperialism was no less demonstrated by the war. Although the national movement had taken its practical stand against fascism, with support to China, Abyssinia and Spain, long before the British ruling authorities had abandoned their policy of backing Nazi Germany and Japan, the British rulers were unable to win the co-operation of the national movement in the war. The offer of the national movement to co-operate on a basis of freedom in the liberation war of the United Nations was rejected and met with repression by the Tory-dominated Government of Churchill. Pressure from the United States and China for Indian freedom was resisted. Political deadlock continued throughout the war, with the majority of the national leaders in prison.

Economic disorganisation was enormously intensified by the war. Reckless inflation and profiteering was rampant. There was no attempt at control or rationing. The note-printing presses worked overtime. India was denuded of resources, without payment save for the paper accumulation of sterling balances. Prices soared threefold. Large-scale famines returned to the land.

Against all these conditions India is in revolt. The demand for independence is universal. Imperialism cannot continue to govern in the old way.

WHY CABINET MISSION WENT TO INDIA

After the war, with the defeat of fascism, the advance of national liberation and democracy swept forward over the world. Imperialism was weakened. The peoples were on the march. The liberated European peoples pressed forward to build new advanced democratic states. In Asia, the peoples liberated from Japanese occupation were determined not to go back to the colonial servitude. In Burma and Malaya great national liberation movements came into being, although met with repression by the imperialist authorities after victory. The Indonesian Republic maintained itself against the Anglo-Dutch military assault.

The British Empire after the war found itself assailed on all sides by the liberation movements of the peoples—from Egypt and Palestine and the Middle East to Burma and Malaya and Indonesia. Above all, at the centre of all stood the question of India, the largest colonial territory of all, representing three-fourths of the population of the British Empire and seven-eighths of its colonial population. British imperialism after the war was engaged in a dangerous world strategy of endeavouring to build up a Western imperialist alliance with the United States against the Soviet Union and the popular advance in Europe and Asia. From Spain to Greece, to Persia, to the Far East the intrigues went forward. But the pivotal question in this strategy was India. From the standpoint of this strategy a settlement in India was imperative.

Within Britain, Toryism went down in an overwhelming electoral debacle. The British people had had enough of Toryism and its reactionary policies at home and abroad. They returned a Labour majority and a Labour Government. Although the moderate leaders of the new Labour Government pursued in fact and imperialist policy in world affairs not very different from the old Tory policy, the Labour movement stood committed, by resolutions equally of the Trade Union Congress and Labour Party Conference, to freedom in India. It was clear that the Labour Government would have to make a fresh departure of policy in relation to India.

The situation within India made this need urgent. Within India, parallel to the world popular advance after the war, a great popular upsurge swept through the country in 1945-46. Whatever the differences of political organisations with regard to the future, the

demand for independence was universal from all. Even the inverted example of the so-called "Indian National Army," sponsored by Bose during the war from within the Axis camp, and the subsequent trials of the I.N.A. leaders kindled to white heat the flame of militant patriotism and the conception of the armed conquest of power in place of the old non-violent struggles. The flame of national revolt spread not only through the civilian population, but extended for the first time to the armed forces. Strikes and mutinies spread through the armed forces, alongside the civilian mass unrest. In those strikes and demonstrations Hindus and Moslems, Congress and League followers, were united. Outstanding was the great naval rising of the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946, when the naval ratings replaced the Union Jack on the warships by the Congress and Moslem League flags, and the people of Bombay came out in support and faced a hailstorm of imperialist bullets, with hundreds killed.

The crisis was urgent. The significance of the rising of the armed forces was not lost on the British authorities. The basis of British rule in India was in danger, if its machinery of power could no longer be trusted. Immediate emergency steps were imperative if British rule in India was not to collapse overnight before the popular assault.

On February 18th, the R.I.N. strike began in Bombay.

On February 19th, Mr. Attlee announced in Parliament the dispatch of the Cabinet Mission of three Cabinet Ministers to India "to promote in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion the early realisation of full self-government in India."

THE SIGNAL OF THE R.I.N. RISING

The lesson of the Indian naval rising is of paramount importance for understanding the present situation in India. The naval strike movement which developed in Bombay, Karachi and Madras began on the morning of February 18, 1946 in Bombay as a result of a long series of unremedied grievances. By the morning of February 19, it had spread to all the 20,000 ratings in the 12 shore establishments in Bombay and suburbs, as well as the 20 ships in the harbour. The Union Jack was removed from the ships' masts and Congress and Moslem League flags were put up instead. Demonstrations followed in the town area with united Congress, Moslem League and Red Flags, and with such slogans as "Jai Hind,"

“Hindus and Muslims Unite,” “Down with British imperialism.” The strike also extended to other vessels of the Indian Navy, including the *Hindustan* of Karachi, which was later involved in armed action.

The people of Bombay, as of Madras, Karachi and other cities, came out in support of the naval strikers. When the British Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Godfrey, delivered his ultimatum, threatening to blow to pieces all the ships of the Indian Navy, Bombay people came out in the greatest strike and hartal ever seen. The British authorities replied with indiscriminate police and military firing on the people. Over the three days, February 21-23, official figures reported 250 killed. The eye-witness description of a British Officer is worth quoting :

I was walking along Suparibaug Road, near the corner of Elphinstone Road, in Bombay's working-class quarter, Parel, at 4 p.m.

There were a good many people in the street, though they did not make up a crowd, much less a mob. On the advice of the Communist Party none of them was armed, not even with sticks or stones.

Suddenly, without the slightest warning, an open lorry loaded with British troops, drove across Elphinstone Road with rifles and one Bren gun.

As the people ran into the doorways, myself included, the troops turned their fire in that direction. Twenty people were wounded and four killed.

What was behind it ?

The trade unions had called for a general strike in support of the naval ratings. The strike was 100 per cent effective in textile mills, factories and railway workshops.

Someone in a high position decided ‘to teach the wogs’ a lesson. So armed patrols in full battle order moved about the streets in lorries, firing at random into crowded streets and moved on before anyone could even pick up a stone.

No ambulances were on the streets and the people had to get to hospital as best they could.

Later, in Delisle Road, I saw the troops enter the *chawls* (slum tenements) and fire on people in their own houses. Four were killed and 16 wounded.

Many papers have told you about the “irresponsible mutiny.” They haven't told you that the authorities ordered the strikers into

Castle Barracks, cordoned them off without food or water, and fired on them when they came out for a drink ("or rushed the gates" as the communique said).

They told you about the mob violence and the hooliganism. They did not tell you that the first stones were thrown after an Army truck driving at great speed knocked down two members of an orderly procession.

This was a united struggle of the people to defend their lives and homes against indiscriminate terror.

United—that's the word. The sight that gave the brass hats the jitters was the Congress Tri colour, the Moslem League Crescent and the Red Flag carried side by side in processions : the League and Congress flags flying from the mast head of the battleship *Narbada*.

As we crouched in the doorway and the bullets whizzed past, an Indian said to me : "That's British Socialism in action." I am concerned for the honour of our Labour Government, which lost in 24 hours whatever support it had left after Indonesia.

I am concerned most of all for the honour of the British people. Almost all the firing was done by British soldiers.

The police took a back seat. I saw no Indian troops and I am told that fear of disaffection spreading to the Army prompted the authorities not to employ Indian troops in the orgy of suppression."

WHY THE RISING FAILED

But there was a weakness in the Indian national front. The mass unity below of Congress and Moslem League followers was not followed up by unity of the Congress and League leadership on top. The upper-class leadership of the Congress and Moslem League feared the popular uprising. They officially opposed the mass strike and hartal, which took place with universal support in spite of their prohibition. Their only counsel was for surrender and it was on the advice of the Congress leader, Vallabhai Patel, with a subsequent message from Jinnah, that the Central Naval Strike Committee finally surrendered on February 23, with the declaration : "*We surrender to India and not to Britain.*"

Thus the official national leadership was not ready in those critical days to lead the uprising of the people. They condemned

the violence, not of the imperialist authorities whose firing had slaughtered hundreds, but of the unarmed people who were shot. In condemning the strike they ranged themselves with imperialism as the representative of law and order. Thus, Vallabhai Patel declared that he "endorsed the remarks of the Commander-in-Chief that there ought to be discipline in the Navy." And Gandhi, in a significant statement, condemned what he called "the unholy combination of Hindus and Moslems" for a violent purpose :

"I might have understood it if they had combined from top to bottom. That would, of course, have meant delivering India over to the rabble. I would not want to live up to 125 to witness that consummation. I would rather perish in the flames."

The British rulers were quick to see this weakness in the national front and to take full advantage of it. The whole tactics of the Cabinet Mission were now directed towards the Congress and Moslem League leadership, to play on their fears of the popular masses and their hopes of peaceful transfer of ruling authority into their hands, and above all to play on their mutual division and antagonism.

DIVIDE AND RULE

The tactics of British imperialism in India to maintain its authority have always been the tactics of "Divide and Rule."

Hindu-Moslem antagonism and communal riot of a character previously unknown have been increasingly characteristic under British rule, especially in the modern period.

As far back as 1821, a British officer, writing under the name of "Carnaticus" in the *Asiatic Review*, declared that "*Divide et impera* should be the motto of our Indian administration, whether political, civil or military." Lieutenant-Colonel Coke, Commandant of Moradabad, laid down the principle in the middle of the nineteenth century :

"Our endeavour should be to uphold in full force the (for us fortunate) separation which exists between the different religions and races, not to endeavour to amalgamate them. *Divide et impera* should be the principle of Indian government."

In 1859 Lord Elphinstone recorded in an official minute :

"*Divide et impera* was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours." (Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, minute of May 14, 1859).

In 1888, Sir John Strachey, leading authority on India, wrote: "The truth plainly is that the existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India." (Sir John Strachey, *India*, 1888, p. 255).

In 1910, Ramsay MacDonald wrote of the "suspicion" that official policy "sowed discord between the Hindu and Mohammedan communities."

In 1926, Lord Olivier, after he had held office as Secretary of State for India, wrote in a letter to *The Times* of the policy of British officialism to seek to utilise the Moslem community "as a makeweight against Hindu nationalism."

In 1941 *The Times* wrote in an editorial with reference to Hindu-Moslem divisions :

"The divisions exist, and British rule is certain as long as they do." (*Times*, January 21, 1941).

When constitutional reforms were introduced with a limited measure of elections in 1909, at the same time there was established the system of communal electorates, i.e., separate electorates according to religion. This reactionary and undemocratic device was calculated to foster communal antagonism to the most extreme point.

In the same period British policy encouraged formation of a separate political organisation for Moslems—the Moslem League (founded in 1906) as a counterweight to the growing strength of the National Congress. A British official reported at the time to the Viceroy, Lord Minto, the news of the formation of the Moslem League in the following terms :

"I must send your Excellency a line to say that a very, very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people (Moslems) from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition (Congress)." (Lady Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, 1934, p. 47).

British policy in modern times has ceaselessly played on the divisions between the Congress and the Moslem League.

CONGRESS AND LEAGUE

Today the situation of the Congress and the Moslem League is in many important respects vastly different from the early days.

Both the Congress and the Moslem League are today mass political organisations which stand for the aim of complete independence from imperialism, though with a difference of programme.

The National Congress, which has developed over 60 years, is the premier organisation of the Indian national movement and the largest political organisation in India, with a claimed membership before the war of some six millions. For many decades, and especially during the last quarter of a century, it has developed as the leader of the Indian national struggle. It has won an overwhelming majority of all general seats in the elections of 1937 and again this year.

The National Congress is a non-communal organisation open to all sections of Indians irrespective of caste, race or creed (though in fact with a markedly weaker following among Moslems than among Hindus) on a general platform of national liberation and democracy. The Congress proclaims the aims of complete national independence; democracy based on adult franchise with full equality of all citizens; unity of India with wide provincial autonomy; protection of cultural rights of all minorities, freedom of religion and State neutrality in issues of religion; and a programme of advanced social reform. While the Congress has a general mass following, the leadership is drawn from the propertied and professional classes, and the big industrialists have a strong influence in it.

The Moslem League has developed to its present predominant position among the Moslems in India during the last decade. Previously it was a very narrow organisation confined mainly to the big Moslem land-owners and Nawabs, and as late as 1927 had only 1,330 members. But in the recent period it has developed to a claimed membership of some two millions and in the elections this year won all the Moslem seats on the Central Legislative Assembly and 447 of the 507 Moslem seats in the provincial assemblies (while Congress Moslems made little headway except in the North-West Frontier Province). The Moslem League has thus established its position as the strongest political organisation among the Moslems in India. While the basis of the Moslem League remains communal and its leadership is dominated by the big Moslem land-owners, there have developed strong popular democratic currents in its ranks in the recent years advocating advanced social and economic demands.

The Moslem League puts forward a programme of complete independence from imperialism and, since 1940 demands the aim of Pakistan, i.e., establishment of a separate Moslem State or States in North-West and North-East India, covering the Provinces of Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier Province together with Baluchistan in the North-West, and Bengal and Assam in the North-East. In this area the Moslems number 59 out of 107 millions, or 55 per cent, leaving thirty-five million Moslems or two-fifths of the Moslems in India, outside. This illustrates the obvious limitations of any attempt to settle the communal question of the closely inter-mingled Hindu and Moslem population in India on a territorial basis.

The third principal political organisation in India is the Communist Party, which comes after the Congress and the Moslem League in strength, but is younger and at present much smaller than either. The Communist Party has its main strength in the working class in the big towns and in sections of the militant peasantry in some areas. It occupies a leading position in the All India Trade Union Congress with 850,000 members, and in the All India Kisan Sabha or peasants' organisation, with 800,000 members. But the Communist Party is not yet comparable on a national scale of strength with the Congress and the Moslem League, the two major political organisations in India.

PAKISTAN AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The main division between the Congress and the Moslem League is over the question of Pakistan. The Congress stands for the unity of India. The Moslem League demands Pakistan or a sovereign Moslem State in North-West and North-East India.

The programme of Pakistan is the subject of sharp and bitter controversy in India. There is no doubt room for valid criticism of the programme of Pakistan. The unity of India is desirable from a progressive point of view, and partition would be a reactionary step. The demand to base nationality on religion encourages communal antagonism and is doubtful from a practical point of view, since the Hindus and Moslems are in reality inter-mingled all over India. The refusal to accept the democratic principle of self-determination, that the people in the areas concerned should decide for themselves, is indefensible (though it should be noted

that the Congress has also shown reluctance to accept fully the principle of national self-determination within India, with the right of secession, within India).

But the considerable mass support for the slogan of Pakistan has revealed the développement of a new factor in Indian political life.

This new factor which now comes to the political surface is the *multi-national* character of the Indian people. The unity of the Indian people in the struggle against imperialism, or the possible unity of a future free India, does not mean that the Indian people are all of one uniform national character any more than the Soviet people are of one uniform national character. There are great differences between a Pathan, a Sikh and a Bengali and a Tamil. They have different national cultures, languages and traditions. There have been estimated to be some seventeen nationalities (the Congress has recognised them as linguistic-cultural groups) in India. In the early stage of the national movement these differences were less important. But as the national movement has extended to wider masses, who are newly awakening to political consciousness, these differences become important. Within the common movement they demand national self-expression. Stalin foresaw this when he wrote in 1912 :—

“In the case of India, too, it will probably be found that innumerable nationalities, till then lying dormant, would come to life with the further course of bourgeois development.”

The slogan of Pakistan does not directly express this rising national consciousness : for the programme of Pakistan proposes not national self-determination, but a Moslem State. But the support for it in Moslem-majority areas clearly reflects, although in a distorted form, some elements of this developing national consciousness.

It is probable that the final solution of these problems will have to come through applying the principle of national self-determination, as in the U.S.S.R. Recognition of this principle, including the right of secession, does not mean that separation is desirable. But any union needs to be a voluntary union. Recognition of the principle of self-determination would enable the national groupings to choose freely their political future, and on a free basis to enter into an All-India Union. This is the programme advocated

by the Communist Party of India to solve the problems at issue between the Congress and the League. On this basis the Communist Party advocated Congress-League unity.

These questions are questions for the Indian people to settle. They are internal questions of Indian politics. They are not questions on which the British people have any right to impose their solution any more than the Indian people would have to decide the claim of Scottish nationalists for national self-determination. These internal questions must not be made the excuse for refusing independence to India. In the United States eighty years ago the division between the supporters of unity in the North and the demand of the Southern States for secession was so intense as to lead to civil war. No one suggested that this was a reason why the United States could not be independent.

The Cabinet Mission, however, did not approach the question in this way. The tactics of the Cabinet Mission were entirely concentrated on the divisions between the Congress and the Moslem League in such a way as to erect on these divisions insuperable obstacles to effective Indian independence.

THE CABINET MISSION'S TACTICS

From the outset the Cabinet Mission played on the divisions between the Congress and the Moslem League. Unfortunately the Congress and the League leaderships played into their hands. In place of presenting a joint front and demanding a firm declaration of Indian independence, with all internal questions to be settled by Indians themselves without British intervention, they negotiated separately with the British representatives, hoping to win British support for their conflicting aims.

So took place three months of prolonged negotiations. The Cabinet Mission set themselves like the Three Wise Men of Gotham to reconcile the Congress and the League. They presented themselves as benevolent arbitrators in the battle. When no agreement was reached they presented proposals as a basis for tripartite negotiations at Simla on May 5 to 12. When this ended in a breakdown they made their own award on May 16. There followed a long haggling over the composition of the Interim-Government. When no agreement was reached, they again made their own award on June 16. But this ended in a breakdown. The League accepted

the long-term and short-term proposals. The Congress rejected the proposals for the Interim-Government (which sought to make the Congress representatives only Hindu) while agreeing to take part in the proposed Constituent Assembly. So in the end the basic problems remained. The Congress and League had accepted to go into the Constituent Assembly only to pursue their conflict.

What then was the final outcome of these conflicting negotiations? The final outcome was the British award.

The tactics of the Cabinet Mission had served the purpose of displaying to the world the apparently irreconcilable divisions of the Congress and the League, and thus paving the way for the British award as the supposed inevitable only solution. In fact it was the presence of the third party that made insoluble Congress-League divisions. So long as the British rulers remained in supreme control with the final word, it was inevitable under the circumstances that the Congress and the League leadership, in place of settling with each other, should seek to win the ear of the real rulers for their own sectional demands. The British negotiators in practice fostered this process by encouraging now one side, now the other, and through a host of intermediary and indirect channels sending out conflicting hopes and threats and bargaining suggestions, the net effect of which was to leave the parties thoroughly embroiled, while the British rulers, posing as entirely innocent of the conflict, were in the key position to come down finally with a heavy hand and make an imposed award.

The term "award" was at first denied in official quarters. But subsequent clarifications made clear that it was in fact an award. The Statement of Policy of May 16 (long-term plan) is not a statement of policy of any Indian organisation. It is a statement of policy of the British Cabinet Mission and the British Cabinet. The decisions of the declaration, the decisions as to the composition and procedure of the Constituent Assembly, as to the grouping of provinces, as to the role of the Princes, etc., all these are unilateral British decisions, not sponsored by any Indian leadership or organisation, but imposed by British power. The Cabinet Mission's supplementary statement of May 25 made it clear that "the scheme stands as a whole"—to be accepted or rejected as a whole without modification.

Thus the Cabinet Mission's Plan for India is not an Indian Plan for India. It is a British plan for India imposed by British

power, and its terms are deeply resented by large sections of Indian opinion.

THE CABINET MISSION'S PLAN

The Main lines of the Cabinet Mission's Plan (including both decisions and recommendations), set out in the Declaration of May 16 and subsequent statements, cover the following points in summary :

1. *All India Union* to be formed of British India and the States for dealing with foreign affairs, defence and communications and with powers of finance for these purposes.

2. *Three-tier Structure* for British India :

- (a) All-India Union;
- (b) Provincial Groups; and
- (c) Provinces

3. *Provincial Groups* to be formed covering :

(a) Hindu-majority region (Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa).

(b) North-West Moslem-majority region (Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan).

(c) North-East Moslem-majority region (Bengal and Assam).

These Groupings to be compulsory at the outset, with the right of provinces to opt out or change only after the establishment of the Constitution and the first elections under it.

4. *Constituent Assembly* of 389 members :

292 indirectly elected on a communal basis from the existing provincial legislative assemblies, with fixed numbers of seats for Moslems and non-Moslems according to population (and in the case of the Punjab, also for the Sikhs). 93 representatives of the Princes.

The Union Assembly to meet as a whole only for the Constitution of the Union; no resolution raising major communal issues to be carried without a majority of both the major communities.

The Provincial Groups' representatives to meet separately to decide the Constitution for the Provincial Groups and provinces.

5. *States*. Basis of co-operation of the States with the All-India Union to be settled by voluntary negotiation.

Paramountcy (control of States by the Central Government) to lapse with the attainment of independence by India.

6. *Protection of minorities.* Approval of the Constitution and cession of sovereignty to India to be dependent on adequate provision for the protection of minorities.

7 *British-Indian Treaty.* Approval of Constitution and cession of sovereignty to India to be further dependent on "willingness to conclude a treaty with the British Government to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power."

8. *Interim Period.* Recommendation for the establishment on an "Interim Government having the support of the major political parties" to be formed by the Viceroy on basis of reconstitution of his Executive Council.

Britain to retain sovereign power during the interim period under the existing Constitution. British military occupation to continue under the control of the British Government carrying "ultimate responsibility for the security of India."

IS THIS INDEPENDENCE ?

Does this Plan give independence to India?

In the interim period it is obvious that it does not. The Viceroy remains with absolute power. The Cabinet Mission has left India to be ruled by a "Caretaker Government" of eight paid officials—6 British and 2 Indian. If in the next stage the proposed "Interim Government" may be formed on the basis of Indian parties, it will still be only a reconstituted Executive Council of the Viceroy with the Viceroy's veto and over-riding powers continuing available for use at any time in case of need. British military occupation continues and the constituent Assembly will have to operate under the shadow of British troops, and of British sovereign control of the country.

There is no indication how long this interim period may last. No final limit is fixed. If the Constitution-making machinery works badly, or reaches a deadlock and breaks down, the "interim period" may last a long time. Some cynical officials have said "off the record" that they hope for a twenty-year "interim period".

What of the future?

Mr. Attlee in his speech on March 15, on the occasion of the departure of the Cabinet Mission, was widely headlined in the world's Press as having conceded "independence" to India. What Mr. Attlee said was rather different. He said:

“India herself must choose as to what will be her future constitution and her position in the world. . . I hope that India may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. . . . But if, on the other hand, she elects for independence, and in our view she has a right to do so, it will be for us to help make the transition as smooth and easy as possible.”

This declaration was acclaimed as a startling new definition of policy and evidence of new spirit in the relation of Britain and India. Actually this very hypothetical offer was not a new definition of policy. It had already been set out in the old 1942 offer sanctioned by a Tory-dominated Cabinet :

“In order to achieve the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India, the British Government propose that steps should be taken to create a new Indian Union which will have the full status of a Dominion with the power to secede if it chooses from the British Commonwealth.”

Is this offer equivalent to giving India independence?

Independence means that the sovereign independence of a country is recognised, and that the people of the country themselves freely elect their representatives to draw up their constitution.

But here the process is reversed. There is only a hypothetical offer of a supposed future right to choose independence. This supposed right is hedged-in by qualifications and conditions (“protection of minorities,” and “British-Indian Treaty”), which must be fulfilled before independence may be conceded. And this supposed right is only to be exercised not by the democratically elected representative of the people but by an un-representative and undemocratic body, whose composition and procedure has been determined beforehand and weighted in a reactionary direction by the British rulers; and in which the autocratic Princes—British puppets—control one quarter of the seats.

This is an absolutely spurious “offer” of independence.

DENIAL OF DEMOCRACY

The Constitution-making Body to be set up under the Cabinet Mission’s Plan is called a “Constituent Assembly.” This is a misuse of words.

A Constituent Assembly is universally understood as a sovereign body of democratically elected representatives of the people to draw up a constitution. What is here proposed is not a sovereign body and not democratic.

Universal suffrage is refused—supposedly on the grounds of haste. It is stated that it may take two years to draw up registers and hold elections. Indian observers are confident that, with the full rationing registers available in the towns and through the village machinery in the villages, the task may be put through very much more rapidly with the co-operation of the people, if there were a will to do it.

Instead of this democratic basis this “Constituent Assembly” is to be indirectly elected from the very bodies which are already based on a restricted electorate of 11 per cent of the population.

This “Constituent Assembly” is to be communally elected and divided into communal groups with numbers fixed beforehand—thus guaranteeing the maximum communal antagonism.

The Princes are given 93 seats or one quarter of the 389 seats. No provision is made for the method of selection of these “representatives.” This is left to voluntary negotiation and the discretion of the Princes. It is well known that the Princes are in fact British puppets. In view of the communal balance in the Assembly, this quarter of the seats under British indirect Control may prove a decisive factor in the proceedings of the Assembly.

Finally, the Constituent Assembly is not sovereign. It operates under the shadow of British sovereignty and military occupation. Its powers and procedure are limited. It is not permitted to deal with questions affecting communal interests except by a majority of both the major communities; and it is obvious that this provision offers the possibility for infinite deadlock. Its scope of constitution-making is limited; for the major part of its work, it is compelled to break up into separate sections or Provincial Groups for drawing up Group Constitutions. The final result of its work will be subject to British ratification, which will be dependent on the fulfilment of conditions laid down by the British Rulers.

This is a mockery of a “Constituent Assembly.” It is in reality only a new version of the old type of Round Table Conference under British rule to draw up a constitution.

PARTITION OF INDIA

The Cabinet Mission's Plan divides India into four zones : (1) Hindu-majority zone; (2) two Moslem-majority zones; (3) the Princes' States.

This partition of India has nothing in common with national self-determination within India. Boundaries of the provinces do not concede with the national, linguistic-cultural groupings. Still less do the completely arbitrary and artificial boundaries of the States, which cut across and carve up national groupings of the Indian people and have no basis or justification whatever for separate existence.

This partition is imposed by compulsion and is irrespective of popular wishes. In the North-Western zone, the North-West Frontier Province has returned a Congress majority opposed to compulsory grouping, but is compelled to be included in the North-Western group. In the North-Eastern zone Assam has a non-Moslem majority population, and its Provincial Government has protested against inclusion in the North-Eastern zone. But the right to "opt out" is denied until after the Constitution has been imposed.

On the basis of this partition, the All-India Union is left weak and without necessary powers for India's development. Its functions are confined to defence, foreign policy and communications—corresponding to British strategic requirements. But it has no powers for all-India economic planning or social legislation. Thus a heavy obstacle is placed to prevent all-round Indian economic development and planning. A premium is placed on reaction. If any province or group adopts more advanced social or labour legislation, taxation or standards, capital will be attracted to the regions with lower standards and especially to the States. This tendency is already visible with the increasing concentration of British and Indian capital on new schemes of development in the States territory.

The three-tier structure (Union, Provincial Groups and Provinces) is cumbrous and probably unworkable. Sovereignty is so divided as to be undiscorverable.

The partition of India is a device to prevent a strong united India, and by the weakness and friction of the different parts to maintain the ultimate British decisive role.

PRINCES IN PERMANENCE

The most glaring undemocratic feature of the Plan is the maintenance of the Princes' States, covering one-third of the territory of India and one quarter of the Indian population.

The States are irresponsible autocracies. Any show of limited or partially representative institutions in some of the States is entirely subject to the will of the Ruler. In practice the Princes are British puppets, and the real rulers are the British Residents subject to the Political Department of the Central Government of India. A leading British Government publicist on behalf of the Princes, Prof. Rushbrook Williams (former Joint Director of the Indian Princes' Special Organisation, Adviser to the Indian States Delegation at the Round Table Conference, and also Director of Public Information of the Government of India up to 1925), declared in 1930 :

"The rulers of the Indian Native States are very loyal to their British connection. Many of them owe their very existence to British justice and arms. Many of them would not be in existence today had not British power supported them during the struggles of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century. Their affection and loyalty are important assets for Britain in the Present troubles and in the readjustments which must come....."

"The situation of these feudatory States, checker-boarding all India as they do, is a great safeguard. It is like establishing a vast network of friendly fortresses in debatable territory. It would be difficult for a general rebellion against the British to sweep India because of this network of powerful loyal Native States" (L.F. Rushbrook Williams, *Evening Standard*, May 28, 1930).

No provision is made by the Plan for democracy in the territory of the Princes. Arrangements with the Princes are left entirely to voluntary negotiation, including with regard to the method of selection of their representatives in the Constituent Assembly.

The States are not only left untouched but their independence from any Indian democratic development is actually strengthened. Hitherto the doctrine of "paramountcy" has meant that the States are ultimately subject to the Control of the Central Government of India. But it has now been announced by the Cabinet Mission that if India becomes independent, the doctrine of paramountcy will lapse. This means that the All-India Union Government will have

no control over the States. If voluntary agreement on the future relations is not reached in the meantime, the States would be legally and diplomatically independent, sovereign States—what has been called “560 Ulsters in India.”

The role of the Princes, who have been termed “Britain’s Fifth Column in India,” is the strategic key to the Plan. Against the elaborate balancing of zones and communities to weaken Indian democratic development, the Princes constitute the pivotal factor for continued exercise of British influence.

The importance attached to maintaining the autocratic power of the Princes was shown by the terror in Kashmir even at the height of the negotiations in Delhi. Kashmir is the largest Indian State, and of key strategic importance as it borders on the Soviet Union and China. The leader of the Kashmir National Conference, Sheikh Abdullah, was arrested for the crime of demanding democracy in Kashmir and launching a campaign against the treaty of Amritsar (by which the East India Company originally sold Kashmir a century ago to the present ruling Dogra House for half a million pounds). Martial Law was proclaimed; there was wholesale firing on the people, with men, women and children shot down in the streets. The Indian national leader, Nehru, was arrested and imprisoned. And this took place in the very midst of the negotiations in Delhi. While soft words were being spoken in Delhi, the terror in Kashmir revealed the mailed fist behind the velvet glove.

BRITAIN’S LAST WORD

The so-called “Constituent Assembly” blinkered, divided and weighted in a reactionary direction, is to draw up a constitution under the heavy limitations and binding directives imposed upon it. But Britain is to have the last word.

The constitutional plan drawn up by the Constituent Assembly will have no validity until ratified by the British Parliament. But it has already been made clear that such ratification will be subject to conditions.

The Cabinet Mission’s statement of May 25 laid down that the proposed future cession of sovereignty to the Indian people will be subject to two conditions.

The first of these conditions is “adequate provision for the protection of minorities.” It is obvious that this condition can be subject to very wide interpretation and can be made the ground for

unlimited further intervention in the character of any Indian Constitution.

The second is “willingness to conclude a treaty with His Majesty’s Government to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power.”

No official indication has yet been given of the terms of the proposed British-Indian Treaty, acceptance of which is made a prior condition of “independence.”

It is known that the British-Indian Treaty under consideration is intended to cover not only the protection of British economic interests in India but also military provisions for British-Indian military co-operation.

IMPERIALISM IS NOT QUITTING INDIA

The conclusion is inescapable.

The Cabinet Mission’s Plan for India is not a Plan for Indian Independence. It is the continuance of the old method of divide and rule. It carries forward the old technique of balance and counterposing the different elements of Indian political life, Hindus against Moslems, the Congress against the League, and with the Princes as the reactionary pivotal force in such a way as to nullify in practice the supposed offer of Indian freedom and retain effective final control in British hands.

British imperialism has not abdicated and transferred power to the Indian people. It has rather exploited all its ingenuity and age-old political experience to establish an elaborate, cumbersome, precarious machinery through which, even behind the formal facade of Indian independence, it will be able to continue to manoeuvre and seek to maintain its essential economic and strategic domination. If we look behind the smooth-sounding speeches to what is actually happening in the economic and military spheres, this becomes still more clear.

ECONOMIC PLANS

The test of whether imperialism is quitting India is worth examining in the economic field.

Is British imperialism quitting India in the economic field? Recent developments throw an interesting light on the answer to

In June 1945, an agreement was reached between Birla Brothers Ltd., one of the largest Indian monopoly concerns, and the Nuffield Organisation in England for the manufacture of motor cars in India. The Birla-Nuffield agreement was reported in the Press to provide for the establishment of a joint company with 25-30 per cent of the shares in Nuffield's hands. The character of the "Indian manufacture" of cars proposed was demonstrated in the production of the new car, the "Hindustan 10," which was widely boosted as "Indian made" car, but whose components were in reality Morris-marked and merely *assembled* in India. In December, 1945, a similar agreement was announced between the Tatas, the biggest monopoly concern in India, and Imperial Chemical Industries, Britain's largest monopoly. Many similar deals are taking place.

The policy was expressed by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, when he declared to the Associated Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta on December 10, 1945.

"I firmly believe that co-operation between British and Indian enterprise in an atmosphere of goodwill provides the best means for the industrial development of India in the quickest and most fruitful manner."

Lest it should be thought that this might only represent a benevolent plea for mutual co-operation, the more specific demands of British capitalism were given expression to by Prof. A.V.Hill, Secretary of the Royal Society, when he toured India in 1945 :

"They (i.e., Indians) have to realise, however, that British industry is not going to do these things for love only. I do not think they can expect British industry to erect by its skill and resources something which it is to have only a minor share in controlling. If they want development they must go equal shares with the people here. Going halves seems a fair proposition." (*Bharat Jyoti*, April 1, 1945).

More brutally *Capital*, the organ of British finance in India, wrote on November 15, 1945 :

"British business has no intention of being just run out of the country, either now or in the hereafter." Not much sign of quitting India here.

MILITARY PLANS

No less important are the military strategic plans of British imperialism in relation to India. In the present world strategy of

British imperialism, India occupies a very important position. Between the two key areas of British domination and in the present period, the Middle-East and South-East Asia, India is the indispensable pivot and military base. Indian troops have been used in Burma, Malaya and Indonesia, despite protests of the national movement. In relation to the reactionary tendencies to build an alignment against the Soviet Union, India is of no less decisive importance. It is significant that during the Cabinet Mission's negotiations, anti-Soviet propaganda of the most vicious type has been pumped into India through every possible channel, and has also found reflection in some sections of the nationalist Press.

British military occupation continues in India during the interim period. The Commander-in-Chief remains responsible to the British Government in London. Future military arrangements in India are to be subject of a special agreement. There is no indication yet of any intention to withdraw British military forces from India. To a question whether the British military forces would remain in India after the establishment of Indian independence, the Cabinet Mission replied that they would nor remain "except with the consent of the new Indian Government."

Even more important than the future decision with regard to the retention or withdrawal of British military forces in India are the undoubted plans for the development of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force under British command and on a basis of strategic co-operation with the British forces.

The estimates for April 1, 1947 plan for an "Indian Army" of 480,000 with 8,800 officers, of whom 5,100 will be British. A motion in the General Legislative Assembly proposing that at any rate new junior British officers should not be taken, and that a time limit should be set to complete Indianisation within ten years, was officially opposed and defeated. The Commander-in-Chief, General Auchinleck, said that he was "*not prepared to set any time limit for Indianisation; it may take ten years, 20 years, or more.*"

Since the normal plea in defence of this policy is the alleged absence of trained Indian personnel, it is to be noted that a large number of wartime Indian temporary commissioned officers have been demobilised, and that out of their applications for permanent commissions, only one-third were accepted; of 1,236 applications for training at the Indian Military Academy, only 126 were accepted.

In the case of the Royal Indian Navy, officers and men suspected of nationalist and Left sympathies have been weeded out and dismissed since the recent rising, while 200 additional British commissioned officers are to be brought in.

At the same time, the separate military forces and preparations in the States are being maintained and strengthened. Hyderabad has announced that the wartime strength of its army of 100,000 will not be reduced. Nawanagar has ordered a fleet of planes with white pilots. British Air Head-quarters are stationed at Bangalore in Mysore State. New naval ports are being constructed at Sika, and Veraval in States territory and at Bhatkal (claimed by the Mysore State) and Vizagapatam (claimed by Hyderabad State).

All these active measures and preparations do not look like quitting. These are concrete plans for continued effective British military control alongside the offer of formal Independence.

FIGHT FOR INDIAN FREEDOM

Indian national feeling overwhelmingly desires complete independence. Hatred for British rule in every shape and form is intense.

The elaborate manoeuvres of the Cabinet Mission and its tactics of playing on Indian divisions may succeed for a time to confuse the situation and delay real Indian independence. But they cannot succeed for long. The Plan will not work. The first warning signs of a future breakdown were revealed already when the initial negotiations for the formation of an Interim Government met with a fiasco, and had to end with the establishment of a dictatorial "Caretaker's Government".

In the coming period an attempt will be made to form an Interim Government on the basis of the Indian parties. It is possible that such an Interim Government might be formed. But this will not mean that the contradictions at the heart of the scheme have been solved.

The Cabinet Mission claim that the Congress and the Moslem League have accepted their long-term proposals even if they have not been able to agree on an Interim Government.

This is not correct. The Congress Working Committee resolution of June 26, did not declare acceptance of the Long-term proposals. The Congress resolution emphasised the "defects" of the Plan, restated the Congress aim of "immediate independence"

and social advance and declared that the Plan "falls short of these objectives." The Congress resolution laid down, not acceptance of the Plan, but the decision "to join the Proposed Constituent Assembly with a view to framing a Constitution of a free, united and democratic India." The Congress leaders have made clear that they would enter with their own "interpretations" backed by legal advice. They have made clear that they will not accept compulsory grouping of provinces—the pivot of the Plan. Thus the fight is transferred to the Constituent Assembly as a new Parliamentary battleground.

The Moslem League have made clear that they will enter the Constituent Assembly to carry forward the fight for Pakistan. They interpret the Plan as providing "The basis and foundation of Pakistan," and proclaim that "the attainment of the goal of complete sovereign Pakistan remains the unalterable objective."

Thus the conflict is merely transferred to the Constituent Assembly and not solved. The breakdown of the attempts to form a joint Interim Government is only the first indication of the continued unsolved deadlock inherent in every stage of the Plan.

Indian opinion is already deeply disillusioned on the outcome of the Cabinet Mission. When Gandhi, who had been the most ardent to express rosy illusions and optimism on the arrival of the Cabinet Mission, in his final message during the last stage of the negotiations declared that "he saw darkness where he saw light before," he was expressing the feeling of deep disillusionment of the common man in India. No responsible Indian leader presents the Plan as a Plan for Indian freedom : even those who favour acceptance do so only on the grounds that they see no alternative at present.

Sooner or later, the fight for Indian freedom will be resumed, and will be carried to victory.

WHAT WE MUST DO

We in Britain have a duty in this situation.

Official propaganda and current Press comment have sought to popularise the Cabinet Mission Plan as equivalent to the granting of independence to India with full freedom for the Indian people to choose their own form of Constitution. There is as yet very little realisation of the true situation on the part of public opinion in Britain. There is very little realisation of the feelings of anger and

frustration felt from the Indian side on the outcome of the negotiations.

It is essential for the future relations of both countries that the true situation should be understood. It is essential that active steps should be taken to ensure the fulfilment of the policy to which the Labour Government of this country stands pledged and which is undoubtedly desired by the majority of the British people—achievement of real Indian freedom.

For this purpose we must demand that the British Government should take immediate steps to make good the shortcomings of the Cabinet Mission's Plan, and especially :

(1) Issue a declaration of recognition of Indian independence as the starting point of any further negotiations with regard to the details of transfer of power.

(2) Provide for democratic election by universal suffrage of a Constituent Assembly in India on the basis of redrawing the existing provincial boundaries on linguistic-cultural lines so as to allow for the exercise of the right of national self-determination if desired in any region.

(3) Hand over power to a provisional National Government of Indian leaders, either of the Congress and Moslem League jointly if they reach an agreement, or in the absence of an agreement, to the major political organisation, the Congress, which would then have the further responsibility of meeting the requirements of the situation in India and negotiating with the British Government until such a time as the sovereign Constituent Assembly would have established the future Indian Constitution and Government.

Such a settlement with India on the lines of Indian freedom is not only vital for the interests of the four hundred millions of Indian people, it is equally vital for the interests of democracy all over the world and of world peace. And it is not less for the best interest of the British people to end the relations of domination and exploitation which have only brought profits to the few and loss and harm to both peoples, and to open out a new basis of free and equal co-operation of the British and Indian peoples which will be of lasting benefit and advantage to both.

July 4, 1946

FOR A FREE AND HAPPY INDIA

Election Policy of Indian Communists

P. C. Joshi

I. BACKGROUND TODAY

THE coming elections will see a great programmatic battle between Indian parties. Other parties claim the monopoly of patriotism and wisdom and will put the blame on each other for coming in the way of the freedom of India. They will seek the confidence of the electorate against each other.

Ours is the only party that will do nothing of that sort, but tell the people the simple truth that India's main parties by fighting with each other will not bring Indian freedom nearer, but only leave India in the hands of the British imperialists as the final arbitrators of its destiny.

The British Government has offered no plan of Indian freedom, but has only asked the Indian parties to come into conference with their own plans after the verdict of the electorate.

The proposed constitution-making body is so designed that the vast majority of our people stand disfranchised and the majority of our delegates will be Congressmen from Hindu-majority provinces, and Leaguers from Muslim-majority areas, and they will never come to any agreement among themselves with the existing outlook of their respective leaderships.

Such a constitution-making body will not be able to come to any agreement on the fundamental principles of the constitution of a free India. The Congress and League delegations will be at loggerheads and the initiative will naturally pass into the hands of the British representatives.

This is the real secret behind the latest Wavell Plan. In the world of today, with the great political awakening in India, the British imperialists dare not directly and openly deny Indian freedom. Their present-day strategy is based on their firm belief that Indian parties will never come together and they will be able to impose their own plan for the future constitution of India.

COUPLAND SCHEME

A British-imposed constitution, designed to perpetuate the British imperialist hold over India under the guise of a "treaty" between India and Britain, is the grim prospect ahead.

The Congress will fight in the constitution-making body for a united India. The League will demand that the Muslim-majority provinces be carved into a separate sovereign state of Pakistan. Each side will look to the British representatives to side with it against the other.

The British will plead their inability to comply with either, and claim an August neutral status for themselves. They will patronisingly point out to both the Congress and the League that their demands are against each other's aims and can only be enforced through civil war.

They will promise to give an award that will meet the essence of the demands of both and also prevent civil war.

They will meet the Muslim demand for self-determination but will not give the Pakistan state the whole of Bengal and incur the wrath of the Bengali Hindus, nor the whole of the Punjab and incur the wrath of the Sikhs. The boundaries they will carve will be such as will neither satisfy the League nor the non-Muslims and will create a permanent minority problem for the Pakistan state.

They will meet the Congress demand for the United India by enforcing a common Centre for co-ordinating minimum common defence and economic functions.

They will provide for their own representation in the future Indian Union by pushing in their own loyal stooges, the Princes. They will provide for separate treaties between Britain and the Indian States which will mean that princely India will be the main future base for British garrisons and capital investments.

This is no imaginary picture. A blue print of just such a plan is already there in the scheme for the future constitution of India drawn up by Professor Coupland. Coupland came as a Secretary at the time of Cripps, he is the respected adviser of the India Office, the maker of the Palestine Constitution and the British imperialist expert on colonial constitutions.

The Congress will not get a United India, but three Indias with the balance of power in British hands. There will be a Hindu

Dominion led by the Congress, a Muslim Dominion led by the League and a Princely Confederation led by their white suzerain.

The League will not get a free and sovereign Pakistan but at best a Muslim Dominion under British overlordship.

After the elections, the Simla story will be repeated on a still vaster scale. Indian failure to come to common agreement on the basic principles of the Constitution of a free India will lead to the imposition of a British imperialist plan of modified Indian slavery.

II. FREE INDIA—FREEDOM FOR ALL

It is against this danger that our Party will rouse the people. As a revolutionary Party we have never suffered from illusions and the worth of our realistic political understanding stands proved.

We alone warned against the illusion of a 'short and swift struggle' on August 8, and we were proved correct.

We alone forecast certain failure of Simla Conference and against the outlook of trusting Wavell and mistrusting each other and we were proved correct a second time.

Once again we alone are fighting the illusion that success is round the corner after winning the elections, and we will be proved right once again.

Our purpose in contesting the elections is not to expose the Congress and the League and glorify ourselves, but to popularise among the electorate such a vision of Free India that ensures freedom to all and does not become the domination of some over the others, based on principles that can and must unite all freedom-loving Indians.

Our Party is the consistent advocate of the great democratic principle of self-determination as the firm foundation for building up the grand structure of a Free India. It is the expression of the sovereign will of the people.

We demand from the British Government an unequivocal declaration in recognition of complete Indian independence. Without it Indo-British relations will never have a firm foundation, but only be a cover for the domination of our country by British imperialists.

If British Labour cannot force the British Government to make such a declaration it will earn not the friendship but hostility of the Indian people and will have to face serious conflicts ahead.

Our Party will campaign for two basic political principles to be the foundation of the constitution of Free India.

(1) UNIVERSAL ADULT FRANCHISE

Our Party declares that a constitution-making body based on a limited franchise and indirect elections is mass disfranchisement of the majority. It cannot and will not solve any burning problem, but only install the Indian vested interests as the legal Government of the country and breed new conflicts.

(2) SOVEREIGN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLIES

The Constituents of the constitution-making body should be sovereign constituent Assemblies of Pathanland, Baluchistan, Sind, Muslim Western Punjab, Sikh Homelands of Central Punjab, Hindustan, Bihar, Rajasthan, Assam, Orissa, Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Gujrat and Bengal with previous agreement for plebiscite of Hindu and Muslim areas.

Every freedom-loving Indian will admit that India is one against British rule.

But only the prejudiced will deny that we have fundamental differences among ourselves which arise from our being different peoples and having different concepts of Indian freedom and the well-being of our people.

The common aim of freedom cannot be transformed into living reality unless our various people see that the freedom sought for will be the freedom of all.

The British built up a centralised state to keep all our people down.

It is inevitable that the nearer comes the issue of the transfer of power, the greater will grow of the suspicions of the minority, or the relatively backward people, against majority domination.

The British imperialists plead our internal differences and leave us all in dependent status and ranged against each other.

The only way out of this vicious circle is to start on the basis of the recognition of the right to sovereign independence of all our people. They have homelands of their own, great historic traditions and a rich cultural heritage of their own, and a growing modern literature. Their homelands also constitute natural economic units.

Such a solution is not academic but truly realistic. It is the most sensible and modern way to solve our present-day acute political differences and prevent the growth of future conflicts.

(1) *It is the only democratic solution of Congress-League differences and meets the just demands of both.*

It meets the essence of the League demand for Pakistan by giving sovereign rights to Muslim homelands. It repudiates the unjust claim of some leading Leaguers to the whole of the Punjab or to Assam. Freedom for one's homeland cannot mean the right to grab others' homelands.

It meets the Congress objection that they cannot agree to League claims without the verdict of the people.

It leaves room open to the leaders of the Sikhs and Muslims to preserve the unity of the Punjab by coming to an agreement among themselves.

It leaves the entire people of Bengal, both Hindu and Muslim, to decide through a prior plebiscite whether they will preserve the unity of their homeland or split.

(2) *Such a solution successfully prevents the further development of other existing, but not yet so acute, national differences, viz. Gujrati-Marathi, Punjab-Sindhi, Bihari-Bengali, Bengali-Assamese, etc.*

So far the vision of a Free India was only negative, freedom from British domination. As the freedom movement has grown, the national minorities naturally ask, what of our freedom in a Free India?

Our Party will place before all our people a positive image of freedom as Free Homelands in a Free India, whose basis and mutual relations the peoples themselves will decide through their direct vote.

This leaves the League to get a majority verdict of the Constituent Assemblies of Muslim homelands for a separate federation or to offer its own terms for entering an Indian Union.

This leaves the Congress free to pursue its goal of United India if it can win a majority in the Muslim Homelands or to offer terms that accredited Muslim leaders think are in the common interest.

Our Party is convinced that majority delegates of sovereign Constituent Assemblies based on universal adult franchise will not

only vigilantly guard the freedom of their own homelands but voluntarily agree to set up a common Indian Union for defending and advancing common interests.

We have no doubt that through such Constituent Assemblies, there will be no partition of India, but as democrats, we are quite prepared to abide by the verdict of the Constituent Assemblies of the people concerned.

Our faith in the future unity of India is based on faith in democratic principles and the common sense of the common people. Once the freedom and quality of our various people is unequivocally recognised by calling into being their own sovereign Constituent Assemblies it is not fear of domination that will keep them apart, but the pull of common interests that will bring them together.

III. FREEDOM FOR STATES SUBJECTS TOO

Under British civilian leadership the Princes have been ordered to learn to use democratic robes, “reforms” have been introduced in some States which however do not go beyond the Minto-Morley Reforms (1906) in some, in a few up to Montagu-Chelmsford (1919) Reforms and in others hardly any start has been made.

This is to ensure that in the future constitution-making bodies, the Princes too bring along some “representatives” of their people who however do not enjoy the franchise that exists even in British India.

Our Party will unflinchingly campaign for the full application of the principle of self-determination and adult franchise to Princely India.

If Congress-League agreement is a frontal blow at British imperialism, assertion of the right of self-determination by the States’ subjects will be such a back-hand drive as to lay it low even in its proposed last fortress.

Such an extension of democratic principles to the representation of the States in the coming constitution-making body will not only enable the suppressed people to come on top of their autocratic rulers, but lead to a real union of people of various nationalities, i.e., Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujerat, Karnatak, Andhra, etc. parts which are under these feudal autocrats and part under the British. Their culture, economy, and political life will record an

unprecedented upsurge after the union of their own people under one national state.

The Party will thus give concrete form to the freedom urge of our peoples, as freedom of all plead for an alliance of free people in an Indian Union to be constituted by their accredited delegates duly elected by the Constituent Assemblies which are directly elected by their universal vote. Thus alone can truly free India emerge and remain really united together.

The Party will put forward not only a political but also an economic programme containing not only the best final solution of our economic ills but immediately practical measures that will give quick relief to our hard-pressed long suffering people and prepare the ground for the basic reconstruction of our economy on democratic foundations.

IV. FOOD FOR ALL-LAND TO THE PEASANTS

Under the double-load of medieval landlordism and modern capitalism our agrarian economy has been decaying fast. After the experience of the war years any honest man should see for himself that our agrarian economy stands self-condemned. The traditional exploiters of the peasant have not only sucked him dry but have also learnt to act as thieves of peoples' food.

If the British inflation-planners were the first, and the town wholesalers the second, the village exploiters were the last and the most vital link among the manufacturers of famine for millions and food scarcity for all.

They must go lock, stock and barrel if our villages are not to become graveyards and our people have at least their food guaranteed to them.

The parasitical zamindar, the usurious mahajan, the crafty baniya become monopoly-trader, have all become hoarders, blackmarketeers and land-grabbers. There is no social crime they do not commit, nothing that they hold sacred. Their doings in Bengal have shocked humanity but that was the last stage in the journey towards which village society is going all over India.

KISAN DEMANDS

The Party will popularise the following measures to destroy these enemies of the villages, liberate the peasant and serve as the basic slogans of rural reconstruction :

- (1) Abolition of landlordism, nationalisation of land. Redistribution of land to make the uneconomic holdings of the poor peasants into consolidated economic holdings and to make large-scale co-operative farming possible.
- (2) Usury to be banned. All agricultural credit through co-operatives State banks.
- (3) Private trade in people's food to be banned. People's State to ensure direct purchase from the peasant at fair price.
- (4) Large-scale mass peasant initiative to be directly aided by the People's State for starting a network of co-operative sales and purchase societies to buy from the peasant his surplus produce at a fair price and make available to him his daily necessities at cheap rates.

INTERIM MEASURES

The Party will demand that the popular Ministries immediately enforce the following urgent steps as interim measures to increase food production, give prompt relief to the poor peasant-producer and get from the parasitical landlord a part of his ill-gotten gains to start village rehabilitation.

- (1) Landless labourers to get all the available fallow land whether of the landlord or the Government for producing food grains.
- (2) Poor peasants with uneconomic holdings to be given substantial reduction in rental to stabilise their own family economy and to encourage intensified food production.
- (3) Big landlords to pay over and above the land-revenue a steeply graduated income-tax so as not to leave an annual surplus of more than six thousand a year out of the total rental collected each of them.

The present serf village cannot be allowed to exist in a free India. It must be rid of its feudal parasites and selfish hoarders and must be led by the actual tiller of the soil, the producer of people's food.

Immediate enforcement of measures like the above will dispel the spectre of chronic famines and put the village economy on its feet. It will be the foremost task of our Party through peasant mass mobilisation during and after the elections to see that newly elected popular governments carry out such measures to ensure the people food and the village toilers decent livelihood, and that they do not

succumb to the influential pressure of the brutish and selfish parasitical elements.

V. FOR PLANNED INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

The British industrialists have traditionally used their political power to prevent the industrialisation of India. Even during the war years they sabotaged the starting of vital new industries and the maximum expansion of existing industries. They kept India poor and undeveloped and during war years made us suffer scarcity and high prices, hardly equalled in any other civilised country.

The Indian industrialists and capitalists instead of standing by their people in a time of such acute crisis only accentuated it by hoarding all available goods and transforming the normal market into blackmarket. The majority of leaders of industry and trade have become notorious war-profiteers. They through their own deeds stand by self-condemned as selfish anti-social elements in whose hands the future of the economy of our country cannot be trusted. The Indian people have not fought for freedom only to let the Indian capitalist-profiteers become the monopoly kings of Indian industry and finance.

The Party will advocate the rapid planned industrialisation of India to proceed under the direct guidance of the People's State on the basis of the following basic principles :

- (1) Nationalisation of all key industries.
- (2) State control of all capital resources for the development of the country as per State Plan.
- (3) Planned and even development of the industrial resources in different parts of the country.
- (4) Large-scale expenditure on social services. Guaranteed living wage to all workers.
- (5) The State Plan to be implemented through free and equal co-operation between the representatives of the State, management and labour.

JOBS FOR ALL

It is idle waste of time to work up schemes for the future planned industrial development in India if the threatened industrial crisis is not vigorously fought here and now. Therefore the Party will concentrate its immediate attention upon measures that will

prevent post-war unemployment and provide jobs to all those already employed in war-time industries now being rapidly closed down.

The Party will advocate in the Legislatures and vigorously press upon the popular Ministries to support and implement the following interim measures to keep up the existing level of industrial employment and get the financial resources to pay unemployment allowance and start new industries :

- (1) Reconvert war-time industries to peace-time needs through workers' co-operation.
- (2) Pass immediate legislation to take over all British concerns in part payment of the sterling balances and to be immediately developed as nationalised industries.
- (3) Pass immediate legislation not to return the EPT reserve fund to the profiteer-capitalists.
- (4) Setting up of an impartial open tribunal to investigate war-profiteers and confiscation of the entire fortune of those found guilty of blackmarketing and profiteering during the war years.

In every industrial constituency our Party will put forward detailed concrete scheme for saving peoples' livelihood and for better service of the peoples' needs by the industries concerned. They will be based on bridling the capitalist-profiteers and trusting the workers, employees and technicians. We will mobilise working class support behind them and demand that popular Ministries immediately carry them out.

NO OPPRESSION OF UNTOUCHABLES

The Communist Party stands for complete abolition of the social oppression of the millions of untouchables. It will fight to secure equal economic and political status for them in the governance of the country. In implementing its programme for settling landless labourers on our newly reclaimed land, the Party will insist that untouchables who form a large proportion of the landless labourers be given special attention.

VI. ATTITUDE TO OTHER PARTIES

From the very character of our Party comes our non-sectarian approach to other parties. The Congress and the League make exclusive claims against each other. We will support them both

where we are not putting up candidates of our own. We have our very serious differences with them, but we recognise them as our major patriotic political organisations that must be generally supported against their reactionary rivals.

Our Party will put up its own candidates in almost all Labour seats to demonstrate that it is the accepted leader of the working-class. We will also contest such rural seats, both general and Muslim, where we are the existing majority of the people to demonstrate the strength and vitality of the organised Kisan movement.

In those general seats excepting those reserved for Scheduled Castes, where the Party is not putting up its own candidate, we will support the Congress candidate.

In those Muslim seats where the Party is not putting up a candidate we will support the League against all rivals.

If any constituency a notorious hoarder and hated enemy of the people stands as a Congress or a League candidate the Party will of course not campaign for him.

In this election our two main parties, the Congress and the League, are going to fight each other in a manner that will not lay the basis for evolving a common plan for Indian freedom, but create the atmosphere of civil war.

Our Party is entering the electoral contest not to fight one or both of them, but to stand in their middle and fight the flames they both light by ourselves putting forward a plan of Indian freedom that embodies their just demands, but repudiates the unjust claims of both, and offers concrete proposals of national reconstruction that are equally in the interests of all peoples.

Our non-partisanship is not our only strength. We are the only Party that enjoys the joint mass backing of both Hindu and Muslim masses, the entire working class, and wherever we have organised Kisan movement in eastern and northern India.

The influence of our programme will be felt throughout India whether we are ourselves contesting a seat or not. It is a programme that will be patiently and intently listened to both by the followers of the Congress and the League.

How can any serious patriotic Indian turn a deaf ear to a practical programme of Indian freedom which guarantees :

Freedom of all

Food for all

Jobs for all

And which can be realised only through the efforts of all.

And above all who will not see that as it is, it is hell for all, and if it continues much longer, India will become a worse hell; where people suffer like animals and profiteers prosper where political leaders are factional and at loggerheads with each other, where lies run current and truth is suppressed, where the desire to dominate is called the will to freedom, where instead of a united fight for freedom, the clouds of civil war gather thicker and blacker.

The simple issue our Party will put to the people throughout India is :

Must it be Darkness or Dawn, Death or Life, Slavery or Freedom.

COMMUNISTS AND CONGRESS

Why Communists Resigned From The Congress

We, Indian communists, had great hopes from the leadership of our foremost patriotic organisation, the Congress, to take the initiative to think out and rally the entire country behind a democratic plan for immediate realisation of Indian freedom in alliance with the victorious progressive popular forces of the world.

In fact, the central plank of all our agitation during the last three years has been to demand their release and to expose imperialist reaction that forcibly kept up the deadlock.

Never before have the sufferings of our people been greater, and such eager looking to the political leaders for immediate relief and a way out.

Never before has the economy of our country been in greater danger, not has there ever been a greater urgency nor such practical possibilities to rebuild it on new foundations.

Never before has there been such a widespread sense of political despair and frustration, on the one hand, and greater political interest, on the other.

Never before in our national movement was there greater need squarely to face up to the various complicated issues that constitute the Indian problem—the achievement of Indian freedom and the building up of Indian democracy.

AGAINST THE LEAGUE

The Congress leadership after its release has not been doing serious thinking but demonstrating sectarian arrogance.

After three years of imperialist deadlock, they got the chance to offer a constructive lead to the country in the last AICC meeting. Instead of offering a concrete plan for Indian freedom, they have committed the Congress organisation to a course of action that will only further divide and disrupt the freedom forces themselves.

The Congress has undoubtedly become stronger during the last three years, but so has the League.

To glorify the strength of the one but to deny that of the other, is to be blind.

The Congress stands for the freedom of India, the League demands freedom for the Muslim homelands.

To demand the right of self-determination from the British but to deny it to a section of our own countrymen is plain injustice.

The Congress is a non-communal organisation, but the majority of the Muslims consider the League as their organisation. The Congress damns the League as a communal organisation, but more and more Congress Muslims are themselves going over to the League.

Not to read the signs of the times is not wisdom.

In the name of Indian freedom, the Congress leadership is denying freedom to the Muslim homelands. In the name of the unity of India, it is keeping divided India's two main political organisations.

Present disunity cannot lead to future unity.

When the Congress leadership refuses to deal with the League, it is refusing to build a United Front for Indian freedom. When Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru declare that they will fight the League, they are only getting the Hindus and Muslims organised into hostile camps. When the Congress leadership seeks the intervention of the British Government against the League, it plays into the hands of British reaction, postponing the day of India's freedom.

We do not consider it good patriotism to seek the intervention of the British in our internal affairs. This will lead not to Indian freedom, but to a British-imposed and British-planned constitution.

We do not consider it good sense to fight our brother Muslims in the name of Indian unity. *This is unleashing the forces of civil war and certainly not forging the future of one Indian Union.*

AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS

The Congress leadership besides turning its back on the League is raising its arm against our young Party which during the last three years consistently defended it against imperialist slanders both within our country and abroad and fearlessly exposed the forces of deadlock which sought to resist the will of our people to be free.

From within the jail walls they repudiated responsibility for the August "struggle" in their correspondence with the British Viceroy. Immediately on coming out almost the very first thing they did, even without hearing us, was to denounce our Party for not participating in the same August "struggle". Who may blame us if we consider their attitude as unprincipled opportunism?

They refuse to make a serious objective analysis of the last three years and then come to truthful conclusions about the role of different parties and groups. They forget the threat of Fascist aggression, they ignore organised sabotage activities, they paint the post August days primarily as a spontaneous upsurge of a freedom-loving people against their hated foreign rulers and condemn us for being "on the other side." They do not ask themselves that if these three years were really what they imagine them to be, we would not be a force worth shouting about.

They sometimes glorify and at other times refuse to judge individuals and groups who openly preached pro-Japanism and organised the sabotage campaign, on the basis of their patriotic motive. But they do not concede that our motives were or could also be patriotic. Against us they repeat the arguments of the world's worst reactionaries, that our anti-fascism was a cover to serve Russian interests and our opposition to the sabotage of our country's defence really an effort to aid the war efforts of Britain.

They refuse to see that their self-contradictory August '42 policy led not to National Government, but to national humiliation. They make our Party their scapegoat.

LEADING TO DISASTER

Such a self-righteous but really blind and prejudiced attitude towards our Party, has already led to three dire consequences.

Firstly, dismay among friends of Indian freedom abroad, for, world communism is the most powerful single influence behind the forces of world freedom and democracy today.

Secondly, openly fascist, reactionary and authoritarian trends have begun to raise their heads inside the Congress and anti-Communism has only become a cover to hide the acute factional struggle inside the Congress for the control of its machine.

Thirdly, utter confusion among the lower ranks of the Congress.

Instead of examining their own policy, formulating a new policy for the new times and appealing to all groups in the Congress to consider it dispassionately, they seek to gag our Party when they provisionally propose that members of our Party can remain ordinary members of the Congress, but cannot be elected to the deliberative bodies of the Congress nor to its executive posts.

The leadership of the Congress has begun to ape the reactionary British Labour Party leaders responsible for the infamous "Black Circular," does not trust the voice of its own membership and denies elementary democratic rights to a section of the national movement inside the national organisation itself.

The Congress leaders have not stopped here. They are giving direct or indirect support to the champions of rival organisations on the Student, Kisan and Trade Union fronts. These elements are either the open agents of profiteers and hoarders, or thoroughly discredited individual 'Labour' and 'Kisan' leaders who have lost their old mass following to us and seek to stage a come-back with the Congress banner in hand.

Our Party cannot passively watch Congress-League conflict growing, aid the one against the other and fan the flames of civil war instead of struggling its hardest to build their joint front for freedom's battle.

Our Party cannot patiently hear slanders against itself repeated *ad nauseam*.

Our Party cannot permit itself to be chained and gagged by a leadership that is leading our freedom movement to the rocks.

Our Party will not let professional careerists disrupt the Kisan Sabhas and Trade Unions. We have spent all our young lives to build them up, they are joint Hindu-Muslim mass organisations and the living bases of the Indian democracy of the future.

We, Indian Communists, consider the existing anti-League and anti-Communist policy of the Congress High Command as direct encouragement to the forces of civil war and class-war, which will lead to the ruin of our country and not to its freedom.

Instead of carrying out such a policy, we consider it our foremost duty to demarcate ourselves most sharply from it.

FOR BETTER SERVICE

We are, therefore, directing our Party members to resign from the Congress. Our AICC members will however, not resign. They will answer the 'charges' and face the verdict of the Working Committee against our Party and get it to opine on the issues that concerned the past as they will concern the future of our common national movement.

After about two weeks, all documents will be available to the people to judge for themselves.

We are confident that all honest Congressmen will see that this, in the prevalent circumstance, is the best course both for the Congress and our Party.

It will enable us to put our policy before Congressmen and the people without let or hindrance.

It will enable the Congress to find its feet more naturally after three years of illegality. After all, how long will the ranks not ask the leadership: How is brother fighting brother the path to the freedom of the country?

By the conscious adoption of an anti-League and anti-Communist policy, the Congress leadership has with its own hand shattered, not only our dream, but all genuine progressives, of seeing the Congress develop as the base and builder of the United National Front of our people.

As long as our country remains enslaved, the only path to our national independence lies through a National United Front of all popular forces.

AS UNITY-CRUSADERS

In the extremely critical and difficult period that is coming ahead, we will ceaselessly work for Congress-League unity as also for Congress-Communist unity and create the basis of Congress-League-Communist unity inside one joint front for Indian freedom. With full faith in the patriotism of our Congress and League brothers we will work as unity-crusaders, patiently explaining the just viewpoint of the one to the other and by ourselves going out to resist the unjust claims of the one against the other.

★ AGAINST THE DISRUPTORS, WE SHALL APPEAL TO THE COMMONSENSE OF THE COMMON MAN.

★ AGAINST THE SLANDERERS, WE SHALL SUPPLY TRUE FACTS.

★ AGAINST THE PREJUDICED, WE SHALL PIT OUR ARDENT PATRIOTISM.

The greatest argument for our policy will be the growing realisation among both Congressmen and Leaguers that the harder they fight each other or the firmer will be the grip of British reaction over the fate of us all.

To-day we may be alone in working against the tide, but the tide will turn.

How long can passion drown reason?

How long can partisanship prevail over patriotism?

How long can we remain apart and all under foreign rule?

What we say today all will see tomorrow through their own experience. We work and shall continue to work for a common front against common slavery and for common freedom. We shall win and not lose, for ours is the cause of all.

THE TATA-BIRLA PLAN : WILL IT WORK ?

B. T. Ranadive

I. THE ESSENTIALS OF THE PLAN

Leaders of Indian Industry and Finance, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, J. R. D. Tata, G. D. Birla, Sir A. R. Dalal and others have come out with a plan of economic development for India. To a Government whose conception of planning has not gone beyond demobilised soldiery or at best beyond building endless roads to draw the Indian peasant into the vortex of the world-market and ensure cheap raw material for export, the plan with its demand for heavy and basic industries will come as a rude reminder that the Indian people cannot be humbugged for all time.

The plan aims at a threefold increase in the total national income within a period of fifteen years. It aims at increasing the aggregate national income from Rs. 2,200 crores to Rs. 6,600 crores, which, taking into account the increase in population during the period, will mean a doubling of the per capita income.

To treble the national income the authors propose that the income from industry be raised by 500 per cent; that from agriculture by 130 per cent and from services by 200 per cent, so that industry will contribute 35 per cent of the total national income instead of 17 per cent as at present, agriculture 40 per cent instead of 53 per cent as at present and services 20 per cent in place of 22 per cent. At the end of the fifteenth year, therefore, the net income from industrial production will be Rs. 2,240 crores; that from agriculture Rs. 2,670 crores; and from services Rs. 1,450 crores—which together will ensure a per capita dividend of Rs. 135 per year.

The authors demand priority for basic industries which include Power, Mining, Metallurgy, Engineering, Machinery of all kinds, Chemicals, Armaments, Transport, Railway engines, Ship-building, Automobile, Aircraft, etc. Along with this they plan to develop consumption goods industries which include Textile, Leather goods, Paper, Oil, etc.

From the estimated net industrial produce of Rs. 2,240 crores the authors calculate that the total capital required for industry will be Rs. 4,480 crores. This is based on the assumption that the ratio of capital to the net annual product is not likely to be more than 2 : 1—an assumption which does not seem to be supported by facts. Even on this modest calculation the amount of capital required is enormous if we take into account the fact that during the entire pre-war period the total capital invested in our industries, barring railway and other transport, is only 700 crores—less than one-sixth the amount required by the plan.

To raise agricultural production by 130 per cent the plan relies mainly on irrigation through new canals, oil conservation, extending the area of cultivation, though it talks about consolidation of holdings and co-operative farming. The total capital requirements are estimated to be Rs. 1,240 crores. For communications including railways, roads and shipping, capital requirements are estimated to be Rs. 940 crores ; for education which includes compulsory primary and adult education, secondary, university and technical education, the estimated capital requirements are Rs. 490 crores; for health which includes general and maternity hospitals, dispensaries and special treatment the estimate is Rs. 450 crores; for housing which is to provide 100 square feet of house room per person the capital required is estimated at Rs. 2,200 crores. The total capital cost is estimated at 10,000 crores of rupees—14 times the total capital sunk in our industries—barring transport, up to the beginning of the war.

Whatever may be the difference of opinion about the plan as a whole, all will agree that the demand for the promotion of basic industries like heavy chemicals, engineering, mining and metallurgy, automobiles, is the demand of the entire Indian people, and the authors of the plan have done well in focussing public attention on it and giving the public a criterion to judge official schemes of post-war reconstruction.

Since its inception British Imperialism has strangled the industrial development of India. It has been particularly hostile to the development of heavy and basic industries which would free India from dependence on British industry for machinery and other vital things. At every stage it has sabotaged the promotion of basic

industries and declared its resolve to use India only as a producer of raw materials. How it sabotaged the establishment of an automobile industry is fresh in the minds of all. It would not change its selfish attitude even in face of the urgent needs of the war. Dominating the Rogers Mission, it declared that India should not start new and heavy industries and in the name of war obstructed all progress. It continued its selfish policy even when India had become the biggest base of the fight against Japan, and the needs of the army required the development of heavy industries in the country. It vetoed even the modest recommendations of the American Grady Mission and accepted the risk of hold-up and dangerous delay in supplying the vital needs of the army. No basic and heavy industry for India has been its watchword.

Thanks to this the Indian economic structure is completely clogged and poverty and misery intensify every year. India is placed at the mercy of the British capitalists. The demand for heavy and basic industries, for industries which will make our machines and tools; our automobiles and aeroplanes; which will manufacture chemicals and produce power plant is a demand for freeing the country from economic tutelage and exploitation by foreign capitalists and for developing our resources and removing the stagnation in our economic life.

This is how Pandit Nehru stated the position in one of his notes to the Planning Committee:

“The very resolution appointing the Planning Committee calls upon us to provide for the development of heavy key industries, medium-scale industries and cottage industries. It lays down that the economic regeneration of the country cannot take place without industrialisation. We have thus to expedite industrialisation and indicate how and where the key and basic industries are to be started.” (4th June, 1939.) (P.74—Red Book No. 1., National Planning committee.)

The authors of the plan, therefore, have voiced an urgent demand of the nation—a vital demand in giving priority to heavy and basic industries. They have thereby also made it clear that any scheme which does not give priority to these industries is mere eye-wash—ignoring the fundamental problem.

II. IS IT A NATIONAL PLAN?

At the same time the tendency to boost up the proposal as a national plan of economic regeneration cannot but be discountenanced. For even the most superficial examination will reveal that the plan neglects the basic and fundamental principles of national planning, is based on wrong assumptions and betrays a conservative and even reactionary outlook which is suicidal to the economic development of the nation.

The authors seem to be extremely chary of making use of the principles accepted by the National Planning Committee set up by the Conference of Ministries in 1938. And yet that Committee with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at its head, laid down all the essential principles required for any orderly economic development.

The political pre-condition of planning laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru was as follows :

“It is clear that the drawing up of a comprehensive national plan becomes merely an academic exercise, with no relation to reality, unless the planning authority is in a position to give effect to that plan. An essential pre-requisite of planning is thus complete freedom and independence for the country and the removal of all external control.” (4th June, 1939.) (P.73—Red Book No.1., National Planning Committee, paras 4 and 5.)

The authors of the plan themselves realise that there must be power to implement the plan. They, however, are satisfied with a National Government in whom will be vested full freedom in economic matters.

Instead of full political sovereignty they base themselves on the so-called full freedom in economic matters, which without political freedom, is but another name for the discredited farce of “fiscal autonomy”. It is because of this political conservatism, that the authors pursue a conservative policy in their proposals which in the end promises to ruin all chances of an orderly economic development.

It might be pleaded, as the authors do plead, that they are planning for the transitional period, and that it is justifiable to do so. And yet even on this basis they cannot escape blame. For any transitional plan of production must in the last resort conform to the basic needs and principles on which planning for a free India can take place.

“Even under existing circumstances we must make every effort to adopt all measures and policies which develop the resources of the country and raise the standard of our people. All such efforts, however, must be directed towards the realisation of the plan we have drawn for a free India. They should neutralise, as far as possible, the force of the existing restrictions on our constitutional powers, and should not create new vested interests, or further erroneous policies, which might form new obstacles in the achievement of our goal and the realisation of our full plan.” (P. 73—Red Book No. 1, para 8.)

Have the authors heeded this warning of Jawaharlal Nehru? Have they in their transitional plan at least taken care to see that the present evils do not oppress us with added force in future; and have they at least taken care to see that their own objectives can be implemented? To everyone of these questions the answer is no.

The objective of our industrial leaders is raising the standard of life of our people—doubling it in the course of fifteen years. And yet they quite casually say that their plan does not discuss the vital question of distribution. They defer that discussion to a future date.

Without an equitable distribution of wealth through minimum living wage, social security, ensuring living conditions for all, an all-round increase in the standard of living is not possible. Unless distribution is planned and controlled along with production, instead of all round happiness, there will be growing accumulation of poverty at one end and riches at the other. This is the common experience of the capitalist world. That is what Pandit Nehru describes as the erroneous policies of the present which should not be admitted in any planning. That is why the National Planning Committee's planning dealt with production, distribution, consumption, investment, trade, income, social security and the many other forces of national activity which act and react on each other; that is why the Planning Committee, taking its stand on the Fundamental Rights resolution of the Karachi Congress sought to regulate distribution by ensuring living conditions for the mass of our people.

It is obvious, therefore, that a plan which defers distribution or ignores it, cannot be a plan for all-round increase in standard of life; it cannot be called a 'plan' for economic development; it will only assume the character of the prospectus of a new Company.

In their conservatism, the authors have fallen into this pitfall and by deferring distribution have renounced all claims to increased standard of living for the people as a whole. Even a child will understand that an increase of national production does not automatically lead to increased well-being of the people unless profits are controlled and legislation, by ensuring living conditions etc., distributes the product equitably.

III. OWNERSHIP OF INDUSTRY

Along with distribution the authors have deferred discussion of another vital principle of planning—Social ownership and control of key industries through a state fully representative of the people. It certainly requires immense courage in these days to come out with a plan for economic development and ignore altogether the role of State ownership and control, when the entire world is fed up with private trade and enterprise and is seriously considering how to reshape society.

Is any planned development of Indian industries possible, unless the question of control and ownership are decided? Planning involves complete and rigid control over certain industries, state ownership of certain others, otherwise there is nothing to be planned, nothing to be co-ordinated.

It is precisely for this reason that the National Planning Committee declared :

“In regard to defence industries, it was decided that they must be owned and controlled by the State. Regarding key industries the majority was of opinion that they should also be state-owned. In connection with public utilities it was decided that they should be owned by some organ of the State.....In regard to other important and vital industries no definite rule was laid down, but it was decided that the very nature of planning required some measure of control.”—Jawaharlal Nehru, February, 1940. (Page 33, Red Book No.2)

Nehru made it clear that by ‘State’, he meant a free and democratic India, not the Imperialist State.

Public ownership of key industries and public utilities, and general control over others, though private enterprise was not ruled out in connection with others—that is what the National Planning Committee decided to be able to plan an orderly development of industry.

Leaders of industry, while they want to score big industrial targets in fifteen years, totally forget that this cannot be done by private enterprise alone, but by society as a whole, exercising ownership and control over basic industries. They forget that with complete freedom to private enterprise, there is no orderly development but chaos.

By deferring the question of ownership, the authors renounce all claims to a planned and orderly development, and also to the targets aimed at.

IV. AGRICULTURE

Equally astonishing is the outlook of the authors in connection with agriculture. The authors plan for an increase of 130 per cent in agriculture in fifteen years.

Irrigation, protection against soil erosion, better varieties of seeds and manures—in short all the stock remedies which are given in any economic text-book, find a place of honour. Rs. 1240 crores of people's money is to be spent on them.

Of course the authors do not seem to have heard about the vested interests which hamper agricultural development and make it impossible for the nation to invest any capital in agriculture and to run it on scientific lines. According to the framers of the plan "the most important question to be solved is that of the size of agricultural holdings" and consolidation of holdings is advocated.

The businessmen's awe and respect for property rights have compelled them to ignore the fact that the landlord bars all way to progress, that so long as he is there, scientific organisation of agriculture is not possible, and with all the sums that are proposed to be expended, and target of production in agriculture will not be reached.

The authors, therefore, conveniently think of only the ryotwari peasant and talk about indebtedness, carefully avoiding all mention of rack-renting.

And how do they propose to liquidate the huge rural debt? With the aid of the moneylender himself who is supposed to finance the co-operative societies! This is what the authors solemnly observe on page 31 of their memorandum :

"It may be pointed out that the finance required for this is not included in our capital expenditure since the debt of the agriculturist

represents the savings of another class and these savings would themselves be available directly or indirectly for financing co-operative societies.”!

The planners think in the same way as the bureaucrat. Think of remedying the lot of the peasant without any change in property relations. Don't touch the landlord. Convert the money lender into a director of the Co-operative Bank, the financier of all credit societies and the problem will be solved—such are their childish proposals which are hundred per cent identical with those of the bureaucrat.

In spite of the colossal sums that are proposed to be spent on agriculture, the dominant outlook is of small-scale farming by rack-rented and debt-ridden peasantry—of peasantry every additional labour put by whom will be easily appropriated by the landlord.

Has this agriculture any future, inspite of the colossal sums promised? It has none. India's agriculture has no future, India's peasant has no future, unless the present landlord-ridden, scattered, antiquated agriculture is replaced by a thorough-going agrarian revolution with scientific and large-scale collective or co-operative farming.

The least that one can do is to create the basis for such a development. The authors dare not contemplate this prospect, for it involves a complete scrapping of old property rights and freeing the land from it. They, therefore, sacrifice agricultural development to it and with it their targets of agricultural production.

Far different was the approach of Jawaharlal Nehru and the National Planning Committee. In his note to the Planning Committee on August 30, 1940, Nehru wrote :

“No social or economic structure which does not provide work and security to the people can endure. In India we have thought too long in terms of the upper groups and ignored the vast numbers of peasantry. This can no longer be done and the forgotten creature, the Indian peasant who has borne so many grievous burdens for centuries, must find relief and secondly advancement in our plan.”—(Page 7, Red Book No. 4, Para 12.)

And following this the Land-policy Sub-committee declared :
 “Agricultural land, quarries, mines, etc., are forms of natural wealth, ownership of which must vest absolutely in the people of India collectively.....No intermediaries of the type of taluqdars,

zamindars should be recognised in any of these forms of natural wealth after transition period is over.”—(Page 33, Red Book No. 3.)

The National Planning Committee attempted to clear the obstacles created by vested interests to agriculture and industrial progress. It had the daring and the clarity to see that without removing all vested interests, industrial progress itself would be in danger. Unfortunately our industrial magnates possess neither the daring nor the clarity.

This conservative approach towards agriculture not only jeopardises the targets of agricultural production, but decidedly ruins the prospects of the industrial progress planned in the memorandum. The Indian peasant is the customer, client and the ultimate market for the industrial goods that will be produced. In the last resort it is he who will determine whether heavy industry will continue to work or not. It is his veto as a market, as a customer that will ultimately decide the fate of all industrial plans.

Keep him landlord-ridden and rack-rented and he is a poor customer and has no purchasing power. He holds back industrial progress.

Remove the landlord and moneylender, free his agriculture from vested interests, and he produces more and also provides good market for industrial products.

Our industrialists not daring to face the landlord, have already sacrificed their market and yet they hope to achieve 500 per cent increase in industrial production!

A detailed examination of the capital figures required under the above heads is not necessary. It is good that borrowing of big sums are suggested for education and health, though one need not necessarily accept the figures as reliable. It is obvious that rapid industrialisation will require a rapid and all-round increase in education and better attention to health.

Yet even here the calculation does not seem to have been done carefully; no care seems to have been taken to see that certain items are not calculated twice. For instance, part of the capital, viz, that required for buildings, education and hospitals, cement, timber, iron etc. will obviously come from the net national product of the industry and will not have to be borrowed. Yet even this part is shown as totally new capital borrowed from other sources.

V. FINANCE

The authors hope to find the finance for this big undertaking from the following sources :

Sterling Securities ..	1,000	crores
Hoarded Wealth ..	300	crores
Balance of Trade ..	600	crores
Foreign Borrowing ..	700	crores
Saving ..	4,000	crores
Created Money, i.e.		
Inflation ..	3,400	crores

The figures appear to have been given without much reasoning to support them. That is not to say that we will not be able to find capital of 10,000 crores. But the amount ascribed to various sources seems to be based on pure conjecture.

There will not be and need not be any objection to foreign borrowing if political power is firmly in the hands of the Indian people. But with the authors' vision extending only to "economic freedom" without full sovereignty—foreign borrowing will mean creating new vested interests to exploit our resources and our people.

The only reliable item seems to be Rs. 1,000 crores from Sterling Securities, since the Sterling Securities held by the Reserve Bank already amount to more than 700 crores. These Sterling Securities constitute a national asset. We have paid for them through high prices, starvation and famine. They, therefore, must be earmarked for the purpose of developing our industries.

But there is grave danger of these securities being frittered away by Government on building useless roads or other things. In fact some such plan is already in the air. Unless public opinion is awake these valuable assets might be frittered away in useless schemes or drained away by manipulation of the exchange rate or some other means as happened after the last war, when by artificially fixing the rupee-exchange ratio at 2 shillings, a good deal of what India had earned during the war years was drained away.

The planners have rightly counted on them for supplying the capital requirements of our industry and claimed them as a national asset.

The most objectionable feature is that of "created money" to the extent of 3,400 crores to finance the plan.

Created money is but another name for inflation pure and simple, the dire effects of which are seen even today in the shape of sky-rocketting prices and endless suffering and starvation for the vast mass of the people.

The net meaning of this created money is to go on with the expansion of currency with the aid of the printing press and paper notes; injection of this paper money in circulation so that it is exchanged against goods, services, labour, etc. The result is ever-increasing prices and a continuous fall in the purchasing power of money, as has happened today. The vast mass of our people will thus find their real income continually shrinking, and will find themselves on short rations or compelled to starve.

This happens because the currency expansion, the created money, only represents paper and does not represent any addition of goods.

The meaning of this created money is expansion of currency with the aid of printing press and paper notes.

This paper money does not represent additional goods; it does not represent any value; it is not backed by gold. It is just paper and nothing else. The total quantity of money will thus increase rapidly without a corresponding increase of goods, as is happening in India today. The result will be ever-soaring prices and a continuous fall in the purchasing power of money. These high prices will only penalise the vast mass of our people whose money-incomes will not increase with the rise in prices. People will be forced on short rations or be compelled to starve as is happening today all over the country.

Now we know how this "created money" is converted into capital for industry. To be able to operate as capital the mere paper money must be converted into something tangible—iron, coal etc. How is this done?

In the last analysis by paying the coal and iron worker with paper money, by forcing them on to starvation rations through inflation, by organising a "saving" of capital at his expense.

It is thus that the authors hope to build their capital. This capital does not come out of the paper notes, but out of the enforced economy and starvation which inflation imposes on the people. They propose to build their structure by enforcing people to cut down their consumption to the minimum; their plan is to ask people

to forgo their daily needs, till out of this is raised a capital of Rs. 3,400 crores.

The fifteen-year plan of currency expansion, of inflation is a plan of organised starvation in the name of tightening the belt. That more than one-third of the total capital of 10,000 crores is made dependent on the atrocious method of filching the common man when he is already living on a sub-human standard only betrays the bankruptcy of the authors.

The enormity involved in this plan can only be understood in comparison with the present. The prevailing inflation has already caused untold suffering, and by encouraging the black-marketeer and hoarder caused millions of deaths. Necessities of life have gone beyond the reach of the people. And yet the prevailing figures of currency expansion appear small before the inflation drive contemplated in the plan. Between 1939-43 the total increase in the note and rupee circulation was 580 crores (*Dr. Rao, War and Indian Economy*). The annual average comes to 145 crores. In the plan the annual average will be 226 crores—that is 66 per cent more than the present rate.

Inflation far more sweeping than the present—that is what is planned. The colossal amount involved can be judged from the fact that 3,400 crores represent $1\frac{1}{2}$ times our present national income and more than 50 per cent of the income expected under the plan at the end of fifteen years.

It is contended on behalf of the authors that this expansion of currency will not lead to inflation, high prices and starvation, because production will be continually expanding. This is a fallacious argument and does not take into account the elementary fact that the new goods do not enter the market the moment created money or additional currency appears. There is always a lag—and the period of this lag is determined by the character or type of industry. In the meanwhile currency expands, but goods are not available; and it happens every year so that the fifteen years of plan are years of continuous inflation.

The authors of the plan assured the readers in the beginning that they did not want to stint the people of consumer goods and therefore wanted to make provision for industries like Textiles etc. And yet when they come to the question of raising capital they find no other avenue than inflation whose precise effect is to reduce the

consumption of necessaries to the lowest possible minimum—even below starvation point.

It is true that enormous sacrifices will be necessary on the part of our people, to change the face of our country and to take it from the old antiquated agriculture to industrialisation and the Indian people, the vast mass of our countrymen, will be prepared to make every sacrifice, undergo any privation to take their country out of the morass of poverty and stagnation. But these burdens must be equitably distributed according to the capacity to bear them; they must really be required by the situation and be in the interest of the people and should not degenerate into one-sided infliction of suffering to line the pockets of a fortunate few.

Inflation is just open to this objection. Financing through inflation is just robbery, for it thrusts the burden on the shoulders of the poor allowing the rich, the speculator to go scotfree. It takes the bread of the poor man beyond his reach, raises the prices of necessaries of life, while it inflates the illgotten profits of the speculators and employers and the wealthy. If attempted on the scale planned by the authors, it will lead to an unprecedented industrial crisis and bring down the entire economic structure.

The authors themselves have an uneasy conscience about the proposal, for they write :

“During the greater part of the planning period, however, financing of economic development by means of created money on this scale is likely to lead to a gap between the volume of purchasing power in the hands of the people and the volume of goods available.” (*P. 48* of their memorandum).

And they are then forced to suggest state interference which they carefully avoided in connection with control and ownership of key industries.

The authors thus realise that this colossal inflation will lead to a position in which with all the printed money in their hands people will not be able to buy much—a position of want, of short ration, shrinkage of real income.

There are other and more equitable and, one may add, honourable methods of tightening the belt and releasing capital for production. Cutting down profits to the minimum, doing away with luxuries, fat salaries and commissions, strict rationing of necessaries, etc. These will distribute the burdens equitably and

make it a plan really based on common sacrifice. It is strange that the authors do not say a word about limiting profits and put forward inflation as the national remedy to create new capital.

In reality financing the plan through inflation is to ask the people to revolt against it.

VI. A PLAN OF FIGURES

Beside the plan as a whole is amateurish in its conception. No attempt is made to co-ordinate the different sections of production. Heavy industry and light industry, industry and agriculture, stand separate and unconnected. No trouble is taken to arrive at the minimum technical co-ordination of the various branches of production.

With infinite faith in the power of mere money to create a new world, our businessmen have gone on adding arithmetical sums one to another. All that they have achieved is to show that for a certain amount of production a certain amount of capital is required. It is indeed a pity that our industrialists have not been capable of anything more.

When we look back to the clarity reached by the National Planning Committee we cannot but say that the proposed plan constitutes a step away from the progress registered at the Planning Committee. It is amazing to find almost every fundamental principle of the Planning Committee ignored. To ignore what was really national in the Planning Committee's recommendations, and to attempt to build a plan only on the basis of capital requirements is to substitute a businessman's plan for a national plan of production. The authors have unfortunately slipped into this path.

The only progressive and national part of the plan is the insistence on heavy and basic industry, without which there is no salvation for India. Every Indian will support the authors in this patriotic demand.

At the same time the plan does not discuss distribution and just because of this, its objective of raising the standard of life 100 per cent cannot be attained.

It does not accept public or state ownership of key industries, once more defers discussion of the question and for the present relies on individual enterprise, thus making it almost impossible to achieve the targets that it has set.

It relies on antiquated small-scale agriculture with its landlords whom it is afraid to touch and inevitably ruins all chances of attaining its proposed industrial and agricultural targets.

Its method of financing through inflation is not only unjust and atrocious but an invitation to the common man to revolt against the plan itself.

In the final analysis it becomes an essay in arithmetical calculations, which ignores the reality—the existence of property and vested interests etc., the social objective—the need to raise the standard of living of the people, and becomes a businessman's plan.

None can characterise it as a national plan or even a transitional plan for economic regeneration. It is a pity that our industrialists have been unable to give us anything better than this. This miserable result they have reached because they ignore the basic principles of national planning. Our advice to them is :

Go back to the National Planning Committee and produce something which will be worthy of you, and which will enthuse our people to work for it as their plan of economic regeneration.

RESURGENT INDIA AT THE CROSS ROADS

G. Adhikari

Mass Upsurge

On this Independence Day, we are in a position to review the first complete year or more that has passed since the end of the Second World War. In India, as everywhere else in the subject countries of the East, it has been an year of an unprecedented revolutionary freedom upsurge of the people seeking to break through the tottering bulwark of imperialist-feudal rule.

It has also been an year of imperialist counter-offensive against the freedom movement which has taken unusual forms, and has created ghastly internal conflicts to drown the freedom fight in a fratricidal blood-bath.

But the deep economic crisis, born out of the intensified imperialist exploitation of the war years, which has brought unbearable suffering and starvation to the broad masses of the toiling and common people, and sharpened their political consciousness and militancy, continues to operate as a mighty driving force, behind the rising revolutionary fight of the masses.

Rising Tempo

Despite the secret military plans to crush our freedom struggles which British imperialist statesmen have hatched behind the curtain while they publicly talk of a peaceful transfer of power and quitting India; despite their back-stair intrigues to pitch popular parties against each other and provoke a fratricidal war; despite the compromising, disruptive and anti-struggle policies pursued by the Congress and League leaderships; the tempo, the sweep and militancy of the struggles of the workers and employees in the cities, of the peasants and tenant-serfs in the countryside, of the common people in the feudal autocratic States have gone on steadily increasing through the year.

All Asia In Revolt

It is well to remember that the events in India are part of the rising post-war revolutionary freedom-struggles of the subject peoples of Asia.

This is a Review of events of 1946

During the course of the war, the prestige of British, French and Dutch imperialists was and shattered in the eyes of the colonial peoples of East Asia. The people saw their former rulers run pell-mell before the advance of the Japanese Fascist armies.

Under the whip of the short-lived Japanese rule, their anti-imperialist consciousness and movement were strengthened.

The world victory over Fascism and the collapse of Japan gave the peoples of Indonesia and Viet-Nam the chance to seize arms and establish their own National Governments before the old imperialist masters arrived on the scene.

Today the people of both Viet-Nam and Indonesia are defending their independence, arms in hand, against the intervention and intrigues of their former imperialist rulers aided by the British imperialists.

In Burma and Malaya, British imperialists betrayed the anti-Fascist peoples' liberation movements which played such a heroic role in the defeat of the Japanese occupation forces, and have established their old rule.

But a new and widespread freedom upsurge is rising to challenge it—as is seen by the recent events, especially in Burma.

The British imperialists are, as usual, seeking to counteract it by deceitful negotiations for “peaceful transfer of power” on the one hand, and by disruptive manoeuvres to split the freedom forces on the other.

No doubt the struggle is taking different forms in different countries; but the fact remains that the first post war years finds the whole South-East Asia a seething cauldron of freedom revolts.

Significantly enough, the year opened with the victory of the country-wide campaign for the release of the soldiers and leaders of the I.N.A.

In 1942, when Pandit Nehru said that he would oppose a Jap-sponsored “Indian Army” invading India together with the Japs, the whole country supported him.

Release I.N.A. Campaign

But in 1945, when it was known that tens and thousands of these captured patriotic I.N.A. men were being maltreated in several concentration camps and when the victory-mad imperialists launched a treason-trial against I.N.A. leaders, the whole country

rose in a flaming indignation and demanded their unconditional release.

In November 1945, the students and the working-class of Calcutta, led by the Communist Party, became the spear-head of the big protest hartals and strike demonstrations. They marched under the joint flags of the Congress, League and Communist Party and were fired upon by the police and the military. It was then that the first martyrs of the post-war period fell.

In December, the late Bhulabhai Desai, defending the I.N.A. prisoners in the spirit of the anti-imperialist demonstrations throughout the country, asserted the right of the oppressed people to revolt.

In January, the British Commander-in-Chief had to bow down before the popular storm and release the prisoner.

R.I.N. Mutiny

Hard on the heels of the 'Release I.N.A' demonstrations and powerfully influenced by it, came the discontent in the ranks of the R.I.N. and the R.I.A.F.

The young Indian navy-men and air force-men demanded nothing more than equality of treatment in food, etc., with their British counterparts.

The naval ratings struck work and went on hunger strike, for their demands, in the ships and shore establishments. They demonstrated for the demands in the city—demanded the release of the I.N.A. and the withdrawal of the Indian troops from Indonesia. They ran Congress, League and Red flags up their ships.

The naval officers, bewildered and panicstricken by the new patriotic spirit in the navy, sought to suppress them by arrests and bullets.

Then it was that these navy-men seized their ships and fired back.

By their heroic, though short-lived, resistance, the navy-men of Bombay and Karachi heralded the beginning of the new period of revolutionary upheaval. Their brave, patriotic and united action sent a thrill through the ranks of all branches of the Indian armed forces.

Men of the R.I.A.F. struck in several places in fraternal solidarity with the R.I.N. The Indian troops, wherever they were called out against the revolting men, refused to fire.

Solidarity Strikes

The Indian working-class, led by the Communist Party instinctively saw in the naval rising a historic turning point in our freedom struggle and supported it by total protest strikes and hartal in Bombay, Calcutta, Tirchinopoly, Madras and Madura.

The total strike and hartal in Bombay on February 22 which came as an instantaneous counter challenge to Admiral Godfrey's insolent threat to destroy the revolting navy and despite the opposition of Sjt. Vallabhbai Patel and the Congress leadership, struck panic into the hearts of the bureaucracy.

They called out the White military with tanks and armoured cars to spread terror and murder in the streets. Over 200 peaceful citizens fell victims to their bullets in two days.

The naval rising and the great solidarity action staged by the advance-guard of the Indian working-class in its support, were not an isolated incident.

They were a flaming signal which announced to the world that a volcanic discontent and anti-imperialist urge was smouldering in the minds of the Indian people and their armed forces, ready to be united and harnessed for the final annihilation of the rotten structure of imperialist-feudal rule.

Mass Actions

One has only to recapitulate the striking events and mass actions of the first six months of the year to be convinced of the truth of this generalisation.

- Within a week of the R.I.N. strike, some three hundred military sepoy's stationed at Jubbulpore struck work and paraded through the streets with all the three flags (Congress, League and Red) (March 4).

- On March 8, the workers and citizens of Delhi observed a protest strike and hartal against the Victory Celebration. The Town Hall was attacked and set fire to.

- On March 18, Gurkha Soldiers of Dehradun revolted in protest against insulting remarks by officers.

- Delhi policemen went on hunger-strike for wage increase and the military was used to arrest them.

- Policemen of Allahabad went on hunger strike in protest against ration-cut. (March 19)

● Ten thousand Bihar policemen went on strike on April 3.

Side by side with this beginning of an insurrectionary atmosphere in the armed forces and the police, a tremendous strike-wave was rising in the working-class.

The intense imperialist exploitation of the war period had imposed upon the worker a virtual wage-cut of about 20-25 per cent. The prices and the cost of living had risen rapidly while the wages and the dearness allowance paid by the profiteering employers had lagged behind.

Attack On Wages

After the end of the war, workers had expected a bettering of the situation. Instead, they were faced with a 15 per cent further rise in the cost of living index between January to September 1946 with chances of further attacks on wages and the dearness allowance, instead of increases, and threats of retrenchment.

Against this effort of the British and Indian capitalists to transfer the burden of peace as well to their shoulders, the industrial workers and other employees are rising in revolt.

Record Strike Figure

In the first six months of 1946, the strike figure of mandays lost was double that of the total figure for the year 1942, which was an year of maximum national activity and strikes in the war period.

The terrific fighting spirit of the striking workers is shown in the case with which the workers responded to the call for protest strikes on every national and anti-imperialist issue.

It was seen in the unprecedented enthusiasm and the cent per cent strike vote in the ballot taken in April for the all India railway general strike—on all principal railways.

It was seen in the rapid spread of the strike enthusiasm to other employees, to bank clerks, peons, primary teachers and to Government servants.

It was seen in the dogged manner in which the workers fought back repression (Amalner, S.I. Railway strike and Cawnpore)

It was seen in the gigantic sympathetic strike actions staged by the workers to support brother strikers. The most significant were the sympathetic one-day strikes in Bombay and Calcutta, where

four and sixteen lakh workers, respectively, struck work in support of the all-India strike of the postal workers.

Kashmir Struggle

This dynamic pace of events in the rest of India was producing the first repercussions among the peoples of the feudal-autocratic States.

Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the people of Kashmir, launched in May a movement for the end of autocracy of the Dogra House and for the immediate introduction of a democratic constitution.

The Ruler promptly arrested Sheikh Abdullah and unleashed a reign of terror against the Kashmiri people, who, however, struck back and performed marvels of heroic resistance.

Pandit Nehru went there to intervene personally to get the repression stopped and negotiations reopened, but the arrogant Ruler, instructed by the British Political Agent, arrested Nehru too.

Instantaneously there were protest strikes and hartals throughout the country (20-21 June) demanding Nehru's release and supporting the struggle of the Kashmiri people.

It was clear that a new round of States peoples' struggles, this time for the final abolition of Princely autocracy, was being heralded by the fighting people of Kashmir, and the people of rest of India were preparing to support them.

Thus, the country-wide movement, which grew round the demand for the release of the I.N.A. and the naval rising of February, marks the beginning of a new period which is not just one of mounting discontent and unrest but one of deep crisis of imperialist rule in India—one when India's revolutionary fight for independence and democracy comes on the agenda.

Imperialism can no longer continue to rule India in the old way. Intense exploitation of the war period has reduced the toiling masses and the common people to starvation and want. Keen political experience of the war years has sharpened their anti-imperialist consciousness. This is the basis of the irrepressible flame of revolt that is bursting everywhere.

2. BRITAIN'S NEW STRATEGY

In the face of this rising mass revolt, the main social and political base of British power which had usually rested on the Princes and

feudal elements—i.e., on the big landlord class created by it for its support, was no longer enough.

It was clear to the British imperialist that they could not save their tottering Empire unless they could draw in the rising bourgeoisie, which stood behind the leadership of the two main popular parties, namely, the Congress and the League, to co-operate with itself and its Princely allies against the Indian masses.

The small Indian capitalist class had made huge profits by fulfilling the colossal war orders of British imperialists, though at the expense of the masses who had been impoverished during the war.

Indian Capitalists

The capitalists were seeking new outlets and expansion for their newly-accumulated wealth and were straining at the stranglehold of British monopoly capital which prevented independent Indian industrial development.

They supported the leadership of the Congress and the League (especially the former) in their demand for immediate transfer of power and independence, and even the Congress threat of struggle if the same were not granted.

But the Indian capitalists were afraid of the new rising temper of the masses. Besides their accumulated wealth was in the hands of the British imperialists in the form of sterling balances and they had to rely upon the imperialists to get it back in the form of capital goods for their expansion and profit-making.

British imperialists knew that they could save their imperialist domination over India by using this weakness of the Indian capitalist class.

Their strategy is to offer the bait of peaceful transfer of power and joint (junior?) partnership in the British economic monopoly in India to Indian vested interests and to draw the bourgeois leadership of the Congress and the League into a scheme of constitutional settlement based on the formal 'Independence' of India.

The tactics of British imperialism have always been similar in the face of mass national revolt. We have the examples of sham 'independence' which Britain conferred upon Egypt, Trans-Jordan and Iraq after the end of the last war.

The same technique is being followed in the Cabinet Mission's Plan vis a vis India.

Sham Independence

In January 1946, Pethick-Lawrence announced in a broadcast that the British Government proposed to make India an equal partner in the Commonwealth and there was no longer any need for organised pressure from Indians. The problem was one of drawing a plan that would satisfy all sections in India.

The essential features of this bogus plan of "independence", which have become subsequently clear through the unfolding of the Cabinet Mission's Plan, are as follows :

- British economic monopoly would remain; a senior partner; only, Indian capitalists will be allowed to expand certain industries on the basis of joint partnership.

- British military control would remain the British Army would remain in India through a treaty, while new and powerful bases would be created in certain Indian States.

- The constitution of the 'Independent' Indian Union would be so based on the retention of the Princely stooges and on the perpetuation of Hindu-Muslim (Congress-League) differences that the decisive balance of power would always rest in the hands of those who co-operated with the imperialist power which would thus be in a strategic position to intervene in case of need.

Already before the Mission arrived, the economic and military basis of the Imperialist Plan were being laid.

Economic Basis Laid

Economically, there was no question of British monopoly capital quitting India or the 2,000 million sterling British capital in India changing hands. On the contrary, the biggest British monopoly capitalists were bringing more capital into India, were linking up with Indian monopoly concerns to form Indo-British corporations for joint exploitation.

Already, we have the examples of Tata-Imperial Chemical combine to jointly 'develop' heavy chemical industry in India and of the Birla-Nuffield to 'manufacture' motor cars in India. Other such combines have been announced to jointly manufacture textile machinery, build ships, etc.

This only extends the grip of British monopoly capital on Indian industries and further retards their growth except under British joint partnership.

Operation Asylum

Militarily, British hold was being strengthened despite the hypocritical declaration of the Commander-in-Chief that he was only labouring to create a strong Indian Army to be handed over to Free India. Instead of withdrawing British officers, he was making plans to sabotage and delay Indianisation.

Immediately after the I.N.A. release demonstrations and the R.I.N. strike, the G.H.Q. perfected plans known as "Operation Asylum" consisting of firm bases from which mobile strike forces can operate to keep open vital communications in the eventuality of "industrial trouble, inter-communal trouble, and anti Government disturbances which may lead to open insurrection."

The disturbances were expected to break out sometime "after the Congress have been in power for a few months and have co-ordinated their plans."

Then again the military forces in the Indian States are being built up to increase strength under British control.

Thus, when the Mission actually came, the key issues of British economic and military domination were not included in the scope of the discussions at all.

The Mission had not come to India to negotiate the future of Indo-British relations on the basis of independence of India and her equality with Britain and other nations.

Cabinet Mission's Aim

It had come to set up a constitutional machinery ostensibly for enabling India to become 'independent', but in reality to provoke internal conflicts in order to destroy and disrupt the growing mass revolutionary upsurge.

Throughout these negotiations, right from the arrival of the Mission to the recent London Conference in January 1947, the British imperialists have pursued two clear-cut aims :

- To draw the Indian bourgeois leaderships of the Congress and the League into the Government at the Centre and the Ministries in the Provinces and to saddle them with the responsibility of facing and curbing the rising struggle of the masses for freedom, land and bread.

- To sharpen Congress-League conflict by alternatively making double-faced assurances to the Congress and League leaderships

regarding their respective aims, namely, unreserved transfer of power to the Indian people on the basis of United India (Congress) and no transfer of power without the satisfaction of the Pakistan demand (League). They thus aimed to hurl the Congress against the League by making each rely upon imperialism against the other, and turn the present revolutionary upsurge into a fratricidal war between Hindus and Muslims.

3. CONGRESS-LEAGUE POLICIES

The policies pursued by the leaderships of the Congress and the Muslim League have corresponded more to the interests of the bourgeoisie vested interests behind them, rather than with the common anti-imperialist and democratic aspirations of the vast masses they claim to represent.

Both the leaderships recoiled in panic from the manifestations of mass revolt against imperialist feudal rule and were ready to welcome the Cabinet Mission as soon as it was announced and to seek co-operation with imperialism.

The policies which they pursued in the period of elections and in the subsequent period of negotiations have in different ways resulted in both the Congress and League leaderships walking into the trap of the Imperialist Plan and strategy.

They have culminated in big inner conflicts, the ghastly and bloody Hindu-Muslim civil war in Eastern Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Calcutta and Bombay and the bureaucratic terror and repression against popular mass struggles under the auspices of popular Ministries.

The national leadership of the Congress emerged out of jail with tremendously enhanced mass prestige and backing, but was now intent on gaining its object by negotiations rather than by 'direct action' (Resolution of the A.I.C.C., September 1945).

Back To Non-Violence!

It initiated the 'I.N.A. Release' campaign to galvanise its following for the coming election campaign. But as soon as the mass upsurge released by it reached a revolutionary tempo, with the participation of workers and students under Communist leadership, it cried halt and talked of strict observance of non-violence (Calcutta, November 1945).

It condemned the naval rising and opposed the protest strike and hartal in its support.

Its election campaign, which was run under the battle-cry of the "Quit India" resolution of August 1942, released a powerful freedom upsurge throughout the country.

But instead of focussing the mass enthusiasm on the slogan of united struggle against imperialism for independence, it directed it against the Communists and the League to cover up its future compromise move.

By slandering the Communists, by expelling them from the Congress and provoking a series of bloody Congress-Communist clashes, they sought to isolate and squeeze the Communists out of the working-class and national movements.

When the Cabinet Mission came with its Plan, the Congress leadership turned even more anti-struggle. Its Ministries gave the bureaucracy free run of repression against workers' and peasants' struggles.

It set its face against struggles of the States' peoples in order to appease the Princes.

Instead of rejecting the Plan with its non-sovereign Constitution-making Body and retention of the Princes, as a plan of masked British domination and as one based on perpetuation of Hindu-Muslim disunity, it accepted the same with minor criticisms.

Muslims Misled

The Muslim League entered the elections with the slogan "Pakistan Here and Now." It has won the support of the overwhelming majority of the anti-imperialist and freedom-loving Muslims, who, however, have been misled into believing that the freedom and well-being of the Muslims in independent India can be won by fighting the Congress and the Hindus.

The Muslim League claims to stand for the independence of India, but continually diverts the anti-imperialist and freedom urge of its following against the Congress and the Hindus, instead of directing it against imperialism, by raising the undemocratic and separatist demand of Pakistan as a condition-precendent to any joint action against imperialism.

Pakistan Demand

Pakistan as a demand for a separate Muslim State and a separate Constituent Assembly for a region of six Provinces in the North-West and in the North-East is undemocratic, because it includes non-Muslim-majority areas without the democratic vote of the people of those areas and because it denies the right of self-determination to the nationalities contained therein—e.g., Assam, Pathanland (N.W.F.), Sind, etc.

In February, the League leaders had threatened that a civil war was certain if a single Constituent Assmebly was set up for the whole of India. But the Muslim League readily accepted the Imperialist Plan of a single Constitution-making Body which provided for the compulsory grouping of the six Provinces in the North-West and North-East under the plea that grouping provided “the essence of Pakistan.” and the Centre would be ineffective.

In January, Sardar Patel too had threatened civil war if the Pakistan demand was conceded. But the Congress also accepted the self-same Imperialist Plan on the grounds that the Centre could be strengthened, while Provincial groupings could be treated as optional or rendered ineffective by the refusal of the Congress-majority Provinces of Assam and the North-West Frontier to participate.

4. RIOTS AND GROUPING

The provision of compulsory grouping of Provinces, which is the most undemocratic and unprincipled feature of the Imperialist Plan, forms really its crux.

It is again the London Award on this point, underlining the compulsory nature of grouping and the non-sovereign character of the Imperialist Constituent Assembly, which has ultimately unmasked the Plan in its true colours, pricking the bubble of the illusion of the Congress leaders.

Imperialism had deliberately made the undemocratic provision of compulsory grouping of Provinces a part of its Plan. Mr. Jinnah was quite right in seeing in the Plan the “seeds of Pakistan”. The essence of the undemocratic demand for Pakistan was made part of the Constitutional Plan because imperialism wanted to perpetuate Congress-League and Hindu-Muslim conflict and keep the decisive power in its own hands.

Behind Communal War

While the imperialists made it clear to the League that the essence of Pakistan was implicit in their Plan, it at the same time gave the Congress leaders the impression that it could proceed with the Constituent Assembly as if the same was sovereign and even nullify the groups by allowing the Provinces to take their own decision.

It was this equivocation and double-dealing that brought the League and the Congress into a clash and was the main cause of the fratricidal war that followed in August and in succeeding months.

It is not necessary here to recount the oft-told story of the various moves and negotiations which followed the coming of the Cabinet Mission. But the following summary of succeeding phases will serve to show how the successive moves heightened the crisis and led to the communal conflict.

(1) The Congress rejects the Short-term Plan for forming the Interim Government which, a Government nominee balancing the League against the Congress, left the decisive veto in the Viceroy's hand. It criticises the groupings in the Long-term Plan, but accepts to join the Constituent Assembly, and work it as a sovereign body (July 1946). The League accepts both plans, hoping to form the Interim Government (26-6-1946).

Caretaker Govt. Formed

(2) The Viceroy, unwilling to face Congress opposition in the country by giving the Government to the League in isolation, announces withdrawal of the Short-term Plan and forms an Officials' Caretaker Government (July 1946).

(3) The League denounces the Viceroy's move as 'betrayal' because the Viceroy acquiesced in the Congress decision of working the Constituent Assembly as sovereign. The League withdraws its acceptance of both plans and calls for "direct action," fixing "Direct Action" day on August 16.

(4) The Viceroy calls upon Pt. Nehru to form the Interim Government (13-8-46) after the Congress in a fresh resolution has declared the acceptance of the Plan in its entirety on August 12, 1946. The Interim Government is formed on September 2. The League refuses to join it. (Calcutta "Direct Action" day riots—Bombay riots on the eve of formation of Interim Government.)

(5) The Viceroy, unwilling to risk the Interim Government solely in Congress hands (in face of League opposition and riots) initiates negotiations with the League (September 13) and allows the League to join the Government (October 14) though there is no agreement between the League and the Congress, and the Ministers are at open war with each other. (Noakhali riots, October 14 onwards).

(6) The Congress announces its intention to go forward with the Constituent Assembly in which it counts on rendering Provincial groupings ineffective, and use its majority to establish a democratic federal republic. The League refuses to participate in it (November 21). (Bihar Riots on November 2-8. Meerut riot, November 10).

Intervention Again

(7) The British Government intervenes from London, and declares grouping compulsory to bring the League into the Assembly and thus restore the balance, and if this fails it threatens to refuse to recongnise the results of the Assembly (December 6).

Several imperialist statesmen have frankly stated that India was on the verge of a revolution before the Cabinet Mission arrived—and that the Plan and the giving up by the Congress of the policy of Non-co-operation have been largely responsible for at least postponing, if not entirely eliminating, the danger (e.g., P.G. Griffiths and Hodson).

The formation of Provincial Ministries and the Interim Government at the Centre by popular parties is certainly calculated to act as a check upon the revolutionary action of the masses. "Wait, the Popular Ministries will redress your grievances" does become for sometime an effective slogan in the hands of the reformists and compromisers to restrain the struggles.

But the situation of 1946, as we have already seen in the review of the revolutionary upsurge of the first six months, was far too explosive.

Old Division Not Enough

It was not enough for imperialism to use the usual line of division—vested interests and popular Ministries versus the masses.

That is why imperialism enough to bring the conflict between the Congress and the League to a head and drown the rising common anti-imperialist struggles of the masses in fratricidal carnage. The main aim of the imperialist manoeuvres to set their Plan in operation was just this.

But the compromising and disruptive policies pursued by both the League and the Congress leaderships have divided our people into two hostile camps instead of uniting them into a joint-Front of anti-imperialist struggle. It was this which gave the imperialists the chance to release the most revolting orgy of fratricidal slaughter in Calcutta, Bombay, Noakhali, Bihar and Meerut.

The riots constitute the counter-offensive of imperialism against a people who only a few months—nay, even a few days ago—had performed marvels in their joint Hindu-Muslim fight against imperialism and sent a wave of terror through their British masters.

New Kind Of Riots

India has often seen bureaucracy engineered communal riots, but never has she witnessed such frenzied riots of mass butcheries, inhuman brutalities, insane arson and loot, and forcible conversions. It was not the work of mere goondas. Rival mobs thirsting for murder, arson and loot against the other community carried League and Congress flags and shouted their respective freedom-slogans.

Arson parties in Noakhali and Tippiura were led by local League leaders, carried League flags and shouted Pakistan slogans.

The marauding groups of Bihar and Garhmukteshwar were led by local Congress leaders, carried the Tricolour and shouted Congress slogans.

In the first instance, it was the reactionary communal policy of the League leadership, its call for 'direct action' against the Congress and not against imperialism, for the undemocratic demands of compulsory grouping of Provinces, insistence on imperialism's veto both in the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly, which was responsible for lighting the conflagration of these riots.

From the other end it was the policy of the Congress leadership which instead of breaking with imperialism's reactionary Plan and making a bid to win the Muslim masses for a joint struggle for independence and national self-determination, seeks compromise with imperialism and tries to use its Plan against the Muslim League.

The result is that the frustration of the Congress masses is led into anti-Muslim bitterness and Hindu-communalism itself has begun to grow inside the Congress.

How They Were Spread

Imperialism made effective use of this situation not only by manoeuvring are the top in terms of the Cabinet Mission's Plan, but its uniformed agents did their best to spread the riots by refusing

to give prompt military aid to both the Congress and the League Ministries in time to control them.

In some cases, its minions even participated in the loot and arson.

These facts are coming to light now in the course of the Spens Enquiry Committee proceedings over Calcutta riots which are going on at present in that city.

Brigadier Sixsmith declared in the course of his cross-examination before the Enquiry Committee that he did not agree to the request for bringing the military into action on the first day of the riot because he feared that intervention at that stage would have resulted in the riot turning against the Government. In other words, he wanted the communal riot frenzy to rise to such a pitch that no such thing should be possible!

While Rome Burned . . .

The infamous "Operation Asylum" so meticulously planned months ahead, in anticipation of anti-Government disturbances expected to break out in August, was nowhere to be seen and heard of, when frenzied Hindu or Muslim mobs were murdering, burning and looting on a wide scale.

The would-be murderers of Indian freedom movement were probably happy that the job was being done for them without their having to waste bullets.

The wave of communal rioting and the senseless suppression of civil liberties which was launched in their name paralysed the joint struggles of the workers and the common people of Calcutta and Bombay for weeks.

The Hindu-Muslim pogroms in the rural areas of Eastern Bengal, Bihar, and the U.P. for a time disorganised the joint struggle of the kisans against landlord oppression.

The poisonous fumes of Hindu-Muslim hatred which emerged from burning homesteads of Eastern Bengal and Bihar seemed for a time to cloud the picture of the rising wave of common struggles of the masses which dominated the scene in the opening months of the year.

5. FLAME OF REVOLT KEPT ALIGHT

But all the devilish intrigues and trickeries of the imperialists and all the blind policies of the Congress and League compromisers

were not able to put out the unquenchable flame of revolt that the R.I.N. mutineers and the heroic working class who supported them had lighted in the beginning of the year.

● While Calcutta was in the throes of organised communal butchery, Shripat Patil and his comrades supported solidly by the united working-class of Amalner were baring their breasts to bullets in defence of trade union liberties.

● While Hindus and Muslims were murdering each other in the streets of Calcutta, 40,000 South Indian Railway workers—Hindus, Muslims and Christians—staged a glorious strike struggle in defence of their rights (August 24 to September 23).

● Four thousand workers of Golden Rock workshops were jointly facing bullets and police terror in their fight to demand the release of Ismail Khan, the leader of Golden Rock workshop (September 5).

● While riots were on in Bombay, Dacca and elsewhere, the military police of Patna and Baguserai, both Hindus and Muslims, were on hunger-strike for their economic demands (September 25).

● While shameful scenes of mass arson, loot and conversions were being enacted in Noakhali, the workers of Allepay in Travancore, belonging to all castes and creeds were writing a glorious page in the history of united working-class rights for democratic right (October 25-30).

While frenzied mobs in Bihar were carrying out mass murders of members of their brother community, looting and burning on an unbelievable scale, the rebellious peasants of Telengana, belonging to all communities, who had thrown off the yoke of forced labour, were putting up a glorious united resistance in defence of their hard-won victory, against the Martial Law terror of the Hyderabad military, and shaking for the first time that main bastion of the feudal order; India to its very foundations. (November 16).

Fighting Back Riots

The shame of fratricidal murder existed side by side with the glory of the common struggle of Hindu and Muslim workers and peasants against imperialist feudal exploitation.

Not only this. Very soon, the class-conscious worker and the fighting peasant who instinctively saw in the flames of communal conflict a menace to common struggles and common organisations,

a blow to the common anti-imperialist struggle of all Indians, rose to fight back the riots.

We have the most glorious and stirring example of HASANABAD, situated right in the centre of the riot area, on the borders of Noakhali and Tippera. Hasanabad was made by its Communist-led peasant militants—of both the communities—a stronghold of the fighting unity of Hindus and Muslims.

Disciplined ranks of militants armed with *lathis* stood guard over bazars, bastis and homesteads, day and night, watching roads and waterways lest riot-mongers of the neighbouring areas creep in for mischief.

In DARJEELING, a timely strike and hartal against riots prevented the efforts of provocateurs.

Everywhere in the strongholds of working-class organisations, the Communist Party and the trade unions came out with mass distribution of handbills nailing down imperialism as the arch riot-monger and exposing the policies of the League and Congress leaderships and appealing for joint action for peace against goondas and riot-provocateurs.

New Round Of Struggles

The most effective counter-offensive against the riots came in the riot-rocked Provinces themselves; a new round of workers' and peasants' struggles for wages and crops began.

In the Eastern and Northern districts of Bengal, the Kisan Sabhas and the Communists sensed the sizzling discontent among the exploited share-cropper Kisans and poor tenants, who for long had been demanding that their share of crop should be two-thirds, while the landlord should get no more than one-third and not half as hitherto.

While the riot fume was yet smouldering in Noakhali and Tippera. The Kisan Sabha launched the TEBHAGA movement.

In a short time, the surging flood of Muslim-Hindu share-croppers rallied in thousands round the battle-cry of "Crop Today — Land Tomorrow." The movement spread to 19 districts encircling as it were the riot-infected Noakhali and Tippera from all sides.

Tebhaga did not start a day too soon. The disruptive communal propaganda starting from Noakhali and Tippera could have disrupted and disorganised the discontent of the peasant even before it was organised into a united movement.

Kisan Unity

As it was, the united movement for seizing the crops while they were yet standing came in time and had already gathered momentum when communal disruptors started with their cry that "Tebhaga is an anti-Hindu movement."

No repression or disruption can now throw back the tidal wave of Hindu-Muslim Kisan unity for Tebhaga that has started on its triumphant career. It is sweeping past all obstacles.

The awakened and united kisan is just taking his two-thirds share and leaving one-third to the Jotedar. None can say 'No' to him. Repression is being fought in guerrilla fashion.

Where lakhs of awakened kisans begin changing the social order with bare hands, a few black-marketeers and tyrants can do nothing. Today the crop; tomorrow the land! The opening battles of the Hindu, Muslim and Scheduled Caste Kisans of Bengal against landlordism has begun.

The shame of Noakhali and Tippera is being wiped out in the fighting unity of the Hindu and Muslim kisans in the battle for Tebhaga.

In Bihar Too

A similar movement, though not yet so wide-spread, is growing round the riot-affected rural areas of Bihar. Here the poverty-stricken and exploited tenant is demanding that we should pay his rent in cash and not in kind—one-half the crop as hitherto.

The movement is to cut the crop and keep it and pay the rent in cash later. Hindu and Muslim Bihari Kisans are joining hands against the landlords for enforcing their demands. In many places, the kisans are saying: Why could we not have started this earlier and stopped the fight among brothers?

In Calcutta and in the surrounding industrial belt, a new strike-wave is fast developing. Hindu-Muslim unity is being relargened and strengthened in a number of strikes.

.....
of riots was the one-day strike of 30,000 employees of 34 Central Government offices in Calcutta, who struck in sympathy with the strikers of the Directorate of supplies fighting against retrenchment (January 30).

Bury August 16. . .

Significantly enough the Hindu and Muslim clerks put up the banner: "Bury 19th August prepare the Road to July 29!"

And indeed, the recent total strike of Cawnpore textile workers for wage-increases and the big rally of workers and citizens in support of the fight against repression show that the road to July 29 is opening up not only in Calcutta, but all over India, thanks to the initiative of the militant working-class. What are the perspective for the new year that opens up with the Independence Day 1947?

The great revolutionary mass upsurge which began with the I.N.A. release campaign and the R.I.N. mutiny, which is seen in the might strike-wave that is sweeping through all industries, which has spread to the peasants and tenant-serfs of Bengal, Bihar, U.P. Tamilnad and the Punjab, who are fighting the opening battles against land-lordism, which has penetrated into the feudal States, where the people of Travancore, Kashmir and Hyderabad have opened a new phase of struggle against autocracy—that mass upsurge is rising to new heights.

The interlude of a round of ghastly communal riots interrupted it for the time being in certain places, but it has by no means disrupted and disorganised it.

For, besides the arch riot-monger imperialism and the Congress and League leaderships, whose compromising and disruptive policies are playing into its hands, there are other factors operating in the country.

Main Driving Force

The main driving force behind the revolutionary upsurge is the deepening crisis of imperialist-feudal rule in India. Economic conditions continue to worsen though war ended 17 months ago and Popular Ministries have been in office for nine months.

- Working class cost of living index had increased during the first seven months of the year already by 15 per cent and is continuing to rise. Cloth prices too have risen.

- The total food deficit for the year 1945-46 was 60 lakh tons out of which only 20 lakh tons was made good by imports upto December 5, with the result that ration-cuts continue.

- Owing to the closing of war establishments and no programme of building new industries, retrenchment, unemployment and wage-cuts are facing workers and employees.

6. PERSPECTIVES FOR 1947

The perspective which arises out of this situation is a greater extension of strike struggles, which will be fought even more bitterly.

It means extension of struggles of the peasants like the Tebhaga struggle and the tenant-struggles in U.P. Bihar, the Punjab and the South.

Perspective In States

The perspective in the State is similar. There a new round of struggles of the States' peoples for freedom is opened as has been clearly shown by the struggle of the Kashmiri people in the first half of the year and the glorious struggles of the Telengana peasants (Hyderabad) and Travancore workers in the second half.

The pre-conditions have matured for an anti-feudal revolution in the States. Masses of the States' Peoples having shed their fear of the ruling authorities are advancing to change the old decrepit social order with their bare hands.

Illusions Bursting

The long chain of intrigues and trickeries employed by the imperialists in relation to the Cabinet Mission's Plan, the communal riots that followed and the real face of the Plan as it emerged after the London Award, have gone a long way in bursting many illusions on the Congress and the League sides.

While the complete grip of the compromising bourgeois leaderships of the Congress and the League remains firm on vast ranks of their respective followings, while the danger of new clashes remains through new developments in the Constituent Assembly, the ranks of both, especially of the Congress, are becoming critical of the compromising policies of the leadership.

The policy of bureaucratic repression against the struggles of the masses for wage increase, food and democratic rights adopted by the Popular Ministries is being resented more and more by the ranks of the Congress, especially in view of the worsening economic conditions.

Among the ranks of the Left there is greater urge for united action of all the forces opposed to compromise, despite the opposition of their leaders.

Tasks Of Communists

● These perspectives for the year 1947 call for ever greater determination of the part of the Communists to carry forward the task of heading, organising and spreading the struggles of workers and peasants and of the States' peoples to over newer regions.

● They must exercise ever greater vigilance against riot provocateurs, the fighting ranks of the toilers must be preserved and strengthened.

● They will have to face greater repression, with even greater opportunities of successfully fighting it back. They must do this by concentrating the main fire on the imperialist bureaucracy, police and military and by exposing the Popular Ministers as acting as appeasers of vested interests instead of as defenders of people's interests.

● They must seek greater contacts with the ranks of the Left parties, and draw them into joint actions, in defence of workers and peasants and States peoples' struggles, against repression and against the policy of compromise.

● Above all, in the name of the long line of martyrs who have laid down their lives in the cause of the revolutionary battles of 1946, they must make ever greater efforts to strengthen the Communist Party, the party of the working-class and toiling masses, so that it can play its role in building the revolutionary unity of the Indian people for the final fight for Independence and Democracy.

DIARY OF EVENTS—1946

JANUARY

2 Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, announces British policy for India.

4 INA leaders released.

7 Parliamentary Delegation reaches India.

9 Communal riots break out in Dharwar.

— Gandhiji advises students against participation in politics and strikes.

10 One lac demonstration in Chittagong against military atrocities in neighbouring villages.

12 Gwalior firing on workers—17 killed, 200 wounded.

13 "For the Final Battle for Indian Freedom" — Communist election manifesto published.

16 Calcutta : Braithwaite Iron & Steel factory workers fired upon—2 Killed, several wounded.

19 Chancellor of Chamber of Princes makes his declaration regarding the “fundamental rights” of States peoples.

20 Central Assembly adjourns in protest against use of Indian troops in Indonesia.

—Congress and League set unitedly.

23 Communist Party Central Headquarters, Bombay attacked — 60 wounded, 1 lac damage.

27 Twenty thousand Kolar miners’ strike begins.

FEBRUARY

5 Central Assembly passes a motion against South African Government.

7 Indian Airmen in Bombay on hunger strike.

13 Rashid Ali Day demonstration in Calcutta fired upon.

14 In an interview to U.S. press, Mr. Jinnah threatens civil war if one constituent Assembly is set up

16 Police fire on Rashid Ali Day on procession in Meerut.

19 R.I.N. Boys in Bombay go on Strike.

20 HMG announcement in Parliament on Cabinet Mission to India.

21 R.I.N. strike spreads to Calcutta, Karachi and Bombay.

23 Hartal in Bombay in sympathy with R.I.N. strikers — 3 lacs workers on strike.

24 R.I.N. strikers surrender to people.

25 R.I.A.F. (Madras) go on strike in sympathy of R.I.N.

— Sardar Patel says R.I.N. strike ill-advised.

— 1 lac rally in Calcutta in sympathy of R.I.N.

26 In sympathy of R.I.N.

—1 lac Trichinopoly workers strike.

—50 thousand demonstration in Madras.

—R.I.A.F. at Sion on strike.

—R.I.A.F. at Amipet on hunger strike.

—R.I.N. strike committee under arrest.

—Gandhiji says : believe in British sincerity and leave aside barricades.

—Attlee in House of Commons says : ONLY communist Party led R.I.N. Strike.

28 Complete hartal in Madura in sympathy with R.I.N. strike.

MARCH

1 Jubbulpore Sepoys' strike begins.

4 Sardar Patel: Congress prestige suffered due to R.I.N. Strike.

— Pandit Nehru: R.I.N. has great significance.

5 Bombay province primary school teachers go on strike.

6 Punjab forms Congress-Unionist Coalition.

8 Anti-Victory Day demonstration in Delhi—Police fired, killing eleven.

12 Gandhiji says : believe in the bonafides of the Cabinet Mission.

14 R.I.N. prisoners in Mullund Camp on hunger strike.

15 Congress Working committee appoints Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel to negotiate with Cabinet Mission.

16 Attlee in Commons : Minority cannot be allowed to veto progress.

— Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru welcome the Mission and Attlee's statement in Commons.

18 Gurkha soldiers in Dehradun revolt.

19 Policemen in Allahabad on hunger-strike in protest against ration-cut.

21 Auk promises efficient armed forces to the future government.

22 Delhi police on hunger-strike for wage-increase.

23 Bengal and Assam Rly. workers' protest strike against ration-cuts.

24 Cabinet Mission arrives in India.

27 Government of India notifies South African Government on ending trade relations.

— Dacca textile workers fired upon—4 killed, 16 injured.

— Dange, Communist candidate, wins Bombay Labour seat.

29 Sir C. P. says : states will not tolerate ending of ruling dynasties and interference in internal affairs.

31 Mr. Jinnah's interview to Fraser Weighton : expects British support for his scheme of Pakistan.

32 Pandit Nehru wants democratic representatives of the States in Constituent Assembly.

APRIL

1 Mr. Jinnah's interview to Norman Cliff on Muslim bloc against Russia.

— Sir C. P. suggests separate Federation for States.

— Congress Ministry formed in U. P.

2 Princes and Ministers formulate their demands vis-a-vis Constituent Assembly.

3 Congress forms Ministry in Bihar and Bombay.

— 10,000 Bihar Policemen strike for rise in wages.

4 Mr. Jinnah's interview to Daily Herald—Demands 6 provinces for Pakistan and declares Pakistan won't be a religious State.

5 All India Railwaymen's Federation takes strike ballot — overwhelming vote for strike.

6 Bombay municipal sweepers strike.

7 Muslim League legislators Convention in Delhi.

10 Mr. Jinnah demands Karachi and Calcutta for Pakistan.

20 Communist Party's Memorandum to Cabinet mission.

22 Gandhiji says : sweepers should never strike.

23 Hoover arrives in India to study Indian Food situation.

— League forms Ministry in Bengal.

26 Palme Dutt's interview to press in Bombay—warning against dragging India in anti-Soviet camp.

27 Faridkhot satyagraha begins.

MAY

1 Sir C.P. apprehends "Soviet Designs" on India—so wants British troops to stay.

2 N.W.R. workers observe 4 hours' strike.

4 Second Simla Conference begins.

5 AIRF Council decides for Railway General Strike from June 27.

6 Police fire on Rampur peasants—One killed, several injured.

10 Pandit Nehru elected President of Indian National Congress.

11 Central Government appoints Pay Commission.

12 Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah meet at Simla.

13 Second Simla Conference falls.

16 Cabinet Mission gives its Award.

- 18 Wavell pleads for acceptance of Mission plan.
— Auk announces readiness to work under Indian Defence Member.
— Gandhiji : Mission should be proud of its solution.
- 19 Congress, League leaders' correspondence with Cabinet Mission released.
20 One day protest strike on S.I.R. against retrenchment.
— Sheikh Abdulla and National Conference leaders arrested in Kashmir.
- 23 Cabinet Mission on States.
- 24 Congress Working Committee postpones final decision.
- 27 Cabinet Mission on Interim Government.
— Communal riots in Bihar, Allahabad and Bareilly.
- 28 N.W.F.P. opposes compulsory grouping.
— Bardoloi condemns the scheme.
- 29 Pandit Nehru settles Faridkot demands.
- 30 Indian High Commissioner in South Africa recalled.
— Soviet Comment : Cabinet Mission Award calculated to increase strife.

JUNE

- 6 Bombay Congress Ministry refuses enquiry in R.I.N. Day shootings.
- 7 League Council accepts the Mission proposals.
- 8 Princes appoint Negotiating Committee.
- 14 Indians in South Africa start resistance movement.
- 17 Cabinet Mission's second Award on Interim Government of 14 members.
21 Pandit Nehru arrested in Kashmir.
- 22 Countrywide protests against Nehru's arrest.
— All India Railwaymen's Federation Council wins Interim Relief, Strike postponed.
- 23 Nehru leaves Kashmir.
- 26 Congress Working Committee accepts long-term plans : reject the short term plan.
- 27 Firing in Patudi—25 injured.

JULY

- 1 Nawab of Bhopal—Sardar Patel parleys on Constituent Assembly.

7 AICC (Bombay) ratifies Working Committee's acceptance of long-term plan.

— 26,000 Indore workers win their demands.

11 All India Postal strike—1 lakh struck.

— Riots start in Ahmedabad.

16 Punjab Kisan Morcha.

— Ratlam : 10,000 demonstration fired, 10 killed, 30 wounded.

19 Assam Assmibly directs its nominees not to sit in Groups.

22 "Kashmir Day" call by CPI General Secretary.

23 4 lakh industrial workers strike in sympathy of postal workers.

24 Pandit Nehru asks Postal strikers to look into country's interest.

25 League Council rejects British proposals.

— Tehri State Movement starts.

26 15,000 students of Calcutta demand release of pre-Reform Heroes.

29 Calcutta : 4 million on hartal; 16 lakhs industrial workers strike in support of postal strikers.

— Bihar Assembly votes abolition of zamindari.

31 Muslim League calls for Hartal on August 15.

AUGUST

12 Congress accepts plan.

13 Viceroy invites Pandit Nehru to form Government.

— 10,000 Madras Corporation workers strike.

15 All-India strike of military accounts clerks—45,000.

16 Jinnah-Nehru talks break.

— "Direct Action" day, Riots in Calcutta.

16-22 Calcutta riots — 6-7 thousand dead, 20,000 injured.

18 Communist Party Central Committee's call for "Final Assault on Imperialism".

23 Punjab Kisan Morcha victorious.

— Struggle in Alwar State begins.

24 Riots in Allahabad.

26 New Executive Council under Pandit Nehru formed.

— S. I. Railway strike begins.

29 Police firing in Amalner—Sripat Patil Killed.

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Liaquat Ali's call for black flags for interim government.
- 2 Interim Government sworn in 2-6 Riots in Bombay.
- 6 S.I. Rly. strikers fired upon. 3 killed—100 wounded.
- 7 Waxiristan bombed.
- 13 Mr. Jinnah invited by Viceroy for talks.
— Pandit Nehru orders stopping of bombing frontier.
- 14 Mysore protest day (i.e.) against no representation in Constituent Assembly.
- 15-16 Jinnah-Wavell talks.
- 16-18 Riots in Bombay and Ahmedabad continue.
- 19 Cawnpore workers and leaders arrested.
- 22 Dacca communal riots.
- 23 B.L.Rly. Workers Strike Committee withdraws strike.
- 24 AICC ratifies Working Committee decision to form interim government. Jaiprakash Narain neutral on resolution.
- 26 Military police in Patna and Beguserai strike for economic demands.
- 28 Communal riots in Agra—13 killed, 50 injured—acid throwing in Bombay.
- 30 Jinnah-Wavell talks—Bhopal intervenes.
— Travancore bans all strikes for political or other object.

OCTOBER

- 9 2 lac leave Bombay because of riots.
— 16,000 coal miners strike at Giridih.
- 10 Sardar Baldeo Singh's Defence policy.
- 12 Congress-League talks fall.
- 14 League decides to join government without agreement with Congress.
- 15 Noakhali riots break out, troops called.
- 16 Mass murder in Chandpur.
- 19 Pandit Nehru's visit to Frontier.
- 21 Travancore Communist Party banned.
- 22 20,000 Noakhali Refugees in Chandpur, 5,000 in Calcutta.
- 23 State of emergency in Dacca.
- 25 Congress Working Committee resolution on Communal Riots in Eastern Bengal.

- Mr. Jinnah condemns Noakhali.
- Police fire at Alleppey on workers.
- 26 Workers raid police station — killed 4 police officers.
- 27 Riots again in Bombay and Calcutta Bucher's (Chief of Eastern Command) admission.
- 29 Viceroy-Jinnah correspondence, Bengal evacuees—50,000.
- 30 Travancore State Police open fire — workers demonstration.

NOVEMBER

- 1 Riots in Dacca and Abbotabad.
- 2 Lucknow students oppose "God Save the King".
- 4 Bengal League Working Committee on Bihar riots.
 - Kolar firing — 4 dead, 12 injured.
 - Bihar premier's statement on Bihar riots—train attacked.
- 5 Pandit Nehru visits Bihar.
- 7 Pandit Nehru and Rajan Babu addressed meetings in Bihar.
- 8 Nagannausa — 500 killed in riots—100 due to police firing.
 - Riots in Delhi and Benaras.
- 9 Central Assembly postpones discussion on release of INA men in prison.
 - C-in-C speaks about the bad effects of these releases on the armed forces.
 - 22,000 textile workers strike in Nagpur.
- 10 Riot in Meerut—part of Congress pandal burnt.
 - Bihar—'Pandit Nehru go back' demonstration.
- 11 Coimbatore firing—12 killed.
 - 15,000 workers win higher wages.
- 12 Mr. Jinnah says no retaliation against Bihar—protect non-Muslims in majority areas.
 - 16 Hyderabad State—Martial Law in Nallagonda.
 - 17 Hyderabad—boycott of reforms advised by Kachru.
- 20 Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Nehru meet Viceroy regarding meeting of Constituent Assembly.
 - Mr. Jinnah wants postponement.
- 21 Jinnah-Viceroy correspondence.
- 22 Pandit Nehru's attack on Wavell and League—Crisis revealed.
 - Nehru-Wavell correspondence.

- 24 Meerut Congress.
- 26 Auk's Quetta Statement.
- 27 Viceroy and Leaders called to London.

DECEMBER

- 2 Strike in BBCI Rly.—6,000.
- 3 Punjab teachers' strike—31,000 — called off on 22.
- 4 Hyderabad State bans Andhra Mahasabha and Communist Party.
- 6 Tebhaga demand of peasants in Eastern Bengal.
— British Government's London Award.
- 9 Constituent Assembly opens.
- 12 House of Commons debate on India.
— 8,000 teachers of Bombay on strike.
- 14 Pandit Nehru moves resolution on declaration of objectives.
— Sind election results, League secures 34 out of 35 seats.
- 15 Mr. Jinnah's Press Conference in London— Congress must accept HMG Statement.
— Sir C. P.'s statement on Pandit Nehru's resolution.
- 16 Hyderabad State communique—warns Communists.
— Firing on Bisnupur (Bihar) kisans.
- 17 Punjab Governor on "Loose talk of civil war" discounts transfer of population.
— Dr. Jayakar's appeal to defer decision on Pandit Nehru's resolution.
— Pandit Nehru addresses Associated Chamber of Commerce Calcutta.
- 18 Mr. Jinnah's interview at Cairo — menace of "Hindu Imperialism".
- 19 Mr. Ghazanfar Ali says—League will consider plans of exchange of population.
— Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Sovereign republic of India is compatible with monarchies in States.
- 20 Decision on Pandit Nehru's resolution deferred.
- 21 Mr. Jinnah won't accept Federal Court's verdict.
— Dr. Khan Saheb says Frontier will not join groupings.
- 22 Mr. Jinnah's interview at Karachi—No League Council meeting till Congress accepts December 6 statement.

24 Announcement of British Financial Mission to India to settle "Sterling Balances".

— Abdur Rab Nishtar asks for plebiscite in NWFP on grouping.

25 Reported inclination of Government of India to reimpose 9 hour day.

26 Gopinath Barodoloi "Assam hopes to press for staying out even if Congress accepts grouping".

27-28 All India States Peoples Conference appoints a Negotiating Committee; demand overhaul of Political Department.

28 Moulana Azad appointed in place of Asaf Ali.

— Hindu Mahasabha session at Gorakhpur.

— Government of India—No action against "R.I.N. mutineers".

— Bengal ordinance bans social boycott on one community.

29 Renewed rioting at Allahabad.

— All India Agricultural Conference wants abolition of zamindari.

31 Congress likely to accept December 6 statement.

— Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel replies Jaiprakash Narain—No fight with British now.

INSIDE VELLORE JAIL STOP THIS VINDICTIVENESS

P.C. JOSHI'S MEMORANDUM TO CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE

Bombay, March, 13, 1947

To

The President and Members of the Working committee of the Indian National Congress.

Dear Friend,

I have received sad news from the Vellore Central Jail, where 120 Communists, victims of the Ordinance of the Madras Government, are confined as detenus.

I am enclosing a memo of their demands. They applied for being given the same facilities as were granted to Congress detenus under the hated Adviser Regime. They received no satisfactory reply.

Recently the Minister of Jails, Syt. Bhashyam, visited them in the Vellore Jail. I am enclosing a letter received from one of the detenus describing Syt. Bhashyam's attitude and replies to the various demands .

It is a clear case of political vindictiveness on the part of Syt. Bhashyam and not one of fairness towards those who have not even been given the benefit of a public trial or even an inquiry.

Such an attitude on the part of a Congress Minister should not be allowed to last one day.

There are certain minimum standards of humanity, fairness and decency that must be practised in our common political life.

I request you to go through the memo of demands, see how reasonable and just they are and to see how unfair and callous was the attitude of Syt. Bhashyam.

Memorandum from P.C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, requesting their immediate intervention re : just demands of the Communist detenus in Vellore Jail, Madras.

As can be seen from the letter enclosed, the detenus have reached the limit of patience. Nevertheless they have decided to give the Madras Ministry time upto April to redress their grievances. It is now nearly the middle of March. Their demands are just and they are all young and determined. As the matter is urgent I hope you will intervene quickly and induce the Congress Ministry in Madras to speed up acceptance of those demands. Without your intervention there is little hope of redress and a hunger strike will be inevitable.

In particular, I request you to secure the immediate release of the only woman detenu in the Vellore Central Jail Kamala Ramaswamy,* who is the granddaughter-in-law of Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, ex-Minister of Madras. She is a young expectant mother being advanced five months in pregnancy. She and her husband are both Party whole-timers but no one in his senses can say that her release particularly in her present condition will be a menace to public security or order in the province. It is cruel to keep her in jail.

The attitude shown by Minister Bhashyam to the demand for extra diet and clothing allowance for her has deeply pained and shocked us all, as it must you also. I hope you will immediately intervene in this matter.

Thanking you,

Yours truly,
Sd. P.C. Joshi,
General Secretary.

LETTER FROM A DETAINED COMRADE

February 28, 1947.

Dear Comrade,

You know that we had submitted to the Ministry on the 3rd February, a Memo containing our demands, giving it a month's time to satisfy those demands. We had indicated that if this was not done by that time, we would be obliged to resort to direct action. This was not an ultimatum or strike notice, the idea being that we should give them a month's time over the Memo, after which a notice of hunger-strike was to be given.

You know the demands made in the Memo. They are substantially the same as those demanded by Chakkarai Chettiar

* *She has been released now.*

(President of the Madras Provincial Trade Union Congress) in his Press Statement.

Meanwhile, Bhashyam, Minister of Jails, came to Vellore Central Jail on 20th February. Four of our comrades, N. K. Krishnan, A. K. Gopalan, N. Prasadarao and R. Ramanathan, went as our spokesmen to discuss all the points contained in the Memo.

Bhashyam's attitude was one of sheer vindictiveness. He rejected everyone of our demands, though they were in the main nothing more than the facilities given to detenus under the Section 93 regime of the Imperialist bureaucrats. I am giving here some of the points raised by our comrades and Bhashyam's attitude and replies to them.

A) TREATMENT AS DETENUS NOT CONVICTS

We are now treated as if we were convicted "B" class prisoners. Our demand is that we be treated as and given the same facilities as all detenus in the 1940-44 period, that is, under the Advisers' Raj.

Bhashyam quite rudely said that he rejected the very approach to the question. He said that since "times had changed" he would not even consider the question of giving us the treatment given to congress detenus under the Advisers' Raj. It was as if in his opinion political vindictiveness was the hall-mark of a popular Ministry!

He insisted that we should make our demand item by item without reference to the status and privileges of detenus in the pre-1944 period.

B) OLD DIET ALLOWANCE

Our present daily diet allowance is only As. 12½ per head. The diet allowance hitherto for detenus was Rs. 1.14. We demanded that the old allowance be restored.

Bhashyam quite callously replied that he thought the old allowance was too much FOR US, that the present allowance was quite enough and that at the most he might consider the question of giving a quarter pint milk per head.

He then treated us to a homily that fruits, vegetables, milk, ghee and even cocoanut oil (for the-head) was not available in the market. As if scarcity and high prices was an argument for cutting the allowance by more than half. He even moralised saying that people outside were living in poverty etc. and therefore we should not demand a better diet!

C) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

As a result of the agitation by the detenus that since they were not even brought to trial they should not wear the convict clothes, the Adviser's Regime had granted Rs. 60 per year clothing allowance to all detenus.

At present we are given "B" class convict clothes and we demanded the same privileges as before.

Bhashyam replied that "B" class clothing was good enough and gave us a lecture on cloth scarcity. The Jail Superintendent butted in at this stage to say that "B" class clothing was "very good".

D) NO LOCKING UP

We had demanded that we should not be locked up and should be allowed to sleep out in the jail yard. This was a privilege given to all detenus throughout the war years by the British.

When this issue was raised Bhashyam behaved strangely. He asked the jail officials and the whole retinue to go out and then asked us "Confidentially" whether we would come to a gentleman's agreement not to escape and give him our word, in which case he would consider the matter.

We refused and told him that it was not because all of us were going to escape but because we considered it very damaging to the self-respect of political prisoners to give any such "undertaking".

"That is not an undertaking", retorted Bhashyam, "it is only a gentleman's agreement. We came to such agreements when we were detenus. Some of us even gave written undertaking to that effect. What is wrong in it?"

We, nevertheless, persisted in saying that our self-respect would not permit us to give any such undertaking.

He then requested us not to let anyone know that he and some other Congress detenus had given such an undertaking "because it would give rise to slander." And still he unblushingly insisted that we should come to a similar "gentleman's agreement" without which he could not consider allowing us to sleep out, though he agreed that Vellore was a hot place etc.

E) PAPERS AND BOOKS

Our demand was that all books and periodicals that are not banned outside should be allowed to us. At present we are not allowed to get any Communist papers. We argued that there was no point in not allowing us to read what anyone outside could read.

To this his immediate answer was, "People outside also will not read them for long." He immediately tried to cover it up by saying, "I do not mean they WILL be banned but they MAY be."

We insisted that since the papers were legal and we being only *detenus*, we should be allowed to get the Party papers. We maintained that our detention is expressly stated to be for the purpose of preventing us from leading mass movements outside and so all other restrictions on us were unfair.

He replied that since the cream of the Party was here, the Government wanted to watch all that we do, know all that we read and think etc., also wanted to prevent us from reading "certain" things (meaning news about the mass movements outside).

F) ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS TO BE TREATED ALIKE

Another of the demands we had raised was that all those who had been arrested in connection with kisan or working-class struggles and other political activity should be treated as "political prisoners" and given the facilities laid down in the latest Government order.

Bhashyam said he would not consider them political at all because they were guilty of "violence."

We pointed out how the issue of violence or non-violence had nothing to do with the question, that the Indian patriotic movement had always maintained that politicals must be treated as such whatever be the nature of the police charges against them. We cited the case of Bhagat Singh.

But Bhashyam did not care for all this; he said that our comrades were against a People's Ministry!

G) FAMILY ALLOWANCES

To our demand for family allowance, (a demand that was granted by the Advisers' regime after a great deal of agitation), Bhashyam insolently asked, "What does a family mean?"

The last of our demands was that the only woman detenué, young Kamala Ramaswamy (granddaughter of Dr. Rajan, ex-

Minister of Madras), who is five months' pregnant, should be either released or special diet and clothing allowance should be given to her.

Bhashyam was petty minded enough to reject even this demand.

On the whole, his attitude came as a surprise to us. He was very vindictive, haughty, highly provocative and insolent in his attitude towards us. He spoke not like a Congress Minister but like a man who had been a Jailor all his life.

We are sending a new Memo. It will contain all the points raised with the Minister personally.

We are thinking of a hunger-strike to be started in APRIL. Bhashyam's attitude gave no hope whatever of our reasonable demands being considered sympathetically. But we want to give sufficient time to the new Ministry (if there is going to be a change) so that they may not put forward the plea that we had not given them enough time to consider the matter.

We believe that our hunger-strike will have to be long and protracted. Popularising and campaigning on these demands must be begun right now.

Campaign for the release of Kamala Ramaswamy, the only woman detenu, must be begun seriously. She is five months' pregnant and it is cruel to keep her here.

H) CHARGE SHEETS AGAINST DETENUS

Charge sheets have been given to all the detenus. In them are listed out various reasons for which their detention was necessary for public safety. All the charge sheets have a common accusation that the C.P.I. is creating disorder and violence in order to embarrass the present Government.

The charge sheets contain charges dating from 1938 and in some cases earlier. Some charge sheets incorporate the charges made during our 1940 detentions by the Advisers' regime. The tone of the charge sheets is purely the old one. For example, one of the charges against Katragadda Narayanarao is that he gave speeches opposing the federation scheme in 1938 and later opposed recruitment to war. One charge against a Tamil comrade who was a Congressman in 1942 was that he was an active participant in 1942 struggle and was consequently sentenced to 2 years' R.I. The

main charge against Vajravelu Chetty of Kuppam is that he led a miners' strike at Kolar Gold Fields and criticised (sic.) the management of the mines and the Mysore State! One of the charges—the main one—against Rajagopalarao is that his paper, *Prajasakti*, gives false reports about Nizam's repression.

Even so many comrades' charge sheets contain charges like: you supported municipal strike; you condemned the Golden Rock firing; you are a leader or an important T.U. worker; you criticised the zamindar, you finance the C.P.

Falsehoods there are many; for example, Rajasekhar is accused of having addressed bus workers of Guntur on the 13th January when he was at Anantapur and who had never seen Guntur except once in 1945.

Police charges dismissed by courts are also dug up as charges now, e.g., Katragadda Narayanarao's case (after elections) is posed now and he is accused of having assaulted a Deputy Collector.

There is not a single charge sheet in which a specific charge of violence is cited. We are not giving individual replies. It has been decided to give a collective reply. The reply will be political, brief exposure of the real hand behind repression and the role of Congress Ministry. It is intended to make it a good exposing pamphlet.

All the charge sheets are marked CONFIDENTIAL.

Memo of Jail Demands Sent by Vellore Comrades

MEMO OF OUR DEMANDS SENT TO THE MINISTRY

February 2nd, 1947

On behalf of the political prisoners detained under Sub-Section 2 of Section (2) of the Madras Public Maintenance Order Ordinance 1 of 1947 and confined to the Central Jail, Vellore, we wish to make the following representation for your immediate and favourable consideration and sanction.

Though we are all political prisoners belonging to the Communist, trade union and kisan movements of this province who have been arrested and detained without any charge being framed against us and without any trial, we are being treated at present in this jail as ordinary B class convicted prisoners. In every respect, (food, clothing, lock-up and other facilities) even the rights which

were granted to Congress detenus in 1940-45 by the then Advisory regime are being denied to us today.

The vast majority of us who were brought here were not even told why we were being arrested and where we were being taken and were not allowed to take anything with us except the bare clothes we were wearing at the time of our arrest. Under such conditions we are lodged here for indefinite detention. The jail administration tell us that they do not know our exact status and have not received any instructions with regard to our treatment.

We wish to point out that such a state of affairs is extremely deplorable under a popular Ministry. We protest emphatically against the way in which we are being detained here without trial. Such detention without trial has so far been used in this country only by Imperialism to crush the national movement and it has repeatedly been condemned by the Congress leadership. It is deplorable that a Congress ministry should today use that same anti-democratic weapon against the working-class and kisan movements of this province. We demand, as a matter of democratic right, that we should immediately be brought on trial and, in the meantime, we, as political detenus, are entitled to at least the same facilities and treatment as were allowed to Congress detenus during 1940-45 by the then Advisory regime in this province. In consonance with this we raise the following concrete and specific demands :

1. *Food.* The B Class ration of As. 12-6 per day, that is now being allowed, is, of course, not even sufficient to cover the expense of one proper meal and a cup of coffee. Even as far back as 1940-45 detenus were allowed Rs. 1-14 per head per day. The cost of living has risen at least by 50 per cent since 1945. As such we claim that we may be allowed Rs. 2-12 per head per day towards food and that we may be permitted to draw the same in cash so that we may have the advantage of making our own choice regarding the variety, quality and quantity of foodstuffs.

2. *Medical treatment.* Facilities for treatment under specialists for chronic diseases must be made and arrangements to remove such of the detenus, who are at present suffering from such diseases, to places where special treatment can be had must be attended to without delay. Such facilities and arrangements were granted to detenus in 1940-45. It is found that the medical supplies in the jail

hospital are not adequate and as such necessary medicines may be supplied immediately.

3. *Clothing.* As the prices of all varieties of cloth (mill, handloom and khadi) have nearly trebled since 1942 and as the 1940-45 detenus were allowed each Rs. 60 per year, we claim that at least Rs. 150 may be granted to every one of us.

4. *Bedding.* Formerly, Rs. 30 per year was sanctioned towards bedding allowance. Now taking into consideration the rises in prices a minimum of Rs. 60 per year may be sanctioned.

5. *Mosquito curtain.* Sanitary conditions of this jail are very bad. All the barracks have been occupied for the last several years, and no arrangements have been made to clean them or the premises before we were brought here. Every detenu may be supplied with a mosquito net as the mosquito pest is a dangerous menace under present conditions in this jail.

6. *Personal allowance.* A sum of Rs. 15 may be granted as personal allowance towards smoking, writing materials, toilet etc. Use of our own typewriters must be allowed.

7. *Tooth paste and brush.* One tooth brush and two tubes of tooth paste per month be supplied to each detenu.

8. *Soaps and oil.* Four cakes of bath soap and half a bar of washing soap and 16 ounces of cocoanut oil or gingelly oil be allowed per month per head.

9. *Interviews and letters.* Every one of the detenus may be permitted to have an interview and four letters per week. All incoming letters should be allowed through without restrictions.

10. *Parole.* Detenus must be granted parole whenever urgently necessary in addition to the regular half-year parole of a month's duration in the minimum.

Government must bear the expenses for such parole, like travelling allowance, etc.

11. *Books, periodicals and newspapers.* All books and periodicals not proscribed by the Government should be allowed inside the jail without any other secondary censorship by the jail authorities. Newspapers in English as well as in all provincial languages should be allowed. We also demand that English as well as language newspapers of our province may be supplied at the rate of one for every 25 detenus at the Government cost.

12. *Library.* A library grant of Rs. 1000 to begin with may be sanctioned. The jail authorities may be directed to purchase the books as directed by us. We supply the authorities with a list of books that may be bought for the library.

13. *Radio set and loud speaker.* The detenus of 1942-45 were allowed to have as many radios as they liked. The same privileges may be extended to us also. We further demand that a radio with a loud speaker may be supplied to us to be installed at the detention camp.

14. *Furniture.* Every detenu must be supplied with a table, a chair, an easy chair, a cot, an almirah and a cloth stand.

15. *Games.* A sum of Rs. 1,000 may be sanctioned so that materials necessary for games such as volley ball, football, hockey, badminton, ping-pong and carroms may be bought.

16. *Lock-up.* The obnoxious and outrageous practice of keeping politicals, especially detenus, under lock-up, whether it being day or night, cannot be tolerated under any civilised Government. Further this criminal practice was resisted in this very jail by the 1940-45 detenus and the Advisers regime was forced to concede this demand and discontinue lock-up. Now, when once again we are brought in, it is surprising that this time under a popular ministry this practice of lock-up is again being resumed. We want to make it clear to the Government that we shall not submit to this and allow a vital right of political prisoners and detenus to be taken away arbitrarily. We demand that immediately instructions be sent to the authorities here to discard this brutal practice of keeping detenus under lock-up.

17. *Outside walks and use of playgrounds.* Detenus under the past regime were allowed to have morning and evening walks outside the jail enclosure. We demand that the same privileges be extended to us now. The detenus may be permitted to use the jail playground also in the evening.

18. *Family allowances.* Detenus having families dependent on them must be granted adequate family allowances to cover their needs and to compensate for the loss resulting from their detentions. This is the most elementary responsibility of any civilised Government and especially where the right of arrest and detention has been used so arbitrarily as in our case. We claim in this matter

the same right which was granted to detenus in 1940-45. Detenus at that time were granted family allowances ranging to Rs. 500, according to the needs.

We also urge that in the case of a detenu who has insured his life, the insurance premium may be paid by the Government.

Necessary instructions be issued to the departments concerned to keep the service going in the case of Government and quasi-Government servants and the employees of industrial and commercial firms and commercial concerns etc. who are under detention, and to disburse their pay to their families during the period of detention. Privileges of grain shops, housing, free passes and PTOs etc., that the families of the railway and other Government employees have, should not be discontinued and instructions may be issued to the administration concerned accordingly. If, however, such facilities are denied, we demand that the Government should compensate the families of such type in money form.

19. *Students and examinations.* In the case of students detained here, parole and such other necessary facilities to appear for university, college or school examinations should be given. Instructions may be issued to the university concerned to grant exemptions from attendance, etc. The Government should also pay the cost of text books, note books and also the necessary examination fees.

In conclusion we want to stress that the above demands are pressingly urgent and hope that the Government would take immediate steps to concede them. We ask for no more than what the Congress detenus secured in the past from the Advisers' regime. No self-respecting political prisoner will tolerate for a day the conditions under which we are kept at present, especially when we are denied the most elementary democratic right of trial before an open court of law. Yet we want to try all chances of peaceful negotiations for securing our rights and to give the Congress ministry time to intervene and grant us those rights which every political prisoner expects from such a ministry. We expect the Government to take action on this memorandum of ours within a month at the most. Failure of the ministry to intervene in time would leave us no alternative except to take other steps for securing our rights. The responsibility for such an unfortunate situation will not lie on our shoulders.

CHARGE-SHEET AGAINST N. K. KRISHNAN

[For Detention—Past Party Life As Main Charge]

*IN THE COURT OF THE CHIEF PRESIDENCY MAGISTRATE,
MADRAS*

PRESENT : S. M. Hasan, Esq., I.C.S.

READ : *Order of Detention dated 30th January, 1947.*

ORDER :

In pursuance of Section 4 of the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, N. Kalyana Krishnan is informed that the grounds for his detention are the following :

In August 1939, he attended the All-Kerala Students' Conference at Calicut and made an objectionable speech. He went to Bombay in October 1939 and was arrested on 7th November 1940 following police raid on the secret Communist Party office in Bombay in city and detained under the Defence of India Rules. On release in 1942 he was mainly concerned with the literature and propoganda sections of the Communist Headquarters at Bombay and also interested himself in the organisational work of the Party for some time in Karnataka. In 1943 he was connected with Kerala Communist Party work at Calicut and also toured Bangalore and instructed N. L. Upadhyaya regarding the Communist Party work in Karnataka.

In May 1945 he was engaged in chalking out a programme for organising labour and kisan work in the presidency, dividing the Province into regions and appointing full-time Party workers for each region. In May 1946, along with other Provincial leaders of the Party, he formulated the policy of the communists as regards their future programme. In August 1946, he took a keen interest in the Corporation Labour Union strike and went to the Bombay Headquarters office (to which he is permanently attached) and returned sometime later. Since then he has been secretly working and issuing instructions to the local Party leaders to bring about general strikes in January this year including a mass uprising attended with violence.

After the arrests early in January 1947 in connection with the Madura Communist Conspiracy case he took over the work of the Party office at Madras and took necessary action to carry on subversive activities and maintain contacts and for the production

and distribution of unauthorised news-sheets. Since he is likely to go underground to carry on subversive activities, his detention is essential.

He is informed that he has a right to make representation in writing against the order under which he is detained. If he wishes to make such a representation, he should address it to the undersigned and forward it through the Superintendent of the Jail as soon as possible.

Sd/. S. M. Hasan

30-1-47

Chief Presidency Magistrate

CHARGE-SHEET AGAINST IMBICHI BAVA

**[Criticism of Congress Failure to Keep Election
Pledges—Main Charge]**

CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS Public (General) Department
MEMORANDUM No. 52|47-1 dated 5-2-47

SUBJECT : *Law and Order—Maintenance—Detention of E. K. Imbichi Bava of Ponnani—Grounds of detention—communicated.*

In pursuance of Section 4 of the Madras Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1947 (Ordinance 1 of 1947) E. K. Imbichi Bava of Ponnani, Malabar district, is informed that the grounds for his detention are the following.

He is a Working-Committee member of the Malabar District Communist Party and Secretary of the Ponnani communist Party. He imbibed communist ideals as a result of his association with E. M. Sankaran Nambudiripad and A. K. Gopalan and others. He has been active on the student front and has organised students and the Communist sponsored Beedi Labourers' strike at Ponnani in October and November 1946.

He is a good speaker and has condemned the Congress Ministry in his public speeches for its alleged failure to carry out the promises contained in the Election Manifesto and for curtailing the civil liberties of the people and oppressing the labourers. He has also accused the Ministry of encouraging blackmarketing.

In view of the disturbed conditions brought about by the militant Communist activities in Malabar, his being at large, as a capable Communist organiser, is likely to prejudice the maintenance of law and order and public peace and tranquillity.

He is informed that he has a right to make a representation in writing against the order under which he is detained. If he wishes to make such a representation he should address it to the undersigned and forward it through the Superintendent of the Jail as soon as possible.

Sd. W. scott Brown,

5-2-47

Chief Secretary to the Government

THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN FOR INDIA

R. PALME DUTT

THE Mountbatten Plan proposes the partition of India and the speedy transfer of responsibility, initially in the form of Dominion Status, to Indian Governments for the sections of a divided India.

Formally, the Plan does not lay down the partition of India, but provides machinery for the areas affected by the Pakistan demand to choose, either through their Legislative Assembly representatives or through referendum, between a single Constituent Assembly in accordance with the Cabinet Mission Plan, or a separate Constituent Assembly for a separate State. This involves division of the Punjab and Bengal so that the Moslem-majority areas and non-Moslem majority areas can decide separately. In practice, on the basis of existing representation, this means partition, including almost certainly the partition of the Punjab and Bengal.

The position of the Princes' States is left unchanged: that is, with the ending of paramountcy they can join either grouping or proclaim their independence and establish their separate relations with Britain.

Legislation is to be hurried through Parliament to establish the new Dominion Government or Governments.

If the Plan goes through, the result will establish the following States or State areas in India:

(1) North West Pakistan, covering Western Punjab, Sind, and possibly the North West Frontier and Baluchistan, with a population of 25 millions (18 million Moslems);

(2) North East Pakistan, covering Eastern Bengal and the Sylhet district of Assam, with a population of 44 millions (31 million Moslems). These two areas, divided by a thousand miles, would constitute the Pakistan State or Federation, with a population of 70 millions.

(3) The Indian Union or Hindustan, covering the rest of British India, with a population of 225 millions.

(4) The Princes' States, covering two-fifths of the area of India with a population of 93 millions or one quarter, would join one or other federation, or possibly, in the case of one or two larger States, such as Hyderabad and Travancore, according to their present declared intentions, proclaim their separate independence.

Assuming that the Princes' States all finally decide to link up with one or other grouping, then on a very rough estimate Pakistan would represent about one quarter of India, covering mainly agricultural, feudal and industrially undeveloped, but strategically important territory; and the Indian Union would represent about three-quarters of India, including the main industrial and commercial regions and urban centres, and the most politically advanced and democratically developed sections of the population and the main forces of the working class.

Relations of Britain with the States to be formed would finally be determined by special treaties. Military, administrative and economic questions are left for future settlement.

This Plan, the third within twelve months (Cabinet Mission Plan of June, 1946; Attlee Declaration of February, 1947; Mountbatten Plan of June, 1947), has received the assent of the leadership of the major political organisations in India and in Britain.

In India the main political leaders have declared their acceptance of the proposals, though with heavy misgivings.

Nehru on behalf of the Congress declared:

"It is with no joy in my heart that I commend these proposals."

Jinnah on behalf of the Moslem League declared:

"We cannot say or feel that we are satisfied or that we agree with some of the matters dealt with by the plan."

Baldev Singh on behalf of the Sikhs declared:

"It would be untrue if I were to say that we are altogether happy. The British Plan does not please everybody, not the Sikh community anyway."

On the other hand, J. P. Narain on behalf of the Indian Socialists, and P. C. Joshi on behalf of the Indian Communists, have sharply criticised the Plan as involving the dismemberment of India, and as not representing a real transfer of power, and have opposed acceptance. P. C. Joshi has declared:

“The new British Plan for the dismemberment of India is a desperate move against the freedom movement which stands for the complete independence of the whole of the country . . .

“Mountbatten’s Plan is not a genuine ‘Quit India’ plan, but rather one which seeks to keep in British hands as many economic and military controls as possible.”

In Britain Tory-Labour unity has been proclaimed in support of the Plan. Churchill, in contrast to his opposition to previous proposals, has declared his approval of the general lines of the Mountbatten Plan, and congratulated Attlee on his selection of Mountbatten as Viceroy—praise which, according to *The Times*, “brought a flush of pleasure to the Prime Minister’s cheek.” “The two men,” observed the “Manchester Guardian” of Churchill and Attlee, “have not found so much common ground since this Parliament began.” On the occasion of the Parliamentary announcement only Gallacher expressed criticism. In the City Indian share prices immediately rose, following the announcement, and as the “Daily Herald” noted, “the City gave its blessing to the Plan.”

Internationally the Plan has received high praise in the American official Press, and in the Right Wing Press of most countries. On the other hand, Reuters has noted that “Left-wing newspapers have been unfavourable in all countries.” Soviet comment was provided by the statement of Zhukov:

“Britain is being forced to take a page from America’s book and copy her policy in the Philippines—to give a nominal false freedom. In other words, to clear out so as to remain.”

A commentary by Lenin on the Moscow Radio drew the conclusion:

“From declarations proclaiming the transfer of power to the Indians it is a far cry to true independence for India. The achievement of the latter will depend first and foremost on the strength of the national liberation movement. British ruling circles mean to maintain their economic, political and military positions in India, whatever her future constitutional structure may be. Among other things they bank on the economic ties established between the British and the Indian bourgeoisie . . .

“Irrespective of the constitutional changes in India, what really matters is the actual economic, political and military positions that

British capital succeeds in maintaining in that country. This will decide whether the long-standing question of independence for India will be settled as it was in the Philippines, or whether India will become a really independent democratic country.”

The rapid and accelerating succession of new Plans for India (and the Mountbatten Plan is by no means likely to prove the final solution, when it comes to the practical problems of operating it) are a demonstration of the deepening crisis in India. Imperialism can no longer govern India in the old way. The old administrative machine has collapsed. British power, in its present weakened world position, can no longer hope by military coercion to hold India in submission. As Cripps said in the House of Commons debate on March 5:

“There were fundamentally two alternatives facing the Government. First, they could endeavour to strengthen British control in India on the basis of a considerable reinforcement of British troops . . . The second alternative was to accept the fact that the first alternative was not possible . . . One thing that was quite obviously impossible was to decide to continue our responsibility indefinitely and indeed against our own wishes into a period when we had not the power to carry it out.”

This bankruptcy of the old imperialist order and irresistible upsurge of the Indian people is the central dominating fact of the Indian situation since the war. All the elaborate constitutional manoeuvres, on the one hand, and the hideous provoked disorders and internal division rending the Indian people, on the other, are only the symptoms of the deep social and political change which is preparing—the blood-soaked birth-pangs of Indian freedom. This crisis has mounted over the past two years. Even the desperate attempts to divert the popular upsurge into fratricidal channels of communal strife have only deepened the crisis, weakened and demoralised the administrative apparatus, undermined the stability of the armed forces, spread contempt for law and order, and hastened the menace of a general conflagration. Gigantic problems are looming before the Indian people, including the deepening food crisis, which are beyond the capacity of the existing administrative apparatus to solve.

Hence the accelerating urgency of British policy to reach a settlement before the situation has passed entirely out of control.

The Cabinet Mission Plan, itself the product of the naval revolt, fixed no date for the transfer of power. The Attlee Declaration fixed the date of June, 1948. The Mountbatten Plan seeks to anticipate the Attlee date and complete the process of handing over to Dominion Governments by August or September of this year.

But this enforced retreat of imperialism is accompanied by complex manoeuvres to play on every element of reaction and division (Princes, Hindu-Moslem antagonism, Congress-League disagreement, etc.) in such a way as to qualify in practice the formal transfer of power and protect the essential political, economic and strategic interests of British capital in India.

In place of a straightforward recognition of independence and transfer of power to the majority political leadership of Indian Nationalism, leaving the internal problems of India to be settled by Indian leaders, each successive complicated Plan has revealed this essential character of building an elaborate structure to play on Indian divisions and antagonisms.

Before the Cabinet Mission arrived, the mighty national upsurge in India was unsullied by communal conflict. The great mass demonstrations bore united Congress and League flags and the slogans "Hindus and Moslems, Unite!" "Down with British imperialism!"

But the Cabinet Mission Plan erected its entire structure on separating Hindus and Moslems in statutory fixed compartments of its so-called "constituent assembly" and counterposing Congress and League in an uneasy balance of mutual impotence and antagonism. The resultant accentuated conflict spread the hell of communal violence through many areas of India. The Attlee Declaration of February 20 prepared the way for partition by declaring that, in the event of the Moslem League continuing its obstruction, such obstruction would be rewarded by granting its demand for partition. The Mountbatten Award has completed the process and laid down the lines of partition.

As in Ireland, so in India, when the national revolt can no longer be contained, an evil legacy of partition is left by the departing imperialist Power to poison the life of the revolting nation and leave behind two weak and mutually conflicting administrations in place of a strong united and progressive nation.

The conditions, however, are not the same in India as in Ireland for the success of this manoeuvre.

The central new feature of the Mountbatten Plan is the partition of India. The main boast of British rule in India was its unification of India. At the end of two centuries of British rule the India which was united under Asoka and Chandragupta over two thousand years ago and under Akbar three and a half centuries ago is handed back, split into discordant fragments, and needing to tread a toilsome and painful path to overcome this vicious legacy of imperialist "divide and rule" and forge living unity anew.

Partition is so universally recognised in all responsible quarters as disastrous for Indian progressive development that the attempt is made on either side to throw the responsibility on other shoulders. British Government spokesmen claim that they would have preferred the semi-unity of the Cabinet Mission Plan, but that, in the absence of united acceptance by both Congress and the League, partition has become unfortunately inevitable. Congress claims that the refusal of Britain to hand over in democratic fashion to the elected majority leadership of the Indian people, and its insistence on placing a power of absolute veto in the hands of the obstructive minority, made inevitable the British-imposed award of partition which Congress accepts only under protest.

In any case partition is a great evil for India. It represents no lasting solution, but contains the seeds of future conflicts. The delimitation of frontiers holds the possibilities of endless discords. The Moslem League has only accepted a "truncated" Pakistan in order to continue the fight for the extension of its frontiers. Congress stands by the aim of the united sovereign democratic Republic of India.

Partition hinders progressive development, encourages particularism, reaction and communal antagonism, places a barrier in the way of urgently needed all-India economic and social planning, and provides a fertile ground for the disruptive intrigues of rival imperialist powers to gain a foothold in India.

Marxist students of the Indian problem have recognised that within the sub-continent of India there are various national groups with their own languages and cultural traditions; and they have urged that only through self-determination of these nationalities in democratic fashion a real and lasting unity of the Indian people will be achieved. Such a solution of the multinational problem has already been powerfully demonstrated, not only in the case of the

U.S.S.R., but more recently in the experience of the Yugoslavian People's Federal Republic. Such a union will undoubtedly prove the final solution also in India as the necessary economic and political development of Indian history.

But the present proposed partition of the Mountbatten Plan, based upon Hindu and Moslem States, not to speak of the equally arbitrary boundaries of the Princes' States, has nothing in common with national self-determination. It creates economic monstrosities; it divorces agricultural hinterland from industrial areas; it cuts indiscriminately across railway and irrigation systems; it must necessarily produce chaos in the economic life of India, and give rise to endless complications in the settlement of common services, communications and financial relations; it ruthlessly divides brother from brother on different sides of artificially drawn barriers; and with the proposal to sub-divide Bengal and the Punjab it opens up a way for the limitless fragmentation of India.

If this partition is carried through, every effort will need to be made to overcome its disastrous consequences, to build up the closest relations and co-operation of the two Governments, and to prepare they way for the speediest future unification.

Congress has only accepted the present partition plan as a makeshift in order to win effective control over the maximum possible area of India, with the unchanged objective to lead forward to the united democratic Republic of India. This was made clear by Nehru in his speech to the States Peoples' Conference at Gwalior on April 18:

“Our aim at present is to liberate as much of India as we can—one half or three-fourths—and then to deal with the question of independence for the rest.”

The establishment of a Dominion Government or Governments, even though restricted in effectiveness by the evil consequences of partition, will represent a signal advance on the present status of the Interim Government. Already through the Interim Government a valuable achievement has been possible in the sphere of foreign policy; and Indian spokesmen in the United Nations have played an independent and progressive role, in marked contrast to the former puppets who provided British reaction with an extra vote in the supposed name of India. But in internal affairs the Interim Government has been in practice impotent, both through

its lack of recognised constitutional authority (the formal position of its members still being that of nominated advisors of the Viceroy), the lack of recognition of the principle of collective Cabinet responsibility, and the mutual feud of the counterpoised Congress and League members, leaving the Viceroy and the bureaucracy in effective control.

The replacement of this situation by responsible Cabinets based on elected popular majorities (even though for the moment on a restricted franchise and communal electorates) will open the way to far-reaching democratic advance and planned economic and social development for the urgent tasks of national reconstruction.

The fulfilment of these tasks will require the closest co-operation of all progressive sections of the national movement and the working-class movement on a common democratic platform.

The working-class movement, which has alone throughout maintained its ranks untouched by communal divisions and has led the fight against communal disruption and disorders, has special problems and responsibility in face of the prospect of the temporary partition of India. The magnificent unity achieved through the All-India Trade Union Congress and the All-India Peasant Federation must not be broken. Here it may be suggested to the national leadership that the attempt to form rival unions, whether through a Congress-controlled "National Trade Union Congress," or through Moslem unions, is not only contrary to the interests of the working class and will break on the rock of working class solidarity, but is also contrary to the interests of national unity for the victory of independence. Now more than ever the situation reveals the urgent need, increasingly recognised on both sides, to endeavour to overcome the past phase of sharp divisions between the Congress and the Communist Party in order to march forward together upon a common programme of democratic advance, for the achievement of full independence and eventual all-India democratic union, and for the fulfilment of the economic and social demands, land reform, measures of nationalisation and planned industrial development, for which the workers and peasants and masses of the Indian people are looking.

In order to ensure that the transfer of power shall be made effective, it is essential to ensure that the accompanying concrete conditions, especially in the military sphere, in relation to the

Princes' States, and in the economic sphere, shall not invalidate this transfer or permit of indirect forms of continued imperialist control.

In the military sphere the full withdrawal of British forces and military missions and the handing over of all bases and installations to Indian control are an essential condition of real independence. No clear statement of the Government's policy has yet been made in this respect; and many long-term military preparations, especially in the States, have been widely reported. Bevin in his speech at the Labour Party Conference, referring to British troops in India, stated that "independence will affect the number of our troops there"—which would appear to imply that it would not necessarily mean their withdrawal. Alexander's reply to Piratin in the House of Commons debate on March 6 would also appear to imply continued military occupation in India:

PIRATIN : I would like to have an unequivocal statement from the Government that there will be no troops stationed in India whether invited or uninvited.

ALEXANDER: It is a most extraordinary proposition—I know the Hon. Member is keenly interested in the Russian ideology and so on—if it is to be suggested that the British authority is never to respond in any circumstances sympathetically to the request of another power, while Russia may be quite free to respond to any other countries that desire Russian troops there.

Alexander's explosion indicates that a vulnerable point had here been touched; and the attempted analogy reveals that the Government considers it as legitimate to maintain British troops in India after the formal recognition of independence or dominion status as for the Soviet Union to maintain troops in ex-enemy occupied countries in accordance with the peace settlement. It may be noted that not only have various Princes of major States offered their territories, but also some Moslem League leaders have offered Pakistan as a suitable British military base in India.

In relation to the Princes' States the position is still unsettled. Constitutionally, with the lapsing of paramountcy, the States resume their independence and need only enter into such voluntary relations as they choose with the Indian Union or Pakistan. Hyderabad and Travancore have asserted their intention to stand on their own and make their separate relations with Britain. Mountbatten has declared

that "the British Government has no intention of recognising any Indian State as a separate Dominion," but that he would transmit any request from a State for a separate treaty to the British Government. There are indications that British policy would urge the States to align themselves with one or other of the two Dominions to be formed, no doubt as performing a more useful function as a conservative factor within the new Dominions rather than as standing outside; but that this would not necessarily affect their autonomy or exclude the presence of special British missions, officers and "advisors." The Indian people will finally deal with the Princes and States, whose autocracies have only maintained a puppet existence as pawns of British power, and will not be able ultimately to resist the advance of Indian democracy and freedom. But in the critical transition period we must defeat the attempts to make the Princes' States or certain major States continue bases of imperialist control and influence. Resolute opposition will be necessary to the contracting of special treaties or the establishing of special direct relations with the Indian Princes against the interests of the unity and independence of India as a whole.

In the economic sphere special attention will need to be paid to defeat any attempts to impose unequal economic agreements upon India or to interfere in the free development of her economy. It is known that the big British monopolies calculate to maintain and extend their grip on India even within the new forms through association with the Indian monopolies as junior partners in the Indo-British corporations which are being organised in the present period. The I.C.I. Information Bulletin, in a special confidential report on the "Political Outlook" in India, concludes:

There is every reason now to believe that the discrimination against foreign businesses which was once feared will not materialise . . .

Unless a Communist uprising on the Russian model could be organised, nationalisation of industries will not go much further than the Government setting up factories at State expense in all those cases where the ordinary chances of supply and demand do not forecast a probable profit on an adequate scale . . .

On the whole, business interests with substantial resources are justified in not taking too short a view and in being cautiously optimistic.

Any serious programme of national reconstruction in India will inevitably require large-scale nationalisation of the main industries and larger enterprises and elimination of foreign monopolies. In the coming critical negotiations on the sterling balances it is essential to repudiate the harsh Dalton attitude, which not only ignores the heavy burdens placed on the Indian masses by the war, but also in practice plays straight into the hands of the American financial interests to clear the road for dollar penetration of India (Dalton's speech was immediately applauded by Churchill and the U.S. Treasury), while alienating Indian feeling and losing the opportunity of a mutually beneficial economic settlement with India.

The international aspects of the new situation developing in India are of far-reaching importance.

Already, even within the limitations of the conditions of the Interim Government, Indian representatives in the United Nations, under the guidance of Nehru as Foreign Minister, have been able to take a courageous and progressive stand, independently of British reaction, over the issues of South Africa and Palestine. The combined leadership of the Soviet Union, India and the progressive democratic countries has even been able on occasion to rally a majority against the bloc of reaction represented by the United States, Britain, South Africa, etc. Indian initiative in the convening the Delhi Conference of Asiatic nations, including representatives of the Soviet Asian Republics, constituted a landmark in the closer relations of the peoples of Asia marching forward along the path of liberation. The world is looking to Indian representatives abroad to carry forward this progressive role, so that India will fulfil the great part which it can play in the partnership of democratic nations.

American imperialism has its eye on India and is actively striving to press forward its penetration. This has been shown in the appointment of O'Grady, former head of the wartime Technical Mission which prepared the confidential report on Indian resources, as Ambassador, with the special message from Truman on American readiness to participate in Indian economic development; the extension of American consulates; the U.S.-Nepal Agreement of May; and the visit of the U.S. warship Toledo to Bombay on May 19. In the past many sections of the Indian national movement tended to look to America as a progressive anti-imperialist country

whose assistance might be a positive factor in opposition to British imperialism. That situation has changed. The Indian national movement has not fought to throw off the yoke of British imperialism only in order to fall a victim to the now more powerful and dangerous American imperialism. The examples of Greece, Turkey and China have awakened Indian opinion to the menace of American expansion and dollar penetration; and the hostile reception to the Toledo at Bombay has revealed this awakening.

In this situation the close co-operation of the British and Indian peoples on a democratic and equal basis is more than ever important, both politically and economically. Once the last traces of the relations of imperialist domination are removed, we can look forward to the closest friendly relations and co-operation, both economic and political, of mutual benefit for both peoples within the world partnership of democratic nations.

MOUNTBATTEN AWARD AND AFTER

The Mountbatten Award does not give India real independence but is the culmination of a double-faced imperial policy which, while making concessions to the national demand to transfer power, sets in motion disruptive and reactionary forces to disrupt the popular upsurge, obstruct the realisation of real independence, throttle the growth of democracy and destroy the unity and integrity of India.

BRITISH IMPERIAL AIMS

The growing upsurge of the various sections of the Indian people, the States' people's struggles in State after State, the gigantic wave of working-class strikes and peasant actions, the brave anti-imperialist demonstrations of students and the militant mood of the armed forces brought the imperialists face to face with the unprecedented strength of the national liberation movement.

In addition, British imperialism emerged greatly weakened politically and economically out of World War II. Its main imperialist rival, the United States, vastly strengthened in the war, threatened to sweep it out of its traditional imperial bases.

At home, the British Labour movement would not back the reconquest of India. All over the world, democratic opinion, immensely strengthened with the defeat of Fascism, demanded Indian independence.

Hemmed in from all sides the imperialist rulers have been forced to enter into negotiations with Indian leadership, talk of agreeing to Indian independence while they seek new forms of indirect rule.

DISRUPTION-SOLE PURPOSE

This has been the central aim of British policy ever since the Cabinet Mission Plan and the Mountbatten Plan is its latest variant despite obvious differences. The sole purpose is to disrupt the people, strengthen reaction, get into alliance with it and thus make Indian independence formal.

[Political Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, June 1947]

(a) *Control through partition.* The British policy of divide and rule, exploiting Hindu-Muslim differences, produced an unprecedented civil war. It has now culminated in the final act of partition of the country into two hostile States which they plan to control by entering into new alliances with reactionary forces in the different partitioned areas.

The British imperialist aim is to influence the reactionary leadership of the League to keep Pakistan a British Dominion, to allow British capital to have almost undisputed sway over the undeveloped Muslim majority areas, to utilise the North-west as a strategic base and as a base for the domination of India as a whole.

British Big Business by entering into partnership with Indian Big Business aims to continue to dominate the economy of India.

- By its agreements with Indian capital it expects to preserve intact its capital and retain and extend its control over vital industries in India.

- It hopes to use its Indian partner as its tool to influence the military and foreign policy of the Indian Union despite its republican form.

- It expects to achieve this aim through reliance on the great influence of Indian Big Business over the extreme Right-wing of the Congress leadership.

The Communist Party warns the Indian people that these are the new methods of control over India that British imperialism aims to employ in order to preserve its domination of India.

(b) *Utilisation of Princely puppets.* In the imperial plan for controlling the India of the future their traditional puppets the Indian Princes occupy a position of supreme importance.

The Plan by granting the Princes the option to stay away from the Indian Union gives them a weapon to drive a hard bargain with the forces of Indian nationalism, retain their feudal privileges as far as possible and act as a brake on the democratic movement of the entire people.

BRITISH FIFTH COLUMN

Thus imperialist strategy is one of putting checks and balances in the new State against the national leadership and attempting to circumscribe freedom and democracy to the utmost possible extent.

It is the selfish British imperial effort to place their fifth column inside all the organs of the Indian States of the future so that they can influence their foreign and internal policy in the interests of their British masters.

But at the same time British imperialism encourages in a subtle manner some of the big Princes to remain "independent", in case they cannot get favourable terms from the Congress and the League, so that such "independent" States can be used as its outposts on Indian soil.

PART OF SAME STRUGGLE

The Communist Party is firmly of the opinion that the struggle against Princely autocracy is at once the struggle against British manoeuvres to limit and control Indian independence and democracy and for the full realisation of this independence and democracy.

(c) *Perpetuation of colonial social order.* In the background of its constitutional manoeuvres imperialism is carrying forward the struggle to save the colonial social order for the existing vested interests so that in alliance with them it may retain control not only over Indian economy but also the Indian States.

Hence, through the links of Indian vested interests with the popular Ministries and the steel-frame of the Indian bureaucracy, it seeks to influence the economic and administrative policy of the Provincial Ministries and the Central Governments so that these Governments resist radical economic measures.

The results of these efforts, if successful, will lead to intensification of the economic crisis and further deterioration in the conditions of the people.

With the same end in view, the bureaucracy seeks desperately to drive a wedge between the national movement, whose leaders are at the head of the Government, and the rising working-class and peasant movements.

MASS TERROR

This they strive to do through the use of unprecedented mass terror against workers and peasants—who constitute the main social force among our people in the vanguard of the fight against the British-created social order and for a rapid transition to a new, democratic social order.

The strategy of British imperialism is to prevent a united national revolt by exploiting all the weaknesses in our national and social life and disrupting the unity of the national forces. It is a strategy to forge a new alliance with the Princes, landlords and Indian Big Business to be able to control through them the Indian States of the future as also Indian economy, and thus manoeuvre the transition from direct to indirect rule.

DISRUPTIVE PROCEDURE

The procedure outlined by the Mountbatten Plan is as disruptive as the plan itself and calculated to ensure its fulfilment through a series of British awards.

The Boundaries Commission and other Commissions dealing with financial and other aspects of division are only intended to worsen Hindu-Muslim-Sikh relations so that the British arbiters can give their awards intensifying the communal conflict still further.

NATIONAL STRENGTH

The very fact that British imperialism does not hope any longer to rule India directly is a recognition of the undisputed strength of the Indian freedom movement. Its desperate manoeuvres reveal not its strength but its utter weakness which has forced it to make important concessions to the urgent demands of the national liberation movement, such as, for example:

(a) Transfer of power to Congress and League Governments on Dominion Status basis by August 15.

(b) Assurance, though equivocal, that Britain shall not seek to establish independent relationship with the Princes.

(c) The Constituent Assemblies, despite their limitations, are free to declare for independence and make their own constitutions.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Communist Party is of the opinion that new opportunities for national advance have been won. The two popular Governments and Constituent Assemblies are the strategic weapons in the hands of the national leadership. It is the task of the national movement to ensure that they are used for the rapid realisation of national aims.

The concessions have not been voluntarily given by the British Government but extracted through the continuous pressure of the Congress leadership for transfer of power and the rising tide of popular struggles of the workers, peasants, students and States' people, which grew despite British provoked civil war, despite all efforts to check and suppress them and which showed the new spirit of the people.

LAST DESPERATE STEP

The British Government agreed to these concessions because there was no way out for it and hence its desperate last step of partition.

The path forward is beset with difficulties. Sharp alternatives face the national movement and our entire people.

● EITHER imperialist manoeuvres succeed, exploiting all the fissures in our national movement, thus making Indian independence formal—

OR, the national forces unitedly ensure that the Constituent Assemblies draft constitutions on the basis of independence of the country and the popular Governments firmly resist imperialist pressure to extort economic and military concessions.

● EITHER the Princes are appeased and the British fifth column is retained inside our country—

OR, with the support of the entire country and the popular Governments, the States' people are actively aided to win their own liberation and bring one-third of our land under the banner of independent India.

IN WHOSE INTERESTS

● EITHER the anti-national and anti-democratic activities of the vested interests are checked and the task of nation building is begun to ensure food, cloth, jobs, and a living wage, prospect of a new life to workers, peasants and the common people, by the joint-efforts of the popular Governments and popular organisations—

OR, Indian economy gets mortgaged to British Big Business and the Indian people pass through bitter suffering.

● EITHER partitioned India grows into two hostile States with reaction strengthened within each—

OR, the progressives intervene and carry forward the struggle for reunion by demanding a complete break with British imperialism

by their own States and friendly relations between them in mutual interest.

The Communist Party has consistently warned against the dangers of imperialist manoeuvres if the national movement fails to forge a united front.

- It warned against partition. It suggested recognition of the right of national self-determination and the immediate implementation of fundamental democratic measures to undermine communal separatism and to preserve and strengthen Indian unity on the basis of the unity and equality of every nationality.

- The Communist Party warned against the intrigues of vested interests with the popular Ministries. It demanded that the Ministries break the resistance of vested interests and meet the needs of the people.

- It warned against our political parties getting entangled in the imperialist plan and demanded a sharp break with it.

PEOPLE'S VIGILANCE

National unification behind the popular Governments for the realisation of complete independence demands that people's vigilance be roused against the compromisers in the national leadership, people's indignation against the vested interests, and national conscience against communal provocateurs.

In the present transitional period the unification of the national forces against reaction in each State is the only guarantee against imperialist manoeuvres.

The Communist Party is fully confident that imperialist intrigues can be decisively defeated. The allies of imperialism have a very narrow social basis. They are the enemies of our people who place profit and self-interest above patriotism and national interest. The very economic crisis that they are intensifying will move the common people against them. The national movement will not tolerate any compromise of real independence if it is kept fully informed and mobilised.

INSIDE INDIAN UNION

IMMEDIATE developments, as also the shape of new India, will depend upon the policies the Congress and the League pursue through the Governments and the Constituent Assemblies headed by their leaders.

The Congress is the main national democratic organisation. The decisions of its leadership will not only build the structure of the Indian Union but greatly influence developments inside Pakistan also.

DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME

The Communist Party desires that the Congress leadership implement rapidly and consistently the declared anti-imperialist democratic programme of the Congress.

The Communist Party will fully cooperate with the national leadership in the proud task of building the Indian Republic on democratic foundations, thus paving the way to Indian unity.

The Communist Party puts forward the following programme:

(a) Real independence

- Withdrawal of all British troops
- No military alliance with Britain, the imperialist enslaver.
- Independent democratic foreign policy. Establishment of friendly relations with all democratic countries; support to UNO to maintain world peace and to help dependent countries to attain full independence.
- Government control over all Indo-British Big Business deals and over foreign trade.
- Prompt repayment of Sterling Balances in order to secure capital goods for the rapid industrialisation of India.
- Nationalisation of all British industrial concerns.
- Mutually beneficial trade relations with Britain on the basis of equality.

British efforts to seek economic and military control over the Indian Republic have to be foiled. All those elements in the national leadership who are ready to compromise and seek "a half-way house" between Independence and Dominion Status have to be defeated.

(b) The Princes

Full support to the States' people's movement, to bring their States inside the Constituent Assembly, to win responsible government and democratic constitution on the basis of their own Constituent Assemblies elected by adult franchise and to help their

struggle forward to assert people's sovereignty and realise self-determination.

(c) Democratic Constitution

—Joint electorates on the basis of adult franchise and proportional representation.

—National self-determination on the basis of linguistically demarcated Provinces to lay the basis for the future unity of India.

—Regional or local autonomy with full democratic rights for the Hill, Frontier and other compact tribal areas.

(d) Democratic Economy

A planned economy on the basis of abolition of landlordism and nationalisation of key industries to ensure a new life for the people.

(e) Against Communalism

The Congress must save the immediate communal situation from worsening and shape it in the right direction by taking a firm and fraternal stand on the following issues :

(I) *Boundaries commission*

—Take its stand on the basis of justice and oppose all unjust and exaggerated demands. Press for the inclusion only of contiguous areas with a non-Muslim majority inside the Indian Union.

—Make boundary adjustments in mutual interest by agreement and without British intervention.

(II) *Muslim minority rights*

—Full protection to the religious and cultural rights of Muslims.

—No discrimination against Muslims in services or in any other sphere of life.

—Open repudiation of elements who preach that Muslims are aliens inside the Indian Union.

(f) Mutual Relations

—Closest possible economic relations, exchange of goods and all aid for the industrialisation and modernisation of backward Pakistan areas.

—Offers of co-operation to Pakistan for the defence of India.

INSIDE PAKISTAN

In the new Pakistan State, consisting of the Muslim majority areas of North-west India and North and East Bengal, the Muslim League would be the major political party. Here the freedom-loving anti-imperialist masses would be face to face with a very difficult and dangerous situation.

Only through the utmost vigilance against reaction and a steadfast adherence to democratic policies can the exploited Muslim masses of Pakistan areas achieve their real objectives of freedom, democracy and prosperity.

Owing to the fact that British imperialism has kept the Muslim majority areas socially, culturally and economically backward, it is the big Nawabs, Khans, tumanders, zamindars and jagirdars who exploit the mass of the Muslim peasantry and through their great influence over the leadership of the Muslim League divert the anti-imperialist freedom urge of the Muslim masses into communal channels.

In this way they not only save their own ill-gotten gains but by disrupting the unity of the Muslim masses with their non-Muslim brethren play the game of British imperialism.

If the Muslim masses do not defeat this selfish and reactionary policy of their upper classes they will continue to suffer the miseries of the most brutal feudal exploitation and the humiliation of foreign imperialist domination.

Now that a separate Pakistan State is coming into existence and the masses of those areas are being cut away from the popular forces of the rest of India, the efforts of the reactionaries would be directed to keep the new State tied to the chariot wheels of British imperialism in order to preserve their feudal privileges.

Already insidious propaganda is being made by sections of the League leaders that Pakistan should remain a part of the British Empire.

REACTION PLOTTING

Flouting the declared aims of the Muslim League itself which as early as 1937 adopted the aim of "full independence" as the goal of the League and which, in the well-known Lahore Resolution of 1940, declared for a "Sovereign State", these reactionaries are plotting to make Pakistan subservient to British imperialism.

They want to hide this pro-imperialist manoeuvre by diverting the intense hatred of common Muslims against imperialism into anti-Hindu communal channels.

At the same time, the fact that Pakistan areas are economically backward is being used as an argument by these reactionaries to seek financial and military aid from Anglo-American imperialists.

In the name of industrial development of Pakistan and of defence of the new State, full scope for ruthless exploitation and political and military domination of the people of Pakistan might be given to the Anglo-American imperialists.

In this case also the bogey of Hindu domination would be used by the Muslim vested interests to hide their real selfish objectives of preserving their own privileges and continuing the exploitation of the common people, in alliance with foreign imperialists.

However, the Communist Party believes that such a reactionary development can be stopped.

MASSES WILL NOT HAVE IT

The Muslim masses, who for the last 200 years of British rule have consistently battled against foreign domination, who are conscious of the fact that British imperialism is the traditional enemy of the freedom of the Muslim peoples of the Middle East, who have valiantly participated in the common workers' and peasants' movements of the last two years—the I.N.A. demonstrations, the R.I.N. Mutiny, the great strike battles and peasants' struggles and States' people's movements—shall resist the slavish policies of their upper classes.

The Communist Party appeals to all anti-imperialist progressive Muslim Leaguers and the masses following the Muslim League to fight and defeat these policies of their own reactionary vested interests.

Democracy in Pakistan can be won through unity with the non-Muslim masses and friendly relations with the Indian Republic. Real economic reconstruction can be achieved only through democracy, by curbing and eliminating the big vested interests and through cooperation with the Indian Republic as equals and in mutual interest.

Only then can foreign aid be got on favourable terms which cannot lead to foreign domination.

Thus alone will end the old era of fratricidal conflicts, imperialist domination, extreme poverty and backwardness of the people. Thus alone will open the era of voluntary Indian unity, full democracy and new life.

With this objective in view the Communist Party will campaign in Pakistan for the following programme:

(a) Pakistan Republic

The Pakistan State must be a Republic and not a British Dominion, free from all economic and military control of British imperialism, with a democratic foreign policy and close friendly relations with the Indian Republic.

(b) The Princes

—Pakistan to support the States' people's movement for democracy and self-determination.

—Total repudiation of the League leadership's present policy of support to Princely autocracy.

(c) Democratic Constitution

—Constitution based on adult franchise, joint electorates and proportional representation.

—Full protection of religious and cultural rights of the minorities. No discrimination against any community and equal opportunities for all in administrative and other services.

—National self-determination inside Pakistan Union to ensure equality of Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans, Punjabis and Bengalis. This will also lead to the future unification of Bengal and the Punjab and ultimately to the voluntary unity of the seceded Muslim majority parts with the Indian Union.

—Regional or local autonomy with full democratic rights for the Hill, Frontier and other compact tribal areas.

(d) Democratic Economy

A Planned Economy on the basis of abolition of landlordism, nationalisation of key industries to overcome backwardness of Pakistan, develop its resources for the common prosperity of the entire people.

(e) Mutual Cooperation

—Military alliance against any external aggression and for mutual security through a Joint Defence Council, independent of all British control.

—Economic alliance to coordinate Planning in both States in mutual interest.

FOR BROADEST JOINT FRONT

A grim future awaits our people if the fatal consequences of imperial manoeuvres, if the strong influence of compromising elements in our national political life are not realised.

- Partition will not solve our problems. It will multiply them leading to conflicts on boundaries, border hostilities, oppression of minorities in each State, perpetuate all conflicts, strengthen reaction all round and thus create avenues for imperialist penetration.

- Appeasement of the Princes will only mean creating new centres of British political, economic and military influence inside our own country.

- Yielding to the pressure of vested interests will mean not only perpetuation but further strengthening of the imperialist stranglehold through new alliances and open our economy to the full impact of the fast-approaching world capitalist crisis.

WE PLEDGE ANEW

The Communist Party pledges itself anew to play its full part in carrying forward the battle for independence, democracy and unity to final victory in the new conditions.

All the mass campaigns of the Communist Party will be concentrated upon the following issues:

(a) **INDEPENDENCE.** Full support to the Constituent Assemblies to frame constitutions on the basis of complete independence and mass pressure against any compromise.

(b) **DEMOCRACY.** Full support to progressive elements to draft democratic constitutions. Mass mobilisation against any conservative pressure inside the Constituent Assemblies.

(c) **INDIAN UNITY.** Carry forward the battle for ultimate unity through the immediate establishment of friendly relations between Pakistan and the Indian Union:

- (d) *Full support to States' people's struggles.*
- (e) *A purge of all incompetent, corrupt and oppressive officials.*
- (f) *A rapid policy of Indianisation and democratisation of the armed forces.*
- (g) *Restoration of communal peace on the basis of unity of all popular organisations and firm action by the Ministries against provocateurs.*

Full Protection of the rights of minorities.

- (h) *The ending of Ordinance Raj.* Restoration of full civil liberties.
Release of all political, Trade Union and Kisan prisoners;
- (i) *Abolition of Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas.* The immediate introduction of full civil liberties and local self-government.
- (j) *Abolition of Untouchability in all shapes and forms.* State aid to Untouchables to improve their cultural and social status. All discrimination against Untouchables to be made a punishable offence.
- (k) *Nation-building.* Immediate steps be taken to formulate a Five-Year Plan on the basis of abolition of landlordism and nationalisation of key industries, with the full co-operation between the Government, experts and all popular organisations, for a new happy life for the people and the creation of a firm and stable social basis for Indian independence.

—Immediate relief to the working-class through enforcement of a minimum living wage, security of service, recognition of trade unions, withdrawal of all anti-strike legislation and improvement in the machinery for the settlement of disputes.

—Immediate relief to the peasantry to grow more food through grant of fallow land, tenancy rights, reduction of rent and land revenue, relief from indebtedness and speeding up of legislation for abolition of landlordism.

—Adequate wages, housing, education, and fallow land for agricultural labourers.

—Special aid to Tribal Areas for the development of their economic resources. Increase in the educational and medical facilities for the people.

—A just plan for the procurement of food-grains based on popular cooperation.

—Country-wide anti-hoarding drive to save the people from an intensifying food crisis.

—Fight against the blackmarket by price control and equitable distribution of all essential commodities through popular co-operation.

—Immediate measures for provision of houses for workers and middle-class families at reasonable rent, through planned housing schemes, together with control of the prices of house-sites.

—Provision for free and compulsory primary education and increased facilities for secondary, collegiate and technical education at reasonable fees and with adequate pay for teachers.

SUPPORT TO STRUGGLES

(1) While making every effort to settle industrial and agrarian disputes amicably, the Communist Party will give full support to workers' strikes and peasant actions for their just democratic demands against the growing offensive of the owners and landlords.

The Communist Party shall mobilise popular and Ministerial support behind these democratic struggles of the toiling people and compel the capitalists and landlords to meet their demands.

The Communist Party is fully conscious that the task of nation-building and the grim reality of economic crisis demands the continuity of production. This necessitates a radical change in the present policies of popular Ministries themselves.

Instead of appeasing the vested interests, they must firmly and speedily implement their electoral promises. Instead of relying upon the bureaucracy and attacking trade unions and Kisan Sabhas they must evolve a policy of fraternal co-operation with them.

The Communist Party reciprocates whole-heartedly the recent appeals of the national leaders for mutual co-operation in the great task of nation-building.

The Communist Party realises that the new situation demands the broadest Joint Front based on the principle of fullest co-operation between the popular Governments and all popular organisations for the noble task of national liberation and reconstruction and final unification. This will bring new strength to the popular Governments as also to the people.

The Communist Party is fully aware that such a broad Joint Front though it echoes general popular sentiment, will not come of itself.

FIRM INITIATIVE NEEDED

Only the firm initiative of all progressives—the Communists, Left elements in the Congress and the League—can bring it about.

It is their responsibility to defeat communal, reactionary and compromising elements within the Congress and the League and help to bring the two organisations together.

The alternative is rise of reaction, stabilisation of vested interests and ultimately compromise with imperialism.

The Communist Party appeals to all Left organisations and elements to forget the partisanship and differences of the past and come together to fight the dangers and realise the possibilities of the present.

The organised working-class and peasantry have been in the vanguard of the fight for independence and democracy in the post-war period.

LEAD IN UPSURGE

● They have played a foremost part in the national upsurge against imperialism in solidarity with the R.I.N. mutiny, in the I.N.A. demonstrations, and against every imperialist offensive against our people.

● They have played a proud role in the popular struggle against Princely autocracy in Travancore, Hyderabad, Kashmir, etc..

● Despite mis-representation by vested interests their own struggles for a better life have won the respect of the common people and inspired the growth of mass trade unions and Kisan Sabhas.

SYMBOLS OF NEW SPIRIT

The hundreds of sons of the Indian kisans killed by police and military bullets, and over twenty thousand jailed, symbolised the new fighting spirit of our common people and expressed the urge that the British-created social order must be changed here and now.

● They have not been torn apart by British-provoked Hindu-Muslim riots. Wherever the Red Flag flew Hindu-Muslim unity prevailed.

In the new situation, the trade union and kisan movements will have to shoulder greater responsibilities than ever before.

The communalists will seek to split their magnificent Hindu-Muslim unity. But their own unity will inspire them to fight for democracy within the Indian Republic and Pakistan and to work for

Indian unity by demanding mutual co-operation for economic planning and defence of India as a whole.

The vested interests will seek to slander them while the common people under the impact of deepening crisis will look to the Red Flag to initiate the battle for food, cloth, jobs and a living wage.

CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORT

Their constructive and fighting effort will lay the basis for a broad united people's movement against the food thieves and capitalist profiteers. This will ensure that nation-building no longer remains a phrase but becomes a reality.

The bureaucracy will seek to suppress them, to isolate this revolutionary vanguard from the national movement and to drive a wedge between the popular Ministries and the toiling masses. They will have to fight back this offensive in the name of Indian independence and for the urgent task of national reconstruction.

In the coming critical transitional phase it will be the task of the Indian working-class and peasant movements to see that the fight for real independence, full democracy and Indian unity goes forward to final victory and they play their full part in forging the unity of the National Front shoulder to shoulder with all progressive and Left elements in our country.

BLEEDING PUNJAB WARNS

FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

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

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

P. C. Joshi

THE AUTHOR

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

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

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

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

Countrymen

In the name of my people

BEWARE !

Dhanwantri

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

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

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

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

NATURE OF DISTURBANCES

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

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

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

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

In violence, in brutality, in the number killed (which Syt. Shri Prakasha, India's Ambassador to Pakistan places at 1½ lakhs), in the use of plenty of modern deadly weapons, in the devastation spread over 14 districts of the Punjab and in the way in which the police, the military and the entire administration was geared not to stop the riots but to spread it—the Punjab tragedy is without parallel.

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

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

PEACE AND PROVOCATION

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

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

This was not all what the imperialist wanted.

Soon after the provocative Attlee Declaration of February 20 had laid the basis for division of India, Governor Jenkins asked Khizar Hyat, the life-long trusted stooge of the British to resign and get out of the way. His plan was simple. It was to rouse hopes in the League of being able to form a ministry and rouse the anger of the Akali Sikhs and Hindus at such a prospect. Overnight the atmosphere in the whole of the Punjab became charged with communal poison.

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

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

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

SPREADING THE RIOTS

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

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

In Rawalpindi, the British Deputy Commissioner was approached by leaders of the Muslim League and other parties who warned him that trouble was expected and he should take precautionary measures. The Deputy Commissioner said he was "watching the situation closely." The next day stabbing began and again the leaders met him and said effective measures must be taken, otherwise the trouble might spread to the countryside. The D.C. told them he was taking all necessary steps, that they should

keep calm and not get panicky. On the 5th the trouble broke out in a large way in the rural areas round Pindi. Mobs were out looting, killing and burning and committing unspeakable atrocities. When Congress leaders of Pindi rushed to the D.C. for drastic steps to save the minorities, do you know what the British bureaucrat replied? He said :

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PREPARATION FOR RETALIATION

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

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

When refugees came straining from Rawalpindi with their tales of woe and horror and the unspeakable atrocities committed

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

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

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

ROLE OF THE PRINCES

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

All of a sudden, thousands of rifles, hand grenades, sten guns, mortars, etc., sprang up in the Punjab. Where did they come from ?

We will get the answer to it if we remember that the Punjab is the one province which has a number of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh States right inside its borders, e.g., Patiala, Jhind, Nabha, Faridkot, Malakotla, Bahawalpur, Kapurthala.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IN THE TOWNS

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

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

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

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

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

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

The biggest single action by the R.S.S. and the first when bombs, rifles and revolvers were used was an attack in April on Rajgarh, a Muslim suburb of Lahore and several Muslims were killed. It was said in Lahore at the time that the police officer of the area, a Hindu, knew about it and that he had in fact got the leader of the raid in his hands 15 minutes before the raid, but he let him go. And within a few minutes the attack was mounted and the massacre took place. The officer was first suspended but soon forgiven and reinstated.

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

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

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

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

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

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

Desperate attempts were made to draw them into the rioting.

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

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

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

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

Only when this division had taken place was it easy for the police and the armed bands to pull the Sikh peasant into the riot fever. Many reports came to us of how police and other Government officials told Sikh villages that neighbouring Muslim villages were arming to the teeth and they would be fools if they did not arm themselves for self-defence. And thus warlike preparations began in almost every village. Spears and swords were furnished and the entire countryside was frantically arming in the fear that an attack was coming from the neighbouring Sikh or Muslim villages.

Nevertheless, the mass of peasantry did not get into the rioting on a large scale except that when Muslims started fleeing for their lives in fear of the armed bands, a large number of Sikh villagers went out fired with the lust for loot, but that was in the last stage after two or three months of this unrestrained lawlessness, this spirit

of death and destruction was in the air and active encouragement was given by police and military to the looters.

THE BOUNDARY FORCE

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

Extravagant claims and counter-claims were made.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Lahore Railway Station non-Muslim refugees who were trying to escape from Lahore were shot down by the Baluchi regiment or they looked on while the Muslim National Guards massacred these refugees. It is estimated that not less than 3,000 to 4,000 were thus murdered on 13th and 14th.

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

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

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

That was the criminal role played by the Boundary Force.

ATROCITIES UNTOLD

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

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

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

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

These armed bands, fully drunk with liquor and with the lust for blood were roaming and falling on the poor victims actively assisted by the Hindu and Sikh police and by units of the Boundary Force. Similar scenes were enacted in Lahore.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whichever side we went, one could see scores of dead bodies of men, women and children. At first attempts were made to bring the dead bodies for postmortem to the Hospital, then the corpses were lying over such a wide area that Doctors were sent out to those areas. Soon the dead bodies were so many that the postmortem was itself given up. You just could not cope with the number of dead; and they were left lying where they were, and dogs and vultures fed on them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND RED FLAG

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

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

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

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

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

One of the most outstanding example of the working class spirit of bravery and service is that of Siri Chand. He was a railway

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

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

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

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

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

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

But the odds were too heavy. In Hoshiarnagar near Railway Station Khasa, about 300 Muslims were given shelter by Sikh and Hindu Kisans of the Red Flag. Twice, the armed bands tried to attack the village and kill the Muslims who they knew were being kept safe there. Twice they were repulsed. On 18th August after

Pandit Nehru's first visit to Punjab, Sikh military went with armed Akali band to the village, pulled out the 300 Muslims and put them to death. The village was helpless when the military itself did such a thing.

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

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

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

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

INDUSTRIAL LIFE SMASHED

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

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

The two cities had a population of at least 16 to 17 lakhs, of these nearly ten lakhs were either workers or small traders, Chhbrivalas (hawkers), Pheriwalas, who have now no means to

fall back upon. Goods have become scarce, shops have not opened at all and the worst form of blackmarkets is thriving.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMERCE DEVASTATED

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

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

This is bound to have a terrible effect on the whole economy of the West Punjab. One has only to know what intimate links

commerce has with agriculture in the Punjab which is predominantly a surplus food growing agrarian province.

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

ALL FERTILE AREAS ARE DESOLATE

Our agriculture stands similarly desolated.

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

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

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

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

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

THE PUNJAB TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONCLUSION

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

The entire administration has collapsed. New recruits are being taken into the police force to fill the vacancies caused by the

Muslims who were sent to West Punjab. The R.S.S. and the Akali bands are burrowing into these services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Punjab tragedy is a crisis for the whole of India. It is a grave threat to our very existence and the future of democracy in our land.

The message of bleeding devastated Punjab is : Let not its fate overtake any other part of India. Let the dark forces of reaction that brought this tragedy to Punjab be hounded out in every part of India. Only then can you help Punjab and save India.

FROM PUNJAB DANGER TO US ALL

P. C. Joshi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE GUILTY MEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AIM OF THE AKALIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We can treat these mad anti-national dreams of these

reactionary communal elements lightly only at our peril. Reaction must be struck on the head. Its fangs are spreading the poison too fast already.

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

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

The National Government rightly and quickly banned the day.

As in the Indian Union, so in Pakistan, the danger from extreme communalists, all old pro-British elements, is equally great. In the beginning Mr. Jinnah and the mass of League leaders were trying to concentrate fire on the atrocities in the Eastern Punjab, completely ignoring the atrocities in the Western Punjab.

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

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

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

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

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

That the armed Muslim National Guards in the Western Punjab no longer listen either to the local or Provincial League

leaders but in alliance with the police function independently against the minorities and were the opposite number of the RSS and the Akali bands.

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

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

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

This is the imperialist design behind the Punjab riots.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IMPERIALIST HOPES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DUTY OF US ALL

The Punjab stirs heroic memories in every heart.

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

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

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

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

It is here that the great weakness lies because the two Governments are still relying only on the bureaucracy which is rotten to the core and needs a drastic and immediate purge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inside the Indian Union it is the duty of us all who love India stand for progress and are pledged to fight for democracy to rouse our people against dark communal elements, the RSS and the Akali leaders of the Punjab, and similar elements in every province who would rouse the spirit of retaliation.

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

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

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

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

ONWARD TO TASKS AHEAD

Communist Party's Appeal To The People Of India

On August 15 India's national flag will fly where the Union Jack flew for centuries, the British Viceroy will transfer power to the leaders of the National Congress, the present Interim Government will become the Provisional Government responsible to the Constituent Assembly, and the Indian Union will be born. It will mark a historic landmark in the liberation struggle of the Indian people.

The mighty National Congress, the premier national organisation of India, will lead the celebrations. The Communist Party of India will join the day of national rejoicing.

On this day we will pay our reverent homage to the countless martyrs of the three generations of the Indian national movement whose supreme sacrifice paved the way to this day.

On this day we will remember with gratitude India's sailors, soldiers and airmen whose post-war strike-wave culminating in the epic of the RIN mutiny warned the British imperialists that the spirit of revolt has caught India's Armed Forces as well and that if they sought to suppress the national upsurge as of old they would have to reconquer India all over again, a course for which they knew they could get neither the moral nor material support of the British people themselves.

On this day we will recall with particular pride the contribution of the organised working-class and peasant movements to this day of triumph.

When the British imperialists saw that the rising strike wave and the peasant upsurge could neither be drowned in Hindu-Muslim civil war nor crushed by bullets, they realised that the only alternative to the rising people's revolution was to seek peace with India's leaders.

On this day we will express our fraternal solidarity with the heroic people of Travancore, Hyderabad, Kashmir and numerous

other States whose struggles warned the British rulers that the day of doom had come for their Princely puppets.

On this day we will honour all the fighting forces of the national movement whose accumulated pressure forced the British imperialists to retreat and enabled the nation to advance to its present position.

Not Yet Journey's End

We are well ahead on the road but not yet at the journey's end. The British Government has been compelled to promise to quit but the British imperialists are desperately plotting to maintain their military and economic control under a new screen, through old and new limits.

They have forced partition on the country and drawn the trail of civil war between the two dominions. The incendiary of civil war is also the umpire between the two dominions. The aim is to encourage and create maximum hostility between the two States and then press for the continued membership of the British Empire as the only way of mutual safety and cooperation in common matters. The British imperialist Press is openly banking upon Lord Mountbatten to successfully play this role of keeping India tied to the British Empire.

SECONDLY, Princely paramountcy has created a host of Puppet States inside the Indian Union itself or in alliance with it, whose territories will be open to British capitalist penetration threatening the independent economic development of India, whose weight will be thrown inside the Indian Union to influence our foreign and military policies in the imperial interests of Britain.

THIRDLY, British Big Business is rapidly entering into partnership with Indian Big Business to continue its imperial grip over Indian economy under a swadeshi cover.

Lord Mountbatten's job is to exploit all our difficulties and mount the maximum pressure from all sides to keep the Indian Union within the British empire or at least successfully extract such economic and military concessions through the Indo-British treaty that would make our independence nominal.

The Communist party is fully confident that the national movement today is so strong that all Mountbatten's manoeuvres can be successfully smashed provided the national forces are kept

united and properly marshalled and the people rallied to counter-attack all along the line the very anti-national elements whom imperialism seeks to utilise for its own ends.

A great responsibility rests on the shoulders of the National Government. On August 15 the leaders of the National Government will call for cooperation and support from all, which the Communist Party will whole heartedly offer.

On August 15 the people too will demand from the leaders of the nation a clear-cut statement of policy, a bold line of advance, that will symbolise the ending of one period and the beginning of another in a visible practical forms.

Release All Patriots

On the eve of August 15 the Communist Party with pain and indignation draws the attention of all patriotic elements that thousands of political prisoners still remain clapped behind the bars.

The INA and RIN prisoners and hundreds of less known soldiers and sailor sons of India, court-martialled by British Generals for the crime of patriotism, are scattered in jails in all the Provinces. Their rightful place is not the prison-cell but posts of responsibility inside India's Armed Forces.

Again, the 1942 prisoners still remain lingering in jails in several Provinces.

In BENGAL, the Secretary of the Civil Liberties Committee states that 5,000 persons are still under various restrictions for political reasons. They are mostly the peasant leaders of the great Tebhaga movement (2/3 share in crops) and the student youth arrested for leading demonstrations in solidarity with Viet Nam.

In BOMBAY, the "Goonda" Act is still in operation against trade union and kisan leaders.

In MADRAS, 130 Communist leaders are detained without trial in Vellore and still larger number is forced to go underground.

In ANDHRA, the Madras police is cooperating with the Nizam's police to track down Telengana refugees, raiding and pillaging villages and raping peasant women.

In MALABAR, the hated Malabar Special Police yet remains camped in villages, committing atrocities and making honourable life impossible.

All this constitutes a national scandal and has lasted too long.
Not one patriot inside any prison of the Indian Union on August 15 !

All at their posts of duty in the service of our people and for the freedom of our country !

On this National Day the National Government will call upon the people to cooperate in the task of nation-building. The common people await with hope a concrete programme of reconstruction that will make our country prosperous and great and mean a new deal for the common man here and now.

The Indian people have suffered too long under the present social order created by British imperialism for its own ruthless colonial exploitation, which has kept our country economically backward, condemned our people to a permanent life of poverty, disease and degradation.

In its last stage today it stands self-condemned. It has produced famine conditions. It cannot even supply the meagre needs of our people, it has produced the blackmarket.

Independent Economy

It must be changed if our people are to live and a democratic social order built in its place. It must be changed if our country is to emerge independent. Only an independent economy can be the sound social basis behind the independence of any country.

On August 15 the Communist Party will demand that the National Government announce a Five Year Plan of National Reconstruction that will be based on abolition of landlordism, nationalisation of key industries, living wage for the worker and recognition of his unions to rescue our country out of the depths of growing economic crisis and lead it on the path of rising economic prosperity.

The organised working-class will demand:

- a date-line for the Living Wage Bill,
- immediate recognition of trade unions,
- Government control of owner's fabulous profits,
- Government running essential industries as public utility service while full nationalisation plans get ready.

Help the worker to get a decent life for himself, let him know that he is producing for the people and not for owners' profits and

the blackmarket and he will rise to the full height of his patriotic duty in building up industry and raising production.

Peasant Demands

The organised peasantry will demand:

- a definite date-line for the Bill to abolish landlordism;
- implementation of steps for distribution of all fallow land to the poor and the landless peasants;
- Government aid to bring fallow land under cultivation;
- tenancy rights against mass ejection by landlords;
- rent-reduction against landlords' squeeze.

And it will pledge to the people that the Indian peasantry will go all-out for 'Grow More Food' and help fight the famine monster.

British-created parasitic landlordism must go with the oppressive British rule. Help the tiller to get the land and the producer of India's food will not fail the Indian people.

The employees are living in dread of unemployment. Even the war-time technicians are being sacked. The youth of our nation faces a blank future.

A Five year Plan with clear yearly targets will immediately ward off retrenchment, create prospects of jobs for all and provide training facilities for the nation's youth to help industrialise our country and modernise our agriculture.

On August 15 the Communist Party will press that the National and Provincial Governments:

- warn the corrupt and inefficient officials that their days are over and organise their systematic purge.
- warn the hoarders and blackmarketeers that they will be hunted down as antisocial elements and given long jail-terms.
- organise a countrywide anti-hoarding drive with the joint efforts of the Government and all popular organisations.

Both the common people and their enemies must be made to feel that the old era is gone and a new era has begun.

The economic situation brooks no delay. Drift today means worsening crisis, greater hold of the vested interests over our economy and ultimately mortgaging our country's resources and freedom to Anglo-American imperialism.

If we do not take energetic steps against the famine-makers today and speed up the abolition of landlordism we will have to go

to Anglo-American imperialists or their satellites with the beggar's bowl for food and they will impose their own political and economic conditions.

If we do not nationalise our industries now the Tatas and Birlas will prove that the country will not get machinery from Anglo-Americans if industries are nationalised while they can get them by entering into partnership with them.

To maintain the status quo would be a national disaster.
A People's Plan based on the immediate satisfaction of the people's needs, meeting the demands of the workers and peasants, boldly put into operation with the cooperation of the people themselves, liquidating the monopoly hold of the anti-national vested interests over our economy, will be the way out of economy, will be the way out of economic crisis today, to growing prosperity for the people and the surest foundation for our independence.

Justice To Minorities

The legacy of the British-provoked communal war is not only the partition of the country, continuing riots, but an unprecedented growth of communal feeling and the worst reactionaries remaining at large.

The situation is critical, communal peace has to be restored, communal harmony built. A good start has already been made by the leaders of minorities inside both the parts pledging their loyalty to their own State and the topmost congress and League leaders having pledged full protection to minorities under both the Governments.

The Communist Party hopes that on August 15 the leaders of both organisations will appeal for communal peace and a new fraternal start.

Unqualified acceptance of the just rights of the minorities regarding their religion, culture, language and in services is the first step to winning the cooperation of the minorities.

The rising Mahasabha challenge that the Indian Union should be considered a Hindu State, Muslims treated as aliens, is a challenge to the Congress and Indian nationalism.

The Communist Party will doggedly defend all the just democratic rights of minorities with the knowledge that it is the only way to defeat the worst reactionaries in one's own camp and

bring the common people together to fight for common democratic advance, that is, into the real battle.

The country is so much sunk in the problems of partition that hardly any thought is being given to future relations between the two States.

Our common interests are so compelling that the two Governments have signed fairly long term standstill agreements.

Fraternal Relations

The Present permanent common interests of our people and also our future independence depends upon effecting a complete breach with British imperialism and establishing closest possible alliance between the two States.

The British imperialists also talk of Joint Defence but that is only a cover to keep the Defence forces of both states severally and jointly under their own control under cover of supplying us equipment, leaving their officers here because we lack our own and then drawing us into anglo-American imperial military system as the price of their aid, in which case our independence disappears and our country becomes another military base and our armies dependent armies of Anglo-American militarists.

This has to be resisted in the name of our national independence and close military alliance sought with Independent Pakistan instead, for mutual defence with the knowledge that the 68 million people of Pakistan will guard our frontiers for their own defence as we will give them all the aid we can in the interests of our own defence.

Our economy has grown as a unified whole and partition has created acute problems. Most of our food is grown in Pakistan while cloth is produced in India. Jute is in East Bengal while the mills are around Calcutta and so on.

It is obviously necessary to come to immediate economic agreements for our sheer existence and for the two Governments to discuss along what lines long-term economic alliance must be negotiated in the mutual interests of our people.

The Communist Party warns that the only alternative to mutual economic cooperation is more and more foreign imperialist-capitalist "aid".

Steps For Reunion

On August 15 the pang of partition will be widely felt inside the Indian Union. The Communist party will renew the pledge to fight for final reunion and sharply emphasise the concrete steps that alone can lead to ultimate unity.

- The more we fight to defend the minorities and guarantee their rights inside the Indian Union the sooner we shall activate the sense of justice of the Muslim majority in Pakistan. Fighting the Hindu communalist here is to weaken the Muslim communalist there.

- The harder we fight for abolish landlordism and nationalise industries, then more we shall inspire urge for similar efforts there, strengthen the Muslim progressive against the Muslim reactionary and help the growth of a common people's movement.

- The more readily we guarantee the right of national self-determination in our Constitution, the sooner will the Muslim masses in Pakistan see that inside the Indian Union there is equality of all nationalities and not Hindu domination.

- The more patiently we work for fraternal cooperation with Pakistan the more secure we shall make the bridge for final reunion.

It is the common struggle of the common people, aided by progressives and resisted by reactionaries, for justice and democracy, within both parts of India, which will finally undo what the imperialists have done, the League leaders have demanded and the Congress accepted and lead to final unity, voluntary and abiding.

On August 15 while we hold the celebrations here it is the Princes and not the people who will be rejoicing inside the States.

The British declaration of Princely independence is a blow against Indian independence itself.

To appease the princes is to condemn a part of our people to suffer under autocracy, leave a part of our territory free for invasion by British capital, involve British puppets to influence our foreign and military policies.

Gratitude demands that on August 15 we greet the heroic struggles of States' peoples which forced the Princes to join the Constituent Assembly.

Duty demands that on August 15 from all over India we pledge full support to States peoples' struggles to win Responsible Government, Constituent Assembly and entry into the Indian Union.

Common sense dictates that this is the only way to foil British intrigues to utilise the Princes and prevent further dismemberment of India.

Princely independence is a challenge to Indian independence and Princely autocracy to Indian democracy. It must be met.

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The Indian national movement has stood for progressive world aims, for friendship with all peoples and opposition to all imperialist Powers.

With our own National Government the time to boldly implement these aims has come.

Despite the crimes of British imperialism in our country our national movement has borne no ill will against the British people and the best of British people especially the Labour movement has been sympathetic to our national aspirations.

On August 15 we will appeal to the British people to compel their Government to stop intriguing to keep India inside the Empire, pledge not to recognise Princely independence, promptly pay our Sterling Balances, withdraw British troops and officers and thus create a stable basis for Indo-British friendship on the basis of sincere recognition of Indian independence, equality of our nations and in the mutual interest of our two peoples.

Our national movement has stood pledged to actively support every liberationist struggle in Asia. Indonesia calls for immediate aid and so does Viet Nam. Pandit Nehru has promised to close Indian aerodromes for Dutch planes. The same needs being done to the French. French and Dutch ships use our ports and even take supplies from here. Indian water must be closed to French and Dutch imperialists.

On August 15 our brothers of French India in all the five towns of Chandernagore, Pondicherry, Karikal, Yenam and Mahe will express their determination to come back to the bosom of India by joining the Indian Union. They must get calls of warm welcome from us all and promise of full support from the National Government.

The Portuguese Fascists hold Goa and keep all popular movements thoroughly suppressed. Our brothers there also want to join India.

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The whole democratic world looks to India to immensely strengthen the cause of progress and world peace at UNO and to take our stand against the aggressive plans of Anglo-American reaction. Our role is very great both in Asia and on world scale and calls for the closest collaboration with the Soviet Union and the New Democracies in Eastern Europe.

On August 15 the Communist Party will dedicate itself anew to fight on shoulder to shoulder with the national movement to win complete independence for our country, build real democracy for and through our great people, establish fraternal cooperation between India and Pakistan as a first step towards voluntary reunion of our Motherland, for our place of honour and responsibility in the counsels of the world.

Sir,

I am enclosing a memorandum on behalf of the Communist Party on the present food crisis and making our suggestions and recommendations. We had proposed to send it in time for the Food Grains Policy Committee but it got delayed for unavoidable reasons. I hope it will receive your due consideration before you make your own recommendations to the Cabinet and plans for winter harvest are formulated.

Our Party shares the deep anxiety of progressive opinion over the reported (in the press) reactionary recommendations of the Food Grains Policy Committee, which was dominated by representatives of Big Business and rich growers, for the following reasons :

1) Their recommendation to remove price control over all other food grains except rice, wheat and jowar is a call upon the National Government to give up its efforts to control prices in the interests of the people. It is common sense that price control in the real sense of the world these three grains will not last long if other grains are decontrolled and if the National Government also yields to raising the price of cloth as is being demanded by the same selfish elements.

2) Their recommendation to limit the ration area is also an effort to get as large as a part of our country as possible under the grip of blackmarketeers. Their willingness to let rationing continue in the main towns, etc. is only acceptance of the fact that if rationing

Memorandum on the food situation submitted by the Communist Party of India to the Government of the Indian Union

was also removed from these areas there will be such nation-wide public outcry against the hoarders as to demand their total liquidation.

Our Party hopes that with you as our Food Minister these anti-people and anti-national demands of the hoarding and selfish elements will be rejected.

Our Country has suffered too long under the food crisis which is now being exploited by riot-mongering elements to turn the people against the National Government. Besides, the wave of riots is disrupting both production and the effective distribution of food. We are aware that you and the National Government are as deeply concerned over it as are all right thinking men and progressive political parties. We know that the lives of millions of our people, the shape of our own country, depend upon how democratic and sound a food plan does our government formulate and what broad and strong support the people can give the Government so that the enemies of the people, land monopolist landlords and trader hoarders, are successfully routed. It is in this spirit that we have made our own recommendations.

Our suggestions fall in three parts :

- 1) Urgent measures to tackle the immediate crisis.
- 2) Immediate measures to get hold of surplus produce of winter harvest in the hands of the Government and its effective distribution.
- 3) Radical measures to tackle the basic problem and take our food economy out of the hands of selfish feudal and hoarder elements, who have produced and profited from the chronic food crisis, and place it in the hands of our food producers—peasants—and rely upon the common people, the vast mass of consumers.

The democratic principles on which we have based all our recommendations are only the concrete application of the programme on which all anti-imperialist elements built our national movement, viz., the great national Congress, all left parties and organised peasant and working class movements. We are confident that you and the National Cabinet will give them your earnest consideration.

The situation brooks no delay. *Either* the National Government is able to rally all Provincial Governments to rapidly implement the age-old pledge to the peoples, of guaranteeing them food,

abolishing landlordism and liquidating blackmarket, *Or* these reactionary classes, actively aided by corrupt bureaucracy will go on exploiting the communal situation to disrupt our national movement, divert the attention of the people from their own crimes just to be able to exploit the food crisis for their selfish aims. It is common knowledge that these reactionary classes are simultaneously presenting their selfish interests upon the Provincial Ministers and the National Government while actively supporting the communal organisations to win reactionary changes in the policy and personnel of the existing Governments.

I assure you that our Party will be with you and behind the Nehru Government in defeating the reactionary offensive against the life, food and freedom of our people.

P. C. Joshi

Introduction

HAVING inherited a deficit food economy, the National Government is immediately faced with a situation when the spectre of famine again haunts large parts of our country, Madras., Bihar, Bengal, Cochin, Travancore, Kathiawar and North Gujerat. Most of the provinces do not have more than two weeks' stocks left with them by the end of September.

Rations have been cut to inconceivably low levels and further ration cuts are threatened in certain provinces. Normally too, quite one-third of our population (according to Dr. Aykroyd) is undernourished.

But with the present ration scales our urban population today gets much less even 900 calories, whereas the minimum required for the bare maintenance of health is 2,500 calories per head per day.

The dietary of the rural population is no better, more so, in view of the tremendous increase in rural indebtedness and worsening of the economic condition of the vast majority of our peasantry during the past two decades.

Today, prices of food grains are rising everywhere :

The Economic Advisers' index of wholesale prices of food articles (Base 26th August, 1939=100), reflecting "only partially the movements in the general level of prices" (as Sir C.D. Desmukh,

Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, stated in his speech at the recent—thirteenth—Annual Meeting of the Bank) has risen from 245.5 in June, 1946, to 276.9 in July, 1947, having increased even further to 283.4 in the week ended 9th August, 1947.

The All India Index of Commodity prices shows that on the pre-war level (Base, 19th August, 1939=100), the price index for rice went up as high as 322 and wheat 373 in December, 1946. Prices, as is generally known, have been in the retail prices of food grains almost everywhere.

(a) *Bihar* : Searchlight of July 30, 1947, reported the following range of prices of rice (per maund) in the various districts of the province :

Patna	Rs. 30-35
Gaya	„ 40
Shahbad	„ 35
Monghyr	„ 40
Champaran	„ 40
Muzaffarpur	„ 35-40
Darbhanga	„ 26-38
Bhagalpur	„ 36-40
Saran	„ 40-42

(b) *Bengal* : According to the reports pouring in daily, price of rice is going up by leaps and bounds. *Amrit Bazar Patrika* (September 12, 1947) reported the ruling price of rice in the Jessore town as Rs. 50/- per md. during the first week of September, in Rajbari (Faridpur) Rs. 42/-, in Satkhira (Khulna) Rs. 22/- per md. *The Statesmen* (September 9) reported the prices at Rs. 32/- in Mymensingh, Rs. 35/- in Pabna, Rs. 32/- in Comilla, Rs. 26/- in Khulna, Rs. 38/- in Rangpur, Rs. 37/- in Faridpur, Rs. 30/- in Barisal, Rs. 37/- Nadia and Rs. 34/- in Jessore.

(c) *Even in self-sufficient U.P.*, the prices of wheat are very high, much more than the controlled prices . According to *Commerce* (6th September, 1947), the price of wheat was as much as Rs. 22-24 in Hapur (the biggest wheat mandi), Rs. 16/- in Chandosi, Rs. 14/12/- in Kosgani, Rs. 19/4/- in Gonda and Rs. 18/8/- in Sitapur.

(d) Prices are rising every where, in rural parts of *Bombay*, in *Madras*, in *Eastern Punjab* and most of all in the *Central India* and *Kathiwar States*.

Persistent reports are pouring in to the effect that food grains are sometimes completely out of market, in Bihar, in Bengal and Madras. In C.P. ever since February, weekly bazars in small and big towns have been closing down occasionally. Even Government grain shops are occasionally found closed on account of "lack of supplies" in Darbda, Wardha, Washim etc.

This stupendous rise in the prices with occasional complete disappearance of grain from the market and the threatened cut in rations consequent upon lack of stocks with provincial Governments, have caused grave alarm all over the country and unless steps are taken forthwith to combat the situation, a famine worse than the 1943 famine of Bengal may overtake our people.

The gravity of the situation has already led the Government to appoint a Food Grains Policy Committee manned by both officials and non-officals under the Chairmanship of Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, "to examine the present position in regard to food grains in India, and the prospective position in the next five years in the light of consideration of production, procurement, imports, distribution and controls and advise the Government on (1) the measures which can be taken to increase domestic procurement and production, (2) the extent to which reliance can, and should be placed on imports, and in the light of the above, (3) the modifications which may be necessary in the food grains policy so far pursued".

In this memorandum we will attempt to place before the Government for their consideration and the consideration of this Committee our suggestions of how best India's present food crisis can be solved.

I. Nature and Causes of The Food Crisis

Before we go on to discuss the various ways in which the battle against famine is being launched and has to be intensified, let us see what is the nature of the present food crisis.

(1) An overall huge deficit of 45 lakh tons, due to failure of rains—this is less than the last year's deficit of 70 lakh tons but even this deficit means that, calculated on the basis of a per head consumption of 12 oz. per day, *this year there is no food for over 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ crores of our adult population, or more than half of our total population under statutory rationing.* The deficit remains uncovered

because of lack of adequate foreign imports and absence of almost any carry over from the earlier year's crop.

(2) This deficit, however, is several times accentuated as a result of hoarding and blackmarketing by powerful vested interests, landlords and wholesale dealers. The failure of procurement, that is *the failure of various provincial Governments to gain complete control over the marketable surplus, has left huge stocks of food grains in the hands of the landlord and trader stockists*, a position which the latter are exploiting to force in the non-rationed urban and rural areas and also to smuggle grain into the rationed areas at blackmarket prices.

This is true of all the provinces, as shown by the universal rise in prices, and is widely admitted even by those at the helm of affairs.

But how big the hoarding is and how grim the resultant situation, becomes crystal clear if we take the case of Bengal.

In Bengal today, we have the worst crisis developing, prices are rising in both parts of Bengal, East and West, and the people of Bengal are threatened with another 1943 tragedy.

One might imagine from this that like the year 1943, Bengal is again deficit by a huge amount. *The reality, however, is that Bengal's internal production is much more than her total needs and the crisis is solely due to hoarding.*

The estimated population of Bengal in 1947 is 66,422,000 (calculated at a constant unitary rate of increase based upon the difference between 1931 and 1941 census figures) and the adult units of population (estimated by taking 80 percent of the total) are 53,137,600. According to the calculations made by the Government of India's Food Department (refer "Food Statistics of India", p. 118) the normal pre-war per head consumption of rice in Bengal was 354 lbs. per year. Thus the total requirements of rice for the entire population this year, on this normal consumption, come to as much as 8,397,700 tons.

What is Bengal's Internal production of rice?

Year	Total Production (in tons)	Net Production* (in tons)
1942-3	6,974,000	6,102,250
1943-4	11,816,000	10,339,000

Year	Total Production (in tons)	Net Production* (in tons)
1944-5	10,476,000	9,166,500
1945-6	9,597,000	8,397,375
1946-7	10,671,000	9,337,000

*Arrived at after deduction 12½ per cent for seed requirements and wastage.

(N.B.— The basis of all the above calculations is the one laid down by the Government of India's Food Department in their publication "Food Statistics of India".)

Thus as is clear from the above table, except in the year 1942-3, when Bengal had a net deficit of about 17 lakh tons, Bengal's production never fell below her requirements. *This year Bengal actually has nearly a million tons more than her needs of rice.*

(3) But the food crisis in India is not merely a war crisis. It has been developing ever since the British rule, manifesting itself in a continually declining yield per acre and even an absolute decline in the acreage under and the total yield of food grains.

(a) The Yield per acre of rice had declined by as much as 254 lbs. or 25 per cent during the 25 years before the war (from 982 lbs. per acre during 1909-13 to 728 lbs. in 1938-9).

Similarly, the average yield per acre of wheat had declined from 724 lbs. during 1909-13 to 636 lbs. in 1924-33.

(W. Burns: "Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India," 1944)

(b) The same author W. Burns, Government of India's Officer on Special Duty, gives the following figures of the decline in area under cultivation of food grains and their total production in British India :

Year	Area Under Major food grains. (million acres)	Production of Major food grains. (million tons)
1921-2	158.6	54.3
1931-2	156.9	50.1
1941-2	156.5	45.7

Thus during these two decades alone (1921-2 to 1941-2), the cultivated area under major food-grains had declined by over 2 million acres and the production of major food grains by as much as 8.6 million tons.

As against this, during the same period (1921-2 to 1941-2), the population of British India had gone up by nearly 62 million.

This absolute decline in acreage under food grains and the total yield of food grains, side by side with an expanding population constitutes the main crisis of Indian food economy.

This is due to no natural disadvantages of Indian soil or any "innate" backwardness of Indian cultivators. In the ultimate analysis, this deterioration in Indian agriculture is due to the existence in India of an imperialist-feudal economy.

The British imperialists by destroying our earlier artisan industry and throttling any real development of modern large scale industry, and imposing a class of parasitic interests on land, have created a situation, when, on the one hand, more and more people have to live off land, and, on the other, agriculture is in the hands of an impoverished, debt-ridden and rack-rented peasantry.

Quite more than 60 per cent of the land in India is today tilled by tenants and hence the bulk of what is produced (as much as 75 per cent) is grabbed by the parasitic landlord, by way of rent and illegal exactions. The moneylender in the ryotwari areas similarly sucks the peasants dry.

This has meant two things :

First, continued primitive technique of Indian agriculture and absence of any improvements in land.

The cultivators are left with nothing to be able to invest in improving the land and its yield. And improvements in land is none of the business of either the landlord or the moneylender !

Secondly, a growing impoverishment of more and more of our peasantry and rural population.

The debt of the peasantry has been on the increase and consequently, more and more land is passing out of the hands of the tillers into the hands of the non-cultivators : (the 1931 Census Report had concluded that "it is likely that a concentration of land in the hands of the non-cultivating owners is taking place"); the number of landless labourers is increasing (increased from 7.5 million in 1882 to 33.5 million in 1931) and today as much as 1/3 to 1/2 of our peasantry in various provinces are day labourers; the number of cultivators too is going down (decreased from 74.6 million in 1921 to 65.5 million in 1931). The result is that 70 per cent of our agricultural population live and work under conditions of serfdom and do not produce enough for their own needs. Even

in the normal pre-war days the majority of our peasantry itself had to depend for its requirements of food on the market for a major part of the year, being forced to sell their share of the crop as soon as it was harvested.

It is this impoverished peasantry who are the first victims of a famine in India.

It is this bankrupt agrarian economy which cracked completely under the impact of the war, when imperialism tried to finance her war effort through inflation, rising prices and intensified exploitation of the mass of the people.

It was this debt-ridden peasantry itself which first collapsed during the Bengal famine of 1943.

II. Abolition of Landlordism

Thus the present food crisis is basically a direct result of the agrarian economy itself, and cannot finally be solved except through an outright abolition of landlordism and giving the right of ownership in land to the actual tiller, thereby abolishing the burden of various debt and rent payments and removing the basic cause of his impoverishment.

This fact is today generally recognised. The recent *Famine Inquiry Commission* (1945) itself posed the issue when in its questionnaire issued to the Provincial Governments, it stated :

"The organisation of agricultural production depends, to a large extent, on the system of rights and obligation of holders of land, that is, on the prevailing land systems. The view has often been expressed that there is a close connection between many features of the present land systems and the efficiency of agricultural production, and that the latter cannot be materially improved unless changes are made in the former."

And the replies received from some of the Provincial Governments confirmed this view. *The Orissa Government*, while doubting whether the altogether abolition of landlordism which is "the only possible remedy" is a practical proposition, wrote that "the zamindars in general, whether of permanently-settled estates or temporarily-settled estates, not only do not introduce any improvement to get better yield or to protect the lands from flood or drought but exploit every opportunity for realisation of enhanced rent or other dues from the tenants."

The Bombay Government replied as follows :

"The view is generally correct with regard to all tenures where the lands are leased to tenants for cultivation on payment of annual rent. The tenant who cultivates land on lease, which is generally annual, is not sure how long the lands would remain in his possession as the landlord has power to resume the lands at the end of the year after giving three months' notice to the tenant. The tenant has thus no permanent interest in the land. In many cases lands are leased on the crop-share rent and if the tenant sows improved seed or puts in good manure or extra labour to improve the land, half of the increased produce so obtained at his cost goes to the landlord and thus the tenant does not get a proper return for his labour and enterprise."

Similarly, *the Government of Bihar* replied :

"The view that unless changes are made in the prevalent systems of land tenure, it would not be possible to secure any significant increase in agricultural production, is in accord with facts,"

Earlier, the *Bengal Land Revenue Commission (Floud Commission)* had given its final verdict against the retention of permanent settlement.

The *All-India Congress Committee* in its Election Manifesto (1946) has itself advocated "The removal of intermediaries between the peasant and the State."

And the issue of the abolition of landlordism is no longer a matter for decision at some future date. It has assumed an immediate necessity. As we shall see later, the monopoly of land has led to a monopoly of a few over the entire food production of the country; the landlords have no longer remained mere parasites rack-renting the peasantry, they have today become hoarders playing with the lives of the entire people.

Therefore, there can be no honest attempt at solving India's food problem effectively and permanently without the liquidation of the feudal land tenure and abolition of landlordism.

As the *All-India Kisan Sabha* declared in a resolution passed at its recent (1947) Session at Sikandra Rao :

"The basic cause of the food crisis which has become chronic is the outmoded land-tenure under the system of landlordism which prevails all over the country. The grip which landlordism has over the rural economy facilitates hoarding and blackmarketing. It has prevented the nation from exploiting all its natural resources for

increasing production of food grains Landlordism also hinders increase in production as it fails to provide any incentive to the actual cultivator of the soil who is always threatened with eviction and increase in rents."

Any measures which ignore this basic fact will fail in achieving the objective because they ignore the basic causes of our food crisis.

In this connection, however, one cannot but note with alarm the hesitation and the vacillation shown by the various Provincial Ministries in tackling this issue and sponsoring the bills for the abolition of landlordism. After more than a year and a half of their coming into power, no Provincial Ministry has so far passed the bill; in Bihar, it has recently been referred to a Select Committee; in Madras, a big controversy is raging regarding the *Inam* lands, and a campaign is being led by the Premier himself for the exclusion of such lands from the provisions of the Bill.

Then, instead of an outright abolition, attempts are being made at payment to landlords of a heavy and exorbitant compensation, which, if accepted, will only mean the retention of the present burden of payments on the peasants and also imposition of additional taxation on the already overtaxed public.

Judged by all laws of equity and justice and considering the future of our agriculture, the big landlords deserve absolutely no sympathies from any quarter, they have no moral or economic right to get any compensation.

Taking these facts into consideration, the Central Government should immediately issue a directive to all the Provincial Ministries for passing the bills for the outright abolition of landlordism within the next six months.

The Central Government which includes some of the top most leaders of the national movement must take steps to make the Congress launch a country-wide campaign among the people for the immediate liquidation of landlordism and re-organisation of our entire agrarian economy.

Pending this legislation for the abolition of landlordism, the Government should as an immediate measure freeze all payments of rent to the landlords and declare a moratorium on all debts of the peasants; the Government must immediately order the all rents accruing to the big landlords shall, henceforth, be paid to the Government and not the landlords. In cases of distress the

Government may sanction from the rent collected allowances which are strictly necessary for the maintenance of the landlord and his family.

The freezing of the rents and a moratorium on debts is an immediate necessity.

First, it will stop leakages of grain into the blackmarket at its very source.

Where rents are paid in kind, this will stop the grain directly going into the hands of the landlord which finds its way into the blackmarket; where even rent is paid in cash, this would check the grain from falling into the grip of the moneylender-trader by obviating the necessity for the peasant of selling it to him for discharge of his obligations of rent payments.

Similarly, a moratorium on debt will save the grain from going under the grip of the moneylender-trader, to whom normally the crop is mortgaged for such payments even before it is harvested.

Socondly, it will immediately place in the hands of the Government large stocks of grain.

Thirdly, it will help the Government to lower prices for the consumers with the aid of these huge stocks, and without harming the interests of the peasants, by eliminating the middleman's profits and commissions.

Fourthly, this lowering of prices will mean a big check on the present inflationary tendencies.

Lastly, with the help of the resources so accruing to it, the Government will be in a position to subsidize the supplies to the cultivator of his needs of manufactured articles at lower prices and also provide him with loans etc., for necessary improvements in land.

The National Government must brush aside all objections of the landed interests and immediately take these steps. In this task, they will have the backing of the entire Indian people and the peasantry. Moreover, it is only thus that the Government will be able to create enough confidence among the people in its seriousness to tackle the food situation.

III. Controls

A demand is today being raised by a certain section of the public for the removal of all controls. It is said that the controls have defeated their very purpose and have led to corruption and maldistribution.

It is undoubtedly true that maldistribution and corruption exist today to a large extent and even the Reserve Bank of India's Annual Report for 1946-7 has to take a very strong note of it. The Report says :

"The most urgent and serious problem that will claim the attention of the two States as soon as they settle down to the real job of governance is that of the all-pervading corruption that is destroying the vitals of public life generally and the administrative machine in particular. Unless its corrosive influence is countered rapidly and relentlessly controls will deteriorate progressively into handicapping the poor and law-abiding members of the community, and all talk of a planned development will have to be abandoned."

Corruption today has become a rule rather than an exception in a number of Government departments, in particular the Civil-Supplies Department. So widespread is this evil that even some of the public men occupying responsible offices have been affected by it and are being generally accused of taking bribes.

Without the elimination of such malpractices from Government departments, the present chaos is bound to accentuate.

But the demand for removal of controls itself, behind the facade of corruption and maldistribution, *is the war-cry of those who are today violating controls by hoarding and selling into the blackmarket.* It is these very vested interests who in co-operation with the local bureaucracy are using "corruption" more and more to blow up controls and thereby win general support for their demand for de-control by creating resentment among the public.

There is an actual shortage of food grains in the country and what is needed is a proper and equitable distribution among the various sections of the people at prices within their reach. De-control will neither bring food grains into the market, nor will it lower prices. It can lead to merely a legalisation of the present blackmarket, as all the available experience within and without the country shows :

In America, controls were removed from food grains in the Autumn of 1946 and, unlike our country, America is very much surplus in food supplies. Yet, by the end of 1946 itself, prices in America had risen by 24 percent. The situation has worsened still further during the current year.

In every province in India, the experience of removal of controls on jute and jute goods, silk and silk goods, non-ferrous

metals, kerosene oil, matches, salt, drugs etc., in fact all commodities which were de-controlled shows a steep rise in their prices after de-control.

The experience of *Bihar* in regard to food grains itself is summed up in an editorial in the *Searchlight*, an influential Congress daily of Bihar. On the 8th of August 1947, it wrote :

"The removal of inter-district embargo has facilitated cornering and profiteering and has not, led to improvement either in supplies or prices. Secondly, with the end of monopoly purchase and procurement levy, procurement of food grains has stopped altogether."

In the United Provinces, too, all recent attempts at de-rationing some 15 towns, as an experiment, had to be given up, for the very news of de-rationing was sufficient to force prices up in these districts.

Thus any attempt at de-control will only mean increased hoarding and blackmarketing, a countrywide rise in prices much worse than the present one.

The situation is very serious. Our deficit last year was estimated at 70 lakh tons, and this year again at 45 lakh tons.

The total available supplies today (about 320 lbs. per head) are much less than the supplies even at the time of 1943 famine (358 lbs. per head according to "Food Statistics of India"). *And despite this worse deficit why we have been able so far to avert a crisis similar to the 1943 one is solely because of the existing rationing and control systems, in whatever small measure they are present.*

Three years ago only one province (Bombay) had a levy system; in 1946, a number of provinces and States had the levy system. The population under rationing too has increased from a mere 3½ lakhs in 1942 to a total of nearly 57 million under statutory and another 115 million under non-statutory rationing (before partition). It is just because of this system of procurement and distribution, despite its obvious loopholes, that we were able to stave off a famine last year also avert a major crisis this year.

Our present troubles are not to the existence of control and rationing but to the existence of corruption, the existence of loose control and inadequate rationing. Hence what is needed is :

(1) A CLEAN PURGE FROM THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY AND RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES OF ALL THOSE GUILTY OF MALPRACTICES AND CORRUPTION;

(2) EXEMPLARY PUNISHMENT TO THESE GUILTY OF VIOLATING CONTROL ORDERS AND INDULGING IN BLACKMARKET OR TAKING AND GIVING BRIBES; AND LASTLY,

(3) ESTABLISHMENT OF STRICTER CONTROL ON PRICES, STOCKS AND DISTRIBUTION, SO AS TO RESCUE EVEN WIDER SECTIONS OF OUR PEOPLE FROM UNDER THE GRIP OF HOARDERS, AND, NOT DE-CONTROL, WHICH WILL ONLY MEAN LEGISLATION OF THE BLACKMARKET AND THROWING THE ENTIRE PEOPLE AT THE MERCY OF THE VESTED INTERESTS.

IV. Foreign Imports

Foreign imports occupy an important place in our battle against famine. It is only through imports from outside that we can make up our huge overall immediate deficit.

And yet, the question of foreign imports has always presented a major difficulty, for it relates to a situation beyond our direct control.

The result is that our actual imports so far have been much less than our requirements :

Last year, our deficit was placed at 70 lakh tons by the Government and our delegates made a demand to the Combined Food Board for a mere 40 lakhs tons. As against this ,our actual imports were only about 23 lakh tons.

This year again we have deficit of 45 lakh tons. But so far (till September 18, 1947) we have actually received merely 1,591,800 tons, of which wheat and flour account for 490,100 tons and rice for 395,000 tons, the rest i.e., nearly half being millets and inferior grains.

The allotments for September were round about 123,750 tons and the monthly meeting of all-India Food Officials held at Bombay on the 23rd September, 1947, revealed that the availabilities from imports during October will be 241,620 tons, as against a monthly requirement of 350,000 tons.

And actual arrivals normally much less than the allotments. For example, in the case of rice , the *Times of India* reported that of the total rice allotments of 410,000 tons for the first half of 1947, only 250,00 tons had been received till the end of June. Similarly with regard to wheat, where too receipts have fallen much below allocations.

This paucity of imports into India from outside countries has so far always been justified by spokesmen of the Government on

grounds that the world as a whole is deficit in food grains (last year's deficit was placed at 10 million tons of wheat and the deficit for 1947-48 is being placed at 18 million tons), that there is more demand than supplies.

Lord Wavell had declared on February 16 last year :

"World shortage is a reality . We are by no means the only country threatened with famine, and there is a limit to the amount of help that will be forthcoming."

The same argument trotted out by Wavell is being paraded right till this by the various Government spokesmen. Even Rajen Babu was led, on the basis of facts supplied to him by the officials, to declare last year that smallness of India's actual imports in relation to our needs was "inevitable in a world desperately short of food."

What is the reality ? Is the world really short of food ? Is it really the world deficit that is responsible for denying us our rightful imports ?

The fact is that there is no world grain deficit in reality. Only the world is today divided into two parts : the deficit countries of war devastated Europe and the countries of the Far East; and the surplus countries like Australia, Canada, Argentina and the United States. The entire world surpluses are in the hands of these few countries, and it is this fact and not overall world shortage that lies at the root of the world food crisis. These surplus countries are deliberately holding back exports with a view to their monopoly for political and economic gains.

This year's deficit in wheat declared at million tons by Mr. D. Fitzgerald, Secretary-General of the International Emergency Food Council at the July Session of the World Cereals Conference. Mr. Clinton Anderson the United States Secretary of Agriculture too vouchsafed that "there is not enough grain to export . It is a dangerous mistake to assume that there is."

But actually the production of the surplus countries this year is a record production. Through the deficit figure of 18 million tons places the deficit at 8 million tons more than last year's, official announcements of the United States Department of Agriculture (*Times of India, 12th July, 1947*) give out this year's, wheat production of the United States alone at 1,436 million bushels or 38.4 million tons. This means that the United States' production alone is as much as 1.6 million tons more than the combined pre-

war (average of 1934-5 to 1938-9) production of all the four wheat exporting countries of the world—U.S.A. Canada, Argentina and Australia—and more than her own pre-war production.

The argument that America has lost her maize crop, too, does not hold good, because on July 19, the U.S. Department of Agriculture itself announced that over 600 million bushels of maize crop were destroyed by wet weather; still this year's crop is to the average for 10 years, from 1936 to 1945, which ran to 2,636 million bushels. Moreover, partially off-setting the drop in the maize crop is the larger-than-average yield of oats; barley production is larger than in any of the past three years and a record for rye has been reached.

Even last year, 1946-7, it was planned to export only 20 million tons, against the actual exports during 1945-6 of 23,900,000; that too when the total wheat harvest of the four countries had increased to 53,600,000 tons during 1946-7 at the pre-war level, exports could increase to 28 million tons, against the demand of 30 million tons.

In countries like Argentina, grain is even burnt. During 1942-3 to 1945-6, as much as 20 lakh tons of wheat and maize were burnt.

Huge quantities of grain are being fed to animals. Last year, 1140 lakh tons of grain was fed to animals in the U.S.A. alone, out of which as much as 90 lakh tons was wheat. This is 325 lakh tons more than the pre-war total fed to animals in the U.S.A.

In the four wheat producing countries, viz., U.S.A., Canada, Argentina and Australia, a total of 105 lakh tons of wheat (when the total world deficit of wheat was estimated at 100 lakh tons) was fed to animals during 1946-7. This is 60 lakh tons more than the pre-war figure (according to British Government's White Paper No. 6785, published in 1946)

And this feeding of animals is no mere accident, not even an act of individual cultivator. It is a planned action on the part of the Governments concerned. Even as reactionary a paper as the *Fortune*, mouthpiece of the Republicans in America, admitted last year:

"The Government officials continued their policy of encouraging farmers by price differentials to feed grain to livestock."

The real nature of the present world food crisis was admitted by the United States Agricultural Department itself. On May 17, 1947, *Reuter* carried extracts (Reference: *Bharat Jyoti*, May 18

1947) from a report issued by the U.S. Agricultural Department's Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations which predicted that world food conditions were unlikely to improve much for another year at least. "Underlining the fact that bumper crops are nearly all being grown in the 'hard money ' Western Hemisphere area," the report stated , that "finance will be the major problem in international agricultural trade in the coming year. With lend-lease and U.N.R.R.A. out of picture, the volume of imports will depend on amounts of United States relief funds, the buying power importing countries can muster out of receipts their own exports, gold and dollar resources and loans. Inevitably trade deficits will remain large in many countries. Only a limited number of countries have sufficient reserves. Many others will not be in a position to deplete further their currency reserves. International loans will therefore remain the key factor that will ultimately determine the volume of international trade in the next crop year (i.e. 1947-8)"

Thus as is clear from the above , it is not a real food shortage but the monopoly grip of a few over the entire world surplus that is responsible for the present world food shortage.

And this monopoly is being used by them for making huge profits and for dictating political terms and gaining political advantages. Those alone who can manage to get American loans (and loans are given to only those countries who surrender their political and economic freedom to the dictates of American imperialism) can get food.

That food is being used for politics is clear even from the figures of the aid through U.N.R.R.A. Sir Frederick Leith-Ross gave the following figures of total supplies during 1945 in U.N.R.R.A. *in Europe*:

<i>Country</i>	<i>Tons</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Tons per 1,000 of population</i>
Greece	1,500,000	6,000,000	250
Yugoslavia	1,000,000	15,000,000	66
Czechoslovakia	500,000	14,700,000	34
Poland	400,000	35,000,000	11
Italy	150,000	43,000,000	3

Supplies for Albania, Ukraine, Byelorussia, are of course, "infinitely smaller". Thus Greece with its fascist puppet regime got the highest supplies.

Sir S.V. Ramamurthi, alternate leader of the Indian Delegation to the World Cereals Conference, declared in a Press interview (refer Hindu, July 13, 1947), that "food is No.1 Politics" and that "it was for political reasons that he wanted India to stand by herself in the matter of food. If India were depended on other countries for food, big powers might threaten to starve her out during the next war if India did not join their side."

Earlier, Sir Ramamurthi had declared in a memorandum submitted to the Asian Relations Conference:

"The politics of U.S.A. and U.K. dominated the allocations of food Members of our delegation were just tolerated as observers."

Free Press Journal, an influential nationalist daily of Bombay, editorially commented on April 25, 1947:

"There is no actual shortage of food in the world today, but one part is deliberately starving the rest. This accusation can be substantiated. The South Americans use food as a weapon of barter and bargain. They also use it as a political weapon to extort advantages, even from nations more powerful, than almost all the Latin countries put together. The United States is more than partly responsible for the scraping of U.N.R.R.A....."

That food is also being used for minting huge profits is clear from our own purchase. Dr. K.N.Katju declared on July 26 :

"But Argentina and certain other countries who were not members of the I.E.F.C. adopted what might be called an international profiteering system. The Argentine Government, for instance, paid its farmers only three-quarters of a dollar per bushel and exported the same at three to three and a half dollars."

Last year we had to pay Argentina five times the pre-war price for all the three lakh tons of maize that we bought.

The price of wheat in Argentina today is 6 dollars per bushel (60 lbs), according to a statement made by Mr. Clinton Anderson, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture himself and the price of wheat in U.S.A. too is as much as 3 dollars per bushel (*Statesman*, May 25, 1947).

The price of Siam rice has also been recently increased to £31 per ton instead of £24 and this price will last for all supplies till the end of 1948 (*National Standard*, September 9, 1947).

Hindu of February 21, 1947, reported that the Burma Government is making a net profit of 300 per cent on its sales of rice.

The result is that last year alone we had to spend as much as Rs.20 $\frac{1}{2}$ cores as subsidy on food imports with a view to bring prices down to the internal level.

Under the circumstances, the method by which the earlier imperialist bureaucracy in India sought to secure imports for us was by appeasing these reactionary powers and yielding to their political and economic blackmail.

All the delegations sent by the world food conference kept mum over the manoeuvres of these world powers and rather than expose their blackmail before the people of the world, they sang hymns of their "generosity", all the time putting out the obvious lie of a "world food shortage."

They even made us pay the highest price that was demanded. Diwan Chamanlal revealed in the Central Assembly on March 18 this year, the startling fact that food was bought in Argentina at 72 shillings after he went there.

The British imperialists even made India a pawn in their game of bolstering up reactionary regimes.

The British were helping to power in Siam the most reactionary military-fascist rule of the People's Party, a rule about which even the pro-British *Statesman* wrote editorially on May 10, 1946 :

"The Bangkok High Court has released every war criminal under arrest. The Chief of the Secret Police was then, and for all we know is still, the same man who tortured thousands of Siamese in collaboration with the Kampeitai; the Siamese jails and chain gangs are still full of men who fought in the popular Resistance Movement before the Government took it over in late 1944."

To help this fascist Government in Siam and suppress all political freedom, the British made India give help to it, help by way of supplies of consumer goods, locomotives, and even a loan of Rs. 5 crores—all on the promise that India would get rice from Siam. This is very much in contrast to their attitude towards the Indonesian Republic and its rice offer to us. In fact, however, we got practically no rice from Siam during the whole of 1946—in all 26,200 tons out of a total import of 3,62,500 tons.

That is the way in which the earlier bureaucracy in India functioned.

With the coming in of the Interim Government, it was expected that this appeasement of the international hoarders and surrender to their political and economic blackmail would be put an end to and India would bank upon the support of the world people for its just demands, by laying bare before them the reactionary game of the imperialist powers.

The Interim Government, however, did nothing of the sort. Rajen Babu's very first broadcast in September, 1946 maintained the *status quo*. Even till this day the Government officials are waxing eloquent about American aid to India. Even a person like Dr. Katju is paying homage to American "reasonableness," although it is a fact that it is the U.S.A. which has all through been sabotaging adequate allotments for India.

True, out of 22.4 lakh of imports last year, 7.57 lakh tons came from the U.S.A; but where else could it come from? It is America which today has the world's single exportable surplus.

What has to be seen, however, is what percentage of her total exports do America supplies to Indian amount? To get a real idea of American "reasonableness" these 7 lakh tons of Indian imports of food grains from America during 1946 have to be placed in relation to the total American exports which amounted to as much as 9.3 million tons during the year ending June 30, 1946, and 18.5 million tons during the year ending June 30, 1947.

Thus this old policy of their open appeasement of the world hoarders or at least a tacit support to their game by keeping quiet over it and begging from them for our needs, leads us nowhere. It has so far failed to get our requirements and hence must be changed.

As the *Free Press Journal* (May 10, 1947) wrote editorially :

"The Government of India has taken great pains to hide from the Indian people the fact that the United States Government, co-operating with His Majesty's Government, was using food as a political weapon, as a means of barter against the Soviet influence in Europe, and as pacification method in the Far East The Government of India can vacillate and placate the Big Two no longer. The people of India must demand that their Government ask for a full discussion on the whole the sake of political power and economic aggrandisement,"

By that alone, by a fight against the reactionaries in the world food conference, by demanding an open discussion on world food supplies, allocations and prices alone, can we hope to get our needs of foreign imports.

Secondly, we must also enter into bi-lateral agreements in regard to food supplies with countries like Burma, Indonesia, Indo-China, and Australia. The existence of a National Government in Burma and Republics in Indonesia and Indo-China should help this course. From these countries we can get our requirements of food grains at reasonably cheap prices and help them in their rehabilitation by offering them supplies of various consumer and secondary goods like cloth, implements etc., in exchange.

V. Procurement And Rationing

Procurement and rationing that is the internal mobilisation of all our resources, form the core of the food problem. Only to the extent to which the Government is able to procure surplus stocks from the cultivator and assure supplies to all sections of the people through equitable distribution and rationing, it fights against famine and starvation overtaking us and checks the food crisis from developing.

But procurement so far has been a bad failure. *Eastern Economist*, an influential financial weekly of Delhi, commented in its issue of June 3, 1947 :

So far Government purchase have been a very small portion of the total output in the various provinces.... It is clear from this that the scope for Government purchase is still considerable."

The following chart shows the procurement in different provinces.

Province	Grain	Year	Production	Procurement (in 000 tons)	Percentage
Assam	Rice	1944-5	18,33	2,09	11.4
		1945-6	20,16	1,52	7.5
Bengal	Rice	1944-5	104,76	6,42	6.1
		1945-6	95,97	6,68	6.9
		1946-7	106,71	3,58*	3.3
* (From Nov. 1, 1946 to June 16, 1947).					
Bihar	Rice	1944-5	26,72	53	1.9
		1945-6	24,60	75	3.0
		1946-7	27,65	140*	5.0

* (till June 20, 1947 when monopoly procurement was withdrawn).

Province	Grain	Year	Production	Procurement (in 000 tons)	Percentage
Bombay	All cereals	1943-4	36,10	510	14.1
		1944-5	31,94	626	19.6
		1945-6	27,81	433	15.6
	Rice	1943-4	882	152	17.3
		1944-5	825	178	21.6
		1945-6	821	181	22.1
	Millets & minor cereals	1943-4	24,58	261	10.5
		1944-5	20,63	344	16.7
		1945-6	16,94	174	12.3
C.P. & Berar	Rice	1944-5	17,24	3.26	18.8
		1945-6	16,23	3.17	19.5
		1946-7	14,00	1,63*	16.6
* (From No., 1, 1946 to March 31, 1947).					
Madras	Rice	1944-5	50,54	7,73	15.2
		1945-6	38,27	13.54	35.3
		1946-7	47,95	12,04*	25.1
* (till August 31, 1947).					
Orissa	Rice	1944-5	13,37	1,36	10.1
		1945-6	12,86	1,18	9.1
U.P.	Rice	1944-5	15,40	84	5.4
		1945-6	18,53	1,11	6.0
	Rabi crop	1945-6	23,05	3,32	14.4
		1946-7	23,30	3,30*	14.1
* (till the end of June 1947)					

Thus as is clear from the above table taken from official publications and Government press communiques etc., except in Madras last year, no Provincial Government has procured more than nearly 20.0 percent of the total rice produce. On an average it is much less. Even in the U.P., last years procurement has been a mere 14.4 per cent of the Rabi crop and 6 per cent of rice. Procurement in other provinces and other grains is even worse.

The real danger of this failure of procurement, however, becomes very clear when we compare these percentages with the actual marketable surplus.

The various Government reports on the marketing of wheat, rice and other crops in India have put the marketable surplus at about 40 per cent on an average (varying, of course, with various crops and various zones) in the pre-war days.

The actual marketable surplus, in the sense of the amount of grain which the majority of our rural population is forced to part with, has not decreased even during the war, for the war has heaped increased sacrifices and privations on them.

The high prices of agricultural commodities, the food grains and commercial crops, benefited only a handful of big landlords and middle peasants, but the mass of peasantry, the poor peasants, tenants and the huge army of landless labourers were hit hard and pauperised; the prices of their essential minimum needs, cloth, salt, kerosene oil, sugar, matches, iron implements, and bullocks increased much more. Consequently, their debts, rents and other obligations mounted up rapidly, reducing even further their capacity to hold back grain for any length of time.

Though all-India figures are not available, yet, the following are a sufficient indication of the trend :

In *U.P.* the per capita rural cost of living Index has gone up even higher than in the urban areas.

Per Capita Rural Cost of Living in 1945

(Base : pre-war=100)

Gorakhpur	..	298
Azamgarh	..	312
Unao	..	354
Almora	..	402
Meerut	..	458
Ihani	..	373

(*Vir Bahadur Singh, "Some Aspects of Rural Economy in U.P. during the War"—a thesis submitted for M.A. Examination, 1946, Lucknow University*)

In Madras, to take another instance, whereas the working class index (with base July, 1935, to June 1936, equal to 100) has gone up to 271 only (April, 1947) the index of rural prices (on the same base) are as high as 413 in Madararm (Bellary), 391 in Thulayanatham (Trichinopoly) or 345 in Guduvancheri (Chinglepet) in May, 1945 (Source : *Indian Labour Gazette*).

The price of bullocks itself has gone up by 8 to 9 times everywhere.

The result is that the rural indebtedness for the majority of the peasantry has increased. In Bengal, during one year of the famine

alone (1943 to 1944), the percentage of families in debt increased from 43% to 66% for kisan families, 27% to 56% for craftsmen and 17% to 46% for all other miscellaneous class of people (*Bhowani Sen : Rural Bengal in Ruins*).

In *Madras* too, similar results of an increase in the indebtedness of petty landholders, tenants and agricultural labourers are borne out by an inquiry conducted last year under the *Madras Government* by Dr. B. V. Naidu.

Dr. M. B. Desai, Lecturer in the *Bombay School of Economics and Sociology*, in his inquiry into the ryotwari districts of *Gujerat* also shows how the majority of the peasants have suffered during the war.

Even in the well-to-do *Punjab*, an inquiry (into the *Dorba* region) but the *Punjab Government's Board of Economic Inquiry* shows that the majority of the peasantry have suffered as a result of the war crisis.

This increased impoverishment of the Indian peasantry means that their capacity to hold back grain has decreased rather than increased during the war. Thus the usual arguments trotted out by the various *Government officials* or interested parties about the increased rural consumption during war are just a self-created baseless myth, a mere cover for their own incompetence and failures. The war has not led to any decrease, if not to an increase, in the marketable surplus.

The small percentage of our procurement in relation to the actual marketable surplus of about 40 per cent clearly proves that the rest of the grain has continually remained in the hands of big landlords and traders to be sold at fabulous prices in the blackmarket.

Based, as it is, on the grip of a handful of big landlords and traders over land, our whole food economy too, is dominated by them. *Land monopoly of a few has meant the monopoly of food*. Almost the entire marketable surplus passes through the hands of these few landlords and traders.

As we have seen above, quite more than sixty per cent of the land in *India* is tilled by tenants and hence the bulk of what they produce (as much as 75 per cent) is grabbed by the landlord in the form of rent.

In the ryotwari areas, it is the moneylender who has a firm grip over a major portion of the crop, which even before it is

harvested, is mortgaged to him for part payment of debt and interest charges. The mass of the peasantry itself has to buy its requirements for a major part of the year in the market.

Let us take a few instances :

In *Bombay*, according to Land Revenue Administration reports, 50 per cent of the holders of land own less than 5 acres and quite about 40 per cent have to buy their needs in the market. Besides, one-sixth to one-fourth are landless labourers. People who can hold grain are only those who own more than 15 acres of land and these 3 lakhs of people have a net surplus of 20.96 lakh tons of cereals (out of a total normal production of 35 lakh tons) every year.

In the *U. P.*, the holding of an average peasant is only 2½ acres. Government report on marketing of wheat reveals that 1/3rd of the cultivators part with practically all their wheat in payment of debt, and 40 per cent have no surplus to sell at all. Thus peasants who can withhold the disposal of their surplus are not above 27 per cent of the total number of cultivators.

In *Malabar*, no less than 2 lakh tons of rice out of a total gross production of 3,60,000 tons go to the non-cultivating landowners in the form of rent.

In *Madras* as a whole, in the year Fasli, 1350 (or (1942-43) 27,639,504 acres of cultivated area were under ryotwari system (another 12,842,230 acres were under zamindari settlement) and this was distributed among 6,689,824 pattas, single and joint. But out of this as many as 6,275, 103 pattadars were those who paid less than Rs. 30/- as assessment and they accounted for nearly 2/3 of the total cultivated area (their holding varying from 0.63 acres to 6.56 acres). The remaining 414,721 alone were those paying more than Rs. 30/- as assesment and owned more than 1/3 of the land. — (S. Y. Krishnaswami : *Rural Problems in Madras*, 1947, published by the Madras Government).

In the *Punjab*, (enquiries conducted by the Punjab Government Board of Economic Inquiry) only 12.1 per cent of the owners of land own holdings of more than 15 acres. Quite about 7 lakh tons of wheat out of a normal production of 34 lakh tons pass into the hands of these landlords in the form of rent. The rest of the marketable surplus of about 14 lakh tons passes through the hands of a few traders.

Commenting on the failure of procurement in *Bihar*, *Searchlight* wrote on 25th August, 1947 that "about 15 per cent of

the people have been able to hoard and to hold upstocks in order that they may profiteer at the cost of the entire province."

It is with a view to destroy this private monopoly of a few anti-social elements and establish real government control over the entire food production of the country that the government of India's Food Grains Policy Committee (1943) laid down two main principles in relations to procurement :

(a) Complete Government monopoly over food grains and elimination of private trade in food grains.

"The only completely satisfactory solution, if this matter of procurement is looked at from the standpoint of principle, would be a Central Government Food Grains Monopoly. Under such a monopoly the Central Government would become the sole owner of food grains (apart from the cultivator) in every part of the country; no one would be allowed to buy, sell or deal in food grains except as part of the Central Government's procurement agency...."

(b) Establishment of Government Control over the entire surplus. " In the last resort, procurement involves getting the maximum quantity of grains from the cultivator, in every part of the country."

Mr. Somerset Butler, Government of India's Officer on Special Duty, too, in his report ("*outline of some of the Government Grain Monopoly Schemes Operating in India in 1944*") while admitting that " the trade almost everywhere has, whenever it was given the slightest opportunity, lent itself to unsocial acts",blew sky-high the various financial and other arguments against complete monopoly purchase by Government. He, in fact, stressed that "in virtually every case the determined policy is to go forward to make the monopoly more complete and to improve the control with a view to endeavouring to ensure the whole surplus of every individual cultivator coming within the physical control of the Government."

But none of these principles have so far been implemented. The various procurement plans operating in the different provinces have neither attempted to establish Government control over the entire marketable surplus nor to eliminate private trading in food grains.

(a) The Provincial Governments have so far aimed at merely keeping rationing going in a few urban and rural centres; they have not taken it as their responsibility to feed the entire rural and urban

population. Thus their procurement plans have not proceeded at all on the basis of establishing Government control over the entire marketable surplus and eliminating blackmarket. They have only fixed some targets of procurement, in relation to their needs for their present rationed areas and commitments, their expected imports from outside the province and then their so-called capacity to procure.

The result is that, as seen above, most of the grain has passed into the hands of the hoarders and all through these years blackmarket has been rampant in the non-rationed rural and urban areas, where prices have continued very high. In Hapur (U.P.), the wheat market of India, for instance, price of wheat was reported at about Rs. 16/- per md., right at the harvesting time this year. Prices in the rural areas have been continually rising, and as shown above, rule at a level many times the control rates.

(b) The procurement plans almost everywhere have relied upon traders to do the job for the Government. Rather than eliminate private trading in food grains, by directly buying the entire surplus from the cultivators in their fields, the Provincial governments have mainly functioned through traders and grain dealers; traders have been employed as agents of the Government, buying for the Government under Government or departmental officers have been employed to purchase on behalf of the Government, the purchase in the *mandis* have mostly been done through merchants, or, in the case of rice, through rice mills. Local traders have been appointed by the Government almost everywhere as agents and the rice mill-owners as licensed purchasers side by side with the direct procurement agencies.

In *Madras*, where, in certain parts, procurement was attempted through Producers-cum-consumers' Societies, these societies came to be controlled and influenced by the biggest hoarders themselves. The Societies were not registered under the Co-operative Act; the democratic principle of one vote per shareholder was given up and certain percentage of Directorships reserved for holders of largest numbers of shares; elections of office-bearers were denied and nominations by district officials (who naturally nominated the richest and the most "influential", namely the landlords and mill-owners) resorted to. And as could be effected from such Societies, governed not by the people but by the hoarders, they naturally sabotaged procurement. And now again the procuring authority

has been taken away from them, and given to merchants and rice mill-owners directly.

(c) The big hoards of the landlords have not been touched, the Ministries depending upon the "patriotism" of these anti-social elements to voluntarily surrender their stocks. But even in provinces where the system of graded levies on producers has been used, with or without elimination of private trade, the levies have left a lot of grain with the big landlords.

To take one or two instances :

(i) In *C.P.* the latest Government plan leaves huge surpluses with the big landlords :

Acreage of land owned.	Total Production.	Procurement according to Govt. Plan.	Left over with landlords after levy.
20 acres	160 mds.	40 mds.	120 mds.
30	240	84	156 "
40	320	127	193 "
50	400	180	220 "
100	800	270	430 "
200	1606	765	835 "
1000	8000	3925	4075 "

The consumption requirements of a family of 5 adult units comes to just about 29 mds. per year on the basis of the pre-war ratio of 459 lbs. per head ("Food Statistics of India")

(ii) In *Bombay*, where "compulsory levy scheme" is in operation and cultivators whose produce is estimated to be greater than 27½ maunds are required to hand over to the Government a progressively increasing percentage of their produce, a large quantity remains with the big landlords. The *Bulletin of the Bureau of Economics and Statistics* (Government of Bombay), in its very first issue of July, 1947, admits that "it is, therefore, possible that considerable quantities of grain may remain with some cultivators even after satisfying levy demand."

The result of all this appeasement of the landlord and trader-hoarders, the main reliance for procurement on these very elements, the keeping intact of private trade in food grains, has been that the blackmarket has flourished unchecked.

Not only that the entire marketable surplus has not been procured, hardly any provincial Government has been able so far in the past few years to even fulfil its own low targets. In *U.P.* where, after the coming into power of the popular ministry last year, attempts were made to take popular co-operation in some half-hearted measure, the target of 5 lakh tons from the Rabi crop

could not be fulfilled; it was later reduced to 4 lakh tons and even then only 3.32.000 tons were procured.

In fact, it is this failure of procurement that lies at the root of our immediate crisis that is developing during the next two months Rations are being cut everywhere because of lack of stocks with the provincial Governments; parts of the country are seriously threatened with famine, rationing threatened with collapse, all because of failure of procurement.

Way out

(A) *Immediate :*

To avert the immediate crisis and collapse of rationing, to restore the ration to a minimum of 12 oz. of cereals during these next two months, till the new crop comes in, what the Provincial Governments need is to improve their stock position.

Today, at the end of the crop season, the stocks are only in the hands of the big traders and landlords. The Provincial Governments must, therefore, immediately launch a powerful anti-hoarding drive with the support of the common people and popular organisations in every area. The stocks in the banks and in the *mandis* must be frozen and granaries of big stockists unearthed and seized. All Parties Volunteer Corps and People's Committees must be formed everywhere and powers given to them for seizing hoards.

That alone, and nothing short of it, can secure us the food that is available and so urgently needed. No appeasement of the hoarders will force them to sell their stocks to the Government. the Madras Ministry's experiment of giving a bonus has already failed and no improvement in the rate of their procurement is reflected: for, the hoarders make much better profits by selling in the blackmarket than by what the bonus can offer them.

The offer of bonus did bring out some hidden stocks and there was a slight improvement in the last week of July and the first two weeks of August (21, 247 tons, 25, 182 tons, and 30.060 tons respectively as against the pre-bonus figure of between 15,000 and 16,000 tons), but that was only a temporary improvement and procurement again fell down to nearly 13,000 tons a week.

(B) *New Plans for the Next Crop :*

The Government must immediately revise and reformulate its plans of procurement for the new crop, with a view to get control over the entire marketable surplus.

It is not possible here to lay down concretely what organisational form it will take in different provinces, for conditions and land relations are different in different areas, but the procurement plans should be revised on the following lines :

(1) Pending the legislation for the abolition of landlordism, as stated earlier, the Government must immediately declare a moratorium on all debt payments of the peasants and order that the rents accruing to the big landlords shall henceforth be paid to the Government and not to the landlords.

This will check blackmarket at its very source, place huge stocks in the hands of the government, for the effective maintenance of control and keeping prices low and checking inflationary tendencies, besides providing the Government with resources with which the supplies of manufactured goods to the cultivators can be subsidized.

(2) The entire surpluses (surplus over the actual annual needs of the family) of the middle peasants and big landlords should be compulsorily taken away at fixed prices. As we have seen above, the present graded levies leave huge surpluses with the big landlords. The Government should take away their entire surplus and not merely a part of the surplus.

(3) Government should establish monopoly of purchase directly from the cultivators and proper incentive must be given to them to sell all their surplus to the Government. It should set up a Government purchasing agency (either through establishing Government shops or taking the help of the Co-operative shops, if and wherever they exist) in every zone and this purchasing agency should itself guarantee the cultivators the following three things:

(a) A reasonable minimum price for his produce. Today the ruling prices in the market are very high, but the prices offered to the peasant are very low. To take an instance, while the ruling prices of rice in Bengal are as high as Rs. 25|- per md. and even the control price about Rs. 16|- to Rs. 20|- the procurement prices fixed by the Government for the *aus* crop from the 15th of August are as low as Rs. 5|12|- to Rs. 6|4|- for paddy, Rs. 10|3|- to Rs. 10|12|- for milled rice and Rs. 9|13|- to Rs. 10|6|- for *dhenki* rice.

Similarly in the South, the prices at which grain is procured from the cultivator are very low.

It is the middleman who grabs a major portion of the difference between the retail price and the price offered to the peasant. By

purchasing directly from the cultivator and eliminating the middleman, the maximum benefit of the present prices can be given to the peasant with impunity to the consumer; prices can even be lowered for the consumer.

(b) Supplies to the cultivator of his necessaries of life, like cloth, salt, oil, sugar, matches, iron implements, seed, manure etc., at control prices and at prices even lower than the control prices to those who sell their grain to the Government.

It is through such supplies alone that the tremendous rise in the cost of cultivation can be compensated and the peasants encouraged to sell to the Government by removing from them the uncertainty regarding the supplies and prices of articles they have to buy for their daily needs.

This aspect of the problem was duly emphasised by Mr. Somerset Butler, Government of India's Officer on Special Duty, as early as 1944. In his report, referred to earlier, he observed :

"It is a curious but understandable phenomenon that where the rural distribution arrangements are well organised and rural rationing is in force, procurement is found to be easier."

(c) Regular supplies of grain all through the year for the needs of the poor peasants and landless labourers.

As shown above the majority of peasants in India are forced to sell their crop as soon as it comes and then are forced to depend for their requirements during the latter part of the year, upon the market.

By assuring a regular flow of supplies through the Government shops, the peasants can be persuaded to sell to the Government (and not to the landlord or moneylender who promises to lend them grain when they require) and control over maximum supplies established.

Such Government supplies are also immediately essential for satisfying the needs of the landless labourers.

(C) Within the Next One Year :

The Government should aim at extending rationing to all urban and rural areas within the next year, that is, before the *Khariff* crop in 1948.

It is in the rural areas that prices first rise and famine first shows its face. If famine has to be checked, rationing and procurement have to be perfected and extended to the entire people.

And all this is possible for our present ministries to do.

The earlier bureaucracy could not do it for it was isolated from the people; and worried more about protecting the privileges of the vested interests, its main source of strength, than feeding the masses, it could not and did not want to seek popular co-operation. In fact, one of the main difficulties mentioned by the first meeting of the Central Food Advisory Board against complete Government monopoly of food grains was lack of popular co-operation. The Memorandum submitted to this meeting referred to the "difficulty of working a Monopoly Scheme on a very large scale without full public co-operation to prevent evasion and development of blackmarket."

It was again only on similar grounds of the difficulties of "the creation (within a short time) of the vast organisation which would be involved" that the *Gregory Committee* itself advised against an immediate perfect Government monopoly.

But after the coming into power of the Provincial Ministries last year, it was generally expected that, popular ministries as they were, they would reflect the popular opinion and implement the sentiments expressed by Pandit Nehru when he declared after his release in June, 1945, that the blackmarketeers should be hanged; it was expected that the Ministries, besides giving no quarter to the hoarders, would change the whole basis of procurement, introduce State Monopoly of Procurement directly from the cultivators and rather than rely merely upon the corrupt bureaucracy to carry out these tasks, they would rouse the entire peasantry against the anti-social elements and seek popular co-operation on a mass scale.

The Ministries, to everybody's regret, failed to discharge their responsibilities.

The Ministries followed a very weak policy towards the hoarders, sometimes withdrawing even the cases pending against them (*as in Bombay*), sometimes trying to appease them by offering them baits of higher price or bonus (*as in Madras*), sometimes directly yielding to their pressure and withdrawing even the existing monopoly procurement and levy system (*as in Bihar*), and in no case dealing with the landlord-trader-hoarders with a firm hand.

It is very strange that the organisations to which the Ministries belonged, sat quite and did nothing to mobilise the people behind Ministerial policies. The Ministries, on the other hand, like the

earlier bureaucracy, relied for active support solely on the old corrupt machinery and bureaucratic methods.

No popular mass campaign was launched to rally round the middle peasant for co-operation with the Ministries in the task of reconstruction.

The middle peasant forms an important patriotic base of the national movement and could and should be roused politically to surrender his surplus stocks to the Government and make procurement a success. Lest they might offend their own following in the middle peasantry, hardly any such attempt was made by Congressmen.

In fact, an important section of Congressmen in almost all the provinces publicly campaigned against even the weak-kneed ministerial policies of procurement.

In *Madras*, Professor Ranga and T. Prakasam, ex-premier, have been campaigning against procurement and exhorting peasants not to sell to the Government. *Hindu* of April 23, 1947, editorially charged Mr. T. Prakasam for "Starting an agitation for higher prices for paddy and encouraging the producers to withhold their produce from the authorized procurement agencies until higher prices were paid" and thereby advising the producers "to adopt a course which is akin to blackmail of community."

Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, Madras Food Minister himself declared in the Madras Assembly on April 21 that Mr. Ranga is reported to have "advised the ryots if necessary to resort to satyagraha by not yielding their stocks to the Government and letting it be acquired by force". Dr. Rajan even revealed that Ranga had told him personally that he was giving this advice to the peasants in his capacity as President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee.

Searchlight referred in an editorial on March 23, 1947, to cases in Bihar of "political intrigues by public workers or members of legislature on behalf of profiteers with a view to securing condonation of their sins of omission and commission." again on June 21, 1947, the *Searchlight* wrote :

"What is worse is that the failure (of procurement) has been due to premium deliberately put on speculative hoarding as much by interested henchmen of powerful vested interests as by many a public worker...."

Even in the U.P., cases of congressmen involved in such shady deals are not uncommon. Mr. C. B. Gupta, Civil Supplies Minister, revealed in a statement immediately after his assumption of office in September last, how a number of important Congressmen had been approaching him for withdrawal of the thousands of cases pending against blackmarketeers and hoarders.

It is regrettable state of affairs in the Congress organisation which is really supposed to back the ministerial policies. One can imagine how the blackmarketeers are encouraged and even the minimum ministerial efforts at procurement hampered at every step when Congressmen lend the prestige of the national organisation by encouraging or whitewashing such anti-social acts.

This is a basic weakness which can only be removed by the Congress High Command appealing to Congressmen to weed out all such people from the Congress Organisation who are guilty of encouraging the robbery of people's food.

The Ministries too have their share of guilt in this connection. Whenever honest Congressmen have offered their co-operation for leading the campaign for procurement or anti-hoarding drives, they have been generally discouraged and reliance placed more on bureaucracy. Political and Party considerations have often come in the way of accepting co-operation; and where sometimes the principle of popular co-operation has been accepted, there has been a tendency to choose and pick people who often have links with the vested interests and who often are out of touch with masses, while those, among even Congressmen, who are prepared to fight the evil of blackmarket, have not been taken.

It has perhaps been done by the local bureaucrats but the ministries have generally upheld it.

In this matter, there has been even definite political discrimination against the Communist Party. The Communist Party has all through offered its hand of co-operation on the basis of the programme given in this memorandum but they have been generally excluded. Even the mass organisations like the All-India Kisan Sabha, the Trade Union etc., in which members of the Communist Party work, have been excluded.

Such discriminatin is not only anti-democratic but is positively injurious to national interests, at this moment of grave crisis.

The ministries must give up their fear of the people, they must make every effort to seek co-operation of the people.

It is wrong to assume that because they are ministries of the Congress, active vigilance and co-operation of the people will come on its own. They must give up their reliance upon the bureaucratic machinery and make a bid for the popular co-operation. They must inspire the best of the Congressmen for a campaign among the people and take them on the various local committees. They should not allow this representation on the Committees to go to individuals who are inactive, and only have a big name but cannot influence public opinion, or people who have links with the vested interests.

Above all, they must invite the co-operation of all the parties and mass organisations who are prepared to co-operate with the ministry in tackling the food problem and helping procurement.

The powerful All-India Kisan Sabha, with a membership of 7 lakhs and its widely pervasive influence has already offered its hand of co-operation. The Resolution passed at its recent Session at Sikandra Rao (U.P.) exhorted "all Provincial Ministries and Indian States to adopt immediately plans of total monopoly procurement of the entire marketable surplus of food direct from the cultivators *with the co-operation of the Sabha, popularly elected village committees and other popular organisations on the basis of fair prices to the peasant.*"

And attempts at popular co-operation and drive are already there, bearing encouraging results in the matter of procurement.

The West Bengal Ministry has already taken steps to seek co-operation from all parties and launch big anti-hoarding and procurement drives. In Madras too, the Communist Party and Kisan Sabha have started moving and initiated a big anti-hoarding drive.

In one week alone (second week of September) as much as 1,500 tons of rice was unearthed in a few villages (Ambasamudram, Nanguneri, Kallidaikurichi, Vikramasingapuram) by Government officials assisted by the Kisan Sabha volunteers.

Similar results are being achieved in other villages. The Kisan Sabha volunteers accompany the officials to the granaries of the landlord (which of course are known to the local population) and unearth maunds of rice.

It is only by taking the above measures that procurement can succeed and Government control over stocks established.

VI. Grow More Food Campaign

The ultimate solution of our food problem, undoubtedly, remains an increased internal production. As Rajen Babu, India's Food Minister, has rightly emphasised time and again, we cannot live on foreign imports.

First, we have no means to pay for foreign imports at high prices. Last year, we imported food stuffs worth about Rs. 77½ crores and the Central Government had to spend another 20½ crores for subsidizing the imports with a view to maintain prices at the internal level.

Secondly, we have plenty of fallow land lying uncultivated and with proper and adequate efforts, there seems to be absolutely no reason why we cannot keep pace with our increasing population in the matter of food and produce enough to feed our entire people, either by bringing this land under cultivation or by increasing the yield per acre.

Forced by the circumstances created by war, it was with this very purpose in view, that the "Grow More Food Campaign" was launched, as a result of which the Agricultural Department of the Government of India now claims to have brought an additional 13 million acres of land under cultivation of food grains and added on a "semi-permanent basis" nearly 3 million tons to our total food production. These figures are given to show how big a success the "Grow More Food Campaign" of the Government has been.

But the actual fact is that the "Grow More Food Campaign" so far has been a complete failure :

(1) There has been no increase whatsoever in the total area under cultivation.

Taking the average of seven years from 1932-33 to 1938-39 and comparing it with average of 1939-40 to 1942-43 (the last year for which the figures are available) we find that the percentage of net sown area to the total area of India has varied only from 42.6 per cent to 42.5 per cent during this period.

Similarly, the percentage of cultivable waste to the total area during the same period has remained constant at 17.0 per cent for the whole of India, and increased by 0.5 per cent for the provinces. This is revealed by the following table taken from the Food Department's Publication "*Food Statistics of India*": (See P-458)

(2) The acreage under food grains too has increased by only 8,796,000 acres and the total yield of food grains by a mere 497,000 tons during the seven war and post-war year (1939-40 to 1945-46) as compared to the average for seven pre-war years (1932-33 to 1938-39).

Even this increase of 8.7 million acres in the acreage under food crops includes (according to the report of the *Government of India's Department of Education, Health and Land on the Grow More Food Campaign during 1944-45*) "an increase of some 4½ million acres in Bengal which is said to be due primarily to a revision in the system of classification."

Thus the net increase in acreage under food crops is a mere 4 million acres.

(3) Even in the *ryotwari* province of Bombay, where the Growth of Food Crops Act was passed, and is being paraded as a successful piece of legislation (having converted Broach, a deficit district into a surplus district, as Mr. Dinkar Rao Desai, Bombay's Food Minister put it), there is in fact a decline in the area under cultivation.

TOTAL CROPPED AREA

(000 acres)

1943-44	29,579
1944-45	29,395
1945-46	28,391

The area under food grains has increased by only 5 lakh acres during the whole period of war; the yield, on the other hand, having gone down by 4 lakh tons :

Average of	Area under food grains (000 acres)	Total yield (000 tons)
1932-33 to 1938-39	17,146	3,605
1939-40 to 1945-46	17,671	3,201
Increase (+) or Decrease (-)	+525	-404

(4) The experience of Madras, another deficit province, was frankly admitted by Dr. T. S. S. Rajen, Madras Food Minister, in a recent debate in the Madras Legislative Assembly. Dr. Rajen revealed that despite the "Grow More Food Campaign", the area under paddy and its yield in the province had been almost stationary during the past decade, and for millets, the area and yield had actually declined.

The various forms that the "Grow More Food Campaign" has so far taken are—

(1) diversion of land from cultivation of non-food crops to food crops;

(2) increase of total area under cultivation.

The first, namely, diversion of land from non-food to food crops, has been attempted by (i) legislative measures, and, (ii) by propaganda and persuasion; it is claimed that the entire increase of acreage under food crops is due to the legislative and other measures of the Government Department.

In January, 1942, the Government of India imposed a duty of 1 anna per lb. on the import of raw cotton, and used the fund thus raised (*Cotton Fund*) for giving grants at a rate not exceeding Rs. 2 per acre of the areas diverted from Short Staple Cotton to food crops. In 1944-45, certain supplementary measures for encouraging cultivation of food crops were announced.

The Government of Bombay enacted and enforced in 1944 the *Bombay Growth of Food Crops Act*, for regulating the cultivation of non-food crops like cotton, tobacco etc.

The Government of Madras too ordered that in parts of the province, certain varieties of Short Staple Cotton can only be grown mixed with food crops.

But the real reason for this little increase under food grains and decline of acreage under non-food crops seems to be the supply and demand position of food and non-food crops and not these legislative measures.

With the Japanese entry into the war, India lost her major markets for her Short Staple Cotton and thus the demand fell sharply. It is this factor plus the tremendous rise in the prices of food articles which acted as the real natural checks on the cultivation of non-food crops and led to a diversion of land to the cultivation of food crops.

The impotency of mere legislative assertions to bring about the desired change has even been indirectly admitted by the Government of India's *Department of Lands* in their report in the *Grow More Food Campaign* during 1944-45. In 1944 when it was realised that the jute acreage had decreased to an extent totally "unnecessary and even unsafe", the Government tried to increase the acreage under jute by guaranteeing minimum prices to the jute

growers. But, as the Report admits, the "*various factors, e.g., the higher price of paddy etc., were too strong for the gurantee to combat tendency of falling acreage.*"

The campaign also aimed at increasing the total area under cultivation, bringing more land under plough, and increasing the yield per acre by proving irrigation facilities, agricultural implements etc. Emergency and minor irrigation projects were opened and attempts were made at land improvement.

But all these attempts have so far failed to increase our food production because they neither visualised nor succeeded in winning the active co-operation of the entire Indian peasantry in the task of growing more food. From the very inception of the campaign, it reduced itself to a mere technical effort relying for its success and execution only upon the minor section of the middle and rich peasants and big landlords.

The Campaign merely became a negative campaign of giving aid to whosoever asked for it and not a positive campaign of rousing the entire peasantry.

All that was done was to invite applications from people who wanted to dig wells in their lands or open up other minor irrigation projects. Approved by the Government, they were given loans, half the money being realised back after completion of the project.

No attempts were made at all at district-wise land surveys and at bringing the entire fallow land under cultivation.

The campaign ignored the basic reality that most of the land in India is cultivated in small uneconomic holdings by a rack-rented, debt-ridden and impoverished peasantry and no effort on the entire land can be made except through their active co-operation. Thus the campaign did nothing to rouse the vast majority of our peasantry into growing more food and providing them with the necessary incentives by securing them relief from huge debt and interest payments and by granting them long-term takaavi loans for effecting necessary improvements in land, for digging wells, for opening up other projects.

Even the fact that most of the cultivable land lying uncultivated is in possession of big landlords and not common peasants, was forgotten. Consequently, no attempt was made at all for bringing this under cultivation by its compulsory rent-free and revenue-free distribution to the landless or poor peasants.

It was solely because of this wrong approach that the "Grow More Food Campaign" of the Government has been a complete flop so far.

The earlier imperialist bureaucracy in India did not purposely take any such measures, for it was more interested in protecting the privileges of the landlords than in making an all-out effort to increase India's food production.

But even the first statement of policy of the Interim Government, based on facts supplied by the same old bureaucratic machinery, has not made a departure from the old approach to the problem. Rajen Babu, while presiding over the Food Production Conference on January 15, 1947, laid down the following basic outline of the new five-year scheme aimed at increasing our food production by 4 million tons by 1951-52 :

"It appears that we still have 90 million acres of land in the different provinces that can be, but are not cultivated. It may be that a part of this land is not cultivated because it is not worthwhile cultivating it, as the return from cultivation is less than the investment on it."

"There is no doubt that part of this cultivable but uncultivated land can be cultivated if irrigation is provided and mechanical devices procured for cultivating it."

"The Government of India have decided, generally speaking, that out of every rupee that may have to be spent on a grow more food project, four annas will be contributed by it, four annas by the Provincial Government and the remaining eight annas by the person benefited by it." The contribution that the Government of India will thus have to make, will be something between Rs. 50 crores and Rs. 75 crores.

Rajen Babu rightly stressed that "*the bulk of the burden has to be borne by the Provincial Governments and the people at large without whose resolute effort and vigilance, nothing can be achieved.*"

But the plan follows totally the earlier pattern and suffers from those very serious defects.

It is not the middle peasant but the poor small peasant and landless tenant who forms the bulk of our peasantry; and for an all-out effort on the entire land, on the basis of which the Five-Year Plan is made, it is not merely the middle peasant but the poor and

landless peasant who has to be roused and helped to increase production on his holding; he is burdened with numerous legal and illegal payments and he has no cash to contribute even the proposed 8-anna share in the attempted improvements.

Moreover, the land lying fallow at present is not being cultivated because large part of it is under the grip of the parasitic landlords, and not because "it is not worth-while cultivating it." To maintain that the fallow land in India is not being cultivated because "the return from cultivation is less than the investment on it", is to make the most devastating criticism of our economy. There is absolutely no reason why a famished peasant should not explore all avenues to feed and maintain himself. The real reason why more land is not being brought under cultivation is that the average peasant is rack-rented and debt-ridden and has neither the resources nor the incentive to produce more; even a large part of the fallow land is not owned by him but by the landlord, who would rather leave it untilled than give it for cultivation, free of rent or at lower rents.

Hence with a view to realise the objective set forth in the above Five-Year Plan, the Government should immediately take the following steps :—

(1) Appoint immediately Grow More Food Officers in all the districts.

Writing about Bihar, the *Searchlight*, a pro-Congress daily has revealed the scandalous state of affairs at present existing in this respect. It wrote on July 21, 1947.

"While the drive was declared so early as December last, the Grow More Food Officers have yet to be appointed in Bihar."

(2) These District Grow More Food Officers should :

(a) set up Joint Grow More Food Committees in every village comprising an equal number of Government officials and representatives of the All-India Kisan Sabha and even landlords, where necessary, for carrying out the campaign. Wherever there are no units of the Kisan Sabha, the officers should take initiative and seek co-operation from the ordinary peasants in the villages by taking their representatives in the committees.

(b) convene immediately in every village, in co-operation with the above Committee, a General Conference of all the peasants, for reviewing the local land position, and seeing which land is lying

fallow, how it can be brought under cultivation, and which are the technical improvements it needs.

(c) distribute in consultation with this Joint Committee, all fallow lands to poor and landless peasants, rent-free and revenue-free.

(d) make available to the peasants taking part in the drive all their necessities of life including manure and seeds at prices below control rates.

(e) provide the peasants taking part in the drive the necessary long-term Takavi loans for effecting the necessary improvements in land, digging of wells, etc., judging each case on its merit, in consultation with the Joint Committee.

(f) provide the necessary incentives to the tenants by securing to them a reduction in rent and declaring a moratorium on all debt payments.

(g) check up periodically upon the results of the campaign; it is only through such Joint Committees and periodical check-ups that we can assure a proper utilisation of our funds and check corruption.

Only by launching our "Grow More Food Campaign" on these lines, can we hope to increase our food production and make our country self-sufficient within a short period.

VII. Partition and Food

Partition of the country into the Indian Union and Pakistan has created entirely new problems in relation to our food situation. So far, the wheat and rice surpluses of the Punjab and Sind were technically supposed to be freely available to the country as a whole. But now it has assumed entirely new forms and requires negotiations and settlement between the two States.

Separation has the following two repercussions on India's food position :

(i) It has accentuated our deficit considerably. According to the calculations made by the Food Department of India, Pakistan will be normally surplus in food grains to the extent of one million tons every year. That means besides our normal deficit, this amount will also not be freely available to us.

(ii) It also accentuates our foreign exchange problem. Earlier, India used to earn most of her foreign exchange by exporting raw materials like Jute and Cotton. We even imported sometimes our

food grains requirements from abroad in exchange for Jute and Cotton, as in the case of Argentina last year.

But now none of these raw materials will be at our free disposal either directly to earn foreign exchange by exporting them or to get food grains in exchange for them from abroad.

This makes it imperative for us to negotiate immediately with Pakistan an agreement for the next 4-5 years by which her food surplus will be available to us in exchange for our cloth.

At present there is supposed to exist a standstill agreement till the end of March, 1948. But standstill agreement merely means maintenance of *status quo* and hence leaves a lot of loopholes. By shelving the issue of some definite commitments on either side, it leaves room for a lot of evasion.

Governed by landlord-ridden ministries, the provinces of the Punjab and Sind have, practically all through the war years, hidden their surpluses and not exported as much as they really could. Even Sir J. P. Srivastava, the then Food Member to the Government of India, had to declare on May 3, 1946, that "the Government of India are not satisfied with the declarations of the Punjab and Sind Governments that they have no surplus." Last year too, Punjab did not export any wheat despite the fact that including the net carry over of 3.38 lakh tons from the 1944-45 crop, the total surplus came to 5.03 lakh tons.

A standstill agreement merely leaves the *status quo*, i.e., leaves the surplus zones to declare their surplus as they please and not according to their total yield and requirements.

Hence, it is essential to immediately negotiate with the Pakistan Government and replace the present standstill agreement by a bi-lateral agreement (for the next 5 years) between India and Pakistan, fixing up the terms and quotas of supplies of food grains from Pakistan to India and of cloth and other necessaries (which Pakistan needs) from India to Pakistan.

The quota of food grains supplies can be fixed on the basis of a normal surplus in Pakistan and that of cloth from India on the basis of the existing per head allocations to the regions now comprising the Pakistan.

This year the position of food surplus in Pakistan is made much more difficult by mass scale rioting in the Punjab and the consequent mass migration of population. This has not only left

the land untilled in many parts of the Punjab, particularly in the Canal Colonies, it has also increased the strain on the supplies by a mass influx of refugees. Already, indications are available that Pakistan may not be in a position to export any grain to India till April, 1948.

An official communique issued by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Health Government of Pakistan, on the 7th of September last, revealed that this year Pakistan itself is faced with a very difficult food position. An earlier message from Karachi (*Free Press Journal and Hindu*, August 27, 1947) had revealed that because of the failure of crops in East Bengal and Western Pakistan, it is "most likely that Pakistan after having met with its internal demands will have no surplus food grains to export to the Indian Union or any other country."

It is only a long-term agreement assuring Pakistan her supplies of cloth etc. which can inspire confidence and instil maximum efforts at procurement for exports in Pakistan and thus bring within our reach whatever surplus there may be even this year.

VIII. Summary of Recommendations

ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM :

(1) The Central Government should immediately issue a directive to all the Ministries for passing the bills for the outright abolition of landlordism within the next six months.

(2) Pending this legislation for the abolition of landlordism, the Government should, as an immediate measure, freeze all rent payments to the landlord, order that all rents accruing to the big landlords shall, henceforth be paid to the Government, and declare a moratorium on all debt payments of the peasants.

CONTROLS :

(3) Purge from the Government machinery and responsible administrative offices all those guilty of mal-practices and corruption.

(4) Give exemplary punishment to those guilty of violating control orders and indulging in blackmarket or taking and giving bribes.

(5) Establish stricter control on prices, stocks and distribution of food grains.

FOREIGN IMPORTS :

(6) The Indian delegations to the World Food Conferences must be instructed to demand an open and full discussion on the questions of world food supplies, allocations and prices, etc.

(7) The Government of India must immediately negotiate bilateral agreements with Burma, Indonesia, Indo-China and Australia for getting our food requirements in exchange for supplies of Indian cloth, implements, etc., which form the major need of these countries in their tasks of rehabilitation.

PROCUREMENT AND RATIONING

(a) *Within the next two months :*

(8) To avert the immediate crisis and collapse of rationing, during the next two months, launch a powerful anti-hoarding drive with the support of people. Form All-Parties' Volunteer Corps and People's Committee in all districts, cities and villages, and give them powers for seizing hoards.

(b) *Plans for the next crop :*

(9) Revise the procurement plans for the new crop with a view to get control over the entire marketable surplus.

(10) Pending the provincial legislations for the abolition of landlordism, the Government should declare a moratorium on all debt payments and order that henceforth, all rents accruing to the big landlords shall be paid to the Government and not the landlords.

(11) Abolish the present grade levies and replace them by compulsory levies aimed at getting from the middle peasant and the big landlord their entire surplus of grain (surplus over the actual annual needs of a family).

(12) Establish complete state monopoly of purchase directly from the cultivator.

(13) Set up a Government purchasing agency in every zone and guarantee all the cultivators, through this agency itself, the following three things :

(a) A reasonable minimum price for his produce by eliminating the present profit of the middleman and giving its benefit to the cultivator;

(b) Regular supplies of his necessaries of life, like cloth, oil, salt, sugar, matches, iron implements, seed, manure, etc., at

control prices and at prices even lower than the control prices to those who sell their grain to the Government;

(c) Regular supplies of grain all through the year for the needs of the small peasant and the landless labourers.

(c) *Within the next one Year :*

(14) Government should aim at extending rationing to all urban and rural areas within the next one year, that is, before the Kharif crop in 1948.

(d) *Seek Popular Co-operation :*

(15) Government should seek popular co-operation from All-Parties including the All-India Kisan Sabha, for carrying out effectively the tasks of procurement and distribution.

GROW MORE FOOD CAMPAIGN

(16) Appoint immediately Grow More Food Officers in all the districts.

(17) Set up Joint Grow More Food Committees in every village, comprising an equal number of Government officials and representatives of the All-India Kisan Sabha, and even landlords, where necessary.

(18) Convene immediately in every village, general conferences of the peasants for reviewing the local land position and seeing which land is lying fallow and how it can be brought under cultivation.

(19) Distribute rent and revenue-free, in consultation with the Joint Grow More Food Committees, all fallow land to the poor and landless peasants.

(20) Make available to the peasants taking part in the drive all their necessities of life including manure and seeds at prices below control rates.

(21) Provide the peasants taking part in the drive with the necessary long-term Takavi loans for effecting the necessary improvements in land, judging each case on its merit, in consultation with the Joint Committee.

(22) Provide the necessary incentives to the tenants by securing to them a reduction in rent payments and declaring a moratorium on debt payments.

(23) Check up periodically upon the results of the campaign.

PARTITION AND FOOD

(24) Negotiate and replace immediately the present standstill agreement by a five-year agreement between India and Pakistan, fixing up quotas of food supplies to India in exchange for cloth supplies to Pakistan from India.

PERIOD	AREA of India (according to profes- sional survey)				Cultivable waste other than fallow land				Net area sown			
	PROVINCES		ALL-INDIA		PROVINCES		ALL-INDIA		PROVINCES		ALL-INDIA	
	Total (000 acres)	Percentage to total area.	Total (000 acres)	Percentage to total area.	Total (000 acres)	Percentage to total area.	Total (000 acres)	Percentage to total area.	Total (000 acres)	Percentage to total area.	Total (000 acres)	Percentage to total area.
Average of 1932-33 to 1938-39	512,076	658,909	93,648	18.2	112,123	17.0	211,312	41.2	280,708	42.6		
Average of 1939-40 to 1942-43	512,846	667,063	95,939	18.5	116,150	17.0	213,311	42.5	283,802	42.5		

(NOTE : For purposes of comparison, we have been forced to rely upon percentage figures, rather than absolute figures of increase or decrease. As revealed by the above table, a comparison on the basis of absolute figures merely lands one into the absurd position when both the area under cultivation and the area under cultivable waste show an increase and that too, on account of an increase in the area of India !)

INDIA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ITS SOLUTION

The postwar crisis of capitalism is rapidly spreading its net over the industrial and colonial countries.

The United States of America, which increased its productive power by at least 50 per cent during the war, was the first to feel the effects of the approaching crisis. She is facing a crisis of overproduction—prospects of goods unsold, jobs of millions gone.

America, therefore, is making desperate attempts to capture world markets through loans, dictatorial trade terms and building a solid iron wall of dependent countries.

Taking advantage of the needs of Europe and of the fear of the European reaction of revolutionary outbursts, it is prepared to finance reactionary governments to stabilise them, to lend them food materials etc., only on one condition—that they become satellites of the U.S.A. and beat down the forces of revolution and socialism in Europe.

It is following the same tactics in China where it is supporting Chiang Kai-shek's Government and aiding it in the civil war against the forces of Chinese democracy led by the Communist Party of China.

America's rival, Great Britain—now left far behind in the struggle for markets—has to live on American loan and is yet desperately attempting to keep up its competitive power by forcing down the standard of living of the British workers and stepping up exports.

The crisis in Britain is not yet one of overproduction but one of maintaining the imperialist position of Britain, of maintaining the markets for imperialist profits at the expense of the British workers and the common people.

The war-boom is now over. The days when the capitalists could make unlimited profits in the name of serving the war are gone. People cannot go on paying the huge profits all the time. The capitalists of the imperialist countries are now hurriedly seeking

new markets—in colonies, in backward countries, in devastated countries of Europe—for their products.

America which has “over-produced” leads the way. She must find huge markets or crash. Britain, where production is still below the prewar level, must join in the race now or permanently lose her markets.

The first casualty in this race for markets, this attempt to get over the crisis, is the workers’ and people’s standard of living. In America in recent months, real wages have been forced down and working-class strikes banned. In England, the call for austerity living is given and reduction in the standard of living being brought about.

But by these methods, neither America nor Britain would solve her crisis. As E. Varga, the Soviet economist, has shown America’s surplus production is likely to be a minimum of 30 billion dollars while through the Marshall Plan, which is her device to stave off the crisis, she expects goods worth only about five to six billion dollars a year to be drained off. (*New Times*, Moscow, September 24, 1947).

A crash is, therefore, inevitable.

India, which is a part of the capitalist world and where all the laws of capitalist society—as they are applicable to a colony—operate, cannot therefore escape this crisis. She is already in the throes of a serious economic crisis and will be violently affected if a big upheaval takes place in America, unless she extricates herself from the capitalist connection and strikes a new path.

NATURE OF THE CRISIS

One thing must be clear. The existence of a deep-rooted economic crisis is not peculiar to India. It is common to all the capitalist countries and colonies—to all the countries in the world except the Socialist Soviet Union and the Eastern European democracies. It is part of the post-war crisis of capitalism itself.

At the same time, India’s crisis has its own special features. India’s economic structure is colonial. The imperialist rulers had obstructed industrial growth all these years; they had kept feudal relations in agriculture alive, thus ruining agriculture as well as the peasant and narrowing the market for Indian goods. The lopsided character of Indian industrialisation itself could be seen

from the fact that the railway transport and textiles together engage the largest number of workers. Coal, iron and steel etc. lag far behind. And there is hardly any machine-manufacturing industry in India.

In fact, the industrial and agrarian structures have been purposely kept such in order to retain India's dependence on the British. Famine, chronic poverty, thousands going without food and manufactured articles, lakhs suffering from shortages of every kind of goods—these have been the constant features of this economy which forced India in feudal bondage and allowed her to have only a superficial structure of industries.

This condition of chronic under-feeding etc. has been ten times more intensified by the ravages of wartime finance. Imperialism looted the Indian people systematically through its policy of inflation which depressed real wages, defrauded the people of the goods they wanted and executed a forcible transfer of goods from Indian to British hands. The measure of this loot is seen in the accumulation of sterling balances which today stand at the colossal figure of Rs. 1,500 crores. It was the common man who came out the worst under this—the peasant, the worker and the middle-class employee who suffered through inadequate rations, black-market, shortage and famine of all necessities. The peasants died in lakhs and lost their implements, cattle and everything including land.

The common people suffered. The Big business thrived as never before. Profits rose to unprecedented heights. In a couple of years alone the capitalists made profits exceeding their total capital investments.

The Present crisis is the direct outcome of this long process of defrauding the people.

There is an overall deficit of 45 lakh tons of food this Year and we have spent Rs. 127 crores on imports during the Years 1944-47.

While the total industrial employment continues almost at wartime levels, the industrial production shows a decline, especially on the wartime peak reached in 1943-44. The figures given obviously exaggerate the decline. In many cases the real figures are not shown, so that the goods can be sent into the blackmarket. This is especially the case in the textiles where the production figures are considered by critiques to be a gross under-estimate, as they do not correspond to the figures of cotton consumption.

Nonetheless, the officially published figures reveal the following tale:

TOTAL INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION
(in thousand tons)

Commodity	1939-40	1943-4	1944-5	1945-6	1946-7
Jute manufactures including twist and yarn	1,277	1,068	1,097	1,114	1,042*
Pig iron	1,838	1,687	1,303	1,489	1,364*
Steel ingots	1,070	1,366	1,266	1,313	1,199*
Finished steel	804	978	923	949	—
Cement	1,733	2,112	2,044	2,151	2,016*
Cotton piece goods (yds. million)	4,012	4,871	4,727	4,676	3,863*
Sugar	1,268	1,224	960	958	921
Coal	29,388	25,511	26,117	26,489*	26,218*
Iron ore	3,166	2,655	2,363	—	—

(Source : *statistics Relating to India's War Effort*, Government of India, 1947.)

*Source : *Times of India*, August 30, 1947.

In a country which is chronically underfed and the vast majority of whose population perennially suffer from famine of every kind of goods—a population which never got enough cloth to satisfy its needs nor a proper and decent shelter to house itself—this decline is certainly alarming.

It means enormous suffering to the people who are already living on famine rations and ridiculously low wages of *eight annas* to *twelve annas* and in some cases even *six annas* per day; in large tracts, even the ration is not always assured and people have to simply undergo privations.

The over-crowding in cities has reached dangerous proportions, leading to a complete break-up of family life. There is an unlimited need for iron, steel and cement to build decent housing accommodation and yet the supply of these is falling.

The cloth quota of the people has been reduced from 18 yards per head to the absurd figure of 10 to 12 yards, which even by Indian standards is far below the requirements.

At this rate there will be no prospect of satisfying the people's needs in any reasonable period of time.

CAUSES OF THE PRODUCTION DECLINE

Why this decline? The capitalists and their spokesmen cannot plead the usual excuse in a crisis, that there is no demand in the market or that the market is slack. The truth is that in the markets there are long queues of waiting customers.

When the capitalist says that the market is slack—that the demand is slack—he does not mean that there is no buyer, that everybody's needs have already been met. He only means that there are no buyers who will buy his product at handsome prices leaving him a good margin of profit. His "no market" explanation hides his greed for profit.

The capitalist wants to advance the same explanation today but cannot do it, with prices continually rising and people extremely sensitive to profit greed.

Thus in the present crisis he explains the decline by putting the blame on the 8-hour day and on the strikes of the workers. He demands legal steps against strikes to crush the workers' resistance, and then slyly suggests that he would agree to increase production if prices were increased. By implication he admits that the production is held back because sufficient profits are not forthcoming.

Mr. J. R. D. Tata, the iron and steel magnate, in his speech at the annual meeting of the Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd., laid the blame at the door of the workers for the decline in production:

"It is unfortunate, therefore, that labour should indulge in practices which retard production and thereby injure themselves, the company and the industry.... What seems to be required is sympathetic yet firm action by Government in dealing with unlawful strikes in particular."

Mr. Tata now feels a hunted and persecuted man and says:

"A feeling is growing among employers today that the scales are weighted against them. Awards, such as the one on the Cawnpore Electric Supply Company's dispute, do not inspire any confidence."

And then Mr. Tata gives his final warning:

"If India is not to be overwhelmed in the near future by a crisis of the first magnitude, which will not only cause untold

miseries to its people but also setback for many years its capacity to undertake the large schemes of economic development on which depends its future prosperity. It is imperative that Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces take firm and immediate steps to arrest the present disastrous trends and re-establish the country's agricultural and industrial productivity."

Mr. Tata finally wound up his warning by pleading for higher prices so that his profits are safeguarded.

"If with the very large increase in our costs and substantial reduction in production, a price increase is not granted, it would result in a serious reduction of our profits which would consequently reduce the dividends and make it impossible for labour to earn profit-sharing bonus on a scale which would satisfy them."

Mr. Tata also quoted strike figures to show that strikes were increasing and said, "the present attitude of labour is such as to reduce the production of wealth and thereby to reduce the pool out of which to claim their share."

In Mr. Tata's speech are summed-up all the arguments of the Indian capitalists.

Another additional argument and a very favourite one is to make the 8-hour day responsible for the decline.

A glance at the above table will show how false these arguments are. The capitalists would have us believe that the decline in production started because of the 8-hour day and the recent strike-wave.

The table given above, on the contrary, shows that the decline in production started long before the 8-hour was brought into force or the recent strike-wave started. The 8-hour day became legal in August 1946.

The decline in production, and a continuous one at that, started from 1943-44.

The strike-wave reached its peak in the last and the present year. The decline set in from 1943, and in some cases from 1941-42.

Take, for instance, the cotton manufacture—one of the most vital commodities of consumption.

The cotton piecegoods reached the peak of production in 1943-44 when 4,871 million yards were produced. Then began a steady decline.

Why? The reason is simple. The year 1943-44 was the year of unchecked profits. Controls were for the first time introduced in that year but they were not effective. The capitalists had a free run to plunder and no need to conceal production or sabotage it. The steady decline since then, the coal shortage apart, is primarily due either to sabotage because profits could not be earned on the old level or concealment of figures for purposes of blackmarketing.

Take iron and steel. Control was first enforced in 1941-42. In that year pig-iron production was the highest, being 20,15,000 tons; pig-iron production never reached that level again. Steel ingots were 13,63,000 tons—a figure which was only once exceeded in 1943-44; finished steel was 9,92,000 tons—again the highest on record.

After control was established, i.e. some check was put on price and profits, the production began to go down. Evidently it was either sabotaged or concealed.

Cement also tells the same tale. Production when control was established in 1941-42 was 22,22,000 tons—the highest on record. After that it began to decline, though 1946 production was higher than that of pre-war by at least 20 per cent. It is, therefore, obvious that the tendency of a decline in production has been there in operation for the past four or five years and that it is mainly due to the capitalists' greed for higher profits and their fight against control.

How this greed caused a practical collapse of the coal industry in these years is clear from the output figures. The coal production dropped from 29,000 tons in 1939-40 to 25,000 tons in 1943-44, solely because the mine-owners wanted to give neither adequate wages to the workers, nor, adequate dearness allowance. Labour began to leave the coal mines and the Government of India stepped in to send women workers underground. But the balance could be restored to some extent only after some wage increases were given.

There should, therefore, be no doubt that the capitalist ownership of vital industry has meant in the past a decline in production, its sabotage and concealment.

At the same time it is equally clear that fall in the last two years might be precipitous because of the loss of working days through strikes, riots, Lock-outs and general political instability.

We must assess all these factors correctly.

First, some fall is and must be due to the fact that the most inefficient concerns which would make profits only under exceptional circumstances, are no longer able to make money. And since in the capitalist society "profits" and not "needs" is the guiding force, a capitalist is free to close down his concern and none can ask why. For instance, in Bombay at least a couple of mills recently closed their night shifts under the plea that they could not afford to use the mills; and neither Mr. Nanda, the Labour Minister, nor the Home Minister had anything to say about it.

Then there are other causes such as riots, unsettled conditions and Government's policy of curtailing the liberties of the trade unions, which weaken the struggle : against the riots.

But in this crisis, as in every economic crisis, the main and dominant question is that of the relation between the employers and the employees, between the capitalists and the workers.

The capitalists point out that the strikes are the cause of all falls in production. The public sanction gullibly accepts it, not inquiring into the real cause of strikes.

The strikes of industrial workers mean that the economic structure has started cracking, that the private owners of industry have overdone their exploitation and are now bringing down the economic structure crashing on their head. Losses through strikes constitute the biggest indictment of the capitalist ownership and is a warning to society that Production can no longer be carried on the basis of master and slave.

The strikes in India have uttered a grave warning to the people and the Government to take away the management from the greedy and selfish hands of the private magnates, at least in the key and vital industries.

The total number of workers affected and working days lost can be seen from the following :

Year.	No. of workers.	No. of working days lost.
1942	7,72,653	57,79,965
1943	5,25,088	23,42,287
1944	5,50,015	34,47,306
1945	7,47,530	40,54,499
1946	19,61,948	1,27,17,762
1947, (Jan. to April)*	5,52,398	52,34,707

[source: Indian Labour Gazette]

*Provisional.

It will be seen that the wave of discontent was steadily rising. The industrialists knew it fully well but would not forego their profits and were prepared to invite even an industrial breakdown for their selfish aims.

The working class was being weighed down by the rising cost of living.

In the beginning some relief could be secured through employment of other family members, the family now having more than one earning members. But soon this too became inadequate. Between 1945-46 things reached a new climax with the cost of living going up rapidly and wages lagging behind more than ever before.

The following figures will show to what dire straits the workers were reduced.

In Bombay the cost of living food index for march 1947 (on the basis of June 1934 eq.to 100) was 112 in August 1938; the average for 1945 was 271; the index for march 1947 stood at 323. The general index was 112 for August 1939; 235 was the average for 1945 and 269 was the Index for March 1947. Every rupee earned by the worker was hardly worth 6 to 7 annas.

In Madras the cost of living index (on the basis of June, 1936eq.to100) rose from 98 in August 1939 to 233 In 1945 and 267 in March 1947. The food index rose from 95 in August 1939 to 260 in 1945 and to 309 in March 1947. The worker's food now costs him three times as much, whereas his wage has not increased accordingly. He has to starve.

In Cawnpore (on the basis of August 1939 eq.to 100) the general index was 308 in 1945 and 341 in March 1947. Food index was 325 and 378 respectively. Food had become four times as costly and genera living more than three times.

In May 1947 (on the basis of August 1939 eq. to 100) the cost of living Index in Ahmedabad was 290, in Sholapur 323, Nagpur 311, Cawnpore 349, and Lahore 327.

Need we wonder then why strikes took place? No economic structure can run smoothly and produce enough for the people by starving the main army of producers. The Indian capitalists attempted this feat and pushed India into an acute economic crisis.

If there had been rapid adjustments of wages, with every rise in the cost of living, there would have been no loss due to strikes.

But the capitalists know that now that the war is over they cannot make fantastic profits and will have to agree to wage increases; that is why they continue to resist every move for wage-increases, bring about a fall in production and misrepresent the workers. The failure of the Government to intervene promptly before the strikes actually took place played into the hands of the employers.

Behind the existing fall and the steady decline in production lie deeper causes. They relate to the ownership of industry, the attitude which society must take to private enterprise and the role and place of the workers in the industry.

The same is true about our food crisis. No one would suggest that the food deficit is due to peasant strikes. Nor can anyone suggest that the fall in food Production is only recent.

The yield per acre of rice had declined by as much as 254 lbs., or 25 per cent, during the 25 years before the war (from 982 lbs. per acre during 1909-13 to 728 lbs. in 1938-39).*

According to the same author, the area under major foodgrains declined from 158.6 million acres in 1921-22 to 156. 5 million acres in 1941-42; while the yield declined from 54.3 million tons to 45.7 million tons.

No, it was not the peasant who was at fault but the social relations established in land; the relationship of the landlord and his serf-tenant, of the sahuakar and his debt-serf.

The Famine Inquiry Commission, in a questionnaire issued to provincial governments, noted:

“The organisation of agricultural production depends to a large extent on the system of rights and obligations of holders of land, that is, on the prevailing land systems. The view has often been expressed that there is a close connection between many features of the present land system and the efficiency of agricultural production, and that the latter cannot be materially improved unless changes are made in the former.”

The Bombay Government, in their reply to the above questionnaire, maintained:

“The tenant who cultivates land on lease, which is generally annual, is not sure how long the land would remain in his possession as the landlord has power to resume his lands at the end of the year

* W. Burns : *Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India, 1944.*

after giving three months' notice to the tenant. The tenant has thus no permanent interest in the land. In many cases lands are leased on crop-share rent and if the tenant sows improved seed or puts in good manure or extra labour to improve the land, half of the increased produce so obtained, goes to the landlord and thus the tenant does not get a proper return for his labour and enterprise."

The Bihar Government wrote:

"The view that unless changes are made in the prevalent system of land tenure it would not be possible to secure any significant increase in agricultural production, is in accord with facts."

Just as there is no way out of the food crisis without a complete overhauling of social relations and abolition of landlordism together with the backward conditions which follow from it, there is no way out of the industrial decline without abolition of industrial serfdom—a term which correctly describes the relation between capital and labour in India.

The fiasco of the imperialist policies during the last so many decades—policies which attempted to solve the agrarian crisis within the framework of landlordism—must warn all. A similar attempt in the industrial field is bound to fail.

Yet, the industrialists are precisely advocating the solution of the crisis within the framework of the old colonial relations of sweated labour.

Under the imperialist Government India's industrial structure was based on long hours of work, low wages, no legal protection to the standard of living and free use of State forces for purposes of guaranteeing profits to the employers by repressing the working-class resistance. It was a relationship of serf and master. Under it the country lost heavily in strikes, the worker lost all interest in production, and no hope could be held out of a prosperous future for India.

THE CAPITALIST WAY-OUT

The way-out of the crisis suggested by the Indian capitalists is a return to the good old days of Imperialist rule. In the name of stopping the decline in production, they ask the National Government to re-impose the 9-hour working day and get itself discredited before the workers.

They demand of the National Government that it should act as the same old imperialist State and suppress all working-class resistance; that it should guarantee their profits by raising prices of commodities; that it should cry a halt to all further social advance—such as holidays with pay or wage increases—and help them to put in plans of intensification of labour; that it should remove all controls and allow them to plunder the people in the open market; that in the final analysis It should help them to solve the crisis at the expense of the working class and the common people.

Is this a real way-out of the crisis ?

The re-imposition of the 9-hour day would set in motion such an unprecedented wave of strikes which either would have to be suppressed in cold blood or the 9-hour day would have to be withdrawn.

Instead of enthusing the workers more and creating a stake for them in production, the measure will alienate the workers, create a tense industrial atmosphere and increase strikes all round. Only the saboteurs of national production can advise the Government to reinforce the 9-hour day.

To stop further wage advances and other measures of social amelioration, when the working class has hardly won anything except to a certain extent in the railways and a few textile centres, is to keep on the causes of economic strife and subject the economic structure to repeated shocks for the sake of a few capitalists.

Any such step will lead to a fall in production and not a rise, as the capitalists would have us believe.

If the schemes of intensification of labour are allowed they will lead to unemployment and misery. To permit increase in prices for the sake of capitalists' profits when lakhs are living on the brink of starvation, is to betray the people and the working class.

The owners' plan of attack on labour will cause further discontent and decline in production It will also lead to a still further rise in prices and an intensification in the misery of the consumer. The owners may have the satisfaction of showing that shops are stocked with goods, but vast sections of people will not be able to buy them because the prices will be beyond their reach.

Today, vast sections of our people have limited purchasing power, and any further increase in prices will still further limit their capacity to buy. Thus the employers' remedy, instead of making goods available to the people, actually makes it more difficult to secure them.

The plain fact is that the crisis cannot be solved with 'the employers continuing as the bosses and with "profits first" as the guiding slogan.

The Government has till now resisted the demands for lifting of controls and allowing a rise in prices, though recently there has been intense pressure on them for decontrol. The representatives of the vested interests inside the Cabinet—Shanmukham Chetty and Bhabha—have been at it all the time. It is rumoured that their policy forced two members of the Commodities Prices Board to resign. Their latest victory lies in the winning over of Mahatma Gandhi for de-control. The Mahatma is demanding immediate removal of food control which would mean endangering millions of lives.

The recommendations of the Food-Grains Committee have urged progressive de-rationing and de-control. The plan seems to be: give up to a large extent the governmental responsibility of feeding the people and confine rationing to a few select industrial towns so that the industrialists have not to pay a higher wage consequent upon increased prices; for the rest of the country, let free trade have free run. It is a policy which, if executed, will mean disaster.

Apart from inflicting starvation and famine on the people, it would lead to industrial strife in many centres. Secondly, it would force large sections of the people to spend all their income on purchasing their food requirements, thus leaving them without any other necessaries of life as before.

The Provincial Governments have lagged behind in handling the economic crisis. Too often they have swallowed the false capitalist cry of wages and prices spiral, when the fact is that wages are continuously lagging behind prices and, in some cases, real wages have gone down by 30 per cent.

The fact is that initially it is price movements that force the workers to demand higher wages. But every improvement in wages of the workers is followed by a further increase in prices because the capitalist does not accept this increase; he does not want his profit to go down; he, therefore, wants to raise the prices of his product. Effective price control will stop this imaginary self-moving spiral.

Because of this, the intervention of the Government has been too late—either after a prolonged strike or during the course

of a strike. They have been out to demonstrate to the capitalists that they are intervening only as a last resort, that they do not wish to intervene except when a grave emergency is created. But it is the Governments' duty to intervene immediately.

It is true that some of the wage awards have given the workers much relief. But in other cases, they have resorted to atrocious repression leading to prolonged strikes without any reason.

The policy of the Government which looks upon the employer as the custodian of the industry has intensified the crisis—both by prolonging strikes and by removing all chances of working-class intervention in production.

In the meanwhile, the fact that the Government has at best a negative policy, that it has no policy of going ahead and establishing new relations in industry, is being utilised by the employers to launch an offensive against the workers—an offensive to bar all ways to a radical democratisation of the economic structure and to keep intact, even to attract, British and other foreign capital for joint exploitation.

Emboldened by the policy of the Government and finding that though the Government is resisting de-control etc. it is still prepared to leave the industry in the hands of the employers who are thus placed in an excellent position to sabotage every Government plan, the employers have started a concentrated offensive. The employers do not want the Government to start any concern on its own. They want the Government to be their instrument.

Mr. Tata has expressed his disapproval of the Government project to start two steel corporations. He has warned :

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Instead of taking drastic steps against them, Sir Shanmukham Chetty has gone there to pacify them.

The mine-owners of Bihar, Indian and British, are uniting, it is reported, to offer resistance to the recommendations of the Conciliation Board; they are threatening to close down the mines if full implementation of the recommendations is insisted upon.

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And so Mr. Birla in his programme for State ownership reserves only public works like hydro-electricity and road-making and keeps out for private enterprise all the heavy and key industries.

All this is meant not only for immediate gains but also, in the interest of future expansion of their profits.

ANGLO-AMERICAN PLANS

Every one knows that India does not produce her own machines; that for machinery for industrial development we must

look abroad.

But the British who pretend to have obligingly withdrawn from India, are not prepared to supply us with our needs of machinery just for the sake of love.

To make us completely dependent on outside help, the British deliberately stopped our industrial growth. The result is that we are left with a rickety industrial structure whose machines constantly break down; our needs for the mere replacement of machinery, our existing worn-out plants, today run into crores of rupees.

But the British are not willing to lend us a helping hand unless the proper price is coming forth. Their slogan is: You may parade your political independence but you are not economically independent; if you are not prepared to be a part of the British Commonwealth—formally and internally—then go and search for supplies of your capital goods somewhere else; if you are at all interested in your sterling balances, and expect some repayment, then behave yourselves; in any case, we have already blocked your sterling balances, and have given you only 65 million pounds for five months till the end of December—most of which you have to spend on food imports.

The colonial backwardness of India is exploited both by Britain and America to strike anti-national deals, and the Indian capitalists are eager to do their bidding.

America, out for world domination, would agree to help India only if she can be made economically subservient to her, playing the second fiddle to her reactionary international designs.

The question of India's economic crisis, the question of planned industrialisation and prosperity is not a simple question. It can be only attained by fighting the machinations of American and British imperialism and of the industrial Mir Jaffars—the Indian capitalists.

What do the foreign capitalists want? They declare that they are prepared to help us build a new industrialised India, but in reality they want to exploit our desire to build huge iron and steel industries, machine-manufacturing industries, automobile plants etc., for gaining a stranglehold over our economy.

What is the first condition? "Trust us," they say. Speaking to the Rotary Club on August 26, 1947, Dr. Henry Grady, American Ambassador to India, declared:

“Neither is there basis for the contention on the part of certain unfriendly circles that America is seeking control over other countries through extension of capital assistance to them.”

And the voice of Indian capitalists, through Mr. Bhabha, had already answered the call:

“The cobwebs of suspicion and distrust die hard and we still continue to discuss in all solemnity the virtues and defects of foreign capital. There is every danger of this in the context of the present, since our economic progress will very much be retarded or hindered by our unnecessarily keeping the ghost of foreign exploitation alive.”

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Dr. Grady, in the speech quoted above, further said:

“You can, of course, develop your country without capital from abroad, but it will take you very much longer to do so than if you tap the centre of capital surplus. Speaking for the capitalists of my own country, I can say that while under proper terms and conditions they are willing to lend money to this country and to other countries, they are not prepared to beg that their capital be received.”

And what are the “proper terms”?

Mr. Sakalchand Shah, Vice-President of the All-India Manufacturers’ Organisation, In his speech to its second quarter meeting in July 1947, said:

“There is a growing suspicion in the minds of many foreign industrialists and technicians that the National Government of India may nationalise the large-scale industries in the course of the next few years. The suspicion may be baseless but it is there and early steps should be taken by the Government to remove it.”

Now we know what “Proper terms” mean. The American imperialists demand of the French, of the British and of every people to stop nationalisation and keep the country on a competitive basis. They and the British are insisting on the same conditions and the Indian Birkis is willing.

The second condition seems to be joint responsibility, i.e. direct control over industry. The same Mr. Shah says:

“.....the partnership in profit and loss and the direct responsibility the joint venture entails on foreign industrialists and technicians will be far more beneficial.”

The third term is, obviously, cheap labour which guarantees profits. The foreign capitalists come here for super-profits and these can be had only by keeping wages low and holding back social legislation.

One can now understand why the Indian industrialists are so desperately attempting to reduce wage standards.

And lastly, both the British and the Americans will require that in return for help in capital goods India should join their economic bloc in the world and should enter into special trade agreements with them, thus tying her chariot to their needs. It is a serious matter that India is being a party to the 59 nations' conference at Havana whose main purpose is to institute a new kind of imperial preference, opening Indian doors both to America and Britain.

Only in exchange for this India will be allowed markets in the Middle East and South East Asia, and the Indian capitalists are willing to sign the bond.

Thus taking advantage of India's colonial conditions, Britain and America are laying down terms which will perpetuate her colonial status low wages, low industrialisation and backward conditions. And for a few industries controlled by them jointly with the foreigners, the Indian capitalists are prepared to accept the terms.

Thus the fight against economic crisis is a fight for India's economic freedom, a fight against low standards of living, a fight for removing shortages and setting India on the road to prosperity.

TRE REAL SOLUTION

That fight cannot be carried on by maintaining the existing relationship between capital and labour, by leaving the initiative for production in the hands of the capitalists, by accepting their absolute power over means of production.

That way lies misery, shortage and economic dependence.

The only other path that remains for the people, for the working class, is the people's way out of the crisis—a way which will remove the present impoverishment create a new relationship in production—a relationship based on the abolition of sweated labour and the emergence of labour with all the rights of citizenship.

1. The immediate necessary step is an unequivocal declaration from the Government that it stands for the realisation of the objectives and principles of the National Planning Committee: it should move forward to take immediate steps for the nationalisation of coal, iron and steel, and textile industries.

This will hearten the working class and the people and reassure them about Government's intention.

In the nationalised sections of industry, wage standard should be immediately raised and laws fixing minimum wages passed.

The existing profits from these concerns should be used partly for raising wages and partly to form the National Development Fund from which new concerns should be started.

2. The Government should immediately take over, as part-payment of our sterling balances, all the British concerns in India.

This will place in the hands of the Government a sum of at least Rs. 15-20 crores which these foreign capitalists get by way of profit. And this huge sum, or the product representing it—together with the money from the Development Fund—can become the means of securing foreign exchange to get capital goods from abroad.

3. Having tendered its bonafides to the workers, the Government should, with the help of the working class, draw production plans for each unit. The biggest asset in this connection would be a further saving of working days through minimisation of strikes following wage legislation.

4. The power of the capitalists to dismiss workers must be done away with; the task of maintaining discipline inside the factory should be placed in the hands of elected committees of workers together with the nominees of the Government.

5. The nationalised concerns will give no profits to individuals. Profits in the non-nationalised concerns will be strictly controlled. In the nationalised as well as the non-nationalised concerns there will be joint committees to supervise production and fight capitalist sabotage. These committees will deal with problems of costing also.

The State should immediately take over the entire reserves and depreciation funds of the private concerns and use them for the purpose of replacement.

But the capitalists know that now that the war is over they cannot make fantastic profits and will have to agree to wage increases; that is why they continue to resist every move for wage-increases, bring about a fall in production and misrepresent the workers. The failure of the Government to intervene promptly before the strikes actually took place played into the hands of the employers.

Behind the existing fall and the steady decline in production lie deeper causes. They relate to the ownership of industry, the attitude which society must take to private enterprise and the role and place of the workers in the industry.

The same is true about our food crisis. No one would suggest that the food deficit is due to peasant strikes. Nor can anyone suggest that the fall in food Production is only recent.

The yield per acre of rice had declined by as much as 254 lbs., or 25 per cent, during the 25 years before the war (from 982 lbs. per acre during 1909-13 to 728 lbs. in 1938-39).*

According to the same author, the area under major foodgrains declined from 158.6 million acres in 1921-22 to 156. 5 million acres in 1941-42; while the yield declined from 54.3 million tons to 45.7 million tons.

No, it was not the peasant who was at fault but the social relations established in land; the relationship of the landlord and his serf-tenant, of the sahukar and his debt-serf.

The Famine Inquiry Commission, in a questionnaire issued to provincial governments, noted:

“The organisation of agricultural production depends to a large extent on the system of rights and obligations of holders of land, that is, on the prevailing land systems. The view has often been expressed that there is a close connection between many features of the present land system and the efficiency of agricultural production, and that the latter cannot be materially improved unless changes are made in the former.”

The Bombay Government, in their reply to the above questionnaire, maintained:

“The tenant who cultivates land on lease, which is generally annual, is not sure how long the land would remain in his possession as the landlord has power to resume his lands at the end of the year

* W. Burns : *Technological Possibilities of Agricultural Development in India, 1944.*

after giving three months' notice to the tenant. The tenant has thus no permanent interest in the land. In many cases lands are leased on crop-share rent and if the tenant sows improved seed or puts in good manure or extra labour to improve the land, half of the increased produce so obtained, goes to the landlord and thus the tenant does not get a proper return for his labour and enterprise."

The Bihar Government wrote:

"The view that unless changes are made in the prevalent system of land tenure it would not be possible to secure any significant increase in agricultural production, is in accord with facts."

Just as there is no way out of the food crisis without a complete overhauling of social relations and abolition of landlordism together with the backward conditions which follow from it, there is no way out of the industrial decline without abolition of industrial serfdom—a term which correctly describes the relation between capital and labour in India.

The fiasco of the imperialist policies during the last so many decades—policies which attempted to solve the agrarian crisis within the framework of landlordism—must warn all. A similar attempt in the industrial field is bound to fail.

Yet, the industrialists are precisely advocating the solution of the crisis within the framework of the old colonial relations of sweated labour.

Under the imperialist Government India's industrial structure was based on long hours of work, low wages, no legal protection to the standard of living and free use of State forces for purposes of guaranteeing profits to the employers by repressing the working-class resistance. It was a relationship of serf and master. Under it the country lost heavily in strikes, the worker lost all interest in production, and no hope could be held out of a prosperous future for India.

THE CAPITALIST WAY-OUT

The way-out of the crisis suggested by the Indian capitalists is a return to the good old days of Imperialist rule. In the name of stopping the decline in production, they ask the National Government to re-impose the 9-hour working day and get itself discredited before the workers.

They demand of the National Government that it should act as the same old imperialist State and suppress all working-class resistance; that it should guarantee their profits by raising prices of commodities; that it should cry a halt to all further social advance—such as holidays with pay or wage increases—and help them to put in plans of intensification of labour; that it should remove all controls and allow them to plunder the people in the open market; that in the final analysis it should help them to solve the crisis at the expense of the working class and the common people.

Is this a real way-out of the crisis ?

The re-imposition of the 9-hour day would set in motion such an unprecedented wave of strikes which either would have to be suppressed in cold blood or the 9-hour day would have to be withdrawn.

Instead of enthusing the workers more and creating a stake for them in production, the measure will alienate the workers, create a tense industrial atmosphere and increase strikes all round. Only the saboteurs of national production can advise the Government to reinforce the 9-hour day.

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Today, vast sections of our people have limited purchasing power, and any further increase in prices will still further limit their capacity to buy. Thus the employers' remedy, instead of making goods available to the people, actually makes it more difficult to secure them.

The plain fact is that the crisis cannot be solved with "the employers continuing as the bosses and with "profits first" as the guiding slogan.

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2. The Government should immediately take over, as part-payment of our sterling balances, all the British concerns in India.

This will place in the hands of the Government a sum of at least Rs. 15-20 crores which these foreign capitalists get by way of profit. And this huge sum, or the product representing it—together with the money from the Development Fund—can become the means of securing foreign exchange to get capital goods from abroad.

3. Having tendered its bonafides to the workers, the Government should, with the help of the working class, draw production plans for each unit. The biggest asset in this connection would be a further saving of working days through minimisation of strikes following wage legislation.

4. The power of the capitalists to dismiss workers must be done away with; the task of maintaining discipline inside the factory should be placed in the hands of elected committees of workers together with the nominees of the Government.

5. The nationalised concerns will give no profits to individuals. Profits in the non-nationalised concerns will be strictly controlled. In the nationalised as well as the non-nationalised concerns there will be joint committees to supervise production and fight capitalist sabotage. These committees will deal with problems of costing also.

The State should immediately take over the entire reserves and depreciation funds of the private concerns and use them for the purpose of replacement.

6. In the course of the year, a full-fledged plan to develop India's coal and iron reserve and to build heavy industry shall be drafted.

7. Immediate legislation should be undertaken for an all-round increase in wages, and for certain social security measures; the objective of 40-hour week should be declared as the Government's aim.

With this, the workers will go enthusiastically for all increased production drives.

Production will begin to pick up the moment nationalised industries offer wage rises and minimum wages, and employers' powers of sabotage and dismissal of workers are removed. In the very first year, it will show a rise which will bring prices down from their present giddy heights.

On the basis of this rising Industrial power the state will have to negotiate for capital goods from other countries.

The British and American capitalists will attempt to sabotage our purchases of machinery. The state should declare that it is prepared to buy capital goods from abroad and take the help of foreign capital on the following conditions: First, it should be done only through the State no individual being permitted to do it; Secondly, only on terms which preserve India's economic integrity and which are strictly business terms; Thirdly, on the principle of no joint control.

The British and American imperialists will threaten to starve us of capital goods. The Indian people should not allow themselves to be intimidated; the British and the Americans are not the only sellers of capital goods. The Soviet Union and the Democracies of Eastern Europe stand out as a democratic camp and they are not likely to lay down any anti-national conditions. They would certainly like to develop economic relations with us and they can satisfy some of our immediate needs at least. The imperialists count on the fear of the Indian bourgeoisie for the Soviet Union and think that our people will never enter into economic relations with the land of Socialism.

With nationalisation and planned economy as our aim, there will be no better friends than the Soviet Union and the Eastern European democracies, and we must take full advantage of it.

India's economic crisis and its solution is a fight against the imperialist system. India cannot solve her economic crisis unless she breaks through the colonial prison by means of nationalisation of key and heavy Industries, abolition of landlordism and of the master-and-slave relation in the industrial field. She cannot achieve Prosperity unless she develops planned economy. And she will not get her economic freedom unless she resists the attempt of her own capitalists to lure her into the imperialist camp.

II

India's desperate plight in her attempt to return from wartime conditions to Peacetime production conceals a bitter struggle that is being waged by the Indian moneybags against the Indian people.

The struggle becomes all the more ferocious in the background of the impending world economic crisis. This crisis arises out of the desperate efforts of international capital to return to peacetime production with their profits and markets intact, i.e. at the expense of the people.

The Indian capitalists are today raising the slogan "produce or perish, export or perish", thus demonstrating that they have now become very good disciples of the International capitalists and know how to present their claims demagogically.

However, if their reading of the situation is accepted, India will soon find herself in the Anglo-American economic bloc, with the burdens of the economic crisis thrown on the shoulders of her people.

PROFITS DETERMINE PRODUCTION

The Indian capitalists and the Government spokesmen go on telling the people that there is a shortage of production, that enough is not being produced; they hold the workers responsible for this and sermonise to them on their duty to the nation.

It should be plain to everybody that the transfer of Power in New Delhi on August 15 has not changed the economic order and basis of society and that this society is subject to its own economic laws which are blindly allowed to determine how much should be Produced.

It is not that there is no plan of production; the blind operation of the law of the market, the anarchic production, is the only plan known to the capitalist society with its private control of production and absolute power of the capitalists over the means of production.

What determines production—the full or partial employment of the productive capacity of society? Everyone knows that it is the profit incentive of the capitalists. Production under capitalist conditions is related to profits and prices. Production shoots up in exceptional times like war when the employers can pile up huge profits and prices rise very high.

It goes down, notwithstanding the fact that there is the same machinery and equal number of people to work, the moment the exceptional conditions—conditions making for huge profits—change.

Production goes down in a number of ways. The employers may close down concerns or they may attempt to keep high profits by reducing wages and resisting wage advances, thus bringing about strikes and leading to under-employment of the productive apparatus.

To understand India's economic crisis, the much advertised fall in production and the shortage of all goods, one must understand the relation between profits, prices and production.

India's production reached peak figures in certain years of war because these years gave fantastic profits to the capitalists.

The Government demand for industrial products which assumed a ready market for the goods produced; the consequent shortage for civilian consumption and enormous rise in prices; the greater rise in the price of manufactured articles than in the price of industrial raw materials and a labour force which had not yet become desperate and had not yet started fighting against depression of its wages—these were the exceptional circumstances under which the capitalists could push production ahead.

These conditions showed that capitalist production, could rise and use all our productive powers only under conditions which give it freedom to rob the workers and the people.

First, let us study the war orders of the Government. The value of contracts placed in India by the Indian Stores Department was as follows:

Year	Value of purchases made (in thousands of rupees)
1939-40	28.71.48
1940-41	78,75.43
1941-42	1,95,98.58
1942-43	2,47.76.02
1943-44	1,33,40,63
1944-45	1,45,79,66

[Source : Report of the Bombay Millowners' Association.]

From orders worth Rs. 28 crores to orders worth 247 crores by 1942-43 such was the patronage enjoyed by the Indian industry, such was the huge stable market secured by it. The total value of these orders from September 1939 to March 31, 1945 was Rs. 8,30,41,80,588. (*Statistics Relating to War Effort, 1947—Government of India, Department of Economics.*)

The military took 54 million yards of cloth in 1939; 211 millions in 1940; 372 millions in 1941; 852 millions in 1942; 601 millions in 1943; 802 millions in 1944 and 575 millions in 1945. (*Ibid.* P. 28.)

Out of a total production of cement of 17,33,000 tons in 1939-40 the military took 8,74,000 tons in 1940, out of a total of 17,27,000 tons production it took 10,39,000 tons in 1941, it took 15,58,000 tons out of a total production of 22,22,000 tons in 1942, 19,70,000 tons out of 21,83,000 tons in 1943, 13,04,000 tons Out of 21,12,000 tons in 1944, 12,66,000 tons out of 20,44,000 tons and in 1945 the military purchased 1,77,000 tons out of a total production of 21,51,000 tons. (*Ibid.*)

Thus in 1940 it bought nearly 60 per cent of the total production while in 1942 it bought nearly 90 per cent.

This enormous and steady market ensured by Government orders had a double advantage. On the one hand, the market for goods was assured; on the other hand, Government orders, by creating scarcity for civilian consumption, sent prices rocketing high in spite of controls, and enabled the employers to garner huge profits. .

The relationship of extortionate prices and production is seen in the following table in respect to cloth :

Year	Index of prices	Production in millions of yards
1939-40	100	40,12
1941-42	259	44,93
1942-43	159	41,09
1943-44	442	48,71
1944-45	317	47,27
1945-46	278	46,76
1946-47	262	

The subsidy claimed by way of profits and the license to plunder the people, the utter parasitic character of capitalist production and wartime increase can be seen from the following:

Year	Economic Advisers index of Industrial Profits (Base 1928eq.to 100)
1939	154.6
1940	220.1
1941	489.1
1942	760.7

[Source:Recent Social and Economic Trends in India, 1946.]

It will be seen that though in 1942-43 cloth production declined somewhat due to political discontment and hartals, profits rose enormously—the index having risen by more than 50 per cent.

PROFITS DECLINE—PRODUCTION SABOTAGED

As soon as control is established in 1943, even a nominal control, and some attempt is made to control prices, cloth production begins to show a decline—in the beginning, of course, due to concealment of figures of production, so that large quantities can be disposed of in the blackmarket. Otherwise there is no reason why with an effective increase in spindleage and loomage the cloth production should go down. The figures for spindles and looms in cotton mills in India are as follows:

Year	Spindles	Looms
1939	10,059,370	202,464
1940	10,005,785	200,076
1941	9,961,178	198,574
1942	10,026,425	200,170

Year	Spindles	Looms
1943	10,130,568	200,890
1944	10,222,107	201,761
1945	10,238,131	202,388
1946	10,305,169	202,814

[Source: **Report of the Bombay Millowners' Association.**]

And taking into account the multiple-shift system, in 1945 and 1946, our ten million spindles worked as much as nearly 18½ million spindles, and our 2 lakh looms as much as 3½ lakh looms.

Thus with this 90 per cent increase in spindles and 75 per cent increase in loomage there need not be any shortage more than the prewar figure, notwithstanding the 8-hour day which came only in August (1946) and which, at the most, might have reduced production by 11 per cent.

Concealment apart, there is something else behind this decline. While one can safely say that the real figures of cloth production are being hidden, it is at the same time true that capitalist production has its ups and downs, dependent on price relationship and the profits they can make.

It is obvious that during the last couple of years the employers of textile mills growingly demonstrated their incapacity to utilise our production apparatus to the full because of selfish considerations.

They forced the workers to go on strike. The least efficient among them closed night shifts. The others declared lockouts, taking advantage of industrial trouble and kept their mills closed for months on end till they could once more be sure of their profits by altering the wage structure.

The result is that while people want cloth, while men and machines are there, only a handful of capitalists are finding it difficult to keep on production at a high level. Why is this so? Because the exceptional factors which gave huge profits to the capitalists are disappearing.

First, the huge war orders have disappeared. As against even the first seven months of the war (September 1939 to March 1940) when the Government Supply Department made purchases in India of goods worth Rs. 28 crores, the purchases made during the seven months in the postwar period (April-October 1946) were worth only Rs. 15 crores.

Secondly, the workers have secured the 8-hour day, thus limiting their exploitation. The 8-hour day was introduced with the old wages intact. This was a big blow to the capitalists' profits.

Thirdly, the labour is no longer quiescent but in a fighting mood and is not willing to make a present of unreasonable profits to the capitalists. It is fighting its way through strikes, arbitration courts and other means at its disposal and demanding a fair deal regarding wages, dearness allowance, holidays with pay and other improvements.

Fourthly, in the first year of the war, the capitalists had got additional profits from another source. The price of raw cotton rose slowly while that of cloth rose rapidly. But in the last two or three years, this gap is narrowing down and cutting off another source of capitalist profit. The following table will show how the gap is narrowing:

Year	Index of cloth prices	Index of raw cotton prices
1939-40	100	100
1941-42	159	143
1942-43	251	139
1943-44	442	228
1944-45	311	191
1945-46	275	184
1946-47	262	200

The prices of coal, which forms an important article in the manufacture of cloth, have also risen more rapidly than the prices of cloth, thus eliminating another indirect source of profit.

Year	Index of coal prices
1939	100
1941	103
1942	128
1943	174
1944	282
1945	304
1946	294

Simultaneously the Prices of articles of food rose heavily during the last two years, increasing the working-class cost of living and making it difficult to resist wage increases.

Between June 1946 and October 1947, the Economic Adviser's index for food articles rose from 245.5 to 281.8; that for cereals it increased from 284.08 to 295; the index for pulses increased from 296.38 to 562—through decontrol; and for other food articles it rose from 180.7 to 220, while that for textile products it increased from 307 in June to 321 in October 1947.

Thus, the direct and indirect avenues of making fabulous profits began to be less and less in number. Not that there are no profits. There are enough profits still, made legally as well as in the blackmarket. But the employers want the restoration of wartime price and profit relations to enthuse them to produce more.

Just now their enthusiasm is running down because they are dreaming in terms of very big profits.

The cry of shortage of production is raised by the employers in anticipation of the break-down of cloth production which must inevitably come if employers' profits continue to determine production. They consider that it is impossible for them to be satisfied with the present profits; they say that the present profits do not offer sufficient incentive to them to continue production; they demand a change in wage and price relations so that their profits can be increased; they demand the restoration of 9-hour day; they demand a rise in prices of cloth; they demand removal of cloth control so that they can force prices still higher and openly plunder the people. It is thus that they want to arrest their falling profits.

If this is not granted, then they expect a break-down of production, i.e. closure of mills for lack of sufficient profit incentive. In fact, it has already started. The Coimbatore millowners are on strike. They have locked out thousands of workers in protest against the Award of the Industrial Tribunal.

We are thus getting the strange phenomenon of mills being closed when cloth prices are still at a high level. We see the demagogic defenders of cloth production closing down mills and coming out in the open with their real demand—i.e., an increase in profits through an increase in prices and a reduction in wages.

The large number of strikes and lockouts that are being forced on the workers are a part of the desperate struggle of the capitalists to keep a higher rate of profit. The decline in production and the cry about shortage are warnings that in the midst of a shortage we

may be suddenly faced with a general break-down of production if the capitalist profits and their untrammelled ownership continue to dominate the industry.

That it is the same greed for profit which sabotages production is clear in the case of another vital industry—coal-mining.

The war led to an enormous increase in the price of coal whereas the production not only did not increase but actually decreased.

Year	Index of coal prices	Production of coal in 000 tons
1939	100	27,769
1941	103	29,464
1942	128	29,433
1943	174	25,511
1944	282	26,117
1945	304	28,972

The index shows that upto 1942 coal production increased under the stimulus of high prices. But in 1943 it suddenly dropped by nearly 12 per cent and continued to remain at a low level in 1944. In 1945 it picked up again and registered an increase of nearly 3 million tons over the 1944 figure, though it was still below the peak figures of 1941 and 1942.

The price of coal increased from Rs. 3-9 per ton in 1939 to Rs. 4-7 per ton in 1942 and to Rs. 11-7 per ton in 1943. While production increased till 1942, it fell precipitantly in 1943, even with the price of coal at the fantastic figure of Rs. 11-7 per ton.

The reason, obviously, was that the coal capitalists who had invested comparatively little capital in the mines, were out to make as much profit as possible in a short time. They did not want to invest in additional equipment and increase coal production lest it might depress coal prices. They were often found to be keeping back the rich seams and working up comparatively barren seams—since now the production in these seams could be disposed of at a profit.

Besides the ownership of these mines by landlords who had to be paid heavy royalty and “salami,” the fact that these landlords leased out the mines in small and uneconomic fragments made it impossible to introduce more effective methods and thereby push production ahead.

Finally, the greed of the capitalists drove the workers out of the mines. The Coal Committee's Report, explaining the fall in production in 1943, mentions as one of the causes the fact "that labour found more attraction and more profitable employment elsewhere, especially on military works" (p. 21). In plain language this means that colliery labour was driven to seek employment elsewhere by the low wage policy of the employers who refused to grant even adequate dearness allowance to the workers.

The Coal Committee (1946) quotes the following extract from the Coal-mining Committee of 1937:

"In short, to use a sporting metaphor, the coal trade in India has been rather like a race in which profit has always come in first with safety a poor second and sound methods an 'also ran' and national welfare a 'dead horse' entering perhaps but never likely to start." (p. 118.)

We find the same trend as regards iron.

The prices and production of pig iron were as follows:

Year	Price index	Pig iron (in 000 tons)
1939	100	18,38
1941	106	20,15
1942	106	18,04
1943	106	16,87
1944	117	13,03
1945	117	14,89
1946	117	

Under the stimulus of a rise in prices and heavy demand the production of pig iron rises from 15,76,000 tons in 1938-39 to 18,38,000 tons in 1939-40; to 19,59,000 tons in 1940-41; to 20,15,000 tons in 1941-42; and then declines in spite of some further rise in prices. By 1944 it declines by at least 20 per cent over the production of 1939-40.

The steady and controlled prices obviously do not give sufficient incentive to the capitalists to produce pig iron. This, of course, seems to be the main reason—through lack of machinery and replacement may also be among the other causes.

Though the profits in jute industry rose in 1942 to nearly four times the 1939 figure, jute production continued to show a decline.

Year	Index of prices	Production of jute manufacture
		Including that of yarn (in 000 tons)
1939	100	12,77
1941	176	12,79
1942	179	12,47
1943	238	10,68
1944	270	10,97
1945	251	11,14

After the high prices had served to keep production steady for some time, it rapidly declined by more than 13 per cent in 1943 and 1944 compared with the production in the peak year of 1941.

We now get a total picture of our economic crisis. Inflation prices, high profits and huge war orders forced production up for some time. But as soon as some of the exceptional factors lose their strength and profits tend to go down, there starts a decline in production which touches levels even below the pre-war production of 1939-40. Notwithstanding the fact that all the commodities mentioned above are badly required by the people, they are not being produced in sufficient quantity and full use is not made of our productive power because the capitalists are expecting a fall in the rate of profit. The employers frankly admit that there is very little incentive for them and are demanding higher prices and longer hours of work as the hush money to keep production going.

The ownership of the means of production by a handful of capitalists is creating a crisis of falling production at a time when production should increase many times to satisfy our needs.

HIGH PRICES AND NARROW MARKET PRECIPITATE CRISIS

The full meaning of this decline must be understood. The decline means that we are already in the throes of a serious economic crisis; that we had the war-boom for only a short limit and it did not last even to the end of the war period. So weak an economic structure is ours, that after a short spell of boom and increased production and that too when huge profits were guaranteed and huge government orders were secured by the industry—we got into a slough of depression, with prices still rising high and the production going down.

The paradox of declining production when there is shortage of goods must properly be understood.

The process of impoverishment of the masses has gone to such an extreme limit that today they are left with hardly any purchasing power to buy the goods produced at the existing high prices. With the cancellation of governmental orders, large quantities of goods: are now thrown on the regular market. In terms of the needs of the people, they are not enough. But in relation to the prices—legal and blackmarket charged for them, they are beyond the means of the people.

Ordinarily this would have expressed itself as over-production, with goods remaining unsold and workers losing their jobs. But the prevailing inflation and the depreciated purchasing power in the hands of many, creates an illusion that, it is all a question of shortage only; that people have got enough purchasing power to buy, only the goods are not there in sufficient quantity.

In reality the present shortage of goods is only the reverse side of the process of impoverishment through inflation. Inflation which robbed India of goods worth millions of rupees during the war years, was also an instrument of effecting a forcible reduction of the national dividend among India's various classes. It made the rich richer and the poor poorer. While it enriched enormously the capitalists and put large sums of money in the hands of certain other selected groups—top professionals, high Government officials, upper middle-class people—it decisively impoverished the bulk of the people, thus limiting their capacity to buy.

It is these latter people, the vast majority of Indians, who suffer from shortage because they cannot afford to buy the goods at the existing high rates. The former, the rich, create the illusion of prosperity, of infinite purchasing power, ready to buy everything and form the main customers of the blackmarkets as well as open markets.

Merchants and traders continue to buy large quantities for purposes of speculation and blackmarkets, hoping that they would be able to dispose them of in a short time. They want to get rid of the depreciating money and buy commodities which go on appreciating under conditions of inflation. The investments in commodity seem to be the safest since every day they go on

appreciating in value. The blackmarket prices are so lucrative that the merchant is assured of good profits even if he sells only a part of his goods. Everyone knows that there are always large stocks in the blackmarket which are not disposed of and yet the blackmarket thrives.

But if the existing price levels continue, a saturating point will soon be reached in the blackmarket : merchants and traders will find that the hope of disposing of the blackmarket stocks is not to be fulfilled and the brisk sales which go on today because everyone believes that there is shortage and infinite demand for goods, will stop. The truth will be out that there are not too little but too many goods at the existing level of prices.

Inflation and speculation arising from it conceal the real nature of the crisis of which a warning is already given by the declining production. How inflation conceals overproduction can be seen from the following:

“The lack of faith in the devaluated money, refusal to hoard it, the tendency to turn cash into goods as quick as possible because of the fear of its further devaluation, cannot but reduce the difficulties of sale of goods and weaken the possibility of an obvious overproduction. We emphasise that we have in view precisely the obvious overproduction.

“The overproduction in the concealed form in conditions of inflation is a phenomenon quite frequent.

During inflation very often large amounts of goods accumulate in villages which cannot be sold because the town has not got sufficiently real purchasing power and cannot give to the village corresponding equivalent in goods. Exceptional accumulation of various kinds of goods takes place at the time of inflation in towns also. The special character of the position consists in the fact that these stocks are not thrown into the market for realisation. The elements of overproduction in a concealed form are combined in conditions of inflation with a tremendous goods famine and at times with a low proportion of production.

“So long as inflation bears a limited character and develops slowly it can stimulate expansion of production. However, at a certain stage of its sharpening it inevitably leads to such a

dislocation of the process of circulation and of the whole reproduction as results in the fall of production.”

(Mendelson, “Postwar Contradictions of Capitalist Economy”, **World Economy and World Politics**, Moscow.)

Such is the real character of the crisis we are face to face. The capitalists have created for us a situation which threatens to cause a complete break-down of production in the midst of a goods famine and inflict severe hardship on the people—all because they own the industry and want to manage it for their private benefit.

The industrialists are conscious of this developing crisis leading industry into the worst disaster. Mr. Tata in his speech to the Tata Iron and Steel Company's annual meeting said :

“If India is not to be overwhelmed in the near future by a crisis of the first magnitude, which will not only cause untold miseries to its people but also set back for many years its capacity to undertake the large schemes of economic development on which depends her future prosperity, it is imperative that Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces take firm and immediate steps to arrest the present disastrous trends and re-establish the country's agricultural and industrial productivity.”

RAISING PROFITS AT PEOPLE'S EXPENSE

What is the way out suggested by the capitalists in the name of increasing production and relieving the shortage?

In the first place, the capitalists conceal the fact that the famine of goods experienced by the people has something to do with the impoverishment of the people, with the one-sided distribution of purchasing power through inflation which has altered the distribution of the national dividend in favour of the upper classes.

Secondly, they falsely accuse the workers of go-slow tactics and advance the exploded myth that the rise in wages leads to rise in prices and benefits nobody, not even the working class. This argument about the wages-prices spiral is an old argument and it was once advanced to show that trade unions are really doing no good to the workers since whatever rise they might secure in wages would be followed by a rise in prices, thus nullifying all gains.

Karl Marx himself had to reply and demolish this unscientific, incorrect and false reasoning in his book **Value, Price and Profit**.

It is palpably false to assert that wage rises are the cause of inflation in India, when everyone realises that it is only after prices have advanced for months that some tardy and totally insufficient increase is granted to the workers.

Thirdly, rise in wages will lead to rise in prices only the capitalist is allowed to increase the price of the article to maintain the old rate of profits. It is not wages alone that form part of the price; profits also form part of the price. The increase in price following a wage increase constitutes an attempt on the part of the capitalist to pass on the burden of wage increase on to society, safeguard his profits, and nullify the benefit of wage-increases. The remedy is to compel the capitalists to accept reduced profits and not pass on, the burden to the people.

Fourthly, no one can advance the argument that prices of food have soared so high in recent times because workers have got additional wages. The shortage of food together with the failure to procure all available surplus and the failure to organise efficient distribution, with the elimination of profiteering motive—all these factors have led to the recent sharp rise in prices of food articles and have forced the workers to demand more wages, to protect at least their physical capacity to work.

On the basis of this ideological propaganda about wages-prices spiral, the capitalists are suggesting ways and means to attack the workers and the people, and resolve the crisis in a way favourable to themselves but disastrous to national economy.

They demand a 9-hour day and the freezing and even reduction of wages; they demand that all proposals for nationalisation be dropped; they demand higher prices and immediate de-control—which is but another way for plundering the people by raising prices. They think that they can dispose of a substantial part of the production abroad and secure higher prices for the rest here—a plan to make high profits on a narrowing home market. They demand drastic measures against the workers, a forcible suppression of all struggles and a stop to all measures of social advance.

In their demand for decontrol, they have secured the sympathy and support of men like Mahatma Gandhi. The 'Big Business' offensive against the people is now in full swing on the question of decontrol.

It is obvious that plans for a prosperous India, for a reorganisation of national economy—reorganisation on principles other than the existing ones—have no place in capitalist calculations. On the other hand they are opposed to them and are openly demanding that all talk of nationalisation be dropped. They are desperately struggling to maintain the existing basis of economy—with all the economic power in their hands—at the expense of the people.

If India adopts the capitalist way out of the crisis, it will lead to still further poverty, loss of employment, more industrial disturbances, closure of factories and fall in production. It will be an economic disaster of an unprecedented magnitude.

To listen to the voice for decontrol at this stage is to aid the capitalists in robbing the people. What is sought to be achieved through decontrol? A forcible redistribution of commodities on the basis of incomes and purchasing power. This means that the richer and upper classes will carry off the cream, they being able to buy at prices dictated by the market. The poorer classes will go without the commodities—they will not get even the present quantum secured through price control and rationing. At the same time an appearance of plenty in the market will be created. There will always be enough goods to buy in the market, but not at prices which the large mass of people can afford.

All the measures suggested by the capitalists and their apologists only fleece the people, curtail people's purchasing power and will make it extremely difficult even to produce on the existing level. They will accentuate the crisis in all directions. They will lead to an industrial war, and peace will be established only after suppression of workers and the people.

India will have to pay this high price and stop all talk of reorganisation of her economy if she insists on maintaining the capitalist monopoly of production, continues to regard profits as sacrosanct and places them above the nation, and the well-being of the masses.

It is obvious that the capitalist way must be repudiated; and the way to tackle the present crisis should be sought on the lines suggested earlier.

INDIAN CAPITALISTS' DRIVE FOR EXPORTS

But if the domestic policy advocated by the capitalists is anti-national and dangerous to the interests of the people, their plans of foreign trade are equally and even more dangerous—threatening to turn India into an economic appendage of the imperialist powers.

The export policy announced by Mr. Bhabha, Commerce Minister of the Union Government, and the export aspirations of the Indian Big Business form an integral part of the capitalist plan to get out of the crisis at the people's expense and continue profit-hunting in the future.

First, the Indian capitalists, seeing the narrowing market in India, seek to find a new outlet for their products—both to stave off the crisis and enable them to gain huge profits on a shrinking market in India.

Also, coming out of the war with sufficient liquid capital in their hands and a State to back them up, the capitalists are devoting much more attention to exports, because with their ambitious plans of starting new industries in India they consider foreign markets essential for them. Many of them entertain the ambition of replacing Japan in Asia. They are therefore casting longing eyes on the Asiatic markets—especially those where Japanese trade thrived in the past.

Secondly, today there is plenty of money in the foreign markets because of the patent shortage of goods there. In many countries the prices fetched will be much higher than in India.

Thirdly, the necessity for developing these markets arises from the fact that the Indian Big Business madly requires foreign exchange to push ahead new concerns which it seeks to open in collaboration with foreign capitalists.

The British imperialists have refused till now to part with any capital goods in part payment of the sterling balances. They are forcing the Indian Big Business to earn their needs of foreign exchange through international trade. The Americans have also refused to enter into any commitments for the supply of capital goods to India.

The game is clear. If India has to secure her foreign exchange for import of capital goods, she must export. But the countries to which she has to export fall within the sphere of influence of America or Britain, and India will not be allowed to earn the

required foreign exchange through export to these markets unless she makes big concessions to England and America and their satellite—concessions which, as we shall see later, are of a staggering character. Mr. Bhabha, the Commerce Minister, outlined in plainest terms the Big Business export policy in his speech to the Advisory Council in New Delhi on November 9.

Mr. Bhabha said that there was general agreement with the view that if India were to continue to import essential food requirements and also the minimum requirements of capital goods, industrial raw materials and consumers' goods, she would require another Rs. 125-150 crores per annum of foreign exchange in the course of the next few years.

Referring to the proposals of new markets, Mr. Bhabha said :
“The most fruitful direction in which our export trade can expand would be in regard to the comparatively cheaper grade manufactured goods in which countries like Japan specialised before the war, and it would seem to me that, given the necessary organisation, we should not find it difficult to get a footing in the markets which have been vacated by Japan and to a lesser extent by Germany.”

It is obvious that the markets vacated by Japan and Germany are generally not available without a deal with the British and American imperialists.

Mr. Bhabha mentioned the following countries as deserving immediate attention of Indian industrialists: South East Asian group—consisting of Indonesia, Malaya, Siam, and other South-Asian countries; 2) Middle Eastern countries including Egypt; 3) South American countries, particularly Brazil and Argentina; 4) Eastern African territories; and 5) Central Asian countries through land routes.

Mr. Bhabha then declares that absolute priority cannot be given to domestic markets. Naturally, since the domestic market, notwithstanding the minimum needs of the people and the goods famine, is not able to buy at current prices, it cannot be given absolute priority. He says: “An appropriate balance between the rival claims of the domestic and foreign markets will have to be struck.” This means that commodities will be sold wherever it is more profitable to sell, i.e., they will be exported.

Then Mr. Bhabha talks about competitive prices—which excuse also will soon be advanced to reduce wages in the name of reducing the cost of production and selling commodities at competitive prices.

"Lastly, we must remember that it is neither the volume nor the quality of the goods that sells them in a foreign market. In order to sell, we must be able to part with our goods at a competitive price we must bring our export prices within the orbit of the competitive system."

And finally, the Commerce Minister talks about a foreign loan and reveals how the Big Business mind is working.

"The sterling releases to which the United Kingdom Government have recently agreed fall woefully short of our requirements and although prospects of an international loan of adequate dimensions cannot be altogether ruled out We must strive to solve our exchange difficulties out of our current earnings of foreign currency."

MORTGAGING INDIA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

In their hunt for profits, in their collaborative policy with foreign capitalists and their desperate effort to get out of the crisis by means of exports, the Big business is preparing to sell the economic freedom of the country.

The Trade Charter prepared at Geneva and now being discussed at Havana clearly shows what heavy price is being demanded by the American imperialists and their satellites, the British, before export markets are given to India and capital goods are allowed to her. In the name of preventing trade conflicts the Geneva Trade Charter demands the economic freedom, sovereignty and independence of all weaker nations and seeks to transform countries like India into economic serfs of Anglo-American imperialists with their economic life totally dependent on them. And through this the imperialists once more seek to control our political life and install political reactionaries in power—as they are doing in Greece.

The so-called Trade Charter demands free run for foreign capitalists; demands no discrimination against them; demands that they should be treated as equals of the nationals of the country; asks that they should be encouraged; severely restricts the right to

raise protective tariffs; and lays down that foreign concerns will not be taken over by the nationals without adequate compensation—the adequacy being such as must satisfy the affected foreign capitalists.

For instance, Article 12 lays down that provided that foreign investment is not used for interference in national affairs, Members recognise that “such development (economic development of countries) would be facilitated if Members were to afford, for international investments acceptable to them, reasonable opportunities upon equitable terms to the nationals of other Members and security for existing and future investments.”

“Accordingly they agree to provide, consistent with the limitations recognised as necessary in this Article, the widest Opportunities for investment and the greatest security for existing and future investments.” Can anything be more direct than this demand for widest opportunities and greatest security for foreign investments? It is a demand which once accepted must impose on the nation an obligation to welcome all foreign capital and defend its profiteering against its own people and the working class, lest it be charged with discrimination.

The same article provides that no member shall impose on foreign investments terms more onerous than those imposed on its own nationals, though the foreign investor may not owe any loyalty to the State. Can anything be more cynical and arrogant than this demand for equality from American imperialists who refuse to support India in her demand for racial equality in South Africa? This demand for equality is really a demand for economic interference in Indian affairs and a demand to restrict the right of our State to take action against foreign capitalists.

Article 2 lays down: “No member shall take unreasonable or unjustifiable action within its territories injurious to the rights or interests of nationalities of other members in the enterprise, skills, capital, arts, or technology which they have supplied.”

Article 17 directs members to carry on negotiations for substantial reduction of tariffs at the request of the organisation.

Article 18 lays down that products of member countries imported into another country shall be exempt from internal taxes in excess of those on products of national origin and that no taxes should be levied on foreign imports for the purpose of affording protection to substitutable products.

The entire charter follows these lines, limiting the freedom of the State, its economic independence at every step. It is this price which the Anglo-American imperialists are demanding for allowing US to export and for supplying us with a few capital goods. The export and capital goods constitute the bait to trap India into the Anglo-American bloc and deprive us of our economic freedom.

Mr. Bhabha, the spokesman of Big Business, seems prepared to barter away India's economic freedom for a mess of pottage. He is now on his way to Havana to discuss the charter and unless the Union Government takes a firm stand or the Indian people vigorously protest against being sold into economic slavery, the deal will be made and our economic life opened to penetration by foreign exploiters and all hopes of a plentiful and prosperous economy will have to be given up.

The domestic and foreign economic policies of the Indian Big Business are thus seen to be anti-national, anti-people and anti-freedom.

If we allow the capitalists to continue in their dominant economic position, if we allow them an absolute right of profit and rule over our economy, our economic structure will collapse, our impoverishment will increase and we will be sold to the Anglo-American imperialists for a song.

This development must be prevented by a vigorous drive against the crisis in the people's way: by nationalising key industries, by removing the capitalists from key positions in the economic life of our country; by defeating plans of decontrol and of reducing wages; by making an end of the master-slave relationship between capital and labour and by pushing back the profit-motive and making the needs of the people the main criterion of production. India must choose this path if she wants to avoid economic disaster, unemployment and serfdom to foreign capitalis.

SAVE PUNJAB SAVE INDIA

STATEMENT OF THE PUNJAB COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA ON THE SITUATION IN THE PUNJAB

AT THIS HOUR OF GRAVE CRISIS when every inch of our soil is soaked with blood, it is the duty of everyone of us to realise what is happening and why?

For over two months death and devastation have been sweeping over our Province. At least two lakhs of people, many of them women and children, have been killed, tens of thousands of our mothers and sisters in both parts of the Punjab have suffered indignities worse than death, 80 lakhs of people have been and are being uprooted from their homes. In the midst of this carnage cholera has raised its head and is ravaging district after district. On top of this all has come the most disastrous flood in our history causing untold damage to life, property and crop.

Never has any province faced a crisis of such intensity and magnitude. It is a crisis that affects every sphere of our life—our politics, our administration, our economy, our culture, our morale. It is a crisis that threatens to destroy our very existence.

In every district the most reactionary elements, often linked with notorious dacoits and goondas, dominate the political scene. Armed bands, with the direct aid of corrupt officials, terrorise peace-loving citizens, killing and looting as they like, not sparing even members of their own communities. Fields lie unploughed, factories are silent, communications are disrupted. Schools and colleges are closed, many of them have been destroyed and their furniture and equipment looted. All moral sense is disappearing, man has sunk to the level of wild beasts, the most inhuman atrocities against defenceless refugees are perpetrated in the heart of cities and in broad daylight.

There have also been innumerable examples of heroic defence of members of minority communities by men and women of the

(Resolution adopted by the Provincial Organising Committee at its meeting held on 1st to 4th Oct. '47)

majority community at the risk of their own lives. We greet those who have kept the fire of patriotism and humanity burning in the midst of worst communal blackout in our history. But these have been isolated cases, and the general picture remains one of barbaric bestiality and collapse of all moral sense on the part of the bulk of our people.

Wherever one goes, death and desolation stare one in the face. The Punjab, the granary of India, is fast becoming a land of howling wilderness. The spectre of famine looms on the horizon.

Our prestige has never sunk so low. The Punjab that produced Bhagat Singh, the Punjab the land of Lala Lajpat Rai, the Punjab that gave India Iqbal, has today become the shame of our people. The Punjab where the flag of Independence was first hoisted has disgraced that flag by soiling it with the blood of women and children. Punjab has become a pestering sore, poisoning the atmosphere of comity of the nations of the whole world.

NOT AN ELEMENTAL BURST-OUT

Who are the people who have brought about this catastrophe? What are they striving for? What are their aims?

Even today very few of our people realise the real significance of the Punjab tragedy. To the majority of them it appears like an elemental outburst, something like an earthquake over which no man has any control. A fit of madness on the part of the people enraged by the atrocities committed on their friends and relatives on the other side of the frontier brought about havoc—this is how the leaders and spokesmen of the Indian Union and Pakistan explain the disaster.

No explanation could be more inadequate. And such an inadequate explanation can only lull our sense of vigilance and blind us to the real danger our country is facing. It can only disarm us against the enemies who have worked and are still working with a definite plan and a definite motive.

Undoubtedly men were worked to a state of frenzy—but who did it and why? It could not be an accident that wild atrocity stories even about districts that were all quiet till then were being circulated both in Eastern and Western Punjab right in the beginning of August. It could not be an accident that the Boundary Force, led and officered by the British, instigated and even directly participated

in murder and loot in many places. It could not be an accident that while the most stringent Arms Act was in force, unlimited quantities of arms—handgrenades, rifles, tommy guhs, sten guns and even Bren guns—poured in, as though from nowhere, and found their way into the hands of killers and looters. It could not be an accident that almost everywhere the police and military defied the orders of their Governments and allowed massacres to take place before their very eyes.

The theory which ascribes the Punjab disaster to a spontaneous outburst of the people and seeks to throw the whole blame on the people themselves, cannot explain any of these things. Therefore it must be rejected.

What then is the explanation?

COUNTER-REVOLUTION'S OFFENSIVE

It must be clearly understood by everyone that what we are witnessing in the Punjab is not merely death and destruction. What we are witnessing is the unfolding and working out of the most diabolical plan against our people, against what freedom we have won after years of sacrifice and suffering. We are witnessing the offensive of counter-revolution. It is not an offensive against the minorities alone. They are merely the scape goat. It is an offensive against the entire people. It is an offensive against the congress and the national government.

The leader, inspirer and organiser of this offensive is British imperialism itself. It seeks to disrupt our economy so that India may continue to be dependent on Britain. It seeks to create a state of war tension between India and Pakistan so that both of them may look to it for help and neither dares go out of the so-called Commonwealth. It seeks to maintain its hold on the strategic northwest so that it may use that area for its future war. It seeks to damn our country in the eyes of the people of the world so that we become ineffective internationally and any future British proposal for intervention may find support from other nations and even from our own people.

How far the British plan has already succeeded can be seen from the fact that wherever one goes, one hears the sentiment "British rule was much better than this freedom."

Our leaders are themselves realising the danger. In his speech at Amritsar on August 31, Sardar Patel described the issue at stake when he said :

We have won our freedom to make our country great and strong and not destroy what little has been vouchsafed to us by our alien rulers. If we are not careful, we shall lose even our long-cherished freedom which we have secured after so much suffering and so many struggles.

But the British have not acted alone.

They have been aided by many of their trusted Indian officials who defied the National Government's instructions and helped the riots to spread. They have been aided by the Princes and big landlords, their faithful stooges—in the past as well as now—who supplied arms and jeeps and cars to the murder bands. They have been aided by the reactionary communalist parties linked with Princes, toady officials, black-marketeers and landlords who never took part in any part in any fight for national freedom but are now seeking to win a dominant political position for themselves and for their allies.

Our people, after two centuries of slavery under the British, wanted to end that slavery once and for all by taking our country outside the British Empire and getting rid of British and pro-British officials. They wanted to end landlordism and thereby ensure human existence for the tillers of the soil. They wanted industries to be run for the good of the people and not for the profit of the few. They wanted to end the strangle-grip of black-marketeers who mint money with people's blood. On the basis of all this they wanted to build a free and happy life for every son and daughter of our country.

It is this which the British and their agents wanted to prevent. They wanted to forestall the growth of a mass movement for the consolidation of the fruits of our independence and for the complete triumph of freedom and democracy. They wanted to create the basis for the destruction of the freedom movement led by the Congress and for paving the way to the risk to power of reactionary and communist forces that would act as the agency of the British and enable it to win back its dominant position in the life of our country.

The Punjab riots and the rising riot-tension in every Province are the outcome of this conspiracy and this plan. That is why they must be understood as the offensive of counter-revolution against our freedom movement.

This is true of both India and Pakistan.

The sensational revelation in the columns of the *Pakistan Times*, Lahore, of September 4, 1947 of a letter by the notorious

Jenkins of the Punjab Police force show the secret plans of the British to retain their hold on Pakistan and their alliance with prominent figures of the Muslim League. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan was right when he spoke of the conspiracy of the enemies of Pakistan. But the conspirators are leading men and officers in Pakistan itself. They are the ex-Unionist today landlords led by Feroz Khan Noon. They are the officials who had enacted the ghastly tragedies of Shakargarh and Sheikhpura. They are the men who are instigating war against India.

These men, agents of the British and enemies of freedom, have their counter-parts in the Indian Union also.

They preach retaliation, they preach war, they preach extermination of Muslims. In their private talks, however, they make no secret of their real aim, their political aim. They want to discredit the Congress and the National Government, destroy its mass influence and instal themselves in power to protect the abuse of the vested interest—Princes, landlords and big capitalists. Communal demagogy is their weapon—annihilation of the Congress their aim.

The danger that faces us today, therefore, is destruction of our proud freedom movement, destruction of all its achievements, destruction of our dream to build a great and powerful India. The danger that faces us today is re-establishment of British control over every sphere of our life through British agents—Princes, landlords and Hindu and Sikh communalists allied to them.

This offensive of counter-revolution which has already achieved a great measure of success, has to be fought and defeated. That is the task before all Congressmen, all Socialists and Communists, all patriots. It is a life and death struggle, a struggle on the outcome of which depends the fate of our nation. Past differences, past prejudices must not be allowed to stand in the way of unity when the existence of our National Government and our nation itself is at stake. National reconstruction will remain a dream if this is not done.

The armed bands that are being organised by the Hindu and Sikh communalists are not aiming to destroy the Muslims alone. Muslims have already left East Punjab or are on their way. Yet the feverish collection of arms and training in their use goes on openly.

The aim is to establish a terror regime, to overawe the Government, to silence and even physically wipe out the forces of progress—Communists, Socialists, Forward Blocists and above all Congressmen who dare to uphold the principles of the Congress and carry out the policy of the National Government.

All those who stand for freedom and democracy, all those who love the country, all those who have suffered and toiled for India's freedom must join hands at this hour of grave crisis and foil the conspiracy of those who are seeking to destroy our freedom forces and pull our country back.

OUR IMMEDIATE TASKS

The Immediate tasks that face us are the restoration of peace, repairing of the colossal damage of the riots and the rehabilitation of the uprooted refugees. These tasks cannot be carried out by the Government machinery alone. With the most destructive famine staring us in the face, it would require the united effort of us all—ministers, honest and loyal officials and the common men and their parties—to solve the crisis.

We Communists have always been and are even now totally opposed to the principles of exchange of population. We hold that the Indian and Pakistan Governments failed in their duties when instead of putting down lawless elements with a firm hand and thus making it possible for the minorities in Punjab to stay on, they accepted the vicious principle of mass evacuation of the minorities—an evacuation involving 80 lakhs of men, women and children. We believe that the Indian and Pakistan Governments should even now create the condition which would enable the refugees to go back to their ancestral homes from where they were hounded out by armed gangsters.

Nevertheless, as realists we realise that this cannot happen till confidence is restored and the Government are able to enforce law and order. The proposals we make today are calculated to bring about the situation which will isolate the reactionary communalists and make it possible for all who want to live there to do so without fear.

Today the battle against counter-revolution has to be fought on the burning and immediate issues facing our people.

I. RESTORATION OF PEACE

Those who thought that the expulsion of Muslims from East Punjab would mean peace have already been disillusioned. The riots have brought on top the most notorious dacoits and gangsters who aided by the police and under the protection of riot-mongering political leaders are spreading terror everywhere. Respect for law and order has vanished.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that without restoration of peace, no other pressing problem can be tackled. Traders and businessmen who are flying from rural areas and even migrating to other provinces cannot be persuaded to remain in the Punjab unless their security is guaranteed. Refugees from Western Punjab who are pouring in, in many cases having lost their all—their agricultural implements, their cattle, their harvested grain, even their warm clothing—cannot be fed and rehabilitated unless the articles looted from the Muslims are recovered. There will be no sense of security unless robber bands are suppressed and the officials in league with them sternly dealt with.

Restoration of peace involves the ensurance of safety in border villages which on both sides have become the scene of everyday incidents—murder, kidnapping and seizure of cattle and crop. Such incidents which create a sense of insecurity among the people and poison the relation between India and Pakistan should be ended. This can be done by erecting barbed wire fences along the frontier and manning them with trusted and communally least affected troops—if necessary from the Southern Provinces. Arming the villagers themselves will worsen the situation and a state of undeclared war between the two States will develop.

Restoration of peace also involves the banning and disbandment of the private armies and seizure of all unauthorised arms and equipment. It demands simultaneous organisation of a national militia with men who have taken no part in riots and looting, trusted and loyal Congressmen and all those who by their record have proved their willingness and their capacity to cooperate with the Government in the task of restoring peace and for reconstructing our economy.

If this is not done, if counter-revolutionary forces that are arming and organising are not suppressed and disarmed, and simultaneous^{ly} the forces of freedom and peace are not organised

and armed, all efforts of the Government will end in failure, its prestige, already very low, will be completely shattered, people terrorised by armed gangs will be forced to follow them.

The shameful attacks on refugees, massacres of thousands on the plea of retaliation that has become a feature of recent weeks could be easily stopped by enforcing rigid curfew order in all the main localities through which refugee trains, trucks and caravans pass and by making the officials of the locality personally and directly responsible for the safety of the refugees.

Even now this can be done and speedy steps must be taken to evacuate the refugees who are stranded on the roadside, with practically no food and very little clothing and are dying in thousands. On humanitarian grounds alone these helpless victims should be protected, properly fed and adequate medical arrangements should be made in each refugee camp. Every right thinking man must whole-heartedly endorse the appeal of Sardar Patel that our own volunteers should escort them to the Pakistan frontier. Every district should raise its volunteer corps for this purpose.

The speedy evacuation of the refugees will also be a big factor in restoring peaceful condition, in opening up the roads which are jammed today, in restoring railway traffic so that the urgent needs of the people can be met.

The National Militia, working in close cooperation with the Government has to help in unearthing the looted material and making them available for the refugees from Western Punjab. From our own experience in Jullundur villages we can assert that this is possible. Arrest, summary trial and punishment of the notorious goondas who, it is known to all, led the looters and campaign among the common people by all-Party village committees to help their brothers from Western Punjab will ensure the recovering of cattle, grain, warm clothing, agricultural implements—all of which will be sorely needed if rehabilitation is to become a reality.

All these measures are needed for restoring peace and make it possible for us to undertake the gigantic tasks facing us. But above all they demand for their success the purging of the administrative apparatus of the corrupt and unreliable officials and drastic punishment for those who are known to have taken part in looting and killing. Order cannot be restored, peace cannot be

achieved, the Government's authority cannot be asserted if exemplary punishment is not given to those officials who have defied the Government's orders.

The existing police, military, and administrative apparatus, created by the British to serve their own interest and suppress our people, cannot be simply taken over by the national Government and run for national upliftment. This is the single biggest reason of the Punjab riots.

Soaked in bureaucratic tradition, honeycombed by agents of the British and of anti-national parties, corrupt and rotten to its very core, this apparatus needs drastic purging and complete reorganisation in order to serve the needs of the people and of the new Government. Thousands of loyal, patriotic and educated Indians are available who can bring about this reorganisation. And it must be begun here and now.

II. EVACUATION

It is known to everyone that the problem of evacuation of the refugees is being tackled in a most corrupt and inefficient way. Officers entrusted with the job, including military officers, take huge bribes, making capital out of the misery of the refugees. Those who have money manage to bring their furniture, their goods, cramming every inch of the trucks while those who are poor wait indefinitely and in many cases actually starve.

To end this scandal, what is needed is that reliable Congressmen and other patriotic and honest persons should be attached to each convoy whose job it would be to see that full use is made of the trucks in removing the largest possible number in the shortest period and bribery and corruption are rooted out.

It is also necessary to requisition more trucks and lorries to ensure rapid evacuation of the refugees. Than only the present suspense can end, the vicious circle of retaliation and counter-retaliation broken and the problem of rehabilitation tackled in suitable atmosphere.

III. REFUGEE CAMPS

All refugee camps must be run by joint committees of patriotic parties and individuals. They must be prevented from becoming centres for communal pro-riot and anti-Government propaganda.

House to house collection must be made for warm clothing for needy refugees and trucks should go to rural areas to collect for them milk, vegetables and other necessities. The patriotic peasants will gladly help the refugees if proper appeal is made to them by their trusted leaders.

IV. REHABILITATION

The problem of rebuilding of our shattered economy and the settling of refugees from Western Punjab is one which brooks no delay. On its success depends the life of millions of our people. On its success depends our ability to avert the most catastrophic famine that any Province has even faced. On its success depends restoration of peace itself—for there is a grave danger that if they are not immediately settled, many of them may drift into a life of lawlessness and join the armed bands that are being formed to spread chaos and disorder.

The land, the property and the goods left by Muslim refugees who have gone to Western Punjab rightfully belong to them. Similarly lakhs of acres of land and property worth crores have been left in Western Punjab by refugees who are coming from there. How all these people on both sides will be compensated is a matter which can be decided by agreement between the respective governments. For the present, however, there is no way except for the Government to take over the entire property left behind and use it for rehabilitation.

The scheme which the Eastern Punjab Government has formulated, of leasing land to groups of cultivator refugees and granting no one more than 8-12 acres is basically sound. Lack of proper statistics has resulted in arbitrary allotment of districts but that at this stage could not be avoided. What is needed is constructive effort to make the scheme a success.

We hold that the following guide principles must be firmly laid down and carried into effect.

1. The present allotment should be on a purely temporary basis and revised within a year to ensure equitable distribution of all cultivated and cultivable land in Eastern Punjab among the tillers of the soil without making any distinction between the refugees and the old settlers. This is necessary in order to avert civil war in the rural area and clash and conflict between the new-comers and the old settlers many of whom own less than 8 acres.

2. No land should be allotted to non-cultivators or those cultivators who already own ten acres or more land in East Punjab.

3. Landlordism should be abolished within the shortest possible time. No man to hold more than 50 acres at the most. All holdings over and above that must be taken by the Government without any compensation.

4. Cooperative agriculture should be encouraged in all the holdings. The Government should start model farms including dairy and poultry farming and show concretely how collective agriculture helps in increasing the produce. These model farms should also conduct short courses of agricultural training for the peasant youths.

5. Cattle, agricultural implements and seeds should be supplied to the needy refugee settlers. Taccavi loans should be made available for them. No rent should be charged from them for the next winter and autumn crop. The same facilities should be given to those cultivators in Eastern Punjab whose crops have been destroyed by flood.

People in villages can be mobilised by patriotic parties and village committees to repair the damage done to huts and houses and make them habitable.

The problem of rebuilding the life in the cities is as urgent as any that we face today. Wheels of business and industry are completely at standstill. It is necessary that they should begin moving again as quickly as possible.

The worst bottle-neck is the transportation system. Railways are running short handed. Guards and drivers are badly needed. Trade Unions on the big Railways have already offered their help to man the trains. In addition however, it is necessary to organise short-term training schools which will quickly turn out reasonably good drivers and guards. This will help to bring in from other centres badly needed goods for our markets.

Then it is necessary to see that every engine and every machine in the province is put into operation. For this the Government, the industrialists and the Trade Unions must act in complete cooperation with each other. We suggest :

1. A conference should be called of chief industrialists and Trade Unionists for a discussion upon the plans for restarting their own shops and factories as well as shops and factories left behind by the Muslims. Government must lease out factories left behind by Muslims to those who can guarantee to start production at once.

Whenever assistance is needed, the Government must be prepared to assist the manufacturers on reasonable terms.

2. Arrangements must be made to supply the manufacturers with enough workers to restart production. Employment exchange workers can make weekly tour of refugee camps to enroll workers for various needs.

3. Training centres must be opened to overcome the shortage of labour.

4. All idle machines must be requisitioned and leased out to manufacturers. Stolen machinery must be recovered by Government with the cooperation of Popular Committees.

5. Rules about maximum hours of work and minimum pay must be made and strictly enforced. The working class of the Punjab and their Trade Unions will give every available worker to the Government to restore and increase production.

We propose that no minister and no Government official should be paid a salary exceeding a thousand rupees per month including allowances. Also that a hundred percent tax should be imposed on all incomes over and above Rs. 20,000 a year—whether from land, industry or profession. There is nothing revolutionary in these proposals. Every Government adopts similar measures during a period of national emergency. Such measures will not only procure money for the Government, they will also inspire the people to make the maximum effort and sacrifice.

Housing and house furnishing for the refugees in the cities is especially a difficult and pressing problem. All the houses left by the Muslims have been occupied and looted. It is necessary to supply the employees who have come from the West not only with houses but also many other requirements before they can begin even a reasonably normal life. It is necessary to see that only refugees get Muslim houses and that the total property is recovered for their use. This can come about only with the cooperation of the citizens of East Punjab.

We propose that Government set up Mohalla Committees of patriotic citizen of the Mohalla who would help to recover the looted property for the refugees. Refugees also should be induced to join these Committees. All those occupying Muslim houses must be made to take a solemn oath that they are genuine refugees. All other citizens must also solemnly declare that they have returned

all the stolen property. This work can only be done by citizens' Committees with real patriotic base.

Education has suffered very badly during the riots. It is necessary to restart schools and colleges in the quickest possible time. We hold that the following plan will help us move in the right direction.

A conference of the heads of all non-Muslim colleges whether in East or West Punjab should be called to consider the following proposals :

(a) Capacity of Ludhiana and Amritsar Medical institutions to be raised immediately.

(b) To increase the capacity of Khalsa college Amritsar so that students of Agricultural College could continue their studies there.

(c) Arrangements for studies in Law to be made with Delhi University.

(d) Arrangements to be made with either Rurki or Benaras University to take Punjab students of Technical Colleges.

(e) Capacity of all other colleges in East Punjab to increase to accommodate all students coming from West Punjab. A quota might be assigned to each college. Deserving students from West Punjab to be assisted by the Government through scholarships and loans. Hostel accommodation for students should be arranged by taking over suitable premises.

Problem of rehabilitating destitute or near destitute woman will be especially difficult one. Grave social and moral problems will be created if this is not done. A special drive should be made to settle the largest number of women in the following professions.

1. Mid-wifery (Village mid-wives were all Muslims).
2. Primary education in all schools wherever possible.
3. Cottage industries of the type of weaving, tailoring, etc.

We propose that training centres should be opened immediately for them so that they can earn their living in a respectable manner.

OUR APPEAL

In the proposals we are placing before our people there is not a single item which cannot be implemented, not a single item which can be opposed by anyone who wants to help the Government to

end the present chapter of chaos and misery and go forward to the realisation of that aim which we all cherish—the raising on the ruins of British rule the edifice of a happy, prosperous and great India.

Gigantic effort is called for on the part of all of us—the Government as well as our people. Popular Committees, consisting of honest and patriotic citizens have to be formed in every village, every town, every district, to coordinate official and non-official efforts for rehabilitation and restoration of peace. Total mobilisation is needed, the kind of mobilisation that a nation at war brings about. For we are at war—at war against the forces of darkness and reaction that are striving to destroy our National Government and our national freedom by intensifying chaos and misery, by plunging the whole country into disorder, by preparing the ground for British intervention.

Also what is needed is complete unity in the ranks of all freedom loving forces.

Too long we have remained disunited and therefore weak. Too long have we allowed our enemies to exploit our differences and our conflicts. Its price we are paying today—in the blood of innocents, in untold hardships and suffering for our people.

Staking his very life Gandhiji, the most venerable leader of our nation, tried to check the flames of Civil War from engulfing Bengal. And he succeeded. His effort brought about the most inspiring unity of the people of Bengal—fighting, militant unity against the riot-mongering criminals. That example should inspire and guide us.

We Communists seek no advantages. We make no conditions. We place our entire strength and resources at the disposal of Pandit Nehru and the National Government. We declare our readiness to cooperate with one and all who are prepared to defend the people and their interests.

We know that while all sections of our people have suffered, the Sikhs feel that their losses have been relatively the most colossal. They have lost tens of thousands killed, they have lost the canal colonies which they made prosperous by their toil. They have lost access to their most important places of worship.

For this calamity that has befallen the Sikh community, responsibility rests above all on their reactionary communalist leaders who played the most unprincipled game of power-politics,

seeking to exploit Hindu-Muslim differences and preaching the policy of revenge and retaliation when that policy ended in fiasco. Not content with the havoc they have brought about on their followers, some of them are today preaching hatred against Hindus, pouring venom on the Congress, on the Communists and on the National Government, advocating war against Pakistan. If they succeed, the worst sufferers will again be the Sikhs who are concentrated in the border districts—districts that will inevitably become the battle ground.

In the name of the countless heroes and martyrs their community has produced, we appeal to the Sikhs to break with those who are even today preaching these disastrous policies and to line up behind the National Government, in the task of restoring peace and reconstructing our economy.

We call upon the Hindus of Punjab and outside who helped the Congress to trounce the Mahasabhite reactionaries in the Assembly Elections to break with those who are trying to spread the conflagration to every province and reduce the whole country to shambles as they have already done in Punjab.

We appeal to the Muslims of the Indian Union to realise now whom the weakening of the Congress and the National Government helps. We appeal to them to learn from the Punjab tragedy and do everything in their power to strengthen the National Government and win its confidence as loyal citizens.

We appeal to the Muslims of Pakistan to realise their responsibility towards the 4 crores of Muslims in the Indian Union. Minimisation of the atrocities committed on Hindus and Sikhs, as is being done by their leaders and spokesmen, helps none, least of all the Pakistan Government itself. Drastic measures against the guilty officials and the murderers, and determined efforts to restore peace—these alone can curb the enemies of both India and Pakistan and weaken the reactionaries who are planning to destroy the people of both.

We appeal to the refugees to exercise restraint and not fall victim to the machinations of those who are trying to use their plight to continue and extend the disorder to every province. The people and the Government will do everything possible to mitigate their suffering but continuation of the disturbances will inevitably hamper the Government in the task of rehabilitation and the worst sufferers will be the refugees themselves.

Counter-revolution which has reared its head in the Punjab and is now trying to make capital of the Punjab tragedy to conquer and subjugate the whole country has to be smashed inside the Punjab itself. It will be a hard battle, it will be a long battle. But the common people who smashed at the plans of British imperialism and compelled it to transfer power, will win this battle as well.

THE PUNJAB RIOTS

P. C. JOSHI

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

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

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

The best of our leaders have rightly emphasised not to stress the past. What, however, needs to be known to everyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, whether citizen of the Indian Union or Pakistan, is that there is nothing to choose between the extent of brutalities, or type of atrocities, committed on either side. The numbers killed on both sides surpass all earlier records. The number of women raped and abducted runs into thousands. Neighbourliness, humanity, Chivalry all seem to have disappeared for the time being.

What set this fire alight? What poisoned our people?

1. *Imperialist bureaucracy.* Soon after the Attlee Declaration on February 20, the Punjab Ministry was sacked by Governor Jenkins who installed his autocratic Section 93 rule, with the result that when the transfer of power came on August 15 our Governments inherited a Province which was already aflame, where the administration had already broken down. Further, the round of riots in March, 1946, in Rawalpindi, Multan, Lahore, Amritsar and Jullundur were all in the districts headed by British Deputy Commissioners.

Next, on the eve of transfer of power from August 1 to 15 and then up to September 1, the centre of the latest riots was all the

12 districts on both sides of the border where the British-officered Boundary Force was supposed to keep the peace. Pandit Nehru has publicly hinted that the Boundary Force did not do its job : and every Punjabi, whether in the East or in the West, if questioned, can easily give innumerable examples from his own experience to show how frequently the army and the police took a part in looting, burning, raping and killing.

2. *Punjab's Princes, and vested interests.* Reactionary anti-national elements, nursed under British rule, have played their own part and bear heaviest responsibility inside each community. Punjabi Princes have supplied arms to bands of their own communities, some to the National Guards, some to the Akalis.

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

In the towns it is the war-rich blackmarketeers who have acted as financial patrons of their respective communal organisations. Factory owners, if Hindu, sacked all the Muslim workers and, if Muslim, sacked all the non-Muslim workers and this added fuel to the fire. The aim of the war-rich capitalist elements has been to drive out their trade and industrial rivals to be able to get monopoly control in their won hands.

3. *Political criminals.* Yet this could never have succeeded without reactionary communal leaders who made a bid for mass popularity in the chaotic conditions that have prevailed in the riot-torn Punjab during the last six months. In the Punjab the Congress has always been weak and has become weaker still because of the unnatural alliance with the Unionists first and later with the reactionary akalis.

In the countryside, the reactionary Akali leadership ruled through armed bands. Their political aim inside the Eastern Punjab is to get a dominant hold over the East Punjab Government. In their illegal leaflets issued in the name of the Government of Khalistan, and distributed *en masse*, they boastfully declare their aim of establishing Khalistan :

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

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

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

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

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

The National Government rightly and quickly banned the day.

As in the Indian Union, so in Pakistan, the danger from extreme communalists, all old pro-British elements, is equally great. In the beginning Mr. Jinnah and the mass of League leaders were trying to concentrate fire on the atrocities in the Eastern Punjab, completely ignoring the atrocities in the Western Punjab.

Soon the Pakistan leaders, too, were faced with complete administrative breakdown and the worst reactionaries began denouncing the League leadership itself for not taking strong measures against the atrocities in the Eastern Punjab. And they, too, began to make a bid for leading places inside Provincial and Central Governments. The realisation of this grave situation inside Pakistan itself led to the laudable sentiments in Mr. Jinnah's broadest speech on August 31.

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

The Punjab riots are being used by the imperialist agencies to discredit both India and Pakistan, to prove that we are incapable of ruling ourselves. Tory papers like Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* are screeching that the Punjab disturbances are due to the hasty withdrawal of British officers.

"Britain's 'precipitate renunciation' of authority in India on August 15 was a gamble with the lives of millions The horrors of the Punjab were the result of a hasty and clumsy policy."

A UPA message from Washington, dated August 27, states that the Anglo-American Joint Chiefs of Staff are watching to see that the Punjab riots do not become a menace to the security of South East Asia. In other words, they are waiting to see how far their own military juniors, who unfortunately yet remain the leaders and commanders of our armed forces, can get an excuse for intervening as a "neutral force" and getting a stronger grip over our defence. The same message says that their diplomatic interest goes to show the disturbances in India would mean that we shall not be able to play our leading role in Asia. This danger is real. Instead of India continuing to play an active role against imperialist intervention in Indonesia and Viet Nam, we are being threatened with imperialist intervention ourselves. Our international standing, our national honour abroad, is at stake.

Further, the peaceful relations between Pakistan and the Indian Union are at stake. Our Party was the first to warn the country that the British were planning to turn partitioned India into two mutually hostile States. Today the threat is become an actual menace.

The *National Standard* reports that the Pakistan Government is alleged to have supplied two rifles per person in their border areas. The *Free Press Journal* reports that the Eastern Punjab Governor has asked the National Government to send at least 10,000 arms to border villages in the Eastern Punjab to meet the daily raids. The urgent need of the hour is not for either Government to arm their border areas but for both Governments to disarm those that are armed, if we do not want two mutually hostile States to grow up.

The Punjab stirs heroic memories in every heart.

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

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

It is a very good sign that the two Government are co-operating closely. We must demand the closest co-operation. That way lies the shortest path toward restoring peace and establishing good relations. The primary efforts have got to come from the two Governments themselves, so far as restoring peace within the Punjab is concerned and also for mobilising the popular forces outside for any and every service required. It is here that the great weakness lies because the two Governments are still relying only on the bureaucracy which is rotten to the core and needs a drastic and immediate purge.

(2) Send New Troops. The Punjab riots, on both sides, need quelling with firm military action. The troops there are the very same the constituted the Boundary Force and who have already been infected with communal poison and have been guilty of the worst atrocities. It is necessary to disarm and withdraw all these troops and send the British officers back home.

The immediate necessity is for Pandit Nehru to appeal to the patriotism of the Indian army and send new troops under picked loyal patriotic Indian officers, of whom there are plenty, with orders to arrest and disarm all the armed gangs, and restore peace for the people who have been terrorised or misled. Further, both the Premiers must appeal for an army of patriotic volunteers for service in the disturbed areas together with the armed forces for aiding the task of rehabilitation, relief, raising mass morale and going all out to fight provocation and bring the minorities back to their own homes.

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

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

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

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

Inside the Indian Union it is the duty of us all who love India, stand for progress and are pledged to fight for democracy to rouse our people against dark communal elements, the RSS and the Akali leaders of the Punjab, and similar elements in every Province who would rouse the spirit of retaliation.

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

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

Communist Statement Of Policy

FOR THE STRUGGLE FOR FULL INDEPENDENCE AND PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

*RESOLUTION ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL
SITUATION PASSED BY THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF
INDIA AT IT'S MEETING IN BOMBAY FROM 7th
TO 16th DECEMBER, 1947.*

The world today is sharply divided into two camps—the Imperialist and the Democratic.

The Imperialist Camp is led by Anglo-American imperialism which is seeking world domination. It's basic aim is to strengthen imperialism all over the world, to prepare for a new imperialist war and to support reactionary pro-fascist regimes and movements in every country in their struggle against socialism and democracy.

The Democratic Camp consists and of the mighty Soviet Union, the new democratic States of Eastern Europe, the powerful Chinese liberation movement, the colonial and dependent countries like Indonesia and Viet Nam fighting for national liberation and democracy, and the democratic forces all over the world. The basic aim of the Democratic Camp is the struggle against the threat of a new war and imperialist domination, for national independence and for the growth and consolidation of democracy, and the liquidation of the remnants of fascism.

India's Place in World Politics

In terms of our own national ideals of independence, democracy and international cooperation for world peace, the proper place for

India, including Pakistan, is in the Democratic Camp which is not simply a bloc of States, but a combination of all democratic forces of the world, joining together in their common struggle against imperialist domination.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has defined India's position as of "neutrality", as belonging to neither of the two camps. This so-called neutrality is only leading to subservience to the Anglo-American Imperialist Camp. This subservience is already demonstrated by the fact that recently, on the most crucial issues, India's delegation in the UNO has voted against the democratic powers and taken the side of the imperialist bloc. They have voted for the setting up of the "Little Assembly"—an instrument devised by Anglo-American reactionaries to weaken the democratic and peace-loving forces inside the UNO. They have voted against the demand for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Korea.

The Government of India, together with the Government of Pakistan, is trailing behind the imperialist war-mongers on the most serious issues of key importance, though under popular pressure they have taken the side of the progressive forces on certain international and national issues. But the future of India's freedom and democracy is so vitally linked up with the Anti-Imperialist Camp that India, including Pakistan, must abandon the policy of so-called neutrality.

The Government of India has already signed trade agreements with a number of foreign States, mainly belonging to the Anglo-American bloc. According to these treaties Indian industries, producing goods contained in the import schedule, cannot be given any State assistance, i.e. these industries can neither be nationalised nor subsidised for expansion, either for lowering prices or for improving the workers' standard of life.

According to these treaties India will get an export market in order to pay for the imports; consequently, an export drive will be specially organised by the State. It follows that, firstly, there will be no nationalisation of key industries and, secondly, industry will be geared mainly to production for export. An export drive to get

foreign exchange will reduce production for internal consumption and raise the prices of essential goods.

This demonstrates that the Indian Big business, in order to secure an export market, has come to an understanding with Anglo-American imperialism, and the Government of India has agreed to back up its reactionary expansionist foreign policy. Such an agreement with the foreign imperialist powers has been made because the Government of India has refused to fight to secure Sterling balances from Britain and has rejected a policy of alliance with the democratic powers, which are resolutely fighting Anglo-American imperialism.

The Pakistan Government is more openly following a similar subservient policy. Instead of seeking agreements with the democratic States, it is begging for an American loan and British capital to develop ports and industrial plants.

The Big business in India, including Pakistan, is trying desperately—angling for the extension of the Marshall Plan to Asia. Such an extension of the Marshall Plan will not help us to develop our national economic life, but will lead to greater economic ruin and to the perpetuation of colonial slavery. Treaties and Pacts for mutual aid with the democratic powers that do not seek imperialist expansion are the only means to secure foreign aid on the basis of equality and reciprocity in order to effect more speedily the reconstruction of the national economy of India and Pakistan. But the Governments of India and Pakistan are pursuing an opposite course, i.e., collaboration with Anglo-American imperialism in order to satisfy the selfish greed of the national Big business.

Role of the Bourgeoisie

This reveals the basic change that has taken place in our country. The Indian bourgeoisie has given up the path of opposition to imperialist domination and has become collaborationist. During the war, the process of merger between Indian and foreign capital has gone forward. The Indian capitalists have become far richer than ever before, more self-confident thereby and more accommodating to imperialism as a result thereof. They want to extend their economic position in the countries of the Middle East and Asia and therefore,

they are in need of the assistance of Anglo-American imperialism that at present dominates these countries.

Alarmed by the growing strength of the Indian working class, the Indian capitalists are surrendering to British imperialism and compromising with feudal elements like the native Princes and landlords. To stem the advancing tide of the democratic forces, they need anti-national agreements with British imperialism in economic, political and military spheres. As a result of these factors, the Indian Big business has become a reactionary force opposed to the anti-imperialist national front.

Moreover, the acceptance of the Mountbatten Award by the Congress and the League shows that the leadership of these two organisations, who represent the interests of the capitalists and the landlords, have reconciled themselves to the position of collaboration with Anglo-American imperialism.

On the one hand, the Indian bourgeoisie is afraid of the masses whom they are determined to suppress and on the other hand, it wants to expand its economic power at the expense of the weaker nations of the Middle East and South-East Asia. In both respects the Indian bourgeoisie seeks the assistance of Anglo-American imperialism, and to get this assistance it sacrifices all national interests, namely Sterling balances and unfettered scope for the industrialisation of India. It is therefore servile and anti-national.

Real Face of The Mountbatten Award

What the Mountbatten Award has given to the people of our country is not real but fake independence. Through this award British imperialism partitioned India on communal lines and gave to the bourgeoisie an important share of State power, subservient to itself.

Britain's domination has not ended, but the form of domination has changed. The bourgeoisie was so long kept out of the State power and in opposition to it; now it is granted a share of the State power in order to disrupt and drown the national democratic revolution in blood. The supreme organs of the State, the Army, Navy, Air force and the bureaucracy are still controlled by the servitors of imperialism. At the same time, the representatives of

the bourgeoisie, the traditional leaders of the national movements, are handed over the reins of Government, while being dominated by imperialism through trade pacts and a military alliance.

The Mountbatten Award does not really signal a retreat of imperialism but its cunning counter-offensive against the rising forces of the Indian people. This is demonstrated by the communal carnage and the setbacks to the democratic and anti-imperialist struggles after August 15.

British imperialism was forced to change the forms of its domination as a result of the growing popular upsurge for freedom and democracy during the war and post-war days. Faced with the alternative of quitting India, it has given a share of power to the capitalists and landlords in order to be able to remain. To parade this new status as national freedom is to shield the imperialist designs and the subservience of the national bourgeoisie.

It is no accident that the popular hopes have turned into illusions. The anti-national policy of allying with imperialism is producing a whole tree of poisoned fruits.

Communal Riots

The Mountbatten Plan is unfolding itself through the vicious communal riots that have taken place since the negotiations with the Cabinet Mission began, and are still continuing.

The communal riots are the direct result of the imperialist conspiracy and bourgeois compromise. Imperialism has strengthened the basis of the communal riots in four ways : i) partition which made one community hostile to another; ii) fixation of boundaries in a manner that roused communal bitterness to its height; iii) independent position for native States who could manoeuvre with India and Pakistan and play one against another in the most vicious manner; iv) communal poisoning of most of the Army chiefs and bureaucrats, which has resulted in the use of the State machinery for spreading the riots.

Imperialism is instigating the communal riots in order to create conditions in which the national bourgeois leadership will be increasingly forced to submit to the imperialist domination and the

common toiling people will be forced to submit to the leadership of the upper classes, namely the national leadership. It also aims at smashing the people's unity and crushing all democratic movements.

Fascist elements like the Hindu Mahasabha, RSS, Muslim communalists and bureaucratic administrators left behind by imperialism are the chief agents for provoking the riots. Princes and landlords are at the head of them. But the bourgeoisie, including a section of the leadership of the Congress and the League, has also played a leading part in the communal riots, though certain sections of the Congress and the League leaderships have taken a stand against them.

The workers, peasants and progressive intelligentsia are the most determined forces that resist all riots, just because the riots smash all democratic movements. In fighting the riots, they must make use of all opportunities including the Government measures to combat them. They will unhesitatingly support every move of the Government and of the national leadership and press upon them to adopt serious measures.

But until the bourgeois policy of collaboration with imperialism and its hostility to the principle of self-determination is successfully defeated, the riots will take place again and again.

Not only the communal riots, but other kinds of riots between one nationality and another, between the advanced castes and backward castes, between tribal people and others, will also take place on a larger and larger scale until full democracy and self-determination of the people are achieved and the imperialist hold over the organs of the State is completely smashed.

A determined fight against the reactionary policy of the Congress and the League leaderships is therefore essential to end the possibility of all riots. The bourgeoisie is itself intoxicated with the idea of communal domination and therefore the Congress and League leadership also rely to a great extent on the communal elements to bargain for power against each other. Though they become surprised and even sometimes overwhelmed by the magnitude of the riots led by the pro-imperialist feudal elements, they fail to take

effective measures to check them. An end to these riots can only be brought about by complete democratic progress.

Since August 15

To sum up, since August 15, the leadership of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, strongly entrenched in the Governments of India and Pakistan respectively, have started making political, economic and military alliances with Anglo-American imperialism. They are strengthening the camp of reaction all along the line.

The political policies of the Pakistan and India Governments reveal their fear of real democracy, reflected in the restriction and suppression of the democratic rights of the common people in the interests of reactionary vested interests. Their economic policies lead not to the welfare of the people and a democratic economy but to increasing profits for the parasites and the retention of the existing colonial economic order.

The Government of India and under it the Provincial Governments are pursuing a policy of fleecing the labour to feed the Big business. Alarmed at the growing strength of the Trade Union movement, the Congress leadership has organised the Government-sponsored INTUC to break the working-class solidarity reflected in the AITUC. The company Unions have been given national names to deceive the workers. Tribunals and Adjudication Courts are set up when the demands for living wage become irresistible; but these bodies are so composed as to cut down as many essential demands of the workers as possible.

In order to assure enormous profits to the capitalists, the Government has never enforced effective measures against the blackmarket; in this respect also they have only carried forward the old imperialist policy; and now in order to legalise the blackmarket prices, they have adopted the policy of de-control.

When the old policy of control was found to be ineffective in checking prices and extending production, and nationalisation of all important industries was being popularly recognised as an immediate necessity, the All-India Congress leadership stepped in

at this stage and instructed the Government to lift controls instead of effecting nationalisation.

The agrarian crisis has reached a stage when the immediate abolition of landlordism and redistribution of land to the tillers of the soil have become an immediate necessity; the various Congress Governments have introduced measures to abolish the statutory zamindari system, but they do not give land to the tillers of the soil, and do not take over the private land of the landlords in the majority of the cases.

The rich landlords, with thousands of acres of private land, are allowed to exist while the share-croppers, tenants-at-will and landless peasants are left at the mercy of the absentee landlords. These Government measures are replacing the zamindari system by ryotwari system with a heavy load of compensation.

Even the small agrarian reforms are being introduced with great hesitancy and delaying tactics and frequently with amendments in favour of the landlords. The proposed agrarian measures of the National Government are intentionally so framed as to bring about a division among the peasantry.

The top leadership of the Congress is making reactionary agreements with the Princes in the native States. The feudal autocracy is being kept intact, and their authoritarian regimes have been constitutionally guaranteed.

The old bureaucratic State apparatus, its armed forces and bureaucracy are kept intact and manned by top-ranking foreign officers trained by the British enslavers, and buttressed by British advisers.

The Constitution that is being drawn up by the Constituent Assembly under the guidance of Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru is essentially authoritarian, though certain reforms like universal suffrage and ministries responsible to the legislatures have been introduced. The constitution gives sweeping extraordinary powers of the executive heads of the Government, guarantees adequate compensation to foreign and native capital as a fundamental right and sanctions rule by ordinances. The self-determination of nationalities has no place in the Constitution; the provincial autonomy is also curtailed; the proportional representation has been rejected.

While such a Constitution is being framed, new emergency laws are being passed. The popular protest movements against such measures are being suppressed by shooting down the people in the traditional imperialist way. The Emergency Powers are being used very little against the communalists and principally against the workers' peasants' and students' movements.

Full use is being made of the old statutes and ordinances to crush the democratic movement before the Constitution is passed, so that its democratic provisions like universal suffrage may not be used in the interests of the common people.

Similar and worse developments are taking place in Pakistan. The landlord-bourgeois leadership of the League is also taking all precautions against any popular efforts to make Pakistan free, democratic and friendly to her democratic neighbours.

The Perspective

Anglo-American imperialism, in collaboration with the leadership both of the Congress and the League, is carrying out its plan of world domination. Under the leadership of the upper classes India, including Pakistan, is sinking more and more into colonial slavery. Famines, rising prices, increasing scarcity of all goods, mass retrenchment of workers, reign of terror and more communal riots are in store for the toiling people.

The Anglo-American imperialist plan is being heroically resisted by the Democratic States of Eastern Europe, backed by the mighty Soviet Union. It is being fought by the French and Italian people. It is getting blow after blow on Chinese soil from the Chinese people led by the Communist Party of China. It is being fought by the heroic people of Indonesia and Viet Nam.

On the Indian soil, the upsurge of States people's struggles, the peasant unrest in South India, Bihar, Orissa and Bengal, the strike struggles of the workers, the mass demonstrations against the Special Emergency Powers in Calcutta, the struggles of middle-class employees and students—these are the forces that will grow and defeat Anglo-American imperialism and its reactionary allies.

A Democratic Front composed of all left parties, progressive people inside the Congress and the League, sections of the Congress

aid agreements with the anti-imperialist democratic nations of the world.

7) Abolition of all forms of landlordism without compensation and distribution of land to the tillers, in accordance with the resolution of the All-India Kisan Sabha.

8) An 8-hour day, a living wage for the workers and an all round improvement in their standard of living; full employment for all people and resistance to retrenchment; Trade Union unity.

9) State aid to cottage industries and agriculture.

10) Radical change of the bureaucracy, purging it of all reactionary elements.

11) Democratisation of the Army, Navy and Air force by purging them of reactionary commanders.

The above programme is the substance of a democratic reorientation of the national movement and constitutes the solution of the grave crisis through which our country is passing. It constitutes the minimum and immediate needs of the toiling people and is no longer a distant ideal. Upon the fulfilment of the above programme depends the unity, freedom and prosperity of the people of all India, including Pakistan.

In order to realise the objectives contained in the above programme, the Communist Party will mobilise the people for every democratic reform and against every reactionary offensive. The Communist Party, in so doing, will do its best to help and unify the progressive forces wherever they are and to whichever organisation they belong.

To underestimate the need for building a united Democratic Front under the illusion that it is possible to change the policy of the Congress leadership by means of mass pressure, or to shirk the responsibility of building a Democratic Front by nursing the illusion that a reshuffling of the Ministry here and there will change the political set-up, is opportunism.

A Democratic Front, leading the mass of the toiling people, alone can change the situation and take India and Pakistan forward to freedom, democracy and prosperity.

ON THE PRESENT POLICY AND TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

January 1948

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Dear Comrade,

The document on our political line was adopted by the Central Committee at its recent session held at Bombay from 7th to 16th December 1947. It was decided to draft a political resolution based on this draft for the Party Congress which is to meet in the fourth week of February 1948. The C.C. has also decided to circulate the document to the ranks as the basic political document for discussion, before the party Congress, till it is replaced by the political resolution.

As is quite clear from the resolution passed by the C.C. and released to the Press, as well as from the present document, the C.C. has reviewed the political situation in the country in the context of the international situation and has made a sharp break with our previous faulty understanding.

The present document contains fundamental formulations regarding the role of the bourgeoisie, the role of the Congress and the new strategy of the Democratic Front. It also makes a break with our old understanding of the Mountbatten Award and National Government which was given in the C.C. resolution of June 1947. It restores the perspective of the democratic revolution which was in the meanwhile blurred out of existence. It emphasises the need for Left unity and underlines its importance and vital significance.

The document further views Indian developments in the background of the world economic crisis which has been hitherto absent from previous Party documents.

It sharply nails down the opportunist illusions about bourgeois leadership—the failure to evaluate the class role of Gandhi, Nehru

and Patel and the attempts to draw wrong distinctions between them to justify an opportunist policy of hanging on to one or the other bourgeois leader.

It shows how in the anti-feudal struggles we failed to assess the real role of the compromisers.

It also shows how, once the revolutionary and class perspective has been blurred, there was a tendency to accept the bourgeois conception on national reconstruction, instead of fighting for the democratic revolution which alone will lead to a real overhauling of the entire economic life of our people.

The sharp attacks levelled on the wrong conception of national reconstruction, on the wrong understanding of the role of reforms in the present period, on the illusions about Gandhi and Nehru in connection with riots as well as democratic policies, on the illusions about the National Government and the failure to see its collaborationist role—all are fully deserved because it is these deviations inside the leadership that committed the Party to wrong political understanding.

Comrades must take this sharp criticism very seriously because the deviations criticised reveal a deep-rooted reformist trend inside the Party—a trend which resists a Marxist understanding of political events. The reformist deviation is to be seen inside many Communist Parties. The errors committed by Browder in America, the errors committed by the leadership of the CPGB — errors for which it was openly criticised by the Australian Communist Party, the self-criticism of Thorez, the leader of the French Communist Party—all these reveal that in many Communist Parties there were Right reformist tendencies which failed to understand the role of the bourgeoisie, of the Social Democrats and of the national reformists as well as the strength of the masses and the effects of the world economic crisis. It is obvious that in several Communist Parties which were coming out of the people's war period, there arose trends which advocated a line of trailing behind the reformists and the bourgeoisie.

It is in the light of this international experience that the self-criticism made here should be understood and taken seriously.

On the basis of his own experience in the mass struggle, the writings of the Party leaders in the party journals, the effect on our people of the agitation we have been hitherto carrying on each comrade must come to his own judgement about the formulations made and the new shifts in the line suggested.

The document does not put forward the changes in the international situation. It addresses itself to the national situation. The resolution of the Party Congress will of course deal at length with the international situation.

A correct understanding of the international situation is to be found in some of the books published by the Party in English as well as in other languages. Of these the following should be considered as important; they give a basic understanding of the situation :

Kardeji : Problems of International Development.

Zhdanov : International Situation — information document.

Varga : Plans of Anglo-American Domination.

Zhukov : Colonial Problem — published in the Communist.

Zhukov : Indian Situation — information document.

Some of these are translated in the provincial languages and should be used for clarifying the international situation.

The basic formulation about the international situation—the formulation about two camps—is to be found in the political resolution passed by the Central Committee at its last sitting.

Besides these, comrades should consult information documents containing "Self-Criticism of the French Communist Party." Sharky's review of Harry Pollitt's book "Looking Ahead," and Harry Pollitt's Report to the C.C. of the CPGB in which he makes a new estimate of the situation and admits the past mistakes.

Both among the delegates and the ranks, there should be a thorough discussion of the document—discussion on concrete points raised in the document and fundamental formulations made therein.

The C.C. has decided that the Provincial Committees and District

Committees should discuss the document first. It should be thrown open to the ranks for discussion within a fortnight of the receipt of the document by the Provincial Committees.

The fortnight is given to the P.Cs and D.Cs. to anticipate the document falling into the hands of non-Party people and garbled versions appearing in the Press. With the document in their hands for a fortnight, they will be able to combat any garbled version and answer any queries.

The P.Cs. should make their own arrangements to lead the discussion in the ranks. The P.C.Ms. should preferably lead the discussion, so that it becomes fruitful. Wherever this is not possible the D.C.Os. or Secretaries will have to do this in their own districts.

Comrades, all the Communist Parties are making a new estimate of the world forces and the national situation in their countries, corresponding to the new developments and alignments. Our discussion should enable the Party comrades, and help the C.C. in this great task so that our Party comes out through the present confusion with a revolutionary understanding of the situation based on Marxism-Leninism.

With greetings.

POLIT-BUREAU

ON THE PRESENT POLICY AND TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Great changes have taken place since 15th August throughout the Indian Union. The establishment of a Central Government manned by the leadership of the National Congress has led to new class alignments, changes in the role of organisations and classes, and render it imperative that a new strategical and tactical line should be adopted for carrying forward the task of completing the democratic revolution as a transition to socialism.

The establishment of the Central Government headed by Pandit Nehru has not solved a single problem of the democratic revolution. Its establishment does not symbolise that the Indian people have won either freedom or independence. Nor does it ensure that they will be moving in the direction of democracy and freedom for the people.

On the other hand, the Government is moving in the opposite direction—against the interests and freedom of the people and towards joining the Anglo-American bloc of imperialist powers—a bloc which seeks to crush all democratic revolutions and to create satellite states by rendering economic and political help to all reactionary vested interests to enable them to crush the struggles for democracy any freedom in different countries.

National Government and the People

The recent acts of the National Government and the trend of its policy prove beyond doubt that it is moving not towards democracy and freedom but towards their suppression.

The Constituent Assembly, manned by the same leaders as lead the National Government, is preparing a Constitution authoritarian in content and democratic in form only. The working class and the Indian masses will not get anything except the right to vote. There is no guarantee of any fundamental rights while the vested interests have been given an absolute guarantee that the State would not nationalise any concern without giving adequate compensation—thus preventing through constitutional guarantees all plans of nationalisation. The constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly will be a Constitution for the upper classes to rule the oppressed millions in the interest of joint exploitation by Indo-British capitalists.

Immediately the Government is carrying out the plan of Indian Big business to oppose nationalisation, suppress the workers and demand more production through longer hours of work; intensification of labour and rationalisation; freezing of wages in the name of stopping the wage-price spiral; sabotaging implementation of gains secured by the workers, viz., Railway agreement; holding forth no hope of legislation for a living wage,

social security or curtailment of management's power of dismissal; assuring the capitalists of full freedom to loot the people in the name of building a "mixed economy" while slandering the workers for the fall in production; demanding an increase in the hours of work;—in short, passing the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of workers to keep up capitalist profits.

The control of the Government by the national leadership has placed an additional and powerful weapon in their hands to sabotage the revolutionary struggles against Princely autocracy. They have persistently raised illusions that Princely autocracy can be fought through governmental pressure and have utilised them to enter into accession agreements with the Princes which keep autocracy intact. By parading accession as a big triumph, attention is sidetracked from the democratic struggle inside the States. The latest act of betrayal is the standstill agreement with the Nizam.

Only where the Prince have point blank refused to strike any compromise giving the bourgeoisie some elbow room, they have sanctioned mass action which was withdrawn at the first opportunity.

The policy that the Government follows can only be described as one of appeasing feudal reaction and sabotaging the revolutionary anti-feudal anti-imperialist struggle.

In matter of civil liberties and democratic rights the Provincial Government under the guidance of the Central Government, have passed the blackest Acts—Public Safety Acts—which are freely used against the rising workers' and peasants' movement and against the students; hundreds are detained without trial, extermed or interned.

The leadership of the Central Government has applied the brake to the agrarian legislation of the Provincial Ministries which itself was an attempt to cheat the peasant of the full fruits of abolition of landlordism. Saddled with compensation and with no provision for land to the tiller, the legislation becomes a mild reform, with relief for certain sections, and is an attempt to split the peasant movement and disrupt the growing forces of agrarian revolution. It is an attempt to broaden, the basis of the present bourgeois Government.

In the matter of minorities, the Government follows a communal policy which is really the bourgeois way of dealing with minorities—discrimination and favouritism and retreating before communal and feudal reaction, opening the way for mass murder of minorities.

The admission of Dr. Shyamaprosad Mukherjee into the Cabinet shows how the Government had compromised with communalism even before the mass massacres had started in Punjab. For a big section in the Cabinet led by Patel, the oppression of minorities is a deliberate policy.

Collaboration With Imperialism

While refusing to develop the industries of our country by nationalising key industries, the Government at the same time is encouraging the export drive in the interests of Indian Big business and at the expense of the people. This is a part of the plan of collaboration with the Anglo-American bloc since these export markets can only be secured in collaboration with the imperialists. By securing foreign exchange through these exports Indian Big business wants to purchase machinery for new industries with the help of the Anglo-American imperialists. Thus, again, they have to depend on the Anglo-American capitalists for their industries.

This double economic dependence on the Anglo-American capitalists, both for the market for Indian products and for purchasing new machinery, necessitates a servility and abject surrender to them; and Big business, helped by the Government, is preparing to sell out India's future to Anglo-American imperialists.

The latter are demanding a number of concessions and fundamental rights—no discrimination against foreign capital, no nationalisation, no tariffs which are not agreed to, joint concerns for exploitation of the Indian people, full security to them—all of which are embodied in the Draft Trade Charter being discussed at Havana and disclose that Indian Big business and the Government are mortgaging Indian economy to Anglo-American capital in their selfish interests. The natural result of this is not only an economic but an indirect political domination, so that both the economy and

the political freedom of India are being mortgaged to the Anglo-American monopolists.

This policy logically means no full-scale industrialisation of India, but only such industrialisation as suits Anglo-American imperialist interests; it means no nationalisation, no planning, no rise in the standard of living of the masses; it means the retention of present backward conditions, the colonial order, low wages cheap labour; it means suppression of the Indian masses in the interests of joint Indo-American and Indo-British exploitation. It means an intensification of the impoverishment of the Indian masses and the suppression of their struggle against it.

Nehru's Foreign Policy

The foreign policy of the Government follows the class interests it represents. From the very beginning Pandit Nehru adopted a line of forming a third bloc—a line which represents the interests of Big business inasmuch as it kept India away from the Democratic camp and opened the way to the Imperialist camp.

The recent months have torn the mask of democracy from Nehru's foreign policy. On all crucial issues the Indian delegation has taken an anti-democratic and pro-imperialist stand—Korea, "Little Assembly," Ukraine. On the question of Ukraine it allowed itself to be exploited by USA, and took the hypocritical stand that India stood against Ukraine because South East Asia was not represented.

Foreign policy depends on economic policy, said Pandit Nehru, and that has been proved. India is rapidly preparing to line herself up with the Anglo-American bloc in matters of foreign policy also. Her diplomats are already uttering anti-Soviet slanders viz., Sir Maharaj Singh's statement on war propaganda.

That is where the Government and Big business are dragging India—from the freedom struggle to Anglo-American camp.

These developments are taking place against the background of a rapidly worsening economic crisis throughout the capitalist world coupled with the drive of American imperialism, by far the strongest force among the world imperialist powers and the leader of world

reaction, to subordinate to itself the bourgeoisie of every other country and enslave the freedom-loving peoples of the whole world. These developments are taking place against the background of a sharpening struggle inside every country—a struggle of the common people against the effects of the worsening crisis and against all those classes that are orientated towards Anglo-American imperialism; it is a struggle for national independence and democracy.

It is therefore clear that there can be no illusions about this "National" government; it cannot be an instrument of people's will to achieve what the people urgently require—the completion of the national democratic revolution; there can be no united front between the people and the Government; the Indian people and the working class will have to fight to defeat the Government's policies and to effect a fundamental reorganisation of it in order to clear the road to the democratic revolution.

Such slogans as "All Support to the Nehru Government" and "United Front of the Government and the People" are opportunist and wrong, and amount to dragging the working class and the people at the tail-end of the bourgeoisie and helping the latter to implement its anti-democratic policy.

New Role of Bourgeoisie

How is it that a Government headed by the national leaders and one which came to power on the crest of the wave of popular struggle should pursue these policies which have to be opposed?

This is so because the national leaders who headed the popular struggles all these years and who now are in the Government represent the class interests of the national bourgeoisie, the industrial bourgeoisie.

Gandhi, Nehru and Patel all represent the interests of the Indian capitalist class, and the formation of the Government after August 15—after what is known as the transfer of power but in reality sharing of power—has meant an immense change in the position of the national bourgeoisie vis-a-vis the people and their struggles.

Formerly the national bourgeoisie and its leaders had to rely on the masses, mass-struggles etc. to secure concessions, share in

power etc., to advance their own interests. The bourgeoisie was excluded from political power, it had no real opportunity to develop industries and had no political power over the people, though in the past it has more and more vacillated at the crucial moments, sought to come to terms with imperialism and prevented or stopped struggles going out of its control.

The post-war revolutionary upsurge forced imperialism to change its tactics, in order to be able to strike at the democratic forces all the more ferociously.

To deceive the people, imperialism formally agreed to hand over the Government to the national leaders, i.e., the bourgeois leaders, and relied on the national bourgeoisie for the maintenance of the old colonial order. The bourgeoisie readily accepted the offer because it received big concessions and because it was frightened by the growing democratic revolution, the increasingly active role of the working class in it, and with the approaching world economic crisis.

The growing jealousy and rivalry between the dominant sections of the Hindu and Muslim bourgeoisie also contributed to its eagerness to accept the imperialist offer.

The Government established after August 15 makes big concessions to the bourgeoisie and hands it over the administrative power to rule the Indian people in its own narrow selfish interests.

At the same time the State it has won is dependent on imperialism and is a satellite State. Economically it is dependent for its future on imperialist help; its compromise with feudal elements places it in the same position; and its fear of Pakistan getting imperialist favour also ties it to imperialism.

In the new State, therefore, the national bourgeoisie shares power with imperialism, with the latter still dominant indirectly.

This is the secret behind the reactionary policy of the National Government. The bourgeoisie has ceased to play an oppositional role; it does not need mass struggles to get concessions from imperialism; it is now depending on imperialism for its economic advance; it is now depending on the new State and its control over

Indian people to use them as pawns in its bargaining with imperialism, whenever differences and conflicts arise. These conflicts will be solved at governmental levels by offering new concessions to imperialism through customs, lowering of tariffs, securing of joint concerns, etc.

The bourgeoisie, therefore, turns its face from the mass, goes over to collaboration. That is why its Government consistently adopts an anti-mass, anti-democratic policy.

In the past the bourgeoisie, and the national leadership which represents it, was in the people's camp; now it is deserting it. This is the new change brought about by the transfer of power on August 15.

Henceforward the march of democratic revolution will have to proceed directly in opposition to the bourgeois Government and its policies, and the bourgeois leadership of the Congress.

Game Behind Riot Offensive

The fact that the Government is manned by popular leaders and that it arose on the crest of a wave of mass struggle has concealed the class character of the Government and the change in the position of the class.

The riot offensive of the feudal reactionaries and imperialist agents and their denunciation of the National Government has led many people to believe that the feudal reactionaries were attacking a revolutionary Government and that it was the business of the people to line up unconditionally behind the Government. This is a totally wrong understanding of the situation.

The unleashing of communal riots in Punjab, U.P. and Indian States, the massacre of tens of thousands of innocent Hindus and Muslims, the forcible extermination of minorities in the States, the terrific suffering and hardships inflicted on innocent men, women and children, and the economic chaos arising from all this were pre-planned and organised by the forces of counter revolution—the feudal Princes, the imperialists, the landlords and the communalists; the object was to drown the Indian democratic revolution in blood, to disrupt and demoralise it. The main attack

was against the people who were moving forward through strikes, armed conflicts and revolts of States' peoples to a democratic revolution.

The attempt of the forces of counter-revolution was to side-track the revolutionary discontent into communal channels, disorganise the people and through it force a new line-up of all vested interest against the mass movement—a line-up in which the bourgeoisie will move to the Right, appeasing the feudal and communal interests all the more so that a stronger front against the masses could be erected.

This was to be achieved by compelling the Government to move to the Right, to appease Hindu communal reaction and surrender to the Princes on the question of maintenance of autocracy by strengthening the consistent appeasing policy of Patle and defeating the vacillating policy of Nehru.

There is no doubt that the deeply laid plot of counter-revolution very nearly succeeded in creating confusion, vacillation and demoralisation in the ranks of the people and the political parties. The main objectives were forgotten and a tendency to line up behind the Government in panic was noticed.

The imperialists and their agents would precisely like such a lining up of the working class and democratic forces behind the Government, as it would lead to the giving up of all further efforts to push forward the democratic revolution and to the doing away with all opposition and criticism of the Government in its policy of combating all further national democratic advance.

For such a policy ensures the success of their strategy. Why are riots on a mass scale possible today? Precisely because the national bourgeois leadership has, through its anti-national compromise, disorganised the forces of revolution and allowed the reactionaries to divert the discontent.

Unmask Compromisers and Communalists

The policy of compromise with feudalism and imperialism has already bred riots and will breed more riots. Compromise feeds counter-revolution and it is so in the case of India. The hands of

Gandhi, Nehru, Patel are alike tainted with this compromise and they all are politically responsible for this riot offensive. The recent AICC resolutions, though taking a somewhat progressive stand regarding the communal question, evade all fundamental issues and sanction decontrol. Later events have proved that even those resolutions were not seriously meant by the leadership.

Unless their compromising policies are exposed before the people, unless the connection between them and the riots is shown and unless their policies are defeated, the feudal-imperialist offensive cannot be effectively fought; on the other hand it will increase.

Secondly, the Government includes open supporters of communalism like Sardar Patel who use the State machinery to pursue communal ends and thus strengthen communal and feudal reaction.

Even Nehru and Gandhi by means of their anti-Pakistan statements, under emphasising Hindu communalism by describing it only as a reaction to Muslim communalism, and by their failure to condemn unequivocally the slogan of war against Pakistan and sometimes even encouraging this slogan by assurances of military action against Pakistan etc., help to keep communal feeling alive and indirectly prepare the ground for further riots.

It is futile to talk of ending riots without unmasking the communal policies of Patel; it is equally futile to expect that communal reaction will be defeated, with Patel inside the Cabinet, by the mere words of Jawaharlal.

The policy of an unconditional line-up behind the Government under the excuse of fighting riots is thus an opportunist policy.

This does not mean that the Party or the working class will not help the Government in quelling riots and restoring peace. But the party knows that by such help the root cause of riots is not removed. The Party also realises that generally the riot-quelling measures of the Government are but another name for the suppression of minorities.

The Party will utilise every opportunity to fight riots and will help the Government whenever honest measures to quell them are

taken. It will regard riots as an offensive against the revolution but, at the same time, will have no illusion that the National Government can fight the riots with its present policy. On the other hand; it realises that the riot-mongers cannot be fought without exposing the compromising and communal policies of the Government and rousing the people against them.

In doing this, it is, no doubt, the duty of the Party to utilise every anti-riot utterance of men like Nehru and Gandhi and counteract the openly provocative policy of Patel. Such utterances, acts and propaganda have much importance inasmuch as they enable us to isolate more easily men like Patel who are nearest to feudal reaction.

Patel, Nehru and Gandhi

The distinction between Nehru and Gandhi on the one hand and Patel on the other, on the basis of their approach to communal question, is therefore valid within certain limits and is also of importance. It is no small advantage to have these two big leaders speaking against riots. The situation would certainly be more difficult if they also were to take a stand for riots, like Patel.

But to shower praise on Gandhi and Nehru as if they with their class outlook and policies can really fight riots is to join in the game of cheating the masses.

The politics pursued by Gandhi and Nehru can never defeat communalism and riots.

On the other hand, their policies are leading them to purchase communal peace by sharing power with the riot-mongers and communalists, the supporters of feudal reaction.

Not only on the question of riots but also on the question of democratic policies, there exist illusions about Nehru among Party leaders.

Nehru is seen as a fighter against Patel's policies and almost made to appear as the leader of the democratic forces. Every verbal opposition of Nehru to Patel is magnified and Nehru's surrenders are glossed over or ignored. It is thus that an illusion is created

that if we strengthen Nehru's hands against Patel, we will transform the Government into an instrument of the people's will.

This estimate of Nehru is anti-Marxist and serves to tie down the masses to the bourgeois leadership. It must be clearly understood that Nehru and Gandhi are as much representatives of the bourgeoisie as Patel is. They all defend the class policies and interests of the bourgeoisie which is now collaborating with imperialism.

The working class no doubt takes into full account the differences between the different bourgeois leaders and distinguishes between the progressive and the reactionary, to fight the reactionary all the more. But it means that the differences must be real and not imaginary.

Today Nehru is continually surrendering to Patel and not fighting him. It is so in the matter of foreign policy, of States, of decontrol, of industrial policy etc. He often outdoes Patel on vital issues. He denounces strikes of the working class as a stab in the back. He surrenders because there is no other independent policy for him unless he decides to fight B. & B. business which he cannot do.

His progressive and democratic views, though they will be always limited by the class interests he represents, will have some importance and will be capable of being implemented only when the bourgeoisie finds itself against a big mass movement outside. That alone might enable Nehru to overcome his vacillation on a number of issues unless he decides to turn away from the people in the meanwhile.

In the absence of strong mass pressure from the left Nehru's utterances remain mere words and Nehru becomes more and more a democratic mask for Patel. His surrender may be stopped only by the independent action of the masses.

This means that it is anti-working class to raise a whole strategy on the illusions about Nehru.

Gandhi and CPI

A similar attitude is to be observed about Gandhi. Gandhi's

espousal of the cause of decontrol and his cynical remarks about death of hundreds from starvation are due to the fact that he is the class-conscious representative of the bourgeoisie.

It is necessary here to remember that it is Gandhi who has always led the reformist and compromising bourgeois leadership and it is he who, in the post-war period, first came out sharply against the revolutionary upsurge and urged upon other leaders to come quickly to a compromise with imperialism. If the bourgeois leadership has betrayed the people and adopted the policy of collaboration with imperialism, it is Gandhi who was and is today the chief leader and inspirer of this betrayal.

The Communist Party of India has always regarded Gandhi as such and has fought Gandhism as an ideology, which stupefies the masses and saves the interests of the compromising bourgeoisie. Anything which makes the working class forget this must be sharply condemned.

It is thus clear that the Central Government manned by leaders of the National Congress cannot be the instrument of further advance—which is nothing but completion of the national democratic revolution. Marxism-Leninism has always taught us that in the period of declining capitalism—of the general crisis of capitalism—the bourgeoisie cannot be relied upon to lead the democratic revolution to its completion, that it betrays it and goes to the opposite camp, and it is the working class which must lead it.

Marxism has also laid down that in conditions of a revolutionary crisis the immediate task in the colonies is not reform, but completion of the democratic revolution. The working class today, after the second world war, has to carry out this task in conditions of the bourgeoisie quitting the people's camp and becoming collaborationist.

National Leaders and Masses

But too much emphasis cannot be laid on the fact that those in charge of the Government are still leaders of the people and the

Government is still looked upon as a National Government in contrast to the previous imperialist Government.

The masses do not yet realise that the National Government is collaborating, that the country is being sold to Anglo-American imperialism, that the policies of the leadership are leading to riots, that the Government is being run in the interests of Big Business; they still believe it to be a freedom Government and are the victims of the national sentiment and national illusions about the Congress leadership. The trusting masses of our country though they are getting rapidly disillusioned with the National Government, have not yet lost their faith in Nehru, their faith in the Congress, and, though repeatedly bitten, they yet cling to old illusions.

Any attack against the National Government which does not take into account the sentiment behind it is likely to defeat the purpose.

At the same time, the rapid economic deterioration and disillusionment of the masses have created conditions for the successful unmasking of the national leadership; and no progress towards democracy and freedom is possible without the Party exposing the real character of the present Government in the course of struggles and on the basis of concrete issues of policies, and disillusioning the masses about it.

To be able to move the masses into action for the fulfillment of the democratic revolution, the working class must tear them away from the bourgeois leadership and build a new movement based on a new understanding of the national unity.

For A New Front of People's Unity

The Communist Party must give up the former conception of national unity, Congress-League-Communist, in which Congress was virtually the main basis of such a unity. It was correct for a period when the Congress together with its leadership was in the people's camp opposing imperialism.

Today the Congress leadership is collaborating with imperialism.

Today the advance towards democracy and independence has to be won not only in opposition to imperialism but also in opposition to the Indian bourgeoisie.

In these conditions the Congress cannot be the main basis of the new democratic front. The leadership is attempting to make the Congress into an ordinary political party of the bourgeoisie and doing away with its united front character. Even if it does not succeed in this entirely the influence of the Congress leaders will be strongly exercised to keep it away from the democratic revolution and to make it an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

The masses inside the Congress will be cheated in the name of loyalty to the Congress national sentiment etc. The CPI should, therefore, give a call for a new front of people's unity—the Democratic Front.

The core of this new front will have to be the CPI with its working class and kisan bases, the mass organisations of workers, peasants and students and the Left parties with their mass following.

The unity of Left parties in the present situation will be a powerful lever to build a new front of the above organisations—disillusioning and activising the Congress and League masses, the States' peoples and other sections, and in building a united movement for the democratic revolution.

The strength of the Left forces today should not be underestimated. Their mass influence also should not be underestimated. This is really a fundamental change between the pre-war and post-war situation—in the pre-war days the Left forces were only a ginger group, today they are the main base and lever at the same time.

The communist Party must, therefore, seek immediate agreements with the Left parties—for joint actions and for a common understanding of the problems of the democratic revolution and for building a front against the compromisers and their real masters.

The building of the Democratic Front is a process of struggle. It advances through a series of joint campaigns and partial struggles, jointly conducted, and through local united fronts between the Party and the local Congress and League masses (even Committees in

some places), between the Left parties and the Congress and League masses at other places, between the Party and other mass organisations in still other places, etc.

The core of the new front would be formed of the Left parties together with the Communist Party, trade unions, kisan sabhas and students' and youth organisations. Round this core must be gathered the vast masses from the Congress, League the States' Prajamandals, etc., so that a broad democratic front takes shape to meet the new situation.

In many provinces organised Left groups do not exist. There are thousands of unattached Lefts in all provinces. Unity of the Left parties is a weapon of drawing these thousands into the common front for joint action. In the South we must devote special attention to the unorganised Left; for, Left unity will mean drawing these unattached thousands in the common fight. In other provinces also, Left unity ought to be an instrument of attracting unorganised Left who will now find an effective platform and instrument for implementing its Left aspirations. It will also attract other progressive Congressmen on specific issues.

It will be defeating the main purpose if unity of Left parties is worked in a way which either keeps the unattached Left away or hinders joint action with other Congressmen on specific issues.

Congress, League and Democratic Front

The place of the Congress and the League in the Democratic Front must be properly realised.

Both these organisations command the loyalty of lakhs of people—of vast sections of anti-imperialist masses. Desperate attempts will be made by the leaderships of these two organisations to keep these masses away from the struggle for democratic revolution and from the Democratic Front by exploiting old loyalties and the memories of anti-imperialist struggle. The forces of the democratic revolutions will be weak and paralysed if the bourgeois leaderships succeeded in keeping these organisations and masses away from the Democratic Front.

The Communist Party must devote the utmost attention to winning

these masses away from the influence of the bourgeois leaders through propaganda, joint campaigns and joint struggles.

Great and vital importance, therefore, attaches to bringing these two organisations inside the Democratic Front, through the mass pressure of their followers and in opposition to their leaders. It is therefore essential that the Lefts who are inside these organisations should carry on a persistent battle to unmask the policies of the leaderships and win over the masses for the democratic revolution and for joining the Democratic Front.

The Congress with its sixty-year old tradition of anti-British fight and with the memories of national battles that it rouses, sways lakhs of anti-imperialists who earnestly desire to move forward. The name of the Congress is today used by the bourgeois leaders to keep popular opinion behind them in support of their collaborationist policy. What the people are unable to accept from the Central Government and Ministries, is pushed through the Congress and public criticism is paralysed. To abandon the fight inside the Congress, to ignore its important role in the Democratic Front, will be tantamount to making a present of lakhs of people to the bourgeois leaders. The CPI has no illusions that the Congress leadership will either accept the programme or the Democratic Front. It will be dangerous opportunism to have such an illusion. But it is vital to win the Congress masses for the democratic revolution. The CPI, therefore, attaches great importance to the work of consistent anti-imperialists and democrats inside the Congress—the work of disillusioning the masses and pressing forward for a democratic revolutionary programme.

Role of the Left

The CPI appeals to the lefts who are inside the Congress not to give up the fight but press it on and defeat all attempts to make the Congress an authoritarian body—a subservient tool of the collaborationist policies of the bourgeois leadership. They should further wage a battle for people's unity by moving the Congress to join the Democratic Front, despite the opposition of the leadership.

That is why the Left should direct its agitation in a way which will help the Congress masses to release themselves from the influence of the bourgeois leaders.

A major role in this release will be played by the independent actions of the Left—and of the growing Democratic Front. Not mere words and criticism alone, but the independent and decisive actions of the Left will be a major source of changing the consciousness of the Congress masses.

The Communist Party of India must therefore attempt to establish immediate fraternal relations with the Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc and other Left groups and make proposals to build Left unity on a common programme. The bitter resistance of Socialist Party leaders to Left unity, their opposition to the unity of mass organisations of the working class, the kisans and students, their attack on Marxism-Leninism as "totalitarian Communism" and their advocacy of "democratic socialism" or reformism of the British Labour Party will not succeed in preventing unity, if the Communist Party patiently explains the situation to the Socialist Party ranks, for in the ranks there is genuine desire for such unity. While offering Left unity on the basis of common programme and agreeing to start joint actions on immediate issues, the CPI should systematically struggle for ideological clarification on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and point out the weaknesses of these parties.

There can be no other programme for Left unity and Democratic Front than the minimum programme of the democratic revolution.

Reforms and Revolution

Today, with the post-war revolutionary crisis which is upsetting the colonial order and which cannot remain at this level for all time, if we do not achieve the democratic revolution in the shortest possible period, the imperialists and the bourgeois will defeat the revolution and will attempt to solve the crisis by suppressing the masses and forcibly retaining the colonial order.

There are only two ways out : either a democratic revolution or an intensified slavery and misery under joint exploitation.

The Slogans of the democratic revolution are not mere propaganda slogans but achievable and realisable in the immediate future.

Those who argue as if the democratic revolution is a long way off, and are content with what they call advance, which in reality are petty reforms, are reformists who disrupt the democratic revolution in the interests of the bourgeois.

We must clearly understand that the concessions won today, the reforms big or small secured today, are temporary devices of the bourgeoisie to slay the agrarian revolution and to lull the peasantry to sleep. They will be attacked, and nothing will remain of them as soon as the strength of the masses is disrupted and the revolutionary crisis is allowed to peter out.

It has been the lesson of every revolution that when the revolution is imminent big concessions are made to the masses, to be withdrawn as soon as the revolution is defeated, i.e., as soon as the masses stop moving forward.

In the context of the present revolutionary situation the reforms and concessions must be first understood from this angle—let them not sidetrack us from relentlessly pursuing the path of the democratic revolution. We cannot be a party to boosting these concessions and lulling the consciousness of the masses. Every concession won will be utilised to build up still further the confidence of the masses that they can fight forward to secure the whole, and we shall ask the masses to compare the reforms secured with the whole that they are striving for.

Today even the eight-hour day is not safe without a democratic revolution. We must tell this bitter truth to the masses that even the concessions won will disappear unless the landsuckers and exploiters defeated.

This, of course, is not the same thing as the vulgar, conception : to achieve revolution in every partial struggle. This is what the enemies of Marxism always say about the Marxists in their attempts to slander them.

A correct outlook can come only if we realise that the direction of the struggles is towards an agrarian and democratic revolution, that social relations have collapsed to such an extent that no fundamental problem can be solved without a democratic revolution and, therefore, it is necessary to guide the several unconnected

struggles consciously into this channel. All reforms, besides, are the bye-products of revolutionary struggles; this truth must never be forgotten.

These bye-products must be utilised to strengthen the revolution and not for removing revolution to a distant age.

Programme of Democratic Revolution

The programme of the Democratic Front and the Left parties should contain the following :

(1) A democratic Government representing the will of the people and not of the capitalists, and opposed to collaboration with Anglo-American imperialism and pursuing a democratic foreign and economic policy abroad.

(2) A Constitution guaranteeing full freedom and democracy to the common man, and ensuring full economic power for the people.

(3) Self-determination to national units—linguistic provinces.

(4) Full rights of Muslim minorities to be embodied in the Constitution.

(5) End of feudal rule and establishment of full democracy. On the question of accession to the Indian Union or Pakistan, the Democratic Front will decide the question by applying three criteria : (i) what are the wishes of the people concerned, (ii) what course helps democracy in the State as well as in the Dominion, (iii) how does it affect the relations between the peoples of Indian Union and Pakistan.

(6) Tribals and similar backward people living in compact areas to be given the right to form autonomous regions inside the provinces concerned. The Central as well as every Provincial Government must assure economic and cultural development of these tribal areas. Administration of agriculture, education, forest, shall be the jurisdiction of the Autonomous unit of the tribal and semi-tribal people.

(7) Co-operation between Indian Union and Pakistan for economic help, military and political alliances for defence, to pursue a

democratic foreign policy in co-operation with the Democratic States against the Anglo-American bloc.

(8) Abolition of landlordism and distribution of land to the tillers of the soil. Abolition of zemindary system without confiscation of khas land of the non-cultivating landowners and without giving land to sub-tenants and share-croppers, while giving huge compensation to the landlords, will no longer be considered as a progressive step worth boosting up.

(9) Nationalisation of key industries, minimum living wage, 8-hour day, right to strike, trade union regulation, social security.

(10) Control of profits in industries in private hands.

(11) Economic plan to develop India's resources and removal of Big business from strategic economic points.

(12) Repeal of all repressive legislation.

(13) Support to democratic nations fighting against Anglo-American imperialism and pacts of mutual assistance with them in economic, political and military spheres.

The Democratic Front, and the Communist Party in building it up, will fight communal agents and riot-mongers as enemies of the people. They will unmask their talk about defence of Hindu or Muslim culture and expose their class affiliation. They will organise "Santi Senas," cooperate with all who stand for communal peace and help every genuine step that the Government might take to quell riots. At the same time, they will expose the policy of national compromise which spreads riots and will call upon the people to defeat the game of vested interests. They will also expose all communal acts of the Members of the Government which abet feudal reaction.

To start with, it is not necessary that there will be a joint front of only those who agree with the entire programme of the Democratic Front. Immediate joint actions may start on specific questions. As joint actions develop and as Left cooperation develops, the correctness of the programme will be self-evident to all democratic elements and the Front will be progressively realised as part of the experience of the Left and the masses as a whole.

The left and “National” Government

The Left, as well as the Democratic Front, must take a correct attitude to the existing Central Government. The Democratic revolution will certainly have to find a new Government to carry out its will—a new Government, representative of classes different than those now ruling the present Government.

But the majority of the people are not yet convinced about the necessity to have it and they continue to look upon the present Government as a popular Government.

Unmasking of the policies of the Central Government together with the concentration on Patel, whom all regard as the spokesman of Big business, opens the way to the new stage when we can demand a new democratic Government.

It is obvious that participation by any Left leaders in the present Government with its present policy is an act of treachery to the Left. All such participation must be denounced. The Left can agree to participate only when the Government is committed to a programme of democratic revolution—the extreme Right at least is expelled from the Government and the united Left has developed sufficient strength to apply decisive mass pressure for the realisation of the programme.

Wrong Ideas About Reconstruction

On the question of national reconstruction the position must be sharply stated. We must expose the bourgeois hoax of national reconstruction which is but another name for passing on the burden of the crisis to the workers and the people, through a 9-hour day, freezing of wages and intensification of labour.

We must expose that the production is falling because of the capitalist ownership and crisis of capitalism; we should not join in the hunt for preparing production plans with capitalist profits intact.

We must make it clear that there can be no national reconstruction and no reorganisation of production without nationalisation of industries, without liquidating the colonial order, without

implementing the programme of the democratic revolution, without giving decent wages to the workers.

Overwhelmed by bourgeois propoganda we sometimes feel ashamed to advocate nationalisation of industries and a living wage as the basis of national reconstruction—thinking that these are too general and abstract bases. So demoralised are we sometimes that we do not see that these are the most practical and concrete proposals—and the only effective ones to change the social order and reorganise production. Only those who are accustomed to think even of the democratic revolution as a distant perspective and do not believe in fighting for it at the present, but want to argue on the basis of bourgeois practicality, will feel embarassed before our immediate programme.

Therefore to ask the workers to produce more for the capitalist plans, made for the purpose when the working class is engaged in a bitter struggle to prevent worsening of its standard of living, is a call to sacrifice the worker to the bourgeoisie. Those who give the call are victims of bourgeois propoganda against the workers.

We must expose and unmask the bourgeois plans, resist all attacks against the workers and boldly put forward nationalisation, control of profits, living wage etc. as our contribution to organising production. All Party leaders must get rid of the idea that nationalisation etc. is not a concrete proposal.

Decontrol — First Shot of Big Business

On the question of decontrol versus control we must take a correct stand in consonance with the realities of the situation. Otherwise we will lose the initiative to Big business.

The decontrolling of commodities will vitally affect the interest of large sections of the working class, the town and city petty-bourgeoisie and also the peasants. Prices of industrial goods and agrarian products will rise. By raising the prices through decontrol Big Business seeks to transfer the burden of the crisis on certain sections of the people. The wage increases will be resisted; prices will automatically rise.

Decontrol means fall in the real wage of the city petty-bourgeoisie and the working class, and also in the purchasing power of the poor peasants.

This must be exposed and the discontent of these sections must be harnessed to defend their own interests. The peasant perhaps will be cheated again. It almost looks certain that prices of goods that he will have to purchase will rise higher than the grain he has to sell.

How are the exponents of Big business justify decontrol before the peasant masses and sections of other people?

By holding out hopes to the peasant that he will get a better price.

By holding out hopes to the city people that prices will fall.

By themselves taking a lead in denouncing administrative corruption, delays and blackmarketing; thus making a plausible case for decontrol.

We must, therefore, expose this game and show that it is the monied interests that are responsible for corruption and blackmarketing; that their game now is to exploit through the rising prices both the town and the village; that the real remedy against corruption is removal of corrupt officers; that the alternative is not between present corrupt controls and decontrol but between effective control — to check Big business and blackmarket—and decontrol; that effective control can be established by freezing all payment of rent to the landlords and interest to the money-lenders, by taking over the entire surplus with the rich peasants, by nationalising the industries, by giving the peasant a fair price and by assuring him industrial goods at cheap prices.

We thus expose the Big business and also the Government policy, and show that the Government instead of attacking Big business has succumbed to it through decontrol, giving it freedom to loot all, including the peasant.

Naturally, with the present decontrol, we will not ask the peasant to part with his grain unless he gets a fair price and supply of

industrial goods at cheap prices. To do so will be to join in the exploitation of the peasant.

Reassess States People's Struggles

We have to adopt very correct tactics on the States people's front. All these days we have in our press glorified every compromise as a big victory of the popular forces. We have fallen into bourgeois trap of glorifying every accession, even though it was accompanied by petty reforms and retention of Princely autocracy.

We must first assess the results of these struggles. Nowhere have the people really scored an irrevocable triumph. On the other hand, the compromise has been of such a thinly veiled character that as soon as the mass pressure declines there is every danger of the most reactionary elements in the States coming on top and practically nullifying the gains. The Central Government with its policy of appeasement will not be able to prevent this. We seem to be unaware of the betrayal of the trusting people.

We must, therefore, reassess these struggles. In the developing struggles we should do our best to fight the compromising policies and if we are unable to prevent compromise we should not at least join the chorus of glorification and cheat the people. By our criticism and explanation, and wherever possible by action also, we should gradually demarcate ourselves from the compromisers. We should not feel embarrassed to put forward our full demand for abolition of autocracy, imagining that it will isolate us. There are a number of ways in which we can popularise it, without getting isolated. It is sheer opportunism on our part to start with a programme of compromise and not even raise the issue of abolition of autocracy.

We should utilise any interval that we might get to expose the real character of the settlement and show how little it is, compared with the strength of the people and their rights. We must teach the people to give up the servile attitude which judges any compromise as an advance over the past and does not examine it in relation to the present.

We are a very weak force in the States and our task to fight compromising policies is very difficult. In many States we are mere

individuals or groups. Our opposition to compromise does not and cannot mean that we break with Prajamandals and do not participate in the struggles launched by them. On the other hand we just participate in these struggles and try to push them as far as possible. Our weak position should not be an excuse to always line up behind the compromisers, to always glorify their compromise and thus get popular. The Party has grown both by participation as well as by independent criticism and action. Unless proper ways of independent criticism and understanding are found and the radical sections of the States peoples are roused to independent thinking, unless the masses are made familiar with their fundamental right to abolish feudalism, there will be no democracy, no fighting the compromise, but only a continuous surrender. The people's Age must help in this and not sow illusions. The comrades on the spot must attempt it and they will soon find that if they do not forget our present weakness, they will be able to do it in a manner which will not isolate us.

We must, besides fighting the compromising policies, boldly put forward, at least in our meetings, the programme of agrarian revolution and popularise legally or illegally abolition of feudalism. Without creating a core round this programme no fight against feudal order can be carried on, nor can the policies of compromise be defeated.

Lead Battles of the Masses

Disillusionment against the policies of the national leadership is rapidly growing among the people. These policies will not solve a single problem of the people. There is not scope for bourgeois development of India—beyond the colonial order and status. These policies, dominated by the capitalist crisis, will add to the misery and impoverishment of the Indian masses, rousing their anger and indignation and leading to mass strikes of the workers and peasant actions.

The Party and the working class must be in a position to lead everyone of these battles; of the workers fighting against the desperate efforts of the capitalists to throw the burden of the crisis on their shoulders; of the struggles of the kisan masses against eviction, for

rent reduction and for fair prices for crops and for getting industrial goods at cheap prices; of the middle-class employees, teachers, clerks, government servants etc., for better living conditions; of the common people against black-marketeers and corrupt administrative officials; and of every struggle for civil liberties and democratic rights.

The Party must realise that everyone of these struggles, partial, economic and political, has a profound revolutionary meaning in the contest of the maturing of the democratic revolution in our country. The Party must work its utmost to win the maximum possible public support to every one of these struggles with the confidence that with the worsening crisis affecting every section of the common man, it will be possible to nail down the vested interests as the chief enemy of our economic life.

The imperialists and their agents seek to build a line-up from the British and American imperialists to the bourgeoisie in order to stop the tide of the revolution. They hope that the bourgeoisie will succeed in splitting the popular forces, paralysing larger sections of the masses and repressing the rest. Their own agents have already started the softening process through riots.

At this stage the fate of the revolution depends on the correct policy of the CPI and of the working class—a policy which must see the great strength of the forces of the revolution and also their weakness in the illusions the masses have about the bourgeoisie. To gather that strength through the Democratic Front, to dispel the illusions by unmasking the "National Government" and to carry forward the fight on the basis of the programme of the democratic revolution is the special task of the Party of the working class. If the CPI itself suffers from illusions about bourgeois leadership, the revolution will be betrayed. If the Party comes out as a bold critic of the national leadership, it will accelerate the process of disillusionment of thousands, enabling the Democratic Front to grow and develop sufficient strength to defeat the present bourgeois policies and create pre-conditions for the establishment of a democratic Government, which will really be an instrument of the democratic revolution.

In the present period of world crisis the task of pushing the democratic revolution ahead is the responsibility of the working class and its party, the Communist Party. The independent role and activity of the working class, as the champion of the anti-imperialist masses against the imperialist-feudal combine and against the collaborationist bourgeoisie constitutes the guarantee for the success of the democratic revolution.

The working class cannot play this role unless it itself is growingly united under its vanguard, the Communist Party, and unless the Party is able to unite the people in the Democratic Front and activate broad masses in the cause of completion of the national democratic revolution.

It is, therefore, more than ever necessary to broaden the mass base of the Party among workers, peasants, middle class, students, youths of all sections, women and oppressed minorities, so that the Party of the working class becomes a real mass party capable of discharging the great responsibilities resting on its shoulders. It is necessary to attract fighters from all fronts and all sections, militants from partial struggles and all honest revolutionaries to the ranks of the party, educate them in Marxism-Leninism so that they in their turn become the real educators of the masses, guiding and leading them towards complete freedom and democracy.

A mass party with a conscious membership fully trained in Marxism-Leninism—such must be our watchword.

POLITICAL THESIS

**Of the Second Congress of the
Communist Party of India held in Calcutta,
28th February — March 6, 1948**

I. THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

The defeat of Hitler Germany and fascist Japan in the second world war has completely altered the international landscape and moved the balance decisively in favour of the working class and its revolutionary movement. Though the elimination of powerful rivals like Germany and Japan might appear to have strengthened other imperialist powers, the total result is not the strengthening of the world imperialist system but its immense weakening; not the strengthening of American imperialism but its tremendous weakening before the world revolutionary movement; not the strengthening of the capitalist world but the strengthening of the socialist world and of the movements and people heading towards socialism and national emancipation.

These results are to be seen in the direct increase in the power and strength of the revolutionary forces.

The imperialist expectation of a tremendous weakening of the Soviet Union, its economic collapse and chaos after the war has not only not materialised, but the contrary has come true.

In spite of the tremendous slaughter of manpower and the most devastating destruction of resources, the Soviet Union has come out stronger—an object of admiration for the people and a great rallying point for the working class and the masses in the struggle against capital. The might of its arms creates confidence among the masses of all countries and shatters the myth of the invincibility of imperialist arms.

Not only the military, but also the economic, organisational and

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industrial prestige of the Soviet Union has increased tremendously, and the people in capitalist countries contrast the planned organised life in the Soviet Union with the anarchy in capitalist society.

Secondly, the rise in eastern Europe of people's democracies—where power belongs to the people, where large-scale industry, transport and the banks are owned by the state and where a bloc of the labouring classes of the population headed by the working class constitutes the leading force—is another big blow to world capitalism. It takes away a population equal in number to that of Britain and France put together and a big territory from the orbit of capitalism, and puts it firmly on the path to socialism.

By tearing these countries out of the orbit of the imperialist-capitalist world, by establishing people's democracies in them, which shatter the political and economic power of the exploiting classes, by organising states which embody the sovereignty of the people based on the alliance of workers, peasants and oppressed middle classes, and by strengthening the world socialist sector, the east-European democracies further widen the breach created by the Russian revolution in 1917.

The strengthening of the revolutionary movement of the working class and the weakening of capitalism is further seen on the European continent in the immense rise in the strength of the communist parties—the vanguard of the working class—and in the growing unification of the class around them. The rise of the Italian and French communist parties, apart from those in eastern Europe, was the logical conclusion of the great role they played in the revolutionary struggle against fascism.

A measure of this immense strength is to be obtained not only by the immense growth in party membership, but in the growth of the mass organisations led by the parties, in the parliamentary successes scored—with the communist parties often coming out as the biggest single parties.

The rise of the communist parties in the countries epitomises the strength of the working class and the instability of the present regimes and the maturity of the revolutionary developments. It shows that before the parties of the right can restore the pre-war capitalist balance, economically and politically, before the ruling

class can successfully throw the burdens of the crisis on the working class, it will have to wage big battles against the workers—battles in which the working-class strength is immense and great. It shows that the working-class is in a position to defeat the new offensive and solve the revolutionary tasks of the present period.

Europe for the capitalists is on the brink of a disaster. In Britain, it is the labour government that stands between the mounting discontent and the capitalist rule. In America, which is getting more and more in the mire of the crisis, which is hungrily searching for markets all over the world and is attacking the living standard of its own people and the freedom of other nations—the crisis opens new battles between the financial autocrats and the common people.

The successful struggle for Chinese liberation that is being waged under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party strikes another powerful blow at the world imperialist order, threatening to alter the political landscape of Asia and preparing the way of throwing the imperialists and their agents out of the colonies. The growing rout of Chiang Kai-shek's armies and the fiasco of the policy of American imperialism unmistakably show that the imperialist policies and aims come up everywhere against insuperable obstacles in the shape of people struggling for freedom.

The Role of Rightwing Social-Democrats

In this new and decisive period of revolutionary developments, the rightwing social-democrats, the traditional hangers-on of the bourgeoisie, come forward with their usual treacherous role as the lackeys and servitors of the bourgeoisie.

In the period of antifascist war, the social-democratic leaders of France, Britain, etc. found themselves in the people's camp, along with their capitalist masters, who were compelled to join it. They joined it after they had slandered the Soviet Union, supported the munichites, disrupted the popular front, split the ranks of the working class and had seen the utter fiasco of the foreign policy of their masters.

In the course of the war, the social-democratic leaders sabotaged the revolutionary armed liberation struggles against the fascists, joining their imperialist masters, firstly, in relying on the Anglo-

American invading armies and, secondly, in supporting the old reactionary imperialist agents (Badoglio, Mihailovitch, Mikolajczyk etc.) as against the people's liberation movements. Thus they acted as a brake on the initiative of the masses.

Today when in each country the question of fight against capitalist rule is being decisively posed, the rightwing social-democrats, as true reformists come out in favour of the capitalist order, as its defenders and apologists, as a hypocritical 'third force' directing its fire on the working class and the communist party.

In the post-war elections they capitalised the discontent of the masses against the traditional bourgeois parties and secured majorities in parliaments (Britain); they capitalised the prestige which the participation of their ranks in the antifascist struggle had won for them to get into governments and split the ranks of the working class.

The social-democratic leaders, in conformity with the needs of their capitalist masters, follow a policy of attacking the living standards of the working class, of throwing the burdens of the crisis on the workers, of engaging in a mad hunt for markets, suppress the working class and the people, attack democratic rights, pursue an anti-soviet, anti-socialist and anti-revolutionary policy—a policy of defending the capitalist order and taking the people to another war.

The rightwing social-democratic leaders have also emerged as the initiators of plans of bestial suppression, of fullscale wars against subject peoples in revolt at the end of the war. They have combined their military suppression with new forms of imperialist enslavement of subject peoples in alliance with native bourgeois classes, miscalled 'independence'. The British labour government has granted such fake 'independence' to India, Pakistan, Burma, etc.

The socialist government of France, in defence of the French empire, is suppressing with armed force the Vietnamese people's struggle for freedom. The Dutch socialists are fully supporting Dutch imperialism's colonial war in Indonesia.

The rightwing social-democratic leaders, under the dictates of American imperialism, conspire with the reactionaries in throwing communist parties out of government, in forming stop-gap coalitions with bourgeois parties to open the way to reactionary regimes, throw themselves on the mercy of American money and loans to maintain the present order and lend their influence to combat the growing wave of revolutionary discontent. Anti-sovietism, anti-communism, defence of capitalism, become the keys to understand the policies of the social-democratic leadership.

New Class Alignments

The close of the anti-fascist war has thus led to a new constellation of class forces. The old combination, in which certain sections of the bourgeoisie and their reformist hangers-on were found in the people's camp in the common battle against fascism, is replaced by one in which the entire world bourgeoisie, ranged together with its reformist hangers-on and reactionary supporters, is attempting to blend itself together to stem the tide of revolution and oppose the working class, the people, the socialist Soviet Union, the eastern democracies and the colonial peoples.

The impact of economic crisis and the imminent menace of revolution are the basic reasons why the new setup comes into existence and the bourgeois states begin to conspire against the Soviet Union; why Anglo-American imperialism more and more uses its majority in the UNO as a bloc against the democratic nations.

Even during the course of the people's war, the contradiction between the socialist and the capitalist worlds was developing (dealy of the second front, Anglo-American intrigue to bleed the Soviet Union and support for reactionaries like Darlan, de Gaulle, Badoglio, etc.). After the end of the war and the sudden release of the economic crisis, the contradiction sharpened immediately.

The basic line of the bourgeois parties in each country and of their reformist hangers-on, is to fight the revolution at home and abroad. That is why the old setup completely changes. This is what creates two camps—the imperialist anti-democratic camp, and the anti-imperialist democratic camp composed of the Soviet Union,

the east-European democracies and the fighting people all over the world.

The leadership of the imperialist camp is in the hands of American imperialism whose strength has immensely grown in relation to its old rivals. It has out-distanced Britain to such an extent that Britain is a supplicant for alms at the American door. It has gained the most from the elimination of its most powerful rivals, Germany and Japan; this has whetted its appetite for markets. With its territory far from the field of war, it was able to develop its resources quickly in the war period, with the result that today its productive capacity has grown immensely.

With it have grown the lust and need for markets, for domination of colonies so that new fields of investment are opened and strategic war bases are secured, for subordinating every government, whether of a colonial or advanced capitalist country, to stave off the crisis in America.

The rise of the American colossus over-riding all other capitalist countries, subordinating nation after nation to its financial rule and operating as the most important factor in determining the policies of the capitalist world, is one of the basic elements in the new situation.

The maintenance and expansion of American imperialism can be achieved only by crushing the freedom and independence of all countries and by establishing fascist reactionary dictatorships all over the world. The necessity of maintaining the old order has forced American imperialism to come out as the open enemy of all mankind.

The role of classes, political parties, leaders and organisations, therefore, must be judged in relation to this basic role of American imperialism.

Simultaneously with this, there has been a flare-up in the inter-imperialist antagonisms. The elimination of Japan and Germany has not solved but intensified the rivalry between Britain and America, and the two come into conflict in almost every part of the world; in the middle-east for oil; in south-east Asia and French Indo-China; in Europe, the American dollar more and more forces

back the British sterling. American imperialism even holds back British big-business' own plans for rebuilding British industry, badly shattered during the war (for instance ship building), exacting harsh terms in return for its loans; it is by using this whip-hand that it continuously applies its pressure to bring Britain firmly within its imperialist orbit, reducing it to the status of a second-rate power and its own satellite.

Today, with Britain dependent on America, the rival claims are being adjusted in favour of America—America forcing Britain to pull down or reduce import tariff walls, give wider scope to American trade, accept all kinds of conditions on loans and make Britain's colonies dependent on America. Britain has no choice as long as it continues to remain a capitalist country, and it is forced to trail behind America.

But a solution of the rival claims in this way only worsens the conditions of the British masses and hampers economic development. This will lead to growing consciousness and determination of the British working class to fight the Anglo-American reactionary alliance. Thus the basis of Anglo-American co-operation against the Soviet Union, against democratic revolution, gets weakened by the experience of the masses.

Imperialism's Way Out

Faced with the biggest revolutionary wave menacing its very existence, with the utter collapse of the capitalist order in Europe, with new gains scored by the working class and the people against monopoly capital and with the threatened collapse of capitalist production in America—American imperialism seeks to find a way out of the present crisis in the interests of the capitalist order.

It pushes ahead with its Marshall plan which is essentially directed to build the western bloc, a bloc of reactionary capitalist states in western Europe, bound hand and foot to American imperialism, a reactionary bloc in which the restored industrial belt in western Germany, controlled by American monopolies, acting directly and through the still-surviving fascists, will occupy a central position.

The granting of American credits is directed to succour Europe's

collapsing capitalist order and stave off the revolution, while in return these countries are forced to sell their economic and political independence to American imperialism, offering themselves as outlets for surplus American goods, thus turning themselves increasingly into virtual colonies of the USA.

The Truman doctrine and the Marshall plan based on it serve the needs of American expansion.

Economically, the Marshall plan is a plan of rendering economic assistance by means of American credits to reactionary regimes in Europe. This economic 'assistance' helps American imperialism to find a market for its goods in the country to which such assistance is rendered. American imperialism thus seeks to mitigate the crisis of overproduction in America.

Politically, it is an attempt to bolster up anti-democratic reactionary governments which, relying on reactionary vested interests, can act as stooges of American imperialism and sell the economic and political independence of their countries to American imperialism. American 'assistance' generally means the domination of the political life of the country by American imperialism; sooner or later only those parties remain in power as are prepared to accept the dictates of Washington in their home and foreign policies and crush the democratic and working masses of their own countries.

American imperialism relies on the rightwing social-democrats of certain countries for help, since the parties of the right are already discredited. It relies on the anti-communism, anti-sovietism and the anti-revolutionary policy of the rightwing social-democrats to do its job. Financial measures and immediate relief given by the USA supply a base for the treachery of the rightwing social-democrats. They arm them with a weapon to cheat the masses and to parade before them the necessity of American aid by taking advantage of their starvation and loss of jobs.

The rightwing leaders of reformist parties today are used as the first weapon to split the ranks of the working class and begin the process of setting a country on the road to fascism.

Simultaneously with this, American imperialism goes on arming and strengthening the real fascists like de Gaulle.

It is on the basis of this aid to the collapsing capitalist structure that the American imperialists attempt to draw the rightwing social-democrats and the bourgeois parties into a common front against the Soviet Union, into a western bloc to fight the Soviet Union and eastern democracies. The rebuilding of capitalist fascist Germany and the formation of the western bloc to unleash war and to fight the Soviet Union are integral parts of the imperialist plan to solve the crisis at the expense of the people. The war propaganda now being carried on, the atom bomb threat repeatedly given, and the anti-Soviet slander which has become a part of the bourgeois offensive—all show that imperialism seeks a way out through war, if it can do so.

To achieve this end, the unleashing of a third world war, however, is not easy; for the Marshall plan and its political counterpart, the plan to build a western bloc, can only succeed through destroying the independence and national sovereignty of the countries of western Europe, transforming them into America's colonies; these plans are therefore, bound to meet and are already meeting with the growing resistance of the democratic forces of Europe, headed by the communist parties and the working class, whose strength can certainly defeat the provocateurs of war.

The Marshall plan is thus imperialism's way out of the crisis, a plan for the enslavement of the world and the colonial fascisation of Europe.

In the Colonies

The post-war revolutionary epoch has brought the colonies to the path of armed struggle against the imperialists and their allies. So powerful are these struggles and so great their revolutionary sweep that the achievement at one stroke of people's democracy (as in the countries of eastern Europe) becomes an immediate attainable objective. The imperialists and their bourgeois collaborators are overthrown and power passes into the hands of the toiling people led by the working class, which assures not only complete national independence but also the liquidation of the capitalist social order and the building of socialism.

As in the metropolitan countries, so in the colonies, the old

imperialist order—the colonial order—was collapsing. Ground down by exploitation and poverty—first by the imperialists and then by the fascists—the people in many countries resisted the imperialists' attempt to come back after Japan's defeat, and fought with arms. Vietnam and Indonesia carried on regular wars of liberation. Burma fought with weapons. India began to see armed-struggles, mutinies and fraternisation of the army and the police with the people.

In the centre of this great struggle for colonial liberation stands the glorious fight of the Chinese people, led by the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army, delivering massive blows against the main bulwark of colonial rule in Asia and the world. People's victory in the Chinese struggle will change the entire shape of Asia and the world, and ensure the doom of the colonial and capitalist order.

Faced with this onrushing tide of revolution, imperialism makes desperate attempts to save the colonial order by seeking new allies with influence and with a mass base, by cheating the colonial people with fake freedom and independence.

In China, American imperialism openly finances the murderous campaign of Chiang Kai-shek—and yet, aware of the fact that the Kuomintang is discredited, makes an attempt to draw other parties into the fight against the communists. But it places its main reliance on the Kuomintang and the armed help given to it.

In Indonesia, it sought to capitalise the vacillations of the bourgeoisie to temporise, defeat and betray the armed struggle of the people.

On the continent of Europe the imperialists first rely on the righthwing social-democrats and then on other parties of the right to achieve their objective. Everywhere their strategic aim is to secure a mass base for their offensive against revolution.

Fiasco of Imperialist Policy

The essence of recent international developments, however, is the growing frustration of imperialist designs, the growing isolation of Anglo-American imperialism and its henchmen in country after country, both in Europe and Asia.

The conference of the nine European communist parties in Poland in September 1947 and its decision to establish an information bureau, for exchange of information and coordination of activities based on mutual agreement, marked a historic turning point in the development of the struggle between the democratic camp and the imperialist camp.

The militant call of the conference to unite to resist the expansionist policy of American imperialism and its agents in every country and its drive to war has led to a new upsurge of the democratic masses throughout the world who have increasingly gone over to the offensive against the Anglo-American imperialists and their local allies.

The firm refusal of the central and east-European people's democracies to support the Marshall plan has dealt a heavy blow to American economic expansion. Subsequent developments in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as well as in Romania and Bulgaria, signify the utter isolation of reaction in these countries. The fact that the toiling masses ranged behind the socialist and peasant parties in these countries have firmly expelled traitorous elements and adhered to the democratic blocs, and thus defeated the American conspiracy to foment civil war in these countries, underlines the tremendous isolation of the forces of imperialism and reaction, and the enormous strength of the democratic and popular forces.

In Greece, the heroic democratic army, commanded by General Markos, has liberated seven-tenths of Greek territory, while all American imperialism's attempts to crush it have been fought back determinedly; at the same time, America's agents, the Greeks fascists, are thoroughly isolated from the toiling people and face a growing opposition even in the territory they yet control, as reflected in numerous strikes and demonstrations.

The heroic struggle of the French working class in defence of the working class interests and the sovereignty of French people has given another big blow to American plan of imperialist expansion.

So also in Italy, the growing strength of the people's democratic front, based on communist-socialist unity, evidenced in the successful mass struggles waged by different sections of the workers and

agricultural labourers, reflect the increasing people's opposition to the American conspiracy to turn Italy with the aid of de Gasperi and local reaction into its Mediterranean colony.

A similar process is revealed in the growing disintegration of the mass following of the Kuomintang in China, the mounting workers', students' and people's upsurge against US-Kuomintang dictatorship contrasted with the ever-large rally of the exploited masses around the banner of the Chinese Communist Party, inflicting on the Kuomintang militarists one defeat after another.

Despite the serious diversion created by the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine, the revolutionary anti-British demonstrations by the students and workers of Cairo, the successful students' and people's revolt in Iraq which led to the downfall of the puppet government and the rescinding of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty of slavery, the persistence of revolutionary discontent in Iran, necessitating martial law in Azerbaijan—all go to underline the immense revolutionary possibilities of the situation in the middle east.

Therefore the chief danger before the working class today is to underestimate its own strength, the strength of the anti-imperialist camp of democracy and socialism, and to overestimate the strength of the enemy camp, the camp of imperialism and reaction and its puppets and collaborators in each country.

The developments show that the people's revolutionary forces of the world are stronger than imperialist reaction and that reaction thrives only to the extent it can disrupt and blackmail the democratic camp with the help of the rightwing social-democratic leaders.

Frustrated in its attempts to solve the crisis of capitalism by means of peaceful expansion of its 'sphere' of influence, alarmed by the growing threat of workers' counter-offensive all over the world and menaced by the imminence of a new crisis of over-production which is inevitable, American imperialism is making hectic preparations for a new world war. All these preparations will only intensify the capitalist crisis and meet with increasing resistance from the toiling people all over the world, rousing them to fight all the more against war and imperialist domination.

II. CHANGES IN INDIA DURING SECOND WORLD WAR AND ECONOMIC BASIS OF COLLABORATIONIST POLICY OF BOURGEOISIE

In India, the British imperialists saw the menacing tide of revolution, irrepressible and advancing, and realised that the days of the old order were over. The old colonial rule in which British imperialism was the avowed master and was supported by a feudal retinue, bureaucrats, landlords, etc. was an order based on perpetuation of feudalism and opposition to the bourgeoisie.

It was an order which could be maintained only by the most naked use of force—for neither imperialism nor the princes had any social base, while the order oppressed the entire people alike.

It was an order which was maintained by repressing the people and keeping the bourgeoisie away from state-power as well as by obstructing its economic development.

Imperialism could rule in this way only so long as the movement for national emancipation had not risen to huge dimensions.

The imperialist policy of obstructing capitalist development threw the bourgeoisie into opposition, into the people's camp, and made it oscillate between revolution and imperialism. The bourgeoisie, though drawn by self-interest to join the anti-imperialist movement, always acted as a brake on the militancy of the movement and repeatedly compromised at the expense of the people.

The post-war situation saw the national-revolutionary discontent reaching the level of armed struggle in India. The national bourgeoisie, though it lost the gamble of a 'swift and short struggle' in 1942—which relied for its success on fascist advance—had nevertheless increased its strength and influence over the people enormously, because the people looked upon the 1942 struggle as an anti-imperialist struggle and the national bourgeois leadership as its leader. The exploitation of the anti-imperialist discontent in 1942 now paid its dividend. The national bourgeois leadership could now head and unite the discontent if it so wished. Imperialism realised that would sound the death-knell of its rule.

The way to bar the revolution, to save the old order, was to

purchase the very leaders who were at the head of the national movement and thus broaden the social base of the government, split the revolutionary forces and strike at them.

Menaced by the revolutionary wave, and finding the bourgeoisie also frightened by it and therefore agreeable to compromise, imperialism struck a deal with the bourgeoisie and proclaimed it as independence and freedom. Imperialism was basing itself on a new class—the national bourgeoisie, whose leaders had placed themselves at the head of the national movement and who were immensely useful in beating down the revolutionary wave.

The objective was the same as in Europe. It was to forge new economic chains to enslave the country and while formally transferring power to the bourgeoisie, keep it as a permanent junior partner in operating the state. The object was to install a reactionary government of vested interests in power which, while protecting the imperialist order, would screen imperialist designs.

This imperialist way out of the crisis is the way of continued subjection, of national enslavement, of retaining the colonial order. its poverty and ruin, of hampering industrial development and keeping the feudal framework intact.

It is once more an attempt to throw all the burdens of the crisis on to the backs of the people and intensify their poverty and exploitation many times. It is the way of suppressing the democracy of the toilers, the rights and liberties of the people and preparing the way for colonial fascisation. In short, imperialism is pursuing the same objects as it pursues through the Marshall plan in Europe.

Basis of Revolutionary Wave

The basis for the post-war revolutionary wave and the collaboration between British imperialism and the national bourgeoisie was laid during the course of the war itself when the process of colonial exploitation reached its extreme limit. The colonial exploitation during the war made the Indian people extremely desperate and ready to do anything to liquidate the present order.

India's economy based on the maintenance of feudal relations on land, landlordism and feudal domains, combined with debt

slavery as in ryotwari areas, an economy of scattered petty production, was already a deficit economy with the toiler remaining a starved worker all the time. The parasitic growth of landlordism debt slavery and feudal domains sucked dry the tiller, and agriculture decayed rapidly.

The total acreage under major foodgrains declined in the twenty years up to 1942 as follows*:

In 1921-22, the area under major foodgrains was 158.6 million acres; in 1941-42, it was 156.5 million acres. The total production of major foodgrains also declined. In 1921-22, it was 54.3 million tons; in 1941-42, it was 45.7 million tons.

The yield per acre of rice had declined by 254 lb, or 25 per cent, during the 25 years before the war. It went down from 982 lb per acre during 1909-13 to 728 lb in 1938-39.

The average yield per acre of wheat declined from 724 lb during 1909-13 to 636 lb in 1924-33.

Out of this falling production, the tiller had to yield a major part to the landlord.

Already before the war India had to import food from Burma to make up the deficit. This fact, together with the policy of inflation which the imperialists were pursuing to finance the war at the expense of the people, caused complete chaos and led to the death of hundreds of thousands when during the war imports from Burma stopped.

Feudal relations on land hampered intensive cultivation. They destroyed all initiative of the peasants to grow more food. They made it impossible to utilise the land fully with modern means and equipment, and starved the tiller. These relations became a fetter on the further development of production. They could be kept up by continually starving the tiller—the price was famine, hunger all round—a continuous process of pauperisation, expropriation of peasants and concentration of land in the hands of landlords, rich

* Figures about acreage and production from *Technological Possibilities of Agriculture in India* by W. Burns.

peasants or moneylenders. The agrarian revolution, completely eliminating all feudal exploitation and giving the land to the tiller, was the only way-out.

The war and the economic results created by it aggravated all these effects ten times, making the peasantry a seething mass of anger and discontent.

The British imperialists, in possession of the country's resources, decided to finance the war by predatory methods at the expense of the people.

With the shifting of the front to India with Japan's attack, the imperialists needed goods worth millions, from India, to procure which they resorted to inflation and paid India's common man, the producer, the worker and the peasant, with depreciated money. This meant not only that the nation as a whole was cheated to make a gift of 1600 crores of rupees to Britain (the amount of sterling balances), but that the poorer classes of India were made to part with this 1600 crores of rupees.

The peasant's income, the worker's wages and the salary of the middle-class employee, all were depreciated to below 50 per cent of the former income—making full allowance for the higher prices and dearness allowance given to them.

The poorer sections of the peasantry were looted from both sides. They could not get the full benefit of the rise in prices, they had to purchase industrial goods at still higher prices and also food at extortionate prices when they went to the market to buy it towards the end of the season.

Inflation was an instrument of defrauding the peasantry from all sides, robbing and looting it, passing on the burdens of the war crisis to the starving peasant.

Its result was immense pauperisation of the peasant, still more concentration of land in the hands of the landlords and rich peasants, famine, and three million deaths during the Bengal famine.

With prices of bullocks, iron, plough immensely risen, India's poor peasant finds it impossible to carry on cultivation and becomes

a pauperised peasant. Inflation has further intensified rack-renting, ejection, illegal demands—making the life of the peasant unbearable.

Workers and the War Crisis

Imperialism continued its policy of blocking industrial development in the period of war with the result that once the war jobs are dispensed with, there will be lakhs of unemployed from the army, industries, government services, middle-class clerks and others, without any alternative avenue of employment.

Already nearly a million persons have been thrown out of government services. Railways, docks, civil staff—all are awaiting orders for a general retrenchment.

Indian industry in wartime prospered at the expense of the workers. No new plants were allowed, but the placing of war orders and the extortionate prices secured from the people enabled the capitalists to keep the factories working for all the twenty-four hours.

The workers, however, got their real wages reduced with a rise in the cost of living. In industries where the workers were organised and where strikes took place, the workers secured some dearness allowance, but in other cases the compensation was a mockery.

Inflation reduced the real value of the rupee earned by the worker to six annas or so, and threw the burdens of war on his shoulders.

This, combined with the deterioration in the quality of foodstuffs, has lowered the physical capacity of the workers, leading to absenteeism and a steep fall in their standard of living.

The working class has been fighting against this deterioration for the last seven years.

With the close of the war, the cost of living continued to rise still further and the condition of the working class began to deteriorate still more rapidly, and in the case of a majority of peasants and a considerable proportion of workers and employees it fell too much, below 50 per cent or even less.

Even according to the official estimates, which are generally

gross understatements of reality, the cost-of-living index for Bombay had risen from 100 in August 1939 to 224 in 1945 and 285 in September 1947.

In Ahmedabad, the cost-of-living index rose from 100 in August 1939 to 272 in 1945 and 322 in August 1947.

In Sholapur it rose from 100 in August 1939 to 360 in September 1947.

In Kanpur (on the same basis of August 1939—100), it rose to 308 in 1945 and 420 in October 1947.

In Madras, it rose from 100 in August 1939 to 228 in 1945 and 285 in October 1947.

In Trichur (Cochin state) it rose from 100 in August 1939 to 301 in September 1947.

The all-India food index (wholesale) rose from 100 in August 1939 to 239.4 in August 1945 and to 348.5 in February 1948, that of cereals standing at 405 in February 1948. The worker's food now costs him nearly four times as much as before the war.

This attack on workers' wages was bound to unleash working class anger. Imperialism, tried to forestall it by introducing the 8 hour day (1947), some legislation for holidays with pay for certain sections of workers, appointment of the pay commission for government servants.

But the discontent could not be checked. The working class, whose standard of living had already deteriorated during the war, who had hardly secured any compensation against the rising cost of living, began to fight back.

The all-embracing strike wave is the biggest since 1942. In 1942, the total number of workers affected was 7,72,000 and the man-days lost were 57,79,000. In 1945, the number of workers affected was 7,47,000 and the man-days lost were 40,54,000. In 1946, the number of workers affected rose to the unprecedented figure of 19,61,000, or nearly two million, and the man-days lost were 1,27,17,000 or over 12 million. In the first eight months of 1947, the number of workers on stike was 13,23,253 and the man-days lost were 1,11,95,863.

This huge strike wave clearly shows that the economic crisis

is rapidly gathering momentum and the masses have already started a desperate fight against the impoverishment caused by the crisis.

Conditions in the industrial areas are rapidly leading to widespread industrial unrest in textiles, railways, etc., to workers' anger against mass unemployment and lock-outs, for a struggle for nationalisation and a living wage, for industrial planning and removal of industrial anarchy.

The imperialists and the bourgeoisie are intent on solving the crisis at the expense of the workers, by means of rationalisation, reducing the wage-bill, stopping all further social legislation and speeding up the name of national production.

The working class, however, can be satisfied only with a living wage, nationalisation, limitation of profits, which means that experience is bringing the working class to demand the putting into effect of the whole programme of the democratic revolution. Once more there are only two ways : the capitalist-imperialist way or the people's revolutionary way.

The petty-bourgeoisie, the vast mass of it, is drawn into the vortex of the crisis as never before. First, the students fighting and striking for cheaper education, for the lowering of fees, disclose the discontent in middle-class households over present conditions which are weighted in favour of the rich. The vast mass of petty-bourgeois earners, clerks, government servants, secondary and primary school teachers—all have undergone the worst kind of hell during the war years. They were the worst victims of the blackmarket, they were the last to get any addition to their salaries by way of dearness allowance, and now with their patience exhausted, they are resorting to strikes.

The people of the Indian states have also gone through the horrors of food crisis, blackmarketing, extraordinary prices and denial of necessities. The unprecedented awakening caused by the rapid deterioration of economic conditions, the fight against which was often led by the working class, has led the states' people to blaze the new trail of a democratic upsurge in movements like that of "Quit Kashmir". The states' subjects, driven to desperation, have challenged princely rule in Travancore and Hyderabad and made every prince quake with fear.

The galvanisation of this front against autocracy shows the all-pervading character of the democratic upsurge.

No section of the oppressed people can tolerate the present order. Their movement has a spontaneous direction—the change of the existing order.

Economic Basis of Collaboration

But if war conditions made the people desperate, they made the bourgeoisie look to imperialism for a new alliance.

First, the war, though it fleeced the poor—the working class, the toiling peasantry, etc.—immensely enriched the Indian bourgeoisie, placing in its hands an enormous amount of liquid capital.

Industrial profits rose to giddy heights. The economic adviser to the government of India gave the following figures :*

INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PROFITS

(Base 1928 = 100)

Year	General	Textiles
1939	72.4	154.6
1940	99.9	220.1
1941	135.4	489.1
1942	169.4	760.7

The huge government orders, which enabled the factories to run twenty-four hours and ensured a steady market for the goods, the scarcity of commodities for civilian consumption because of government demand which enabled the capitalists to charge inconceivable prices besides allowing them to make huge black-market profits, made the Indian bourgeoisie a willing partner in the common loot and placed an enormous amount of liquid capital in its hands. Never had 'Indian' industry seen such prosperous days; never was the market so attractive; never did profits pour down in millions like this.

* *Recent Social and Economic Trends in India, 1946.*

Notwithstanding the excess profits tax and other measures, the Indian capitalist class gained enormously in the war. In fact, through inflation and high prices, the government made an unwritten pact with the Indian bourgeoisie to make sure of a steady supply of goods in return for huge profits through looting the people.

The Indian bourgeoisie was not willing to subscribe to government loans. Its leadership—the leadership of the National Congress—was bringing pressure on the government through the ‘August struggle’. It, therefore, could not be drawn into an easy economic cooperation in supplying the economic needs of the government. In fact in the 1942 struggle two of the biggest industries—Jamshedpur and Ahmedabad—organised lock-outs to bring pressure on the government.

Only a huge bribe could quieten them for the time being—the mechanism of prices, of inflation, of continually rising profits. Even though the industrialists were supposed to deliver part of their production at controlled prices to the government, they could charge anything from the civilian population in the blackmarket and thus reap huge profits. That is why the government did not attack the capitalists for their blackmarket transactions; that is why it appointed them on the textile and other boards and allowed them to sabotage such schemes as that of standard cloth.

The rise of prices in the open market as well as in the blackmarket is the measure of the loot which the capitalists were able to garner in the war period through the imperialist mechanism of robbing the people through inflation and depreciation of their labour.

The growing accumulation of liquid capital in the hands of industrialists, merchants and traders has solved one of the big problems of the national bourgeoisie—the availability of liquid capital in a poor country. Capital is no longer shy.

This accumulation has made the Indian bourgeoisie—big business—ambitious and to look in all directions for investment. The Tata-Birla plan, propounded by India’s moneybags, was an advertisement to the world that Indian capitalists were prepared to invest in a big way and to invite big capital for high stakes. It was the measure of the Indian capitalists’ ambition born out of a new confidence created by looted and accumulated cash.

At the same time the capitalists are shrewd enough to understand their own dependence on British and American capital.

British imperialism has successfully denuded Indian industry of all replacement machinery; it has prevented the import of any new machinery to start new industries. Through the eastern group commission and the refusal to implement even the Grady report, it kept Indian industry on a breakdown level during the war.

Renewal and replacement alone will require machinery worth crores of rupees, apart from that required to satisfy the grand ambitions of Indian big business. America and Britain possess the monopoly of capital goods.

Notwithstanding the growth of liquid capital and ambitions, Indian big business is hemmed in from all sides by its backwardness, colonial limitations and dependence on Britain—factors which the latter is fully exploiting.

Indian big business was counting on India's sterling balances amounting to Rs. 1600 crores for large-scale import of capital goods without any difficulty about securing foreign exchange. The bourgeoisie thought that it could successfully negotiate a deal over this vast sum and secure capital goods at the earliest opportunity.

But the British and American imperialists have joined hands to repudiate the major part of these sterling debts and forced India to agree to it for the sake of paltry concessions or the release of a very small part of it.

The British, of course, never intend to pay back the sterling balances but only hold out the bait of releasing part of them as a weapon to secure new economic bargains.

America also wants that India should not be paid back the major part of these balances so that it does not get capital goods to any appreciable extent and its bourgeoisie is made dependent on American or British mercies.

The terms of the Anglo-American loan agreement of 6, December 1945, entered into between the government of the United States and the United Kingdom, lay down in clause 10 :

“The settlements with the sterling area countries will be on the

basis of dividing these accumulated balances into three categories: (1) balances to be released at once and convertible into any currency for current transaction; (2) balances to be similarly released by instalments over a period of years, beginning in 1951; and (3) balances to be adjusted as a contribution to the settlement of war and post-war indebtedness and in recognition of the benefits which the countries concerned might be expected to gain from such a settlement."

The sub-clause (3) is an open proposal to liquidate a substantial part of the balances with the bait that benefits might follow from such a settlement.

Thus the British and American imperialists are using the very debt which Britain owes to India to beat India down, to force India to scale it down in return for some benefits in the shape of capital goods, or in the alternative, to stick to its debt and forgo any benefits. Immediately, i.e., till India has not made a final settlement, they are not releasing any part of the balances for importing capital goods, though a part is released to import food at extortionate prices.

In order that India should be able to pay for the import of capital goods, when they are not paid out of the balances, India must export its own products to other countries and earn sufficient dollar or sterling. In the absence of a foreign loan, or utilisation of the sterling balances, India has no other way of importing capital goods except what it earns through its exports.

The sum earned by India through exports is too little to finance the requirements of big business and it is thus brought to face the bitter truth that for its very existence it is dependent on America or Britain. It will have to wait for years if it were to depend on mere exports for financing its need of capital goods. In fact, it will not be able to replace old machinery for years this way.

The refusal to pay back the balances, the insistence on financing imports of capital goods through foreign exchange earned in exports, are devices of imperialism to strengthen the economic dependence of India on the British and American imperialists and force the Indian bourgeoisie down to servile economic agreements.

They are also instruments of drawing the Indian bourgeoisie into

the Anglo-American economic net, baiting it by the offer of larger export markets in Anglo-American colonies.

The repeated entreaties for releasing at least a part of the sterling balances show the dependence of the Indian bourgeoisie on imperialist mercies.

The Indian bourgeoisie itself is already in need of foreign markets in view of the falling Indian market due to the economic crisis. It knows that unless some outlet is given Indian industry might collapse in a big way.

But this dependence on foreign markets is nothing but dependence on the colonies and semicolonies of Britain or America, which enables the latter to force down any conditions before access to these markets is given. The foreign exchange earned through this trade will constitute a mere trifle in relation to India's capital requirements and will constantly goad Indian big business to shed all the formal trappings of independence and come as a beggar of alms and completely depend on imperialism.

Indian big business itself, in its ambition, is looking to widespread foreign markets—to the entire south-east Asia—and looking upon itself as the inheritor of the mantle thrown off by Japan. The Indian bourgeoisie realises that its plan of expansion cannot be realised without foreign markets, and members of the union government are already talking about exports to south-east Asian countries. The desire to exploit the peoples of south-east Asia with the help of imperialists is one of the most powerful factors in bourgeois politics. The need for foreign markets is the logical conclusion of a desire to develop industries on a capitalist basis with the colonial order kept intact.

Both for its immediate needs—replacement, immediate exports to avoid collapse of industry—and its big plans of expansion of industry, import of capital goods, finding of new markets, release of sterling balances, the national bourgeoisie needs collaboration with imperialism, as without imperialism it will not even be able to run its industry regularly, nor expand it.

The businessmen know that these are the crucial years when either industry expands, new markets are captured before the other nations suffering from war devastation come out as competitors,

or they go bankrupt. That is why they need collaboration very badly.

This desire for collaboration, therefore, takes the shape of retaining the colonial order and willingly inviting foreign capital for joint concerns. They agree to make wide and sweeping concessions to foreign capital in return for securing access to other colonial markets.

The secret of the joint concerns, planned by Indian big businessmen but not yet executed is this. The Indian capitalists finding no other way of getting capital goods are prepared to accept the most extortionate terms from the monopolists of these goods.

The full meaning of this collaboration is seen in the terms demanded by imperialism and accepted by the Indian bourgeoisie.

Foreign capital through the Havana trade pact is demanding full equality, full compensation in case the state takes over any concern; that no measures of nationalisation be carried through, a demand which the Indian government, itself opposed to nationalisation, has found easy to satisfy through its recent statement of policy when it says that there will be no nationalisation for five years; it demands that no discrimination be made between home and foreign capital; that tariff walls be not raised against foreign capital without previous consultation; and that full security be offered to it, meaning security against labour and state intervention.

These terms, accepted by the Indian bourgeoisie, were openly put in the several speeches of the arrogant American ambassador to India, Dr Grady. Speaking in April 1947 in New York. Dr Grady demanded a fundamental reorganisation of India's taxation structure to suit the needs of the American imperialists for unhampered exploitation of India.

“He was of the opinion that the obstacles to maximum economic cooperation such as the present complicated tax structure that hampered the conduct of manufacturing operations in India by foreign companies could be removed by treaties or agreements”—in short, the state should not encroach through taxation on the profits of the foreign concerns.

Demanding a war on protective tariffs, etc., in the name of world

recovery and American assistance and sympathy, Dr Grady stated (Calcutta, 28 October 1947) :

“Until there is truly one-world trading system with bilateralism, preferences and all other forms of exclusive trade advantage eliminated or at least in the process of progressive reduction, world prosperity will be shackled...”

Speaking in November 1947 in Calcutta, Dr Grady said “that he was not in a position to state what attitude the Export and Import Bank would take for advancing loans to India if the government of India decided to go ahead with wholesale plans of nationalisation. But if a middle course between private enterprise and state institutions was followed then he believed there would not be much difficulty....” —thus openly coming out against any genuine nationalisation.

To these insolent demands the reply of the Indian union government has been one of meek acceptance with only verbal modification here and there.

Speaking to the Associated Chambers of Commerce in Calcutta in December 1947, Pandit Nehru said:

“We cannot have any special privilege for any foreign interest in India. There is a large field especially for the next few years and we want cooperation with other countries during the process of India’s development, and I think British and other foreign interests that exist in India will and should have this large field open to them.”

This open welcome to foreign interests, seeking to dominate India, though verbally qualified by a declaration of no special privileges, shows how the government is begging for foreign help.

In practice it accepts one by one all the terms which the foreign capitalists want.

At the industries conference, which met in January 1948 in New Delhi, the government gave a secret understanding to the Indian capitalists that there would be no nationalisation for at least five years to come, thus accepting the demand of Dr Grady. The resolution which the conference passed on foreign capital kept quiet on all the insolent demands made, and contented itself by saying that the

conditions under which foreign capital is invested in India should be regulated by national interests, and private deals between Indian and foreign capitalists should have the formal approval of the government.

What results from this is not industrial revolution, not the freeing of agrarian economy from feudal bondage, but the establishment of a few industrial concerns as give some outlet to the accumulated capital without endangering the interests of Anglo-American imperialism; the establishment of such concerns as fits in with the Anglo-American scheme of exploiting the world and drawing India into its war plans.

If this is welcomed by the bourgeoisie it only reveals the narrow and antinational character of its intentions. But for the mass of the people it only means continuation of feudal exploitation, low wages, no industrial revolution, but continued poverty, unemployment, crisis and famine—the price of tying India to the capitalist order, of collaboration and joint exploitation. That is where the Indian bourgeoisie, and the national leadership which represents it, are taking India—to economic dependence on Anglo-America, subservience to them and growing poverty for the people.

The collaboration thus represents an economic and political alliance against the democratic revolution through which alone the people can liberate themselves from the yoke of the colonial order, of landlordism, of the princes and of foreign and home capitalists. It is directed against the agrarian revolution, against the nationalisation of industries, a living wage and planning, and against the widespread industrial expansion which can only be realised on the basis of nationalisation. It is calculated to guard the present order with the bourgeoisie playing the role of a junior partner to imperialism.

Imperialism Needs Collaboration

The need for collaboration arises from the other side also. Otherwise it might be asked, if the bourgeoisie is so dependent, why do the imperialists not continue in the old way, why is even junior partnership given?

First, the war has meant a certain change in the economic

relationship between India and Britain. The repatriation of the sterling debt has meant that Britain's capacity to drain goods without payment, and thereby automatically have a lien over India's exports of raw materials, has declined, which also affects its capacity to export goods to India. Britain, therefore, stands badly in need of new investments in India which will restore the old balance of payments and automatically influence the direction of Indian trade towards it. It is, therefore, in its imperialist interests that it should get access to new investments, taking care that they do not conflict with the basic interests at home.

Secondly, Britain is afraid that if it were not to placate the Indian bourgeoisie, America might enter into a deal with it. The Indian bourgeoisie, helped by America, might become a second rival, and, therefore, concessions must be made and collaboration has to be achieved.

Thirdly, as an opponent, Indian capital has become a powerful adversary. It is not the old weakling that it was. It has the powerful backing of the national movement which it can exploit against any plan for pure British concerns and a total refusal to make concessions. It has made it impossible to open purely British concerns and concentrate state patronage on them, and thus is in a position to obstruct British investments or plans of exploitation.

And politically, the situation is such that pure British concerns like a pure imperialist state cannot run unless the bourgeoisie is won over. 'Law and order' cannot be maintained, strike cannot be suppressed and British lives cannot be protected without the aid of the national leadership which represents the bourgeoisie and controls the people.

Therefore both political and economic bargains become necessary to protect the old order.

The so-called 'transfer of power' was one of the biggest pieces of political and economic appeasement of the bourgeoisie—which was necessary to strike a deal. This power, putting the bourgeoisie in control over the man-power and resources of a vast territory, though as a junior partner, was the dream of the bourgeoisie and it has realised it.

From the standpoint of the revolution all that it means is that henceforth the bourgeoisie will guard the colonial order.

Along with this are being negotiated 'treaties as between the equals' for trade, industry, commerce—treaties with the condition mentioned before—treaties which enslave India but enable the bourgeoisie to become a junior partner in the exploitation of India.

The concession about exports, about capital goods, etc., however petty they may seem in relation to the needs of the masses, are real in relation to the selfish and petty needs of the colonial bourgeoisie, sufficient for collaboration and betrayal.

This is the economic and political basis of collaboration between imperialism and the national bourgeoisie.

III. POST-WAR REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE AND NEW POLICIES OF IMPERIALISM AND INDIAN BOURGEOISIE—NEW CLASS ALIGNMENT

The deep economic crisis and the intensified imperialist exploitation of the war years, which have brought unbearable suffering and starvation to the broad masses of the toiling and common people and sharpened their political consciousness and militancy, continued to operate as a mighty force in the post-war years behind the rising revolutionary fight of the masses.

Despite the secret military plans to crush the struggle which British imperialist statesmen hatched behind the curtain, while they publicly talked of a peaceful transfer of power and of quitting India; despite their backstair intrigues to pitch the Congress and League against each other and provoke a fratricidal war; despite the compromising, disruptive and anti-struggle policies pursued by the Congress and League leaderships—the tempo, the sweep and the militancy of the struggles of the workers and employees in the cities, of the peasants and tenant-serfs in the countryside, of the common people in the feudal autocratic states went on rising steadily in 1945-46.

The sweep of the struggle swept even into the armed forces leading to mutinies and rebellions, strikes and hartals in the imperial

armies. Gandhi's non-violent India, guarded by the bourgeoisie for more than a quarter century against any militant action, now suddenly resorted to arms. The development of the struggles into armed clashes signified a new stage of the revolutionary struggle—the final phase in defiance of imperialism and the victory of the democratic revolution becomes imminent.

The second characteristic feature of the situation was the great role played by the working class in these struggles—economic and political. The strikes of the working class became the great cohesive and centralising force when the bourgeoisie was abjuring struggle and the National Congress was withdrawing from it. In fact many of the glorious struggles took place in the teeth of opposition from national leaders.

The developing strikes for economic demands and the mass participation of the working class in the political protest strikes were leading the entire struggle in the direction of an all-India general strike, supported by the armed forces and government servants.

India has never seen such a sweep; never seen the armed forces collapsing so easily before popular pressure; never seen the working class fighting with such abandon and courage.

It was the eve of the total collapse of imperialism.

The heroic fighting spirit of the striking workers was shown in the ease with which the workers responded to the call for protest strikes on every national and anti-imperialist issue. It was seen in the rapid spread of strike enthusiasm to other employees, to bank clerks, peons, primary teachers and government servants.

A similar movement started in the armed forces. In 1945 when it was known that tens of thousands of the captured patriotic INA men were being maltreated in several concentration camps, and when the victory-mad imperialists launched a treason trial against the INA leaders, the whole country rose in flaming indignation and demanded their unconditional release.

In November 1945 the students and workers of Calcutta became the spearhead of big protest hartals and strike demonstrations. They

marched under the joint flags of the Congress the League and the Communist Party and were fired upon by the police and the military. It was then that the first martyrs of the post-war period fell.

In January 1946 the British commander-in-chief had to bow down before the popular storm and release the INA prisoners.

Hard on the heels of the release the INA demonstrations and powerfully influenced by them, came the discontent in the ranks of the Royal Indian Navy and the Royal Indian Air Force.

The naval ratings struck work and went on hungerstrike for their demands in the ships and shore-establishments. They demonstrated for their demands in the city, demanded the release of INA men and the withdrawal of the Indian troops from Indonesia. They ran up the Congress, League and red flags on their ships.

The naval officers, bewildered and panic-stricken by the new revolutionary spirit in the navy, sought to suppress them by arrests and bullets. Then it was that these navy men seized their ships and fired back. By their heroic though shortlived resistance the navy men of Bombay and Karachi heralded the beginning of a new period of revolutionary upheaval. Their revolutionary spirit and united action sent a thrill through the ranks of all branches of the Indian armed forces.

Men of the RIAF struck in several places in fraternal solidarity with the RIN. The Indian troops, wherever they were called out against the revolting men, refused to fire.

The Indian working class, led by the Communist Party, instinctively saw in the naval rising a historic turning point in our freedom struggle and supported it by total protest strikes and hartals in Bombay, Calcutta, Trichinopoly, Madras and Madura.

The total strike and hartal in Bombay on 22 February 1946, which came as an instantaneous counter-challenge to Admiral Godfrey's insolent threat to destroy the revolting navy and despite the opposition of Vallabhbhai Patel and the Congress leadership, struck panic into the hearts of the imperialists. They called out white troops with tanks and armoured cars to spread terror and murder in the streets. Over 200 citizens fell victim to their bullets in two days.

The naval rising and the great solidarity action staged by the advanced guard of the Indian working class in its support were not isolated incidents. They were a flaming signal which announced to the world that a volcanic discontent, an anti-imperialist urge, was smouldering in the minds of the Indian people and their armed forces, ready to be united and harnessed for the final annihilation of the rotten structure of the imperialist-feudal rule.

One has only to recapitulate the striking events and mass actions of the first six months of 1946 to be convinced of the truth of this.

Within a week of the RIN strike, more than 300 military sepoy's stationed at Jabalpur struck work and paraded throughout the streets with all the three flags, Congress, League and red (4 March).

On 8 March, the workers and citizens of Delhi observed a protest strike and hartal against the victory celebrations. The Town Hall was attacked and set on fire.

On 18 March, the Gurkha soldiers of Dehra Dun revolted in protest against insulting remarks by officers.

Delhi policemen went on hungerstrike for wage increase and the military was used to arrest them.

Policemen of Allahabad went on hungerstrike in protest against ration cut (19 March).

Ten thousand Bihar policemen went on strike on 3 April.

Side by side with this beginning of insurrectionary atmosphere in the armed forces and the police, a tremendous strike wave was rising among the working class.

This terrific pace of events in the rest of India was producing the first repercussions among the people of the feudal autocratic states.

The people of Kashmir launched in May, 1946 a movement for the end of autocracy of the Dogra house and for the immediate introduction of a democratic constitution. The ruler promptly arrested Sheikh Abdullah and unleashed a reign of terror against the Kashmiri people, who, however, struck back and performed marvels of heroic resistance.

It was clear that a new round of states' peoples' struggles, this time for the final abolition of princely autocracy, was being heralded by the fighting people of Kashmir, and the people of the rest of India were preparing to support them.

Thus the countrywide movement which grew round the demand for the release of the INA men and the naval rising of February marked the beginning of new period which was not just of mounting discontent and unrest but one which immediately placed on the agenda the democratic revolution and the task of vanquishing imperialism and its collaborators.

The paralysis of the imperialist system was seen not only in the breakdown of its economic structure, the poverty and hunger it created, but in the disintegration of the armed and the police forces which were no longer able to resist the popular pressure and revolutionary upheaval.

Imperialism saw the writing on the wall and opened negotiations with the two bourgeois parties, the Congress and the League. But it was not only imperialism, that was frightened by the menace of the approaching revolution. The bourgeois leaderships of the National Congress and the Muslim League clearly saw that the struggle of the masses was getting beyond control and was bringing to the forefront the working class and the exploited masses. They, therefore, were eager for compromise and began to attack the militant struggles of the people.

The policies pursued by the leaderships of the Congress and the Muslim League corresponded to the bourgeois vested interests which they represent and not to the anti-imperialist and democratic aspirations of the vast masses that they claim to lead.

Both the leaderships resiled in panic from the manifestations of mass upheaval against the imperialist-feudal rule and were ready to welcome the cabinet mission as soon as it was announced and to seek cooperation with imperialism.

When the cabinet mission came with its plan, the Congress leadership turned even more antistruggle. Its ministries let loose a wave of repression against the workingclass and peasant struggles. It set its face against the struggles of the states' peoples in order

to appease the princes and betrayed the struggle of the Kashmiri people. Instead of rejecting the plan with its non-sovereign constitution-making body and retention of the princes, as a plan of masked British domination and as one based on the imperialist policy of divide and rule, it accepted it with minor criticisms.

The leadership of the National Congress, representing the interests of the Indian capitalist class, thus betrayed the revolutionary movement at a time when it was on the point of overthrowing the imperialist order. It only exploited the movement to win the maximum concessions possible for its own selfish interests and disrupted for the time being the growing revolutionary movement. By detaching the Congress from the movement, by isolating these spontaneously developing militant struggles, by repressing them, the national leadership played the game of disrupting the battle against imperialism and pursued a policy of repressing it.

The leadership of the Muslim League, representing the interests of the Muslim capitalists and landlords, had always played a disruptive and antinational role through its policy of communalism, its slogan of division of India and its general policy of obstructing the national emancipatory struggles headed by the Congress. The Muslim League leadership capitalised the backwardness of the Muslim masses and the failure of the national reformist leadership to draw the Muslim masses into the common struggle, and succeeded in giving the freedom urge of the Muslim masses a distorted expression. The hypocritical talk of 'Muslim freedom', of saving the Muslims from the Hindus, stood exposed when in connection with the RIN strike in Bombay, Jinnah came out against the participation of Muslim workers and people in the common demonstration, and betrayed his fear of independent mass action.

Throughout this period the Muslim League did its best to keep the Muslim masses away from the developing revolutionary wave but did not always succeed. It had sometimes to start demonstration on its own (demonstration in Calcutta for the release of the INA prisoner Rashid Ali) to give an outlet to the anti-imperialist sentiment of the Muslim masses. The Muslim League leadership was concentrating only on blackmailing the Congress and through obstruction to secure its separatist demand of Pakistan.

It also, therefore, readily took to negotiations on the basis of the cabinet mission's plan. The Muslim League leadership thus betrayed the revolutionary movement and revealed itself once more as an agency of upper-class interests out to sell the freedom movement for its own selfish gains.

British imperialism, standing in immediate need of erecting a barrier to the revolutionary movement, saw the necessity of placating the Congress to the utmost limit. It realised that only by using the Congress leadership against the revolutionary movement could the imperialist order be saved.

At that same time, having drawn the Congress into negotiations, imperialism fully exploited the fear of the Congress leaders of revolution, their need for economic help from Britain, their conflict with League, and the independent existence of the princely autocracy, to make them willingly accept the Mountbatten plan.

The original cabinet mission plan did not provide for direct partition; this was a concession made to Congress pressure. But as soon as the purely Congress-manned interim government came into existence the pressure of riots was worked up, taking advantages of the 'direct action' launched by the League. Pressure was also worked later through cabinet members of the Muslim League, when it afterwards joined the government, making it impossible for the Congress to function the government. The leaders of the Congress were thus forced to accept partition of India.

Real Face of the Mountbatten Award

The Mountbatten award comes as a culmination of the betrayal of the revolutionary struggle by the National Congress and the League leaderships.

Though the bourgeois leaderships parade the story that independence has been won, the fact is that the freedom struggle has been betrayed and the national leadership has struck a treacherous deal behind the back of the starving people, betraying every slogan of the democratic revolution.

The Mountbatten plan partitioned India. The national bourgeois leaderships of the Congress and the Muslim League, which had always opposed the solution of the communal problem on the basis

of the just and revolutionary principle of self-determination of nationalities, accepted the imperialist solution of partition on the basis of religion. This enabled imperialism to organise the ghastliest riots and mass butcheries of minorities, creating permanent hostility between Hindus and Muslims, and to work up war fever between the two states when required in imperialist interests. The partitions in a ready-made weapon to organise riots and side-track the revolutionary movement by war appeals. It is one of the biggest attacks on the unity and integrity of the democratic movement and is also used to weaken the bourgeoisie of both the states vis-a-vis imperialism.

Secondly, the plan keeps the princes, the age-old friends of the imperial order, intact and enhances their bargaining power, enabling the national leaders to parade their accession as a great triumph, for the princes are now supposed to be independent.

Thirdly, the leading economic strings are still in the hands of the imperialists, who successfully use them to make the bourgeoisie move against the masses, crush the democratic revolution and establish a new line-up of imperialism, princes, landlords, and the bourgeoisie.

The Mountbatten plan is the expression of this alliance against the democratic revolution—an alliance which seeks to drown the revolution in blood. It crowns the process of bourgeois vacillation with final capitulation. It is the fruit of the national leadership's compromising policy, culminating in an avowedly anti-national, anti-people and anti-revolutionary policy.

What the Mountbatten plan has given to the people is not real but fake independence. Through this award British imperialism partitioned India on communal lines and gave to the bourgeoisie an important share of state-power, sub-servient to itself.

Britain's domination has not ended, but the form of domination has changed. The bourgeoisie was so long kept out of state-power and in opposition to it; now it is granted a share of state-power in order to disrupt and drown the national-democratic revolution in blood.

The supreme organs of the state, the army, the navy, the air force

and the bureaucracy, are controlled by the servitors of imperialism. They are dominated by upper-class elements, officered by them, by old bureaucrats who have pronounced pro-British sympathies and bitterly hate all democratic advance. And the final imperialist control will be registered through military missions and military advisers—'willingly accepted' by the Indian government.

The behaviour of the military, the police and the civil service in face of the riot offensive of communal elements clearly demonstrates how anti-popular, anti-democratic and pro-imperialist elements control these organs of the state—elements on which the bourgeoisie safely relies for the law and order of collaboration.

At the same time the representatives of the bourgeoisie, the traditional leaders of the national movement, are handed over the reins of government, while being dominated by imperialism, through trade pacts and an open military alliance which is in the process of formation.

The Mountbatten award does not really signify a retreat of imperialism, but its cunning counter-offensive against the rising forces of the Indian people. This is demonstrated by the communal carnage and the setback to the democratic and anti-imperialist struggles after 15 August.

British imperialism was forced to change the forms of its domination as a result of the growing popular upsurge for freedom and democracy during the war and post-war days. Faced with the alternative of quitting India, it has given a share of power to the capitalists and landlords in order to be able to remain. To parade this new status as national freedom or as national advance is to shield imperialist designs and the subservience of the national bourgeoisie.

National Government and the People

The deeds and actions of the 'national government' since 15 August fully prove this understanding of the purpose behind the Mountbatten plan.

The establishment of the central government headed by Pandit Nehru has not solved a single problem of the democratic revolution. Its establishment does not mean that the Indian people have won

either freedom or independence, nor does it ensure that they will be moving in the direction of democracy and freedom for the people.

On the contrary, the government has already made a big move in the opposite direction—against the interests and freedom of the people. It is linking itself with the Anglo-American bloc of imperialist powers—a bloc which seeks to crush all democratic revolutions and to create satellite states. It is manoeuvring to find an advantageous position for itself in the Anglo-American bloc.

The recent acts of the national government prove beyond doubt that its policy is to suppress freedom and democracy.

The constituent assembly, manned by the same leaders as lead the national government, is preparing an authoritarian constitution. The working class and the Indian people will not get anything except the right to vote at long intervals and that too only for the provincial assemblies. The constitution framed by the constituent assembly will be a constitution for the upper classes to rule the oppressed millions in the interests of joint exploitation by the Indian and British capitalists.

The constitution provides for arrest without warrant and detention without trial, it authorises the provincial governors to act in their discretion, legislate by ordinance and rule by proclamation, thus usurping the powers of the legislature and over-ruling them in the name of grave emergency.

It includes the reactionary provision for second chambers in provinces and allows for nomination of members to the council by the governor, thus ensuring that the vested interests and their upper-class spokesmen will have a dominant voice in the chamber.

The model constitution for provinces further does not accept the basic right of linguistic national units to self-determination, thus expressing clearly the reactionary bourgeois interests which seek to dominate the different nationalities.

It does not provide for proportional representation, without which the progressive political parties and the various minority groups cannot get fair representation. It does not provide for freedom and self-determination of the tribal and other backward people enabling the formation of autonomous regions or provinces, without

which these backward people cannot economically and culturally protect and develop themselves.

Under the constitution the basic and fundamental rights of the toilers, such as right to work, right to a living wage, equal pay for equal work, right to old-age, sickness and unemployment aid, are denied and do not find a place in the fundamental right which the new state of India is bound by the constitution to guarantee and protect.

While these rights of the mass of toilers are not guaranteed, the property and the privileges of the vested interests are specifically granted protection by a clause in the fundamental rights that no property of a person or corporation shall be taken over for public use except by payment of compensation, thus preventing through a constitutional guarantee all plans of nationalisation of industries including foreign concerns.

The government is carrying out the plan of Indian big business to oppose nationalisation, suppress the workers and demand more production through longer hours of work; intensification of labour and rationalisation; freezing of wages in the name of stopping the wage-price spiral; sabotaging the implementation of gains secured by the workers (railway agreement); holding forth no hope of legislation for a living wage, social security or curtailment of management's power of dismissal; assuring the capitalists of full freedom to loot the people in the name of building a 'mixed economy', while slandering the workers for the fall in production, demanding an increase in the hours of work. In short, it is passing the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of workers to keep up capitalist profits.

The control of the government by the national leadership has placed an additional and powerful weapon in its hands to sabotage the revolutionary struggles against princely autocracy. It has persistently raised illusions that princely autocracy can be fought through governmental pressure and has utilised them to enter into accession agreements with the princes which keep autocracy intact. By parading accession as a big triumph, attention is side-tracked from the democratic struggles inside the states. The latest act of betrayal is the standstill agreement with the Nizam.

In a number of bigger states the bourgeois leadership has used the popular movements against princedom to get limited constitutional reforms which do not give power to the people but give a minor share of power to the bourgeoisie. In exchange they have joined hands with the princes to defend feudal exploitation and oppression of the people and to disrupt and suppress all popular democratic movements.

The policy that the government follows can only be described as one of supporting feudal reaction and sabotaging the revolutionary, anti-feudal, anti-imperialist struggle.

In the matter of civil liberties and democratic rights, the provincial governments, under the guidance of the central government, have passed the blackest acts—public safety acts—which are freely used against the rising workers' and peasants' movements and against the students; hundreds are detained without trial, externed or interned.

The leadership of the central government has applied the brake to the agrarian legislation of the provincial ministries, which itself was an attempt to cheat the peasant in the name of the abolition of landlordism. Saddled with compensation and with no provision for land to the tiller, the legislation is not even a mild reform, retains landlordism under different forms, and is an attempt to split the peasant movement and disrupt the growing forces of the agrarian revolution. It is an attempt to broaden the basis of the present bourgeois government.

In the matter of minorities, the government follows a communal policy, which is essentially the bourgeois way of inciting majority-minority conflict. This leads it to practise discrimination and favouritism against the minorities depriving them of their fundamental democratic rights, and to retreat before the more ruthless and direct incitement of communal conflict by feudal-imperialist reaction, which has resulted in the mass murder of minorities in certain areas.

The admission of Hindu Sabha leader, Shyamaprosad Mukherjee, into the cabinet and the retention of Akali leader, Baldev Singh, in the important position of defence minister, taken together with the open encouragement given to communal reaction, shows how the government itself wanted to use the weapon of communal division, even before the mass massacres had started in the Punjab.

Thus for the government, the oppression of the minorities is a conscious and deliberate policy.

This policy, carried to its greatest lengths by Sardar Patel with his praise of the openly communal princes (Patiala, Bharatpur, Nawanagar) and of the RSS, and his viciously communal incitement of Hindus against the Muslims and Pakistan, has lent added strength to these forces. The result is seen in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by a leading organiser of the RSS.

So determined are the leaders of the government to utilise and safeguard their use of this communal weapon that even after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, every effort is made to screen and protect reaction; angry people demonstrating against them are arrested and even shot down, a farce is enacted of arresting some of them—while in reality every occasion is utilised to find and excuse to say a good word for the communalists and save them from the anger of the masses.

The arrest of Hindu Mahasabha leaders, etc. took place because the angry masses set the pace and compelled the government to take steps against these communalists.

Even the banning of the RSS by the national government has been done due to the tremendous mass indignation against it and is only a cover for its continued policy of shielding and allying with that organisation and the elements behind it.

According to Pandit Nehru's own statement this policy does not lead to any differences inside the cabinet; even on this issue there are no political differences, but only temperamental differences. This should be enough to demonstrate the strong pull of communal reaction on the national government.

Government's Economic Policy

While refusing to develop the industries of our country by nationalising key and vital industries, the government at the same time is encouraging the export drive in the interests of Indian big business and at the expense of the people. This is a part of the plan of collaboration with Anglo-American bloc, since these export markets can only be secured in collaboration with the imperialists. By securing foreign exchange through these exports, Indian big business wants to purchase machinery for new industries with the

help of the Anglo-American imperialists. Thus again it has to depend on the Anglo-American capitalists for its industries.

This double economic dependence on the Anglo-American capitalists, both for the market for Indian products and for purchasing new machinery, necessitates a servility and abject surrender to them; and big business, helped by the government, is preparing to sell out India's future to the Anglo-American imperialists.

The latter are demanding a number of concessions and fundamental rights—no discrimination against foreign capital, no nationalisation, no tariffs which are not agreed to, joint concerns for the exploitation of Indian people, full security to them—all of which are embodied in the draft trade charter being discussed at Havana and disclose that Indian big business and the government are mortgaging Indian economy to Anglo-American capital in their selfish interests. The natural result of this is not only economic but indirect political domination, so that both the economy and the political freedom of India are being mortgaged to the Anglo-American monopolists.

Government's Foreign Policy

The foreign policy of the government follows the class interests it represents. From the very beginning Pandit Nehru adopted a line of forming a so-called third bloc—a line which represents the interests of big business inasmuch as it kept India away from the democratic camp and opened the way to the imperialist camp.

Recent events have torn off the mask of neutrality from the government's foreign policy. On all crucial issues the Indian delegation has taken an anti-democratic and pro-imperialist stand—Korea, 'Little Assembly', Ukraine. On the question of Ukraine it allowed itself to be exploited by the USA, and took the hypocritical stand that India stood against Ukraine because south-east Asia was not represented.

On the questions crucial for the peoples of Asia in particular, e.g. the American-directed Kuomintang war against the Chinese people and the French colonial war in Vietnam, it has remained silent and refused to act; while on the question of the Japanese peace treaty, it has virtually lined up with Anglo-American imperialism.

Over the American-backed Dutch war against the Indonesian people, it has approved of the betrayal of the Indonesian freedom struggle, achieved through the latest truce, put through by the US-sponsored and dominated good offices committee and welcomed by president Truman.

Foreign policy depends on economic policy and India is also rapidly lining herself up with the Anglo-American bloc in matters of foreign policy. Its diplomats are already uttering anti-Soviet slanders, e.g. Sir Maharaj Singh's statement on war propaganda.

The British imperialists are giving open hints about an anti-Soviet bloc including the overseas territories of Britain, indicating that the role India will have to play, is to support the western bloc economically, especially with its raw materials.

Speaking in the House of Commons on 22 January, Bevin, Britain's foreign minister, stated in connection with the formation of a bloc of west-European powers:

“The overseas territories of these countries (Britain, France, Holland, etc.) should be brought within this union, so that this tremendous cooperation would stretch through Europe, the middle east and Africa to the far east... The western organisation of Europe must be economically supported. That involves the closest possible collaboration with the commonwealth and overseas territories, not only the British, but the French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese overseas territories. These territories are large primary producers and are capable of great development.”

Along with this come reports about an alliance of south-east Asian countries—embracing India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon and in agreement with Britain—an alliance of an entirely 'defensive' nature; the aim of this 'bloc' as openly reported is to 'prevent the spread of communism in south-east Asia', which feally means suppressing all struggles for freedom and democracy in south-east Asia and bringing these countries directly into the imperialist camp. The Indian bourgeoisie, which is playing the role of chief agent of the imperialists for the formation of this bloc, wants all south-east-Asian countries to fall in line with them, i.e. give up the struggle for freedom and join the imperialist camp, because it wants to prevent the Indian people from being affected by the revolutionary

struggle in these countries and also because it wants to get some foothold in these markets, with the help of imperialism, by keeping the colonial order intact.

There are also reports about military missions from Britain coming to India to keep its defence properly organised ; reports which openly state that British statesmen do not want India or Pakistan to have any defence policy out of the orbit of the British commonwealth, i.e. independent of British imperialism.

That is where the government and big business are dragging India—from the freedom struggle to the Anglo-American camp.

New Role of the Bourgeoisie

How is it that a government headed by the national leaders and one which came to power on the crest of a wave of popular struggles should pursue these policies?

That is so because the national leaders, who headed the popular struggle all these years and who are now in the government, represent the class interests of the national bourgeoisie, the industrial bourgeoisie.

The leaders of the government including Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel represent the interests of the Indian capitalist class, and the formation of the government after 15 August—after what is known as the transfer of power, but which in reality is the sharing of power—has meant an immense change in the position of the national bourgeoisie vis-a-vis the people and their struggles.

Formerly the national bourgeoisie and its leaders had to rely on the masses, mass struggles, etc. to secure concessions, share in power, etc. to advance their own interests. The bourgeoisie was excluded from political power, it had no real opportunity to develop industries and had no political power over the people.

The post-war revolutionary upsurge forced imperialism to change its strategy, in order to be able to strike at the democratic forces all the more ferociously.

Imperialism makes big concessions to the bourgeoisie and hands it over governmental power to rule the Indian people in its own narrow selfish interests.

At the same time the state it has won is dependent on imperialism and is a satellite state.

In the new state, therefore, the national bourgeoisie shares power with imperialism, with the latter still dominant indirectly.

This is the secret behind the reactionary policy of the national government. The bourgeoisie has ceased to play an oppositional role; it has renounced mass struggles to get concessions from imperialism; it is now depending on the new state and its control over the Indian people to use them as pawns in its bargaining with imperialism, whenever differences and conflicts arise. These conflicts will be solved at governmental level by offering new concessions to imperialism through customs, lowering of tariffs, securing of joint concerns, etc.

The bourgeoisie, therefore, has turned its face away from the masses and gone over to collaboration. That is why its government consistently adopts an anti-mass, anti-democratic policy.

In the past the bourgeoisie, and the national leadership which represents it, were in opposition to imperialism; now they have given up that opposition. This is the new change brought about by the transfer of power on 15 August.

Henceforward the march of the democratic revolution will have to proceed directly in opposition to the bourgeois government and its policies, and the bourgeois leadership of the Congress.

Game Behind the Riot Offensive

The fact that the government is manned by popular leaders and that it arose on the crest of a wave of mass struggles has concealed the class character of the government and the change in the position of its class.

The riot offensive, inspired and engineered by imperialists and their feudal reactionary agents, and their denunciation of the national government has led many people to believe that the feudal reactionaries were attacking a revolutionary government and that it was the business of the people to line up unconditionally behind the government. This is a totally wrong understanding of the situation.

The unleashing of communal riots in the Punjab, UP and the Indian states, the massacre of tens of thousands of innocent Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, the forcible extermination and expulsion of minorities the terrible sufferings and hardships inflicted on innocent men women and children, and the economic chaos arising from all this were preplanned and organised by the imperialist-feudal counter-revolutionary forces. The object was to disrupt and drown the people's democratic revolution in blood. The main attack was against the people who were moving forward through strikes armed conflicts and revolts of states' peoples to a democratic revolution.

The attempt of the forces of counter-revolution was to sidetrack the revolutionary discontent into communal channels, disorganise the people and through it consolidate a line-up of all vested interests against the mass movement, a line-up in which the bourgeoisie will move more to the right, allying with feudal and communal interests all the more, so that a stronger front against the masses could be created.

This was to be achieved by strengthening the openly communal elements inside the government to appease Hindu communal reaction and surrender to the princes on the question of maintenance of autocracy, by strengthening the consistent communal policy of Sardar Patel and checking the inconsistent and vacillating policy of Pandit Nehru.

There is no doubt that the deeply-laid plot of counter revolution very nearly succeeded in creating confusion, vacillation and demoralisation in the ranks of the people and of political parties. The main objectives were forgotten and a tendency to line up behind the government in panic was noticed.

The imperialists and their agents would precisely like such a lining-up of the working class and democratic forces behind the government, as it would lead to the giving up of all efforts to carry through the democratic revolution and to the doing away with all opposition and criticism of the government in its policy of combating all national-democratic advance.

For such a policy ensures the success of their strategy. Why are

riots on a mass scale possible today? Precisely because the national bourgeois leadership has, through its antinational compromise, disorganised the forces of revolution and allowed the reactionaries to divert the discontent.

Communal riots are the direct result of the imperialist conspiracy and bourgeois compromise. Imperialism has strengthened the basis of communal riots in four ways: (i) partition which made one community hostile to another; (ii) fixation of boundaries in a manner that roused communal bitterness to its height; (iii) independent position for the states which could manoeuvre between India and Pakistan and play one against the other in a most vicious manner; (iv) communal poisoning of most of the army chiefs and bureaucrats, which has resulted in the use of the state machinery for spreading riots.

Imperialism is instigating communal riots in order to create conditions in which the national bourgeois leadership will be increasingly forced to submit to imperialist domination, and the common toiling people will be forced to submit to the leadership of the upper classes. It also aims at smashing people's unity and crushing all democratic movements.

Fascist elements like the RSS, Hindu-Muslim-Sikh communal reactionaries and bureaucratic administrators trained up by imperialism are the chief agents for provoking riots. The princes and landlords are at the head of them. But the bourgeoisie, including sections of the leaderships of the Congress and the League, has also played a leading part in communal riots, though certain sections of the Congress and the League leaderships have taken a stand against them.

Sections of the national bourgeois leadership also provoke riots as a matter of policy—as part of their policy towards the minorities. The policy of compromise with British imperialism, the policy of relying on it in the conflict between the Indian union and Pakistan, leads straight to the massacre of minorities as a weapon of intimidating the government of the other dominion. The massacre of Muslims, for instance, is a part of the game of intimidating Pakistan, of replying to anarchy with anarchy—a game which suits

the interests of the British excellently. The minorities have become a big pawn in the game of power politics of the compromisers.

A section of the bourgeois leadership encourages and protects communal armed bands for using them against political opponents and democratic movements and for strengthening the princes and other vested interests; they even incorporate communal armed bands into the police, home guard and army.

Another section of the bourgeois leadership, while continuing the policy of compromise and thus creating conditions for riots, are scared by the riots when they actually occur, due to the disorganisation of administration, trade, etc. They take only palliative measures to stop the extreme forms of riots and anarchy.

The workers, peasants and progressive intelligentsia are the most determined forces that resist all riots, just because riots smash all democratic movements. In fighting riots, they must make use of all opportunities including the government measures to combat them.

But until the bourgeois policy of collaboration with imperialism and feudalism and its hostility to the principle of self-determination are successfully defeated, riots will take place again and again.

Not only communal riots, but other kinds of riots between one nationality and another, between the advanced castes and backward castes, between the tribal people and others, will also take place until full democracy and self-determination of the people are achieved and the imperialist hold over the organs of the state is completely smashed.

A determined fight against the reactionary policy of the Congress and the League leadership is, therefore, essential to end the possibility of all riots. An end to these riots can only be brought about by complete elimination of imperialist domination and full democratic progress.

Unmask the Compromisers and Communalists

The policy of compromise with feudalism and imperialism has already bred riots and will breed more riots. Compromise feeds counter-revolution, and it is so in the case of India also.

The hands of all national leaders are equally, trained with compromise and they are all responsible for the mounting offensive of the communal elements.

Unless their compromising policies are exposed before the people unless the people see the connection between them and the rising offensive and push their policies back, the feudal-imperialist offensive cannot be defeated.

It is, therefore, wrong to draw basic distinctions between different national leaders on the question of their approach to the communal problem. Sardar Patel who takes an openly communal stand, a Pandit Nehru who comes out against riots and for the protection of the Muslim minority, both move in the vicious circle created by compromise. In the final analysis Pandit Nehru has no independent line and has to fall in line with Sardar Patel.

Pandit Nehru's own stand, which regards Hindu communal reaction, only as a reaction to Muslim communalism, and does not see in it the forces of counter-revolution; his indulgence in threats of reprisals against Pakistan on the Kashmir issue; his failure to take a bold stand against the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS even after Gandhiji's assassination; his full acquiescence in the policy of the central and provincial governments of utilising the assassination in order to strike at the democratic, revolutionary and really anti-communal forces in the country—all these only show that Pandit Nehru has completely surrendered to Patel's policy.

The party will utilise every opportunity to fight riots and will make use of every measure taken by the government to stop riots. It will regard riots as an offensive against the revolution but, at the same time, will have no illusion that the national government can or will fight against riots.

In doing this, it is no doubt the duty of the Party to utilise every anti-riot utterance of men like Nehru and counteract the openly communal policy of other leaders. Such utterances, acts and propaganda have some importance inasmuch as they enable us to expose more easily men like Nehru and counteract the openly communal policy of other leaders. Such utterances, acts and propaganda have some importance inasmuch as they enable us to expose more easily men like Patel who are nearest to feudal reaction.

Patel and Nehru

Not only on the question of riots but also on the question of democratic policies, there exist illusions about Nehru.

Nehru is seen as a fighter against Patel's policies and almost made to appear as the leader of the democratic forces. Every verbal opposition of Nehru to Patel is magnified. It is thus that an illusion is created that if Nehru's hands are strengthened as against Patel, the government will be transformed into an instrument of the people's will.

This estimate of Nehru is anti-Marxist and serves to tie down the masses to the bourgeois leadership. It must be clearly understood that Nehru is as much a representative of the bourgeoisie as Patel is. They both defend the class policies and interests of the bourgeoisie which is now collaborating with imperialism.

Today Nehru is following the same policy as Patel. It is so in the matter of foreign policy, of the states, of decontrol, of industrial policy, etc. He often outdoes Patel on vital issues. He denounces strike of the working class as a stab in the back.

In fact all shades of difference within the bourgeois camp (such as those between Nehru and Patel) are entirely subordinated to the new basic realignment of the class as a whole, viz. its role of collaboration with imperialism. Both Nehru and Patel represent this collaborationist class, and all differences between them are being and will be solved within the fundamental framework of the collaborationist policy of that class as a whole. The working class cannot go forward without fighting the policy of this class. That is why today it is anti-Marxist for the working class to base its strategy on 'differences' within the bourgeois camp such as 'Patel-Nehru' differences.

It is thus clear that the central government, manned by leaders of the National Congress, is the avowed enemy of the national-democratic revolution. Marxism-Leninism has always taught that in the period of declining capitalism—of the general crisis of capitalism—the bourgeoisie cannot lead the democratic movement to victory, that it betrays it and goes over to the opposite camp, and that it is the working class which must lead it.

National Leaders and the Masses

We must remember that those in charge of the government are still looked upon by the majority of the people as their leaders and the government is still looked upon as a national government in contrast to the previous imperialist government.

The masses do not yet realise that the national government is collaborating, that the country is being sold to Anglo-American imperialism, that the policies of the leadership are leading to riots, that the government is being run in the interests of big business; they still believe it to be a free government and are the victims of national sentiments and national illusions about the Congress leadership. The trusting masses of our country, though they are getting rapidly disillusioned with the national government, have not yet lost their faith in Nehru, their faith in the Congress, and though repeatedly betrayed, they yet cling to old illusions.

Any criticism of the national government which does not take into account these sentiments about it is likely to defeat its purpose.

If in criticising the policies of the government, we do not base ourselves on concrete instances, if we do not patiently argue on the basis of a series of such instances and bring the masses to the point at which they can for themselves see the truth about our characterisation of the policies of the national government, if we do not take into consideration the strong ties of loyalty that still bind the people to the Congress, our criticism will not impress the people and will not succeed in its aim of making them break away from their collaborating leaders.

At the same time the rapid economic deterioration and disillusionment of the masses have created conditions for the successful unmasking of these reactionary policies—conditions which did not exist in the past.

To be able to move the masses into action for the fulfilment of the democratic aims, the working class must tear them away from the bourgeois leadership and build a new movement based on a new understanding of national unity.

IV. DEEPENING ECONOMIC CRISIS IN INDIA—THE CAPITALIST AND THE PEOPLE'S WAYS OUT

The causes of the upsurge lie in the crisis of colonial economy, accentuated by wartime exploitation and postwar developments.

The main features of the crisis in India are :

(1) growing collapse of agrarian production because of feudal relations, and ruin of small-scale production;

(2) the decline of industrial production from the middle of the war itself, in spite of favourable factors, showing the utter rottenness of the colonial order;

(3) accentuation of all the factors of colonial crisis by wartime inflation, which was the device of imperialism to transfer its war burdens to the people of India; and,

(4) following this, a still further polarisation of wealth and poverty in India, the masses of workers and peasants being forced to lower standards of life, or utter destitution.

The postwar upsurge continues because the exploiting classes, the bourgeoisie, the imperialists, the landlords and the feudal princes, once more attempt to pass the burdens of the crisis on to the backs of the masses; because they seek to protect their profits in the face of decline in production; to protect their rights and interests in the face of deterioration of agriculture, at the expense of the workers and peasants, at the expense of middle classes. This leads to a sharpening of the economic struggle of the masses and develops it to a still higher stage—political struggle.

Collapse of Agrarian Economy

The colonial economy based upon feudal and semifeudal landlordism had already started cracking long before the war. Agrarian revolution came on the agenda with the commencement of the world capitalist crisis in the year 1929, it became accentuated when the second world war had broken out in 1939. By this time the outmoded land-relations had already become such a fetter on agricultural production that even the royal commission on land

revenue was forced to recommend abolition of permanent zamindari settlement with, of course, adequate compensation to the landlords.

But one decade of peasant struggles (1930-40), bursting out at intervals in different parts of India, revealed that complete abolition of all forms of landlordism without any compensation and a redistribution of land to the tillers had become an urgent social need.

On top of this came the war economy which threw rural economy completely out of gear during the period of the second world war. The devastating Bengal famine of 1943, the famines in Bihar, Orissa, Malabar and Andhra came as a rude reminder that the land system was collapsing very fast.

Imperialist war economy, viz inflation and high prices and acute scarcity of all essential goods, resulted in impoverishment of the toiling peasants to an unprecedented extent. The cost of agricultural production increased abnormally while the family budget of the poor and middle peasants become upset. Inflation, which increased the economic burden on the mass of the peasantry and was an imperialist device to pass the burdens of war on to the Indian masses, meant a rapid process of expropriation of the peasantry.

The landlords have taken full opportunity of the rack-rented peasants' misery and grabbed land to an ever-increasing extent. Small peasants' land passed into the hands of landlords whose monopoly hold over food stocks increased. The landlord became the principal food hoarder and the main source of blackmarketing in grains. The rich peasant also grew richer by grabbing the poor peasants' land and selling surplus stocks in the blackmarket at abnormally high prices. The landlord, the rich peasant, the war-contractor and the dealer together constituted the new village rich, the criminal blackmarketing gang.

As a result of these developments the number of middle peasants dwindled and the poor and landless peasants have grown in number to an unprecedented scale. A small percentage of middle peasants has swollen the ranks of rich peasants. Disintegration of the middle peasantry is an outstanding fact of the new period.

Mass evictions of poor peasants by landlords and rich peasants

intensified the new class differentiation in rural society. Small-peasant economy is thus passing through a deep crisis.

The burden on the middle and poor peasants and other semi-proletarians of the village was much more than the Rs 1600 crore taken by Britain in the shape of sterling balances. For, apart from this, the blackmarketeers and speculators netted crores from the peasantry.

The end of the war therefore saw the sharp polarisation of the classes and intensified class-antagonism in the villages. The middle, poor, and landless peasants began militant struggles as in 1946 against the new village rich, the landlords and the prosperous peasants.

Agrarian economy, under the control of the new village rich, the food-hoarders and land-grabbers, is already on the brink of a precipice, The parasitic landlords, rich peasants and other blackmarketeers have been ruining agriculture; while the poor peasant is to toil, the parasites are only to grab. Agricultural production is therefore deteriorating very fast, famine has become a normal phenomenon.

This meant, on the one hand, peasants' fights against land-relations and big mass struggles. It at the same time, meant the accentuation of the contradiction involved in a capitalist development of the colonies. It meant a narrowing of the market for capitalist goods—the peasant becoming less and less of a buyer.

Every step forward in establishing capitalist relations in the advance of large scale industry, transport etc., was accompanied by growing impoverishment of the peasantry and a consequent narrowing down of the market.

Both the imperialists and the national bourgeoisie relied on the vast millions to be their market. Both found that with their method of exploitation the market must go on narrowing.

The contradiction involved in capitalism itself narrowing its market was stated by Engels :*

**Letter of Engels to Danielson. 22 September 1892. Marx-Engels Correspondence, National Book Agency, Calcutta p 439.*

scarcity for civilian consumption, sent prices rocketing high and enabled the employers to garner huge profits.

The prices of all industrial commodities rose enormously, except in one or two cases. The cloth price-index rose from 100 in 1939-40 to 442 in 1943-44 and remained at 262 in 1946-47. The coal price index rose from 100 in 1939 to 174 in 1943, 282 in 1944 and 304 in 1945. Pig iron rose from 100 in 1939 to 117 (controlled) in 1944 and subsequent years. Jute rose from 100 in 1939 to 238 in 1943, 270 in 1944, 251 in 1945.

Obviously industry would have had no chance with this rise in prices at a time when the market was getting impoverished and the mass of the peasantry was getting pauperised.

The price structure of industrial goods was totally at variance with the purchasing power of the people.

But industry continued because of the huge government orders which offered a stable market.

Secondly, it sustained itself on those sections of the people which had grown rich during the war, or those which had a greater purchasing power, etc.—a small and narrow section—but which offered enough market to take a good part of what was left by the military or the government.

The question of the market was thus temporarily solved, in spite of the impoverishment of the masses.

But with the close of the war and the falling off of government orders, the problem of market once more faces the industry.

First, the fact that new industries are not being built, the fact that erection of new factories is not yet taking place, is an important factor in the narrowing of the market. It follows logically from the imperialist policy of denying any capital goods to India till a deal is put through. It follows from the very colonial status of India.

Secondly, when all these goods have to be consumed by the people, directly or indirectly industry comes up against a pauperised people, whose purchasing power has been drastically limited or destroyed and who can no longer buy the products of the industry.

The wartime market, composed of the rich and upper-middle-

class strata, etc., is no longer sufficient, since now the question is of selling the entire production and not only that part left by the military.

The same process which accumulated an enormous quantity of capital in the hands of the capitalists has destroyed their market. Inflation and wartime exploitation robbed the masses of their capacity to pay not only the imperialist masters but also the Indian capitalists, and have led to the killing of the market on a large scale. It is this contradiction which the capitalists have to solve if their industries are to move.

But the close of the war has intensified the market crisis. Apart from the peasantry, etc., other sections are also being deprived of this purchasing power. The clerical staff of the government, the extra staff drafted for war purposes, the soldiers of the army, and other branches of defence, men from ordnance depots, government transport, railways, docks, etc, tens of thousands who represented some purchasing power are being thrown out of jobs, thus intensifying the crisis of the market.

It is already reported that nearly half a million soldiers are demobilised; several thousands of government servants are being retrenched from all departments.

This of course means that the market will not be able to absorb the same quantity of production—goods will be surplus and remain unsold, and production will decline. This in its turn results in closing down of factories, in workers being thrown out of jobs, reduction in wages, etc—thus causing a still further decline in the purchasing power of the people and narrowing the market.

Already industrial production was declining in the midst of the war itself. Coal rose from 27 million tons in 1939 to 29 million tons in 1942 and then dropped to 25 million tons in 1943, 26 million in 1944 and had not yet come to the 1942 level in 1945.

Pig iron dropped from two million tons in 1941 to 1.4 million tons in 1945—a decline of nearly 20 per cent over 1939-40. Jute manufactures dropped from 1.2 million tons in 1941 to one million tons in 1943 and 1.1 million tons in 1945. Cloth production rose from 4012 million yards in 1939-40 to 4871 million yards in 1943-

44—a figure which is vitiated by the bogus standard-cloth production—and then declined to 4676 million yards in 1945-46, and is said to be near the pre-war figure now.

No doubt part of the decline is due to want of replacement of old machinery; part is also due to concealment of figures for purposes of blackmarket transactions. But, nonetheless, there is a real decline, and that is seen from the fact that in these years industrial stoppages increased involving loss of millions of working days.

The increasing strike wave, specially in 1945-46 and 1946-47, was the outcome of the resistance of the capitalists to working-class demands, of the attempt to pass additional burdens on it, in their desperation to lower the costs of production at the expense of the workers, so that the market should expand and not narrow down. It was a recognition on the part of the capitalists that with existing prices the market would shrink continuously. But intent on keeping the old profits they began to apply the axe on workers' incomes and brought about stoppages of production. The decline in production was thus directly due to the capitalist way of securing a market which was rapidly contracting.

The paradox of declining production when there is shortage of goods must properly be understood.

The process of impoverishment of the masses has gone to such an extreme limit that today they are left with hardly any purchasing power to buy the goods produced at the existing high prices. With the cancellation of government orders, large quantities of goods are now thrown on the regular market. In terms of the needs of the people, they are not enough. But in relation to the prices—legal and blackmarket—charged for them, they are beyond the means of the people.

Ordinarily this would have expressed itself as over-production, with goods remaining unsold and workers losing their jobs. But the prevailing inflation and the depreciated purchasing power in the hands of many creates an illusion that it is all a question of shortage only; that people have enough purchasing power to buy, only the goods are not there in sufficient quantity.

In reality the present shortage of goods is only the reverse side of the process of impoverishment through inflation. Inflation, which robbed India of goods worth millions of rupees during the war years, was also an instrument of effecting a forcible redistribution of the national dividend among India's various classes. It made the rich richer and the poor poorer. While it enriched enormously the capitalists and put large sums of money in the hands of certain other selected groups—top professionals, high government officials, upper-middleclass people—it decisively impoverished the bulk of the people, thus limiting their capacity to buy.

It is these latter people, the vast majority of Indians, who suffer from shortage because they cannot afford to buy the goods at the existing high rates. The former, the rich, create the illusion of prosperity, of infinite purchasing power, ready to buy everything, and form the main customers of the blackmarkets as well as of open markets.

Merchants and traders continue to buy large quantities for purposes of speculation and blackmarket, hoping that they would be able to dispose of them in a short time. They want to get rid of the depreciating money and buy commodities which go on appreciating under conditions of inflation. The investments in commodity seem to be the safest, since every day they go on appreciating in value. The blackmarket prices are so lucrative that the merchant is assured of good profits even if he sells only a part of his goods. Everyone knows that there are always large stocks in the blackmarket which are not disposed of and yet the blackmarket thrives.

But if the existing price levels continue, a saturation point will soon be reached in the blackmarket; merchants and traders will find that the hope of disposing of the blackmarket stocks is not to be fulfilled and the brisk sales, which go on today because everyone believes that there is shortage and infinite demand for goods, will stop. The truth will be out that there are not too little but too many goods at the existing level of prices.

Inflation and speculation, arising from it, conceal the real nature of the crisis of which a warning is already given by the decline in production.

The policy of decontrol embarked upon by the government means that the bourgeoisie has already recognised that the blackmarket has reached a saturation point, that at the level of blackmarket prices goods cannot be sold in large quantities.

Decontrol therefore is a device to widen the market in a special way—prices will fall compared with the blackmarket rates but will rise compared with the control rates.

It is an effort to reach a wider section of well-placed people, while keeping out the large mass as before. It is a device to distribute goods according to means and remove all barriers in the way of the selling in the best possible market to the upper strata of the population in as large a quantity as possible.

Thus the profit-motive of the capitalists intensifies the crisis at every step. They must keep prices high in order to make huge profits. But these prices are at variance with the purchasing power of the bulk of the people—which means that the needs of the latter will not be satisfied and the goods of the capitalists will remain unsold. The profit-greed of the capitalists has driven the workers to desperation, it is keeping goods out of the reach of the common man, and in its search for profitable markets, causing a collapse of production.

The crisis thus arises from the imperialist loot of the war period, from the imperialist obstruction to industrial development, from the re-distribution of the national income through inflation, from the profit-hunt of the capitalists, and from the colonial character of India's agricultural relations.

How do the capitalists and the national government seek a way out of this crisis ? What are their plans of avoiding a decline in production?

Their plans lie within the framework of colonial economy, of imperialist economy.

Afraid of the masses and their initiative, afraid to interfere with property rights and thus create a precedent for interference in capitalist property, especially in the context of the growing demand for nationalisation of industries—the Indian capitalist class and the

national government are opposed to the liquidation of the old feudal order, which alone will release the peasant masses from the yoke of feudalism and stop the process of impoverishment.

The release from feudalism, will make the peasant a good customer, a good market, but the social consequences of the step, they fear, will be such that the people might march forward and take charge of the entire national economy, dethroning the bourgeoisie from its privileged position.

That is why, both politically and economically, the bourgeoisie compromised with imperialism and the feudal landlord bloc.

The economic collaboration with landlords expresses itself in the so called land bills which retain landlordism in one form or another and thus ruin all chances of expanding the market among the vast bulk of the peasantry. The agrarian bills of the Congress ministries with their insistence on compensation, with no provision for land to the tiller, with at best some concessions to the richer upper strata of the peasantry, keep the old land-relations intact and impoverishment on the increase.

In these most favourable circumstances, the market is somewhat extended only among the upper section of the peasants who are granted concessions and get new opportunities of grabbing land from the poor peasants. If the rights of the landlords are somewhere touched, it is only in order to help a section below them—a wider section—but not to give relief to the mass of the peasantry.

For the rest, the national government and the bourgeoisie hope to save Indian agriculture by means of extension of irrigation facilities, manure, hydroelectric dams, of bringing new land under cultivation—all the old familiar schemes of imperialism which seek to achieve a miracle in agrarian conditions without changing the pre capitalist land-relations.

The hope that through these a prosperous, middle, independent peasantry will be stabilised—with feudal relations dominating land—is a fond hope doomed to failure.

The national bourgeoisie therefore, in its compromise with imperialism, and feudalism, has set its face against revolutionary

changes in agrarian relations, thereby announcing its bankruptcy to raise either the standard of living of the peasant or the production on land. It is thus incapable of utilising the vast potential market that exists, and organise the rapid industrialisation of India. That is why there can hardly be any genuine industrial development of India on capitalist lines, ending her colonial character. At every step the attempts to develop on capitalist lines come in conflict with the capitalist collaboration with the imperialist-feudal combine, which destroys the market and hampers industrial growth.

In the post-war crisis therefore the capitalism and the national government do not have any plan of getting out of the crisis except one of maintaining the old order on the basis of repression and force. For the vast masses of India, the rural millions, they offer nothing except feudal and landlord tyranny, sanctified now by the bourgeoisie in its base compromise with imperialism; they offer nothing except the upholding of the old imperialist order which kept India backward on the basis of pre-capitalist relations in agriculture.

Fear of the agrarian revolution, arising out of the fear of a political revolution, forces the bourgeoisie to solve the crisis within the framework of the imperialist-colonial order and thus get into an insoluble contradiction. On this basis therefore not only expansion of industries is not possible but even retention of the present production level is becoming impossible.

How then do the bourgeoisie and the national government attempt to solve the crisis on the industrial front? Having decided to keep the large masses of people in poverty, the only hope for production is to produce with sweated labour, low wage-costs and intensification of the labour process.

The bourgeoisie and the national government thus attempt to find a way out the crisis by brutally lowering wage-costs, attacking the workers in all directions, demanding a restoration of the nine-hour day, stopping all further wage concessions and attacking the wage standards of the working class, introducing rationalisation and retrenchment where possible so that wage-costs are reduced. They attempt to bring production near to the impoverished people by impoverishing the workers as well and thus accentuating the crisis.

The capitalist way thus means misery for the peasant, misery for the worker, misery for the middle class, and, in the bargain, an all-round decline in production.

The bourgeoisie starts by raising the cry about shortage of production and then concentrates fire on the working-class strikes. Its demand is that the working class should tamely submit to wage cuts, etc; to guarantee capitalist profits and enable the capitalists to secure markets at the expense of the working class. To this end the national government and the Congress ministries introduce anti-strike legislation and suppress the workers' resistance to facilitate the capitalist offensive.

The capitalists and the national government are moving towards an attack on the eight-hour day so that the employers get one hour's labour without much extra cost and are able to reduce costs and make profits.

The national government helps the capitalists in their rationalisation of industries, no wage legislation, complete freedom for them to deal with labour, and pass on the burden of the crisis to the workers.

All this, by reducing the purchasing power of the people, intensifies the crisis instead of solving it.

But, nonetheless, for the capitalists there is no way out. They must forcibly make the workers accept low wage standards and suppress them to keep production going. They must also keep the peasantry enslaved.

Naturally, in these circumstances, the Indian capitalists look to foreign markets for absorbing their goods which the Indian market cannot absorb because of the poverty of the people. They are looking more and more to the foreign markets not only for an outlet for present surplus goods, but also for exporting goods of the industries which they hope to build in the near future.

The collapse of the Indian market makes the capitalists more dependent on foreign markets which only America and Britain can offer.

This leads to two results :

First, it means further intensification of attacks against labour to increase the competitive capacity of the Indian industry in foreign markets.

Second, it leads to deals with foreign capitalists, to allow them the right of joint exploitation of the Indian market, joint investment in return for exports and supply of capital goods. This means guarantees about no nationalisation of industries, of return on capital and of putting down labour firmly. It also means acceptance of only such industrial expansion as is permitted either by Britain or America, and, for the rest, retention of the old colonial order. All talk of planning, prosperity, abolition of Indian poverty, etc. disappears with this policy, this attempt to get out of the crisis.

That is why the national government no longer talks about planning; that is why it has given an assurance to the capitalists in the industries conference that at least for five years to come there will be no nationalisation ; that is why it is passing antistrike legislation and enabling the employers to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the workers and the people. That is why it has removed controls to enable the capitalists to make profits.

The conditions attaching to the export of Indian goods abroad are such that exports will not solve the crisis but intensify it at every step and Indian collaboration with Britain and America will only intensify the misery of the people ruining both industry and agriculture.

The capitalist way therefore is opposed on all fronts by the people, by the workers, by the peasants, by the students and by the middle class.

As against the capitalist plan of retaining Indian misery by retaining the existing land-relations, by attacking wage-standards, forcing prolongation of the working hours, demanding higher prices for goods or decontrol, demanding uncontrolled profits and opposing nationalisation, attacking trade unions and strikes and suppressing workers and peasants demanding mass retrenchment and ration-alisation—the needs of the people demand planning in economic

life based on the abolition of landlordism and land to the tiller; nationalisation of key and vital industries with workers' control over them; nationalisation of banks; living wage, trade-union recognition, right to strike, and social security to workers; living wage for middleclass employees, security of service and pension; control of profits; confiscation of British capital, etc.

This way alone the contradiction between production and a narrowing market can be solved, a contradiction arising solely out of the capitalist character of production.

On the basis of these, the people can plan ahead, organise production for the needs of the people, increase it by common efforts for common good and distribute it on the basis of labour performed—so that a planned prosperous economy is possible for the people.

The two ways out of the crisis are diametrically opposed.

The capitalist way is that of safeguarding profits by intensifying the misery of the people, of guarding the old colonial order in collaboration with imperialism, and of perpetuating and intensifying Indian misery; while the workers' and the people's way is to solve the crisis by uprooting the root cause—the colonial order—with its imperialist-feudal-bourgeois exploitation. The capitalists can only attain their objective by suppressing the people, defeating the workers' and peasants' movements and establishing a naked dictatorship of force, i.e. by suppressing the political liberties of the people. The capitalist way is not only one of economic misery but of political suppression and slavery.

That is why the working class and other toiling people must defeat the capitalist policy and successfully solve the crisis in the interests of the people. This means that they must defeat the capitalist-landlord offensive and the policies which help them and see to it that their movement is not terrorised by force.

In the partial struggles, strikes, political conflict, these two ways face each other. The capitalist way drives the masses to accept the challenge every day, makes their condition unbearable and unleashes the upsurge all round.

V. AGAINST IMPERIALIST-BOURGEOIS CONSPIRACY FORGE A NEW CLASS ALLIANCE PROGRAMME OF DEMOCRATIC FRONT

Masses Fight Back

The establishment of the Congress ministries and subsequently of the national government, the communal offensive launched by reaction and the disruptive role played by the Congress, have not diminished the postwar upsurge. Its causes lie deeper than the mere formation of government, for they directly follow from the exploitation of the Indian masses which has reached unbearable proportions.

Though the Congress leaders in the beginning were successful in creating new hope among the people that things could be remedied through the national government, the process of disillusionment has been quickened since 15 August, and the upsurge is asserting itself more and more. Through their common fights and day-to-day struggles, through their cooperation for their demands, all these sections more and more come to realise that their poverty and exploitation can be ended only by a triumph of the democratic movement. Never was there so much understanding of the main slogans of the democratic movement; abolition of landlordism and land to the tiller; abolition of autocracy; nationalisation of key industries and a living wage as the cornerstone of any stable life for the people.

But today the people in their disillusionment are learning something more, and that is that a government manned by leaders in whom they had utmost faith cannot discharge a single responsibility and cannot give them either land, peace or bread. More and more the people are coming to the conclusion that the national government is guided by the vested interests; more and more they are seeing the link between the Indian capitalists and the national leaders. Out of this disillusionment will come the demand for another government, and it is the duty of the Communist Party to consciously guide the people in fighting for that demand boldly and decisively.

The programme of the democratic movement can be implemented only when the state-power belongs to classes which are interested

in full democracy and from which all opponents of democracy are excluded. Such a state will be based on the alliance of workers, peasants and the oppressed petty bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the working class. It will be a people's democratic state based on the alliance of anti-imperialist classes, workers, peasants and the oppressed petty bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the working class, and from which all collaborationists and exploiting elements are excluded. It will be based upon direct rule of the toiling people in place of the present bureaucratic system.

The existing correlation of forces, in which every step forward of the popular struggle is to be taken not only in opposition to imperialism but in opposition to the bourgeoisie also, clearly shows that the old phase of the bourgeois democratic revolution is over, a phase in which the bourgeoisie was in the anti-imperialist camp. Today the entire trend of events demands a democratic state of workers, toiling peasants and the oppressed petty bourgeoisie as the only rallying slogan to surge forward to the defeat of imperialism, and its bourgeois allies and emancipation of the people. It means that people's democratic revolution has to be achieved for the completion of the tasks of democratic revolution and the simultaneous building up of socialism. This can be assured by establishing firmly the leadership of the working class over the other sections of the toiling people.

New Class Alliance

To defeat the bourgeois-imperialist conspiracy, to defeat the combine of imperialism, feudalism and the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to marshal the forces of the revolutionary people in a new way, i.e. to forge a new alliance of all the classes for whom the success of the democratic revolution is vital. The democratic state cannot be realised without such an alliance and unity of the people.

The spontaneous movement of the workers, peasants and middle classes against economic exploitation and political repression itself gives the form of the new front. It is the duty of the working class and the Communist Party to combine this growing upsurge into a new democratic front reflecting the unity of the fighting masses. The basis of this new democratic front is the common struggle against exploitation and political subjection. The front will therefore

include the fighting masses and all those fighting organisations which help it to go forward against the treacherous policy of the national bourgeoisie and the designs of imperialism.

The Communist Party, the working class and the mass organisations led by the Communist Party will be the core of this front. The militant following of the left parties and all genuine leftists in these parties will be important partners in the front. The front will grow by drawing inside it the entire fighting masses as well as the anti-imperialist following of the Congress and the League so that the broadest unity of the common people can be built in the struggle for freedom and democracy.

It must be clearly understood that though the front will include several political parties, trade unions, kisan sabhas, student and youth organisations and other bodies, it will not be a mere coalition of several organisations. On the contrary, it must become the genuine fighting alliance of the masses against imperialism, feudalism and the bourgeoisie.

For building such a front the communist shall seek the cooperation of all left parties and elements. They will strive to establish unity of action with left parties. But the cardinal thing for the communists to remember is that the struggle for building the democratic front is inseparable from the struggle to establish working class hegemony, i.e. to win the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie for the fighting programme and policy of the working class.

It must also be stressed that in course of its development the democratic front will have to be directed, through persistent struggle for a common programme and progressive realisation of working class leadership towards a disciplined and firmly united mass political organisation functioning democratically and based solidly on the unity of the people.

The democratic front therefore must not be looked upon as an organisation representing a top alliance between left parties. It is a front based on the masses. It is an alliance between the working class, the peasantry and the progressive intelligentsia. This front becomes strong and capable of decisive action to the extent that it becomes unified both politically and organisationally under working

class leadership, to the extent that the working class secures the confidence of its allies and is able to win them for its programme and policy.

Unless the communists realise all this, there is every danger of repeating the mistakes of the past, of right-opportunism masquerading as left unity, and making the working-class trail behind the vacillating class.

Under the impact of the crisis and as the result of growing disillusionment with the government, larger and larger sections of masses will be set in motion. The process of radicalisation will be hastened even among the most backward strata. It will be the task of the democratic front to draw all these sections in the common movement, forge the fighting alliance of the people, coordinate and integrate the various partial struggles and develop them as part of the fight for the ending of imperialist-feudal-bourgeois domination. Only under the firm guidance of the working class and only by developing as the united mass organisation of the fighting people, the democratic front can carry out these tasks.

United Front with Left Parties

The united front of left parties in the present situation will be a powerful lever to build the new front, disillusioning and activating the Congress and League masses, the states' peoples and other sections, and in building a united movement for the democratic revolution.

The independent strength of the Communist Party of India and the general leftward swing of the people enhance immensely the strength of left forces and make them the base and spearhead of the new unity.

The Communist Party must therefore seek immediate agreements with left parties for joint action, for common understanding of the problems of the democratic movement and for building a front against the compromisers and their real masters. At the same time, the Party must note that discredited and dishonest elements and groups sometimes come forward as a left force, exploiting the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist anger of the masses. The party must

expose and fight such groups, especially groups having connection with organisation or professing policies which are internationally accepted as counter-revolutionary.

The building of the democratic front is a process of struggle. It advances through a series of joint campaigns and partial struggles, jointly conducted, and through local united fronts between the party and the local Congress and League masses—even committees wherever possible— between the left parties and the Congress and League masses at other places, between the party and other mass organisations in still other places. The fundamental basis however is the independent activity of the proletarian party and its capacity to lead struggles of the masses and draw new masses into the fighting arena. The core of the new front would be the Communist Party together with the mass organisations led by the party, trade unions, kisan sabhas and students' and youth organisations. Round this must be gathered the militant following of the left parties, vast masses from the Congress, the League, the states' Praja Mandals, etc. so that a broad democratic front takes shape to meet the new situation.

In many provinces organised left groups do not exist.. There are thousands of unattached leftists in all provinces. Unity of the left parties is a weapon of drawing these thousands into the common front for joint action. In the south we must devote special attention to the unorganised left ; for left unity will mean drawing these unattached thousands into the common fight. In other provinces also left unity ought to be an instrument of attracting unorganised leftists who will now find an effective platform and instrument for implementing their left aspirations. It will also attract other progressive congressmen on specific issues.

Congress, League and the Democratic Front

The relations of the Congress and the League to the democratic front must be properly understood.

Both these organisations command the loyalty of lakhs of people, of vast sections of the anti-imperialist masses. Desperate attempts will be made by the leaders of these two organisations to keep these masses away from the struggle for the democratic revolution and

from the democratic front by exploiting old loyalties and the memories of the anti-imperialist struggles. The forces of the democratic movement will be weak and paralysed if the bourgeois leaderships succeed in keeping the masses under the influence of these organisations away from the democratic front.

The Communist Party must devote the utmost attention to winning these masses away from the influence of the bourgeois leaders through propaganda, joint campaigns and joint struggles.

Great and vital importance therefore attaches to bring the masses of these two organisations inside the democratic front, in opposition to their leaders. It is therefore essential that the leftists who are associated with those organisations should carry on a persistent battle, both inside and outside these organisations, to unmask the policies of the leaderships and win over the masses for the democratic revolution and for joining the democratic front.

The Congress with its sixty-year-old tradition of anti-British fight, and with the memories of national battles that it rouses, sways lakhs of anti-imperialists who earnestly desire to move forward. The name of the Congress is today used by the bourgeois leaders to keep popular opinion behind them in support of their collaborationist policy. What the people are unable to accept from the central government and the provincial ministries is pushed through the Congress and public criticism is paralysed.

To abandon the fight for the Congress masses, to ignore their important role in the democratic front, will be tantamount to making a present of lakh of people to the bourgeois leaders. Every attempt must be made to win over the Congress masses, to carry the fight against the bourgeois leadership right inside the Congress organisation itself on every burning issue. The Congress leadership however will neither accept the programme of the democratic front nor come into the front, because it represents the bourgeoisie as a class and that class has gone collaborationist. But it is vital to win the Congress masses for the democratic movement. The Communist Party therefore attaches great importance to the work of consistent anti-imperialists and democrats inside the Congress, the work of disillusioning the masses and pressing forward for a democratic programme.

The Socialist Party

The Communist Party of India must take into consideration both the importance of the united front of the left and its limitations.

Under the stress of the crisis and the militancy of the masses, under the stress of the August struggle and disillusionment of large sections of congressmen with the rightwing leadership, left-minded elements strongly opposed to the capitalists are drawn to the Socialist Party. In places like Bombay, the Socialist Party has also a working-class base. In places like Calcutta, it counts among its members old trade-union leaders. It has a large number of honest elements in its ranks who seek to work among the kisans, workers, students, to build mass organisations.

The rightwing Congress leadership itself is afraid of the Socialist Party and at the same time wants to woo it.

The strength of the Socialist Party comes from the ranks who are overwhelmingly drawn from the petty bourgeoisie. The ranks hate the capitalists, are dissatisfied with the Nehru government and the compromise and want to move forward. They consider themselves socialists; in fact they are left-nationalists. Nonetheless their urge for socialism is real and though they are kept away from it by the misleading policies of their leadership, they constitute a current orientation towards the proletariat.

The building up of the united front of the left involves the winning over of their ranks for the common task of pushing forward the democratic revolution and establishing a democratic state.

But the aspirations and the orientations of the left ranks must be separated from the leadership and the programme of the Socialist Party. The ranks are being poisoned by the anti-working-class theories and formulations of the socialist leadership, are given a distorted idea about socialism and the international situation and are continually poisoned against the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement. Sharp exposure of the 'socialism' of the socialist leaders, their theoretical presumptions, their anti-Soviet and anti-communist line, and their stand on Indian questions is an integral part of the struggle to build the united front of the left.

In exposing the socialist leadership it must be remembered that

the leadership, barring the four or five at the top, has no uniform policy. In such cases a differentiated approach should be made.

The programme and policy laid down by the top leaders of the Socialist Party, including Jayprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Ram Manohar Lohia and Asoka Mehta, clearly reveal that behind the talk of socialism lurks the sinister design to exploit the left discontent of the ranks to transform the Socialist Party into a bourgeois constitutional party—his majesty's constitutional opposition, so to say. Both their international outlook and national outlook reveal the same thing.

In its recent programme, which is supposed to be a transitional programme, to socialism, the first stage in India's evolution towards socialism, the party suggests a banal programme of administrative reforms, the high watermark of its democracy not going beyond responsibility of the executive to the legislature. It requires an amazing boldness in these days to parade mere responsibility to the legislature as a transitional step to socialism.

While the programme prattles about India being a republic, of expropriation of private property and enterprise "with or without compensation," it nowhere mentions struggle as being necessary for it. It pins its faith in constitutional opposition and acts as if the democratic revolution is already complete, the people are in power and all that remains to be done is to take transitional steps to socialism.

It openly preaches the illusion that socialism can be achieved by constitutional means. It covers its advocacy of constitutionalism by calling it "democratic means."

In their demands for constitutional rights the socialist leaders do not include the right of self-determination of national units like Andhra, Tamilnadu, or Maharashtra, and reveal that they have learnt nothing from recent Indian history.

In their economic programme they suggest the possibility of compensation before nationalising private property, and they do not necessarily demand immediate nationalisation of heavy industries. On the contrary their demand is immediate or early nationalisation, thus seeking an excuse to postpone nationalisation.

They talk of abolition of landlordism, living wage, etc., but having given up all struggle to change the social order, not having the courage to demand nationalisation at least in their programme, everything else becomes just the words of a bourgeois leadership giving electoral promises.

On the concrete issues of day-to-day importance, the Socialist Party leaders adopt antipopular policies, support decontrol and help big business to exploit the people. They echo capitalist slanders about the working class not doing its duty, and help the bosses (Jayaprakash's letter to the railway board).

Forced by the ranks, they have to go in for strikes, but generally they oppose and even break strikes (strikes of drawers-in of Bombay textile mills and Asoka Metha's admissions). They disrupt the unity of the trade union congress and the trade-union movement and help the bosses' offensive, though their ranks want unity.

They concentrate their fire on the Communist Party—the mass actions led by it—and shamelessly support repressive measures against it (Asoka Metha's statement on the firing on Bombay students). Their members in the legislature support black measures like the public safety bill in Bengal and they oppose and break protest strikes against them.

They are strong opponents of left unity of any cooperation with the Communist Party. They thus perform a disruptive role in the interests of the collaborationists.

From time to time the socialist leaders give it out that they are leaving the Congress. This is an attempt first of all to pacify the ranks with left talk about secession from the Congress, for the ranks are fed up with the vacillating policies of their leadership and think that they are the inevitable consequences of remaining inside the Congress. The talk of leaving the Congress pleases the left ranks, for it opens before them prospects of independent and militant political activity in opposition to the compromising leadership of the Congress. The ranks hate the compromise and want to cut themselves off from the deadening grip of the policies of the Congress leadership and go in for an independent militant political line.

Nothing however is farther from the minds of the socialist leaders. At present the talk about secession from the Congress only serves to keep their left prestige with their ranks, and also it is a weapon of bargaining the Congress leadership.

When the leadership decides to leave the Congress, it will not do it to go in for an independent revolutionary line but when it finds that it can now play the role of an independent bourgeois opposition party, a parliamentary party for the next election. The talk about secession from the Congress in the mouth of socialist leaders is only an advertisement of their future plan to contest elections independently under the new constitution and try their luck at the ballot box. It is the result of their maturing into constitutional bourgeois leaders and has not an iota of revolution in it.

Their statement of policy reveals that they have drawn their theoretical understanding and appraisal of international events from the extreme rightwing social-democrats of Europe and America.

They repeat the worst slanders about the Soviet Union calling it a totalitarian state and making it plain that they are opposed to a real socialist revolution.

In their foreign policy they follow the hypocritical Bevin in advocating a 'third' group—which is only a cover to conceal their political alignment with American imperialism.

In their statement of policy they deliberately omit all reference to American imperialism, which means they will follow its dictates. Instead of concretely pointing out that a conflict does exist between the two camps—the camp of democracy and the camp of imperialism—they pose the conflict as being between Russia and the rest of the nations of UNO, thus screening American imperialism and its designs against democracy and freedom of all peoples and its conspiracy against the socialist state.

And finally, by a sleight of hand, they seek to do away with the main contradiction between capitalism and the working class by saying that the main contradiction is between advanced and backward countries—thus making a crude appeal to bourgeois nationalism and hiding the fact that the struggle of backward countries is part of the struggle for world socialism and against the capitalist order.

This outlook enables them to say that a socialist of backward countries must be an assertive nationalist, i. e. it draws and lends justification to any cooperation with any imperialist power in the name of nationalism.

The leadership of the Socialist Party is attempting to transform it into a collaborationist party behind the facade of socialist phrases.

It must be ideologically unmasked and fought, and the ranks must be taught to see it in its real colours.

The ranks themselves do not accept this programme wholly. The Socialist Party is not a unified party but a heterogeneous combination. In winning over the ranks these points must be noted.

Nonetheless a merciless ideological struggle must be carried on against the leadership. The ranks must be won over on the basis of Marxism which a large section accepts, and on the basis of concrete issues, but we should have no illusions that the top leaders will ever agree to a joint front unless the ranks do it over their heads or press them to do it.

Programme of the Democratic Revolution

The programme of the democratic front and the left parties should contain the following :

(1) Complete severance from the British empire and full and real independence.

(2) A democratic government representing the workers, toiling peasants and the oppressed petty-bourgeoisie, opposed to collaboration with Anglo-American imperialism, allied to the democratic states working for peace and freedom of all nations.

(3) A constitution based on adult suffrage and proportional representation, guaranteeing full freedom and democracy to the common man and fundamental economic rights.

(4) Self-determination to nationalities, including the right of secession. A voluntary Indian union, autonomous linguistic provinces.

(5) Just and democratic rights of minorities to be embodied in the constitution. Equality and protection to the language and culture

of minorities, all liabilities, privileges and discriminations on caste, race and community to be abolished by law, and their infringement to be punishable by law.

(6) Abolition of princedom and feudal rule in the Indian states and the establishment of full democracy. On the question of accession, exposure of the policies of the governments of both India and Pakistan of parading accession to the Indian union of Pakistan as a big triumph, and explanation to the common people that the urgent and primary task inside the states is the abolition of princedom and feudal rule and the establishment of a people's democratic state. Accession before that is only slavery of the states' people, both to princely autocracy and to the bourgeois rulers of the Indian union. It is only after the people of the states become completely free that they will have real liberty to decide the question of accession. At that state the question will be decided by the wishes of the people.

(7) Freedom of the tribal and such other backward peoples from economic, cultural and political oppression, extension of full democratic rights to them, prompt and adequate state aid for their development, so that they may, rapidly catch up with the advanced nationalities. The people of all contiguous, compact, predominantly tribal areas shall have regional autonomy. They may form autonomous areas within the provinces, enjoying full powers regarding general administration within the areas and specially regarding economic and cultural matters of regional importance. The people of such areas, in suitable cases, may also form separate province or provinces. The people of such areas or provinces shall have the right to secede from the state by a democratic verdict.

(8) Cooperation between the Indian union and Pakistan for mutual economic aid in the interest of the toiling people, military and political alliance against imperialist intervention and foreign aggression, democratic foreign policy in cooperation with democratic states against Anglo-American bloc.

(9) Abolition of landlordism without compensation and distribution of land to the tillers of the soil. Abolition of the zamindari system must mean confiscation of khas lands of the noncultivating landowners, and ensure land to subtenants and sharecroppers, Liquidation of rural indebtedness and abolition of usury. Living wage for the agricultural labourers.

(10) Confiscation by the state of interests of foreign capital in banks, industrial and transport concerns, plantations, mines, etc., and nationalisation of these concerns.

(11) Nationalisation of big industries, big banks and insurance companies, guarantee of workers' control, minimum living wage, eight-hour day etc.

(12) Economic plan to develop India's resources and removal of big business from strategic economic points, Control of profits in the industries in private hands.

(13) Repeal of all repressive legislation.

(14) Elimination of the bureaucratic administrative state apparatus and the establishment of a democratic administration with elected officials, guided by people's committees.

(15) General arming of the people and the establishment of a people's democratic army.

(16) The right to free education and compulsory primary education.

(17) Equal democratic rights to women.

The democratic front, and the Communist Party in building it up, will fight communal reactionaries, riotmongers and protagonists of war between the Indian union and Pakistan as enemies of the people. They will organise shanti senas, cooperate with all who stand for communal peace, and in order to quell riots, will make use of every antiriot measure of the government. At the same time they will expose the policy of national compromise which spreads riots and will call upon the people to defeat the game of the vested interests. They will also expose all communal acts of the members of the government which abet feudal creation.

To start with it is not necessary that there should be a joint front of only those who agree with the entire programme of the democratic front. Immediate joint actions may start on specific questions. As joint actions develop and as left cooperation develops, the correctness of the programme will be self-evident to all democratic elements, and the front will be progressively realised as part of the experience of the left and the masses as a whole.

VI. TASKS OF THE PARTY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

The aim of the people's democratic revolution is to bring about those fundamental changes in our political and social structure without which there can be no freedom and no prosperity for our common people. The present state will be replaced by a people's democratic republic—a republic of workers, peasants and oppressed middle classes. The bureaucratic administration will be dissolved and will be replaced by officials elected by the people, controlled by their committees and subject to recall. Landlordism will be abolished and land given to the tillers. All big banks and factories will be taken over by the state and run in the interest of the people and not for the profits of the few. Princely autocracy will be ended and the states' people freed from feudal and capitalist shackles.

On the basis of these changes the foundation will be laid for the building up of a socialist economy, for the ensuring of a happy and prosperous life for our people.

It will be the task of the Communist Party to work untiringly for these aims and to make this perspective the perspective of the entire democratic movement. It will be the task of the party to conduct and lead all struggles of workers, peasants and other toilers in such a manner as to develop them as part of a single movement for the realisation of this programme.

Tasks on the Trade-Union Front

The working class under the leadership of the party has played a glorious role in the recent struggles. Today under the stress of the economic crisis, the working class is being attacked (Coimbatore, Kanpur, Bombay tram and port trust etc.). Big battles are already taking place in Coimbatore and Kanpur.

The strike wave has gone on mounting and repression has failed to check it. Under the pressure of the economic crisis both the government and the capitalists are desperately trying to reduce wage-costs, i. e. to solve the crisis at the expense of the workers. Retrenchment, unemployment, cut in the dearness allowance and reduction in wages, attempts to prolong working hours—these

constitute the means by which the national government seeks to help the capitalists at the expense of the workers.

The recent 'industrial truce' conference was nothing but an open declaration of war against the working class. It shamelessly promised the capitalists that there would be no nationalisation for five years. It refused to accept the obligation for a living wage, it put profits and fair wages on the same level, making it quite clear that the capitalists were as much entitled to fair profits as the workers were to fair wages. It gave a promise of making provisions for industrial housing but in reality it only hastened to make provisions for illegalisation of strikes in the name of promoting industrial peace through arbitration.

This policy means that every effort will be made to launch an intensified offensive against working-class standards and the government will use all its forces to crush the resistance of the working class. It also means that in future the arbitration courts and the arbitration machinery will be used more and more as weapons to put the workers at disadvantage, to deny them all their demands, take away the rights previously won and seek every excuse to illegalise strikes.

The perspective is therefore one of growing deterioration of the industrial situation in which every kind of repression will be used against the workers, every kind of misrepresentation will be made and the workers will be forced to mobilise all their strength to defeat the offensive.

The trade-union front therefore will have to bear the brunt of this offensive and defeat it with the might of the working class. At such a time working-class rights and demands must be defended most decisively. Every care should be taken to see that the fight of the workers is not isolated from other sections of the workers and the people whose sympathies or neutrality the national government will try to exploit.

The national government and the national leadership attempt to hoodwink the people by talking about national reconstruction, and in its name launch an economic offensive against the working class. They exploit the existing scarcity of goods, the high prices that the

people have to pay, and make it appear that the workers' strike struggles are responsible for this so called shortage of goods. They appeal to middleclass sentiments and ignorance by declaring that illegalisation of strikes and the measures that they are suggesting will lead to increased production and prosperity, and that the people must support them in their plans. In talking about national reconstruction, the national government and the bourgeoisie exploit the people's desire and wish for a planned economic life and their anger against capitalist anarchy.

We must expose this bourgeois hoax of national reconstruction which is but another name for passing on the burden of the crisis to the workers and the people, through prolongation of the working day, reduction of wages, intensification of labour and mass unemployment.

We must expose that production is falling because of capitalist ownership and the crisis of capitalism, that the only way to improve it is to nationalise the means of production and remove the profit-motive from it. We should warn the people not to be a party to the reconstruction plan of the bourgeoisie which is only a profit-making plan.

We should not join in the hunt for preparing production plans, with the capitalist method of production intact and profits untouched. We should clearly show that the way of the capitalists and the government will reduce production and not increase it. The capitalist plan will only lead to crisis and to steep reduction in output.

We must make it clear that there can be no national reconstruction and no reorganisation of production without nationalisation of industries, without liquidating the colonial order, without implementing the programme of the democratic revolution, without giving a living wage to the workers.

Overwhelmed by bourgeois propaganda, some people are reluctant to advocate nationalisation of industries and a living wage as the basis of national reconstruction—thinking that this is too general and abstract a basis. Such elements fail to see that these are the most practical and concrete proposals and the only ones on the basis of which social order can be changed and production reorganised. Only those who are accustomed to think even of the

democratic revolution as a distant perspective and do not believe in fighting for it at present, but want to argue on the basis of bourgeois practicality, will feel embarrassed before our immediate programme.

Therefore to ask the workers to produce more for the capitalist plans made for the purpose, when the working class is engaged in a bitter struggle to prevent worsening of its standard of living, is a call to sacrifice the workers to the bourgeoisie. Those who go this way are victims of bourgeois propaganda. We must expose and unmask the bourgeois plans, resist all attacks against the workers and boldly put forward nationalisation, control of profits, a living wage, etc. as our contribution to organising production. We must wage a consistent fight against the idea that nationalisation, etc. are not concrete proposals.

The trade unions and the party will have to put up the most decisive defence of working class interests. This will have to be done in a way in which not only the working class emerges victorious, but inspires the other classes—the middle class and the peasantry—with confidence in the common victory against the bourgeoisie. These struggles must unify the entire working class under common mass organisations and politically under the Communist Party. They will be the strongest levers to build the new democratic front, the new alliance of classes which is necessary to build a democratic state based on this alliance.

Today, more than ever, when in many places the working class is drawn in different directions—some sections directed to the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), some sections to the Socialist Party, some confused by the stand of the national government—it is necessary to build the unity of the working class in each struggle. This unity may be achieved before the struggle or in the course of the struggle. Every effort must be directed towards this end, for working-class unity can and shall be forged through the coming struggles against the effects of the growing economic crisis. This is so because the crisis hits every section of the working class and it is possible for us, if we adopt correct trade-union tactics, to draw every section of the working class into a common front of resistance to the employers. Such united struggles

afford the best lessons to the working class on the treacherous role of the reformist trade-union leaders and on the need for revolutionary working class unity.

It is also necessary to counteract the mischievous propaganda of the national government and the bourgeoisie among the people and to win their sympathies, so that the struggles are not isolated and crushed. Today there is an overwhelming opinion in favour of strikes even in the middle class because they themselves have to go in for strikes for their own demands. This constitutes a big basis for winning popular sympathy, and how effective it can be is seen from the great fraternal demonstrations of the clerical workers of Calcutta in favour of the tramway strike.

In forging working-class unity we must make it our special task to forge the unity of the Hindu and Muslim workers to fight communalism and see that our trade unions take an active part in protecting the minorities and making the working class aware of its basic duty towards itself and the minorities. The working class must be clearly warned that its trade-union struggle and the struggle for economic and political emancipation will be inevitably lost if communal barriers are not overcome in the class itself and if the class as a whole does not fight for the democratic rights of the minorities and does not take an active part in routing those who persecute the minorities.

Afraid of our growing strength in the working class, afraid of the strike struggles and convinced that mere repression will not crush the working class, the national bourgeois leadership headed by Sardar Patel, has launched the INTUC to disrupt the ranks of the working class, to confuse the minds of the middle class and to slander every working-class struggle. More and more the INTUC reveals itself as an appendage of the state, a labour front of the bourgeoisie in power which wants to disrupt the working class struggles, to serve the needs of the ruling bourgeoisie.

Its role is anti-strike, anti-communist, anti-working class. Its policy is dictated by the national leadership, i.e., the bourgeoisie, and it acts as the unofficial arm of the national government in every strike and independent action of the working class. It is also becoming an agency through which strike-breakers and gangsters are recruited

to terrorise the workers. It functions in cooperation with the police and the bosses and acts as their spy. It is being groomed to represent Indian labour in international conferences and replace the AITUC.

The following it has got in many places is due to the influence of the Congress, but it is getting discredited very quickly. Barring perhaps a few places, it has no mass following. The more it gets discredited in other places the more it bases itself on the supervisory staff, on paid hirelings on factory officials, who compel the workers to pay subscriptions to its unions and ask the owners to victimise those who are opposed to it. The INTUC is not an ordinary reformist organisation, but one which is fast moving to become a Hitlerite labour front. The role it played recently in the Calcutta strike and the role of intimidation of workers, of attacking them with the help of goondas, is the real role of the INTUC and it will be used more and more till the workers are able to beat it back.

The attacks of goondas, the physical assaults on workers and the criminal intimidation practised by the INTUC are an admission of the failure of the INTUC to win over the workers and a confession of its own bankruptcy.

The role of the INTUC unions therefore must be thoroughly unmasked and exposed in every working-class meeting and the workers' anger must be roused against it. Every action against strike, every attempt at intimidating the workers, every act of betrayal must be unmasked so that the INTUC unions do not get any roots among the masses. Where the INTUC unions have mass influence exposure should be combined with offers of united front on specific issues concerning wages, living conditions and offers of help in every action and struggle against the capitalists.

The Socialist Party leadership is another disruptive agency which together with the INTUC is making desperate efforts to isolate the AITUC, i.e. the vanguard of the organised working class gathered in the AITUC. It has seceded from the AITUC and has started rival unions in many places. It broke away from the AITUC after the INTUC was started and thus continued the work of disruption started by the INTUC. For fear of its ranks it dared not join the INTUC. At the same time it had neither sufficient courage nor loyalty to the working class to remain in the AITUC and fight

jointly with the communists and others against the disruptive designs of the INTUC.

Though in some places like Bombay, under pressure from the working-class ranks, the socialist leaders opposed the INTUC, still their general opposition to the INTUC has been a mild and polite opposition while their hostility to the AITUC is pronounced. They do not regard the government-sponsored INTUC as their enemy but concentrate their attacks on the AITUC in which is centralised the independent strength of the trade-union movement. While the socialist leaders would never have a united front with the AITUC they join hands, as in Calcutta, with the INTUC leaders to break up the unions of the AITUC (Calcutta tramway workers' strike).

Its unions in some places have a mass basis, the workers being attracted to the socialist leadership because of its left phraseology. The socialist leadership has attempted to stabilise this disruption by starting a new central organisation, thus splitting the ranks of the working class. The socialist leadership itself opposes and denounces strike organised under our leadership, supports or condones measures of governmental repression against the working-class under our leadership, and itself holds back the workers under its unions as much as possible.

If the Socialist Party leadership today leads any strike it is because of the intense pressure of the rank and file. The unions led by the Socialist Party are generally active unions in which a lot of militant material is gathered. We must make offers of united front on every occasion to these unions and workers in their struggle; we should not identify them with the policy of the socialist leadership; and, at the same time, we should criticise the disruptive role of the socialist leadership in the working class movement.

Every occasion of half-hearted support to strikes or sabotaging of strikes by the socialist leadership must be condemned by us in a way which will unify the workers and attract them to the AITUC as the common organisation. Our offer of united front should gradually develop into a demand for one central organisation and a denunciation of the disruptive move of the leadership of the Socialist Party.

By our independent actions, decisive lead of strike struggles and increase in trade-union membership, we must enhance the strength of the AITUC and put it before the working class as the only class organisation consistently defending and fighting for its rights.

The national government is making serious endeavours to take away the representative character of the AITUC and thus remove it from international gatherings. This must be fought by making the working class aware of the danger and by immensely increasing the strength of the AITUC. We have failed to carry the battle for the central organisation to the mass of workers belonging to the socialist unions. Had we done that, it would not have been easy for them to break away from the AITUC.

Today the AITUC has such tremendous prestige that newly-formed organisations automatically turn to it for guidance and affiliation. We must realise that the strength of the AITUC is the strength of the working class, and that the stronger the central organisation is the easier it is for the working class to fight its life-and-death battle against the economic crisis and capitalist attacks.

In the course of our strike struggles, we must, along with the immediate demands popularise the demand for nationalisation of key industries control of profits a living wage, as the only way out of unemployment and wage reductions.

The tendency to look on such popularisation as abstract is reformist and must be fought, and the conduct of these partial struggles must be guided by the correct Marxian understanding that no partial gains are stable in the period of crisis unless the entire capitalist offensive is defeated all round. Therefore, while accepting whatever partial victories which may give immediate relief to the workers and are acceptable to them, we will ask the workers to be always vigilant and ready for any offensive that is likely to be launched, and for their basic demands which they must achieve.

And above all we will have no illusions that the arbitration courts appointed by bourgeois governments are likely to do justice to us. We will never have illusions that in times of economic crisis the desperate struggles between capital and labour can be solved through arbitration courts.

In defending and advancing the interests of the workers in these day-to-day struggles, we must so conduct the strikes that the working class gets unified as a class conscious of its political responsibility to struggle against the existing order and fight for a democratic state, conscious that it must lead struggle in the democratic alliance for the people to be victorious.

Along with the fight for the defence of its day-to-day interests, the working class will champion the cause of the people as a whole and organise mass political actions on the widest scale against repressive acts and policies of the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine, against workers, peasants, students, states' people and minorities. Through solidarity actions, sympathetic strikes, protest demonstrations and other forms of political action the working class will cement the fighting alliance of the masses and increasingly come out as the defender of democratic rights and liberties, as the leader, unifier and builder of the democratic front.

Tasks on the Peasant Front

The central task on the peasant front is to rouse and lead the toiling peasants around the central slogan of "Land to the Tiller". Landlordism in all forms must be liquidated without any compensation to the landlords, khas land of the landlords and rich peasants must be distributed amongst the toiling peasants, and all forms of feudal and semifeudal exactions must go. The fight against eviction, against rent, against serfdom to the moneylender, for commutation of rent in kind into money and for two-thirds share of the crop must be strengthened and developed into the fight for land to the tillers. The agricultural proletariat must be specifically organised under the All-India Kisan Sabha, either as a separate organisation affiliated to it or as a specially organised section within it for fair wages and regulation of labour conditions.

The tempo of the agrarian struggles is so sweeping and big that the Congress ministries themselves are forced to come out with what they call anti-landlord bills. They themselves have to take up the slogan of abolition of landlordism because the bourgeoisie perceives that the peasantry can no longer be cheated except by talking about abolition of landlordism. We should not allow ourselves to be deceived by its legislation and must expose its real class

character and show that the abolition of landlordism that they promise is fake and not real. In fact today bowing down to the opposition of the landlords the Congress leaders and ministries are holding the so-called anti-landlord bills in abeyance, so as to settle the question of proper compensation in the name of uniformity.

The proposed bills, in the first place, give compensation to the landlords, which we must oppose and fight. They do not take over the land monopolised by the landlords, and so do not provide for redistribution of land to the tillers. Sharecroppers, tenants-at-will and other tillers, who constitute the majority of the peasant population, will not gain any right on land. The proposed bills will simply acquire with compensation only that portion of the landlords' property which has been let out on a rent-basis to tenants with occupancy rights. These measures will not abolish landlordism but retain it in a different form. Only a new load of compensation will be thrust upon the overtaxed and impoverished people for the benefit of the landlords.

For the purpose of consolidating landlordism in a new way certain provincial governments have produced new plans which indicate which way the wind is blowing. In these new plans (the Bengal plan, for example) it is proposed that all agricultural land in different areas will be possessed collectively by cooperatives of landlords and peasants and the compensation money given to landlords will be invested as capital in the cooperatives. Naturally in such so-called cooperatives the rich landlords owning the major share, will be in a position to control the entire land and the crops.

Before the new legislative measures are adopted, the landlords are evicting peasants from their possessions on a large scale and with the assistance of the police beating back the resistance of the evicted peasants. As a result the private possessions of landlords are growing, monopoly holdings of land are increasing, and the tillers of the soil are being expropriated on a very large scale. The new agrarian measures will do nothing but legalise this expropriation.

To boost these measures as advances or progressive steps is to cheat the peasants and shield the bourgeois leaders.

We must expose and unmask the proposed bills as measures to rehabilitate landlordism, measures that will further impoverish the

mass of tillers of the soil and thereby further intensify the food crisis. They will strengthen the hold of monopoly in food, and thereby extend the blackmarket. We must oppose compensation being given to landlords and demand that instead of giving compensation to landlords, the state must provide for manure, irrigation reclamation of fallow land and supply cattle, seeds and modern implements to the peasants. Land must be given to the tillers of the soil, private land belonging to landlords being expropriated without compensation. The poorer sections of landlords are to be given a moderate allowance for a certain period, or allowed to retain private land sufficient for their maintenance.

The agrarian movement against feudal relations is not complete unless land is secured for the tiller. The peasantry, in order to secure land, must develop a coordinated movement round that slogan—a movement emerging from the partial movements for reduction of rent, debt etc.

We should unhesitatingly lead the fight against the food famine created by the government's policy and demand that the stocks of the big traders and landlords be confiscated for distributing food to the people. In the backward areas we should demand abolition of serfdom forced labour, illegal cesses as in the case of Warlis and Halis and take the struggle forward to the central slogan of "Land to the Tiller". In the states also the peasant must be roused to demand complete abolition of jagirdari and landlordism, of all feudal relations and land to the tiller.

The economic crisis, which will smite the agrarian areas most ruthlessly will set in motion colossal forces. These agrarian movements, uniting the entire mass of the poor peasants, middle peasants and the agrarian proletarians, will serve to bring about an alliance between the workers and the peasants which is the crux of any successful democratic movement. They are a part of the movement for the democratic front against the imperialist-bourgeois combine.

To head these agrarian struggles and unify them into one single stream of agrarian resistance, centring round the slogan of "Land to the Tiller", the All-India Kisan Sabha must be built up as the fighting central organisation of India's peasantry.

Tasks on the Student Front

In the postwar revolutionary upsurge the student movement has played an important and significant role. The clashes between student demonstrators and the police and military in the demonstrations for the release of the INA prisoners, which roused whole cities to action, ended the wartime political lull and heralded the postwar upsurge. Mass solidarity actions of militant students during workingclass strikes in the postwar period have been a new feature, raising the student movement in India to a higher level.

Although the illusion that freedom has been won gripped the students after 15 August 1947, there has been a quick revival of the student movement. The enhancement of fees (with the consequent restriction of education) has provoked angry demonstrations in many provinces. Brutal repression by the ministries on student demonstrations against the fee-increase and in observance of political anti-imperialist anniversaries has led to direct clashes between students and the government, developing into a general struggle of the people for civil liberties.

With rapidly worsening economic conditions and growing political disillusionment with the Congress leadership, the perspective is one of developing struggles on the question of fees and other educational demands, solidarity actions with workingclass and kisan struggles and political action on the issue of civil liberties, the democratic struggles in the states, etc.

Aware of the menace from the student movement to the rule of reaction, the government is launching brutal repression to 'quell student revolts', to crush the spirit of the students.

Congress leaders have also started propaganda for the liquidation of the student movement as fighting force, for the dissolution of militant student organisations and for setting up a government-sponsored nonpolitical students' organisation devoted to 'constructive work'.

The leadership of the Socialist Party lends support to this attack on the student movement by declaring that there is no need for a militant student movement and militant students' action. It therefore demands the dissolution of the militant student organisations,

supports the setting up of a common nonpolitical organisation, and is concentrating only on recruiting students to the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party is thus ranged with those forces which seek to liquidate the student movement and disband its militant organisations.

Under such circumstances any tendency which ignores or underestimates the importance of the student movement, its revolutionary potentialities in the struggle for real independence, democracy and socialism, is disastrous and must be rooted out of the party ranks. Such a tendency only plays into the hands of the liquidators of the student movement.'

Similarly any tendency which, in the name of 'maintaining the unity of the student movement' and in an imaginary fear of 'isolation', seeks to restrict the student movement to fighting for student demands, shirks the task of organising mass solidarity actions with working-class and kisan struggles, must also be sternly combated as a non-Marxist anti-working-class tendency, which also would cripple the militant student movement.

The communist students must boldly seize the initiative and, through effective leadership of the developing mass struggles and a firm ideological struggle, bring about a re-orientation of the entire student movement so that a fighting alliance of the student movement is forged with the working class and toiling masses, and the student movements as a whole comes to accept the ideology, programme and leadership of the working class in the fight for real independence, democracy and socialism. In this way they must defend the militant student movement from all bourgeois attacks and rally the fighting students in a common fighting organisation..

Tasks Among the Youth

The toiling youth drawn from the working class, the peasantry and the lower-middle class, has a special role to play in the present stage of the revolutionary struggle.

The working-class and kisan youth have always played a significant role in class battles, in the trade-union and Kisan struggles and in the national movement. The lower-middleclass youth have played an important role in periods of national upsurge. In the post-war revolutionary upsurge they have been the moving spirit in the

strike-struggles of the clerks and middle class employees. The youth from these sections have played the role of advanceguard in the militant battles of the post-war period in which barricades were thrown up and whole cities went into action against imperialism.

With deepening economic crisis, heightened economic exploitation of the masses, the imposition of crushing burdens on the toilers of town and country—the perspective is one of ever-larger masses of young workers, kisans and young employees and unemployed middleclass youth being thrown into the arena of struggle. Political disillusionment with the Congress leadership is spreading with utmost rapidity among the exploited, disaffected toiling youth.

Failure to marshal the forces of youth in a powerful democratic movement under proletarian leadership, failure to take communism directly to the toiling youth, however, is misdirecting the masses of disillusioned middle class (and even sections of working-class and kisan youth) into reactionary communal volunteer organisations or to various youth organisations which are being developed into disruptive, anti-democratic and anti-working-class organisations, tools in the hands of the exploiting classes.

The Communist Party must therefore make special efforts to win over the toiling youth to the ideology and programme of communism, combating bourgeois, anti-working class and anti-democratic trends among the youth. It must address itself to the task of developing a strong democratic movement of youth toilers for the fulfilment of the special aspirations of toiling youth in the field of labour and culture, fighting for the specific demands of the youth of the working class, the peasantry and the lower-middle class, and drawing the toiling youth into the struggle for real independence, democracy and socialism as a powerful organised force.

Tasks on the Women's Front

Growing evidence of a new awakening amongst women and their remarkable fighting capacity and courage even in the face of the most terrible repression has been a new feature during the last few years. This has been shown by the Indian peasant and working-class women as well as the lower-middle class women—the wives

and mothers of the workers, clerks and toiling sections of the people. Linked with them, the employed women—the teacher, the nurse, the telephonist and the clerk—have come forward to participate in the battles of their class, and through these have shown the tremendous fighting qualities of women. The heroic part played by the peasant women in the great struggles of tebhaga and Telangana the fight of the primary school-teachers, small strike battles of nurses, the participation of women telephonists in the great postal strike, the firm and glorious part played by women workers (e.g. Basanti Cotton Mills, Bata, pottery women workers of Calcutta, the textile women workers in Coimbatore, Madura and Bombay) in the long-drawn-out and fierce strike battles of recent times, and food demonstrations of lower-middle class women are pointers to the fact that the tremendous hardships of the war years and after, the rising cost of living, the low wages, have brought to even the most backward section of our people—the women a new consciousness and a new fighting quality.

But the conscious efforts of the women's front during these years have remained strictly confined to the middle-class housewives and even for this section a fighting programme for food, cloth, housing was never effectively worked out, with the result that no movement worth the name developed under the guidance and inspiration of women's organisations or the women's front

Today with the growing economic crisis the threats of retrenchments and dismissals, the high prices of essential commodities, the central tasks of the women's front must be to establish close contact with, and to unify, organise and stir into action the toiling masses of women—the working class, the peasant, the employed women and the wives of workers and of the lower-middle class employees, struggling sections of the population, whose sufferings in the coming period will continuously increase to a breaking point.

For this the entire demands of the democratic programme must be put before them and explained to them. On the one hand, the democratic rights of all workers for work, a living wage, better conditions of life, and of the peasant for land, must also be taken up by all sections of the toiling women in common with their menfolk. On the other hand, the women's fight against unjust social

prejudices and oppression, their ignorance, superstition, and unequal position in society must form a powerful part of the democratic fight of mothers of all classes to ensure a better future for their children ; this will draw in women from all classes, including the middle class.

The organisational task of the women's front must be to bring increasing numbers of kisan and women workers into the kisan sabhas and trade unions, to take an increasing part in the campaigns and battles of their class. Together with that the associations of middle-class employess like teachers, nurses, etc., where they exist, must see more active participation of women employees in the fight for their legitimate rights; and where such organisations do not exist, they should be rapidly build up.

The peasant women constitute the dominant section of oppressed womenfolk of India; that is why there must be consistent effort to draw them into struggles of their class as well as to take up their own special demands.

The party must pay also the greatest attention towards the mobilisation and activisation of the lower-middle class housewives, especially the wife of the worker, the clerk, the petty artisan, the foreman, the fitter, the small shopkeeper and the teacher. It is these toiling hard-hit women who must be brought into the various women's organisations to implement and fight for their democratic rights. In the coming months the consciousness of these sections of women will be raised to a higher level with the oncoming and increasing strike battles of their menfolk. It will be the revolutionary task of the women's front to consolidate this new consciousness and unite the fight of all sections of women for a better and a more progressive way of life. Only thus can a real powerful and democratic women's movement be built up which will bring in half the population of the country—the women—to play a powerful and decisive role in the establishment of a people's democratic state.

Tasks on the States' People's Front

The states, with their rotten autocratic and feudal structure and the long-oppressed masses awakening to struggle, constitute the weakest link in the collapsing imperialist-feudal structure.

The lack of any democratic rights, of any democratic and parliamentary institutions, the retention of the most backward feudal privileges and relations, jagirdari, landlordism, with the feudal elements monopolising high governmental posts—all these, backed by the personal autocratic rule of the feudal princes make the Indian states extremely vulnerable to the popular movement.

The feudal princes and their supporters never had any social mass basis. Their domains were bound to start shaking the moment the people woke up. Today these interests are attempting to seek a base for themselves by encouraging Hindu communalists, the RSS and other counter-revolutionary organisations and by encouraging the massacres of Muslims to divert attention from the struggle against autocracy.

Nonetheless the states continue to be the weakest link in the imperialist chain. The suppression of the press, of democratic and civil liberties the oppression of the peasants, the middle class, etc. under the autocratic rule of the princes, and the sham reforms which do not solve a single problem unite the entire people against autocracy.

The recent agreements between the prajamandals and some of the princes constitute a new attempt to stabilise old regimes with the aid of popular bourgeois leaders. But this attempt will also fail, since the new reforms cannot deceive the people for long, especially as the prajamandal leaders themselves have not the same prestige as the national leaders of the Congress have in India to hold back the masses for any length of time from joining the movement to end autocracy.

The perspective on the states' people's front should not be one of winning halfway house responsible governments based on compromise with autocracy but one of ending autocracy and carrying forward the democratic movement. The former is the reformist perspective which has led us to trail behind the present reformist prajamandal leaders instead of isolating them and developing decisive movements through independent initiative.

The mighty sweep of the states people's struggles is seen in some of the biggest actions that have been launched in the recent years, like the struggle of the Kashmiri people and now of the Hyderabad

people or of the Travancore people. These struggles, though conducted by reformist leaderships, develop into militant actions frightening the autocracy and making it plain that, led properly, they are invincible against the weight of autocracy which has become unbearable for the masses.

This is borne out by the struggle in Hyderabad, where under the leadership of the Communists and the Andhra Mahasabha, the struggle of the Telangana people has reached an unprecedentedly high level. Braving the terror unleashed by the nizam's army and police and the fascist Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul- Muslimeen the people of Telangana have liberated over 2000 villages and are conducting a bitter struggle for land for freedom and for democracy. Thereby they have demonstrated how the struggle can grow and develop when the basic issue of land to the tiller is made an integral part of the democratic struggle, when the issue of abolition of autocracy and power for the people is placed in the forefront, when the masses are led by fighting organisations and are free from the paralysing influence of the bourgeoisie.

But in the majority of states the struggles were conducted by the reformist leaderships of prajamandals or the state congresses. Supported by leaders of the national government, they used the people as pawns in the ignoble game of compromise. They restrained the people and made them look to the central governments at whose bidding the movements were called off the moment the ground had been prepared for compromise.

The national leaders, intent on compromising within the framework of the Mountbatten plan, only concentrated on getting the states to accede to the Indian union, and paraded it as a big triumph. In fact in some states, the rulers put up a mock resistance to accession so that the whole struggle could be developed on that issue and the people kept away from a successful struggle for democracy and for the end of autocracy.

In fact accession, petty reforms, merger schemes, the formation of unions of states, all these are calculated to achieve the same basic objective of destroying the revolutionary movement in the states, of preserving autocracy and reinforcing it by means of an alliance with the bourgeoisie, of getting rid of the economic barriers that

prevent the full exploitation of the markets and resources of the states by the bourgeoisie in cooperation with the princes.

Accession is not merely a device to sidetrack the attention of the people from the struggle for abolition of autocracy and agrarian reforms. It is also, as has been proved in Tehri, a weapon to protect the princes and buttress their collapsing regimes against the democratic struggles of the people. This must be recognised and exposed.

The much-boasted scheme of merger of the states with the neighbouring provinces protects the petty princes against popular revolt and enables them to retain their jagirs, their income from extensive private lands and their feudal privileges. The corrupt state bureaucracy is bodily incorporated in the provincial administration, giving no relief whatsoever to the common people.

Where several states are grouped together to form a union, as in Kathiawar and Central India, a counter-revolutionary alliance is established against the people, and new and extensive powers are conferred on the so-called raj pramukhs, so as to enable them to erect effective barriers against the mounting tide of democratic struggles and preserve the states as backwaters of reaction

Out of all this have emerged only some reforms in which the weak bourgeois element in the states shares power with autocracy, and is not even the senior partner but a junior partner. These compromises have been of such a thinly-veiled character that as soon as the mass pressure declines, there is every danger that the most reactionary elements in the states will come on top,

In fact in many states the feudal princes, the landlords and the jagirdars are using the RSS, the Hindu Mahasabha and the communal elements to organise intimidation and goondaism against the states' people's movement and to see that further demands for democracy are stopped.

All the princes are organising a hunt of the Muslim minority to rouse communal passions, to give a mass basis to the Hindu Mahasabha, to expel the Muslims into Indian territory and there create problems for the Indian union administration. Thus those

whom the national government is allying itself with are openly organising this counter-attack against it.

The extremely weak and compromising bourgeois leadership in the states is afraid of extending the struggle to the peasants and the workers by adopting an agrarian and industrial programme. Only when the struggle lasts for some time, does it get spontaneously extended to the masses, but it is withdrawn when the masses enter the arena. This weakness is fully exploited by the states' authorities to drive as petty a compromise as possible and counter-attack the reformist struggles with communal attacks.

In these circumstances it is essential to expose fully the agreements as sell-outs organised by the prajamandal leadership in collaboration with the national-bourgeois leadership.

To believe that the type of responsible government which has been ushered into the states constitutes an advance, is to ignore the revolutionary strength of the people and the character of the compromise.

It is therefore wrong not to popularise the demand for the abolition of autocracy, and to accept and be content with the reformist demand for responsible government. It is wrong to start with the programme of compromise and not even raise the demand of the abolition of autocracy.

Equally, the excuse of organisational weakness of the progressive forces must never be advanced to shield a line-up behind the compromisers, to glorify the compromise and thus win 'popularity'.

For organisational weakness can never be a reason to abandon a basic slogan such as the abolition of autocracy. If in advancing such basic and correct slogans the compromisers attack us and we temporarily suffer isolation, we have to face them boldly and not retreat. The party has grown by putting forward its programme boldly, by independently acting and by participating in the common struggle. And it would be totally wrong to give up the right of independent criticism and attack against those who betray the people, to give up the duty of rousing the radical sections of the states' people to independent thinking, to give up the right to

educate the masses about their fundamental right to abolish feudal rule.

We must therefore resolutely support the movement of the states' people for liberation and democracy. While participating in the struggles launched by the reformist leadership, we should not forget our basic slogans and the fact that the people themselves are demanding an end to the feudal rule. Participating in the common struggle, fighting resolutely against compromises and working to make the struggle all-embracing so that it reaches its basic objective—these are our tasks.

Our decisive participation in the states' peoples' struggles, our clear programme and sharp criticism of the compromising leadership, will rapidly rally round us the militant elements in the states' people's struggles, as the working class in many states has already rallied round us, and become a lever for building an alliance between the advanceguard and the states' people—an alliance for the achievement of complete democracy. The alliance will be defeated if the working class hesitates, does not show a militant way out of the situation and succumbs to the compromisers. Any weakness on the states' people's front will lead to the disruption of the democratic front.

The Untouchables

Forming the most exploited and oppressed section of our people, the six crores of untouchables are a powerful reserve in the struggle for democratic revolution. The Congress, led mainly by bourgeois leaders belonging to upper castes, has consistently refused to champion the cause of the untouchable masses and to integrate the struggle for social and economic emancipation of the untouchables with the general struggle for national freedom. This enabled the reformist and separatist leaders like Dr. Ambedka to keep the untouchable masses away from the general democratic movement and to foster the illusion that the lot of untouchables could be improved by reliance on imperialism.

The utter bankruptcy of this policy is proved by the fact that while the top leaders of the untouchables, like Dr. Ambedkar and Mandal, have become ministers and thus have lined up with the

ruling sections in Indian Union and Pakistan, the trusting untouchable masses continue to suffer social degradation and economic exploitation as before. As for the bourgeois leaderships of the Indian union and Pakistan, they have done nothing for the untouchables except promising them formal equality of status.

The untouchables therefore have been betrayed by the Congress as well as by their own leaders. Their emancipation, it has been proved by events, can be achieved neither by reliance on imperialism nor on the bourgeoisie but only through a united struggle of the entire toiling people against all exploitation.

In recent years the untouchables, both in cities and in villages, have waged big battles against social discrimination and against worsening conditions of life. Under the impact of the crisis the untouchable workers in Bombay, Nagpur and other centres are being drawn into the common struggle of workers and are joining the trade unions in increasing numbers. Political consciousness is fast growing among them.

To quicken this process, to draw the untouchable masses into the democratic front, to break down the caste prejudices of the uppercaste workers and peasants, to unite the common people of all castes against their common enemy—such are the tasks facing the party. This task will have to be carried out by a relentless struggle against the bourgeoisie of the upper castes as well as against the opportunist and separatist leaders of the untouchables themselves. We have to expose these leaders, tear away the untouchable masses from their influence, and convince them that their interest lies in joining hands with the other exploited sections and that only the victory of the democratic revolution will emancipate them from social degradation and slavery. Every discrimination against the untouchables must be denounced as a bourgeois attempt to keep the masses dis-united, and every just demand of theirs must be fought for as a part of the common struggle for people's rights.

The Minorities

The democratic front will be repeatedly disrupted if the working class and its party are not able to defeat the minority-baiters and

solve the problem of protecting the minorities. In Indian union Muslim minority is being hunted and attacked by Hindu communalism.

The problem of minorities is of vital importance in the class battles of the working class and the battle for a democratic state. The hunt of the Muslims is not a religious or communal hunt but an attack of the counter-revolutionary forces to disrupt the forces of the democratic revolution by involving them in an internecine war. The counter-revolutionaries realise that the common movement of the working class and the peasantry has assumed such threatening proportions that unless it is directed into fratricidal channels it cannot be defeated.

Knowing this, the working class and the Communist Party must take a firm stand against the communalists from both sides, the Hindu and Muslim communalists, fight riots and make the struggle for the rights of the minorities a part of its own struggle for political and economic emancipation. Unless the working class and its party are able to inspire other classes with a powerful urge to protect the right of the minorities, their right to exist, of culture, language, no discrimination in government services, etc. and the right of religious worship as part of the democratic struggle of the entire people, the compromisers cannot be defeated and the democratic struggle cannot triumph.

The working class must therefore actively work for the protection of minority rights and fight against communal agencies like the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League and the RSS, and also communal policies of the Congress leaders and national government ministers like Sardar Patel.

The War Danger

It is the design of imperialism that India and Pakistan remain in a state of permanent hostility, so that at the least sign of a revolutionary upheaval in either, both can be sidetracked into a war to drown the revolution and in the end both can be kept under complete control. Some leaders of the central as well as provincial governments also indulge in war-mongering in order to sidetrack the attention of the people from the struggle against their own

oppressor and to divert the rising discontent of the masses into channels of hatred against Pakistan.

We must fight against this war propaganda and assert the integrity and unity of the struggles of the oppressed in both states, and pledge to help each other by maintaining friendly relations and carrying on the fight against our oppressors and exploiters, and by fighting the common enemy British imperialism.

Unless great vigilance is exercised by the working class and its party, they may find themselves dragged behind the bourgeoisie in the imperialist game of war between the two states. Today threats of war, etc. are no doubt part of pressure politics and are meant to key up popular support behind the governments. But, at the same time, real issues of conflict, like that of Kashmir, are arising. These issues, manipulated by imperialism, may any day lead to what may virtually amount to war.

The working class must take a clear attitude on this question. The fight over the states bordering on the two dominions has become a question of pure grabbing of territory without any progressive content on either side. The working class on either side cannot support this lust for territory—of both dominions—neither of whom genuinely accepts either the right of self-determination or the freedom of the peasants and the people from feudal rule.

In the event of a conflict arising on this or any other issue, the working-class and the people must assert the unity of the democratic movements on both sides and declare that the interests of the working class and the common man lie in fighting imperialism and their common oppressors, the landlords and the capitalists, and not in fighting each other at their dictates. The latter course would only perpetuate imperialist-feudal-bourgeois bondage. In fact the conflict will be engineered precisely to defeat the common democratic movement in both territories.

The conspiracy of the communalists from both sides will lead to more and more riots, since they are required by the counter-revolutionaries to stop the march of the people. In every province, in every town, riots will have to be fought ruthlessly by forging the common bond and exposing the common enemies. The common

bond forged in the class struggles, in the working class and kisan struggles, in the trade unions and kisan sabhas, will become stronger and stronger, the more the party succeeds in leading the partial battles and showing the solidarity of the oppressed.

Fight for Self-determination

The Congress leadership by its compromising policy and its hostility to the right of self-determination has brought about a disastrous partition of the country. Today, in the Indian union, it is again committing the same crime in the interests of the dominating bourgeoisie by refusing self-determination to national units like Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamilnadu, etc.

Such a refusal is bound to lead to hostile sentiments among the different nationalities of the Indian union and create the danger of exploitation of their discontent by reactionary elements. In the interests of advancing the democratic movement, the party must support the right of all nationalities to self-determination and demand that it be made a part of the constitution. Unless the party takes a lead in this, the communal reactionaries are likely to run away with it.

Foreign Policy

The Indian bourgeoisie, allied to imperialism for crushing the Indian revolution, eager to secure economic and military assistance from US and British imperialism, anxious to enter the markets of the Indian Ocean region by the grace of Anglo-American imperialists, is emerging increasingly as a party to imperialist plans for crushing the revolution in these countries.

In view of the strong sympathies of the Indian masses with the camp of democracy and socialism, with the cause of Indonesia and Vietnam, the Congress leadership hides its subservience to the Anglo-American bloc in world politics under the cover of neutrality between opposing camps, of frank opportunism to realise Indian bourgeois interests.

The Communist Party must boldly declare that there can be no neutrality in the world struggle between the forces of imperialism and the forces of democracy, independence and socialism—any

more than there can be such neutrality in the struggle of the exploiters and the exploited inside India.

Recognising the strong popular feelings against imperialism, the party must ruthlessly unmask every betrayal by the Indian government in the field of foreign policy. It must seek every opportunity to mobilise popular masses in support of the democratic cause in every country.

It must combat the poisonous anti-Soviet propaganda that is disseminated by bourgeois politicians and also by the socialist leaders, and popularise the role of the Soviet Union as the leader of humanity in the struggle for independence, democracy, socialism and a lasting peace.

It must popularise the glorious achievements of the Chinese revolution, underlining its international significance—particularly its significance for the peoples of Asia.

It must make special efforts to frustrate the political and military measures of imperialism to crush the revolutions in Indonesia and Vietnam, by means of ceaseless propaganda and mass solidarity actions.

It must conduct a merciless campaign of exposure against the plans being hatched for a southeast Asia 'defence bloc' under the leadership of the British, French and Dutch imperialists, with India playing a principal role, which is designed to be the finishing touch to imperialist plans for the reconquest of this region.

Lead the Masses

Disillusionment against the policies of the national leadership is rapidly growing among the people. These policies will not solve a single problem of the people. There is no scope for industrial development of India on capitalist lines—beyond the colonial order and status. These policies will add to the misery and impoverishment of the Indian masses.

Struggles—partial economic and political—against this impoverishment have a profound revolutionary meaning in the context of the maturing of the democratic movement in our country. The party must work its utmost to win the maximum possible public

support for every one of these struggles, with the knowledge that with the worsening crisis affecting every section of the common people it will be possible to nail down the vested interests as the chief enemy of our economic life.

The imperialists and their agents seek to build a line-up from the British and American imperialists to the bourgeoisie in order to stop the tide of the revolution. They hope that the bourgeoisie will succeed in splitting the popular forces, paralysing large sections of the masses and repressing the rest. Their own agents have already started this process through riots.

At this stage the fate of the democratic movement depends on the correct policy of the Communist Party and of the working class—a policy which must see the great strength of the forces of democracy and also their weakness in the illusions that the masses have about the bourgeoisie. To gather that strength through the democratic front, to dispel the illusions by unmasking the collaborators and to carry forward the fight on the basis of the programme of the democratic movement—these are the special tasks of the party of the working class.

The Communist Party, by exposing the national-bourgeois leadership will accelerate the process of disillusionment of thousands, enabling the democratic front to grow and develop sufficient strength to defeat the bourgeois policies and create the pre-conditions for the establishment of a democratic state, which will really be an instrument for implementing the full programme of the democratic movement and for simultaneously passing on to socialist construction, without an intermediary stage to capitalism.

In the present period of world crisis the task of pushing the democratic movement ahead is the responsibility of the working class and its party—the Communist Party. The independent role and activity of the working class, as the champion of the anti-imperialist masses against the imperialist-feudal combine and against the collaborationist bourgeoisie, constitute the guarantee for the success of the democratic movement.

The working class cannot play this role unless it itself is growingly united under its vanguard the Communist Party, and

unless the party is able to unite the people in the democratic front, and activate broad masses in the cause of achieving real people's democracy.

It is therefore more than ever necessary to broaden the mass base of the party among workers, peasants, middle-class students, youths of all sections, women, and the oppressed minorities, so that the party of the working class becomes a real mass party capable of discharging the great responsibilities resting on its shoulders.

It is necessary to attract fighters from all fronts and all sections, militants from partial struggles and all honest revolutionaries to the ranks of the party, to educate them in Marxism-Leninism, so that they in their turn become the real educators of the masses guiding and leading them towards complete freedom, democracy and socialism.

Particular emphasis must be placed on recruiting militants from the working class into the party and on educating and promoting to responsible positions of leadership the rising worker-cadres in the party, thus strengthening the proletarian element in our party. In our leadership it must be clearly understood that only a conscious effort in this direction, particularly in educating such cadres in the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, and in their application to the problems of the Indian revolution, can ensure the development of a strong disciplined mass Communist party. Towards a mass Communist party with a conscious membership, fully trained in Marxism-Leninism—such must be our watchword.

REPORT ON REFORMIST DEVIATION

The draft political thesis endeavours to make a sharp break with the past reformist understanding of the political situation. In deciding our line of action in India, our immediate slogans and attitude to other parties, we are taking a stand on the basis of international situation, the general crisis of capitalism, its special features in India and the role of classes in the new situation. We are again basing ourselves on a concrete study of the correlation of class forces in the country—the only way for Marxists to judge a situation.

The draft does not explain however how we came to accept the Mountbatten resolution, why we failed to apply class analysis in the war and in the recent post-war period. Nor does it throw any light on our understanding of the situation in the war period.

The purpose of the present document is to study the mistakes of the preceding period which landed us in the worst form of reformism with the Mountbatten resolution. Its purpose is to lay bare those deviations in our line which from time to time made us stray from the revolutionary path and landed us in opportunist deviations.

Party members, district leaders and even provincial leaders had often felt that there was something wrong in many aspects of the party line and they were not always able to reconcile the central committee's resolutions with the reality of the situation. A review of our past together with the new political resolution should serve to unify our party to discharge its revolutionary responsibilities in the immediate future.

The oscillations in party line in the postwar period which in the course of nine months swung from the August resolution to the Mountbatten resolution were the direct result of a faulty and

Presented by B.T. Ranadive in the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India, Held in Calcutta, February 28—March 6, 1948 .:

reformist understanding of the war period itself. It is necessary therefore to go to the root cause of the mistakes and find out where we erred because our postwar mistakes followed directly from the mistakes of the war period.

These mistakes are of a very serious type, and therefore ought to be studied and mastered by everybody. It is obvious that in this document we cannot deal in detail with them but we can only point out the major trends that were revealed through them.

To begin with, with the transformation of the imperialist war into people's war, everyone knows that the leadership of the party for six long months refused to recognise the changed character of the war and pursued a policy of bourgeois nationalism and trailed behind the national bourgeois leadership of the country. Long before this, for years, the Communist International had given repeated warnings and guidance about the duties of the world working class in the event of a war against the Soviet Union. In the discussions of the seventh congress itself, the defence of the Soviet Union was recognised to be a condition binding on all honest socialists to whichever party they belonged and was considered to be the elementary duty laid down by proletarian internationalism and by the demands of the world liberation struggle.

In spite of this, the leadership of the party behaved exactly as social-democrats behaved in the first world war and for six long months trailed behind the national bourgeoisie, opposing war and making the party to a line which was anti-working class, anti-Soviet, anti-Marxist.

Therefore on the most crucial question of working class politics and the international working class movement on the question of defence of the Soviet Union, on the question of anti-fascist war, the leaders landed themselves in the camp of opponents of anti-fascist war and betrayers of the working class movement.

Once again the deviation was to sacrifice the independent revolutionary activity and principles of the working class, for currying favour with the national bourgeoisie in the name of fighting sectarianism, preventing isolation.

The line of the party was changed only after certain party

comrades who were in jail at that time had repeatedly written to the party centre demanding a change in the line and had sent a number of documents explaining why the line should be changed. These documents named "jail documents" were the first consistent attempt to understand the changed character of the war on the basis of the international duty of the working class and the unity of the world struggle for socialism and the colonial struggle for freedom.

These documents themselves contained a number of wrong formulations which were not only open to charges of Royism but were themselves Royist formulations. For instance, such formulations as united front with imperialism, national oppressor being an ally, etc. were nothing but Royist formulations which would have logically led to Royist practice.

But the great merit of the jail documents was that they correctly understood the changed character of the war and the international implications of the war and its significance, sharply attacked the stand of the national bourgeoisie and did not allow us to be swerved from the path of proletarian duty by fake considerations of isolation and sectarianism to hide our trailing behind the bourgeoisie and even when they made some very wrong formulations they advocated a practice which was one of support to struggle against imperialism while supporting war at the same time. For instance, they stated that "the working class must create a serious situation for the government" and asked the party "not to hesitate to engage itself in skirmishes with the government which seem to be looming ahead. It is in the course of discharging these tasks that the proletariat will have to wage political warfare against the government..."

They further asked the working class and the party to have a path independent both of imperialism and the bourgeoisie. Characteristic is their attitude towards national government.

"Such a government (national government) will no doubt enable us to organise the war effort better...but remember, at the same time, the other side of the picture. It will be after all a government of compromise between imperialism and the bourgeoisie. When it helps the war, it will do so in a thoroughgoing bourgeois fashion, accepting all the imperialist arguments and salting them with nationalist phrases, delusions and dreams....It will not hesitate to

sell Russia or other revolutions when Britain finds it necessary and is prepared to offer them a handsome bribe."

And lastly the documents did not promise automatic freedom after the military defeat of fascism. On the other hand, they took a sober view of the international situation and saw that the military defeat of fascism would unleash a new wave of revolutions and not cause the automatic collapse of world imperialism.

"Only a swift defeat of Hitler can ensure for the European proletarians the armed support of the Soviet Union for the developing revolutionary wave. Such a defeat can throw the entire world imperialist system out of gear, enabling the colonial masses to raise their standard of revolt."

These documents advocated partial struggles in defence of the working class and peasant interests, political and economic struggles, to establish national government. Yet there was no illusion about the national government itself, no illusion that imperialism would automatically collapse. They thus understood the strength of imperialism correctly and sought to strike a path independent of the national bourgeoisie and imperialism. The actual line of action that was suggested was no doubt contrary to some of the generalisations that they made, generalisations like united front with imperialism, etc.

Had the right-reformist deviation not been dominant among the party leaders, it would have utilised the strong points of the jail documents to arrive at a correct line and understand the real transformation that had taken place in the character of the war. It would have laid stress on the correct points which the jail documents were making for striking a path independent of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Unfortunately the leaders failed to learn anything from their own mistakes or what was wrong in the jail documents. They formally accepted the changed character of the war but then made a slashing attack on the jail documents and instead of rejecting certain very wrong formulations in the documents and strengthening the correct ones, they denounced the documents, rejected correct formulations and themselves worked on the basis of the incorrect formulations which they sought to attack.

All this is abundantly seen in the booklet *Forward to Freedom* which was accepted by the entire party leadership and the entire party as a convincing book explaining popularly the changed character of the war and the tasks of the party. In reality *Forward to Freedom* clearly shows that the party leaders had accepted people's war only formally and was yet trailing behind the national bourgeoisie and through the line given in the booklet, it had started trailing behind imperialism also.

For what was the gist of this booklet? Instead of the sober estimate of the international situation which would have made the author understand that the defeat of fascism would lead to a tremendous weakening of the world imperialism and unleashing of revolutionary wave, the author holds out a rosy picture of the automatic liberation of India and the world with the mere military defeat of fascism. This was the stamp of bourgeois nationalism on the formal acceptance of the changed character of the war for it was precisely the bourgeois nationalists who were raising the question why should they participate in the war unless they get freedom here and now. Here was the Communist Party promising them automatic freedom without struggle with the mere military collapse of fascism. To seduce the patriots into the camp of people's war such phrases as imperialism is a prisoner in the people's camp were coined, phrases which were extremely dangerous because they made the party blind to the treacherous and disruptive role which imperialism was playing in the course of the war.

“Hereto the imperialist rulers of the world have shaped the future history at the peace conferences. The peace conference is not yet in sight but it will be a peace conference the like of which the world has never known before. The Soviet government will act the leader of the peoples of the world to see that the end of the all-people's war is all-people's peace, all-people's democracy, all-people's liberation and all-people's unity. This is how the USSR will fulfil its role as the world liberator, for a new world order of peace, prosperity and freedom for all the peoples of the world.”

In contrast therefore to the jail documents, *Forward to Freedom* promised automatic freedom and underestimated the role of

imperialism and thereby prepared the way for abjuring struggle against imperialist policy in the name of fighting the people's war.

Secondly, *Forward to Freedom* did not in the least try to understand the selfish class policies of the national bourgeoisie but on the other hand did its best to tie the working class to the tail of the national bourgeoisie. The jail documents described the national government as a government of compromise about which we have to be cautious. But *Forward to Freedom* gets into ecstasies over this government and says :

“National India led by a National Government will be smashing the imperialist fetters imposed on every department of our national life. In the very process of defending ourselves, we will be building our economy, we will be imparting national consciousness to 400 millions of our countrymen, we will be recruiting millions as soldiers, inspired as defenders of our country and fighters for freedom. National India with her own hands will be shattering the foundations of British India and creating those of people's India.” Further, “India under a National Government will take giant strides towards such a development of all her economic resources, the like of which we have not yet known. 400 millions to be fed and clothed, millions of Indian soldiers to be equipped and armed, everything done to clean out the fascist hordes from the near and far east, all-aid to China, all-aid to USSR, all-aid to every struggling people. This means an unprecedented economic development of all the resources of our country, every productive element in our national life doing its best to defend the country and aid the liberation not only of our country, not only of the whole east, but of the whole world.”

In this rosy picture, the little fact that the national bourgeoisie will be controlling the national government, will be guided by its own selfish interests, is forgotten and national government is equated to national freedom. Once again both the role of imperialism and the role of the national bourgeoisie are done away with by sleight of hand and people are promised quick results.

Similarly in the same book Gandhism is only described as the path of negation and Gandhiji's role as a class-conscious bourgeois leader is not even mentioned. Same running thread is there in

connection with the, entire national leadership. The utterly selfish and compromising character of the national bourgeoisie now revealing itself as anti-freedom and pro-fascist is not mentioned, attacked and castigated. To what length this illusion about the bourgeoisie not only of our country but also of other countries had gone can be seen from what is written in the preface about Chiang Kai-shek:

"The fall of Singapore, the concern for the fate of Asia, the imminent danger to India, brought Marshal Chiang on his urgent mission to India. He came to take national India into the people's war. He came to build the united front between the peoples of India and China as an integral part of the world anti-aggression front. His visit was political intervention by the united national front of China for the liberation of India in the interests of the common anti-fascist war. Who would have dreamed when we sent our tiny medical mission to China that its fraternal return will be the visit of China's great leader to our land to help unshackle our proud nation from the hands of imperialist autocracy? His farewell message to the people of India means for the future of Asia what Stalin's July and November speeches mean for the future of the entire world."

Chiang, the murderer of Chinese workers, is as great a liberator as Stalin.

In short, illusions about imperialism, illusions about our own bourgeoisie and the murderous bourgeoisie of other countries, abjuration of struggle against imperialist policy and against the bourgeoisie and sweeping concessions to bourgeois-nationalist arguments about immediate freedom—such were the characteristic features of the line laid by *Forward to Freedom*.

No one in the party criticised the book but everyone praised it. Even the signatories of the jail documents did not have a word of criticism to say against the book and swallowed all that was written in it.

In the first meeting of the central committee in September 1942 every member who spoke started by paying a tribute to this booklet which everyone assured had opened their eyes and corrected the

wrong perspective which was supposed to have been given by the jail documents. One could understand how deep down the mire of reformism everyone had gone since no one had reacted against this book.

The attack of the imperialist government against the National Congress and the arrests of Congress leaders on 9th August 1942 put our new line severely to test. It was no doubt very creditable to us that in spite of the terrific attack against us and anger of the people all round, we stuck to our main line and did not become open victims of bourgeois nationalism. On the question of 9th August there was no wavering inside the central committee or inside the party and we decided to carry on our line despite the provocative tactics of the national bourgeoisie and the wanton repression of the people by imperialism. We absorbed the shock of attack from the bourgeoisie, their agents and the government, and steadfastly went on propagating for our line. Now under the double effect of repression and national anger the real implications of our line begin to emerge more and more.

Having separated ourselves from the 9th August struggle, we were more and more pushed into taking a non-struggle, nonclass approach on every vital question because of the basic defect in our line. For instance, on the question of strikes, *Forward to Freedom* does speak of the right to strike. It is emphasised again in the resolution on production passed by the 1942 September meeting of the central committee. But by the beginning of 1943, even before the party congress, the central committee actually rejects a draft mentioning the right to strike and conduct of strikes wherever necessary and comes to the conclusion that there should be no strikes. Similarly, in the name of concretely helping the people's war the main slogans of the agrarian front gradually begin to disappear from our platform, the demand for abolition of landlordism, for reduction of debts, rents, the actual struggle to conduct them, the struggle against forced collection of war levy—all these are more and more relegated to the background and their place is taken by the Grow-More-Food campaign, by concessions demanded to grow more food and so on.

On the trade-union front, we had secured some demands of workers in essential and vital industries because the government

was afraid of stoppages but we imagined that we secured them without strike because our policy was for production and so on. We satisfied our anti-imperialist conscience by raising the demand for the release of Congress leaders and thereby thought that we had sufficiently struggled against imperialist provocation. In actual fact we go on doing less and less struggle against imperialist policy since we had already regarded imperialism as a prisoner in people's camp.

Very eloquent was our understanding of the food crisis in 1943 and the remedies we suggested to solve it. The food crisis resolution passed by the central committee on 19 February 1943 nowhere mentions landlordism as one of the basic causes of the food crisis, and does not hold imperialist colonial system of destitution and slavery as the main source through which deterioration in the food situation had come. Having abjured struggle against imperialism on the food question, we also abjured it against imperialist policy in general but here we do it cleverly by telling the people that if people's unity is built to the maximum, the bureaucrats will necessarily yield. The theory about imperialism being prisoner in the people's camp is now repeatedly trotted out to show that the bureaucracy and imperialism are so weak that the moment people unite anywhere, they must yield like lambs. This was only a clever way of pushing forward the policy of no attack against bureaucracy and no attack against imperialism lest the fifth column takes advantage of it.

In fact it is at this time that the party leaders begin to warn against exposure of the bureaucracy and imperialist policy as a purely negative policy. The hunt for exposure deviation which means unmasking of imperialism now starts and the deviation to replace criticism and attack of imperialist policy by merely positive proposals now begins to grow. The line laid down in *Forward to Freedom* was logically leading us to this practice. For instance, in the February resolution of the central committee, while we failed to note the landlord, we say the following :

"In short, we failed to grasp that the food crisis was an extension of the national crisis to food and that the fight for food was closely linked agitationaly as well as organisationaly with the fight against fifth column...."

And again the resolution says : "Our agitation often tended to become merely denunciation of the bureaucracy and the hoarders."

Thus we will see that every kind of criticism, attack against imperialist policies, every demand for a fundamental solution of the problem was more and more opposed by us in the name of carrying forward the people's war. We were able to hide from ourselves this fact by exaggerating the role of the fifth column, by becoming panicky before it and by abjuring mass protests in the name of not giving an opportunity to the fifth column to exploit it. The strength of the fifth column was an invention of our imagination to justify abjuration of struggle against imperialist policy.

In the resolution passed by the (first) party congress (June 1943) these deviations found their culmination. For instance, resolution states :

"In the second phase, namely, that of building national unity in action, continuance of left-nationalist deviation is a far greater drag on progress. For instance, a food campaign which reduces itself to a mere exposure of the bureaucracy coupled with formulation of general demands, leads not to food but to riots. The point is to unite the people against riots and for positive tasks in connection with the solution of the local food problem. This enables us to force the bureaucracy to change or modify its measures and prevent riots. Not to do this is to open the door to food riots, to let in the fifth column."

Here the line is stated in its bluntest form. Fear of any kind of mass action, illusion that the bureaucracy will change its line and modify its measures, fear of exposing the bureaucracy, all are put forward in the sharpest possible manner. It is really a demand for constructive suggestions to imperialism and not 'destructive' criticism. And all these are put forward in the name of fighting the left nationalist deviation when actually right-reformist deviation was dominant inside the party.

Again the resolution states :

"All these deviations have one common root—namely, the failure to conduct a sharp struggle against the fifth column and its slogans,

failure to expose the negative policy followed by the Congress leaders and tendency to overemphasise the 'exposure' and the wordy abuse of the bureaucracy."

Thus, once again, unmasking of imperialism is derided and prohibited by the party.

In the party congress resolution there is hardly any anti-imperialist slogan except the release of national leaders. For the rest, in a typically liberal fashion, the responsibility for securing partial demands, of avoiding food famine, everything in the world, is thrown on the unity of the people and an alibi is given to imperialism.

The main classes that keep the people in bondage, the classes that exploit them, the policies that these classes pursued, the treacherous role of imperialism—all these are absent from the document. The practice that naturally results from this is to offer collaboration and generally of supporting the workers' and peasants' economic struggles when they break out over our heads.

It is in this congress therefore that we come out sharply against strikes and the production report submitted by B.T. Ranadive denounces every strike as a political defeat of the working class. On the production front, we again raise illusions that by mobilising the people and mobilising the workers without strikes, we will not only be able to raise production but also secure workers' demands.

It was not wrong for us to have talked about production in general saying that the workers are interested in raising production for supporting war but our main battle for production could only be in the nature of unmasking the existing system of production. We should have recognised that without strike struggles the working-class demands could not be secured to any large extent and we should have continued the supple tactics of the earlier period when we said that we would only strike where we must to defend the workers interests. We gave up this supple position and landed ourselves into a purely anti-strike position which cost us in many cases the support of the growing working class movement. This whole illusory nonclass, unrealistic outlook in production, the

profuse promises given to the workers, was codified so to say in B.T. Ranadive's book on production which was subsequently published.

The party letter dated 4th October 1943 shows the utter reformism that had developed on the peasant front after the party congress. Class collaboration, abjuration of the struggle of kisans against landlordism, praise of the zamindars and upper class, illusions about religious preachers, everything is seen in this letter. This letter on Grow-More-Food campaign is a review of the work since the party congress.

"They (achievements of the GMF campaign) are enough as pointers to show that if only we make a proper approach to them even the zamindars can be drawn into the movement."

And thus it talks about Malabar zamindars, the jenmis in the following manner :

"A new consciousness is in fact rising among the jenmis; and this is not confined to the jenmi youth. The jenmi representative on the central assembly is the president of the all-Malabar food committee. He expressed his sympathies with the Youth League; Narikkot Namboodiri, who gave 500 acres of land to kisan sabha was formerly a bitter opponent of the kisan sabha; the Raja of Kattakkal (a 70-year-old man belonging to the Zamorin's family) is doing all he can to save people from cholera and starvation; and many more are likewise working shoulder to shoulder, with us in food and cholera relief committees.

"Why this change in their consciousness?"

"Acute misery in the countryside, starvation leading to cholera which took a toll of 25,000 victims in Malabar and would have killed more had it not been for the social service rendered by patriots. All this roused the social consciousness of the jenmis."

Thus the upper class moved sometimes by humanitarian motive is praised as showing a new social consciousness, a sign of communist inferiority before the upper class. Then later on the letter says :

"Every one of these organisations can and must be moved into action in our struggle against the hoarder, the profiteer and the fifth columnist. It has been proved by experience that even zamindars and moneylenders can be moved to participate in the campaign if proper approach is made."

This was said at a time when the zamindars and money-lenders were the biggest blackmarketeers. Further :

"Moulvis, missionaries, pandits, all dignitaries of any religion should be approached and requested to take part in the campaign. Explain to them persuasively and convince them that there can be no higher service of god to-day than rousing their followers to do their duty to their starving brethren."

And earlier it asks party leaders to tackle every question in the village, offer such solution as will be acceptable to every section of the people in the village, which of course includes the exploiting class. The rent dispute between the zamindars and tenants is also mentioned as a question on which solution should be found which is acceptable to both.

Due to our faulty understanding of the role of imperialism, the party came out with the most horrible formulations about the Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc and other left groups. They were denounced as fifth-column groups while in reality it was imperialism that was doing the work of the fifth column. While we kowtowed and bowed down before the national bourgeois leaders, while we ignored the existence of imperialism, we directed fire against these groups whose following was left-nationalist following and whom later on we had certainly to win over. We even refused to note the fact that sabotage and other things were often the acts springing up out of the anti-imperialist indignation of the following of these groups. This characterisation of these parties as fifth column alienated the sympathy of many people and earned us the hostility of thousands. One of the reasons why the left following in the post-war period took initiative in launching anti-communist attack was our wrong attack against these parties.

The party congress resolution overestimated the danger of the

fifth column and the most ridiculous formulations about its all-pervading influence were made and it was because of this that we landed ourselves into this wrong attack against these groups.

In the name of Grow More Food, abjuration of struggle against the imperialist land system, of the struggle against landlords; in the name of solving the food crisis, helping the iniquitous procurement plan of the government, at least not fighting it out; in the name of having a broad movement raising illusions that even the exploiting profiteering class will be in the movement, thus leading to class collaboration.

It was following this that we began to make basic distinctions between a good bureaucrat and bad bureaucrat and quote with pride concessions which we won in this or that district, to raise the illusion that under popular pressure all the bureaucrats can be put together to solve people's problems.

One may justifiably ask how is it that in spite of these deviations the party developed and went ahead. The answer is, immediately after the change of the line the party was really gathering the fruits of the earlier anti-imperialist battles that it led. Even in this period our close link with the masses forced us from time to time to take up issues which were agitating their minds, issues of their daily struggle and pushed us forward to defend their day-to-day interests. But there is no doubt that in the main the party was isolated and failed to grow after the end of 1943. Certain amount of stagnation came because the masses could no longer see in the party the same fighting organisation that led the earlier battles.

These mistakes if they had been committed by any other party would have smashed that party out of existence. But because, in spite of these mistakes, sometimes even by violating the strict party line, the party members doggedly fought for the day-to-day demands, although in a reformist way, enabled the party to grow to some extent. But there is no doubt that had the party followed supple tactics of attacking when the war situation permitted it to attack, of fighting imperialism, of leading the battles of the masses—it would have grown tremendously and become a very big force.

These mistakes should not lead us to underestimate the big work

that was done by the party members in fighting famine, even in the Grow-More-Food campaign, or in the trade union campaigns, which served to keep the base of the party alive.

Our basic slogans about people's war of winning the war, of National Government, of National Unity, of National Defence, Grow More Food, all no doubt were correct and we alone had correct basic slogans. But the point is that in implementing them we followed ways which were reformist, which were sometimes anti-mass, which sowed illusions and therefore we could not reap the full advantage for our people.

In fact the mistakes we committed obstructed the realisation of our political objectives and the growth of the party. No one however should misunderstand thereby that we have committed nothing but mistakes. On a basically correct line we committed a number of mistakes. That is the blunt and simple truth.

It was not only in connection with the attitude to imperialism but in connection with the understanding of the day-to-day developments of the war that we committed a number of mistakes. Just because we had the conception that the final military collapse of fascism would automatically lead to freedom of the world, we did not care to bother about the changes in the military situation developing during the course of the war, changes which would have enabled us to adjust our political line to suit new conditions. For instance, one of the biggest turning points in the war was the battle of Stalingrad. We declared that fascism was now to be defeated and annihilated in the shortest possible time. But the battle of Stalingrad fought just before our party congress met should have enabled us to adopt a still more supple line in connection with the war and embark upon more courageous and daring tactics in relation to imperialism.

While continuing to support the war we could have decided to apply extreme pressure against imperialism both political and economic, and created a serious situation for it. Even ordinary men began to see that after Stalingrad it was very difficult for Japan to invade India with any chance of success. But we still went on believing that invasion of India was as easy as before, that the battle of Stalingrad did not alter anything so far as our defence was

concerned, and this was carried on to such a ridiculous extent that even when the entire world was saying that the Japanese invasion had receded to the background, our press kept on saying that the Japs will attack again and again. If we had grasped this central fact that the military defeat of fascism would unleash new political forces and not liberate peoples automatically, if we had understood that imperialism was still strong and was conspiring to ensure its domination after the end of the war, we would have started taking a firm stand against its machinations and not believed that our freedom would automatically come after the war and therefore nothing need be done with regard to imperialism.

The signal failure to assess the political significance of the battle of Stalingrad the political significance of the military defeats of fascist armies, made us toe a line which was not justifiable even in the worst days of Nazi attack. It gave imperialism much room to manoeuvre at the cost of the people.

It was not only on the question of imperialism that we developed illusions but also on the question of the bourgeois leaders. In *Forward to Freedom* there was no understanding of the class character and policy of the National Congress leaders. Considered as popular and national leaders, the class character of the leaders was forgotten. The party no doubt courageously came out against the lead of the National Congress leaders, against the 9th August lead of the Congress leaders, but yet we failed to understand that what was being done was a part of the compromising policy of the national bourgeoisie. The party therefore only became ardent champion for the release of national leaders and advocated its line of people's war without unmasking the compromising policies of the National Congress leaders. To save its anti-imperialist prestige. it caught at every straw and glorified the National Congress leaders as anti-fascist when sections of them counted on Jap victory.

The 9th August struggle was not a gamble as we described it but a calculated shot of the bourgeois leaders to drive a hard bargain under circumstances which were far from favourable to the government. Instead of exposing this adventurist politics in which Nehru was as much a partner as Sardar Patel or Jayaprakash Narayan, we went on sowing illusions that they were anti-fascist.

This was done in the name of a popular approach to the people, but was really an excuse to glorify the bourgeois leaders and continued the policy of trailing behind them. This is seen on hundreds of occasions but more so on the occasion of Gandhiji's fast in February 1943. This is what the central committee resolution writes:

“From behind prison bars Gandhiji has denounced sabotage and anarchy. He has given call for unity with the League. In the name of the Congress, in the name of Congress-League unity, stop sabotage, anarchy, smash the fifth column.” Further, “Gandhiji's statements have swept away every obstacle, every prejudice that stands in the way of our great patriotic parties uniting among themselves and with the peoples of the United Nations. He has answered back all the slanders hurled against our national movement by the bureaucracy and reaffirmed the staunch anti-fascist stand of the Congress. He has categorically disowned sabotage and anarchy on behalf of the Congress. He has revealed that the Congress was on the eve of new negotiations with the League prior to 9 August.”

This was a tribute to Gandhiji at a time when the astute leader of the bourgeoisie was opening new doors for negotiations, after the collapse of his movement which sought to exploit the fascist invasion of India. By giving a certificate of anti-fascism to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders, we supported their politics. In continuing to praise them as leaders of anti-fascist forces, we really trailed behind the national bourgeoisie.

It was about this time that even Stalin's report to the 16th congress of the CPSU (B) was 'corrected' by Adhikari by deleting, in a reprint, the references to Gandhiji as a liberal compromiser in the service of the imperialist bourgeoisie against the colonial national-revolutionary movement. This should show how deep was the subservience to nationalist bourgeois leaders in the minds of some leading comrades.

The characterisation of the policy of the national leadership in the September 1942 resolution is also on a non class basis. It says the national leaders instead of going all out to unite the people to rouse them to do everything which strengthens the country's defence against the fascist aggressors and forge mass sanctions for securing

national government for national defence, chose the opportunist path of inactivity, of nonembarrassment of non-cooperating with defence measures hoping thereby to win the national demand as a gift from imperialism. About its compromise, about its attempts to exploit the menace to national defence, there is no word. This emerges from a nonclass understanding of the national leaders and from the previous policy of trailing behind them.

The campaigns launched by the party for national unity, for the release of national leaders, also served to strengthen this illusion, all the more so because the national leaders were victims of imperialist repression. Actually, by the backdoor, party policy once more became dependent on the good wishes of the bourgeois leaders. It amounted to saying that if the bourgeois leaders would be released and man national defence, we would be happy. Whenever we protested against imperialism or criticised it, it was only in this connection, the failure to release national leaders and nothing more. The campaign for the release of national leaders only became an excuse to glorify them, to put in their mouths anti-fascist phrases and pay a tribute to their anti-fascist motive which they did not have.

The result of this wrong policy was its wrong approach to national unity which was also conceived in a typically reformist manner. There is no doubt that national unity or Congress-League unity was very correct and a revolutionary slogan but its revolutionary significance could be realised only by the proletariat independently attempting to unite the people and not by making itself dependent on the will of the two sections of the bourgeoisie. Our appeals to the Congress leaders to accept self determination and our appeals to the League leaders to demand the release of the Congress leaders and thus unite, really became opportunist policies. We became dependent on both the leaders and did not activate the masses independently of them and in opposition to them. In fact there is no effort to rouse the masses against pro-fascist and pro-imperialist policies of both leaders. Thus, in spite of the correct slogan of Congress-League unity, we continued to trail behind both of them.

In this connection the contortions of our policy on self-

determination constitute open evidence as to how we trailed behind the leaders of both parties. We will deal with that question a little later.

The question of national unity therefore was neither based on the common class ties through economic struggles because we began to abjure all class approach. It was not based on the common struggle for demands in the peasant areas because here again we generally abjured open fights against landlords and moneylenders nor was it based on the exposure of imperialism and the bureaucracy because we were afraid of this deviation. Logically from the very nature of our line, unity became more and more an appeal to the leaders which really summed up the process of trailing behind both the bourgeoisie.

No doubt we talked about national unity for food, national unity for defence, national unity for the release of Congress leaders, etc. but our ways and methods were more of appealing to all the leaders to unite.

It was then this kind of right-reformism which was dominant till the end of the war. For all these mistakes which would now horrify ordinary party members, no single leader is responsible but the entire central committee is directly responsible and more so is the polit bureau. If we understand this, then we will be able to understand the difficulties in the way of the party in effecting a change in the line in the new period and the subsequent conflicts that arose inside the central committee, revealing two trends, one a deep-seated reformist trend which wanted to continue the old line of trailing behind the bourgeoisie and the other struggling to get out of the bog of reformism and taking vacillating step towards Marxian understanding of the new situation.

The end of the war presented us with a new problem. The war was over and our rosy illusion of the automatic liberation of all peoples including India was not realised. But we would not be beaten. The September 1945 meeting of the central committee continued to nurse reformist illusions and made the following formulation :

“The international situation, the victory of the forces of world

democracy, opens the prospect of immediate peaceful realisation of Indian freedom through alliance with British labour and with the support of the United Nations.”

All the deviations of the war period are rolled here into one sentence and added to that there are the deviations which would prove very dangerous for the new period. At a time when the Indian people were entering the period of armed conflict with imperialism and when the bourgeoisie was getting ready to strike a treacherous deal over the head of the people, we assure the people of prospects of immediate peaceful realisation of Indian freedom. At a time when British labour was entering the path of betraying the British working class, we assert that alliance with British labour will lead to Indian freedom. And now we realise how wrong it was to think that India could get her freedom with the aid of the United Nations because the United Nations included only one big socialist power and the conflicts between socialist and imperialist states continued. All that India could hope to get from the United Nations was verdicts like the verdict on the Kashmir issue and not freedom.

Here was therefore faith in social-democracy which was turning treacherous, faith in automatic collapse of imperialism, faith in the United Nations and failure to understand that the major powers there were imperialist powers out to grab the world, a nonclass understanding of the international situation and a totally wrong understanding of the Indian situation when India was entering a decisive period of conflict and struggle.

How does this document define the internal situation?

The internal situation was defined as one threatening to make civil war inevitable and leaving initiative in the hands of British reaction but nowhere seeing the vast mass struggles that were developing under our very eyes. So that we find that we continue with the war outlook again in the postwar period.

Again we fail to characterise the national leaders as national bourgeois leaders and describe it apart from Indian big business. The resolution says that imperialist strategy for India is to rally Indian big business for collaboration. At the same time it does not unmask both the Congress and League leaders as bourgeois

compromising leaders but merely says that there is Indian disunity, not exposing the selfish class policies which create this disunity and then it makes this formulation that imperialist plans of British reaction would be still-born if it were not for the disunity of the Indian national forces and the vacillating attitude of the British labour leaders towards the whole colonial problem in general and India in particular.

On the Indian situation the resolution only says there is strife and no unity. And its tailism behind the bourgeoisie it expresses by saying that Indian freedom will be won if we can successfully solve our national differences meaning thereby that if Congress and League leaders solve their mutual differences, thus making Indian freedom completely dependent on the selfish policies of the two bourgeoisie. There is no perspective of struggle, no call for struggle. In fact a nonclass pride is taken in not fighting the other two parties. The resolution states: "The true role of the party is as the party of unity which fights for justice and freedom all round irrespective of the attitude of other parties and interests towards itself, which has an undying faith in the sound national and democratic sentiments of the entire people and which is bent upon rousing their best and fighting the worst from whatever quarter it comes."

And it denounces "the sectarian left reaction which will wrongly understand the emphasis on the independent role of the party as the call to fight the other two parties, indulge in sectarian selfglorification of the party", etc.

Thus warnings are given not to fight the other two parties, not to fight their policies, their leaders are not criticised according to their class policies and unity of these two parties is made the sole condition of national freedom. Not the upsurge of the people, their fighting unity realised in the course of struggle, despite bourgeois opposition, but the voluntary unity of these two sets of leaders. That is how every time the party resolutions came to the conclusion that the situation is one of greatest opportunity and greatest peril. These formulations summed up the tailism of the party behind the bourgeois leaders.

Again in the resolution there was no attempt made to understand the real change that had come in the international situation. With

the end of the war, the role of social-democracy had rapidly changed. American imperialism was again emerging as successor to Hitler-fascism. The conflicts between the revolutionary people of eastern Europe led by the Soviet Union and the imperialist world was growing. At the same time everywhere colonial upsurge was reaching the level of rebellion and armed conflict. All this was not seen in the document or in the December resolution of the party.

An attempt was no doubt made in the original document drafted by Adhikari to put the international situation properly and that document did give some understanding of the change in the balance of forces throughout the world after the defeat of fascism. But that document itself completely overestimated the role of social-democracy and yet strangely enough there was a solitary protest against that document as overestimation of social-democracy. The other comrades rejected what was really valuable in that document, namely, its sober understanding of the international situation. In its place was substituted a preamble to the September resolution which is no analysis of the international situation and which is sufficient to show to what depths of reformism all the party leaders had sunk in as much as they would not sit even to consider the change in the international situation after the most gigantic and colossal war that the world has ever seen. How impervious the minds of the party leaders had become to international changes, how all of them had practically replaced proletarian internationalism by bourgeois nationalism could be seen from the single fact that after the end of the war the party leaders did not think it worthwhile to study the world situation again and draw strategy and tactics on the basis of the situation. It was the same mistake which was committed at the beginning of the war period when the party leaders did not accept the changed character of the war.

Failing to understand the international situation, the depth of political crisis at the close of the war, the desperation of the masses, the party continued to trail behind the national bourgeoisie again in December and November. The December meeting of the central committee took place when two things had already happened in the country. The Congress leaders were released a few months earlier and mass meetings took place with lakhs of people attending them

to welcome them and it was obvious that no power on earth could really defeat the desperate people. By November, the great INA demonstration had already taken place in Calcutta, sending shivers down the imperialist spine. While comrades in Calcutta had instinctively reacted to these happenings in their city, the central committee which held its meeting in December in its resolution did not even mention the INA demonstration or the great upsurge that was already working itself through strikes, meetings and anti-imperialist conflicts.

Again the December resolution begins with the formulation of “unprecedented opportunity to make the final bid for power and of the greatest danger of national disruption through strife among our major parties”.

Though the resolution in a loose way talked about united struggle for freedom, it totally underestimated the depth of the upsurge and did not come out with any slogan of real struggle. On the other hand it came out with promise of better future and better freedom plan only. In December it had become obvious that both Congress and League were hatching a treacherous compromise with imperialism. Instead of directing fire against it, the resolution only says that there is danger of unilateral compromise and disruption arising out of it. It does not nail down the leaders of both the parties as compromisers, unmask them and put forward the programme of struggle in opposition to them. On the other hand it attacks revolutionary strategy as surrender to economism and elementary upsurge. For instance, it writes:

“The first minority trend is purely sectarian which bases itself entirely on the elemental upsurge that is already visible in the new post-war period, glorifies it and suggests tactics of the period that we applied in building up the initial working class movement in period 1929-34. It glorifies working class action only to cover up the isolation of the working class to which such a policy inevitably leads. It seeks the glory of debating with the national bourgeois leaders from a distance and hopes that the patriotic masses will come over to our side. It also leads to the adoption of a narrow strategy of class versus class and left versus right instead of the correct strategy of national unity versus national disruption.”

This hatred for class versus class was not accidental but had become a part of the consciousness of some leading members of the central committee. Through the attack on what they called sectarianism they were really attacking a revolutionary line of leading the upsurge, of heading the upsurge, which was already breaking out and of turning it against the compromisers and imperialists. They attacked it because they wanted the bourgeoisie also to be within this upsurge and lead it. In fact the fear of mass struggles which developed in the period of war is continued in the September and December resolutions and in this resolution it again comes out in the shape of a warning against vanguardist mistakes when strike struggles were breaking over our heads and we were lagging behind them.

Once again we find differences between the leaders of the two parties being made excuses for rejecting an independent proletarian policy, the fear of mass struggles, failure to expose the class character of the leaders and failure to lead the mass battles that were developing before our eyes. In the name of fighting the danger of disruption, the entire thing is made dependent on the two wings of the bourgeoisie. There is no call for struggle, there is only a programme of mass amelioration. It will be seen that neither the workingclass strikes that were developing one after another, nor the huge demonstrations and strikes of the armed forces was making any meaning on the members of the central committee. It misses the role, the changed policy that imperialism was adopting towards the national bourgeoisie and the desperate efforts of the national bourgeoisie to come to compromise with imperialism, though clear statements about this were made by some members of the central committee.

Here is one such statement taken from the minutes of the central committee:

“Not very satisfied with the presentation of Joshi’s report and Adhikari’s contribution, Hangover of old period still. Got to sharply bring out main change—imperialism is the main enemy. For example, we have not studied economic situation when imperialist economy is facing a final collapse. Economic crisis—world and Indian—looming large. Out of this arises new revolutionary struggle, strategy

against British imperialism. What is the setup? Imperialists seeking a new way out—with new social allies—old landlords and princes are not enough. They seek to meet strengthened national bourgeoisie—and “balance of imperialist leaning” towards the Congress and away from the League. See change from Linlithgow to Wavell. This is in line with need for exports in Britain. They are seeking a new alliance with the Congress, not only against the League but also the growing mass movement. Which is the direction of the mass struggles? Not just local struggles—but heading for national general strike—e.g. in the railways—against wage-cuts and unemployment. Similar blow-up in the countryside. In this setting, present disruptive line of Congress and League leaders has to be seen. Spontaneous anticommunist assaults have begun after Congress leaders lighted the flame. Congress freedom demagogy created anticommunist and anti-League feeling. League doing same. In this period, cut out idea of any possibility at all of peaceful freedom. It is opportunism to think there is. Path of partial struggles of a new type—they will try to crush it as ‘provocation’. This will mean sharp conflict between Congress and the people. Great role of these struggles as unifier just as in previous periods particularly periods of communal riots.

“Hence it will be a common Hindu-Muslim leadership leading big mass Hindu-Muslim struggles against imperialism, will be a big lever to change the consciousness of the people, and unity will be seen in practice, increasingly forged in struggle.

“In this period the specific policy of the bourgeois leaders of the Congress will be to smash independent class organisations of the workers and peasants. They themselves start rival organisations and in coming period, they will use their official positions to buttress these and smash genuine trade unions and kisan sabhas. But their capacity to do this will be less and less because of their antistrike slogan. But there is another cadre also, August cadre, which will be wanting to bring about strikes, etc. Thus in this big upsurge, we shall have to employ in trade-union front tactics of old united front, united front to struggle for workers’ demands. This will actually prevent disruption on TU and kisan field”

Here was a clear indication about the way things were happening,

though fundamentally the role of the national bourgeoisie was not analysed, yet the fact that imperialism was trying to rely on it was recognised, a fact which should have led us to change our line immediately and boldly in the context of the revolutionary upsurge that was developing.

But instead the central committee passed a resolution which again recognised the upsurge only formally, holding to the tails of the national bourgeoisie in the name of fighting disruption and decided to give only electoral battle to the Congress and the League.

The trailing behind the bourgeoisie and blunt refusal to characterise its ministries was seen in the formulation in the resolution of April 1946 meeting of the central committee. The resolution states:

“It is inevitable that inside the party some comrades loosely begin talking about Congress ministries being fascist or semi-fascist. The proper party characterisation of the Congress and League ministries is that they are popular ministries.....because the organisations they represent are the biggest popular organisations of our country, embodying in howsoever a distorted and wrong way, the freedom urge of the vast majority of our people. In addition the Congress is committed to a broad democratic programme of national reconstruction, however reformist it may be.”

Thus once again the class characterisation of the ministries is not done and we cheat ourselves by calling them popular only to slow down the struggle against bourgeois compromisers. From this conclusions have been drawn which really are meant to keep down mass struggles :

“All mass leaders should see and awaken the militants to the realisation that the mass work in the new period both on the trade-union and kisan fronts is possible only with the determined political approach of regarding both the Congress and the League ministries as popular ministries.” This was made at a time when the Congress ministries were already shooting down workers and striking terror.

Not only that. A deliberate effort is made to distinguish between the leaders of the Congress and the League and the vested interests whose political representatives they are. The formulation is made :

"Together with this development the influence of vested interests has also grown both inside the Congress and the League and this requires of the party that in its campaign and agitation it must concentrate fire on the vested, reactionary and communal interests and isolate them from the popular ministries. Failure to do so is to allow such elements to secure a firm grip over the ministries and intensify their offensive against the party, thus isolating it from the people."

This was the source of political opportunism and illusions about Congress ministries conceding the demands of the workers and fighting the capitalists under popular pressure, a policy which was persistently pursued till recently, which reached its culmination in the Mountbatten resolution and the slogan of all-support to the Nehru government.

This nonclass approach leads to the following formulation :

"Our tactical line is based on the approach that the political differences between us, the Congress and the League should not come in the way of cooperation between all—in people's common interests, which we are all pledged to safeguard and implement, and in isolating and concentrating fire on the vested interests attempting still further to tighten their grip over the ministries." As if the ministries and Congress leaders were not interested in maintaining the profits of the capitalists and the hold of the landlords! And that is why again a warning is given against criticism of the ministries.

"In executing this task, the party will particularly guard against the grave danger of drifting into the attitude of only exposing the shortcomings or anti-popular acts of the ministries, which can only lead to the growing isolation of the party from the masses and thus play into the hands of the reactionary and disruptive elements", though the resolution says that we must firmly criticise all non-popular measures.

This opportunist policy is of course put forward on the basis of fighting sectarian reactions :

"While we emphasised the need to take a positive approach towards the new ministries because the urgent need is to combat

elemental sectarian reactions in our own ranks, we not only do not seek to encourage but seriously warn the entire party against entertaining any illusions about the new ministries."

Having sowed a lot of illusions, the resolution wants to dispel them with one sentence. In actual fact the resolution has come to a stage at which on every point it is giving a counterformulation, a balancing formulation, thus negating every positive formulation that it makes. So out of touch with reality had the understanding of the central committee become that more and more it had to come out with warnings on all points so that every point was in succession negated by the following point.

The election once more derailed the party and strengthened the illusions about disruption, about the strength of the bourgeoisie and the strength of the Congress, illusion which were being shattered in the very course of mass struggles. It is very strange that this meeting of the central committee which met two months after the rebellion of naval ratings only casually mentions that great event and does not even care to study the character of the new upsurge, where it is leading the qualitative change that is coming over India. And that for the simple fact that the election had demoralised party leaders to such an extent that they could not think of striking an independent path, independent of the leaders of the two bourgeois parties.

The election manifesto of the party bears out all the criticisms of the party line that have been made hereto. The manifesto which was issued in the midst of revolutionary battles begins with the sentence : "The Communist Party is the only party that does not malign or raise its arm against other patriotic organisations." At a time when we had to unmask the role of Indian capitalists and Indian national leaders and fight them tooth and nail, the manifesto states that "the only call of our party is Indian must not fight Indian, but all Indians together must fight the British enslavers". There is nowhere a real call to action but constitutional demands which finally end in the following :

"The Communist Party pledge to the people that it shall not rest till the new popular ministries pass within the very first year of coming into power three new democratic laws; only the enactment

of these laws and their rigorous application will end the domination of the feudal parasites, blackmarketeers and usurers, over the economy of the village and ensure the entire people their daily food, thus preventing the calamity of new famines."

The promise was acts of Congress ministries and nothing more. The manifesto was written in this strain and though it talks here and there about joint struggle, struggle is the real thing which is absent from it.

The August (1946) resolution of the CC was the first successful attempt to break through the shackles of reformism to a revolutionary understanding of the post-war situation. It was preceded by sharp conflicts in the PB which came up before the CC.

The August resolution, by returning to the revolutionary perspective and throwing overboard the politics of the war period, constituted a big achievement of our party. The August resolution sought to correct all the major deviations of the previous periods :

(1) It demanded a revolutionary struggle against imperialism and raised the question of power.

(2) It correctly characterised the class policies of the Congress and League leaders as compromising policies of the bourgeoisie and demanded fight against them.

(3) It placed the upsurge, understood its revolutionary significance and correctly placed the direction in which it was spontaneously moving.

(4) It understood the full meaning of the qualitative change in the Indian struggle with the beginning of armed clashes and the participation of the armed forces in the struggle against imperialism.

(5) It restored the minimum programme of democratic revolution in the party platform as a programme of immediate realisation.

(6) It frontally attacked the fear of struggles by calling on the party not only to lead partial struggles but placed before it the perspective of local battles.

(7) It restored the connection between political and economic battle of the masses.

(8) It did away with the production disease of the war period and correctly understood the procurement plans of the government.

The August resolution was really a revolutionary call to anti-imperialist action and a call to fight the compromising policies of the bourgeois leadership, a call to lead the great mass battles that were sweeping the country as a result of the post-war crisis, battles which the party was ignoring and whose revolutionary significance it had not yet understood. The August resolution gave a line which sought to rescue the party and the working class from the clutches of the bourgeoisie and make the proletariat strike an independent path in opposition to both sections of compromisers.

The August resolution itself had its weaknesses. It did not base itself on the understanding of the international situation and the general world position, nor did it take into consideration the basic fact of the growing world crisis of capitalism and the new strategy which imperialism was employing in India. It failed to understand the basic change in the role of the bourgeoisie and the change in the relations between imperialism and the bourgeoisie that was coming to the forefront under the stress of the growing revolutionary struggle and the need for economic collaboration on both sides. The main weakness of the August resolution was that it really did not analyse the role of the Indian bourgeoisie and base itself for its new orientation on this changed understanding of that role. In spite of its call to fight the compromising policy of national bourgeoisie, the August resolution itself argued on the basis as if the national bourgeoisie might lead a struggle again and its compromise with imperialism can be broken on the strength of the mass forces. In short the resolution overestimated and not underestimated the role of the bourgeoisie. Nonetheless the resolution was a great step forward and a firm step towards a revolutionary understanding of the new situation and signals the return of the party to revolutionary politics.

Discussions on the resolution revealed that certain comrades like P. C. Joshi had become such hardened reformists that they would not care to understand the new situation, the new kind of class alliance and would doggedly fight to maintain the old reformist line.

Joshi first opposed the August resolution. He himself prepared the draft which abjured struggle against bourgeois compromise, glorified the role of the bourgeoisie and did not at all place the revolutionary perspective before the party, much less slogans of action like general strike, etc. After a lot of discussion Joshi formally accepted the resolution, but once again in the PB meeting tried to liquidate it by making formulations like 'partial struggles might be conducted as partial struggles', thus divorcing them of the real revolutionary significance in the present situation. Though the resolution was adopted unanimously, immediately after its adoption Joshi carried on a persistent fight against it and did his best to sabotage its operation by pushing ahead his own reformist understanding of the situation.

The wave of riots which started in Calcutta gave him the first opportunity once again to create doubts about the upsurge and make his earlier formulations of greatest opportunities and greatest danger. The great struggles of the working class which our party led all over the country and in which some of our best working class comrades were shot dead under the regime of the Congress ministries did not create anger in Joshi's mind against the ministries, but he adopted an attitude of panicky retreat before repression, began to call these struggles sectarian and argue as any opponent of the party will argue, namely, that these struggles were miniature revolutions. Joshi developed a theory that we were repressed because we were sectarian and so on, thus giving a clean alibi to the Congress ministries, an alibi which was consistent with his refusal to fight the bourgeois leaders. Instead of inspiring the party and its members to face the ferocious repression launched by the bourgeois leaders, instead of indicting the national leaders for playing their own selfish class game and the game of imperialism, Joshi utilised every occasion of repression, of breakdown of struggle, of illegality, to create panic and demoralisation in our ranks and to prepare for the retreat from the line of leading mass struggles. This was very much in evidence in connection with his understanding of the struggles in the south, the glorious struggles of the working class, textiles, railway and other workers in the south, struggles of which any communist party would be proud. The understanding about these struggles was that they were sectarian outbursts, with

the result that some comrades began to characterise Vayalar as a private struggle and would not include the Vayalar martyrs and mention them in *People's Age* in the 15th August number.

Actually through these struggles, the party was breaking the isolation of its earlier period, reforging its links with the old class bases and was becoming an object of admiration among the critics, opponents and even enemies of party. The net result of these struggles in the south at least was that a basis is laid for a mass membership of the party from the working class, perhaps the only province which can boast of it. It was exactly in this period that Joshi and a number of other comrades saw growing isolation of the party. When they were faced with the growing support of the working class, then they made another strange formulation that our strength in the working class is increased, but nonetheless we are isolated from the national front.

The December (1946) meeting of the CC saw Joshi's concerted attack on the August resolution. The draft that he submitted openly repudiated the upsurge and came out with the formulation that since the formation of the interim government the upsurge has got disrupted and riots are the main reality. And this at a time when the strike wave was continuously mounting and the discontent was gathering all round. Though Joshi's draft was rejected and everybody saw through it, yet it was obvious that he wanted the party to return to the old reformist lines, abjure the revolutionary perspective and wanted to abandon all fight against the compromising policies of the leaders and concentrate on Hindu-Muslim unity. He again wanted the party to go back to organise capitalist production in the name of national reconstruction and came out with proposals in respect of that. He consistently wanted to offer them his reformist line on all fronts. In launching this attack he seized on riots, he seized on repression and more particularly he seized on the temporary illusions of the people about the interim government. He characterised the formulation in the August resolution about the interim government and the Congress leadership as sectarian, when there was nothing sectarian about it, and was able to secure some backsliding of the earlier position. His attack was that the August resolution underestimated the popular character of the interim government

under the Congress leadership, that it stressed too much the class character of the government under Congress leadership, that it underestimated the role of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois leaders in the national camp. We have seen that the August resolution could have been attacked really from the other end, that it did not see that the oppositional role of the bourgeoisie had ended. But Joshi chose to attack it from the reformist end and got some concessions. Using these concessions, he launched a frontal offensive on his own against the August resolution. In letters to the CC members, he denounced the resolution as trotskyite, meaning thereby that its attack against the bourgeois leaders, its insistence on the upsurge and its revolutionary call for struggle against imperialism were all wrong. Joshi then produced the pol-org letter of February 1947 which was nothing but a total repudiation of August 1946. In his dogged struggle for his reformist line, Joshi circulated this reformist document in opposition to the other PB member (B.T. Ranadive), the third (G. Adhikari) being absent in England. This document in a subtle way seeks to take the party back to the pre-war line and is a perfect screen covering the bourgeois leadership, handing over the working class to its tender mercies. Some of its formulations are :

"The *main weakness* of imperialism lies in the fact that the bourgeois leadership which it is using against us is also the popular leadership, embodiment of their aspirations, bound by programmatic pledges, answerable to the people. It is very much on the defensive. However aggressive its language in defending terror against us, it goes against all national tradition and is the anti-thesis of how it had promised to 'govern'...

"Our aim therefore is to destroy the strength of imperialism, and increase our strength to defeat its policy against us.

"How do we destroy the strength of imperialism? By driving a wedge between the imperialist bureaucracy and the bourgeois leadership by rousing the common people, its own followers to intervene."

What is stated here is the exact opposite of what the August resolution had stated and especially the exact opposite of the reality.

The strength of imperialism was that it was able to compromise with the leaders who had a popular basis. It was not itself a weakness. but its strength and secondly the strategy suggested by Joshi of driving a wedge between the imperialist bureaucracy and the bourgeois leaders was exactly the opportunist strategy of not fighting the bourgeoisie, of giving a clean alibi to the bourgeois leaders in the name of fighting imperialism. Instead of denouncing the compromisers who in the interest of the bourgeoisie were now launching terror against the people, Joshi suggested the strategy detaching the bourgeois leaders from the bureaucracy as if the bourgeois leaders were not interested in suppressing the working class for their own class interests.

"We denounce the terror against us as imperialist conspiracy to split freedom forces and smash them in isolation. It is today us : it will be others tomorrow. This corresponds to reality; anti-imperialist traditions of the past and the interests of future final struggle which are a common growing urge. In every simple case we expose how particular bureaucrats have lied against us and pressed for action and done what atrocities and thus rouse the anti-British indignation of the people. In short, we show how the policy against us is part of British plan against India's freedom struggle and the real agency that implements it is imperialist bureaucracy. We thus make our agitation real.

"We denounce the terror against us as having been pressed for by vested interests in alliance with the bureaucracy and explain that listening to them means not meeting people's demands but suppressing them, not implementing electoral pledges but breaking them, not solving but intensifying economic crisis. We positively explain the demands of the fighting people as the dire need to live, as the healthy urge for a better life which the common enemies of the entire people seek to resist. We denounce vested interests as British allies..

"...Just as on national-political plane our slogan is : *Break with the British* plan and unite for national struggle, the key slogan of the antirepression campaign is : *Break with the bureaucracy*, guarantee civil liberties to all ; let the people judge policies and practice.

"But the popular ministries own up as their own the ordinances, bans, arrests, shootings. Just when they do it, we have to say you are owning responsibility for police deeds, sheltering their crimes, you are responsible to the people, yours is the responsibility to the people, their freedom movement and its ideals. Fulfil your true responsibility against the imperialist bureaucracy and in fulfilment of pledge by which you are bound...."

This was the line advocated in the document, a line which is nothing but abjuring of the struggle against the bourgeois compromisers in the name of driving a wedge between imperialism and the bourgeoisie. Actually it was a line of making the masses defenceless in the face of the ministerial offensive and preventing the working class from exposing the conspiracy that was being hatched by the compromisers against the people.

Joshi made the same reformist formulation with greater precision on page 15 of his document :

"The imperialist tactic is to hide itself behind the popular ministries and isolated us by exploiting anti-communism and thus crush us. Our countertactic is to isolate the bureaucracy, expose not only the offensive being its plan, the agency its own bureaucracy and the reason being imperialist reason and our offence being anti-imperialist and show its voice not only in the propaganda against us, but expose the hand of its own agency in the terror against us.

"In such a situation, if our propaganda makes it primarily the issue of rightwing offensive against our party we play the imperialist game, only isolate ourselves more, and will succeed neither in isolating imperialism nor putting the right wing on the defensive nor in winning popular support. This is the one big correction we have to make in our understanding. Our explanation has to be not that the right is hitting at us because it is compromising but imperialism is hitting at us because it wants to disrupt and divide freedom forces piecemeal with this as the central point. We have to explain why the right wing is owning up and sanctioning the imperialist offensive and drive the conclusion home that the government of the popular ministries is not to own up responsibility for police but discharge their responsibility to the people...."

Here was an entire line to cover up the tracks of the bourgeoisie and make the working class trail behind them. From what did it arise? It arose because of the reformist illusions about the national bourgeois leaders, Joshi said considering the bourgeois leaders only to be popular leaders and not wanting to fight their treacherous role. It arose from a failure to understand the bourgeois leader themselves, driven by their fear of revolution and narrow class interests, were vitally interested in suppressing the people. It arose from a fear of mass struggles and a fear of repression and totally ignoring the revolutionary upsurge that was sweeping the country. Joshi's document, circulated on his own responsibility, was a frontal attack against the August resolution and a demand that the party be taken up the old reformist line. How grovelling before the bourgeoisie this approach was can be seen from the following.

Frightened by the bourgeois propaganda about communist revolution Joshi wanted the words like 'agrarian revolt' to be banned and all revolutionary significance of partial struggles to be forgotten. His advice is "agrarian revolt must be denounced as mythical to cover the suppression of the peasant movement invented by the bureaucracy at a time when agrarian revolt was expressing itself precisely through anti-rent and rent-reduction campaigns, etc. He wanted the party to forget the revolutionary significance of the partial struggles in the present period and made the formulation "to understand the actual nature of the present popular struggles as partial struggles is to get the right understanding of jobs to be done and political perspective not to go wrong. It is very necessary to have this in mind because we ourselves through the central press have been guilty of sectarian overglorification of partial struggles, e.g. the MSP bloodbath at Coimbatore being characterised as the battle of Coimbatore, antiejectment peasant struggle at Basti being called struggle for land. etc."

This was not an innocent formulation. All reformist and social-democrats exactly when they can no longer control struggles want the masses to understand only the partial limited character of such struggles as when, in the context of the revolutionary situation, these struggles begin to assume revolutionary significance. But the charge of revolution frightened Joshi so much and the swing towards mass struggle inside the party also made him so panicky that he

began to suspect that everybody was attempting to manufacture revolution in every small struggle. He was not rally correcting any deviation inside the party but expressing only his own fear of revolutionary mass struggles. The reformist advice to the leaders of mass struggles was as follows :

"We should carefully study police tactics in every struggle and aim to minimise conflict to the utmost so that the masses suffer the least terror and the struggle can hold out longest and we get the best possible opportunities to organist it out. We should let the police do its normal duties, e.g. patrol, searches, etc. but if it comes to loot, burn and rape we must put up the best resistance we can in sheer self defence...'

This advice was given at a time when the most brutal atrocities were being committed by the police and the workers and our masses had to fight with every ounce of their strength to save themselves and defeat police terror. A more reformist advice could not have been given. What is meant by allowing the police to do its normal duty? The normal duty of the police in times of struggles is to repress the people. The masses were supposed to resist only when looting and burning and raping had started, which are generally the last acts of the police when the mass action had already been beaten down. In fact Joshi's advice was : Don't resist till then. Why was Joshi making such formulations which are unworthy of not only a party leader but an ordinary party member? Because he honestly believed that under the line given by the August resolution, the party and its mass organisations were acting as the provocator. He believed that police repression was due to the provocation given by the party. His characterisation of August resolution as a trotskyite resolution has no other meaning than this and because of this total anti-revolutionary understanding, he gives the advice which seeks to disarm the masses in their hour of need.

In short Joshi's document was an open betrayal of the August resolution and shows his deep reformism. If anything has been responsible for political stagnation and paralysation of the party line since August 1946, the blame will have to be laid at the deep-rooted reformism of Joshi who refused to learn from his colleagues.

It must be admitted that with the line of his pol-org letter, Joshi

was able to derail a number of comrades and paralyse their understanding. These comrades themselves were thus guilty of reformism. The implication of Joshi's line on the TU front was a straight return to an antistrike line and more production of the war period. If the party had really seriously attempted to implement this line in practice as Joshi would have liked to do, it would have been wiped out of the working class and justifiably so.

The disastrous deviations which arose on the basis of this line were seen not only in the memorandum submitted by some of the unions in south India, but it was sharply brought home when one of our prominent communist leaders agreed to industrial truce at Delhi a couple of months back. To Bihar, UP and several other provinces the pol-org letter became a substitute for the August resolution and other provinces continued to be confused. It was natural therefore that there should be complete confusion and paralysation of political initiative of the party in this period.

Vacillations and reformism of the majority of the members of the CC, some of whom had now become prominent upholders of the reformist line, reached their culmination in the discussion on the Mountbatten award. Every amendment which sought to put down that the Mountbatten award was a concession to the national bourgeoisie and that the national bourgeois leadership was striking a deal against the interests of the people was negatived or watered down and it was asserted that the Mountbatten award was a concession to the national movement and the Indian people. Thus what was asserted was that it was a retreat by imperialism and an advance for the people. Joshi was a persistent advocate of the theory of advance and was supported by a number of comrades. Again the view points clashed as before, amendments were defeated and the resolution adopted. After the defeat of the amendments about the bourgeoisie and the upsurge the resolution was adopted without opposition because both the trends by now had come to look upon the resolution in different ways. The comrades who stood for the August resolution said that the August resolution was not repudiated and anyway the Mountbatten resolution was a step away from the earlier pol-org letter of Joshi. The comrades who stood for the Mountbatten resolution led by Joshi considered it to be a

total repudiation of August resolution. The two trends continued to clash and it was decided that within three months documents should be prepared and the party congress should be called. At the CC meeting itself there was an attempt to explain the resolution in two different ways in repudiation of the August resolution and in support of it and in support of carrying forward the mass struggles.

The vacillation of the latter comrades arose from the fact that they too did not realise that the oppositional role of the bourgeoisie had ended and therefore strove to work out a revolutionary line within the framework of the old understanding. Some of them, especially Adhikari, Ranadive and Ajoy Ghosh, correctly saw that we had made a mistake in placing the Congress and the League in the same category during the earlier period and wrongly ascribed to the latter an oppositional role vis-a-vis imperialism. But they failed to see that the Congress too had ceased to be oppositional and was going towards collaboration. From this resulted a pro-Congress deviation on the part of these comrades which culminated in their formulation at the time of Mountbatten award that the accession to the Indian Union itself was progressive. Some other comrades who too were advocating a line of struggle sought to criticise this pro-Congress deviation from a wrong end. They developed a pro-League deviation. They did not stress that the League had always been reactionary and now the Congress itself was becoming reactionary. On the contrary, they accepted that the Congress was progressive and stressed that the League too was progressive though perhaps less so than the Congress. This went to such length that they wanted the CC to hail the League decision to launch direct action in August 1946 as an event full of anti-imperialist significance.

All these facts show that even those members of the CC who were advocating a line of boldly leading struggles and demanding that a final break should be made with reformism were themselves not conscious of the new role of the bourgeoisie. They were ascribing to one or both of them a progressive role when both had become reactionary. The inevitable result was that when the riot offensive came, they sought to make the Congress or the League more

responsible for the riots, and apportion blame instead of concentrating fire on the bourgeois policy of compromise as a whole which bred riots.

Thus for their failure to understand the new collaborationist role of the native bourgeoisie, the advocates of the line of struggle failed to wage a consistent battle against reformism inside the CC.

In actual fact the Mountbatten resolution is a thoroughly opportunist resolution which by making concessions here and there to the fight against the bourgeoisie in reality conceals the aim of the leaders of the National Congress. It was opportunist to have described the Mountbatten award as an advance and that new opportunities have arisen for the people. It was opportunist and totally wrong to have made the formulation for a united front between the government and the people. It practically ignores the compromising role of the Congress leaders and whenever it talks of compromise, it talks about big business, i.e. once more carries forward reformist refusal to fight the national bourgeoisie. It ties the working class and the party to a policy of cooperation with the national bourgeoisie in their nefarious attack against the Indian revolution and while it makes concessions about the programme of the democratic revolution. It again suggests ways and means which would effectively obstruct mass struggles. The opportunism of the Mountbatten resolution can be seen only by understanding it in relation to the resolution passed by the CC at its last (December 1947) session or with the resolution now placed before the congress.

On the basis of the Mountbatten resolution a thoroughgoing reformist line was being pursued by the party whose first effect was to make the party retreat in panic before the riot offensive and rally behind the government and the compromisers. Its effect was to glorify the national leaders as champions of national unity and as champions of the people against feudal reaction and it landed the party in failing to understand that on 15th of August it was not transfer of power but betrayal by the bourgeoisie. It also led to formulations made and popularised by all the members of PB and also some other CC members "about defending Indian freedom and supporting the Nehru government in defence of Indian freedom."

From the beginning the Mountbatten resolution was interpreted in two ways to justify the line of fighting the bourgeoisie, of mass upsurge and fighting the compromise, and the line of surrendering before the bourgeoisie. These lines began to clash intensely inside the PB on every vital issue.

At the December meeting of the CC it was seen that the majority of the CC had independently come to a correct understanding of the present revolutionary situation and the utter reformism involved in the Mountbatten resolution. The two drafts independently placed by B. T. Ranadive and Bhowani Sen reached almost the same conclusion and carried forward the understanding given by the August resolution. Once more it was seen that Joshi had become the most hardened reformist and he produced a draft which had not only nothing in common with the other two drafts but was again an attempt to sidetrack the party from the revolutionary policy and derail it on the question of riots. It was again the same blind refusal to fight the national bourgeois leaders, the same subservience which Joshi showed every time in his writings of Gandhiji and Nehru. The running thread in Joshi's writing, whether in his correspondence with Gandhiji or in articles on Nehru has been this grovelling subservience before the bourgeois leaders and Joshi had no faith in the working class. This was once again seen in the December discussion when Joshi would not move an inch from his reformist line even when the world perspective was put to him. Joshi doggedly fought, then gave up his fight and again as in August formally accepted the document only to repudiate it in practice. Joshi accepted the resolution but voted against the document which was adopted by the CC (December 1947) for circulation perhaps just because that document concretely nailed down his own reformism and warned the party against it. His formal acceptance of the resolution however meant not change in his outlook. Now he accepts the resolution unreservedly. In any case it shall be clear that a hardened reformist trend exists inside the CC led by Joshi and had it not been for that trend, the CC and the party would not have been derailed after August 1946 and would have gone on enriching its understanding of the present period. The August resolution of the party was a very concrete lead and a big step forward. Had the

line been persistently pursued without hesitation, without vacillation. the party would have been in a much better position and a much stronger position to take its responsibilities in the present period. But while the masses under the leadership of the party acted decisively and faced repression with unbending courage, when the ordinary proletarians discharged their duty by the revolutionary struggle by shedding their blood in every big and small struggle, while it is they who raised the prestige of the red flag high, faced every repression and every terror, with houses burnt and looted, with jobs lost and women raped, a section of the party leaders by its reformism was trying to dig out the ground under their feet and itself getting panicky. That this trend has done incalculable harm to the party has to be admitted by everybody and the responsibility for derailing the party since August 1946 must be squarely placed on Joshi and those who persistently agreed with him through blind following, through their refusal to adopt Marxian criteria and refusal to listen to the voice of their colleagues. In this connection one cannot but mention some special weaknesses of Joshi which only served to show how he cut himself adrift from Marxism. Persistently through the war period and till recently, Joshi developed disregard for Marxian theory. He called Marxism abstract Marxism and in his party schools discouraged the study of 'abstract Marxism' and asked comrades to concentrate on their day-to-day problems. In the CC resolution he characterised class analysis as a narrow conception, class versus class strategy as sectarian and thus talked about class analysis in a reformist petty-bourgeois way. Before submitting his draft for the December session of the CC he confessed that he had not even read Zhdanov's report on the international situation and had the audacity to submit a political report to the party. His conception of party education was to make the party members reformist job-doers divorced from all revolutionary consciousness and that was one of the main reasons why our ranks even when they lead fights get demoralised at a later stage because the CC as a whole had not looked after the Marxist education. But if any one made a principle out of that, it was Joshi.

This critical review should teach all the CC members to look at themselves in an objective manner. In the war period all CC

members were guilty of pursuing a reformist policy. This was due in some cases to some of the younger comrades of the CC having implicit faith in Joshi and Adhikari. There is no extenuating circumstance which could be shown by any of the PB members. One of the reasons why the CC could not come to an earlier decision on the question of policy and get out of the rut of reformism was the blind faith of certain CC members in Joshi and failure by them to apply Marxist criterion to any situation. The result was that even when an opening was made to understand the new situation, the collective mind of the CC could not take advantage of it and would promptly accept denunciation of such an opening as sectarian. The deeprooted reformism of the war period could not go at once but at the same time it has to be admitted that certain comrades became hardened reformists who would not learn. Others continuously vacillated and would readily accept any criticism of imagined sectarianism as an excuse to retreat from revolutionary policies. It is because of these vacillations and hardened reformism that the party was derailed after having reached a correct revolutionary line in August 1946 and the work of organising the Indian revolutionary movement was effectively sabotaged. Those comrades who are mainly responsible for it must candidly accept the mistake and their responsibility. Otherwise there can be no political functioning. The CC as a whole has to get over the old reformist understanding of every event and overcome the basic reformist deviations. These relate to failure to fight the national bourgeois leaders, failure to identify the bourgeoisie with the Congress leaders, failure to lead mass battles decisively because of wrong notions or reconstruction, reformist conceptions of reorganisation of national economy and first and foremost failure to understand that without the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic struggle, the democratic revolution can never succeed. Today, when we are making a break with our old reformist understanding and replacing it by a correct revolutionary understanding, we must remember that merely understanding the situation in its broader bearings is not enough. In implementing our resolution, we are likely to come up again and again against our old deviations which will cause us to waver and vacillate. On the strength of a deeper understanding of Marxism,

of the great harm that we have done to our party and our movement by our past mistakes, we must continuously overcome these vacillations and deviations so that the CC as a whole becomes a decisive leadership leading the big mass of revolutionaries that we have in our party, so that it really becomes a fit leader of the party of the proletariat.

REFORMIST DEVIATION ON SELF DETERMINATION

The recognition of the existence of nationalities and the acceptance on the party platform of the demand of self determination for nationalities was a great contribution of our party, a contribution made on the basis of our Marxism, a contribution which distinguished us from all other parties and enables us to understand the problem of minorities, the problem of communalism and the problem of partition, better than any other party and gives us confidence to fight them out.

If our party had not understood that the communal problem was also linked up with the problem of nationalities, we would have developed no understanding of the minorities and the nationalities problem except that which is current either among congressmen or socialists which means the only way out for us would have been outright surrender to Hindu communalism in one form or other. That way there would have been no hope for us of organising unity of the workers, unity of the peasantry and in the context of present conditions, fighting the war propaganda that is launched by reactionaries. In fact one of the main levers to build the revolutionary unity of our people in the common struggle would have been lost and the party line would have limped on one leg. That is why the recognition of nationalities and the right of self determination, the contributions made to develop clarity on this question, are of immense value to the party.

But unfortunately on this question also as on others while we took basically a correct revolutionary position, we more and more drifted into opportunist trailing behind the bourgeoisie till we sank deep into the mire of disruptive reformism. In this respect Adhikari's *Pakistan* and *National Unity* together with the resolution that he

drafted for the September 1942 meeting of the central committee are not only not free from blemishes but in many places contain the seeds and germs of the opportunist surrenders that we made in the subsequent period. While Adhikari in his pamphlet correctly states that the question of self determination is linked with the question of democratic revolution and anti-imperialist struggle, that the question of self determination comes on the agenda when the peasant enters the political arena, while he hits against constitution-mongering and warns that our path is the path of revolutionary struggle, of building revolutionary unity of the people, still this is not the central idea of his pamphlet and this core in the end is missed. The pamphlet in reality does not expose the bourgeois leadership as the obstacle and the disruptor of the struggle of self determination and as a force by defeating which alone the people can march forward to self determination. Here and there conflicts between the bourgeoisie are mentioned, their separatism has been mentioned, but the fight against bourgeois leaders is not made an integral and important part of the struggle for selfdetermination. Secondly in his historical review Adhikari misses imperialism completely, a failure quite in keeping with the line advocated in *Forward to Freedom*. The whole conception of how the Hindu-Muslim problem arose at different times is a nonclass conception in which classes are not taken into account and the deliberate policy of imperialism of divide and rule is screened from the reader's eyes. It is out of this that the subsequent falsification of history arose, in the *Final Bid for Power* in which again the role of imperialism is screened and genesis of the Hindu-Muslim problem is traced to certain wrong ideas in the heads of the leaders of the national movement.

Adhikari's pamphlet further fails to attack the League leaders and their cry of Pakistan as a weapon of compromise with imperialism, separation being the special form of compromise of the League leaders with the imperialist government. The obstructionist role of Pakistan in dividing the Muslim masses from the common struggle, the disruptive role played by the League in connection with this, is ignored and ground is already cleared for drawing the conclusion that Pakistan contains the core of the freedom demand of Muslims.

In fact Adhikari's pamphlet commits the same errors as *Forward to Freedom*—refusal to see the bourgeoisie and refusal to fight it. In this case the class character of the League leaders was not seen but hidden. In fact we did not remember the elementary fact that each nationality is composed of several classes and that the bourgeoisie would always strive to exploit the freedom urge or consciousness of any mass to suit its own selfish interests. We further forgot the Leninist axiom that the bourgeoisie is incapable of securing the right of self determination of any nationality and that either it must dominate over other nationalities or it must surrender to imperialism and thus keep the people in bondage. That bourgeois separatism is a form of political betrayal was not seen and that therefore the proletariat cannot adopt an attitude of conciliation towards it is also ignored, it is because of this that we not only refused to fight the disruptive role of Muslim League and Pakistan demand but more and more ourselves make concessions to separatism in the name of popularising and enriching self determination. The disease was one of following at the tail end of the League bourgeoisie. We opportunistically believed "that the central task throughout the war period was the acceptance of self determination by the leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League against British-imposed deadlock" (December resolution). That is why we continued to have illusions that these two sets of leaders would accept self determination provided we are able to make them understand that it was in their own interest. This trailing behind therefore began in the resolution of September 1942 when we said : "This would give to the muslims where they are in an overwhelming majority the right to form their autonomous state and even to separate if they so desire." This antidemocratic disruptive idea of muslims forming a state was not a technical concession to nationality on the basis of religion but was part of the appeasing policy we were following towards the League bourgeois leaders. In fact it was their demand that muslims should have the right to form an autonomous state where they are in a majority. By putting forward this demand, the Muslim League leaders were not championing the cause of any nationality but was successfully disrupting the struggle of nationalities and the common struggle of

the Indian people. In fact we tend to accept this characterisation and begin to trail behind the Muslim League in the very first resolution of ours. Following this whatever we have written, all the writings of the PB members, bear this opportunist stamp and latter on we carry this conception to its logical conclusion.

Adhikari's pamphlet correctly stated that Pakistan distorts the rising nationalist urge of the nationalities. And we should have emphasised this fact that it is not putting forward the demand of nationalities but distorting it. But behind that distortion we saw the core of the freedom demand and Adhikari warns that if we did not see the core of freedom demand behind the distortion we would remain blind to realities. It was such formulations that paved the way for subsequent concessions that we made to separatism.

Our position in relation to the muslim masses, the fact that we were weak among them, the fact we had hardly any independent mass base among them, and the fact that we were hardly leading any working class and peasant struggles—all combine to create lack of confidence in us regarding our correct stand about self determination and unmasking the League stand.

Though the September resolution did lay down that we should organise hindus and muslims, untouchables and caste-hindus, in their own class organisations and unite them for complete democracy and selfdetermination; though it called to fight hindu chauvinism which denied selfdetermination and muslim chauvinism which demanded a muslim state in muslim-majority areas, still these slogans remained mere words because of the general policy of trailing behind that we were pursuing on every front.

In the hunt for quick Congress-League unity therefore we went on discovering new virtues in League's reactionary resolutions, e.g. B.T. Ranadive's article on Muslim League session in Bombay. And instead of winning the muslim masses independently for antifascism and for self determination and common democratic struggles and freedom, we went on looking upon the League as the organisation of muslims and the need for making the muslim masses move. It is very strange that throughout all these years we hardly gave any call to the muslim masses to join the party, hardly ever sang in

praise of our party which was with the masses and leading their struggles but always asked them to join the Muslims League.

This certainly was not a way of fighting communalism which the Muslim League was preaching every day. The role of the Muslim League leaders were glorified, their separatism was not attacked, and self determination was brought nearer to Pakistan. No efforts were made to secure the independent following for the party or making people see that the party alone had a real programme for the freedom of the muslims. Faced with this we began to move still further in the wrong direction. Instead of understanding that our stagnation was due to subservience to the League bourgeoisie, we become more subservient and distort history and make new characterisations about the League. In the August 1943 CC meeting we began to say : "League is moving towards becoming the national organisation of the muslims representing the freedom urge of mainly the muslims in the majority areas. League leaders are hindering this development and we have to strengthen and speed the development by working to create a progressive democratic trend." Thus we sought to justify our tailism behind the League.

In the party letter dated 16 October 1943, Adhikari says : "We have to make the League capable of fulfilling its role as a national muslim organisation. If we refuse to make this formulation about the League, it means the refusal to make a political turn in the consciousness of the people and their attitude." Again, "the Muslim League as the common political organisation of all the muslims, especially in the majority areas, can and must become the national organisation of the muslims there, uniting them for democratic demands, selfdetermination and independence, for unity with the Congress. It is no more a communal organisation." All this of course was necessary in order to theoretically justify our acceptance of the disruptive Pakistan demand of the League. On par with this, the following is said about the League leaders : "Not to see this growing differentiation inside the League leadership, to damn the reactionary landlord-hoarder, together with Jinnah and the patriotic elements within the leadership of the League, is to miss the reality... The patriotic leaders of the League have shown that they yield to mass pressure under the present impact of crisis." And this at a

time when Jinnah and his admirers had almost done nothing to fight the hoarder, the landlord and even to save the East Bengal peasant from the Bengal famine.

This was preparation for further concessions to separatism and from which arose also the strange parallelism that we developed between the Muslim League and the Congress.

Now it was forgotten that the League leaders had generally obstructed the mass struggle of the Indian people and that they were being used as an obstruction by imperialism to beat down the Congress. History was forgotten and also falsified. Justification for separate electorate was found and everything was written which could show that the League leaders had all along been leading the muslim masses towards freedom and that Pakistan itself was a child of the Lahore resolution. This falsification of history is seen in this crassest form in the *Final Bid* for power. All this was ideological preparation for the complete surrender on the question of separatism. This surrender now begins to take place by ourselves stressing the right of separatism and secession in the name of convincing the congressmen about this right at the same time failing to stress unification and voluntary union before the muslim masses. Secondly, it takes place on the basis of a growing support to muslim state.

Instead of emphasising that separatism based on religion is one of the main weapons of the Muslim League leaders in their politics of division and bargain, we begin to say that muslim people and their leaders are not bent on separatism.

When after the release of Gandhiji in May 1944, the Rajaji formula was published we begin to accept a principle which was common to both Rajaji formula and the Pakistan resolution. That was almost accepting the contention of the basic principle enunciated by the League itself for a separate state on the basis of muslim religion as the basis of both Rajaji formula and the Pakistan resolution. The difference was only how much and how. Instead of exposing and rejecting the wrong and disruptive principle which was common to both positions and basing our proposals for unity on the basis of the unifying principle of self-determination and clearly coming out against the disruptive character of both formulas

and unmasking them as preparation for the coming political compromise and betraying revolutionary struggle we ourselves took a position of separation based on religion. So blind were we to reality that we even failed to understand that Gandhiji's visit to Jinnah was one of the preparations to strike a deal with imperialism and we were actually helping him in doing it. At this time it was in the interests of imperialism also that Jinnah stiffened his demand and by our separatist stand we actually supported him in doing it. And we made the following amazing formulation : "Pakistan is as much the inalienable right of the muslims as swaraj is the right of us all." Here we completely identify the revolutionary demand for self-determination which can only come by completely liquidating the imperialist colonial system and defeating the bourgeoisie, with the separatist demand of treacherous compromise with imperialism which the League bourgeoisie had launched. And from that we went on headlong supporting Pakistan more and more : "Once Pakistan is accepted, as the sovereign right to muslim homelands, demarcation of the boundary of Pakistan is only a question of facts and figures". "The Muslims can claim as of right all the areas where they are a majority but they cannot cast their eyes on one foot of extra territory."

Thus we completely accepted a muslim state identified with self-determination.

And we even began to flatter the muslims by saying that Indian muslims would become masters of the biggest muslim state in the world and so on.

Actually we should have exposed the Rajaji formula, we should have exposed Jinnah's demands, we should have exposed the disruptive compromising basis of Gandhi-Jinnah negotiations and once more asserted the right of self determination together with the demand for revolutionary struggle against imperialism. We should have exposed the fact that neither of them was thinking of democracy, of liquidation of landlordism, for both were trying to work out a solution within the framework of the existing system which keeps the ordinary man enslaved.

Again in "They Must Meet again" we say: "Unqualified

recognition of the right of muslim nationalities to establish independent sovereign states in muslim homelands in terms of Lahore resolution of the League.”

In this article we finally and completely give up the slogan of selfdetermination of nationalities and also all vestiges of fight against separatism. We no longer stand for achieving an Indian union of sovereign national units.

Naturally out of this come all kinds of disruptive slogans such as muslim state, Sikhistan. In fact we begin to trail after every section of the bourgeoisie which begins to frighten us by its hold over the people and by its appeal to backward communal sentiments. It was complete panic of the party of the proletariat and retreat before the vested interests instead of bold attack to defeat the poisonous communal propaganda. We forgot the elementary duty to fight for common Indian union. And at the time of the election manifesto, we come out with the slogan of 18 constituent assemblies.

We later on come back to the correct slogan of voluntary Indian union and RPD's (Rajani Palme Dutt's) criticism about the League wakes us up with a shock to its communal character. Though RPD was not able to trace the source of our deviation and perhaps formulated his criticism wrongly saying that we ignored the unifying character of the Congress proposals such as plebiscite, etc. still he laid his finger on a vital spot when he emphasised the communal character of the League and debunked our formulation that Muslim League is a national organisation of the muslims. RPD's formulation enables us to fight against parallelism between the Congress and the League, the wrong parallelism that was developing throughout the war period. Some comrades insisted, and rightly so, that the parallelism be dropped. But they were already late because the new situation created by the postwar upsurge and the compromising policies of the leaders of both parties was establishing a new parallelism under which they could be treated at the same level as compromisers and disruptors, betrayers of the revolution, and collaborators. For some time this deviation, which wanted to drop parallelism when parallelism was real and had basis in fact, persisted and on the basis of that an attempt was made to drive a distinction

between the Indian union and Pakistan, the Indian union being considered as more progressive and Pakistan being considered as reactionary. The opportunism involved in this formulation was apparent when the question of the accession of states came into prominence and when our mistaken support for accession to the Indian union in preference to Pakistan could be clearly seen as a support to one section of the grabbing bourgeoisie against another.

With the division of India brought about by the treacherous and compromising policies of leaders of both parties, the real face of the League and Congress leaders is alike seen, Muslim League having secured exactly the Pakistan they wanted; they had secured it without the help of the Congress and with imperialism and they are parading it as the freedom of muslim homelands. The face of this Pakistan clearly reveals that the muslim masses have been cheated, have been sold in bondage to imperialism and are being repressed for the sake of landlords and capitalists. The role of the League leaders and their communal appeal is also seen. The muslim masses are misled by the communal appeal to act against their own interests, to hunt out the minorities to divert their energies into communal channels so that the united strength is not felt against imperialism and its collaborators.

Pakistan thus has come out neither as the achievement of freedom for any nationality nor for any section of the people, hindu or muslim, but has been an imperialist conspiracy to keep the hindu and muslim masses divided, to fight the common democratic movement and defeat the forces of revolution. When the League was demanding Pakistan, it was this that it was demanding, it was demanding a junior partnership with the landlord-bourgeois clique in power and in the state and was willing to sell the muslim masses in bondage to the imperialists. It was this that it was passing off as the freedom of the muslim homelands and it was this that we had to unmask and fight tooth and nail so that the muslim masses were neither cheated nor betrayed. Our tailist deviation made our fight against this treachery extremely difficult and because of it we could not warn the muslim masses in time.

We must therefore clearly see that though we had a correct

slogan in self determination of nationalities, though that slogan again enables us to look confidently to the future and establish friendly relations between the peoples of the two territories and maintain the integrity of the democratic movement, still in our day-to-day line we pursued the same tailist policy that is outlined in *Forward to Freedom*. We committed the same right-reformist deviation, the same retreat before the bourgeoisie, with disastrous results for national unity. Because of this we failed to stress our independent mobilisation of the muslim masses in the common struggles, economic and political, we began to underrate them and refused to give a call to the muslim workers and peasants to rally round the banner of the party when that alone would have been the banner to carry forward the struggle for self determination. Once again these reformist mistakes ought to be mastered and the party and the leaders ought once for all give up their policy of trailing behind the bourgeoisie. of abjuration of the path of independent leadership of the working class and relying on the bourgeoisie to lead the masses.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Adopted in the Second Congress of the
Communist Party of India, held in Calcutta, in 1948

PREAMBLE

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA *is the most advanced organised section of the proletariat of India, the highest form of its class organisation.*

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA *carries out the leadership of the proletariat, the toiling peasants and all the toiling masses, organising them in the struggle for the victorious anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution, for complete national independence, for the establishment of a People's Democratic State led by the working-class and the building of socialism according to the teaching of Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party of India is a united fighting organisation cemented by conscious proletarian discipline. The party is strong in its unity, unity of will and unity of action, which are incompatible with any deviation from the programme, any violation of Party discipline and factional grouping inside the Party.*

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA *demands from its members active and self-sacrificing work for carrying out the programme of the Communist Party of India and of the international Communist movement. It demands also the carrying out of the constitution of the party and fulfilling all the decisions of the Party and its organs, the guarantee of the unity of the ranks of the Party and the strengthening of the fraternal international relations both between the toilers of the various nationalities of India and with the proletariat of all countries of the world. The party works in all the mass organisations of the toilers, seeking to win over the toiling masses of members of these organisations to its side and to isolate the reformist leaders.*

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of the organisation shall be the COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA.

ARTICLE II

EMBLEM

The emblem of the Party shall be a five pointed red star in the centre of which is placed a crossed hammer and sickle, representing the unity of workers and peasants and with a circular inscription : "Communist party of India"

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Any Person eighteen years of age, or more, regardless of race, sex, colour, religion or nationality, who resides in India including the "Indian States" and whose loyalty to the working class is unquestioned, shall be eligible for membership.

Note : Young comrades between 14 and 18 years shall be organised into separate cells. They will function as branches in the mass organisations such as Student Union and Youth Leagues. They will be considered as Young Communist and they will not participate in the elections or voting on resolutions of the Party, but they will be guided by the Party Committees under whose area they exist.

Section 2. A member of the party is one who accepts the programme of the Party, who works in one of the Party organisations, obeys the decisions of the Party and regularly pays the membership dues.

Section 3. Every application for membership must be made individually to the local cell and vouched for by at least two members of the Party who know him well both at his place of work and residence. The new members recruited by the cells must be confirmed by the local, town or district committee.

Note 1. If the leading members from other political parties come over to the Party, in addition to the sanction of the district, town or local Committees it is necessary to have the sanction of the Provincial or Central Committees.

2. Members once expelled from the Party can be re-admitted only by District or Provincial Committees.

ARTICLE IV

PARTY DUES

Section 1. Membership fee shall be paid every month by every member according to the rate fixed by the All-India Party Congress or Central Committee.

Note : Local or town committee on the recommendation of the cell may exempt any member from payment of membership fee on grounds of unemployment etc.

Section 2. Income from the membership fee shall go to the District Committee.

Section 3. The District Provincial or Central Committees may fix and collect levies on the income of Party members for their funds.

ARTICLE V

RIGHT AND DUTIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Section. 1. A member of the Party must observe the strictest discipline, actively participate in the political life of the Party and of the country carry on in practice the decisions of the Party organisation.

Section 2. He must tirelessly work to raise his ideological attainments, to master the fundamentals Marxism-Leninism and the chief political and organisational decisions of the Party explain them to the non-Party masses.

Section 3. He must be, unless exempted, a member of a mass organisation (Trade Union, Kisan Sabha, etc.) for which he is

eligible, and work there, under the leadership of a Party Committee.

Section 4. All leading Committees of the Party from the local committee upto the Central Committee are elected either directly by the membership or through their elected delegates. Every committee must report regularly on its activities to its Party organisation.

Section 5. In matters of provincial or district nature, the Party organisations have the right to exercise full initiative and to make decisions within the limits of the general policies and decisions of the Party.

Section 6. After thorough discussion, the majority vote decides the policy of the Party and minority is in duty bound to carry out the decisions.

Section 7. Party members disagreeing with any decision of a Party organisation or Committee have the right to appeal to the highest bodies of the Communist Party of India, its Central Committee and the All-India Congress. The decisions of the All-India Congress are final. While the appeal is pending, the decisions must nevertheless be carried out by every member of the party.

Section 8. A member can transfer himself from one district or province to another with the permission of the district or the Provincial Committee respectively. Permission of the Central Committee is required to go to another country.

Section 9. The question of the expulsion of anyone from the Party is decided by a meeting of the cell or Party unit of which the given person is a member, and is confirmed by the district Committee or by a higher committee. Pending the decision of the District Committee or a higher committee, the person in question can be removed from Party work.

ARTICLE VI

STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY

Section 1. The main principle on which the structure and

organisation of the Party is based, is called Democratic centralism. This means that :

(a) All the leading organs (i.e. Party Committee) of the Party from top to bottom are elected.

(b) The leading Party Committees periodically report on their work to their Party organisations.

(c) The strictest Party discipline and the subordination of minority to majority.

(d) Decisions of the Central Committee and of the higher Party organs are unquestionably obligatory for lower organs and for all members of the Party.

ARTICLE VII

PRIMARY UNITS

Section 1. The basic and the lowest unit of the Party is a cell which is organised on industrial or territorial basis. A cell is formed of three or more Party members, working in a factory, mill, department, plantation unit or an institution. Party members who cannot be in factory cells, etc, are organised in street, locality, chawl, bustee, ward or village cells.

Section 2. The cell is the living link between the masses, of workers, peasants and other citizens within its area or sphere and the leading committee of the Party. Its tasks are :

(a) To carry out the directions of the higher committees.

(b) Win the masses in its factory, etc. or locality for the political and organisational decisions of the Party.

(c) Draw in militants and sympathisers as new members and educate them politically.

(d) Publish a wall-paper for the cell and for the factory or locality where you work.

(e) Help the district, local or town committee in its everyday organisational and agitational work.

Section 3. To carry out the current work, the cell at its meeting

elects a Secretary who is confirmed by the local, town or district committee.

Section 4. The district, town or local organisation shall comprise all the cells in the given territory of the district, town or locality, which shall be defined by the provincial committee and normally shall correspond to the administrative divisions. These organisations are formed with the confirmation of the next higher committee.

Note : Local or town Committees are intermediate between the cell and the District Committee and their areas are defined by Provincial Committee from time to time.

ARTICLE VIII

DISTRICT ORGANISATION

Section 1. The highest body of the district, town or local organisation is the district, town or local Conference which has to meet at least once a year. A specially delegated representative of the District or Provincial Committee shall be present at this Conference. This Conference discusses and confirms the report of the district, town or local committee, elects the District, town or local committee of 7 or more members and also delegates for the Provincial or District Conference the number of which will be previously fixed by the Provincial Committee.

Between the district, town or local conferences, the highest Party body in the district, town or local organisation is the district, town or local Committee.

Section 2. District, town or local committee elects a Secretary (to be confirmed by the Provincial or District Committee), organises and confirms lower units and fractions in mass organisations, organises collection of membership dues, guides the work of lower units and the fractions in the mass organisations, and has charge of the district, town or local funds. They can elect delegates to the Conference of next higher committees when it is not possible to hold their own Conferences for the purpose, with the permission of the higher committees.

In order to carry out its task efficiently the members of the

district, town or local committee may distribute among themselves the chief functions of the same in this way.

—Secretary to be responsible for; and to lead the work of the committee as a whole ;

—Organisers to check up lower units ;

—Heads of fractions in mass organisations :

—Distribution of literature and literature accounts :

—Treasurer, accountant of the funds ;

—Head of special work.

The district, town or local committee will give regular reports on its work to the Provincial or District Committee on the dates and in the form which are fixed by the Provincial or District Committee.

Note 1 : ... According to the concrete conditions of work, the district, town or local committee may combine several of these functions, etc. The district committees may appoint organisers other than its members to check up and guide lower units, fractions in the mass organisations. It can form sub-committees or special cells for proper functioning of the party and mass fronts if necessary.

The district, town or local committee will give regular reports on its work to the Provincial or District Committee on the dates and in the form which are fixed by the Provincial or District Committee.

Note 2 : The Provincial Committee may permit the establishment of a secretariat for District or Taluk Committee if necessary.

ARTICLE IX

Section 1. Provincial organisation shall comprise of all Party organisations in the given province whose boundaries will be de-fined by the All-India Party Congress or by the Central Committee.

The highest body of the provincial organisation is the Provincial

Party Conference which shall meet ordinarily every year and which shall be composed of delegates elected by the Conference of the districts in the province. The quota of delegates for the Provincial Conference is fixed by the Provincial Committee every time taking into account the numerical strength of the Party in the districts and other factors.

The Provincial Party Conference discusses and confirms the report of the work of the Provincial Committee and elects a new Provincial Committee, of nine or more members as well as delegates to the All-India Communist Party Congress. Extraordinary conferences are called at the decision of the Provincial Committees or on the decision of the Party units representing one-third of the total Party members represented at the last Provincial Conference provided that the Central Committee sanctions the same.

Section 2. The Provincial Committee elects a Secretary. It also elects a secretariat of not more than nine members including the Secretary, which will be charged with the responsibility of carrying out the decisions and the work of the P.C. between its two sessions. the Secretary of the Provincial Committee directs the proper distribution of Party workers, and ensures the fulfillment of the decisions of the Provincial Party Conference, the Provincial Committee and the directives of the Central Committee of the Party. The Secretaries of each Provincial Committee are confirmed by the Central Committee of the Party. The Provincial Committee which must meet at least once in two months gives regular reports on its work to the Central Committee on the date and inform as established by the Central Committee. The Provincial Committee can also elect delegates to the All-India Congress or Conference when it is not possible to hold the Provincial Conference for the purpose with the permission of the Central Committee.

Section 10. In order efficiently to carry out the tasks which face the Provincial Committee and to ensure the proper leadership of the work, of the lower party organisations, the members of the Provincial Party Committee are attached to definite districts of the province and divide among themselves the functions of the Provincial Committee such as :

(a) Editor of the provincial organ (to be confirmed by the Central Committee);

- (b) Organisers to check up the lower units;
- (c) Heads of fractions in mass organisations;
- (d) Distribution and production (if allowed by the Central Committee) of literature and accounts of the same;
- (e) Treasurer of the provincial Party funds;
- (f) Party schools and Party education;
- (g) Head of special department;

Note : According to concrete conditions of the work, the Provincial Committee may combine several of these functions in one comrade, form new functions, etc. The Provincial Committee may appoint organisers other than its members to check up lower units and fractions in mass organisations. It can form sub-committees or special cells for proper functioning of the Party and the mass fronts, if necessary.

Section 3. Provincial Committee leads all the work of the provincial organisations in the intervals between the Provincial Conference, represents provincial organisation of the Party in relation with other organisations and institutions, organises various Provincial Party institutions and guides their activities, distributes the forces and funds of the provincial organisations and has charge of the Provincial treasury. To strengthen the leadership of the district organisations within the province, and to ensure a thorough check-up on the fulfillments of decisions, the Provincial Committee sends representatives as organisers and reporters to districts.

(Note : Provincial Committee may constitute any town committee as a District Committee considering the industrial and political importance of the town.)

Section 12. Provincial, district or local committees can co-opt members to fill any vacancies that may occur. They can dissolve and nominate lower units or members thereof. They can postpone the Conference of lower units, when they deem it necessary.

ARTICLE X

CENTRAL ORGANISATIONS OF THE PARTY

Section 1. The supreme authority in the Communist Party of India is the All-India Party Congress. Regular All-India Party Congress shall be held ordinarily every year.

Extraordinary Congresses are called by the Central Committee on its own initiative or at the demand of Party units having a representation of not less than one-third of the total Party members represented at the last Party Congress. The extraordinary congress is to be considered as having full powers if it has delegates representing not less than half-membership of the Party represented at the last regular Party Congress. Representation quotas at the Congress and the method of election are decided by the Central Committee.

Note : If it is impossible to call a Congress of the party, the Central Committee will call an enlarged session or the Plenum of the Central Committee with the participation of the representatives of the provincial Committees.

Section 2. The All-India party Congress;

- (a) discusses and confirms the report of the Central Committee ;
- (b) revises and changes the programme and Statutes of the party ;
- (c) decides on the tactical line of the Party on the basic questions of current politics ;
- (d) elects the Central Committee by a majority vote ;
- (e) elects a Control Commission to which appeals re-disciplinary action are referred to by the Central Committee.

During the sittings of the Party Congress, a small auditing commission has to be elected, which look through the financial affairs of the past period and at the end of the Congress, reports of its work and is then dissolved.

Section 3. The size of the Central Committee shall be decided upon by each All-India Party Congress. It will consist of regular

and candidate members. The candidate members shall have voice but no vote. In case a member of the Central Committee leaves it, he will be replaced by one of the candidate members in the order fixed by the Congress. The Central Committee has a right to co-opt members to the Central Committee.

Section 4. The Central Committee is the highest authority of the Party between All-India party Congresses, and is responsible for enforcing the Constitution and securing the execution of the general policies adopted by the democratically elected delegates in the Party Congress assembled. The Central Committee represents the Party as a whole and has the right to make decision with full authority on any problem facing the Party between two Party Congress.

The Central Committee leads the whole work of the Party in interval between two Party Congress, organises various Party institutions and guides their activities, appoints the Editor of the Central Party Organ, confirms the secretaries and editors of Party organs of Provincial Party Committees, distributes the forces and funds of the Party and is in charge of the Central Funds.

The Central Committee, under exceptional circumstances is empowered to reconstitute itself and other committees and fractions and to frame new rules.

Section 5. The Central Committee elects from among its members a Political Bureau and a General Secretary who will also be a member of the Political Bureau and act as its Secretary. The Central Committee shall elect such additional secretaries or organise such departments and committees as may be considered necessary for most efficient work. The Polit Bureau is charged with the responsibility of carrying out the decisions and the work of the Central Committee between its full sessions. It is responsible for all its decisions to the Central Committee. The size of the Polit Bureau shall be decided upon by majority vote of the Central Committee.

The Central Committee shall ordinarily meet at least once in three months and the Polit Bureau shall meet at least monthly.

Section 6. The members of the Central Committee are attached

as representatives, organisers and instructors of the Central Committee, to definite provincial organisations and also divide among themselves the various fields of activity of the Central Committee :

(a) Editor of the Central Party organ and Central party Publication;

(b) Party press and distribution of literature ;

(c) Heads of work in All-India mass organisations :

(d) Party schools and Party educations ;

(e) Treasurer and keeper of Central Accounts ;

(f) Heads of special apparatus.

Section 7. With the aim of strengthening the Bolshevik leadership of the Party and ensuring check-up over the work of Provincial and district organisations, the Central Committee sends representatives, organisers and instructors who must work on the basis of special instructions laid down every time by the Central Committee or the Polit-Bureau.

Section 8. The Central Committee may when it deems necessary call All-India Party Conferences. The Central Committee shall decide the basis of attendance at such Conference. Such Conferences shall be consultative bodies auxiliary to the Central Committee.

ARTICLE XI

FRACTIONS IN MASS ORGANISATIONS

Section 1. At all Congress meetings and in the elected committees of the mass organisations—Trade unions, Kisan Sabhas, Student and Women's organisations, co-operativ societies, sports clubs, youth organisations, etc, and also in local self-government bodies and in legislatures where there are not less than two Party members, Party Fractions are organised which must function in a disciplined Party way. They must strive to win the support of the non-Party masses for the party policy with a view to strengthen the unity and fighting capacity and power of the given organisation.

Section 2. The fraction is completely controlled by the

corresponding party Committee (Central Committee, Provincial Committee, District, Town or Local Committee, or Cell) and on all questions must strictly and without vacillation carry out the decisions of the Party organisations which lead them.

Fractions of higher bodies of mass organisations, by agreement with the corresponding Party Committees, may sound directives to Fractions of the lower bodies of the same mass organisation and the latter must carry them out without fail as directives from a higher Party organ.

For current work, the Fraction elects a Secretary.

ARTICLE XII

PARTY DISCIPLINE AND ITS ENFORCEMENT

Section 1 : Preservation of the unity of the Party demands ruthless struggle against anti-party tendencies of forming factional groupings and provoking factional struggle and splits within the Party. In order to bring about the strictest discipline inside the Party and secure the greatest unity, the Central Committee will not only take steps to remove all factions but will also have the right to apply all Party penalties to the point of expulsion from the Party in cases of violation of discipline or the existence of factions.

Section 2 : The Decisions of the leading Party committee must be carried out exactly and rapidly. Failure to do so in the case of individual members may be punished by censure, public censure, removal from responsible post, suspension or expulsion from the Party.

∴ Breaches of discipline by Party committee may be punished by the removal of the Committee by the next higher Party Committee which may then conduct new elections or nominate a new committee.

Section 3 : Party members found to be strike-breaker habitual drunkards, moral degenerates, betrayers of Party confidence, guilty of financial irregularities, provocateurs or members whose conduct or actions are detrimental to the Party and the working class, shall be summarily expelled from the Party and exposed before the general public.

Section 4 : All Party organisations from cell to Central Committee have the right to hear and take disciplinary decision against any individual member or organisation under their jurisdiction. The disciplinary actions taken by lower units have to be confirmed by the committee above them. Pending the confirmation, they will be removed from responsible posts.

Section 5 : The members punished shall have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision to the higher committees right upto the Control Commission and the All-India Congress of the Party.

ARTICLE XIII

INNER PARTY DISCUSSION

The free and business-like discussion of Party policy in the various organisations or in the Party as a whole is the indefeasible right of every member of the Party, arising from inner Party democracy. But an interminable discussion on issues of Party policy, which degenerates into an attempt on the part of an insignificant minority to force their views on the vast majority of the Party members or reduces itself into an attempt to form factional groups, cannot be tolerated as it would be a gross misuse of innerparty democracy and would result in splitting the working-class and the Party. Therefore, a wide inner-Party discussion can be recognised as necessary only if :

(a) This necessity is recognised by one or more provincial organisations;

(b) Inside the Central Committee there is not sufficiently firm majority on the chief questions of the Party policy;

(c) Despite the existence of a firm majority in the Central Committee for a certain point of view, the Central Committee nevertheless considers it necessary to verify the correctness of its policy by a discussion in the Party.

Note : Inner-party discussion, even allowed under the above-mentioned conditions must be conducted, under the strong leadership of the Central Committee and of the

lower committees. The main issue of the Policy under discussion must be clearly set forth in a written report and resolution which must form the basis of discussion in the various units which must be guided as far as possible by reporters from the Central and Provincial Committees, specially sent down to them.

ARTICLE XIV

RULES AND BYE-LAWS

Section 1. Rules and bye-laws shall be adopted, based on this constitution, for the purpose of establishing uniform rules and procedure and for the proper functioning of the Party organisations. Bye-laws may be adopted or changed by majority vote of the All-India Congress or between the Congresses by majority vote of the Central Committee.

Section 2. Provincial Bye-laws not in conflict with the All-India Constitution and bye-laws may be adopted or changed by majority vote of the Provincial Conference or between conferences by majority vote of the Provincial Committee

REVIEW OF THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

The 632 delegates who met at the pandal of the second congress of the Communist Party of India in Calcutta, from 28 February to March 6, came straight from the numerous battlefields scattered all over India, where the toiling masses of our country are waging bitter and prolonged struggles for an independent and democratic India where the people will rule.

They came from scenes of great strike battles of Bombay and Kanpur, of Madras Coimbatore and Golden Rock, and of the great industrial area of Calcutta.

They came from the scenes of peasant struggles of Bihar and UP, of the struggles against landlordism in Tamilnadu, Andhra and Malabar and from the areas in Maharashtra where the Warli peasants waged their heroic battle against serfdom and landlord oppression.

They came from the battlefields of struggles against the princely autocracy in the states of Rajputana, Central India, as well as from the states of the south, and above all from the battlefields of Warangal and Nalgonda where the peasants of Telangana are putting up an epic armed resistance against the armed might of the Nizam's autocracy and his satellites, the deshmukhs and landlords.

There were student delegates fresh from the great student battles of Bombay, Calcutta and Kanpur, and about fifteen women delegates who are struggling with great determination to build a women's movement in the various provinces of India. There were also delegates from those territories of India in the northwest and the east which have been partitioned off and reconstituted as the state of Pakistan.

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These delegates all together represented a powerful and rising movement which was challenging the might of the imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine which had come into existence after the Mountbatten award, a movement of the toiling and the common people fighting against the collaborationist policy of the bourgeois leaders, fighting for the victory of the democratic revolution.

Five Years of Trials and Struggles

The congress was meeting after five years, years of great political changes in the world as well as in India. These were also years of great trials and struggles for the Communist Party, years through which despite slander and opposition, despite brutal repression, it had grown in stature as a leading revolutionary force in India.

During the war, the Communist Party took the correct proletarian stand of lining up with the antifascist camp which was headed by the USSR, the bulwark of socialist revolution.

It took that stand because it was a stand of correct proletarian internationalism, a stand in conformity with the interests of the people of India as well as of all other countries.

It enabled the proletariat in every country to join in the common fight not only to smash fascist-imperialism but also to strengthen the people's democratic forces against Anglo-American Imperialism.

In India the parties of the left, which talked in terms of socialism and the world workingclass movement, betrayed the cause of the world workingclass and of socialism by taking a stand against the antifascist people's war. They trailed behind the bourgeois leaders of the Congress and the League who were gambling on the Japanese invasion while seeking at the same time a compromise with imperialism. It was the Communist Party alone which stood out boldly for a real proletarian line, a line which was in the interests of the working class and the toiling millions throughout the world as well as in India itself.

In those days there were many people who foretold the complete collapse of the Communist Party, now that it was taking a line which was against the line which the national movement and its leaders were taking.

They were proved false prophets. Fighting against the stream, the Communist Party in those days stood boldly by the people, campaigned against the repression launched by imperialism against the national movement, rallied the peasant masses to campaign against famine, to fight the blackmarkets. It stood by the workingclass and the toiling masses in those difficult days of war.

Thus it was that despite slander and opposition from the right and left leaders of the national movement, the Communist Party, though it lost some of its masses, grew in strength in the country as a whole. Its membership rose from 10,000 to 50,000, its organised strength among the workingclass, peasants and the students increased in the same measure.

After the end of the war the bourgeois leaders of the Congress sought to turn the people against the Communist. "We made the August revolution, while the Communist Party was on the other side"—this was the key-note of the slander campaign which the Congress leaders ran against the Communists, inciting and provoking attacks on the Communist Party offices and presses and even against individual members of the party.

But the real face of the national leaders was unmasked when the post-war revolutionary upsurge broke out toward the end of 1945. Terrified by the rising tempo of the revolutionary activity of the masses, the leaders of the Congress and the League took the path of compromise and collaboration with imperialism.

While the Communist Party was participating in the heroic struggles in connection with the release of the INA prisoners and later on fully supported the great revolts of the Royal India Navy and the armed forces, the Congress leaders were denouncing the fighting masses as goondas and turning their backs on the struggles of the masses.

While the Communist Party was forging in these as well as in the rising struggles of the peasants and workers, unity and solidarity of hindus and muslims, touchable and untouchable toiling people, the Congress and the League leaders were pursuing the path of compromise with imperialism and of disruption of people's struggles, a path which led to communal carnage of an unprecedented magnitude and which ultimately culminated in the partition of the country,

enabling imperialism to exploit this division to disrupt the struggles of the common people for a democratic revolution and real independence.

Since the very beginning of the post-war revolutionary upsurge, the Communist Party has been Participating in and leading the battles of the masses.

It was the communists who led the wave of protest strikes which greeted the glorious revolt of the RIN ratings against imperialist arrogance and oppression.

It was the Communist Party which led the big strike struggles both in the railways and the textile industry which broke out in the years 1946 and 1947.

Tebhaga and Other Struggles

In these very years the Communist Party led the great struggles of lakhs of Bengali peasants for tebhaga which spread over more than eleven districts of Bengal.

The Party also led the great struggles of a lakh of Warli peasants against serfdom and is today leading the magnificent partisan warfare of the peasants of Telangana against the Nizam's autocracy.

While the bourgeois leaders of the Congress and the League, pursuing the policy of collaboration with imperialism and of rivalry and competition against each other, with the aim of grabbing markets and a share of state power, created conditions that led to the most ghastly communal riots that India had ever seen and while even some leaders of the left parties too were swept into this communal frenzy, it was the Communist Party alone which stood firm by the principles of proletarian unity, by the cause of the solidarity of the toiling and common people in the struggles against exploitation.

In the riots of 1946 and 1947 it was the Communist Party which came forward boldly denouncing imperialism as the archincendiary of riots.

It was the Communist Party which nailed down the main responsibility of the compromising and riotmongering policy of the Congress and the League leaders for these riots and strove hard,

despite difficulties, to maintain the unity of hindu and muslim toiling people.

In 1946 it was the communists who created Hasanabad, the flaming example of Hindu-Muslim unity right in the midst of the riot-inflamed countryside of Bengal.

In 1947, in the midst of the post-partition riots in the Punjab, it was the Communist Party members who displayed rare heroism in facing death in their efforts to save members of the minority community from the hands of the murderous riot mobs.

In Calcutta and Delhi it was the communist who were in the forefront of the heroic demonstration which were organised to fight back the riots.

As the spearhead and the leader of the principal struggles of the masses of workers, peasants and students, it was the Communist Party of India which became the main target of repression at the hands of the Congress ministries in the year 1946-47.

Communist workers and rank-and-file members have been shot dead by policemen, as at Amalner and at Golden Rock; their following has been harassed and tortured, as in Malabar at the hands of the Malabar special police; their workers have been set upon and murdered by goondas, as in Coimbatore: their following has been put in jail in thousands, as in the tebhaga battle. But the communists and the masses led by the Communist Party have not faltered or wavered in the face of the heaviest repression.

They have fought back repression in the spirit of the martyrs of Amalner and Golden Rock, in the spirit of the students who defied the ban on their conference in Bombay.

Repression has not crushed the communists; on the contrary, the unflinching fight of the communists against repression is rousing the anger of the common people against repression by the so-called popular ministries and is leading more and more to the isolation of these ministries.

Thus through the years of the post-war struggle, the Communists Party has emerged all the stronger, breaking down the walls of slander and provocation, leading mass struggles, fighting back

riots, and advancing forward despite the repression of popular ministries.

Though the party was leading these battles, still it continued to vacillate in its policy and line. It had not made a completely new evaluation of the forces in the post-war period, of the role of the national bourgeoisie, of the new tactics of imperialism and of the strength of the popular forces.

By August 1946 the party came to a correct understanding of the new upsurge, began to lead mass struggles decisively and had also evolved correct political slogans. It is especially after the August Resolution that the party led the great workingclass and peasant battles of the recent past.

But failing to understand the treacherous role of the national leadership, the Party was again derailed into reformism, especially because of a strong reformist trend of certain members of the central committee.

The vacillations of the party culminated a year later in the Mountbatten Resolution, which looked upon the Mountbatten Award as an advance, instead of a new offensive of imperialism which considered the national government as a strategic weapon of advancing towards national freedom, instead of as a government of compromise and surrender.

This led the party to come out with slogans like 'All support to Nehru government', when that government was attacking the masses and betraying the cause of Indian Freedom. It made the party come out with the opportunist slogan of a united front between the government and the people, when the government was suppressing the people in the interests of big business.

This developed illusions about national reconstruction—and cooperations for it with the government of the national bourgeoisie, when the latter was daily attacking the living standards of the workers.

With this outlook the party got completely confounded and confused by the wave of riots and mass massacres following partition and began to trail completely behind Nehru and Gandhiji.

In short, the Mountbatten Resolution tied the party to the treacherous policies of the bourgeoisie.

Break with Reformism

In December 1947, the central committee of the Communist Party met and reviewed the whole situation. It adopted a statement of policy and a document formulating the policy of revolutionary defence against the collaborationist policy of the bourgeois leaders, of consolidating the struggles of the masses for building the democratic front for the achievement of democratic revolution and a people's government.

The December meeting made a break with the reformist understanding of the previous resolution, correctly characterising the national government as a government of collaboration and surrender, it raised the question of political power and called on the working class to rebuild people's unity through a democratic front—so that power is really secured by the toiling millions..

It shed all illusions about the national bourgeoisie and declared that the national bourgeoisie had ceased to play an oppositional role, and that the Congress high command which represented it had gone over to the camp of imperialism.

On the basis of this, it declared that there should be no illusion that the Congress as an organisation would be in the democratic front, and that the struggle for real freedom and democracy would have to be waged in opposition to the collaborationist policy of the Congress leaders.

The Central Committee appointed a drafting commission to prepare a draft political thesis on the basis of these documents to be place before the second party congress. Meanwhile the statement of policy and the document adopted by the Central Committee were issued to the entire party ranks as a basis for discussing the general line of the party in the provincial conferences and in their units.

For two months, January and February, the entire party ranks were eagerly discussing these documents, selfcritically reviewing their own past work and the work of their higher committees. The delegates to the congress were in the majority of case clected in

provincial conferences in which discussions had taken place over these documents.

The delegates who came to the congress were mostly mass leaders who had their finger tips on the pulse of the rising struggles of the masses. They knew what the hesitations and vacillations of the foregoing period had meant for their work among the masses. They came to the Congress with the firm determination to end the vacillations and mistakes of the past and to make a collective effort to evolve a correct revolutionary line.

Their own experience of mass struggles, of the deepening crisis on every front, of the growing disillusionment of the masses with the policy of the Congress leaders had made them impatient of vacillations and hesitations and vigilant of mistakes.

Report on Political Thesis

There were three main reports delivered at the Congress on behalf of the Central Committee.

The first was a report on the draft political thesis by B.T. Ranadive.

The second was a report on Pakistan presented by Bhowani Sen in connection with the resolution to restrict the organisation of the Communist Party to the boundaries of the Indian union, leaving the Communist Party organisations in the territories separated and reconstituted as Pakistan state free to organise a separate communist party.

The third report presented by B. T. Ranadive was a selfcritical review of the policies of the party during the last five years.

These reports were presented before the Congress one after another, and the discussion on them started only after all of them had already been placed before the delegates. About 100 delegates participated in the discussion, which was keen and lively and contributed greatly to forging a united understanding and towards improving the draft place before the Congress.

In his opening reports on the draft political thesis, Ranadive pointedly dealt with those key issues over which the thesis was making a sharp break with the old understanding.

International Situation

Dealing with the salient features of the new international situation, Ranadive pointed out that there was no Chinese Wall between the international situation and our national situation. Many of our mistakes in the past had arisen from an incorrect understanding of the new world situation which had come into existence after the end of the antifascist war. They had arisen because we had failed to understand the significance of the new features of the present international situation for our national movement.

Communists were the first to say that, as a result of the military defeat of the fascist-imperialists, the forces of world imperialism would be weakened immensely and the forces of the workingclass and the people fighting for democracy and socialism would emerge stronger.

With the end of the war the correlation of forces between the world of socialism and the world of capitalism has changed. The balance has shifted in favour of the world of socialism and against the world of capitalism. This changed correlation of forces naturally found expression in the tremendous strengthening of the forces of socialism and democracy.

“The Soviet Union emerges as a strong power, a strong state and strong economic unit”, declared Ranadive. “Along with that, the East-European countries have broken out of the imperialist orbit and are marching towards socialism.

“In the great continent of Asia, the Chinese Liberation Army is marching ahead victoriously, and throughout the colonies, colonial revolts are developing rapidly.

“In the Central and East-European countries, the Communist Parties, which were once hunted parties have come to the forefront as the biggest parties showing the maturity of the workingclass, in the struggle against reaction and for a people’s democracy and for socialism.”

This changed correlation of forces expressed itself also in the weakness of world imperialism. It is seen in the desperate efforts

the Anglo-American Imperialists are making to save the capitalist social order from its impending doom.

It is seen in the desperate offensive which the Anglo-American Imperialists have launched to rally together all reactionary forces in every country, to stop the onrushing tide of social revolution, to prepare the ground to unleash a new world war for domination over all peoples and for the destruction of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies.

This new correlation of forces is expressing itself in the aggravated crisis of the colonial system. It is expressing itself in the rise of powerful movements of national and social liberation in the colonies and dependencies of imperialism.

Two Camps

In every country, including the colonies, the bourgeoisie and their servitors, the social-democrats, menaced by the revolution, are lining up with the Anglo-American imperialists in their fight against forces of democracy and socialism. In every country, including the colonies, the bourgeoisie and its henchmen are taking the position of subservience to the Anglo-American imperialist masters and against the interests of national independence and democracy of their own countries.

This new correlation of forces expresses itself in the formation of two camps, which face each other in irreconcilable conflict—the camp of Anglo-American imperialism and its reactionary allies, and the camp of all the peoples, fighting for their national independence and democracy, led by the Soviet Union and the people's democracies.

It is this situation, this changed correlation of forces, in which the bourgeoisie in each country is openly joining the camp of reaction and imperialism, and openly betraying the cause of national independence and democracy of its own country and people, which places upon the proletariat in each country the responsibility to come forward as the most resolute champion of the fight for national independence and people's democracy.

It is this situation, this changed correlation of forces, in which

the bourgeoisie of all countries is lining up under the leadership of Anglo-American imperialism in its drive for world domination and for the unleashing of a new world war, which places upon the proletariat of all countries the historic responsibility of building a solid front to consolidate the camp of anti-imperialism, democracy and socialism and to hurl back the offensive of reaction and imperialism.

Defining the fight for a people's democracy, Ranadive made points which can be summarised in the following manner:

The struggles for people's democracy is a democratic fight of the millions, the masses of workers, peasants and the toiling intelligentsia against reaction, against imperialism, a fight which does not remain confined to what is commonly known as bourgeois democracy, but gets intertwined with the fight for socialism.

People's democracy represents the changed correlation of forces in every country where conditions are mature for the isolation of the collaborating bourgeoisie in such a way that the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism get intertwined in a single revolutionary struggle.

People's democracy represents a new kind of state, based on the alliance of workers, peasants and progressive intelligentsia, under the leadership of the proletariat. It goes ahead to smash landlordism and the power of capital, so that, the conditions are created not only for the flowering of real democracy, but also for the building of socialism.

People's democracy is really the fight for rallying the majority of the people against capitalism, against the rule of reaction, and for the freedom of every country.

This is the revolutionary meaning of the struggle for people's democracy, in the course of which the bourgeoisie all over the world finds it more and more difficult to gather any appreciable mass force behind it, because in the course of the deepening crisis of capitalism, it exposes itself more and more nakedly before the common toiling millions as the ally of Anglo-American imperialism.

The fight for people's democracy in every country must therefore be conducted also against its own collaborating bourgeoisie.

It is a part of the worldwide fight of the world proletariat and the camp of anti-imperialism, democracy, peace and socialism against the menace of Anglo-American Imperialism trying to dominate the world and to unleash a new world war.

It is necessary to understand the salient features of the new world situation :

(1) As against the apparent strength of the Anglo-American imperialist colossus which is seeking to bolster up reaction in every country, it is necessary to realise that the strength of the camp of anti-imperialism, democracy and socialism is far greater.

That strength is expressed in the increased might of the Socialist Soviet Union, in the stability and strength of the people's democracies in Eastern Europe, which are advancing firmly towards socialism, it is expressed in the giant victorious strides with which the liberation army of the Chinese people is marching forward towards creating a real people's democracy for the whole of China and thus opening a new and big breach in the wall of world imperialism.

It is expressed in the new revolutionary movements which are growing in the colonies like India and Burma, Indonesia and Vietnam—movements led by the proletariat, which are challenging the efforts to perpetuate their colonial status and the basis for imperialist-bourgeois collaboration.

There is not the slightest doubt that it is these forces of anti-imperialism, democracy and socialism which are today potentially stronger than the might of Anglo-American imperialism, which is being corroded from within by the deepening crisis of capitalism.

(2) In every country the bourgeoisie and its henchmen have gone over to the camp of Anglo-American imperialism. This creates conditions for unmasking them before the people as enemies of national independence and democracy; it creates conditions for the proletariat to emerge as the champion of the fight for national independence and people's democracy.

In every country, in different degrees, conditions are maturing for the proletariat to come forward and lead the fight for people's democracy, for the power of the working-class in alliance with the other exploited classes, for the transition towards socialism.

If we get this understanding, then we will realise that what is happening in our country is an integral part of what is happening elsewhere, the crackup of the world imperialist system after the military defeat of fascism, a crackup of its economic system, which throws new and additional burdens on the shoulders of the masses and makes them more and more angry against the existing system, and thus creates conditions for the waging of victorious fight for people's democracy and socialism.

In the context of this understanding of the world situation and the position of the world bourgeoisie, Ranadive referred to the fact that the past resolutions of the central committee of our party had not correctly placed the compromising and collaborationist role of the national bourgeois leaders.

Referring to the resolutions of the central committee on the Mountbatten Award, he said that, though the resolution referred to the compromising role of the bourgeoisie, it did not nail down the compromising role of Nehru and Patel and therefore did not place before us the task of fighting and isolating their collaborationist policies. He pointed out that even in the resolution of the central committee of August 1946 this fact was absent.

Basis of Collaboration

He stated that these resolutions had not sufficiently stressed the compromising and collaborationist role of the national bourgeoisie and the national leaders and had not emphasised the fact that both had crossed over to the camp of imperialism. This fact, he said, would be found clearly and sharply nailed down in the present draft thesis.

He pointed out that we missed this big fact, which in its turn led to a series of reformist deviations, because of our failure to study the economic changes that had taken place in India during the course of the war.

“One of the basic things”, he pointed out, “which happened in the course of the war and which has profound bearing on the collaborationist role of the bourgeoisie, is that the process of war enriched the bourgeoisie, and there was a tremendous accumulation of capital in its hands for which it hoped to find an outlet through

building industries, especially in collaboration with American imperialism.

“The economic basis of collaboration was laid through inflation, through fleecing of the people, through profiteering and blackmarketing, which led to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and to the intensification of poverty, starvation and misery among the common people, on the other” (Bengal famine).

Referring to the great post-war revolutionary upsurge, which also arose out of the deepening economic crisis as a result of the intensified exploitation of the war period, Ranadive pointed out :

“The bourgeoisie recognised the significance of the new upsurge and the danger that it represented to its own position and therefore turned its face decidedly against the upsurge and began calling the fighting people goondas. It was this fear of the rising upsurge also that turned the bourgeoisie toward collaboration.”

Proceeding further Ranadive pointed out that we missed the significant fact that the great driving force behind the revolutionary upsurge of the masses was the deepening crisis of the colonial system.

“We did not make a correct analysis of the economic crisis, did not make every party member, every provincial committee member, every central committee member, understand that we were and are living in the midst of an economic crisis of gigantic magnitude. Instead of this we accepted a large number of economic formulations made by bourgeois economists, and more and more forgot that the only solution of the crisis was through a change of the social order brought about by the fighting masses.

“It is because we missed all these that we are today putting the entire analysis of the crisis before the congress, because it is necessary to understand once again that ours is a colonial-agrarian country and the crisis cannot be solved without an agrarian revolution.”

Explaining the real nature of the deepening economic crisis and the way in which the capitalists and the Congress leadership are seeking to solve it at the expense of the people, Ranadive said:

“There is no doubt that production is declining, but it is because the capitalists seek to retain high profits and high prices. In spite of the decline in production we will soon find that there are too many goods in the market; because the prices quoted are so high that they are beyond the reach of the ordinary man. In this sense this shortage of goods is only the reverse side of the process of impoverishment, of the one-sided distribution of national income.

“The capitalists seek to propagate that the workers are responsible for this shortage of goods; and they demand stern action against them. While finding that they cannot continue to sell for long at the present prices and at the same time determined to keep their profits high, they demand reduction in labour costs—wage-reduction, etc.

“The cry of shortage of goods is only a preparatory cry to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the workers and the people; and on which conceals that the decline in production is brought about by the selfish struggle to maintain high profits—that it is part of the capitalist crisis itself.”

Sharply negating the formulations made about the national government in the former central committee resolution he said:

“We characterise here the national government as a government of national surrender, of collaborators, a government of compromise. Thus in place of our former wrong characterisation about the government as one of national advance with which we should have a joint front, we have now the characterisation that it is a government of national surrender and collaboration.

Central Slogan

“The conclusion that follows from this is that the basic policy of the workingclass and its party must be one of opposition to this government, and this is what is sharply underlined in this thesis. We must therefore consistently and continuously unmask before the masses the compromising and collaborating face of this government.

“Our first task today must be to run an unceasing campaign to win the majority of the masses to our side; and it is this alone that will enable us to achieve our objective of replacing the present

collaborationist government by a government representing the workers, peasants and other sections of the petty-bourgeoisie. This forms the central slogan of our programme of the democratic front."

Referring to other illusions and halfway-house solutions, Ranadive said :

"There are some who still have illusions that if any left party joins this government, it will be a progressive act; we must however declare that no honest party can participate in this collaborationist government. Any left party that enters this government will be committing an act of treachery toward the toiling masses."

Explaining the slogan of the peoples' democratic front, he said that it was an alliance of the working class, the peasantry, the oppressed middle class and the intelligentsia.

"We visualise", he continued, "that as the front grows, we can marshal all people around the slogan of the democratic revolution, disillusion them about the present government and develop sufficient sanction behind the demand for a people's democratic state. The central question is the question of power and we have answered that question by declaring that the workingclass will demand a people's democratic state."

Outlining the tasks of partial struggles on the various fronts, Ranadive sharply polemised against the old outlook of looking at partial struggles only as partial struggles for partial gains.

He pointed out that the imperialist-feudal-bourgeois order in India was collapsing and that the collaborationist bourgeoisie, despite its frantic efforts to sustain it and prop it up, will not be in a position to prevent it from collapsing and rebuild it.

On the contrary the policies which the Congress leaders and the government are following, the policy of propping up landlordism in a new way instead of abolishing it altogether, the policy of screening and protecting the feudal autocrats behind the veil of accession and mergers, the policy of aiding big business to act as tools as Anglo-American imperialists to place the ever-growing burdens on the heads of the workers and the common people—all

these policies can only result in the further deepening of the crisis and transferring this burden on to the shoulders of the masses.

Hence it is necessary to realise that the period that has opened is not one of stable bourgeois development, despite the rosy pictures of national reconstruction which the hypocritical henchmen of the national bourgeoisie continue to paint. It is one of deepening crisis, of the disintegration of the imperialist-feudal order.

Democratic Front

It is a period in which the central slogans of democratic revolution, namely, the abolition of landlordism without compensation and land to the tiller, nationalisation of industries, breaking the power of big business and workers' control, smashing the power of feudal autocracy of jagirdars, nawabs, princelings big and small, all these are on the immediate order of the day.

These slogans are realisable today and it is necessary that every partial struggle, whether it is of the workers or of the kisans or of the states' peoples against autocracy has to be fought in the context of the immediate realisation of these slogans.

It is necessary to popularise in every partial struggle the central and basic slogans. The toiling masses should be inspired to advance towards the realising of a people's democratic state based on the power of the workingclass allied with other oppressed classes.

On the issue of the states, Ranadive pointed out that, it was necessary to make a complete break with the old conception of fighting for responsible government only, of considering accession, mergers and the like as progressive steps towards the elimination of feudal autocracy.

“On the question of the states”, he pointed out, “we must take a correct stand of fighting for complete democracy, for the immediate final liquidation of the feudal order. We must not mislead the people by creating illusions about accession and about the mergers of various small states into a single state or of certain other small states into neighbouring provinces.

“We must clearly point out that all these are merely clever devices to protect and retain the feudal order. In fact all these

devices are an expression of the collaborationist alliance that is being forged between the Congress leaders and the Congress governments on the one hand and the feudal autocrats on the other, an unholy alliance in the face of the rising tide of the struggle for the states' peoples for the complete liquidation of feudal autocracy.

“We must realise that the revolutionary struggle of the states' peoples today has to be carried on against the line-up between the Indian union government, manned by the Congress leaders, and the autocratic rulers and the compromising Praja Mandal leaders. This fight will have to be led by the working class and its party.”

Concluding his report, Ranadive said:

“Let us not forget that despite our mistakes we have great achievement to our credit. In the war as well as in the post-war period our party has grown as no other party, though had it not been for its mistakes, it would have developed even ten times stronger.

“Masses of people have fought for their demands, have fought glorious battles under the leadership of the party. Our party had the privilege of leading the biggest battles. Our party was at the head of the students' struggles. Everywhere people say that the one party which leads the battles of the masses is the Communist Party.

“Telangana is another big landmark in the history of struggles led under the leadership of our party. Here we took the struggle to new qualitative heights with exemplary organisation. Circles close to the Nizam tremble before the name of Telangana. For Telangana today means communist and communist mean Telangana.

“No party in India can claim to have led so many battles in the post-war period as we have led.

“No party in India has to its credit struggles like that in Travancore the glorious battles of Vayalar, the strike struggles of Coimbatore, Kanpur and Amalner, and lastly the agrarian struggle of Telangana.

“In the recent past our leadership hesitated and vacillated. But the masses under our leadership have fought continuously and that has raised the prestige of our party.

“Remember that we are a force that is feared by the existing

ruling class. The fear is real because we lead the majority of the organised workingclass, the majority of the organised peasantry, the organised students. We are a force and we should not underestimate ourselves. If in the past two years, in spite of these mistakes we achieved all this, then without these mistakes we must go forward to-day ten times more swiftly than ever before in the history of our party and our people.”

Report on Pakistan

The next important report was made by Bhowani Sen on Pakistan. It was in the context of the question which had arisen because of the partition of the country and the separation of the territories of Pakistan and their incorporation into a new state.

The question of confining the organisations of the Communist Party of India to the boundaries of the Indian Union and leaving the Communist Party Units in the separated territories of Pakistan free to form a separate communist party was before the congress for decision.

Bhowani Sen's report placed this question in the correct perspective, emphasising the fundamental unity of the communist movement throughout India.

At the outset Bhowani Sen raised the question of two opinions or trends in relation to the Indian union and Pakistan: one opinion or trend considered the Indian union to be progressive, while in contrast it considered Pakistan to be reactionary; while another opinion or trend considered Pakistan at least an advance towards muslim freedom from hindu domination. Bhowani Sen emphasised that we must make a fundamental departure from the old outlook and resolve this controversy in a scientific manner.

Both the Indian union and Pakistan, he declared, were dominated by reactionary capitalists and landlords collaborating with imperialism. It was as wrong to think that the Indian union was progressive as to assert that Pakistan was an advance towards the so-called muslim freedom from hindu domination.

In reality there was no such thing as muslim freedom; neither was there any such thing as hindu domination. Did the hindu worker oppress the muslim worker? Did the hindu peasant dominate over

the muslim peasant? On the contrary they were one and all oppressed by the same people, imperialists and their landlord-capitalist allies.

The Muslim League propagated the false theory of hindu domination in order to conceal the real character, real purpose and real motive for partition, which was one of consolidating and safeguarding muslim vested interests against the richer and more powerful hindu competitors. They diverted the genuine indignation of the oppressed muslim masses against imperialism and the vested interest into communal channels and thus played the game of imperialism which wanted to partition the country and keep both muslim and hindu enslaved.

From this central point, Bhowani Sen emphasised the fundamental unity of the communist movements both in India and Pakistan; they are faced with the same task of radically changing the existing order and building up really free independent people's democratic states in their respective countries.

From this it follows that henceforth the most important task that is before the party is the unity of the democratic movements in Pakistan as well as in the Indian Union. It is this unity which guarantees the liquidation of the existing order in a revolutionary manner.

In the course of his report, Bhowani Sen raised and answered three questions :

(1) What factors led to the formation of Pakistan?

(2) What is the character of the Pakistan state and the Pakistan government?

(3) What is the future of Pakistan?

Referring to the future of Pakistan, he pointed out that imperialism had not quit Pakistan, nor had anything like muslim freedom or any freedom whatsoever been established there. Imperialism is very much present in Pakistan; its representatives are the real man who rule behind the scene.

He exposed the hollowness of the rumour which is being spread by congressmen in the Indian Union that Pakistan is going to collapse because of its economic weakness. Imperialism has not

created Pakistan so that it may collapse. Out of these economic difficulties what is coming is not the automatic collapse of Pakistan but the further strengthening of the imperialist-landlord-bourgeois ruling clique. There is already talk of a military pact being under preparation and Jinnah has openly declared that Pakistan will remain within the British commonwealth.

Future of Pakistan

Bhowani Sen pointed out that unless the people in Pakistan stand up and fight the policies of the government and of the League leaders, unmask and defeat them, their freedom cannot be realised. The future of Pakistan will be determined by the democratic movement of the people, and the unity the two democratic movements of India and Pakistan will together free both India and Pakistan from imperialist bondage.

Polemising against the theory of automatic collapse of Pakistan, Bhowani Sen said that, we must take a bold stand against this sort of demagoguery and expose the policy of the Congress leaders, who are putting across this propaganda in order to befool the Indian people and keep them in permanent conflict and hostility with the people of Pakistan.

Answering the three questions, Bhowani Sen proceeded to show how imperialism was creating and maintaining a permanent state of war between India and Pakistan. He pointed out that for the purpose of maintaining strained relations between the two dominions, imperialism uses all its agents, spreads lies, both among hindus and muslims to ensure permanent hostility between these two, so that it may be able to strengthen its domination and its authority.

“Thus lies have been multiplied like inflation of money. When there is inflation of money, the value of the coin decreases. In the same way the effectiveness of these lies decreases.”

Bhowani Sen referred to the question of Kashmir and how imperialism was utilising it to create an open clash between the two dominions.

He pointedly referred to the mistake committed by the party in connection with Kashmir. He exposed how we made the people believe that the march of the Indian army into Kashmir was the

march of the democratic forces for the purpose of freeing the muslim peasant from the raiders. But what has been the result?

The result was that after such long period of warfare, Kashmir did not become free but was going to be under Anglo-American domination.

This mistake, Bhowani Sen pointed out, arose because we thought the Indian Union to be progressive and Pakistan reactionary. Out of this followed the logical conclusion that since the Indian Union is progressive, accession to the Indian Union is a progressive step.

But what has happened? Princedom remains, landlords are still there, and it is the army of the Indian Union which dominates over the toiling people of Kashmir. Therefore we have to understand this question of accession and look at it from a new angle.

In fact this posing of the question as one of accession or no accession is the weapon with which reaction seeks to divert the popular energy from the revolutionary direction.

“We must not enter this trap”, said Bhowani Sen, “and for us there is no question of accession. Such accession will only lead to the forging of an alliance between the government of the Indian Union or of Pakistan with princely autocracy.

“There can be no question of accession before the complete victorious democratic revolution has been achieved, before the toiling peasants have got land, before princely autocracy is really liquidated and power has passed into the hands of the masses. It is after all this that the victorious people of the states will decide their relations to the Indian union or Pakistan.”

“The real way out”, said Bhowani Sen, “is the way of the heroic people of Telangana. The real solution to this question is on the field of battle. The heroic people of Telangana, the great example of their fight against autocracy, not only show what will happen inside the states, but also what will be the real future of India and Pakistan. That is the way the victorious people must march to freedom and real democracy.

“Therefore, we must respect this battles, this struggle inside

Hyderabad, of the people of Hyderabad, as a struggle of a new type. We must be proud to say that here at least there is the force that will achieve Indian liberation.

“Kashmir has gone to Uno. And the fate of Kashmir lies at the feet of imperialism. But something else is happening in Hyderabad. The difference between Hyderabad and Kashmir is the difference between our old understanding and our new understanding.”

Emphasising the point further to the loud acclamation of the delegates, Bhowani Sen said:

“In Hyderabad, in 2000 villages the writ of the Nizam’s administration has ceased to run, people’s volunteers defend people’s rule. In 2000 villages people’s democracy has been established. This is the difference between Kashmir and Hyderabad.

“The question is whether the people will go the Hyderabad way or the Kashmir way; and our duty is to make the people go the Hyderabad way. If we can create this spirit of revolution among the masses, among the toiling people, we shall find reaction collapsing like a house of cards.”

In the latter part of his report, Bhowani Sen outlined the programme and tasks of the democratic front in Pakistan and showed how they were exactly similar to those of the democratic front in India, thus once again emphasising the fundamental unity and solidarity of the movement for independence and people’s democracy in both the states.

Report on Reformist Deviation

The next important report placed before the Congress was the one on reformist deviation, introduced by B. T. Ranadive. The delegates who had come with the firm determination to forge a new revolutionary line also wanted to be clear about the mistakes of their own as well as of the leaders, for without a clear understanding of the past mistakes there could be no firm understanding of the new revolutionary line, nor could there be any guarantee against future mistakes.

Ranadive’s speech on this report was a sharp and clear exposition of the reformist deviations and vacillations displayed by the old

central committee in the execution of the otherwise correct line pursued by the party. The review generally covered the period between the two congresses of the party.

In regard to the line adopted by the party in the period of the antifascist people's war, Ranadive emphasised its fundamental correctness and the achievements which the party had been able to make because it adopted fundamentally correct proletarian slogans in that period.

He pointed out that if the Communist Party had followed in the wake of other bourgeois parties and had gone in for a fullscale opposition to the antifascist people's war with all its organised strength among the workingclass and the peasantry, it would have spelt a veritable disaster for the whole country.

By holding firm the correct proletarian line the Communist Party not only remained true to the banner of proletarian internationalism, not only strengthened its bases among the workers and peasants, but also saved the country from what could have been a veritable disaster.

The mistakes in that period arose from a wrong understanding that the military defeat of fascism would automatically lead to the liquidation and elimination of imperialism itself and as such to the automatic liberation of all peoples.

This wrong understanding which was part of the analysis given in *Forward to Freedom* underestimated the intrigues and sabotage that the imperialists were carrying out in the people's camp.

The mistaken theory that imperialism was a prisoner in the people's camp made us forget the fact that imperialism continued to function in India even in the period of the antifascist-people's war, strengthening at every step the imperialist-feudal economy and its own role, even at the cost of sabotaging the war against fascist aggression.

This total underestimation of the role of imperialism in the period of the people's war made us lose sight of the task of exposing imperialism and fighting it within the framework of support for the anti-fascist war.

For instance, in connection with the food crisis and the Bengal famine we correctly exposed the role of the hoarders and blackmarketeers but forgot to expose the role of imperialism, whose policy of inflation and bribing the Indian bourgeois and transferring the burden of the war on to the shoulders of the people was actually the root cause of the food crisis as well as the disastrous Bengal famine.

Similarly, while we were quite correct in organising the peasant effort to grow more food, we tended to forget that the main fight against the imperialist-feudal agrarian structure should not be slackened.

Again we were right in preventing sabotage in production and avoiding strikes as far as it was consistent with the defence of the living conditions of the working class but it was necessary for us to see that it was not possible to raise or organise production as long as production remained in the hands of profiteering capitalist and an imperialist government for whom profits and not interests of the antifascist war constituted the main guiding factor.

It was not only in connection with the attitude to imperialism it was pointed out, but, in connection with the understanding of the day-to-day developments of the war that a number of mistakes were committed. We ignored changes in the military situation developing during the course of war, changes which would have enabled us to adjust our strategy to suit new conditions.

With the battle of Stalingrad, for instance, and the turn in the tide of war, as the defeat of fascism became certain, we could have adopted supple tactics in relation to the struggle against imperialism in preparation for the post-war revolutionary upsurge, increasingly marshalling and unleashing the forces of struggle as the war situation improved, applying extreme pressure, both economic and political, and creating a serious situation for imperialism.

We were right in those days in demanding the release of national leaders and raising the slogan of national government for national defence, but in fighting for these slogans we trailed too much behind the national bourgeois leaders, instead of taking an independent proletarian stand. We overrated the supposed anti-fascism of the bourgeois leaders and did not sufficiently realise and expose their

opportunist role and gambling policy in relation to the Japanese invasion

Thus the two reformist deviations of this period were : (a) that the edge of our fight against imperialism was dulled; and (b) that we began to trail behind the bourgeoisie instead of exposing it and following an independent policy.

This expressed itself in this that left groups and parties which were only carrying out the policy of the opportunist bourgeois leader were attacked even more severely by us than the national leaders calling the left groups 'fifth column' and agents of the fascist powers.

This also expressed itself very sharply on the question of the application of the slogan of self-determination of nationalities to the hindu-muslim question.

Undoubtedly the main slogan raised by the party that the Hindu-Muslim question was the distorted expression of the existence of various nationalities in India was fundamentally sound. We were quite correct when we nailed down the Congress opposition to self-determination of nationalities and we correctly exposed and fought the Congress leaders for their refusal to take their stand on that principle in order to build a joint front against imperialism.

But we did not ask the bourgeois-landlord leaders of the Muslim League as to where they stood in relation to the struggle of the masses against imperialism. On the contrary, we often applied the principle of self-determination in a manner which helped the separatist demand of the Muslim League for Pakistan.

This serious deviation arose mainly because in those days we were trailing behind the bourgeois leaders of both the Congress and the League and had illusions that the unity of the Hindus and Muslims and of the Congress and the League could be achieved by the bourgeois leaders themselves. It was because of these illusions that we busied ourselves in working out detailed 'practical' solutions to suit the separatist demand of the League leaders.

We did not see that the bourgeois leaders of both the Congress and the League, which were pursuing opportunist and compromising

policies vis-a-vis fascism and imperialism, could not be united for a real anti-fascist, anti-imperialist stand.

We forgot the fundamental Leninist teaching that the unity of the people of different nationalities, communities etc. can be achieved only by the proletariat by bringing the toiling and common people of both together in the common fight against imperialism and reaction, only by simultaneously exposing the demand of the dominating and separatist bourgeoisie, only by firmly standing for the right of self-determination of nationalities which could be really implemented by the people in the context of the achievement of democratic revolution.

It was these two reformist deviations of the war period, namely, the underestimation of the role of imperialism, and the trailing behind the bourgeois leaders and the faith in their anti-fascist and anti-imperialist bonafides, which were the root cause of the serious reformist deviations which we committed in the post-war period.

The result was that when the war ended we were not quick enough to see the new rising post-war revolutionary upsurge, not did we see the changed correlation of forces in which imperialism menaced by the rising revolutionary tide began to seek a new social basis in the colonies, namely, the collaborationist bourgeoisie, in order to perpetuate its domination over the colonial people.

Instead there was a tendency to fall a prey to reformist theories about peaceful development towards independence and socialism, and to abjure struggle.

Our ranks began instinctively to lead the upsurge from about the end of 1945, but it was only in July-August 1946 that the central committee was able to see the existence of the revolutionary upsurge and work out the main slogans of developing the partial struggles for the achievements of the democratic revolution and for the seizure of power by the people.

The central committee resolution of August 1946 was a great turning point. It gave the line clear to our ranks to lead the great strike battles on the railways and the textiles, to head the great struggles of the peasants for tebhaga in Bengal and similar struggles

in UP and Bihar which enabled our comrades to unleash revolutionary struggles against the feudal autocracy in Travancore and against the autocracy of the Nizam in Hyderabad.

Though the August resolution gave our party a correct line to head the struggles, there were many comrades who thought that it was a left-sectarian resolution. It is from this time that there came into existence two trends inside the central committee. There was a trend inside the central committee which thought that the August resolution was left-sectarian. In reality the fault of the August resolution was that it suffered from a right-reformist deviation: for, though the August resolution gave a clear call for heading the struggles, though it spoke of the compromising policies of the Congress and League leaders, it still left plenty of room for illusions about the oppositional role of the national bourgeois leaders.

Its real failing was that it failed to characterise sharply the collaborationist role of the bourgeois leaders of both the Congress and League which had become quite apparent the formation of the interim government in which both the Congress and the League leaders were participating

After August 1946 came the bloody riots in Calcutta, Noakhali and Bihar. Towards the end of the year came the repression on the Communist Party in the south; about 100 leading communists were jailed without trial.

The imperialist-bourgeois combine had opened its offensive against the rising upsurge. In the face of this offensive, those in the central committee who had originally opposed the August resolution as left-sectarian began now to resile and turn towards a right-reformist repudiation of the resolution.

The formulation that the interim government was a government of compromise and surrender was thrown overboard. A sharp criticism of the Congress ministries which were suppressing the workers' and peasants' struggles as agents of vested interests was condemned as incorrect. They were to be given a clean alibi while only the bureaucracy which was in fact doing their bidding was to be attacked.

The great struggles of the working class of Travancore which culminated in the heroic resistance of Vayalar and Punnapra

battles, the dogged struggle of the textile workers of Coimbatore in the teeth of murderous goonda attacks, the revolt of the Warlis, all these were dubbed as vanguardist actions that had provoked ministerial and police repression and therefore were to be discouraged.

There was a tendency to line up behind the hypocritical bourgeois slogan of national reconstruction and of minimising strike while ignoring the brutal offensive which the capitalist had opened against the living standard of the working class. There was even a tendency to think in terms of agreeing to the treacherous slogan of industrial truce.

In the face of the riots of 1946 and 1947 there was a tendency to line up behind Gandhiji and Nehru instead of exposing their policy which was itself playing into the hands of the imperialist-feudal riotmongers and often even directly inciting riots. There was a servile throwing of bouquets to the bourgeois leaders like Gandhiji and Nehru in the name of fighting communal reaction.

Such was the backsliding and retreat noticeable within the ranks of the central committee which came in the face of the offensive of reaction, namely, communal riots and repression. It was advocated mainly by P. C. Joshi, representing the reformist trend inside the central committee. Vacillations and reformism of the majority of the members of the central committee reached their culmination in the June (1947) meeting of the central committee on the discussions on the Mountbatten award. Every amendment which sought to put down that the Mountbatten Award was a concession to the national bourgeoisie and that the national bourgeois leadership was striking a deal against the interests of the people was negated or watered down, and it was asserted that the Mountbatten Award was a concession to the national movement and the Indian people. After the defeat of these amendments the resolution was adopted without opposition.

For a time nobody saw the enormity of the reformist deviation involved in that resolution. To cover up the greatest betrayal of revolution to screen the treacherous deal it had struck with imperialism, the bourgeois leaders raised the hope of 'freedom won' through huge celebrations throughout the country.

We were ourselves taken in by this. When the ghastly post-partition riots began in the Punjab and Delhi, we did not see them as the inevitable nemesis of the treacherous policy of collaboration with imperialism and its feudal allies which the Congress leadership itself was pursuing. Instead of exposing that policy, we lined up behind Gandhiji and Nehru and became supporters of the Nehru government. We built up a theory of differences between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Nehru and Gandhiji on the other to justify our uncritical support to Nehru and Gandhiji who in fact were pursuing the same policy as Sardar Patel.

We forgot the simple truth that the riot offensive of imperialism and its reactionary allies could not be defeated by lining up behind Gandhiji and Nehru and by glorifying their alleged 'fight' against communal reaction, but only by defeating the collaborationist policy of the entire bourgeois leadership and the government.

However in the months after 15 August, the majority of the central committee out of their own experience soon began to discover how far they had strayed from the correct revolutionary line which they had themselves begun to shape since August 1946.

In the meeting of the central committee which was held in December 1947, the majority of the committee took a firm stand and adopted the statement of policy and the document for the party congress on the basis of which the present draft political thesis was framed. Joshi, who accepted the statement of policy, had not yet made a complete turn and did not vote in the meeting for the document.

Summing up his report on reformist deviation, Ranadive said :

“Today, Joshi unreservedly accepts the political thesis though he will certainly have to struggle very much to make a complete turn. For a time there was a serious situation inside our party. Reformism had invaded our ranks.

“It would be wrong to think that all mistakes were made by the central committee and the political bureau alone. There is no doubt that theirs was the main responsibility. But all, including the delegates assembled here, will have to turn the light inwards and

self-critically examine their own mistakes and their experience of the struggles.

“It is only through such Bolshevik self-criticism that we can, at this congress, unify the entire party behind the revolutionary line that we are formulating here and equip ourselves to advance into the coming battles with bold faith and firm confidence.”

Ranadive's report which he took nearly 4½ hours to deliver, was listened to in midst of pindrop silence. In the course of his speech he had not only criticised Joshi, but had also nailed down the reformist deviations of every other political bureau and central committee member, including himself.

Next to speak after Ranadive had finished his report was Joshi himself. He fully supported Ranadive's report. He said that he himself was the leader and organiser of the right-reformist deviations inside the party and he was the last among the central committee members to accept the political line of the thesis. He mercilessly criticised his own mistakes and traces their ideological roots to the repudiation of Marxism and Leninism. He was overwhelmed with emotion as he made these points in the course of his one-hour speech.

Discussion on Reports

The discussion on these reports started only after all the reports were delivered and were notable for the initiative shown by the delegates, who together submitted a large number of amendments to the draft thesis directed at strengthening it, and the vigour and firmness with which they expressed their criticisms of the thesis and of the leadership.

Delegate after delegate came to the microphone and out of his own experience in daily struggle moved amendments or made suggestions for changes in the thesis; later, in the discussion on the report on the reformist deviations, there was the same frank and decisive vigour from numerous delegates explaining how reformist deviation had crept into the party and the enormous harm it had caused.

In the discussion on the draft thesis, particularly important was

the sharp controversy on the question of the building of the democratic front. A considerable number of delegates declared that the formulations in the thesis concerning the democratic front were confused and capable of misinterpretation.

From Satyapal Dang came a clearcut speech asserting that in the thesis the conception of the democratic front as a coalition of left parties still remained and its real character as a "monolithic mass organisation" was not at all emphasised or underlined. He declared that it was very necessary to clear this point for two reasons.

First, to bring out the great responsibility that rests on the shoulders of the Communist Party for building the democratic front, and secondly, the need for a very severe struggle against the reactionary agents of the right in the left camp before any unity of the left can be achieved.

From Sunil Mukherjee, secretary of the Bihar provincial committee of the party, came equally strong criticism of the formulations of the thesis on this issue, and a number of comrades from different provinces also participated, supporting the criticisms made.

So also from the floor of the congress a number of delegates came out in sharp attacks on the weaknesses in the formulation of the concrete tasks and tactics of effecting the agrarian revolution, the main axis of the democratic revolution in our country.

Hanumantha Rao from Andhra said that we must have a clearcut analysis of the changes in the agrarian economy during the war years so that our comrades on the kisan front can understand who will be our allies and who our enemies in the struggle for agrarian revolution.

So also Indradeep Sinha from Bihar stressed the need for a more detailed up-to-date analysis of the class setup in the rural areas: in Bihar, Indradeep said, class differentiation of the peasantry during wartime had led to further pauperisation of the middle and poor peasantry and a considerable increase in the number of landless labourers; thus, today about 65 per cent of the rural population possessed less than 15 acres of land while 30 per cent were landless

This indicated that the agrarian revolution must be carried out by these 95 per cent against the remaining 5 per cent.

Indradeep stressed finally that the need for the communists to turn their face more firmly and decisively towards the agricultural proletariat who were the main lever for achieving the agrarian revolution was absent in the draft.

Other speakers stressed the insufficient treatment of the problem of the states' people's struggles and the tactics to be adopted on this front; women delegates so vigorously protested that the problems and tasks of communists on their front had been totally ignored in the thesis and this defect must be made up; a similar criticism came from the student delegates.

Right in the middle of this discussion came the strongest criticism of all, from a number of delegates from Telangana, pointing out that the revolutionary significance of the Telangana struggle for the present epoch of maturing democratic revolution in India was absent in the thesis.

This last criticism was no sooner made than accepted by the central committee and a delegate from Telangana was given the opportunity to move a special resolution on this question: in a stirring speech that evoked thunderous applause, this delegate detailed the mighty struggle being waged there, and appealed to the congress to understand its historic significance and support it with all their strength and vigour.

The congress responded to this moving appeal by adopting the resolution standing and amidst resounding cheers.

After 34 delegates had taken part in the discussion, Ranadive summed up the entire discussion.

Gracing the soundness of the criticisms made by many delegates, he declared in particular that the section on the democratic front would have to be changed and strengthened; regarding the criticisms made on the 'analysis of the agrarian crisis, the states' people's struggles, the tasks on the women's and students' fronts. Ranadive said that all these criticisms would be taken into account when the detailed analysis of the tasks on various fronts was made by the new central committee.

He finally asked that the thesis be adopted by the congress and the new central committee be charged with the task of amending the thesis for publication in the light of the discussion and the various amendments moved in the congress. This proposal was accepted unanimously amidst great applause.

There was a discussion on the proposal to confine the Communist Party organisation to the boundaries of the Indian Union and to enable the party units in the territories now separated as Pakistan to reconstitute themselves into a separate communist party organisation. Some comrades opposed the proposal, saying that by allowing a separate party to be formed in Pakistan we were tailing behind the separatists and accepting the imperialist partition itself.

In answering the discussion on this question, Sajjad Zaheer and Ranadive explained why a separate party was needed just in the interests of building a united communist movement in both the territories. This would enable us to fight more effectively, forge the unity of the communist movements in both the territories and defeat the disruptors especially in Pakistan

The Communist Party organisation in Pakistan would be responsible for shaping and formulating the policy and leading the struggle in Pakistan in the same way as the party organisations in the Indian Union would be responsible for the same task in the Indian Union.

The joint action of the two parties, the coordination of their tasks in the common struggle against their respective governments representing the unholy alliance of imperialism, the bourgeoisie and feudal elements, would ensure the fundamental unity of the communist movement and a victory of the democratic revolution in both the countries.

After this explanation the resolution was put to vote and passed by an overwhelming majority.

After the discussion on the report on reformist deviation was over, the congress authorised the new central committee to draft a complete analysis of the reformist deviation inside the party since 1939 and circulate it among party members.

The congress also adopted the amended constitution of the party as presented by Adhikari.

In the discussion on the amended draft, the main point discussed was in the preamble. The preamble as it appeared in the draft constitution submitted by the central committee contained no direct reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It stated the basic aim of the party as the "organising of the toiling masses in the struggle for the victorious anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution for complete national independence, for the establishment of a people's democratic state led by the working class and the building of socialism according to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism".

On this issue there was a lively discussion. On behalf of the central committee it was made clear that a people's democratic state itself meant the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was also stated that in the present phase of the general crisis of capitalism after the second world war, a people's democratic state represents a specific form of class alliance led by the proletariat and becomes the instrument of completing not only the people's democratic revolution but also of carrying it forward to the achievement of socialism.

However several delegates who spoke on the question insisted that the references to the dictatorship of the proletariat must be explicitly there and declared that it was a fundamental principle of Marxism-Leninism and no ambiguity, no loopholes, for a possible reformist deviation must be left on this point.

Finally Bhowani Sen moved an amendment which added the words "for the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat" after the words "people's democratic state led by the working class".

This was accepted by Adhikari and then by the Congress as a whole.

Election of New Central Committee

On the concluding day of the congress, the outgoing central committee placed a panel of the new central committee before the congress for adoption. It was an enlarged central committee which,

while it included the majority of the old central committee members, also included nearly an equal number of new central committee members drawn from the main leaders of the mass struggles on different fronts from several provinces. It was a central committee truly representative of the great mass struggles that the party was leading on the various fronts throughout India.

There was a keen discussion from among the delegates on this panel. The delegates wanted to be assured that the new central committee would have a firm majority of such comrades who had fought for the new revolutionary line and who would ensure its correct execution in the future. The proposed central committee panel also included the name of Joshi.

In the course of the discussion, various amendments were moved to the panel and six more nominations were put up. The whole enlarged panel was then put to vote in order to elect the fixed number (31) for the central committee as decided by the congress.

In the course of this polling the entire panel proposed by the central committee, except the name of Joshi, was passed.¹ Though Joshi had accepted the political thesis and expressed this acceptance of it as well as of the report on reformist deviation before the congress, the voting showed that the congress was of the opinion that he should not be in the new central committee because he had been the last of the old central committee members to accept the new line and had resisted it more strongly than anyone else.

Immediately after the election of the new central committee, the committee met during the congress itself and unanimously elected B. T. Ranadive as general secretary of the Party. Ranadive's election was then announced to the congress and greeted with loud applause.

1. B. T. Ranadive (general secretary), Bhowani Sen, Somnath Lahiri, G. Adhikari, Ajoy Ghosh, N. K. Krishnan, C. Rajeswara Rao, M. Chandrasekhara Rao and S. S. Yusuf (all members of the PB); Ranen Sen, S. A. Dange, S. V. Ghate, D. S. Vaidya, P. Sundarayya, E.M.S. Namboodirpad, Arun Bose, S. G. Sardesai, Biswanath Mukherjee, P. Krishna Pillai, K. C. George, M. Basavapunniah, D. Venkateswara Rao, L. K. Oak, S. V. Parulekar, M. Kalyanasundaram, B. Srinivasa Rao, Muzaffar Ahmad, Biresh Misra, Mohd Ismail, Sunil Mukherjee and Ravi Narayana Reddy.

The election of a control commission² of three comrades, which will be responsible for dealing with all appeals over questions of discipline, and the adoption of the reports of the credential commission and the auditing commission (which approved the finances of the party) were then carried unanimously.

The entire party congress was keenly followed by a strong fraternal delegation which had come from the brother communist parties³ of the various countries to specially attend the congress.

The second congress of the Communist Party of India thus marks a great turning point in the history of our party. It displayed a magnificent and united initiative of the rank-and-file delegates and the leadership of the party in evolving a revolutionary line, policy and tactics in a period of revolutionary crisis in India.

It has made a decisive break with the reformist deviation of party policy which continued for five years or more.

As a result of this congress, the party emerges solidly united behind the new revolutionary line and behind the new leadership, ready to go into action with firm faith in Marxism-Leninism and full confidence in the revolutionary spirit of the masses.

The party congress has handled with great firmness and collective wisdom a serious innerparty crisis. And that this serious innerparty crisis was solved with such firmness, discipline and united determination did honour to the entire rank-and-file delegates and leadership of the party, to their loyalty to the principles of Marxism and Leninism, to their loyalty to the principles of the communist party organisation and to the cause of the proletarian revolution.

2. S. S. Mirajkar, Radharaman Mitra and K.P.R. Gopalan.

3. *Fraternal delegations came from Australia, Burma, Ceylon and Yugoslavia. Messages were received from the parties: Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Caracas, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Holland, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Lebanon, Malaya, New Zealand, North Ireland, Norway, Palestine, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland, Syria and USSR.*

ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION IN INDIA*

I

In view of the fundamental questions raised, the stage has arrived when the Communist Party must make a fresh analysis of the agrarian situation, assess new factors and frame a new strategy of fight and slogans on the basis of a correct estimation of the class relations in the rural areas.

The colonial theses of the sixth congress of the Communist International analysed the situation as follows:

“Inasmuch as the overwhelming mass of the colonial population is connected with land and lives in villages, the plundering character of the forms of exploitation of the peasantry made use of by imperialism and its allies (the class of landowners and trading-usury capital), acquires a specially important significance. Owing to the interference of imperialism (imposition of taxation, import of industrial wares from the metropolis, etc), the drawing of the village into the sphere of monetary and trading economy is accompanied here by a process of pauperisation of the peasantry, destruction of village handicraft industry, etc., and proceeds at a much more rapid rate than was the case when the same process took place in the leading capitalist countries. On the other hand, the delayed industrial development in the colonies has put sharp limits to the process of proletarianisation. This enormous disproportion between the rapid rate of destruction of the old forms of economy and the slow development of the new has given rise in China, India, Indonesia, Egypt, etc. to an extraordinary ‘pressure on agriculture’ and to agrarian immigration, rackrenting and extreme fragmentation of the land cultivated by the peasantry. At the same time the whole burden of the previous feudal or semifeudal conditions

* Document adopted by the December 1948 PB meeting of the CPI printed as an authoritative statement of the editorial board in the January 1949 issue of *Communist*.

of exploitation and bondage, in somewhat 'modernised' but in no way lighter forms, lies as before on the shoulders of the peasantry. Capitalism, which has included the colonial village into its system of taxation and trade apparatus and which has overturned precapitalist relations (for instance, destruction of the village commune), does not thereby liberate the peasants from the yoke of precapitalist forms of bondage and exploitation but only gives the latter a monetary expression (feudal services and rent in kind are partially replaced by money rent, while payment of taxes in kind is replaced by monetary taxes, and so on), which still more increases the sufferings of the peasantry. To the 'assistance' of the peasants in their miserable position comes the usurer robbing them under certain conditions (e.g. in some localities of India and China), even creating a hereditary slavery based on their indebtedness.

“Notwithstanding the great variety of agrarian relationships in different colonial countries, and even in different parts of one and the same country, the poverty-stricken position of the peasant masses is almost everywhere the same. Partly owing to unequal exchange, and partly to direct exploitation, the peasants in these countries are not in a position to raise the technical or organisational level of their economy.....The ancient systems of artificial irrigation which in these countries is of great importance for agriculture, thanks to the interference of imperialism, first of all fell into decay, and when later they are reestablished on a capitalist basis, then they were found to be too dear for the peasants to make use of

“The pitiful attempts at carrying through agrarian reforms without damaging the colonial regime are intended to facilitate the gradual transformation of semifeudal landownership into capitalist landlordism, and in certain cases to establish a narrow stratum of kulak peasants. In practice this only leads to an ever-increasing pauperisation of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, which again, in its turn, paralyses the development of the internal market. It is on the basis of this contradictory economic process that the most important social forces of the colonial movement have their development.”

This was two decades ago, before the great capitalist crisis, before the second world war and the economic developments preceding it—two decades before the full effects of the growth of

Indian industry, despite imperialist obstacles, growth of trade, commerce and towns which led to increased commodity production, production for the market in villages, could be seen: this was two decades before the second world war, which brought every product of the Indian village into the market, transformed them into commodities and subjected the producer to the law of the market, leading to an unheard of differentiation in the villages.

II

However the Communist Party has not made any fundamental analysis of the peasant problem after that made in the colonial theses of the sixth congress of the Communist International. The party platform and the ruling conceptions of the peasant struggle have mainly been based on this analysis made two decades ago, without taking into consideration the big changes that have come over the Indian village since then.

Not only has no new analysis been made: the colonial theses itself were either understood in a mechanical way or totally ignored. All the wrong reformist notions about a united national front, which were mercilessly criticised at the session of the second congress of the Indian Communist Party, appeared on the peasant front, in the party basing itself on this theory, i.e. on the vacillating classes who by themselves could never be the driving force of either a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution or even a powerful agrarian movement. The Kisan Sabha, for instance, which we have been leading, mainly based itself on the middle peasant and voiced his doubts and vacillations. Without the least desire to underestimate the work done by the Kisan Sabha, as communists we must say that we mainly based ourselves on the vacillating middle peasant, sometimes allowed even the rich-peasant ideology to dominate or influence the Kisan Sabha, neglected the poor peasant and kept the agricultural workers at an arm's length. The failure to organise the agricultural workers into a separate organisation is not an accidental one. It reflected the capitulation to the rich peasant and middle peasant, the fear of offending them, of disrupting the "peasant" unity. It was seen in the Kisan Sabha and kisan fraction when the question of redistribution of land was discussed and some comrades demanded 100 acres for the rich peasant, as a matter of principle—once again in the name of peasant unity.

Today also the same capitulating reformist tendency manifests itself under the slogan of 'neutralisation' of the rich peasantry which in reality is another name to avoid open conflict of agrarian workers against the rich peasant—substitutes neutralisation for such conflict and thereby capitulates before him. Again the capitulation manifests itself by defining a rich peasant as a middle peasant and advocating alliance with him in the name of Lenin and Stalin. It unmasks itself in hesitation to organise a separate agricultural workers' organisation or in bypassing the question of the fight for a living wage for the agricultural worker.

This reformist outlook was immensely strengthened in the period of antifascist war when the party committed gross reformist mistakes and was guilty of a nonclass reformist outlook on a number of problems. This was reflected in the antihoarding and anti-blackmarketing campaigns which also were not based on the main exploited strata of the peasantry and in which the help of the upper classes was also sought. The idea of making them nonclass all-people's campaigns was dominant in some of the circulars quoted in the "Report on Reformist Deviation to the Second Congress". Along with this was of course the failure to develop struggles against land relations, etc. which marked the culminating point in the class-collaborationist reformist outlook. This last however was a special feature of the war period. It meant collaboration with feudal elements also—thus taking up a position of which the party has not been guilty now or earlier.

What was the ideological postulate of this reformism, which continues now and which was there before the war itself? It was the formula, the uncritical formula, that the agrarian struggle was only against feudalism in land (a counterpart of the formulation that the national struggle was only against imperialism); it led to a failure to understand the changing class reality in rural areas, to understand the rapid class differentiation that was taking place in the villages—in ryotwari as well as zamindari areas—and therefore to the advocacy of collaborationist tactics with rich exploiting elements, and to the development of a conception of peasant unity in which the oppressed section, the real driving force, the agricultural workers and poor peasants, was deprived of its leading role.

The fact that the middle peasant suffered from feudal domination in landlord areas: that in ryotwari areas he suffered from the money-lender-landlord; that the rich peasant was critical of the landlord and was not averse to curbing his power, especially if it could be done by others—this was taken as sufficient reason to seek united front with him, on his own terms: in fact to base ourselves precisely on the middle peasant and make the agricultural workers and poor peasants trim their sails to suit his vacillations which opened the door to the infiltration of the movement by rich peasants. The question was not asked: how far are these classes consistently antifeudal, how far will they stand for consistently carrying out of the democratic revolution? Nor was the question asked as to what distinguishes the rich peasants' opposition to landlordism from that of the agricultural proletariat and the poor peasants—that the one was a compromise in his own interest, etc.

The failure to judge each section, its opposition to feudalism etc. by reference to the position it occupied in the process of production, its links with existing society, the failure to see the antagonism of new classes which was developing within the shell of feudal relations, the failure to see the class differentiation arising out of the development of capitalist relations in agriculture—which would have made it clear who was compromising notwithstanding his critical attitude to feudalism, who was vacillating notwithstanding his sufferings from feudal yoke and his talk about fight, who constituted the driving force because it combined the opposition to the old and new exploitation—was at the bottom of the reformism on the peasant front.

If we had adhered to classical Marxist-Leninist writings these mistakes could not have occurred. For the strategy of class combination in the democratic revolution had been repeatedly stressed in the writings of Lenin and Stalin. For at no stage of the democratic revolution does Leninism permit us to rely on the middle peasant. The reliance on agrarian proletariat and poor peasantry is incumbent for the proletariat at any stage of the revolution. The different stages may be distinguished by the attitude taken towards the middle peasant, by the classes who are considered to be the main enemy to be fought.

III

The political thesis of the second party congress contains no fundamental reestimate of the class relations in the agrarian areas. The party congress was busy hammering out a correct political line, rescuing the party from collaboration with the national bourgeoisie and taking a position of opposition and struggle against the bourgeois-national government. It could not reestimate the agrarian situation and had to content itself with giving a general call to struggle. How the party resolution moved within the old framework could be seen from the following :

“The central task on the peasant front is to rouse and.....as the fighting central organisation of India’s peasantry.”*

Notwithstanding the fact that a general call to struggle is given the bourgeois landlord bills are unmasked, the slogan of land to the tiller is raised and a call is given to organise the agricultural labour into a separate organisation, the analysis remains rooted in the old and fails to take proper account of the changed class relations in agrarian areas. It does not take account of the development of capitalist relations, of the rise of new contradictions, new antagonistic classes as a basic contradiction and fails to develop the strategy of a correct class combination for the day-to-day struggle of the rural toilers as well as for the struggle for people’s democracy. Nevertheless the call given therein served to release the peasant front from the fear of struggle, from capitulation before landlords and the agents of the Congress, and unleashed new forces.

The unleashing of these struggles have brought forth all the accumulated problems of the agrarian front. The fact that in the recent struggles in Bihar the agricultural worker played a leading role, that they centred round him, has raised the question of his separate organisation for his day-to-day battles. This has raised a number of problems, his relations with the poor peasant, and the middle peasant; would a separate organisation lead to an antagonism between the two?

Similar is the experience in the United Provinces—the experience of agricultural workers fighting heroically in the agrarian struggle has posed the same problem. But the comrades of the United

* See this volume, pp 97-100

Provinces have gone deeper in the analysis, for they have posed the problem of the agricultural worker in his antagonism to the rich peasant. Once again the question of his separate organisation has been raised and of his relations with the poor peasant and the middle peasant.

In both these provinces, the question is raised only from the point of view of organising the day-to-day struggles.

In Andhra, the question has been raised more fundamentally—from the point of view of the main class combination for the present stage of our revolution. The question has been asked; do we seek an alliance with the middle peasant, or do we seek to neutralise him? It is contended that if we are in the period of revolution corresponding to February in Russia, then we must seek alliance with the middle peasant; if we are heading for October then we must neutralise the middle peasant. Here the problem of the class combination in rural areas was raised in a different way—in the guise of protecting the alliance with the middle peasant, etc.—but its basic approach was the same reformist one which would only apply a class analysis to the peasantry and would not uphold the cause of the agrarian workers for fear of breaking the peasant unity.

But the merit of the Andhra comrades was that they tried to correlate the strategy in the peasant areas with the general political strategy of the proletariat for people's democratic revolution; that they sought to deduce the day-to-day tactics from the general political strategy. That they did it wrongly is another matter.

It is therefore inevitable that the party reexamines the agrarian situation and comes forward with a correct strategy based on a correct class analysis of the forces in rural areas. This leads us to go to the facts about the agrarian situation and test how far things have changed since the sixth congress of the Communist international made its analysis. In passing it should be noted that while the sixth congress sharply emphasised that pro-capitalist and feudal forms of exploitation and relations on land continued, yet they also took note of the fact that the situation would not be always so rigid and that changes might take place. They declared :

“The pitiful attempts at carrying through agrarian reforms without damaging the colonial regime are intended to facilitate the gradual

conversion of semifeudal landownership into capitalist landlordism and in certain cases to establish a narrow stratum of kulak peasants."

IV

What have been the changes in Indian agriculture during the past five years—what has been the accumulated effect of the changes in the last fifty years? How does it alter the picture of Indian agriculture hitherto painted by us?

The first arresting fact is the rise of the landless labourers. Quite a considerable part of these landless labourers are the village serfs or slaves of the hindu village—the untouchables. They are no longer in possession of their plot of land. The rest are expropriated touchable peasants. Both together create the landless labourers. The following statistics are revealing :

THE RISE IN THE NUMBER OF AGRICULTURAL
LABOURERS (IN MILLION) : *

1882	1921	1931	1933	1944
Census	Census	Census	ILO estimates	
7.5	21.5	33	35	68

Figures given by R. P. Dutt in *India Today* on class differentiation in Madras (per thousand of agricultural population) :—

	1901	1911	1921	1931
Labourers	345	340	317	429

Figures about Bengal quoted by R. P. Dutt :

	1921	1931
Labourers	1,805.502	2,718.939

* These figures are given by the directorate of economics and statistics of the ministry of agriculture, government of India, in its monthly publication, *Agricultural Situation in India*, Vol. III, No 4, July 1948. They are for the whole of the undivided India including the states. The same source gives its own estimate of the population of agricultural labour for 1948, in Indian union and states including Hyderabad, as 33. 986 million, which is obviously too low.

According to 1944-45 official figures, 20.6 per cent of 78 lakhs of acres in Bengal were cultivated by agricultural labour.

According to the same source, the strength of respective sections of the peasantry in Bengal was as follows :

<i>Type of peasant</i>	<i>Percentage of total agricultural population</i>	<i>Percentage of cultivated land in their possession</i>
Landless	36.4	1.8
Families dependent on less than one acre of land	17.7	4.2
More than one acre but less than three	22.0	16.9
More than three acres but less than 5 acres	9.6	14.7
More than 5 acres	14.3	62.8

(Agricultural Statistics, 1944-1945, p-48.)

Thus in Madras in 1931, 42 per cent of the agricultural population was landless labour. In Bengal in 1944-45, 36 per cent was landless, and together with those who held below one acre—the semi-proletarians—they formed 54 per cent, i.e. the absolute majority of the agricultural population.

Figures given by the Ándhra provincial committee of the party about Andhra reveal that in one village, out of 447 families, 220 are families of landless labourers. In another, out of 49, 16 are families of landless labourers and 22 are those of poor peasants. In a third village, out of 492 families, 350 are those of agricultural labourers including artisans. The proportion of landless thus is nearly 50 per cent in the first village, 30 per cent in the second and 70 per cent in the third.

A report of a member of the UP committee of the Communist Party contains the following :

"I have here used the word ryot along with agrarian labour. Now

this is very important since the agrarian labour numerically is a very very minor section these days.

"The ryot or 'riyaya' means the small artisan, barber, ironsmith, carpenter, sweeper, etc. in the village, including of course the agricultural labourer. They are all landless generally.

"The riyaya is 30 to 45 per cent in the villages. The larger the village the bigger the percentage.

"Taken communitywise the sweepers and chamars make the major portion of the ryot. They are the worst sufferers too.

"Now the agrarian labour is drawn mainly from the chamars. The nonagrarian among them indulge in various trades. And the labour section also has two categories—seasonal and permanent.

"For the whole ryot the question is of wages and land. But the question of land concerns the agricultural labourer alone and the question of a living wage is also his. For the rest it is an economic question of yearly or terminal remuneration on a fair basis.

"No doubt the remuneration given to them is very poor and inadequate and the sweepers are posing the issue very sharply. But so far we have not fixed any remuneration standards for the different sections of the ryot. At various places the sweepers have struck work under the leadership of Babinki Sabha or some opportunist leaders. The striving for a better deal is intense in the sweepers all round.

"Then comes the agrarian labour mainly employed by the Zamindars, rich peasants and an upper section of the middle peasants and, above all, by the farm owners.

"Their wage standards are certainly very poor and differ from locality to locality. Mostly they are paid Rs 15 monthly and an ordinary diet, or maximum two maunds of grain yearly instead of diet. The seasonal ones get ordinarily Re 1 per day.

"So far we have fixed no living wage for them too. This is to be particularly noted that during the recent years there has been a growing shortage of agrarian labour due to the miserable wages and hard work. In the industrial areas the agrarian hands have

become industrial workers and in other areas they have become milkmen, etc.

“At many places they have refused to work and agree only after a petty increase was sanctioned. In many areas they are getting even Rs 30 monthly and food.

“Politically, the chamars (the agricultural labour too) are swinging towards the Dalit Sangh and the sweepers towards the Babinki Sabha, etc. Now all these are communal organisations led by congressmen of their own community. But in places where we have worked they look to us also.

“As soon as we pose before them their demands of wages and land the entire ryot gets up and thinks. They are also easily convinced of a united front with the poor peasants and become ready to join the common organisation of which so far the latter is not convinced.

“Not only that there are deep prejudices among the ryot against all peasants, it is also divided sharply on the basis of caste, but such prejudices wither away as soon as they have to face some common oppression.

“There exists vast discontent in this section and there have been clashes between ryot and zamindars, but our task is to properly and consciously lead this discontented mass and win it over from all sectarian and communal politics and influence.”

Here is yet another new factor. The ranks of the rural proletariat are swelled not only by the ancient serf, the pauperised peasant, but also by the dispossessed artisan who has lost his profession. The comrade concerned is somewhat hesitant to lump him with the agricultural worker—and yet it is correct to do so.

Here again, according to the testimony, rural workers from land as well as other means of production number 30 to 45 per cent in villages.

According to the report of the Floud commission the number of landless labourers in Bengal was about 22 per cent of the population. This was nearly a decade ago. The latest official data for 1944-45 give the percentage of landless labourers as 36.4.

V

What is the significance of the rise of the agricultural workers. It announced the fact firstly of capitalist commodity production. It announced the fact that an increasingly large number of rural people can only exist by offering to sell their labour power—that their labour-power has become a commodity. Notwithstanding the fact that a considerable number of these again find occupation as tenants, or sharecroppers, etc.—the main conclusion emerges that they are sellers of labour-power. They are not only divorced from land but also from other means of production, bullocks, ploughs, etc., so that it is becoming impossible to engage them except as 'hands'.

The development of labour-power into a commodity is a capitalist relation and is in contradiction with feudal relations, feudal land relations; in fact it is the negation of such relations. It is only a sign of the disintegration of feudal economy and the growth of capitalist relations within the womb of feudal society.

The striking feature then of our agrarian relations is that between 30 to 50 per cent of the rural population is involved in capitalist relations and is seller of labour-power. Actually the number is much bigger since together with the poor peasants, who partly hire themselves out and also sell their labour-power, they come to 70 to 80 per cent of the village population—which shows a reversal of old relations and the strength of capitalist relations.

Naturally another conclusion follows from this. These 70 to 80 per cent are also buyers of commodities—means of livelihood, etc.—in the market, and thus once again this overwhelming majority represents the capitalist mode of exchange. Despite the feudal relations obtaining on land, despite the varied forms of feudal bondage that still exist—the overwhelming majority is subjected to the laws of commodity production. It has not escaped feudal exploitation or feudal burdens. The new exploitation has been added to the old one. But the point is that such an overwhelming mass is also subject to capitalist exploitation, capitalist relations; that the monopoly of feudal exploitation and relations is broken, that these relations are disintegrating and, as a result, new ones have developed.

Describing the rural proletariat Lenin in the *Development of Capitalism in Russia* wrote as follows :

"The other new type is the rural proletariat, the class of wage-labourers possessing allotments. This comprises the poor peasants, including the completely landless peasant; but the typical representative of the Russian rural proletariat is the agricultural labourer, the day labourer, the unskilled labourer the building worker, or worker in other trades, possessing an allotment. The insignificant dimensions of the farm on a small patch of land and moreover, a farm in a state of ruin (this is particularly evidenced by the letting of land), the inability to exist without selling labour-power, (the 'trades' of the poor peasant), an extremely low standard of living, probably lower than that of the labourer without an allotment, these are the distinguishing features of this type.... Very often the rural labourer is allotted land in the interests of the rural employers and for that reason the type of rural labourer with an allotment is a common type in all capitalist countries. This type assumes different forms in different countries : the English cottager (cottager) differs from the parcel land peasant in France or in the Rhine provinces, and the latter differs again from the knecht in Prussia. Each of these bears traces of the special agrarian system, of the special history of agrarian relations in those countries... The legal title to his plot of land does not affect the definition at all. Whether the land belongs to him as his own property (as in the case of the parcel land peasant) or whether the landlord or rittergutsbesitzer allows him the use of the land, or, finally, whether he owns it as a member of the village commune, as in Russia—makes no difference to the case at all. In including the poor peasant in the category of rural proletariat we are not suggesting anything new."

The main criterion for the rural proletariat is that it must be a seller of labour-power, whether it formally own some plot of land or not.

Writing about the significance of the disintegration of the peasantry and the rise of rural proletariat. Lenin further said : "The disintegration of the peasantry creates the home market for capitalism. In the lower group, the formation of the market takes place in regard to articles of consumption (the personal consumption market). The

rural proletarian consumes less in comparison with the middle peasant—and moreover, ...consumes goods of an inferior quality (potatoes instead of bread, etc.), but he buys more."

Thus the rural proletarian is a buyer of commodities on the market—he belongs to capitalist society—more than the middle peasant.

His emergence, continued Lenin, gives rise to another class belonging to capitalist society :

"The rise and development of a rural bourgeoisie creates a market in a twofold manner : first, and principally, in regard to means of production (the productive consumption market), for the well-to-do peasant tries to convert into capital the means of production he 'collects' from the 'impoverished' landlords as well as from the ruined peasant. Secondly, the market for articles of consumption is created by the fact that the requirements of the wealthy peasant have grown."

In this way the rise of the agrarian proletariat signifies the rise of a capitalist market, the rise of commodity production, the rise of new antagonistic classes, the rise of the peasant bourgeoisie out to hire and exploit labour, run agriculture not as a source of livelihood, not for satisfaction of personal needs, but for profit, for surplus value.

VI

The strength of these relations can be seen easily if we take into consideration the strength of the agricultural workers and poor peasants—and the figures about concentration of land.

All these years we had noted the phenomenon of the growing concentration of land in the hands of fewer and fewer people. But from this we did not draw the conclusion of the rise of a new class—antagonistic to or superimposed upon the old one; we saw in it only growing impoverishment, and not the new classes—and were deceived sometimes by the fact that the expropriated peasantry was again employed as feudal tenants, moneylenders' serfs, etc. We regarded it only as a throwback to feudalism. Today we can understand the same facts in quite a different light.

The evidence about expropriation of peasants, described by imperialist chroniclers as the "passing of the land from the cultivating classes" but which constituted in reality the process of penetration of capital into agriculture—the money-lenders, the usurious capital, and later on the rich tenants and farm capital—has been noted by economists, and our party long ago. But it was associated only with the growing impoverishment of the masses under imperialist rule and not with the rise of new classes. The concentration of land comes out of this process of expropriation, which expropriates the peasant not only of land but also of means of production—making it more and more difficult for him to return to the status of an ordinary or even a cultivation peasant. The evidence submitted to the Bengal famine commission shows that this process is going on. War conditions have of course accentuated it all the more. The famine commission asked the provincial governments : to what extent was there a tendency for ownership of land to pass out of the hands of cultivating classes to non-cultivating classes (real people with money, or money-lenders etc.)? Has this tendency been reversed or arrested to any significant extent ?

The replies* were as follows :

Bengal : "There is no doubt that there is an increasing tendency for ownership of land to pass out of the hands of the cultivating classes. The transferees may be either nonagriculturists or agriculturists who have already got more land that they could cultivate directly. There is no reason to suppose that the tendency has been arrested or reversed; and it may be presumed to have been rendered worse by the Bengal tenancy (amendment act of 1938), which, by removing restrictions on rights of transfer, has greatly facilitated the passing of lands out of the hands of bonafide cultivators."

Orissa : "There are reasons to believe that the right of free transferability of land has prejudicially affected the small cultivators. At present there is no noticeable tendency for ownership of land to pass out of the hands of the cultivating classes to noncultivating classes, but there is a tendency for land to pass from small cultivators

* *The Bengal Famine Enquiry Commission, Final Report, 1945 (emphasis added).*

to persons who are men of professions as well as cultivators"—i.e. to rich farmers or to those who though born in the farmer's family have made money in profession and accumulated capital to invest in land.

Madras : "An investigation of transfers during the period 1931 to 1934 showed that about 20 per cent of all the areas transferred went to nonagriculturists, while a very large proportion went to big absentee landholders, particularly agricultural moneylenders. This was the result of foreclosure on debts. A definite reply cannot be given whether the tendency has been arrested or not in recent years. The indications are there that the tendency has decreased."

Bombay : "One of the results of agricultural indebtedness is the transfer of land from the cultivating classes to noncultivating classes. The process is however slow and is checked by the Dekkhan agriculturists' relief act, the agriculturists' debtors' relief act and by the introduction of the restricted tenure." The claim of the Bombay government to have checked the process is a false one. Bombay is one of the worst provinces so far as direct expropriation of peasants is concerned.

The Central Provinces and Berar : "There was an increasing tendency for ownership of land to pass out of the hands of cultivating classes but this has been checked by the debt conciliation act, the moneylenders' act, the relief of indebtedness act, etc. There is now a tendency for ownership of land to go back to the agriculturists as a result of good profits made in agriculture. In Berar, most of the lands bought up by cooperative banks have been sold to the agriculturist class."

The claim of the Berar government is equally false. For by agriculturists it only means rich cotton-growers or landlords. One can easily understand who could buy back the land because of good profits from the cooperative societies, who could have had the money. The fact is that in Berar, nearly 20 to 25 years ago, the small peasants as well as the well-to-do peasants, and following them perhaps even some of the landlords, were ruined by the falling cotton prices. They were heavily indeed. Large parts of the land were mortgaged to money-lenders—who were considered to be nonagriculturists, and large parts went to the cooperative societies

who had advance big loans. Large areas of land remained uncultivated. The government appointed a debt conciliation board to scale down the debts and laid down that debts up to Rs 25,000 can be scaled down. The clear intention was to include the debts of the landlords and very rich farmers also for scaling down. In the process of conciliation the small peasant was ruined and the rich ones and the landlords got back the land after paying the scaled down debt. The process of conciliation consisted in scaling down the debt to an arbitrary proportion—say to one-third or one-half—and then ask the debtor to pay the sum or in view of the same give away his plot of land. The small peasant had not cash and could not pay even the reduced amount. Only the big ones could pay the reduced amount and get back their land.

The United Provinces : "Where transfer of cultivating tenures take place, the transferee generally belongs to the cultivation class, because unless he sublets the land, he himself cultivates it. The United Provinces tenancy act provides for restrictions on subletting and for ejection as a penalty for subletting in contravention of the act. The recent working of the tenancy act shows that ejection of tenants giving subleases in contravention of the act have been rather large."

The UP government does not say how far land is passing into the hands of the bigger or richer tenants. The admission however that subletting is increasing may be of importance because subletting is often done by poorer sections to richer sections who require more land for cultivation.

The high prices of the war and postwar period have accentuated the process of strengthening the richer sections at the expense of the poorer ones—whose direct result could only be more and more concentration of land in the hands of the richer sections. The Report of the Famine Commission says under the heading "Decrease in Indebtedness between 1942-45."

"In view of the absence of reliable statistics. It is impossible to estimate the extent of the reduction in agricultural indebtedness as a result of high prices for agricultural produce. The replies which we have received indicate, however, that there has been a substantial reduction in all provinces. This appears to be particularly true of

cultivators with large holdings and a considerable proportion of those possessing medium holdings. The hopeful significance of this fact for the future development of agriculture must not be underestimated merely because the proportion of such classes to the total rural population is not large. I should not be overlooked that the proportion of land held by these classes is large. In so far as the burden of debt has hitherto stood in the way of the improvement and better cultivation of land the outlook for the future may be regarded as reasonably bright in respect of the greater part of the cultivated land of the country" (emphasis added).

Here is ample testimony to prove that only a small minority of well to-do and rich farmers, together with a few medium peasants, benefited by the high prices, and that for the rest conditions must have deteriorated. Also ample evidence to show that this? minority holds the major part of the land. The hopeful sign that the commission perceives in this is characteristic of their hope to develop agriculture on a "more production" basis, i.e. on capitalists lines. The members feel that freed from the old debt the rich peasant will now be permanently freed from the tentacles of moneylending parasitic capital and will have capital enough to exploit land and labour.

Though several provincial governments mixed the rich and poor agriculturists and replied to the commission that agricultural indebtedness as a result of high prices has declined, still a number of them could not fail to notice which class has benefited.

Replying to the famine commission's question: "Can you assess to what extent, if any, this (agricultural indebtedness) has been reduced as a result of the rise in prices of agricultural products?"—the provincial governments say the following :

Bengal : "Substantial reduction has been possible because a large number of cultivators are now in a better position than before to repay their debts in cash and to secure thereby larger reduction of their debts from the creditors. It is difficult to say to what extent the small cultivators, who form the majority of the agricultural debtors, have reached to the rise in prices, since the crop they get from their lands is not always sufficient for the upkeep of their families and they have to purchase cloth, salt, kerosene, medicine, etc. which are at abnormal prices."

Bombay : "Well-to-do agriculturists are to some extent taking advantage of the facilities for encouraging the savings habit afforded by the post office savings bank cash certificates, national savings certificates and cooperative societies. Others have practically nothing to lay by."

Orissa : "Substantial cultivators have been able to effect small savings, out of which they paid something to liquidate their own debt without incurring new ones. The smaller agriculturists owning land up to five acres have not much benefited by high prices, as they have hardly any surplus produce to repay the old loans, and the high prices of consumer goods have imposed an additional strain on this class.

"The well-to-do classes are investing their savings in the purchase of lands and defence savings certificates and other was bonds. There has been a noticeable demand for land among agriculturists in the rural areas."

The Central Provinces and Berar : "High prices have resulted in regular payments of instalment of scaled-down debts and in making many debt-free or in redeeming their lands which were mortgaged" (we have seen above the meaning of this). "The rural population knows no other method of saving than the purchase of land, cattle, gold or silver. All these being high priced, a leaning has been shown to purchase land wherever possible."

VII

All this evidence points to the emergence of a new class, of the rich peasant, that benefits by high prices because it produces a surplus for the market, that hires labour, that buys land and that regards agriculture as a source of profit and not a source of livelihood. This class has forced itself on the attention of the provincial governments. Previously the governments knew only three classes landlord, tenant or peasant, and the moneylender. The differentiation among the peasants was noticed. The war years have accentuated the process and the new class is now recognised.

This class emerges sometimes from the former moneylending 'landlord' of ryotwari areas who now takes to cultivation by hired hands instead of letting out the land. It also emerges directly from

the cultivator—from the more fortunate better situated section. and is no longer a 'nonagriculturist'. It emerges from the tenant of either the moneylending or the feudal landlord.

This class is the other side of the process which has brought the agricultural proletariat into existence, and is its opposite. The agricultural proletariat is deprived not only of land but of means of production also. In the developing commodity production and market, both land and means of production have to be bought on the market for which investment, capital, money is necessary. Neither the poor peasant nor the agricultural labourer can buy them, for they have no money. The rich peasant with his surplus cash and money is able to buy them on the market, and use them for hiring labour. His mode of production is typically capitalist. He exploits labour, buys labour-power, on the basis of his possession of means of production—land and implements of production.

He does not belong to feudal society but to capitalist society. He arises out of the disintegration of feudal economy in face of developing commodity production and often represents the emancipated tenant of the landlord who is able to get out of the shackles of the feudal landlord by the power of money, the power of exchange relations, over feudal relations.

This is how Lenin described the phenomenon in connection with Russia in his article "The Agrarian Question in Russia":

"We see therefore that the peasants are more and more throwing up social elements which become transformed into private landowners... At the end of the nineteenth century, the feudal or serfowning landed property of the nobility still comprised the overwhelmingly greater part of the privately-owned land, but the trend of development is obviously towards the creation of bourgeois landownership. Privately-owned land acquired by inheritance from former royal bodyguards, patrimonies and government officials, etc. is diminishing. Privately-owned land, acquired simply with money, is increasing. The power of land is declining; the power of money is growing. Land is being more and more drawn into the stream of commerce..."

Thanks to the power of money, the power of developing

commodity production, these well-to-do elements are able to escape medieval yoke and carry on capitalist exploitation.

To quote Lenin :

"Mr Karyshev has to admit that 'natural rent' (i.e. rent, not in money but in kind or labour) as a general rule is everywhere higher than money rent, and considerably higher at that, sometimes twice as high; that natural rent is most widespread among the poorest groups of the peasantry. The peasants who are at all well-to-do strive to rent land at money rents. The tenant takes advantage of every opportunity to pay his rent in money and in this way reduce the cost of hiring other people's land.'

"Hence the whole burden of the serf features of our tenancy system falls upon the poorest peasants. The well-to-do peasants try to escape from the medieval yoke, and they succeed in doing this only to the extent that they possess money. If they have money they can rent land for a money rent at the prevailing market rate. If they have no money then they must go into bondage, pay three times the market price for the land they rent, either in the form of a share of their crop or in labour."

And Lenin adds :

"Since we see, on the one hand, households which have no horses, or have only one horse, renting one dessiatin, and even a part of a dessiatin of land and, on the other hand, we see households having four or more horses, renting from seven to sixteen dessiatins, it is clear that quantity is being transformed into quality. The first category is compelled to rent land by poverty; the position of those in this category is that of bondage. The 'tenant' under such conditions cannot but become transformed into an object of exploitation by paying rent in labour, winter-hiring, moneyloans, etc. On the other hand, households having from 12 to 16 dessiatins of land and in addition renting from seven to sixteen dessiatins obviously do so not because they are poor but because they are rich, not to provide themselves with 'provisions' but to become richer, in order 'to make money'. Thus we have a striking example of how tenant farming is converted into capitalist farming, we see the rise of capitalist enterprise in agriculture, for as we shall see further on, households like these cannot dispense with hired agricultural labourers."

The rise of the rich peasant is thus a capitalist phenomenon, the rise of capitalist relations in agriculture. The 'emancipation' of this strata from the medieval yoke—the reduction of their relation with feudal lords to a mere contractual relation—symbolises the power of money over land; and their mode of exploitation constitutes the capitalist method, of exploitation of men divorced from means of production. Their emergence heralds a new class struggle in the countryside—superimposed upon the old—and makes it plain more and more that the struggle against feudal landlordism cannot be carried on without simultaneously carrying on the struggle against capitalist exploitation, that the two become inextricable mixed, that the majority of the countryside are now exploited by both landlords and capitalists, directly or indirectly.

VIII

The strength of capitalist relations is further seen in the figures of transfer of land to the upper section and its concentration in fewer and fewer hands.

The sale and purchase of land—even when it is legally only a transfer of tenancy rights—is itself a witness to the power of money, which now represents capitalist relations. It means that land has become a commodity, and whosoever has money can buy it on the market, notwithstanding the obstacles raised by feudal property in it. It is a sign of the crumbling power of the feudal landed property. Land, as Lenin says, is now drawn into the vortex of the commercial order. So long as feudal private property dominated economic relations, so long as production could be conducted on the basis of natural economy, and exchange of commodities hardly existed, land could never be an object of sale and purchase. Money could not barter in land as in any other commodity.

Secondly, the concentration of land in ryotwari areas and in landlord areas is an expression of class relations and of the fact that the product of land is more and more turned into commodities, that men working on land sell their labour-power, that the phenomenon of producing for oneself, for satisfying one's needs, is coming to an end.

The Bengal famine commission report gives figures about Punjab

which show that 2.4 per cent of the owners have holdings over 50 acres and own 38 per cent of the land.

28.8 per cent of the owners hold between 1 and 3 acres and hold 3.2 per cent of the land.

20.2 per cent of the owners have holdings of less than one acre and hold 0.8 per cent of the land.

Thus while 2.4 per cent hold 38 per cent of the land, 49 per cent hold only 4 per cent of the land.

The figures about Bombay show that :

Holdings below 5 acres number 1,130,000, they constitute 49 per cent of the total number of holdings, they occupy only 9.5 per cent of the land.

Holdings between 24 and 100 acres number 220,000, they constitute 10 per cent of the total number of holdings and occupy 34.4 per cent of the land.

Holdings over 100 acres number only 20,000, they constitute 1 per cent of the total number of holdings and occupy 15.6 per cent of the land.

This feature becomes all the more glaring when we take into consideration the total number of acres occupied by each category.

Thus the first category of 1,130,000 holdings occupy 2,540,000 (25 lakh 40 thousand) acres.

The Second category of 220,000 holdings occupy 9,230,000 (92 lakh) acres.

And the Third category of 20,000 holdings occupy 4,170,000 (41 lakh) acres.

Thus 11 per cent holdings occupy 50 per cent of the land; they together occupy 13,400,000 (1 crore 34 lakh) acres when 49 per cent occupy only 25 lakh acres.

The concentration will be still more sharply understood if one remembers that these statistics do not take into consideration the number of agricultural labourers, who may number anywhere between 40 and 50 per cent.

These figures relate only to holders of land and show concentration of land as among those who hold the land as owners. The polarisation, the land monopoly, would stand out still more sharply if we took into consideration the total agricultural population and included the land labourers in the figure.

Figures quoted earlier show the following about Bengal :

Category of holders	Percentage of holders	Percentage of land in possession for cultivation
Landless	36.4	1.8
Less than one acre	17.7	4.2
Between one and 3 acres	22.0	16.9
More than 3 but less than 5 acres	9.6	14.7
More than 5 acres	14.3	62.8

Thus 54 per cent of the rural population has 6 per cent land for cultivation.

14.3 per cent has 62.8 per cent of the land in its hands.

If we take the first three categories together, we find 76 per cent of the rural population has 23 per cent of the land, while 14 per cent has got 62.8 per cent of the land.

IX

These figures apart from showing the impoverishment imposed on the peasant mass reveal how the old feudal small scale agriculture is crumbling, how its place is being taken by new agriculture in which production for the market dominates and new classes come forward.

First, the fact that a very big majority hold only a small part of the land means that they are not able to maintain themselves from the land and that they must hire themselves out partly. They together with the agricultural workers must go the labour market to work for others.

Secondly, because they have to hire themselves out, it means they have to purchase their means of subsistence on the market; they cannot produce them.

Thirdly, the fact that a small minority owns the land means that it is not longer owning the vast tracts of land for satisfying its own needs, but for selling on the market; that it cannot exploit these lands unless it exploits hired labour. It means a considerable part of the produce of these lands—the majority of the land area—must enter the market as commodities.

Thus in landlord area also, under the very nose of the feudal landlords, people begin to produce for the market, hire labour, and carry on capitalist methods of production.

The concentration of land in landlord and ryotwari areas is determined by the growing concentration of money-capital in the hands of a few; by the growing availability for the few to purchase means of production on the market. The concentration of land is not only concentration of land but also other means of production—bullocks, ploughs, manure, etc. Lenin has explained this as follows in his “Agrarian Question in Russia.” :

“As a matter of fact the paradox is explained by the fact that the loss of horses is accompanied by the concentration of land in the hands of the wealthy households who are able to maintain a 'proper' proportion between the number of horses employed and the area of land cultivated. The 'normal' proportion is not being 'restored' (for it never existed in our peasant economy) but is reached only by the peasant bourgeoisie. The 'abnormality' is really the fact that the means of production are broken up and divided in small peasant farming : the same amount of land which a million one-horse peasants cultivate with the aid of a million horses is better and more carefully cultivated by the wealthy peasants with the aid of only one-half or three-quarters of a million horses.”

This concentration of land further signifies the disintegration of the old feudal peasantry. It symbolises the collapse of the small scale production suited to natural economy with its production to satisfy personal wants, with little or no exchange of commodities. This understanding of the process is vital for understanding the position of the middle peasant. To quote Lenin (*Development of Capitalism in Russia.*) :

“The sum total of all the economic contradictions among the

peasantry comprises what we call the disintegration of the peasantry. The peasants themselves very aptly and strikingly characterise this process by the term 'unpeasantise'. This process signifies the complete destruction of the old, patriarchal peasantry and the creation of new types of rural population...No attempt was ever made to study this phenomenon systematically....This is due also to the fact that the majority of the writers who write on this question regard the disintegration of the peasantry simple as the rise of property inequality, simply as 'differentiation', to use a favourite term employed by the narodniks in general...Undoubtedly the rise of property inequality is the starting point of the whole process, but the process is not confined to 'differentiation'. The old peasantry are not only undergoing a process of 'differentiation' they are being completely destroyed, they are ceasing to exist, they are being squeezed out by absolutely new types of rural population—types which serve as the basis of a society in which commodity production and capitalist production predominate. These types are the rural bourgeoisie (mainly petty bourgeoisie) and the rural proletariat, a class of commodity producers in agriculture and a class of agricultural wage workers....

"The disintegration of the peasantry, which, at the expense of the middle 'peasantry', develops the extreme groups, creates two new types of rural population. The common feature of both types—is the commodity, money character of economy. The first new type is the rural bourgeoisie or wealthy peasantry...The other new type is the rural proletariat, the class of wage labourers possessing allotments....

"The intermediary link between these post-reform types of the 'peasantry' is the middle peasantry. Their distinguishing feature is that commodity production is least developed among them (emphasis added). Only in good years and under particularly favourable conditions is the independent husbandry of this type of peasant sufficient to maintain him and for that reason his position is a very unstable one. In the majority of cases the middle peasant cannot make ends meet without resorting to loans to be repaid by labour, etc., without seeking 'subsidiary' earning on the side, which partly also consist of selling labour-power. Each time there is a failure of the harvest, masses of the middle peasant are thrown into the

ranks of the proletariat. In its social relationships this group oscillates between the higher group, towards which it gravitates and into which only a fortunate minority succeeds in entering, and the lower group, into which the whole process of evolution is forcing it. We have seen that the peasant bourgeoisie not only squeezes out the lower group, but also the middle group of the peasantry. Thus a process which is a specific feature of capitalist economy is going on—the process of 'unpeasantising', the intermediary members are dying out, while the extremes are growing."

X

This gives us the place occupied by the middle peasant in the development of the new class struggle. He is squeezed by feudal landlords; his economic position when it weakens makes him a helpless prey of landlords where landlordism exists; therefore he is antifeudal. He is squeezed by the peasant bourgeoisie also; therefore in the joint struggle against the feudal landlords and peasant bourgeoisie he can be won over as an ally.

But, at the same time, he vacillates because of this intermediary position, because of his social orientation to the peasant bourgeoisie. He, at the same time, tries to defend his intermediary position as a small selfsufficient proprietor—with little connection with production of commodities—when the whole trend of social development is towards production of commodities; he tries to defend small scale production when large scale production is developing. Hence he continually vacillates not only in the struggle against the peasant bourgeoisie but also against the feudal landlords. He can be won over by decisive action, but cannot be made the base of antifeudal anticapitalist struggle.

The connection between the middle peasant and the feudal form of bondage, especially labour rent, Lenin stressed. (*Development of Capitalism in Russia*) as follows :

"The more the natural self-sufficiency system of economy and the middle peasantry decline, the more effectively is the labour rent squeezed out by capitalism. The wealthy peasants of course cannot serve as the basis for the labour rent system, for it is only extreme poverty that compels the peasant to take the worst-paid form of work and such that is ruinous for his own farm. But neither is the rural proletariat fit for the labour rent system, although for quite

another reason; not possessing a farm, or possessing an insignificant plot of land, the rural proletariat is not tied down to it to the same extent as a 'middle' peasant, and consequently it is much easier for him to go away and hire himself or 'free' conditions, i.e. for higher pay and without any bondage."

No separate statistics are available just now to show the disintegration of the middle peasant. But the process is considerable in Bengal. According to the Floud commission the percentage of families owning above 5 acres was 25 per cent in 1940; according to the 1945 figures of the Bengal government quoted above it was reduced to 14.3 per cent. This precipitous reduction could only have been reached by a mass expropriation of the middle peasant, especially in view of the fact that between 1940 and 1945 prices are immensely in Bengal, from which only the richer sections benefited; that in 1943 Bengal saw the worst famine leading to wholesale expropriation of peasants.

The development of capitalist relations thus gives us new classes in the agrarian areas and a new class struggle superimposed on the old one against feudal landordism. It shows that a new class of exploiters had arisen—the rich peasant; that the interests of the majority—the agricultural workers and poor peasants—are decidedly antagonistic to the interests of the feudal landlords as well as the rich peasant; that the middle peasant, though himself a victim of this process, vacillates and is capable of giving the battle only under decisive leadership.

XI

Having come to this understanding of the new classes in the rural areas, we must at the same time see the tenacity of feudal relations, which, while they are disintegrating, yet continue to exist and oppress the majority of the people. Only the rich peasants are able to emancipate themselves from their tentacles. The development of capitalist relations does not as yet mean that feudalism is dead, that it is finished. If we act on this premise we will be committing the same mistake as that made in the agrarian programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, a mistake which was nailed down by Lenin as the result of "an overestimation of the degree of capitalist development in Russian agriculture."

We must realise that the new class antagonism, the new class relations are superimposed upon the old. The entire toiling peasantry groans under the unbearable conditions created by feudalism, backwardness, etc.—and the rise of new capitalist methods of exploitation has only added to the exploitation without abolishing old burdens.

If this is not realised we will not only miss one of the main sources of oppression, of universal oppression, but also land ourselves into a different kind of alliance—an alliance to fight only capitalism—an alliance in which the middle peasant have no place—one which we will have to neutralise him.

What are the facts which show that feudal relations are still tenaciously persisting and that they are still strong, despite the development of capitalist relations?

First, over a large part of the territory—the acceded states—the jagirdari, landlord and other systems remain, while commodity production may not have reached there to this extent, nor proliferation of classes and emergence of new classes. At the same time, it is a fact that these classes are emerging, and with the accession of all the states to the Indian union and the opening of them to trade and exchange on an increased scale, the evolution will be in this direction.

Secondly, in the landlord areas of the Indian union the landlords own vast tracts of land as their private land; in addition they hold thousands in feudal bondage on lands which they rent. All kinds of feudal levies, like batai, sharecropping and other forms of excessive rent, continue on the landlord lands. Their extortionate rents and forms of bondage spell ruin and disaster among the peasants—and the developing capitalist relations only enable a tiny section of the rich peasants to emancipate themselves. The rest includes middle peasants, poor peasants and sections of agricultural labourers, and all of them suffer from feudal exploitation also along with capitalist exploitation.

The tenacity of feudal relations arises from the fact that penetration of capital in agriculture and development of commodity production depend on the general development of capitalism, of large scale industry, in the country. India—which in spite of the

development of large scale industry like the cotton textile, jute, exploitation of coal and iron mines, of cement industries, and big iron and steel works in two places, has not yet developed the metallurgical industry on a big scale—cannot boast of machine-producing industry, and therefore has not yet broken through its industrial backwardness. Development of capitalist relations could not be therefore fullfledged in agriculture and feudal relationships could not be swept aside. The tenacious roots of feudalism could be uprooted only by a thoroughgoing process. In this connection the failure of Indian industry to produce agricultural machinery and the consequent failure to apply it to agriculture has played a great role in keeping feudalism alive, continuing agriculture on the basis of primitive implements and therefore open to small scale production under feudal overlordship. In one sense this was inevitable. For the application of machinery depended upon the growth of a strata with sufficient capital in hand and this strata was only slowly rising till late.

Consequently we find some of the worst forms of feudal bondage still continuing and the fight against the landlord still becoming the rallying cry for the majority of the people in the rural areas. Of course it has become impossible to rally a big section of the majority if simultaneously you do not raise the cry of fighting the capitalist exploitation. But the point is that even those who are exploited directly by the capitalist cannot remain indifferent to feudal exploitation, since it also affects them directly or indirectly by producing and perpetuating conditions of backwardness, low wage or feudal bondage.

The fact that alternative employment in the city is limited because of industrial backwardness compels even sections of agricultural workers, recently dispossessed of land, to seek feudal bondage in the form of sharecropping or tenant with no right, tenant-at-will, tenant with rent in kind, etc. This is much more the case with poor peasants and middle peasants who allow themselves to be exploited by the land monopoly of the landlord. Thus, in spite of proletarianisation, there come into existence various shades of proletarian and semiproletarian elements, some of which work now as wage-labourers, now as feudal tenants, etc. This fact makes the fight against landlordism a common and real fight.

The main point however to understand is that the capitalist relations have developed inside the feudal framework, that they are developing with great speed and that in future they will develop with still greater rapidity. Neither the tenacious resistance offered by feudal relations in India as a whole, nor the uneven development of commodity relations in different parts of the country, can disprove this truth. So far as the uneven development of capitalist relations in agriculture in different parts of the country is concerned, such unevenness is normal and the penetration of capital in agriculture is always an uneven process. Lenin in his "The Agrarian Question in Russia" says.

"It must be pointed out that the penetration of capital into agriculture is a peculiar process which cannot be properly understood if we confine ourselves to general statistics covering the whole of Russia. Agriculture does not become commercialised suddenly and to an equal degree in all types of economy and in all parts of the country. On the contrary, the market usually subordinates to itself one phase of the complex economy of agriculture in one place and another phase in another, moreover, the remaining phases do not disappear but adapt themselves to the 'main' i.e. to the money, phase."

To conclude, feudalism is not dead despite development of capitalist relations. But the struggle against feudal relation becomes linked with the struggle against the new capitalist exploiters in the countryside. To attempt to carry out the one without the other is to be guilty of class collaboration and disrupt the struggle for agrarian revolution. It gets directly linked with the struggle for land itself—for today the struggle for land is directed against the monopoly in land of the landlords and rich peasants—both in landlord and ryotwari areas. The land-hunger of the people cannot be satisfied without attacking the land-monopoly of the old and new monopolists. The slogan of the agrarian revolution, 'Land to the Tiller' is directed against both.

XII

What is the policy of the bourgeoisie towards the agrarian problem, towards landlordism? What is behind the landlord bills of the Congress ministries?

To understand this we must first give up the fatuous idea that the bourgeoisie only wants to strengthen and protect feudalism, that it would not attack feudalism even to protect its own interests or advance them. When we say the bourgeoisie compromises with feudalism, or strengthens it, the only Marxist meaning is that from the standpoint of consistent revolutionary policy or action, its actions are compromising etc. It does not mean however that the bourgeoisie does not seek to compel feudalism to reform to its own advantage. All that we say is that the bourgeoisie in the period of declining capitalism cannot liquidate feudalism in a revolutionary way, but will save its interests of the declining period by only attacking to curb feudalism to suit its own interests. The process only emancipates the bourgeoisie, clears the way for the development of bourgeois relations to the extent necessary, even absorbs the landlords in the bourgeois framework and makes of them bourgeois landlords, without really liberating the masses or calling forth their initiatives. Every class is out to protect its own interests and no class is generous to protect another at the expense of its own interests. The idea which is generally prevalent in our ranks comes from a wrong and mechanical understanding of the colonial character of India—an understanding which, by saying that industries have not developed because of colonial character, practically equates the bourgeoisie with feudal elements, sees no contradiction between them and reduces the content of the alliance to one of complete identity of economic interests. In his "Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy", Lenin writes :

"Yet there may be two forms of this development. The survivals of serfdom may fall away either as a result of the transformation of the landlord estates or as a result of the abolition of the landlord latifundia, i. e. either by reform or by revolution. Bourgeois development may pursue its course having at its head big landlord economy, which will gradually become more bourgeois and gradually substitute bourgeois methods of exploitation for feudal methods. It may also pursue its course having at its head small peasant economy which, in a revolutionary way, will remove the 'abscess' of feudal latifundia from the social organism....These two paths of objectively possible bourgeois development may be described as the Prussian path and the American path respectively. In the first

case, feudal landlordism gradually evolves into bourgeois, junker landlordism, which dooms the peasants to decades of most painful expropriation and bondage, while at the same time a small minority of grossbauern (big peasants) arises. In the second case there is no landlordism, or else it is broken up by the revolution, as a result of which the feudal estates are confiscated and divided into small farms....In the first case the outstanding content of the evolution is the transformation of serfdom into usury and capitalist exploitation on the land of the feudal lords—the landlords—the junkers. In the second case the main background is the transformation of the patriarchal peasant into a bourgeois farmer."

Lenin further writes :

"Also Marx in Vol III of *Capital* pointed out that the form of landed property which the nascent capitalist mode of production finds does not suit its requirements. Capitalism creates for itself its own suitable forms of agrarian relationships out of the old forms, out of feudal landed property, small peasants commune property, clan property, etc. In that chapter, Marx compares the various methods whereby capital creates forms of landed property suitable for itself. In Germany the reshaping of the medieval forms of landed property proceeded in a reformists way, so to speak. It adapted itself to routine, to tradition, to the feudal estates that were slowly converted into junker estates....In America this reshaping went on in a violent way as regards the slaveowning farms in the southern states."

Keeping this fact in mind that the bourgeoisie seeks to adapt the feudal structure, bringing such changes into it as will advance its own class interests and the capitalist order that it represents—what exactly is the policy that it seeks to follow in relation to the feudal landlords? That it is compromising that it does not seek to destroy the feudal elements, is obvious. But what is the special form of its compromise, its pressure against feudal lords, of its efforts to adapt the feudal set up to its needs? In the states, by securing the election principle, by holding the military in the hands of the central government and cashing in upon its influence with the masses, the bourgeoisie has adapted the princes to the republic and secured for itself a dominant voice. The alliance takes the form of

a dominant voice to the bourgeoisie in the affairs of the states. Only the masses have secured nothing, no abolition of feudal set up, only double domination.

XIII

What is its policy with regard to the landlords? How does the crisis of agrarian relations come before the bourgeoisie today? The bourgeoisie in power first of all sees the crisis as a crisis of deficit food production which is using all its valuable foreign change, making it difficult to import machinery and capital goods from abroad which it wants for its industries. Secondly, the shortage of food, high prices, etc. are leading to a dangerous situation—facing the bourgeoisie with hungry masses and endangering its regime. Thirdly, it realises that the rack-renting and exploitation of the landlord disorganises agricultural production, makes it less and less efficient and by impoverishing the people narrows down the market for future industrial goods. Fourthly, by keeping the prices high, deficit production raises wage-costs of industrial workers, and makes it difficult to cut wages. Fifthly, the bourgeoisie sees that small scale production of the impoverished peasant has become very inefficient, and turns its eyes to the rich farmer with capital who, it hopes, will more and more take charge of production. It also hopes to supply him with some machinery in the near future. Sixthly, it realises that the present rights of landlords constitute an obstacle to the rapid penetration of capital in agriculture, to the seizure of agriculture.

The way in which feudalism is adapted to the needs of the bourgeoisie is determined by these considerations. The landlord legislations of the ministries make the aim quite clear. They are directed to open the way to the rich farmer to produce commodities, to produce in a capitalist way, and seek to remove or curtail or curb the interference from the landlords' proprietary rights in the way of penetration of capital. The landlords are being bought, by paying compensation worth crores—though the bourgeoisie might of course claim that it is not paying the full capitalised value of rent. The oppressive feudal rent is not abolished but 'nationalised', i.e. the bourgeois state seeks to appropriate the huge rent for itself, to advance the interests of its own class, for fixing industrial and

agricultural development on capitalist lines. The toiler is not freed from this rent. On the contrary, he is asked to shoulder the burden of compensation, the interest on compensation bonds or the money given in compensation. The beneficiaries of this compensation are the rich farmer and the bourgeoisie. But the entire people have to pay for it.

Whether the present landlord bills are withheld or proceeded with, the bourgeoisie will try to clear the road, an opening in the rich farmer through some means or another, either through amendment of tenancy act, or court or legal pressure against the landlord, or putting a provision in the act that certain type of tenants will be allowed to buy the land at fair price determined by the government, and one which the landlord cannot refuse, and fixing the price of land, etc.—steps will be taken to put its agrarian programme into practice. If it is implemented it will mean widespread exploitation of the peasantry, adding fuel to the fire, setting a spark to an explosive situation.

The bourgeois programme bears a strange resemblance to the programme of the tsarist minister, Stolypin, described by Lenin in "Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy".

"Serfdom may be abolished by the gradual transformation of the landlords's feudal latifundia into junker-bourgeois estates, by transforming the masses of the peasants into landless peasants and knechts, by forcibly keeping the masses down to the pauper standard of living, by the rise of small groups of grossbauern i.e. rich bourgeois peasants who inevitable spring up under capitalism from among the peasantry. The Black Hundred landlords and Stolypin, their minister, have chosen this very path. They realised that it would be impossible to clear the path for the development of Russia without forcibly breaking up the rusty medieval forms of landownership. And they boldly set out to break these up in the interests of the landlords. They abandoned the sympathy which only recently prevailed among the bureaucracy and the landlords for the semifeudal commune. They evaded all the 'constitutional' laws in order to break up the village communes by force. They gave the kulaks carte blanche to rob the peasant masses, to break up the old system of landownership, to ruin thousands of peasant farmers:

they handed over the medieval village to be 'sacked and plundered' by those who had roubles in their purses. They cannot act otherwise if they are to retain their class rule, for they have realised the necessity of adapting themselves to capitalist development and not of fighting against it. And in order to preserve their rule, they can find no other allies against the masses of peasants than the 'commoners', the Razuvayevs and Kolupayevs. They had no other alternative than to shout to these Kolupayevs 'Enrichissez vous!'—get rich! We shall create opportunities for you to make a hundred roubles for every one you invest, if only you will help us to save the basis of our power under the new conditions! This path of development, if it is to be travelled successfully, calls for wholesale, systematic, unbridled violence against the peasant masses and against the proletariat..."

Thus did a landlord ministry adapt landlordism to the needs of bourgeois development.

In the light of these facts we must study critically the landlord legislation and unmask it. The phrasemongering and negative attitude which contents itself with saying that no change has been brought about, that the bills do not mean any change—which really screens from the masses the new offensive—must be given up and a successful campaign launched to unmask the new measure. It is not enough to say that landlordism is not being abolished; you must expose the new capitalist class which is being helped forward in its exploitation.

XIV

This also means that in some respects we must modify our agrarian slogans—add to our main agrarian slogans a basic slogan: *Nationalisation of Land!*

The Communist International had put the slogan of nationalisation of land on the programme of the communist parties of colonies. Its dropping out of our programme was not accidental. It was the same opportunist concession to rich and middle peasant psychology that has been noted earlier. It is obvious that a movement which mainly based itself on the middle peasant and would not offend the rich peasant, would always be afraid to push forward the slogan

of nationalisation, afraid of the reactions of the property-holding followers. Therefore only one of the main slogans was kept : *Abolition of Landlordism*—and Land to the Tiller. The fact that we had to add 'Land to the Tiller' was an admission that mere abolition of landlordism might not benefit the toilers, that the fruits might be appropriated by the new class of exploiters.

The slogan of nationalisation, the realisation of nationalisation of land, is the most consistent carrying out of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Nationalisation of land should not be confused with socialisation of agriculture, socialised large scale agriculture. Under nationalisation, land is nationalised, and so long as the material foundation for socialised agriculture is not ready, private production, small scale production, commodity production is carried on. In the course of his earlier writings, Lenin repeatedly stressed that nationalisation of land, by breaking up the feudal estates, by nationalising rent, will remove all feudal obstacles to capitalist development in agriculture.

Today, with a quick passing of the democratic revolution into the socialist revolution, nationalisation of land in the hands of the people's democratic state becomes the revolutionary weapon not only of abolishing feudal property but also of carrying forward the struggle against capitalist elements who continuously arise out of the commodity production in rural areas and who if left unchecked, would soon monopolise all land—for private property would mean capitalist property. Nationalisation of land thus becomes a weapon of carrying forward the democratic revolution into the next stage—the proletarian socialist revolution—by using it as a weapon to squeeze the capitalist elements until they are eliminated by final victory of socialism. It is the transitional slogan which links the democratic revolution with the next stage of the revolution, enabling the proletariat to strike at the capitalist elements.

The land-hunger of the rural masses, the demand of land to the tiller, is directed against the monopoly of land of the landlords as well as rich peasants. The slogan of nationalisation of land is thus directed against the monopoly of both these classes—against both feudal and bourgeois private property in land. The tasks of the two stages of the revolution thus get interlinked through it. At the same

time, nationalisation by itself does not and cannot abolish capitalist relations, private or commodity production. It enables the people's state to bring it under control and gradually squeeze it out.

It will be a common slogan both for the landlord and ryotwari areas—one which we have been lacking all these days. We had hitherto satisfied our conscience by stretching the meaning of the word 'landlords' and applying it to the moneylending landlords. Actually the ryotwari areas had not slogan of revolutionary transformation all these days.

Will it be a rallying slogan? Will it galvanise the rural masses? It will definitely do so. Why? Because the basic masses of the rural population on which we have to rely are the proletarian and semiproletarian elements—the agricultural workers and poor peasants who have been or are being rapidly expropriated because of private property in land. The same is happening to the middle peasant, though he desperately clings to the illusions of a small property holder and dreams of a better world on the basis of small property.

All these classes, and especially the middle peasant, will certainly be frightened if nationalisation is put in the wrong way; if it is not put correctly and properly and its real antifeudal, antirich-peasant, anti-money-lender content is not propagated; if it is not advocated on the basis of the very experience of the masses.

The masses have seen that under present property relations they have been expropriated. But our general denunciation of landlords has prevented them from drawing the proper conclusion. Life itself is proving to them that all private property—whether feudal or bourgeois, whether landlord or small scale peasant property—leads to expropriation of the peasant—it means property of the exploiting classes. We have attacked only feudal property in land, and thus prevented them from understanding that the only guarantee against feudal and bourgeois expropriation is nationalisation of land.

Only nationalisation of land will break up feudal property, only nationalisation of land will hand over the land to the tiller for use, only nationalisation will end the land monopoly of the landlords and rich peasants, only nationalisation with its prohibition of purchase and sale of land will eliminate the power of money, of rich ones

to speculate in land, to appropriate it and to expropriate the peasant, only nationalisation gives a guarantee of security to the peasant and against the power of money, against attachment of land by the moneylender, etc. Thus not only the agricultural workers and poor peasants will rally round it, but even the middle peasant, whose experience tallies with what we are saying, can be made to understand that nationalisation, far from threatening him with loss of land, ensures him against expropriation by the richer elements. There is no doubts that initially his vacillation will be very big; incited by the rich peasant, he may be hostile. For he himself has all the prejudices of a property holder against nationalisation. But he can be convinced, especially as he sees the truth with his eyes, especially if we describe to him what is happening to the middle peasant all over the country—statistically, concretely.

Nationalisation of Land—with land to the tiller for use—should be our slogan along with abolition of landlordism, etc.

XV

Another major demand which must figure in our programme is the demand for a living wage of agricultural workers—which will be a tremendously rallying demand to organise the agricultural workers. This, together with limitation of hours of work, extension of other rights of industrial workers, social insurance, etc. will become the broad platform for organising the agricultural workers in a separate organisation. Of course the platform will include the common demand for nationalisation of land, abolition of landlordism, etc. These at present appear to be the additional demands that will have to be incorporated in our agrarian programme.

Certain questions about organisation—questions regarding a separate organisation of agricultural workers, or rural working class as a whole—have been raised. Some comrades have expressed the fear that such an independent organisation might bring about a conflict with poor and middle peasants, especially if the organisation champions a living wage. These questions can be answered briefly, because the foregoing analysis has already made the position clear. The rural proletarians constitute the biggest single group of the agricultural population in many parts. Divorced from land, he is the nearest ally of the proletariat in carrying through the revolution.

He is the closest ally in the democratic as well as the socialist revolution. Proletarian hegemony in the agrarian revolution, in the people's democratic revolution, cannot be established without the rural proletariat taking the lead and initiative in the countryside and leading the poor peasants—another firm ally—and the middle peasant, a vacillating ally. Proletarian hegemony can only be secured through the leadership of the proletariat. Both for the success of the democratic as well as the socialist revolution, the proletariat must see that the rural workers, firmly allied with poor peasants, take the lead and initiative.

The rural workers cannot be roused to this task unless they are organised as a separate class, unless their day-to-day battles are fought against their exploiters through their separate organisation. Their separate trade organisation or organisations and the battles fought through them will create a common class consciousness, rouse political consciousness and enable them to play their vanguard role in the agrarian revolution. It is therefore incumbent that they should be organised in separate organisations for their day-to-day battles. It is further incumbent that the party makes special efforts to recruit this section inside the party, since they are nearest to the proletariat. Special political work, party work among the rural proletarians, recruiting them inside and making them the base of proletarian party in the countryside is incumbent on every communist. It is the ABC of Leninism. Only thus, i.e. by being drawn inside the party and inspired by the proletariat, the rural worker begins to assume a leading role in the agrarian revolution and the battle for people's democracy in the countryside.

The separate organisation of the rural workers must of course have close links forged by common struggle, mutual help and organisational cooperation with the other sections of the rural masses—the poor peasants and the middle peasants, organised in the Kisan Sabha. The rural worker's organisation may be affiliated to the Kisan Sabha, with proper representation—or, better still, representatives of one organisation should invite the corresponding executives of the other for their important meetings, etc., and there should be joint observance of days and of course joint struggles. But it is incumbent, at the same time, that the trade organisation of rural workers or its federation should be affiliated to the All India

Trade Union Congress where its members come into direct touch with the industrial proletariat.

The doubts raised about hostility from certain sections of the peasantry towards the rural workers' movement should not be rejected off hand. There are special elements in the Indian situation which make such hostility probable in the beginning, at least which make it possible that the enemies of the workers and peasants might exploit them to create disruption in the rural population.

First, the fact should not be forgotten that in certain parts of the country quite a big section of the rural workers, especially agricultural workers, consists of untouchables while the peasant sections, both poor and middle, consist of touchables. In UP, Bihar, Maharashtra, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala this is so. This struggles that we have been conducting all these years—mainly based as they were on the middle peasant—have not yet succeeded in battering down the caste walls even in our areas. The fact that both the middle peasant and the poor peasant have sometimes to use the services of at least the rural workers of other trades—sweeper, carpenter, blacksmith—will make them antagonistic to rural workers' wage demands and their separated movement. If this is allowed to happen, the richer sections, against whom the edge of the movement is directed, will utilise the opportunity to start caste conflicts, incite the lower sections of the peasants against the rural workers, and disrupt agrarian unity. The danger should not be underestimated. The touchable peasant in many places quite casually says that the untouchable is getting cheeky.

It must be counteracted from the very beginning by bringing before the poor and middle sections the really antirich-farmer and the antilandlord character of the day-to-day struggle. They should be made to realise that it is a part of their own struggle against the same oppressors. As far as possible, in any new area, strike demonstrations, etc. should be first organised against rich farmers and landlords—wage struggles should be directly carried on against them—so that the antirich-farmer and anti-landlord character is clearly seen. Secondly, such demands as a living wage etc. should be properly explained as another aspect of the same struggle which fights for land for the poor peasant, etc. A living wage for the worker and decent livelihood for the peasant is our demand. It

should be explained like this. The misconception that he will have to foot the bill should go. The landlords and the rich will foot the bill. He also will benefit thereby. This will come by overthrowing the exploiters, etc. The same explanation must be given to the middle peasants. In all cases patient explanation and campaigns to see that the unity is not disrupted are necessary. If this precaution is not taken the struggle of the workers will be betrayed.

Finally, we must take into consideration our past. Our base is primarily a middle-peasant base. We have no desire to liquidate this work of a decade. We must desperately attempt to retain him, answer his doubts, etc., do everything to see that he is saved from going over to the wrong side even temporarily, or from taking a merely neutral attitude towards this question. At the same time, we must decisively go ahead, carrying forward the struggle and overcomes his vacillations through it, if they are not overcome before. All opportunities for explaining, propaganda, solving doubts and creating solidarity should be taken—all tactical handlings of struggles, when to start, how to start, etc.—but we cannot sacrifice the tempo of the struggle for him, cannot wait till he is convinced, till his doubts are solved. If we do sufficient propaganda and do not leave him to his fate, if we continue to maintain our links with him in the course of the struggle, then his doubts will more and more disappear as he sees the agrarian workers fighting desperately. His vacillations however are bound to be great.

XVI

We must refer to another organisational aspect—the role of peasant committees in the struggle of land—of peasant committees as organs of struggle. Our full slogan should be 'Nationalisation of Land' and its distribution for use through peasant committees—which, we should take care to see, are mainly composed of the poor peasants and rural proletarians—i.e. that they are in majority, though the middle peasant will also be there. The committee tradition must be created in the day-to-day struggle itself—whether it is a struggle against ejection, for wage, or for the occupation of land. The committee—elected committee in the course of the struggle, and not the sabha committee—which throws up new militant elements, must be the broad democratic organ to conduct struggles.

It must be the real authority, respected by the people, consisting of active elements thrown up by the struggles, and before which capitulation and vacillation in the leadership, etc, can be exposed. It must be made into the authority—and it can be because it is elected in the course of the struggle and therefore looked upon as the embodiment of unity whose word is law, the call of the movement. Our comrades must popularise these committees and function them as the democratic organs of struggle, and rouse pride in them. They are the weapons of rank-and-file leadership and they must be fully used. When out of the partial struggles the committee idea takes root, it comes into automatic play whenever the masses fight, and gives organised form to the struggle. And when the struggle reaches wide dimensions, leading to the seizure of land, they become the revolutionary peasant committees to seize land and, at a still higher stage, the basis of peasant soviet. Unless the committee is an organ of struggle, is consciously developed as the proper organisational form, the class leadership will not emerge.

XVII

This analysis of the agrarian problem ought to give us the class alignment not only in the agrarian revolution but also in the people's democratic revolution, the organisation of which is our immediate task. The class alignment in our rural areas, which contains the vast majority of our people, is of vital importance in the struggle for people's democracy.

Who are the enemies and who are the friends of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle for people's democracy? Against whom is it directed, who is to be overthrown? What is the difference between the present period and the previous period?

First, the people's democratic revolution is directed towards the overthrow of the political rule of the bourgeoisie. This is basic change in the situation. Formerly our perspective was overthrow the imperialist rule, paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. Today, it is not neutralisation of the compromising role but direct vanquishing of the bourgeois rule in a political battle. From the old position of opposition indirectly, the bourgeoisie has become the spearhead of Indian counter-revolution.

Where do the feudal landlords, princes, etc. stand? The agrarian revolution must liquidate feudalism. The people's democratic revolution is simultaneously directed against feudalism.

In the agrarian areas it must also struggle against the capitalist elements and attack their monopoly in land. The agrarian revolution thus contains both elements, the struggle against feudal exploitation as well as capitalist exploitation.

What about imperialism? The struggle for real independence and freedom of the country is no longer a struggle for a national state, but a struggle to take the country out of the orbit of world imperialist, world-capitalist order; to join the democratic socialist system. People's democracy and remaining within the imperialist orbit are diametrically opposed to each other.

Here we find the interlacing of the democratic and socialist revolutions. The task of liquidating the feudal order is linked with the task of overthrowing the political rule of the bourgeoisie—a task to be accomplished under the leadership of the proletariat.

The task of national independence is linked with the task of breaking away from the capitalist orbit and going into the socialist system of countries—an interlinking of the two, which comes about because the present democratic revolutions are taking place in the context of the developing world-socialist revolution. The meaning of two camps today becomes more and more clear—on the one hand, the camp of imperialism and capitalist order, and on the other hand, the camp of socialism and democracy. The struggle for freedom from imperialist aggression becomes directly linked with the struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist order on a world plane.

Which are the classes that will be the driving forces of this people's democratic revolution?

First, the proletariat, which alone can take a lead in vanquishing the political rule of the bourgeoisie and which must lead it.

Secondly, the rural proletarian and semiproletarian masses, poor peasants, both of whom struggle against feudal as well as capitalist exploitation. The former is the nearest to the proletariat and is directly exploited by the capitalist elements and expresses

the antagonism of commodity production far more sharply than any other rural section. Neither has got any chance of decent existence unless socialism is achieved. They together constitute the big majority of the rural population.

Then come the vacillating allies. The middle peasant vacillates most; firstly, because his social orientation is towards in rich peasant against whom the people's democratic alliance to fight; secondly, he vacillates most because the struggle calls him to fight the bourgeois government about which he has illusions. His vacillations therefore become violent, especially when he realises that the Congress government is to be fought. His vacillations were of a quite different type when it was a question of anti-imperialist struggle and following the oppositional bourgeoisie—he vacillated but he was able to overcome his vacillations because of his anti-imperialist and antifeudal hatred. But today he vacillates most because when he is asked to fight the bourgeois government and rich peasants, he is called upon to fight all that which he aspires to be, his ideal so to say. His vacillations will be therefore of the most violent type.

And yet he can be won over; there is an important place for him in the alliance because he is a victim of both feudal and capitalist exploitation, and the grim truth of life will teach him to ally himself with the fighting forces. The struggle for the alliance of the middle peasant is a vital struggle and it will be successful to the extent the other sections inspire confidence in him by their decisive action. But any neglect of conscious efforts to win him over would prove fatal.

Then comes the petty bourgeoisie of the town and city. The intellectuals, the upper sections, and part of the lower sections get split from the main front, and sections of them range themselves against the proletariat. These are sections who form the upper crust of the state bureaucracy, army, organs of state, and occupy privileged positions as managers, officials in business concerns, factories, establishments, etc.—all of whom look to the present bourgeois government to protect their privileged position.

The remaining—the employees, school teachers, students, clerks, officials, etc.—vacillate, but a section takes a more

and more decisive stand and gets socialist minded. The winning over of this section of the petty bourgeoisie is of vital importance.

In all this, where does the rich peasant, peasant bourgeoisie, stand? Does he vacillate? Can he be neutralised? No. He is one of the main enemies in the rural areas—in fact, the spearhead of bourgeoisie-feudal reaction in rural areas. First, he is a capitalist and he looks upon the government as his government. Any movement directly against that government, he knows, is directed against him—hence he fights doggedly. Secondly, he is an exploiter and the agrarian revolution, which is out to attack his monopoly in land and his exploitation of labour, ranges him against the alliance. He becomes the most fanatical defender of the government, of reaction, of the present order.

The disposition of class forces then appears as follows : The proletariat, basing itself firmly on the rural proletariat and poor peasants, marches in alliance with the middle peasant, against the landlords, while fighting the rich peasants, for the overthrow of the political rule of the bourgeoisie, for the overthrow of feudalism, for taking the country out of the imperialist orbit, for a democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants.

Such is the disposition of the class forces which emerges from our analysis. Such is the meaning of the proletariat basing itself firmly on the rural proletariat and poor peasants.

The alliance, the disposition of the class forces, also shows the interlacing of the democratic revolution with the socialist revolution.

The preponderating force in the class alliance—the force of the proletariat—leading the rural proletariat and poor peasantry, is the basis of the socialist revolution, is the force which brings about the socialist revolution. Thus the main class force is already born and reaching for the next task.

The alliance by overthrowing feudalism discharges the task of the democratic revolution. The direct overthrow by the proletariat of the political rule of the bourgeoisie gives it a proletarian socialist character.

The task of breaking away from the capitalist orbit strengthens

this character. At the same time, the immediate result of the alliance, the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants, marks the stage as completion of the democratic revolution, accentuates the class struggle, strengthens the leadership of the working class and its alliance with toiling peasants.

But all the necessary elements for marching to the next stage area already there. Apart from nationalisation, etc. The main weapon—the alliance of the proletariat and rural workers and poor peasants—is already dominant, and it cannot rest without marching to the next stage, because none of its problems gets solved without socialism. The overthrow of the political rule of the bourgeoisie deprives the class enemy of the state weapon and places it in the hands of the toilers. How quickly the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants—or the people's democratic state—enters the second phase, i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat, depends on how firmly the alliance of the proletariat with rural workers and poor peasants marches against the bourgeoisie, how firmly the leadership of the proletariat is established so that the state is firmly used to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie; how free the proletariat and its party are from illusions about peaceful struggle. Then people's democracy passes from the first to the second stage, the socialist stage—thus the interlacing takes place.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IN INDIA

REPORT MADE BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA TO
THE POLIT BUREAU AND THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE :

Part I

1. THE ACCENTUATION OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, THE CONTINUANCE OF THE UPSURGE DESPITE REPRESSION, FULLY CONFIRMS THE BASIC ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL THESIS

The eight months since the party congress have completely confirmed the analysis of political forces made by the second congress in its political resolution and the forecast of developments. The economic crisis has deepened with every month—till now the bourgeoisie and their government come face to face with it in the shape of ever-increasing inflation.

The monetary inflation, with whose aid the bourgeoisie hid the rapidly-developing crisis—which in people's mind is generally associated with falling prices, loss of wages and open unemployment of thousands—has now brought the economic structure on the verge of collapse. In inflation the bourgeoisie have found the most callous way—the invisible weapon—to fleece and rob the masses, inflict starvation on them, depreciate their labour, reduce their wages and hurl the burdens of the crisis on the shoulders of the masses. The ever-increasing spiral of prices, with wages lagging

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behind. fleeces the worker of his labour and inflicts starvation wages on him and draws him to defend his standard of living and advance claims for permanent guarantee against starvation wages. The dearness allowance everywhere lags far behind the actual rise in the cost of living, and with everyday the bourgeoisie seems to widen the gap. The recent announcement of the government of India to virtually abolish the cheap grainshops, and retain them with only restricted items, is intended to subject the railway workers to the rising spiral of prices, bring about a still further worsening of their conditions, as it would remove the automatic protection against rise in prices afforded by the cheap grainshops and as under new terms of cash allowance.

The question of living wage, security of employment, housing, etc. all remain unsolved—sacrificed to the need of solving the crisis at the expense of the workers.

The inflation, which is expression of the crisis, hits the worker hard and draws him to challenge the government and his exploiters more strongly than ever.

The salaried employee is in the same position as the worker with his salaries static and the cost of living shooting higher and higher. His struggles break out again and again—as the direct result of the inflationary movement, which makes his conditions unbearable.

The inflationary movement ruins the middle peasant, it helps the process of expropriation of the poor peasant and makes the position of the agricultural workers insufferable. The doggedly-fought struggles of the agricultural workers, the tenacity with which the poor peasant fights to get back land from which he has been evicted and the militant and broad sweep of the agrarian struggles—speak of the unbearable conditions created by the rise in prices, which have added a new excruciating burden to the exploitation by landlords and other rural exploiting elements.

Only the landlords and rich peasants have reaped a good harvest out of the rising prices of food products, commercial crops and other agricultural products. The middle peasant even when he has a surplus and is consequently able to cash it on the market and reap good prices, finds himself completely defrauded when he goes as a buyer to the market to purchase goods required for carrying

on cultivation. The price of industrial goods required by him is so high that the little cash earned by him falls too short of his requirements as a purchaser and he runs into debts.

The inflationary crisis thus sharpens the class struggle in the countryside—especially the struggle between the agricultural workers and poor peasants on the one side and the landlords and rich peasants on the other. The ruin of the middle peasant compels him to join the struggle.

A new entrant in the struggle is the police employee of the government who was preceded by other government employees. The desperate situation created by inflationary crisis—the desperate effort to throw the burdens of the crisis on the people—is seen in the fact that the demands of policemen are growing and they are coming on strike. The other government employees too are being drawn in the fight though some of them are temporarily calmed down by petty concessions and show of strength.

Thus the overwhelming majority of population—workers, employees, government servants, policemen, agricultural workers, poor peasants, middle peasants—all are being drawn into the struggle through the direct effects of the inflationary movement.

But inflation is only the expression of the accentuated economic crisis and a weapon of throwing additional burdens on the masses—the burdens of the crisis—by defrauding people of their labour through monetary devices. The fact however that the government itself is forced to talk against inflation shows that this method of throwing additional burdens is no longer enough, that the ruling class requires more drastic measures than the existing distribution of national income secured through inflation that it requires open and frontal attacks.

For inflation only expresses the accentuated stage of the crisis. It cannot remove the basic causes of the crisis which goes on getting deeper and deeper. These basic causes are seen in the total inability to produce more or keep to the old level of production within the framework of present relations of production. The relations of production have become a fetter on the growth of production and whatever the ruling class does, the basic problem cannot be solved.

This is seen in relation to the production of food and the

production relations obtaining on land. The rapid deterioration of production on land, rapid impoverishment and expropriation of the producer from land as well as means of production, is a direct consequence of the feudal and capitalist relations in agriculture.

The war years have accentuated this process tenfold. By concentrating land and means of production in the hands of a fewer and fewer people, the agriculture of the small producer has been ruined. It has become impossible for land to be cultivated with efficiency by the small producer.

This is the basis of deficit and famine economy in the countryside—one which has now become a permanent feature. The old relations of production mean famine and destitution, expropriation of the producer from land—and must certainly drive millions to fight.

These basic causes of the agrarian crisis were sharply thrown into relief in the period since the second congress when the struggle of the poor peasants and agricultural workers broke into militant fights, when starting with the unhoarding of paddy in Kerala—a form immediately dictated by famine economy—it developed into clashes with police and hired gangs, into a miniature civil war.

The same collapse is to be seen on the industrial front, though here loose talks of importing capital goods etc. act as a smokescreen—hiding the real nature of the crisis. In spite of all efforts, illegalisation of strikes, enforcing compulsory arbitration etc., production is on the decline. In so far as the decline is real—and not faked by capitalists due to their desire to evade taxation and sell in the black market—it reveals, apart from such factors as breakdown of machinery etc., the limitations and restrictions imposed by capitalist profits. Firstly, the growth of strike struggles and the increasing demands of workers themselves show that the present conditions of production are coming in sharp conflict with the real producer and are a sign of the growing collapse of capitalist production.

Secondly, there is sabotage by capitalists, who do not want to increase production unless conditions are first ensured that the workers' wages are cut, that the increase in production would not result in fall in profits. This is already seen in connection with the question of three shifts in textiles. The millowners undertake to do

it only if they are allowed to increase workload, distribute the number of workers in two shifts in three shifts—and thus increase workload per worker and reduce the cost of production which would ensure that even if the price of cloth falls, the capitalist would get enormous profits and which would also enable the capitalist to retrench the workers in the other shift when he finds it less profitable to employ them.

Increase in production without a corresponding guarantee of profits, of reduction of wages and increase in workload per worker frightens the capitalists, who see the looming shadows of the world crisis in the near future.

The capitalists seek to find a way out by importing the more up-to-date machinery—which would enable them to reduce employment and ensure profits by cutting down the wage-bill.

But the importation of capital goods from abroad, whether for renovating old industries or starting new ones, would not solve the problem. For the bourgeoisie will not be able to solve the problem of the market—which because of the destitution of the peasantry is shrinking every day. The feudal and capitalist relations in agriculture act as fetters on the development of the productive forces—both in industry and agriculture. In relation to industry the agrarian relations hinder the development by narrowing down the home market—and hence the crisis continues despite all attempts to introduce new machinery etc. The bourgeoisie accentuates the crisis by maintaining old relations in agriculture, by depriving thousands of jobs, by cutting down wages—all of which narrow the market still further.

The accentuation of the crisis is already seen on the industrial front, though it is masked by blackmarket, high prices and inflation. Actually blackmarket and high prices are only means of depriving the common people of ordinary necessities—i.e. an expression of the way in which the burden of the crisis is passed on to the people. But it appears only in the nonclass form of shortage of goods—though the sufferers are only the exploited masses.

The accentuation is seen in high prices and in the denial of necessities and a decent standard of life to the producer, in the growing strike-struggles and demands of the workers, in the ferocious

repression against the workers, in the insistent demand of the capitalists that production cannot proceed unless strikes are illegalised, wages are cut, work-load is increased, thousands are rendered unemployed, and in the fact that with all this, the home market shrinks more and more.

The basic causes of the capitalist crisis, the impossibility to solve it remain and bring fresh collisions. The basic cause of the revolutionary upsurge thus gets accentuated at every step. Last eight months have conclusively proved it.

Revolutionary Upsurge Continues

Out of this has arisen the great struggles of the last eight months—the struggles of workers and peasants, students—struggles against which most barbarous methods of repression were used (Kerala, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal)—struggles which saw fascist terror against the toilers.

These struggles bear one special character. Not only are they born out of economic desperation; but they come in the wake of growing disillusionment with the Congress governments and are undertaken by toilers in direct defiance of the Congress government. In them are being trained and steeled the new forces which are destined to overthrow the bourgeois rule. They reveal not only the rapid process of disillusionment, the rapid decline of the influence of the Congress, but also the growing desperate determination and militancy of the masses. They often develop into armed clashes in the face of terror. The terror—one-tenth of which would have formerly demoralised the fighters—now evokes only indignation and greater determination. How often have the leaders of the party, in recent struggles, underestimated the power of resistance of the masses under terror (Coimbatore, Kerala), and thinking that all resistance is broken, have been surprised by the masses who have refused to yield to terror and decided to continue resistance? All old standards of measuring the resistance power of the masses have gone to the winds. The masses are no longer the old masses, afraid of terror, always dragged back by the illusion of a secure life. They are the new masses on the eve of revolutionary battles—those who more and more realise that retreat is impossible and those who are

developing a great confidence in the victory of their cause, because they have begun to see their real strength.

The partial struggle of the present period therefore become wide mass battles, armed conflicts—miniature civil wars—and when they are organised on a sufficiently big scale easily develop into political battles and throw up embryonic state forms (Telangana)—such is the logic of the situation. No Chinese wall today divides the two as it did divide during the period of stabilisation. The terroristic repression teaches the masses to march forward and to challenge the state with all their power. It convinces them that without such a fight no struggle is possible, thus raising the struggle to a political plane—its stage being determined by the form and successful character of the resistance offered.

Naturally in these struggles, which the party had the great privilege of leading, the government concentrated all its terror and venom against us and the militant masses under our leadership. Rape, torture, burning of houses, murder, gangsterism, assault on women, merciless beating of well-known leaders—all these were systematically utilised to crush the struggle. The bourgeoisie seeks to rule the people with terror. The Congress government has revealed itself as the unashamed dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, maintained in defence of the feudal-imperialist-bourgeoisie alliance.

But despite this terror and the ruthless repression launched against the CPI which is rapidly assuming its role as the vanguard of the revolutionary forces, despite the terror launched against the masses—the bourgeoisie and the Congress governments have been compelled by the resistance of the masses to go slow; the Congress governments have found it increasingly difficult to solve the crisis at the expense of the people and hence had to adopt tactics of postponement, disruption, concessions etc. before a frontal offensive could be launched.

The glorious resistance offered by the workers of Coimbatore in the prolonged four-month textile strike; the recent strike of SI Railway staff; strikes like the militant sweepers' strike in Bombay; the doggedly-fought strike of Calcutta Port Trust workers and of other workers; the textile strikes of CP and Berar; the innumerable strikes all over India led by the unions of the AITUC, led by the

CPI leaders, and often by unions belonging to socialist and other organisations—the dogged resistance offered to every new offensive, or the doggedness with which every new demand was fought—have all created fear of the working-class resistance in government quarters and made them realise that any sudden and all round offensive will meet with general resistance, and pass into even a general strike, bringing the whole structure crashing down.

The organised working class led by the CPI bars the way to an easy attack against the workers. It inspires the workers under the leadership of other parties. It is this fear of working class strength that has hitherto saved the railway, postal and other government workers from immediate unemployment, from retrenchment. If the government has hitherto succeeded in postponing the redress of their demands—thanks are mainly due to the treachery of reformists like Jayaprakash Narayan. The government similarly dared not sanction the textile millowners' proposal of three shifts by distributing the present number in three shifts because an attempt to do so in Ahmedabad led to a revolt on the part of textile workers against Nanda & Co last year.

In spite of the repeated demands of the capitalists for retrenchment and rationalisation, the government representatives, who have been mass leaders and who therefore were able to judge the temper of the masses correctly, would not rush into such measures. They resorted to disruption, softening of the workers through INTUC, disruption through the socialists, through protracted negotiations, postponement, through arbitration etc. so that they should have sufficient time to deal with the masses. They banned strikes, repressed strikes; at the same time they established arbitration tribunals to deflect the discontent in constitutional channels, to arm the reformists, and to be able to put off the strikes. In many cases they also granted wage increases to the workers, at the same time leaving the door open to the capitalists to launch rationalisation.

Till now the arbitration machinery itself has been used to give petty concessions, and to tire out the workers—making a struggle at the end difficult. But now even the limits of these petty concessions have been reached. What the capitalists demand is not concessions to workers, but open frontal offensive; not deflection of discontent but open warfare. For this purpose arbitrary powers of the employers

and police batons are necessary, not arbitration tribunals. And the government is rapidly moving towards that.

Meanwhile, compelled by the resistance of the organised workers, the government has been moving slowly. It is even now afraid to challenge the organised strength of the workers. It relies on disruption, propaganda and illegalisation of the CPI and help from the reformists who promise to retreat and betray at the first official offensive.

In the coming period therefore in the name of fighting inflation the government will embark upon wholesale offensive. It is heralded by the withdrawal of cheap grain facilities for railway workers. The government relies on ruthless repression and short and swift struggle. But the forces of the working class are strong and if they take an unbending attitude, the government offensive can be defeated. It is not at all easy for the government to challenge the strength of the workers. The government wants to do it piecemeal. It is afraid of the united strength of the workers.

The resistance offered by the workers to the capitalist method of solving the crisis thus has till now thrown the government on the defensive and forced it to move slowly. It has saved the jobs of tens of thousands. It is a big testimony to the strength of the workers.

The last eight months have not been months of victory for capitalists and the government. They have been months of struggles which have forced the government to be cautious in inciting the workers to take up the challenge.

Similarly resistance has grown in rural areas with peasants and agricultural workers in a militant and fighting mood. The recent struggles show that the peasant masses were beginning to hurl the full force of discontent against every aspect of government policy—procurement, prices, land, wages etc. The coming months which will see governmental procurement, and which will mean more hardships for the smaller peasants, will see a general movement for not giving any grain to the government, accompanied by no-rent and land-to-the-tiller campaigns.

Along with the crisis and the repressive measures which have accompanied it, the last eight months have seen a growth of mass

resistance which makes it more and more difficult for the government to solve the crisis at the expense of the people.

Nehru Government—Spearhead of Counter-Revolution

The characterisation of the Nehru government as a collaborationist bourgeois government has not only been fully borne out by the events of the last eight months but has been enriched. Recent events have thrown added light on the real face of the government.

In its internal policy, the government, as we have seen, seeks to rule by terror in the interests of capitalists, in the defence of the present capitalist set up. Where it is embarrassing to use direct police terror, it uses its mass influence to organise terror gangs from Congressmen (Kerala) and starts civil war. These gangs are used in hundreds and thousands so that they cease to be mere gangster warfare but develop into civil war.

In industrial matters, the government has thrown off its mask and has come forward as an avowedly capitalist government. It has given up nationalisation, it has assured defence of the capitalist order; it is giving relief from taxation to capitalists, it has sanctioned rationalisation; it is itself embarking upon retrenchment; in the name of fighting inflation it intends to throw fresh burdens on the people, does not prevent the capitalists from reaping huge profits but only limits distribution of dividends. The capitalists attack every reference the government spokesmen made to nationalisation and the government retreats. It is now becoming clear that the government is formally giving up even the ten-year limit and assuring the capitalists that private enterprise will dominate. All legislation regarding living wage etc. is shelved; by baddling about fair wages, by relating them to fair profits, the government cheats the workers and protects the capitalists.

On agrarian questions, the government pursues the policy of adapting feudal land relations to the needs of capitalism and relies on the new class of rich peasants as its firm base. The landlord bills of provincial ministries were a fantastic plan to advance the interests of the rich peasants by making the poor peasants, taxpayers etc. to compensate the landlords and to transform the landlord

in so far as he held the land into a capitalist landlord. The main beneficiary was to be the rich peasant as well as the landlord whose financial interests were to be protected through compensation and whose feudal methods of exploitation were to be modified to suit the needs of the capitalist conditions. Even if these bills are postponed today, the government would be moving in the same direction through one method or another, enabling the rich peasant to loot the agricultural workers and poor peasants, protecting him against the depredations of the landlord, while leaving the landlord free to exploit the poor and middle peasants and agricultural workers.

In agrarian matters also the government has come out as the avowed champion of capitalist elements whose modification of and compromise with feudalism only enhances the burden of exploitation of the toiling peasants.

It is because of this that intense repression is launched; civil liberties are suppressed; the public safety acts enacted: mass arrests of members of CPI ordered; arrests and convictions of workers, peasants, students and occasionally of youths under socialist influence are ordered. The policy could not be implemented except through a general attack on the people as a whole, except by crushing every vestige of democratic right and suppressing every opposition to the ruling clique. The intimidating practices resorted to against the socialists whenever the reformist leadership is forced to embark on strike by the pressure of workers; the intimidation practices against them in the assembly elections (United Provinces), and the unscrupulous use of repressive powers against the CP, its press, its members—constitute an eloquent testimony to the regime which the Congress wants to establish. It is the familiar path—under the cloak of anti-communism, reaction's stealthy attempt to march to fascism and crush all democratic forces at the head of which stands the Communist Party.

The political resolution characterised the government as a collaborationist government—as a government of compromise and collaboration with imperialism. It definitely stated that the bourgeoisie had ceased to play an oppositional role. It also noted that there would be conflicts and differences between the bourgeoisie and imperialism but these would be solved at governmental level.

All these characterisations have not only been proved but enriched in the last eight months.

The bourgeoisie and its government have come out not only as mere compromisers and collaborators; they have come out as the spearhead of the counter-revolutionary forces, the main force which alone because of its mass influence can defend the capitalist order, create disruption among the masses, and organise terror. No other class, neither imperialism nor feudalism, can do it. No other class today can secure wide social support, even though temporary, for the present regime of capitalist order; none can direct such terror and still continue to exist and rule for some time.

Hangmen of Popular Revolts in States

The Indian bourgeoisie is the most fighting active partner in the bourgeois-feudal-imperialist combine. In relation to the people it is the strongest of the three and today when the main immediate task of the combine is to stem the tide of revolution, the Indian bourgeoisie comes forward as the leading member of the combine.

The fight for revolution therefore breaks out directly against the rule of the Congress government—and no amount of curses and abuses to imperialism can alter the fact.

In the consciousness of people as well as in reality the fight for revolution means the fight to overthrow the Congress government. It is so because the Congress government and the bourgeoisie are not mere puppets but because in reality they are active partners and leading forces in the combine.

This fact has a number of consequences—the chief among them being that initially the fight for revolution starts with divided forces, i.e. a large section of Congress masses is not prepared to believe that it is necessary to overthrow the government and is therefore often hesitating to make a move, that the present government is not automatically isolated as its predecessor which was the national oppressor.

It means further that the present government cannot be beaten just by anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist slogans. Nor can it be beaten by shouting that it is a mere puppet government; that it is

imperialism which rules in reality; and by calling on the people to overthrow the imperialist rule. It means that people have to be convinced of the necessity of overthrowing a government which many of them considered to be their own.

The government's role of a spearhead of counter-revolution and protector of the present order was clearly seen in its dealings with the accession of states. Under the original plan of imperialism, the states, though they might not have remained formally independent, would have secured so much freedom as to be continuous thorns on the side of the bourgeoisie and a weapon of imperialist pressure on the bourgeoisie. Perhaps Hyderabad was in the early stages marked out for independence.

But imperialism forgot one important and vital factor in its calculation—the people—whom the bourgeoisie alone could utilise. In actual life therefore the bourgeoisie acting within the framework of the Mountbatten compromising plan has been able to bargain hard and advance its own interests and swing the princes to its side from being a reserve of imperialism. Though the various states signed the instruments of accession prepared by Mountbatten which only handed over defence, foreign affairs etc. to the centre, the Congress leaders soon utilised the threat of mass movement of the one hand and refusal of military help on the other. Thus prince after prince was compelled to agree to elected legislatures which, though they were with restricted franchise, were enough to give the bourgeoisie the required majority and pressure to dominate the states from within—and collaborate with feudal elements on terms favourable to the bourgeoisie—and in consonance with its new status at the centre.

In Hyderabad the bourgeoisie played the same game. Knowing the importance of Hyderabad it took every step with the advice of Mountbatten. But its trump card to frighten imperialism was the popular movements, strength of communist forces etc. It agreed to hold back the popular force, curb the communists, provided imperialism brought pressure on the Nizam to accede, failing which it proposed to take action. Again its trump card is elected legislature which under any wide franchise gives it complete majority. Imperialism could not say no to this demand and wanted a compromise.

In Kashmir the bourgeoisie overstepped the bounds of compromise, went to the UNO and got it in the neck.

What is necessary to understand is that the bourgeoisie through accession etc. has not only compromised with the feudal elements but has advanced its own position relatively—both in relation to imperialism and feudal princes; and that it has made the feudal princes its own satellites—in the combine. The princes feel that today only the Congress government can protect them against the wrath of the people and not imperialism. The bourgeoisie-feudal alliance is not only in existence against the people but in the bargaining between imperialism and the bourgeoisie the feudal princes act as the ally of the bourgeoisie, i.e. its satellite.

It is this development that now enables the bourgeoisie and its government to come out as the ferocious defender of the mixed order, of the feudal princes etc. Having advanced its own interests, the bourgeoisie act as the spearhead of counter-revolution defending the princely order modified by its own advance. From the point of view of revolutionary development and the interests of the masses, its compromise is nothing but surrender and treachery. From its own selfish class point of view it is a strategic advance which places the initiative in its hands both with regard to feudal princes and in connection with the beating down of the revolutionary mass movement against feudalism.

By betraying the people's interests, by exploiting its influence with the masses, the bourgeoisie has at last secured such an arrangement that through all the compromises it has been able to advance its own interests, and at the same time help the princes by acting as the hangman of the popular revolts. Through this it has further succeeded in tying the princes to itself and facing imperialism with a united bloc. The bourgeoisie has not only improved its position in relation to feudal elements but also in relation to imperialism.

Independence and Slavery to Imperialism

But yet the bourgeoisie and its government remain tied to the imperialists.

Firstly, menaced by the rising tide of communism in Asia and

Europe, panicky that the same developments are taking place here (Sardar Patel's repeated warnings about south-east Asia), the bourgeoisie and its government seek to meet this national and international danger by allying themselves, i.e. seeking the protection of the imperialist powers, through treaties etc. These treaties and understandings are nothing but an alliance against the labouring masses of India and other countries—and the USSR and other democratic countries. This means joining directly or indirectly the world front of imperialists against the world front of socialism and democracy, for the defence of capitalist order at home and abroad. It means a foreign policy dictated by imperialists and interests of capitalist order, anti-Soviet, anti-socialist—a defence based on subservience to the imperialist powers and integrated to war plans of imperialist aggression. It means sub-ordination of India's defence and foreign policy to the dictates of imperialism—in the cause of anti-Sovietism and anti-communism—and sacrifice of independence and sovereignty to the needs of imperialism.

Secondly, the Indian capitalists are dependent on the imperialists in yet another way. For industrial development there are two paths—the path of socialist development, the path of national freedom and democracy. Following this path India could get help for economic advance from the USSR and democratic countries. This would mean economic advance which would safeguard national sovereignty. But the capitalists want the other path—the path of building Indian economy not in co-operation with the USSR but with imperialists. This means capitalist development is determined by the war-needs of imperialist powers and not by the interests of the people. It means begging for capital goods from imperialists who are not prepared to send them unless you sell your foreign policy and defence to them and also agree to accept them as economic partners, and guarantee them that there will be low taxation, no nationalisation, suppression of labour, cheap labour and drive against communists and other democratic forces.

Thus the price of defending the capitalist order, of co-operating with imperialism means complete domination of internal economic life and foreign relations and defence by world imperialists—loss

It is thus that dependence and slavery to imperialism is brought

about; it is thus that imperialists begin to dominate political and economic life—and not in the old way. It is thus that the bourgeoisie is formally independent; that there comes into existence a formally independent national state—and yet the people continue to be enslaved.

This development is once more clearly seen in the more and more open trek towards imperialist war blocs, the alignment on the various questions in UNO, the open sub-servience to the imperialist powers, the decision to have relations with the commonwealth which is tied to the west-European union and Anglo-American war bloc.

All these confirm the formulation made in the resolution that the bourgeoisie and its government stand for the war bloc of aggressors, against socialism and democracy.

II. EIGHT MONTHS OF REPRESSION—CORE OF THE PARTY STANDING FIRM—A SECTION DISPLAYS WEAKNESS DUE TO NON-PROLETARIAN COMPOSITION OF THE PARTY—EMERGENCE OF REFORMIST DEVIATION IN NEW FORMS—EXAMPLES

Heavy blows fell on the party immediately after the second congress. Untold repression was launched in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra and other provinces. Number of prominent leaders were arrested, and the virtual illegalisation dislocated the work of the party in the beginning.

The repression launched against our comrades and the masses fighting under our leadership was brutal to the extreme. Torture of the worst kind including driving of pins under nails, merciless flogging, beating, breaking of ribs and bones, raping of women and tortures of women—all these were let loose. Comrades found carrying messages and papers were beaten to pulp to get information from them about the whereabouts of underground leaders.

To the honour of our party, of the masses fighting under our leadership, it must be said that they stood heroically to this repression and loss of morale was rare. Young workers in Tamil Nadu, young

kisans in Kerala stood the worst kind of torture but would not give a word on information to the enemy. In the first battle against torture and sadistic terror our south bases—Tamil Nadu and Kerala—stood as a glorious example of revolutionary morale and determination of purpose.

From inside the jail young comrades and old veterans carried on the fight through hungerstrikes—fighting against the indignities imposed on them. A. K. Gopalan and other comrades from the south, our UP comrades, comrades from Punjab—old veterans like Sohan Singh Bhakna etc.—all fought the indignities and defended communist honour. They blazed a new path and brought fresh glory to the party.

And in leading the mass struggle of the new type our Kerala comrades led by K.P.R. Gopalan set a new glorious example of revolutionary organisation and leadership. The enemies of the people took vengeance on them by brutally beating them after their arrests and inflicting the worst kind of torture on them.

Yet it is a fact that in many provinces—including major provinces where repression was heavy—the party began to reel under it and unstable elements getting demoralised and even running away from the party. Even in those provinces where repression was not so brutal and nothing compared with the worst in the southern provinces, wavering and unstable elements, accustomed to legal conditions and never having had faced repression, began to waver and vacillate before it, raising doubts about the party line.

One of the legacies of the reformist period is the overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois composition of the party. It was clearly revealed in our analysis of the composition of the party congress made by the credentials committee.

As a logical consequence of the reformist policy the party was based on the wrong classes. The working-class, the poor peasant and the agricultural worker were in the main neglected—so far as recruitment inside the party was concerned. In the name of nonsectarianism bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals, untempered by Marxist education, were encouraged with all their faults; even these elements themselves were prevented from taking

a firm stand against capitalists and reformists and often denounced as terrorists, *bhadralogs* etc. when their anti-imperialist instincts drove them to take a correct stand.

With Marxist education discouraged, with reformist policy in operation and with workers not supposed to study Marxism—it was next to impossible to inspire the workers to join the party in large numbers. With reformism masquerading as Marxism, the importance of working class as a class was also ignored and no effort was made to promote working-class cadres, to train them etc.

It is thus that we find that though our party in Andhra has a strong following in the agricultural workers, though it is perhaps the only provincial unit that has from the beginning led struggles of agricultural workers and organised them—the organised strength of agricultural workers in Andhra is 60,000, by far the biggest in any province—yet politically, because of the reformist line of the CC, it is the rural intellectuals, sons of rich peasants and middle peasants that preponderate in important positions, and the party politically based itself on the vacillating politics of the middle peasants, and allowed itself to be influenced even by rich-peasant ideology. The logical conclusion of this was that though our party in Andhra no doubt took up the struggle of poor peasants and agricultural workers, the two played an ineffective part both inside the party and in the kisan movement and not the leading part they should have played. Inside the party the middle peasant or the rural intellectual is the leader and not the poor peasant or the agricultural worker.

To take another instance, the party in Bengal and especially Calcutta in spite of having led so many strikes is almost exclusively based on the nonproletarian strata, i.e. its composition is nonproletarian.

It is because of this wrong social base that in Andhra half the party nearly collapsed before the intense repression—some prominent members, even one or two members of the provincial committee, having deserted the party. The havoc was worst among functionaries of lower committees—village committees, cells etc., which were manned by intellectuals, sons of rich peasants, etc. Both in Tamil

Nadu with its working class and Kerala with its poor peasant base, the party and its masses withstood the repression very well.

At the same time it is a fact that the overwhelming majority of members—coming from all sections—stood their ground heroically in all the provinces. But nonetheless waverings and vacillations, and even desertions were there because of petty-bourgeois composition of the party. If Marxist law of class struggle and class understanding has any meaning it means that unless the social composition of the party is quickly changed, unless the overwhelming majority of members are strengthened in their Marxism—i.e. unless proletarianisation of the party is carried on both ideologically and in composition—even then elements which have remained firm now, will vacillate when still bigger offensives are unleashed.

The overwhelming petty-bourgeois composition of the party therefore made it almost inevitable that some elements in the party should vacillate before the repression and cast doubts about the fighting line. But even apart from repression the social composition of the party made it almost inevitable that a number of petty-bourgeois elements should run riot, interpret the line according to their special illusions, and advocated the same old reformist path in a different guise. The party congress gave a line based on class realities, but it is the inevitable tendency of the petty-bourgeois to forget class realities and substitute himself as the driving force of history and advocate slogans which really turn out to be reformist.

One of the results of the self-criticism made by the central committee was that certain petty-bourgeois elements—not the majority—consider themselves free to put any interpretation they liked on the line; criticise the central committee without even reference to the party congress thesis; and of course forget that the party was based on Marxism-Leninism and that the congress had adopted a long political resolution.

Thus vacillations and hesitations arise regarding the party line among certain elements though the overwhelming majority has steadfastly stuck to the line and has attempted to improve its understanding. The vacillations, wrong understanding, the role of irresponsible critics—is emphasised in a small section of leadership—

central and provincial and in certain intellectual and petty-bourgeois elements in the ranks, and among those occupying positions in the kisan and trade-union movements.

First come those who panicky before the repression want to return to a line which would not disturb the quiet tenor of their life, restore firm legal conditions to make the party and appendage of the bourgeoisie. To such category belong certain leaders and also the hidden opponents of the party line who dared not oppose it in the congress but who are waiting for a suitable opportunity to come out with the old advice.

Next come those who have made to genuine self-criticism of their own past, who wrongly think that they have been right all the time and who therefore fail to take the political decisions of the congress seriously and advocate their own reformist conception of class relations and political line. To this category belong the Andhra secretariat—whose documents besides being reformist, reveal that they have not taken the congress seriously and have not made any genuine revolutionary self-criticism of themselves. The line advocated by them in the first document has not only nothing to do with the party congress line but constitutes an attempt to restore the former reformist line.

Next come deviations arising out of a failure to apply the line to certain special questions like nationality etc. where just because the resolution fails to analyse the question on the basis of class relations, the correct way is not easily found and hang-over of the past remains.

These are open manifestations of right-reformism. Added to this is the new disease—the hidden manifestation of right-reformism which masquerades as Left-revolutionism, as uncompromising struggle against reformism.

This is a dangerous tendency because a number of honest elements, genuinely revolutionary and yielding to none in their desire to break away from right-reformism and carry on a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, became victims of this tendency in their just anger and indignation at repression, or general impatience. These elements find themselves often in the

strange company of those who are at heart reformists but who raise every time extreme slogans, general slogans, irrespective of place and time, to reduce the party line to absurdity and thus made out a case for going back to the old reformist line.

Whatever the subjective desire of the honest elements, howsoever eager and honest they might be in their desire to fight reformism, the bourgeoisie cannot be fought unless on each and every occasion the concrete class situation is studied, and concrete slogans are advanced to fight them. However it is precisely this that is forgotten by the petty-bourgeois revolutionist—the typical disease of all petty-bourgeoisie being the ignoring of the class realities. That is why it leads to the same reformist results as an open reformist policy—i.e. it paralyses the proletariat, its ability to fight the bourgeoisie. expose it, isolate it. It has to be combated inside the party seriously. In what form does this petty-bourgeois revolutionism which leads to right-reformist results appear? It appears as a repetition of general slogans and abandonment of all special efforts to make the masses realise the correlations of our general line.

The special characteristic of this type of petty-bourgeois revolutionaries is total inability to study concrete class relations, to apply the line to a developing situation. It is abandonment of all pretence to base oneself on a class analysis.

These deviations have come in manifold forms and various ways. The Andhra secretariat made class formulations totally at variance with the party thesis and declared that only the big bourgeoisie have gone collaborationist—and from this they logically deduced that in the agrarian revolutionary struggles the rich peasant is not to be fought but to be neutralised. This open advocacy of class-collaboration, this pseudo-class analysis whose practical conclusion was collaboration with the rich peasantry would have had the political consequence of returning to the Mountbatten resolution, for it means only Tatas and Birlas are no longer oppositional, the remaining section of the bourgeoisie was still oppositional—and from this someone in the Congress would have been described as the representative of the oppositional bourgeoisie and the conclusion would have been drawn that we should cooperate with him or them. This was only one step short of advocating

the policy of driving a wedge between the Congress and big business saving certain Congress leaders from the clutches of big business and so on.

This was combined with a lot of Left phraseology about Nehru being fascist—about Telangana etc.—all of which of course was mere dressing for the opportunist theory of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and for finding someone other than Nehru or Patel—Jayaprakash Narayan for instance—to rely on. The Andhra documents reveal right reformism in its crassest form.

In Bengal a similar thing was attempted without the class analysis. The Bengal provincial secretariat passed a trade-union resolution which liquidates the trade-union upsurge and in the course of which comrades solemnly discussed whether there was upsurge or not, totally forgetting the crisis and the economic analysis made by the party congress.

In UP, Azamgarh furnishes an instance of petty-bourgeois funk before the masses, before a wide sweep of mass struggles, running away from the battle in the name of organisation, and with Telangana on the lips funking mass struggle and satisfying the conscience by attempting to organise individual actions.

On many occasions the deviation appears in the shape of an exclusive emphasis on securing the technical means of struggle, without having any masses behind us. Give us the means—becomes a substitute for rallying the masses. In this form it amounts to means divorced from the real struggle of the masses.

Petty-bourgeois revolutionism also appears as a refusal to fight the machinations of imperialism, feudal reaction and bourgeoisie in the concrete—and bases itself not on the actual condition and stage of class struggle, but on the heroism of phrases. For instance on the question of Hyderabad this type of phrase-mongering advocated resistance to the Indian Union army as "imperialist aggression". It did not stop to think about the stage of the democratic movement, the consciousness of the people, the machinations of the Nizam and the manoeuvrings of the bourgeoisie. Left phrase-mongering which would have helped the bourgeoisie to isolate the CPI and which would have made the masses believe that the CPI

stand helps the Nizam while Congress opposes the nizam—such would have been the logical conclusion of such a policy.

The same deviation also appears on the question of Kashmir, where this type of outlook takes a position of no distinction between the raiders and the Indian army—under the excuse that there is no distinction between Pakistan and Indian Union. According to this standpoint not only is there not distinction between Pakistan and Indian Union on any question, that no distinction can be made on any future question also; also that there is no distinction between Indian Union and imperialism—is not the former a tool of Anglo-American imperialists, they argue. The counter-revolutionary result of this outlook is to be seen in the acts of the communists of Pondicherry who have shamelessly advocated remaining inside the French imperialist union.

The heroic stand of making no distinctions only helps imperialism—and its right-reformist friends, the pro-imperialist reformism, which also was prevalent in the worst days of reformist deviation.

The right-reformist tendency further appears in yet another Left form—in the form of saying that nothing has changed—that the Mountbatten award and subsequent developments have not meant any shift in the class relations, arguing as if imperialism rules as before. The advocates of this outlook become extremely impatient when they hear anybody say, "The bourgeoisie has secured power" etc. According to them even the bourgeoisie has not gained by the deal. They thus advance slogans as if it is an imperialist state isolated from the masses, fail to see in the bourgeoisie the spearhead of counter-revolution, fail to see that the present government of state just because it is manned by the bourgeoisie has yet popular support which must be weaned away and in practice relies on classes and strata which are either wavering or inimical to the proletariat. Their slogan "nothing has changed" leads them to the old class set-up in which the bourgeoisie was oppositional with its followers spontaneously playing an anti-imperialist role, and they rely on this. While they appear to condemn the bourgeois most with their slogan "nothing has changed" their practice is such that they

appear to rely on rich peasants and other sections of the bourgeoisie, as well as its immediate petty-bourgeois followers to spontaneously rally round them.

In the trade-union struggles, the deviation appears as rejection of steadfastly building TUs, exploiting the possibility of legal TU movement, boycott in principle of works committees etc.—all of which can be effectively summarised as failure to wage a dogged fight for working class unity—for the class unity of the working class. The struggle for the extension of our TUs through united front tactics, of working-class unity through special work in reformist unions, the building of class unity in the course of strike struggles by building wide and broad-based organs of proletarian resistance—is not being properly organised. In short, we are more or less content with what we are holding and are not planning an all-out effort to wage a persistent struggle in all forms—from failure to work out mass campaigns—to isolate and undermine the bourgeois influence among the workers.

On the kisan front the deviation is one of holding back the agricultural workers, poor peasants, and relying on middle and rich peasants—one which is being overcome.

Similarly there is the deviation on organisational questions which arose out of a wrong political outlook. Despite the wide offensive against the party, comrades in certain provinces take a bourgeois reformist attitude towards illegal apparatus, underground work and fail to protect the party apparatus. In Bengal the provincial secretariat would not be roused to the danger to the existence of the party even after a member of the PB had brought it to the notice of the secretariat. The way in which leading comrades were arrested in Azamgarh along with the DC, the way in which the entire Kanpur DC was arrested—point out to a reckless disregard of elementary principles, an outlook based on formal democracy fostered in the period of reformism and strengthened by a wrong interpretation of the self-criticism made by the CC and a complacent reformist outlook towards the safety of the apparatus.

III. LENINIST CONCEPTION OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE PRESENT STAGE OF THE REVOLUTION IN INDIA

These questions cannot be tackled unless certain fundamental notions are clarified. Obviously many of these deviations arise from confusion between strategy and tactics—strategy of the entire period and the tactical slogans given from time to time; from a confusion between the basic slogans of a period and intermediary slogans which take the masses forward to the realisation of the basic slogans; from a failure to understand the real implications of the vanguard role of the party.

Inside the Communist Party the understanding of a whole period and the strategy chalked out for a given stage of the revolution cannot be challenged every now and then, directly or indirectly. It changes and can be changed only if the party feels that the understanding of the period as a whole is wrong, that the class relationship is wrongly understood and therefore the understanding must be changed or the old class relationship has become obsolete or if the stage of revolution to which the understanding related is over etc. For an understanding of the period and the strategy for the period are based on an existing class set-up, on the role of various classes—and to change them, it must be first proved that the roles of the classes have changed, that the particular period is over. All suggestions, amendments, questions, doubts which only seek to change the basic understanding indirectly, surreptitiously, without raising fundamental questions—for instance the existence of the world crisis, class relationship in India—are impermissible. For instance to raise the question whether upsurge exists or not is really to raise the question whether world crisis exists or not and whether we are in a revolutionary period, a period of revolutionary advance and victory or not. No one dare raise the question. Yet opportunism smuggles itself by avoiding battle on basis issues and seeking to modify them.

To avoid this confusion we must clarify the Leninist conception of strategy, basic slogans, tactics etc. Stalin in his *Foundations of Leninism* wrote on "Strategy and Tactics as the Science of Leadership in the Class Struggle of the Proletariat."

"Strategy", according to Stalin, "is the determination of the main blow of the proletariat at a given stage of the revolution, the elaboration of a corresponding plan for the disposition of the revolutionary forces (the main and secondary reserves), the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution."

"Strategy deals with the main forces of the revolution and their reserves. It changes with the passing of the revolution from one stage to another, but remains essentially unchanged throughout a given stage."

Describing the strategy of the revolution at different phases, Stalin writes :

"Our revolution already passed through two stages, and after the October Revolution it has entered a third stage. Our strategy changed accordingly."

"First stage. 1903 to February 1917. Objective : to overthrow tsarism and completely wipe out the survivals of medievalism. The main force of the revolution : the proletariat. Immediate reserves : the peasantry. Direction of the main blow : the isolation of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, which was striving to win over the peasantry and liquidate the revolution by *compromising* with tsarism. Plan for the disposition of forces : alliance of the working class with the peasantry. 'The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie' (Lenin).

"Second stage. March 1917 to October 1917. Objective : to overthrow imperialism in Russia and to withdraw from the imperialist war. The main force of the revolution : the proletariat. Immediate reserves : the poor peasantry. The proletariat of neighbouring countries as probable reserves. The protracted war and the crisis of imperialism as the favourable factor. Direction of the main blow : isolation of petty-bourgeois democrats (mensheviks and socialist-revolutionaries), who were striving to win over the toiling masses of the peasantry and to terminate the revolution by *compromising* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces : alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry. 'The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution by allying to itself the mass

of the semiproletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie' (Lenin)".

Strategy in the Present Phase of the Indian Revolution

In short, strategy is the particular class alliance—disposition of revolutionary forces which the proletariat must bring about in order to smash the enemy that holds power. It holds good for the entire period, stage of the revolution. What is the strategy that we have outlined for our stage of the revolution? It is given in a nutshell in the slogan of democratic front which is defined as an alliance of working class, peasants, oppressed middle class, against bourgeois-feudal-imperialist combine.

If we were to define our strategy in Leninist terms we would have to describe it as follows :

Objective : overthrow of the bourgeois government heading imperialist-bourgeois-feudal combine, completely wiping out survivals of medievalism and going to the transitional economy through nationalisation etc. **The main force of the revolution :** the proletariat. **Immediate reserves :** agrarian workers, poor peasants, middle peasants (also oppressed sections of petty-bourgeoisie in towns). **Direction of the main blow :** isolation of the ruling bourgeois circles from their masses as well as isolation of other bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and groups (Socialist Party etc). **Plan for the disposition of the peasantry,** firmly relying on the agrarian workers and poor peasants. "The proletariat must accomplish the people's democratic revolution by allying to itself the agricultural workers and poor peasants—followed by the middle peasants in order to isolate the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance by force."

It will be found that the stage of revolution in which we are party shares the characteristics of both stages of the Russian revolution. We must especially note the fact that unlike in the second stage of the Russian revolution, we have to work for both isolating and overthrowing the bourgeoisie. In the second stage of the Russian revolution the direction of the main blow was against the petty-bourgeois democrats because then the bourgeois parties were already discredited and only through petty-bourgeois mensheviks and

socialist-revolutionaries operating in the soviets, was the bourgeoisie being saved and masses betrayed.

Isolate the Bourgeoisie to Overthrow It

In our country the ruling bourgeoisie itself, the Congress leaders are far more powerful in their mass influence than any other petty-bourgeois party : they have not yet lost their mass influence and they have to be systematically unmasked and isolated in order to overthrow them.

The political thesis adopted by the second congress emphasised the task of isolating the bourgeois leadership in the following words :

"We must remember that those in charge of the...and build a new understanding of national unity."

The task of tearing away of the masses, of isolating the bourgeois leadership, of directing the main blow to undermine its influence—as part of the strategic plan to overcome of right-reformism—has to be fought.

The strategic plan given above is exactly the plan given by the second congress; this has to be remembered. Any change in this plan—covert or open, indirectly advocated in the garb of Left-criticism or directly put forward in the name of right-reformism—has to be fought.

Stalin on Tactics

"Tactics," says Stalin in *Leninism*, are the determination of the line of conduct of the proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow or ebb of the movement, of the rise or decline of the revolution, the fight to carry out this line by means of replacing old forms of struggle and organisation by new ones, old slogans by new ones, by combining these forms, etc. While the object of strategy is to win the war against tsarism, let us say, or against the bourgeoisie, to carry the struggle against tsarism, or against the bourgeoisie to its end, tactics concern

(aim)

engagement, or a particular battle, at carrying through successfully a particular campaign or a particular action corresponding to the

concrete circumstances in the given period of rise or decline of the revolution. *Tactics are a part of strategy, sub-ordinate to it and serving it* (emphasis added).

“Tactics change according to flow and ebb. While the strategic plan remained unchanged during the first stage of the revolution (1903 to February 1917) tactics changed several times during that period. In the period from 1903 to 1905 the party pursued offensive tactics, for the tide of revolution was rising, the movement was on the upgrade and tactics had to proceed from this fact. Accordingly, the forms of struggle were revolutionary, corresponding to the requirements of the rising tide of the revolution. Local political strikes, political demonstrations, the general political strike, boycott of the duma, insurrection, revolutionary fighting slogans—such were the successive forms of struggle during that period. These changes in the forms of struggle were accompanied by corresponding changes in the forms of organisation. Factory committees, revolutionary peasant committees, strike committees, soviets of workers' deputies, a workers' party operating more or less openly— such were the forms of organisation during that period.

“In the period from 1907 to 1912 the party was compelled to resort to tactics of retreat ; for we then experienced a decline in the revolutionary movement, the ebb of the revolution, and the tactics necessarily had to take this fact into consideration. The forms of struggle as well as the forms of organisation changed accordingly : Instead of the boycott of the duma there was participation in the duma, instead of open, direct revolutionary action outside the duma, there were parliamentary speeches and work in the duma ; instead of general political strikes there were partial economic strikes, or simply a lull in the activities. Of course, the party had to go underground during that period, while the revolutionary mass organisations were superseded by cultural, educational, cooperative, insurance and other legal organisations.

“The same must be said of the second and third stages of the revolution, during which tactics changed dozens of times, whereas the strategic plans remained unchanged.

“Tactics deal with the forms of struggle and the forms of organisation of the proletariat, with their changes and combinations.

During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times, depending on the flow and ebb, the rise and decline of the revolution."

"Tactical leadership", says Stalin," is a part of strategic leadership, subordinated to the tasks and requirements of the latter. The task of tactical leadership is the master the forms of struggle and organisation of the proletariat and to ensure that they are used properly so as to achieve with the given alignment of forces, the maximum results necessary to prepare for strategic success.

"What is meant by making proper use of the forms of struggle and organisation of the proletariat?"

"It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones :

"First : To put in the forefront precisely those forms of struggle and organisation which are best suited to the conditions prevailing during the flow or ebb of the movement at a given moment, and which therefore can facilitate and ensure the bringing of the millions to the revolutionary positions, the bringing of the millions to the revolutionary front, and their disposition at the revolutionary front.

"The point here is not that the vanguard shall realise the impossibility of preserving the old order of things and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the millions, shall understand this inevitability and display their readiness to support the vanguard. But the masses can understand this only from their own experience. The task is to enable the vast masses to realise from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organisation as will make it easier for the masses to learn from experience to recognise the correctness of the revolutionary slogans.

"The vanguard would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost contact with the masses, if the party had not decided at the time to participate in the duma, if it had not decided to concentrate its forces on work in the duma and

on |
masses to realise from their own experience the futility of the duma, constitutional democrats, the

impossibility of compromise with tsarism and the inevitability of an alliance between the peasantry and the working class. Had the masses not gained their experience during the period of the duma, the exposure of the constitutional-democrats and the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

“The danger of the ‘otzovist’ tactics was that they threatened to detach the vanguard from the millions of its reserves.

“The party would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost its influence among the broad masses of the peasants and soldiers, if the proletariat had followed the Left-Communists, who called for insurrection in April 1917, when the mensheviks and the socialist-revolutionaries had not yet exposed themselves as advocates of war and imperialism, when the masses had not yet learned from their own experience to recognise the falsity of the speeches of the mensheviks and the socialist-revolutionaries about peace, land and freedom. Had the masses not gained this experience during the Kerensky period, the mensheviks and socialist-revolutionaries would not have been isolated and the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been impossible. Therefore, the tactics of ‘patiently explaining’ the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois parties and of open struggle in the soviets were the only correct tactics.

“The danger of the tactics of the Left-Communists was that they threatened to transform the party from the leader of the proletarian revolution into a handful of inane conspirators with no ground to stand on.

“Victory cannot be achieved ‘with the vanguard alone’ says Lenin. ‘To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it... would not merely be folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with astonishing force

and vividness not only in Russia but also in Germany. Not only the uncultured, often illiterate, masses of Russia, but the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany had to realise through their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, the utter vileness of the government of the knights of the Second International the absolute inevitability of a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia, Kapp and Co in Germany) as the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat in order to turn resolutely toward communism' (Lenin)".

Commenting further on how the bolsheviks succeeded in convincing the masses and leading them, Stalin writes:

"Fourth peculiar feature : The picture would not be complete if we did not deal with the question of how and why the bolsheviks were able to transform their party slogans into slogans for the vast masses, into slogans which pushed the revolution forward, why and how they succeeded in convincing not only the vanguard, and not only the majority of the working class, but also the majority of the people, of the correctness of their policy.

"The fact is that for the victory of the revolution, if it is really a people's revolution which embraces the masses in their millions, correct party slogans alone are not enough. For the victory of the revolution one more necessary condition is required, namely, that the masses themselves become convinced through their own experience of the correctness of these slogans. Only then do the slogans of the party become the slogans of the masses themselves. Only then does the revolution really become a people's revolution. One of the peculiar features of the tactics of the bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October was that they correctly determined the paths and turnings which would naturally lead the masses up to the party's slogans—to the very threshold of the revolution, so to speak—thus helping them to feel, to test, to realise by their own experience the correctness of these slogans. In other words, one of the peculiar features of the tactics of the bolsheviks is that they do not confuse leadership of the party with leadership of the masses ; that they clearly see the difference between the first sort of leadership

and the second sort of leadership, that they therefore, represent the science, not only of party leadership, but of leadership of the vast masses of the working people.

“A graphic example of the manifestation of this feature of bolshevik tactics was provided by the experience of convening and dispersing the constituent assembly.

“It is well known that the bolsheviks advanced the slogan of a soviet republic as early as April 1917. It is well known that the constituent assembly was a bourgeois parliament, fundamentally opposed to the principles of a soviet republic. How could it happen that the bolsheviks, who were aiming for a republic of soviets, at the same time demanded that the provisional government should immediately convene the constituent assembly? How could it happen that the bolsheviks not only took part in the elections, but themselves convened the constituent assembly? How could it happen that a month before the insurrection in the transition from the old to the new, the bolsheviks considered a temporary combination of a republic of soviets with the constituent assembly possible ?

“This ‘happened’ because:

“(1) The idea of a constituent assembly was one of the most popular ideas among the broad masses of the population;

“(2) The slogan of the immediate convocation of the constituent assembly helped to expose the counter-revolutionary nature of the provisional government;

“(3) In order to discredit the idea of a constituent assembly in the eyes of the masses, it was necessary to lead the masses to the walls of the constituent assembly with their demands for land, for peace, for the power of the soviets, thus bringing them face to face with the real and authentic constituent assembly;

“(4) Only this could help the masses to become convinced through their own experience of the counter-revolutionary nature of the constituent assembly and of the necessity of dispersing it;

“(5) All this naturally pre-supposed the possibility of a temporary combination of the soviet republic with the constituent assembly, as one of the means of eliminating the latter ;

“(6) Such a combination, if brought about *on the condition* that all power were transferred to the soviets, could only signify the subordination of the constituent assembly to the soviets, its conversion into an appendage of the soviets, its painless extinction.

“It need hardly be proved that had the bolsheviks not adopted such a policy the dispersion of the constituent assembly would not have taken place so smoothly, and the subsequent actions of the socialist-revolutionaries and mensheviks under the slogan “All power to the Constituent Assembly” would not have failed so signally.

“We took part’, says Lenin, “in the elections to the Russian bourgeois parliament, the constituent assembly, in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not ?... Did not we, the Russian bolsheviks, have *more* right in September-November 1917 than any western communists to consider that parliamentarism was politically dead in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is *not* whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long time or for a short time, but how far the broad masses of the working people are *prepared* (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the soviet system and to disperse the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or allow it to be dispersed). That owing to a number of special conditions, the urban working class and the soldiers and peasants of Russia were in September-November 1917 exceptionally well prepared to accept the soviet system and to disperse the most democratic bourgeois parliaments, is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact. Nevertheless, the bolsheviks did *not* boycott the constituent assembly, but took part in the elections both before the proletariat conquered political power and *after*.’

“Why then did they not boycott the constituent assembly? Because, says Lenin :

“ ‘.....participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament even a few weeks before the victory of a soviet republic, and even *after* such a victory, not only does not harm the revolutionary proletariat, but actually helps it to *prove* to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be dispersed; it *helps* their successful dispersal, and *helps* to make bourgeois parliamentarism politically obsolete.’ ”

Our Tactical Line Today

What is our tactical line—subordinated to the strategy outlined above? What are the forms of struggle that we advocate—and the organisation of the proletariat that we build?

The forms of struggle are determined both by our strategic objective and the revolutionary period. The objective of overthrowing the bourgeoisie combined with the existence of the revolutionary period and the rapidly moving revolutionary developments impose on us the militant and revolutionary forms of struggle and organisation. Hence strikes, agrarian struggles, armed conflicts, general strikes, political strikes—all heading towards insurrection—such are the forms of struggle that flow from the situation. Corresponding to that are also the forms of organisation which are revolutionary peasants' committees (Telangana), or strike committees, illegal factory committees, or peasants' committees—to conduct the struggle, or squads, guerilla or volunteer squads to defend the workers and peasants, which develop into an instrument of attack also.

At the same time these forms of struggle do not exhaust all the forms which we have to utilise and we are utilising. We still participate in parliaments; lead deputations and demonstrations; appear before industrial tribunals in trade disputes; participate in tripartite conferences; do all kinds of preparatory work from holding ordinary union meetings to exposing some industrial wrong, to holding political and group meetings whose main object is exposure, attack or criticism of the government. We thus see that we cannot get away from the elementary forms of protest, agitation and struggle, though the situation is full of revolutionary possibilities.

Why is it so? Because though the situation is full of revolutionary possibilities, the masses everywhere are not learning and moving with uniform rapidity and consciousness. In some parts they have already left the preparatory stage and are determined to wage struggle with utmost determination—convinced that the government has to be fought—and in some cases fully realising that it has to be overthrown. In large tracts the struggles are just beginning—with vast sections poised for the first direct fight against the present government—fight for some immediate issue, or for the basic issue

of land or wage—with many of them still to realise that the fight is not only against the landlord but against the government as well. But as the fight develops they learn it with astonishing rapidity, and grow into organising armed resistance in partial struggles themselves and begin to realise that the government has to be ended. Thus with quick rapidity masses embarking upon partial struggles learn to take political position: they become politicalised. This process is accelerated by the leadership of the party which also puts before them direct political issues, issues of political power, political exposure and campaign. The two currents convince the fighting masses that the government is to be liquidated.

The uneven development of disillusionment and consciousness, the uneven character of the political experience of the masses, the far from uniform strength of the influence of the proletariat and its party in different provinces, areas and sections of the masses, and finally the influence of the bourgeois leadership—all combine to produce a situation in which the working class must be prepared to use from the most elementary to the most advanced and revolutionary forms of struggle—with the one object of rapidly bringing the masses to the point at which they themselves will echo the party's cry for the overthrow of the government.

It is because of this that we find on the one hand Telangana—armed struggle of the peasants against feudal rule, with revolutionary committees confiscating and distributing land and solving the land problem in a revolutionary way, and acting as nucleus of new people's power—with ordinary strike activity in Bombay or Calcutta accompanied by appearing before industrial tribunals. Ordinarily party members would not like to speak of Telangana and filing the workers' case before tribunals in the same breath—and yet, life, the reality of class struggle is such that the party which wields arms in Telangana, files cases before the industrial tribunals in Calcutta and Bombay. It is the same situation that gives us armed peasants' resistance in parts of Kerala, with ordinary peasant meetings of support in other provinces; the occupation of factories in Ferozabad by angry workers with acceptance of some ordinary concessions elsewhere.

It would be nothing short of treachery, if we were to stabilise or freeze this situation, if we were not to make conscious efforts to see

that everywhere the elementary forms of resistance are being left behind by the masses and proceed to higher forms of struggle for the objective of overthrowing the present rule. It would be rank opportunism if anyone were to state that just because the present consciousness is what it is today—we must only conduct partial struggles etc. This is exploiting the existing level of consciousness to betray the masses. Just because it is a revolutionary period, we know that the most elementary struggle will set in motion forces which will enable the masses to overcome their present consciousness and therefore today we do not put up a Chinese wall between the economic and political struggles; nor do we accept that it will take years for the various sections to come to the level of advanced consciousness. On the other hand we know that struggle of the masses is a great teacher which enables all backwardness to be overcome.

Nonetheless, to start with we have to take into account the uneven development of consciousness and advance a form of struggle suited to the consciousness of the participants. This unevenness we must realise is due to the fact that the bourgeoisie still possesses great influence; that the influence of the proletariat is uneven. The struggle to isolate the bourgeoisie is the struggle to overcome this unevenness and bring the masses to the level of the consciousness of the advanced sections—to realise that the present set up must be overthrown by means of a revolutionary struggle, that there is no other way out of the situation.

Here again we thus find that the strategic formulation that the bourgeoisie has to be isolated in order to be overthrown, finds expression in tactical forms of struggle rendered necessary by the situation.

This makes it all the more necessary that not only in relation to forms of struggle but in relation to political slogans also the same law should be applied. Taking into consideration the level of mass consciousness etc., the party has to combine ways and means to see that the slogans of the party become the slogans of the masses, through their own experience. The party has to so guide itself, so guide the struggles of the masses, advance such slogans from time to time, that the masses begin to realise the correctness of the basic slogans of the party—on the basis of their own experience. This of

course cannot be done by only repeating the basic slogans in all situations, pitching your tent on these basic slogans and hoping that one day the masses will see the truth and enter the tent.

Writing about the mistakes of the German Left, Lenin says :

“Parliamentarism, of course, is ‘politically obsolete’ for the communists in Germany; but—and that is the whole point—we must *not* regard what is obsolete for us as being obsolete for the masses. Here again we find that the Lefts’ do not know how to reason, do not know how to conduct themselves as the party of the *class*, as the party of the *masses*. You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. This is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You must call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices—prejudices. But at the same time you must soberly observe the *actual* state of class consciousness and preparedness of the whole class (not only of the communist vanguard), of all the toiling masses (not only of their advanced elements)” (“*Left-wing*” *Communism*).

Lastly it must be remembered that the objective of our strategy and tactics is to win over the majority of the people to be able to smash the bourgeoisie. The people's democratic front—the class-alliance built through it, is the alliance with the majority of the people. It is an instrument of winning over the majority under proletarian leadership. Every manoeuvre, every tactic we advance must be judged on this context—how it takes you to winning over the majority of the people for revolution. Stalin quotes from Lenin:

“‘If a revolutionary party has not a majority among the vanguard of the revolutionary classes and in the country generally, there can be no question of insurrection.’

“‘.....Revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working-class, and this change is brought about by the political experience of the masses.’

“‘The proletarian vanguard has been ideologically won over. That is the main thing. Without it even the first step towards victory cannot be taken. But it is still quite a long way from the victory. With the vanguard alone victory cannot be achieved. To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before

the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard or at least one of benevolent neutrality towards it and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy, would not be merely folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the toilers and oppressed by the capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not sufficient. For this the masses must have their own political experience.' ”

Stalin asks, “What does *leadership* mean when the party policy is correct and the correct relations between the vanguard and the class are not disturbed?”

“Leadership under these circumstances means the ability to convince the masses of the correctness of the party's policy; the ability to put forward and carry out such slogans as bring the masses to the party position, and help them to realise by their own experience the correctness of the party's policy; the ability to raise the masses to the party's level of consciousness, and thus secure the support of the masses and their readiness for the decisive struggle.”

These are the criteria which we must bear in mind when we deal with the questions raised and deviations seen. These are the tasks we must bear in mind which a party has to discharge, which the proletariat has to accomplish—winning over the majority of the people. :

As regards this latter task, a warning has come from the organ the Cominform pointing out the fact that in many countries even the majority of working-class has not been won over as yet by the communist parties. The warning of the Cominform organ applies to India as well.

“Serious battles are ahead of the working class of the capitalist countries. The bourgeoisie and their agents— the right socialists and other traitors—will again try to undermine the strength and unity of the democratic movement, to influence certain groups of working people. Unremitting and ever-increasing organisational and political propaganda work is needed on the part of the communist parties to counter the influence of the bourgeois ideology on the masses, and to win over increasing sections of workers, peasants and the intelligentsia. This is all the more important since in a number of

countries there are serious shortcomings in the mass political and educational work of the communists, and since they have not as yet won decisive influence even among the working class in a number of places.

“By continually improving their *organisational and mobilising role among the masses* (emphasis ours) the communist parties in capitalist countries will win new successes” (*For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy* 1 September 1948).

IV. ON THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT STAGE OF REVOLUTION IN INDIA—CRITIQUE OF THE DOCUMENTS OF THE ANDHRA PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT

In the light of the foregoing we must judge the line advanced by the Andhra secretariat which reveals reformism in its most naked and gross form. It is true that the Andhra secretariat has somewhat changed its formulation in subsequent documents, but the changes are not material and its last documents dealing with practical tasks once more reveal that it stands rooted in a reformist outlook.

The PB must sharply criticise the Andhra documents, not only because they reveal the standpoint of one of our biggest provincial committees, but because the Andhra secretariat contains at least two members of the PB and four members of the CC. That a section of the central committee and PB should hold such views after the party congress is alarming to the extreme.

Here we will deal only with the document of the secretariat, and not with Nageswar Rao's documents, who draws a mechanical parallel to the situation before the October revolution and whose position, so far as it is based on this mechanical parallel—we reject. Yet there are many correct things in his document—fight against rich peasants etc. In a general way the question of the stage of the revolution has been answered in another document. It ought to solve a number of difficulties of Nageswar Rao.

The document of the secretariat is an open attempt to take the

party back to the—'Mountbatten' resolution position—and repudiate the line adopted by the second congress.

What are the formulations of the Andhra documents on the stage and strategy of the revolution?

Proletarian Hegemony Wrongly Understood

In combating the argument of Nageswar Rao who put forward the argument that the present stage of revolution corresponded to that between February and October—the stage of proletarian revolution—the secretariat says the following :

“The proletarian hegemony, i.e. the ideological and programmatic leadership was consistent throughout these three stages in the Russian revolution. But actually the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat was only at the end of the second stage, though it was complete in its entirety after the exclusion of the Left socialist-revolutionaries from the government. Hence it has to be borne in mind that proletarian hegemony is distinctly different from that of the proletarian dictatorship.”

The secretariat in wanting to correct the mistakes of Nageswar Rao itself steps into a number of mistakes. If it had given a general warning not to mix hegemony at every stage of the revolution for the establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat, in relation to the past, it would have been correct. For instance hegemony in the democratic revolution and the state form corresponding to it should not be immediately mistaken for the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the secretariat contrasts hegemony in general with dictatorship and at least its formulation is such that it creates an impression that it fails to understand the link between hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle for revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. hegemony of the proletariat in the socialist state. Besides it characterises the conception of hegemony wrongly.

Is it correct in the first place to define proletarian hegemony as the “ideological and programmatic leadership...?” It is not only incorrect but amounts to rejection of the vanguard role of the party and the working class. For proletarian hegemony is not embodied in

general ideological and programmatic leadership, but organisational leadership as well. It is anti-Leninist to define hegemony in the way it has been defined.

Leadership of the toilers, not only through programmatic and ideological leadership, but leadership in action, in struggle, of the toilers by the working-class as a whole—guided by the party—is a basic conception of proletarian hegemony, according to the Leninist-Stalinist doctrines. To talk of only programmatic and ideological leadership is vulgarisation of the revolutionary concept of hegemony of the proletariat—a vulgarisation which sometimes originates from an incorrect understanding of the revolutionary theory. That a party basing itself on the ideology and programme of the proletariat will be able to give the peasants whether such a party is able to move the entire working class to action or not, i.e. whether such a party secures the leadership of the whole working-class in action or not, its own leadership is enough and that it is equal to proletarian hegemony in colonial conditions—such is the vulgarisation of the concept of proletarian hegemony put forward by the Andhra secretariat.

In any case the concept which reduces proletarian hegemony to programmatic and ideological leadership is wrong, as the following from Stalin's *History of the CPSU(B)* will show, where Stalin describes the hegemony in action :

“ ‘The idea of a general strike’, the Petrograd police reported, ‘is daily gaining new followers and is becoming as popular as it was in 1905....’

“On 25 February (10 March) the whole of working-class Petrograd had joined the revolutionary movement. The political strikes in the districts merged into a general political strike of the whole city. Demonstrations and clashes with the police took place everywhere. Over the masses of workers floated red banners bearing the slogans: ‘Down with the star !’, ‘Down with the war !’, ‘We want bread !’.

“On the morning of 26 February (11 March) the political strike and demonstration began to assume the character of an uprising. The workers disarmed police and gendarmes and armed themselves...A

most energetic and persistent drive was made to win over the troops, especially by the working women, who addressed themselves directly to the soldiers, fraternised with them and called upon them to help the people to overthrow the hated tsarist autocracy...

“The workers and soldiers who had risen in revolt began to arrest tsarist ministers and generals and to free revolutionaries from jail. The released political prisoners joined the revolutionary struggle. .

“In the streets, shots were still being exchanged with police and gendarmes posted with machine guns in the attics of houses. But the troops rapidly went over to the side of the workers, and this decided the fate of the tsarist autocracy.

“When the news of the victory of the revolution in Petrograd spread to other towns and to the front, the workers and soldiers everywhere began to depose the tsarist officials.

“The February bourgeois-democratic revolution had won.

“The revolution was victorious because its vanguard was the working class which headed the movement of millions of peasants clad in soldiers’ uniform demanding ‘peace, bread and liberty’. It was the hegemony of the proletariat that determined the success of the revolution.

“ ‘The revolution was made by the proletariat. The proletariat displayed heroism; it shed its blood; it swept along with it the broadest masses of the toiling and poor population’, wrote Lenin in the early days of the revolution.

“The first revolution, that of 1905, had prepared the way for the swift success of the second revolution, that of 1917.

“ ‘Without the tremendous class battles’, Lenin wrote, ‘and the revolutionary energy displayed by the Russian proletariat during the three years 1905-7, the second revolution could not possibly have been so rapid in the sense that its *initial* stage was completed in a few days.’

“Soviets arose in the very first days of the revolution. The victorious revolution rested on the support of the soviets of workers’

and soldiers' deputies. The workers and soldiers who rose in revolt created soviets of workers and soldiers' deputies. The revolution of 1905 had shown that the soviets were organs of armed uprising and at the same time the embryo of a new revolutionary power. The idea of soviets lived in the minds of the working-class masses, and they put it into effect as soon as tsardom was overthrown, with this difference, however, that in 1905 it was soviets only of *workers'* deputies that were formed whereas in February 1917, on the initiative of the bolsheviks, there arose soviets of *workers'* and *soldiers'* deputies."

Such is the Leninist-Stalinist conception of proletarian hegemony—not just programmatic and ideological leadership but hegemony in struggle, in battle, in giving new forms of struggle and decisiveness in battle, courageous leadership in action which is able to organise the millions of toilers for a struggle and inspire other toilers to join the ranks of revolutionaries. It is this hegemony that gave the general strike—the proletarian weapon, that also gave the soviet—the new organ of struggle and form of proletarian state.

Secondly, is it true that proletarian hegemony was consistent throughout the three stages? This is wholly incorrect. The Bolshevik Party, the vanguard of the working-class, was no doubt placing a correct programme and ideology before the class and the peasantry. But it had to continuously fight for the acceptance of the programme, against the vacillations of peasantry, against opportunist parties. If hegemony of the proletariat was a fact—from where came the critical period between February and October when the peasantry had almost handed over the power to the bourgeoisie, when the working class had to organise the October Revolution? The Andhra secretariat comrades forget accepted facts of history of revolution—facts which should be known to everybody. The fact is that there was persistent struggle for hegemony, the working-class after great efforts succeeded in carrying the peasantry on decisive issues, but the peasantry again vacillated (for instance even after the formation of soviets, power was practically handed over to the bourgeoisie—the faith in the constituent assembly etc.) till finally the hegemony was fully established during and after October. The expression of this firm establishment of hegemony was to be seen in the dictatorship of the proletariat which expresses the firm hegemony of the proletariat in the state.

Is it correct then to draw a distinction between hegemony and dictatorship, in the way the secretariat does? It is impermissible and anti-Leninist. It should be clearly understood that hegemony in the struggle for proletarian revolution ripens into hegemony in the state—which is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Stalin in his *History of the CPSU(B)* explains the link between hegemony in the various stages of the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat:

“According to this theory the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution, the proletariat *being in alliance* with the peasantry, would grow into the hegemony of the proletariat in the socialist revolution, the proletariat now *being in alliance* with the other labouring and exploited masses. while the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry would prepare the ground for the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Explaining the dictatorship of the proletariat as a special type of alliance. Stalin stresses the leading role, the hegemony of the proletariat in the state :

“The West-European social-democrats held that in the socialist revolution the proletariat would stand *alone*, against the *whole* bourgeoisie, *without allies*, against *all* the nonproletarian classes and strata. They would not take account of the fact that capital exploits not only the proletarians but also the semiproletarian millions of town and country, who are crushed by capitalism and who may become allies of the proletariat in the struggle for the emancipation of society from the capitalist yoke. The West-European social-democrats therefore held that conditions were not yet ripe for a socialist revolution in Europe, that the conditions could be considered ripe only when the proletariat became the majority of the nation, the majority of society, as a result of the further economic development of society.

This spurious, anti-proletarian standpoint of the West-European social-democrats was completely upset by Lenin's theory of the socialist revolution.

“Lenin's theory did not yet contain any direct conclusion regarding the possibility of a victory of socialism in one country,

taken singly. But it did contain all, or nearly all, the fundamental elements necessary for the drawing of such a conclusion sooner or later.”

And in the *Problems of Leninism*, Stalin says:

“The special form of alliance consists in that the guiding force of this alliance is the proletariat. The special form of alliance consists in that the leader in the state, the leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is one party, the party of the proletariat, the party of the communists, which does not share that leadership with other parties.”

And again quoting from his own pamphlet on *October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*, Stalin says :

“The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class alliance between the proletariat and the labouring masses of the peasantry, for the overthrowing of capital , for achieving the final victory of Socialism, on the condition that the guiding force of all this alliance is the proletariat.”

Here again the guiding role, the hegemony is emphasised.

The Andhra secretariat would have been justified in saying that every participation of the proletariat in state is not necessarily dictatorship of the proletariat, that the dictatorship emerges only when the proletariat secures complete hegemony in the state, prepared for by its leadership of the peasant masses, when inside the state it does not share power with any other class. But instead they contrast hegemony against the dictatorship. In any case it is impermissible to contrast hegemony against the dictatorship of the proletariat in this way.

Equally wrong is the formulation made in connection with another problem connected with the Russian revolution. For instance take the following :

“For example, besides a number of leading comrades, Dr. Adhikari himself, in his speech at the Andhra party conference, made such a reference and compared the present national government with that of the Kerensky government. Subsequently a comrade from the session sent a question asking for clarification, whether it is correct

to bring in such a parallel and whether similar objective conditions exist in present-day India. Comrade Adhikari without going into the deep implications of it explained it away by saying that a dual power came into existence in the shape of the soviets of soldiers' and workers' deputies, whereas in India the revolutionary forces are far from such a stage of organisational strength and achievement. As a matter of fact, the broad fact of the existence of a dual power had little to do in deciding the then stage and strategy of the period. Even supposing such a dual power was absent, could the CPSU(B) then have advanced any other slogan except the 'socialistic dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry'. Our answer is and must be 'NO' and absolutely not. There the fundamental question was the question of political power which was in the hands of the bourgeoisie and it was the task of the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie and take power into the hands of the proletariat in alliance with the poor peasantry."

The Andhra secretariat here misses the main fundamental link between the two stages of Russian revolution, between the two strategic objectives of the two periods. In fact it misses the entire essence of Leninism and Leninist lead in the Russian revolution.

It fails to understand the significance of the dual power, and comes to the conclusion that the power was in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and therefore no other slogan except the one of the socialistic dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry can be given. They thus miss the significance of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants that was established on the overthrow of the tsar.

The two components of dual power were: (1) The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants which was the real source of power ; (2) the bourgeois provisional government to which the former was transferring power. The former was the strategic objective of the proletariat led by the Bolshevik Party since 1905. Lenin repeatedly stressed the fact that only the proletariat could lead the democratic revolution, that it alone in alliance with the peasantry could overthrow the tsar, and that the revolution must lead to a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants. And just because only the proletariat can lead it, and

because the overwhelming mass of peasants must support it, it will pass over quickly into socialist revolution. The fact that after reaching the strategic objective of the first stage—the power passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie was due, as Lenin explains, to the insufficient class-consciousness of the masses, including sections of the working-class.

What did the existence of the democratic dictatorship signify? It signified that at one sweep the revolution went out of the bounds of the ordinary bourgeois revolution, that it had become ripe for the next stage, that it had brought to the forefront classes who by making a firm alliance could take it to the next stage—the proletarian stage etc. Thus the existence of democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants was the vital factor in enabling the proletariat to raise the slogans of the next stage. Anyone who reads the *History of the CPSU(B)* or Lenin's writings would not make such a horrifying formulation that the broad fact of the existence of dual power had little to do in deciding the third stage and the strategy of the period. The democratic dictatorship signified that the transitional state form had already been reached and the next step forward must be taken. It showed the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in one of its vital aspects—the state. That is why the next stage could be only the socialist dictatorship of working-class and poor peasantry. There is no need to argue on the hypothetical case whether, if Kerensky had come to power and there had been no soviets, the slogan of the dictatorship of working-class and poor peasantry could have been given or not. All that one can say is such a slogan can be given only when it is justified by existing class relations—whether the role of other intermediary classes and parties had been fully exhausted. The main fact in the Andhra argument, however, is that they miss the revolutionary significance of democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants, its existence as a transitional state form, and fail to see its link with the strategic objective of the next stage, fail to see that it itself was the strategic objective of the earlier period, linking the democratic revolution with the socialist revolution.

Sometimes the Andhra secretariat argues as if Russia was an industrially developed country—i.e. in a category quite different from
 exper... ssia did not
 apply so much to India. This of course is wrong. In the first place

the sixth congress of the Communist International in its programme for the world as well as colonies like India did rely on the Russian experience, on the Leninist strategy, and developed for India the strategic objective of democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants.

Secondly, it is wrong to regard or put forward Russia as an advanced industrial country, qualitatively in a different category than India. In fact Russia was economically backward. The fact of there being heavier concentration of workers per industrial unit than even in America is sometimes wrongly equated to advanced industrial development of the country as a whole. When Stalin refers to this fact in his *Leninism* he only draws attention to the fact that this concentration helped the bolsheviks to organise the workers all the more speedily. Indicating the several reasons for this comparatively easy victory of the socialist revolution in Russia, Stalin in his *History of the CPSU(B)* mentions the first reason as follows:

“The October revolution was confronted by an enemy so comparatively weak, so badly organised, and so politically inexperienced as the Russian bourgeoisie. Economically still weak, and completely dependent on government contracts, the Russian bourgeoisie. lacked sufficient political selfreliance and initiative to find a way out”.

It should be understood that whatever differences there might be between the industrial development in India and Russia before the Russian revolution, they are not of a qualitative character and that the entire experience of the Russian revolution is fully valid in the case of India also. And secondly it is wrong to present Russia as an industrially advanced country. The testimony of the leaders of Russian revolution points in the other direction.

Reformist Postulates of the Andhra Document

These basically wrong conceptions and fundamentally revisionist notions about the Russian revolution are not unconnected with the reformist policy and line advocated by the Andhra secretariat. They form the theoretical groundwork to deduce the reformist outline.

As will be seen below these wrong conclusions form a link in the chain of reasoning which leads to opportunist conclusions. If one were to present the various provisions of the Andhra secretariat's line, they would be somewhat as follows :

Wanting to make out a case for collaboration with the rich peasants, or 'neutralisation', the secretariat has unconsciously developed the following line of argument :

(1) Rich peasants are fought only when proletarian revolution is on the agenda (here the secretariat and Nageswar Rao agree). For an instance they point out to the Russian revolution.

(2) Proletarian revolution is organised when bourgeoisie is in power—for instance Kerensky, they say.

(3) But in India bourgeoisie is not in power, since the colonial set up, which they practically reduce to the same old kind of imperialist domination, remains.

(4) The revolution in India being revolution in semicolonial conditions and the bourgeoisie only sharing power—it is a bourgeois democratic revolution, new democratic revolution, but not a proletarian revolution—hence the rich peasants cannot be fought. Not only the rich peasants, but also other sections of middle bourgeoisie can be neutralised—considering that only the big business is collaborating.

(5) The next stage of the Indian revolution is supposed to be new democratic—whose class content however is not defined, so that the rich experience of democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants can be ignored. In so far as the new democracy is defined, it is done so from opportunist quotations from Mao as 'dictatorship of many classes'—not specially of workers and peasants and toiling petty-bourgeoisie—which formulation may therefore mean that sections of the bourgeoisie are also included in the government.

Thus we come back to the old mutton. Joshi and the old CC were guilty of transforming the party and the working-class into an appendage of the bourgeoisie by asking them to follow the national leadership which was supposed to represent the people and whose class character was forgotten.

The Andhra secretariat wants to achieve the same thing after the party congress by advocating collaboration with rich peasants, middle
oisie, in the name of neutralisation i.e. a basic strategy based
on difference between big business and the other sections—based

on collaboration with certain sections of the bourgeoisie in the name of neutralisation. For this purpose they have borrowed the formulation from Mountbatten resolution—only big business is collaborationist.

That this is not a harsh judgment can be seen from the following. It will then be found that the Andhra secretariat differs from the party congress on every issue including the international situation.

Reformist Understanding of the World Situation !

Revealing as it may seem, the Andhra secretariat does not accept the fact of the division of the world into two camps—of the line laid down by Cominform, by Comrade Zhdanov. On the other hand it presents a reformist understanding of world situation giving first importance to conflicts and competitions among the bourgeoisie and bases the entire strategy of class alliance on it. Read the following :

“Firstly, the international background that was present on the eve of October when compared to the present which forms the background of our revolution is totally a different one. Lenin analysed thus : ‘Monopoly capitalism and imperialism is capitalism in permanent crisis. Imperialism is the dying form of capitalism. This is the feature present in the beginning of the 20th century which forms the background of Russian revolution. But today imperialism from that stage of ‘beginning its end’ has reached a stage which can be characterised as ‘imperialism on death-bed’. World imperialism today has been stuck up in a crisis more deep and intense than in the early period of 20th century. It can today either exist in the shape of semi-fascism or fascism or get smashed under the advancing tide of the world revolution. Imperialism after the two world wars had been so weakened as we find it today that the feature of its warring camps had been ended. Today there is only the mighty colossal American imperialism dominant of the world imperialisms. All other capitalist states in one way or other, while they are struggling for existence, had gone under the wings of the mighty American imperialism. The crisis of world imperialism can be best seen when we observe the present Truman’s American expansionism. American imperialism faced with the unheard-of crisis, is bent upon not only keeping colonies and semicolonies under its domination but steadily advancing

step by step to reduce other independent capitalist states as its colonies. This parasitic feature of rapidly devouring the weaker sections of its own species has got tremendous bearing on the course of the present day world. Monopoly capitalism today has been so naked an enemy not only of socialistic democracy but also of 'bourgeois democracy'. It is out not only to destroy the toiling and working masses but also to devour a section of its own class, the small bourgeoisie. Thus in the present day international background we find imperialism in its last stages, caught in the grip of a crisis so deep, so extensive and unheard-of."

This quotation, this understanding of the international situation, is the key to understanding of the reformist outlook of the Andhra secretariat. After repeating a lot of phrases about imperialist crisis, world crisis, what is the major conclusion drawn? Not the conclusion of two camps of imperialism and the people, of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but the first conclusion is that imperialism is devouring certain sections of the bourgeoisie which is supposed to have a tremendous bearing. In fact out of our own analysis of the international situation this is the major and only conclusion drawn by the Andhra secretariat, a conclusion which enables it later on to recommend that certain sections of the bourgeoisie, especially rich peasants, must be treated gently.

This reading only means that the proletariat must ally itself on a world scale with 'oppressed' bourgeois section, with the section 'threatened' by American imperialism—a shamefaced theory of class-collaboration.

This understanding has nothing in common with the political thesis of the second congress of our party nor with Cominform. This is how the second congress thesis puts it: "The defeat of Hitler Germany and fascist Japan.....insuperable obstacles in the shape of people struggling for freedom".

"The close of the antifascist war has thus led... majority in UNO as a bloc against the democratic nations".

Not two camps, but reliance, and basic reliance at that, on the increased competition among the bourgeoisie—not reliance on the revolutionary contradiction between the people and imperialism,

between the workers and the bourgeoisie, but on the conflicts among the bourgeoisie : such is the international understanding of the situation of the Andhra secretariat which is but an attempt to tie the proletariat to one of the sections of the bourgeoisie. This formulation also makes it clear that when the Andhra secretariat talks of neutralisation it actually advocates collaboration and surrender; otherwise it would not have called the 'devouring of smaller capitalists' as having as tremendous importance on world situation and excluded the contradiction between the people and imperialism, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Equally opportunist and reformist is the reading on the question of the significance of the USSR and the new democracies and the proletarian movement—of the shift in the balance of power in the world. The Andhra secretariat commits the unforgivable crime of not only underestimating the strength of the camp of socialism and democracy, as a result of the second world war, but practically ignores it and argues as if the second world war has not taken place, the world communist parties have not grown, the Chinese liberation struggles has not dealt a heavy blow to imperialism, the colonial revolutionary struggles have not taken place. All this serves the purpose of belittling the people's forces, in the name of new democracy and makes out a case for collaboration. Read the following:

“The second aspect of the special feature of the international situation which forms the background of our present revolution today is coming into existence of Soviet Union. October revolution and its achievements during the last 30 years have changed the very course of world development and influenced the wide strata of people. Before October revolution the doctrines of Marx and Engels which were considered by many intellectuals as utopian, have not only been demonstrated in practice the practicability of Marxist-Leninist doctrines, but consolidated socialism on one-sixth of the surface of the earth. In contrast to decaying capitalism in all its spheres, the Soviet world has emerged as the real champion of democracy and an all-round progress. This effective growth and consolidation of the October revolution has profound influence on sections of the peasantry, urban petty-bourgeoisie and intellectuals who were

previously considered as the reserves of the bourgeoisie. Socialist world has not only become the hope of the toiling masses of the world but of the entire progressive mankind who crave for peace, who strive for national independence and aspire for progress. All genuine scientists, artists, educationists, look towards Soviet Union for real advance. Peasantry in the world as a whole, which once got land from the feudal landlords with the help of bourgeoisie, has been steadily realising that in the present context of the world today, it is the proletariat that can give them land but not the bourgeoisie which is already played out and joined hands with feudalism. The existence of a socialist world forms an effective background for our revolution which makes the vital contribution in deciding different aspects of the revolution."

The last sentence sums up the reformist understanding, the total underestimation of the people's camp. The balance against the bourgeoisie has not decisively changed : the revolutionary conflicts have not put on the agenda the defeat of the capitalist order; the new revolutions are not being fought under conditions when the people's forces, the forces of socialism are decisively a stronger than the forces of the capitalist order. All that has happened is "The existence of the socialist world forms an effective background for our revolution which makes the vital contribution in deciding different aspects of our revolution"—it only is an effective—background this sums up the understanding completely.

Such is the fundamental difference between the international outlook of the second party congress and the outlook of the Andhra secretariat.

The political thesis bases itself on the intensified contradictions—the major contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, on the immensely increased strength of the forces of socialism. While it takes account of the increased conflict of capitalism and imperialism, it at the same time lays down that the new basic elements are two camps—the camp of the bourgeoisie, of imperialism, against the camp of socialism, of the working class, of democracy, the people. The Andhra secretariat because it denies the existence of two camps, bases itself primarily on the increased conflict among the bourgeoisie and, thus, makes out a case for collaboration with one section of the

bourgeoisie when all sections are united in organising a world front of capital against labour. The document of the Andhra secretariat, when it talks about the Soviet paraphrases the estimate which Stalin gave about the consequences of Russian revolution 25 years ago and do not go beyond them—do not see the great shift in the balance of forces reached since then.

Obviously the international outlook revealed in the Andhra secretariat document is open repudiation of both the thesis and Zhdanov's statement before the nine communist parties' conference.

Need we than wonder that with this outlook, the secretariat should write the following about India:

“Whereas in the present-day India, by the Mountbatten award and the subsequent formation of the so-called national government, nothing has been smashed of the imperialist-feudal state machinery, but simply political power is being shared by the dominant bourgeoisie. It is not the entire capitalist class that gets benefited by this compromise but only the big business houses that have entered into deals with the British capitalists. Not to speak of the toiling masses, the middle bourgeoisie will also be devoured as the economic crisis develops.”

Thus we have again returned to the Mountbatten position. Only big business is compromising and collaborating. The middle bourgeoisie since it is not supposed to gain by this collaboration is presumably to be collaborated with or at least 'neutralised', i.e. which in the context it is being used means not fight. In actual fact the secretariat is advocating collaboration with the middle bourgeoisie, as is clear from the quotation from Mao which it uses and which defines new democracy as united dictatorship of several classes—a definition which does not exclude the bourgeoisie.

This is one more a shamefaced apology to ally with some other sections of the bourgeoisie than say Tata and Birla, but sections which fundamentally follow the same policy. The thesis nowhere makes such a formulation but the Andhra secretariat makes it with the realisation that it is taking a stand which is nothing but the rejection of the political thesis.

Only 'Big Business' Gone Over—A Reformist Formulation

These formulations firstly follow logically from the reformist outlook on international developments.

Secondly, they unmask the real meaning of the seemingly radical phrase 'nothing has changed'—the old setup continues etc.; of such a position makes it straight plump for one or the other section of the bourgeoisie. For it is a logical conclusion that if nothing has changed, if only a narrow section of the bourgeoisie finds it to its interests to collaborate and defend the new state, if the other sections are not interested in defending the new government and state, because of their economic conditions—then one or the other section of the bourgeoisie does play an oppositional role and is capable of appealing to the masses as in the old way. The Andhra secretariat is making out a case that some sections of the bourgeoisie are still playing an oppositional role—otherwise there is no meaning in emphasising the so-called conflict of the middle bourgeoisie with the collaborationists.

Is it true that nothing has changed? It is untrue. To say this is to underestimate the great revolutionary ferment that shook India in 1946-47. The political thesis correctly lays down that the Mountbatten award is a cunning offensive, it is not an advance but a retreat, the form of domination has changed—all these are correct characterisations in relation to the demands of the revolutionary movement, to the demands of the masses.

At the same time in relation to the gains of the bourgeoisie, the political thesis states that "imperialism makes big concessions to the bourgeoisie and hands it over governmental power to rule the Indian people in its own narrow selfish interests. At the same time the state it has won is a dependent on imperialism etc". This is how imperialism has forged a new alliance and relies on the bourgeoisie to defend the old order. The state can only be managed by the bourgeoisie with its big social base. This big concession is made. At the same time its weak economic position, its fear of world communism, of the Soviet, is utilised and exploited to tie it to the apron-strings of imperialism. The bourgeoisie has got unlimited freedom to exploit its own people; at the same time the economic development is dependent on political bargains and needs of world capitalist order.

The point to be noted is that the bourgeoisie has improved its position, it has secured direct control of the state, unlimited freedom

to exploit, which makes it a ferocious defender of the state and collaborator of imperialism.

It logically follows from this that it is not only 'big business' but the entire bourgeoisie that is interested in defending the new state—collaborationist state. Why? Because all of them realise that they have unlimited opportunities to exploit the people, that any conflict between the people and themselves will be solved under the state in their own interests.

Secondly, the limitations placed upon economic development through its satellite character are in their opinion questions of bargaining for which their power has developed because of their possession of the new state.

Thirdly, they are not thinking in terms of competition and conflict only, but more in terms of collaboration against world communism and the Soviet Union.

Fourthly, they know they cannot get a state which is equally anti-mass and at the same time completely free from imperialist strings.

Fifthly, the Andhra secretariat always forgets the basic class contradictions and bases itself only on the increased conflict of the bourgeoisie. It is obvious that even if some sections of the bourgeoisie do not get enough benefit, or let us say not much out of the present state etc. can they think in terms of an alternative, of altogether a new type? Can they really take a challenging stand to the present collaborationist state? They dare not. For the alternative to it is people's democratic state and not another form of capitalist state. That is why even the disgruntled elements cannot go beyond constitutional opposition and an attempt to take possession of the government through constitutional means, while always ready to protect the state against the people, against communists.

The Andhra secretariat forgets the dominant contradictions between the exploited people and the capitalists, the challenge of world communism and the consequent position taken by world capitalism—the international front of capital, and hopes to base its strategy on the differences among capitalists, when all of them are united, in spite of the differences, against their enemy, the working-

class. The working-class no doubt takes advantage of whatever differences that might exist among different sections of the bourgeoisie, not to rely on any section, but to discredit and expose both. In the present period it cannot base its strategy on these differences, and forget as the Andhra secretariat does, the main basic contradiction between the working-class and the bourgeoisie. The Andhra documents see the effect of economic crisis, collaboration etc. only on certain sections of the bourgeoisie and forget the masses; they forget these same crises and collaboration intensify the contradiction between the people and the bourgeoisie a hundredfold, leading to an open war between the two. It thus leads to an advocacy of alliance in one form or another with sections of the exploiting bourgeoisie, and in the name of this alliance, of this broad front, effectively tie down the working-class to the apron-strings of the bourgeoisie.

Abjuring Struggle Against Rich Peasants

The logical result of this analysis can be nothing else. In fact this is the strategy which is openly advocated by the documents. The main purpose of the documents is to abjure the fight against rich peasant to build an alliance with him (this also is openly advocated in certain circumstances). No doubt the documents talk generally of "neutralisation in respect of an enemy who has to be openly fought and routed"—neutralisation becomes the banner of class-collaboration with the enemy. Read the following:

"Because the present stage of the revolution is the new democratic stage, not socialist stage, the middle peasant is affirm ally in the revolution who participates in the revolution. The rich peasant who has no feudal tails can be neutralised as a class but in areas like Telangana and Rayalascema, where feudalism is very strong, it is even possible to get sections of rich peasantry in the struggle (though vacillating).

In the matter of procurement of paddy, the secretariat believes that it is possible to neutralise the rich peasants as the government plan goes against the rich peasantry also. Though the rich peasantry as a class is not standing firmly in the fight, it is parting with paddy with dissatisfaction. When we are able to mobilise they are with the general mass of the peasantry.

“Regarding the demands of agricultural labour, the secretariat is of the opinion that it is wrong to import mechanically relations between a capitalist and an industrial worker into the village life where small-peasant economy is dominant. It only disrupts the new democratic front, also does not get the demands of the agricultural labourers satisfied, because this mechanical outlook will drive the poor and the middle peasant into the fold of the rich peasant. So the demands of the agricultural labourers are so formulated that they will not disrupt the new democratic front, but bring the poor and middle peasants to the side of the agricultural labour.

“And again, the lumping of the rich peasantry into a single category without any discrimination between the section which is ‘able to shake off their tails of feudalism’ and those who are ‘not able to do’ so—they characterise the entire rich peasantry as counter-revolutionary : they even do not concede the idea that a section of them can be neutralised in this democratic revolution. They do not concede that at least in the feudal areas like Telangana the rich peasant can be taken along with liberation struggle in this stage. Today the reality that is demonstrated on this front is a concrete proof against this formulation and a good section of it is coming with us in the liberation struggle”.

This constitutes the real practical gist of the documents a programme of class-collaboration in rural areas, of bowing down before the rich peasant. It must be admitted in this connection that if Andhra comrades felt confused and perplexed over the question of the rich peasant, the fault was not entirely theirs. The party congress thesis has not made any special analysis of the rich peasant. It is however equally true that if the Andhra comrades had attempted to apply correctly the line given in the thesis they would never have reached the conclusions which amount to surrender to the rich peasant.

About the role of the rich peasant and the attitude that we had to take towards him, the PB has dealt with these questions in the documents on the agrarian question and people's democracy. These documents reveal that the stand taken by the Andhra comrades is wrong—that the phrase borrowed from Mao about rich peasants with no feudal tails, and applied mechanically without an estimate

of class relations, only serves the purpose of protecting the rich peasant who along with the landlord is the enemy of the rural masses.

In fact the Andhra comrades are attempting to furnish belated ideological justification for the utterly reformist line that the Party adopted in the kisan movement in the period of reformism. That period led to our basing ourselves on middle peasants, allowing ourselves to be influenced by the rich peasants, and in the name of rural unity keeping down the struggle of the agricultural workers and poor peasants, keeping down their leading role—an exact replica of united national front in rural areas.

The results of this were seen in Andhra when repression started in the province.

Starting with the talk of neutralisation, when the rich peasant is to be fought as one of the enemies, the document immediately talks about the possibility of securing the rich peasant as an ally in Telangana where feudalism is strong. From neutrality you straight come to alliance under the pretext that rich peasants in areas where feudalism is strong can play an active anti-feudal role in the struggle for democratic revolution. Once more an absurd reliance on conflicts and differences among the exploiting classes and not seeing their common interests in exploiting the masses. How can rich peasants, even in feudal areas, really play an anti-feudal role when the entire bourgeoisie wants to compromise and enter into an alliance against the masses ; when their leader the industrial bourgeoisie has signed a new alliance with feudalism and when consistently fighting against the feudal elements creates danger for the rich peasants also at the hands of the masses ? How can all this happen when the class-antagonism between the exploiters and the exploited has reached such higher proportions?

The documents say that this has been proved in Telangana. In reality no such proof exists. It must be remembered that what the documents say is not just some sympathy of rich peasants in partial struggles now and then and in the initial stage—which is quite conceivable, just as one factory owner may sometimes support financially etc. the strikers of another rival factory—what it lays down is the vacillating support of the rich peasants in the political revolution.

It thus becomes that in the name of this neutralisation it is the proletariat which has to support the rich peasant in his selfish aims and not that the latter has to support the proletariat in its revolutionary struggle. For instance anyone would see that the resistance of the rich peasant to procurement has nothing in common with the revolutionary opposition to it of the poor peasants etc. The demand of the proletariat is not support to the rich peasants' war on the exploited in the name of supporting his anti-government activities but demand that all his surplus stuff should be confiscated or taken over, while nothing should be taken from those who have no surplus. But the secretariat advocates support of rich peasant's opposition to procurement of surplus stuff, to his plan of blackmarketing his stock. The Andhra secretariat which bases itself on the conflict between the middle bourgeoisie and big business, lands in practice to the support of the policy of blackmarketing by rich peasants, to the support of one section of exploiters against another. It makes the proletariat the camp-follower of one section of the bourgeoisie.

If every action of opposition to the government is to be applauded as progressive, then one may easily support the conspiracies of capitalists to defeat control of prices etc.

Letting Down Agricultural Workers' Struggles

And after this the exploiters are openly supported against the exploited. It is known to all that the reformism of the past six years has meant the abjuration of the struggle of agricultural labourers in the interest of peasant unity and a slackening of the struggles of poor peasants. It meant the proletariat failed to organise the agricultural workers and surrender of the interests of the agricultural workers. A sharp attack has to be launched against this opportunist policy. But instead of this attack in the name of peasant unity, the same policy of openly letting down the agricultural workers is advocated. In the name of this neutralisation it seems you are not to fight the rich peasant for the wage of the agricultural worker. The question is presented as if the struggles of the agricultural worker is only against the middle and poor peasant while the rich peasant, the main exploiter, is given an alibi by not mentioning him and in the name of keeping peasant unity, the unity of middle, poor peasant

and agricultural worker—the struggle of the worker is to be slackened or abjured—with all the benefit naturally going to the rich peasant—for he is the main exploiter of agricultural labour.

In the past when the workers talked about nationalisation, the apologists of the capitalists would ask—what you are going to nationalise, the Singer sewing machine belonging to some poor old widow and thus make it appear that nationalisation would hit smaller sections? In similar fashion the Andhra secretariat when it talks about the wage of agricultural worker, only talks in relation to poor peasants and middle peasants, and not in relation to rich peasant—thus screening the antagonism between the agricultural worker and rich peasant. This is how in the interest of neutralisation class antagonisms are bypassed and interests of the masses let down.

It certainly is necessary to stress the importance of the unity of poor and middle peasants and agricultural workers. But it is imperative for a Marxist—first to emphasise that the struggle of the agricultural workers for better wages, for living wage, must be carried on at all costs, against the rich peasants, the main exploiter of the labourers. And then state since some middle and poor peasants also employ labour, it is necessary to make them understand the importance of this struggle in their own interests, as part of their struggle itself. This is quite different from what the Andhra documents are saying.

Middle Peasant not a 'Firm' Ally

The formulation that the “middle peasant is a firm ally in the revolution” and that the rich peasant ‘with no feudal tails’ is to be ‘neutralised’ is nothing but the ideological cloak for the worst reformist policy pursued in the kisan movement—the policy of basing the peasant movement on middle peasants, of collaboration with rich peasants, and neutralisation of the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. Instead of basing itself on the agrarian workers and poor peasants—the policy in reality bases itself on middle peasants and collaboration with the rich. It is
 peasant is a firm ally in the revolution. He is a
 his vacillations in our revolution are

been shown in the document on people's democracy. The rich peasant has to be combated as one of the main exploiters of the peasant mass, of agricultural labour. He is an enemy who is in the other camp. The refusal of the secretariat to see the class-differentiation in the countryside ends in advocating class-collaboration and suggesting a strategy based on the conception that the entire peasantry, rich as well as poor and middle—with the exception of only those who are unable to shake off the tails of feudalism—which means that the entire peasantry including capitalist rich farmers are revolutionary classes throughout the period of people's democratic revolution. It is incredible, but it is true that the Andhra secretariat solemnly proclaims the rich peasant to be a revolutionary throughout the period of 'new democratic revolution'. This is what it writes :

“Main force of the revolution : workers both rural and industrial; immediate reserves : peasants in general with the exception of those rich farmers who are unable to shake off their tails of feudalism and poor and middle peasants in particular remain as immediate reserves throughout this stage of new democratic revolution.”

Compare this with the class-combination given in the document on people's democracy—for the overthrow of landlordism, against the rich peasants, with the middle peasant as a vacillating ally. The Andhra formula is not one of relying on the basic fighting masses—the agricultural worker and poor peasant—who alone under the leadership of the proletariat can act as the driving force of the agrarian revolution, but of surrendering them to the middle peasants and rich peasants and erecting a strategy based on the interests of these classes—which can only end in abject surrender. For when you consider a vacillating ally to be a firm ally, and when you certify your class enemy as a revolutionary with whom you must seek alliance—such an alliance can only come on the terms of your enemy and in the name of this alliance, this peasant unity, you surrender one fighting position after another, thinking you are advancing the cause of revolution. This is plainly seen even in the formulation when even the agricultural workers' struggle for elementary demands is cautioned against. How much more will be the surrender when

Mechanical Application of Stages of Revolution

Both Nageswar Rao and the secretariat have turned Marxism upside down. Whoever has heard of deciding about the stage of the revolution in a country without concrete study of its class-relations? But they first decide that the stage must be this or that and then create amazing class-relations to suit the particular stage. The secretariat decided it is the stage of February revolution, since it does not want to fight the rich peasant—nothing has changed—only big business gone over, new democratic revolution carried as only anti-feudal etc. Nageswar Rao imagines another set of relations.

Both make a mockery of Marxism, by mechanically transferring the class-combinations obtaining at the two stages of Russian revolution, to the Indian situation without asking whether in view of the fact that three decades of revolutionary struggle have passed since the October revolution, that the second world war has completely altered the balance of class-forces in the country—there is any chance of the stages getting intertwined, of class-relations getting mixed, of the class-combinations of one stage being combined with some of the combinations of the next stage. Thus the entire revolutionary essence of the Russian experience is missed in its mechanical application.

It was and is no doubt correct to have discussed the experience of the two stages of the revolution—that experience is one of the rich heritages of international Marxism, but it cannot be discussed apart from the class-relations obtaining at any given time. Only when studied in relation to the concrete class-relations the rich experience yields a rich harvest.

Lenin showed that actual life produces a variety of combinations and not an exact replica of the past. The class combinations obtaining in one country in the revolution are not exactly reproduced in another country at another time simply because the stage of the revolution itself gets more or less intertwined with the next stage, because the class-combinations get mixed etc. A rigid mechanical expectation to see in Indian conditions an exact replica of the position of various classes at the two stages of the Russian revolution leads to comic effects and wrong conclusions.

The logical conclusion of the Andhra documents is to justify collaboration with all non-feudal exploiters—the biggest of them. This of course even the advocates of the documents dare not do. Therefore they try to narrow down the scope of their collaboration, by defining the rich peasant as one having an income of Rs 1000 to Rs 2000. “Rest of those whose annual income exceeds Rs 2000 *generally* come under the category of landlords, with varying degrees of difference, no matter whether they are feudal exploiters or modern entrepreneurs on capitalist lines.” Thus through this definition an attempt is made to repudiate the logical conclusions of the line—by just defining certain sections as landlords; distinguishing them from rich peasants. There is no reason for this distinction—but it has to be made ; otherwise the secretariat realises the whole policy reveals as openly collaborationist with the most ruthless exploiters. However mere definition will not enable the authors to escape the logical conclusion of their policy in practice for the whole thing is based on a wrong understanding of the role of the new capitalist exploiter in the village.

How carelessly and even wantonly the secretariat interprets Lenin is to be seen in their interpretation of Lenin's definition of various sections of peasantry in his draft theses on the agrarian question submitted to the second congress of the Communist International. There Lenin in defining the various categories primarily lays emphasis on the hiring of labour—and on the role played by hired labour in the production of each category. And this is the comment of the Andhra secretariat on Lenin's definition : “Here we find from Lenin that in his definition and classification of the peasantry the main running thread throughout is seen as the basis of income one gets or in other words sufficiency or insufficiency to his family and farm.” Can distortion go further?

Finally in support of its erroneous policies the Andhra secretariat quotes certain passages from Mao Tse-tung. Firstly, read the following : “Marxism is not a dogma. It is a science which provides us with guiding lines of action. Since the October revolution, in this long period of more than thirty years, mighty revolutionary struggles in different countries, colonies, and semicolonies have been taking place. They present us varied experience and rich lessons. These are most valuable theoretical lessons deduced and added to the armoury

of Marxism-Leninism in this period. Mao, the leader of the historic Chinese liberation struggle, from his unique and rich experience and study, has formulated a theory of new democracy. This is a new form of revolutionary struggle to advance towards socialism in colonies and semicolonies. Mao advanced new democracy as distinct from the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Authoritative Sources of Marxism— Only Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin

Firstly, we must state emphatically that the CPI has accepted Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin as the authoritative sources of Marxism. It has not discovered new sources of Marxism beyond these. Nor for the matter of that is there any communist party which declares adherence to the so-called theory of new democracy alleged to be propounded by Mao and declares it to be a new addition to Marxism. Singularly enough there was no reference to this new addition to Marxism in the conference of nine parties. Under these circumstances it is very wrong for a section of the CC leadership to take upon itself the task of recommending new discoveries which one of the most authoritative conference of Marxists has not thought fit to recommend. The Andhra secretariat should have thought ten times before making such a formulation and taking an original stand on the question of this contribution. It is impermissible for communists to talk lightly about new discoveries, enrichment, because such claims have proved too often to be a thin cloak for revisionism. (Tito, Browder, etc.).

Secondly, the documents of the Andhra secretariat quote Mao's old outlook on new democracy in support of its view but does not even mention by a word that a conference of leading communist parties including the CPSU(B) took place, that at that conference, Zhdanov submitted a report explaining the nature of people's democracies and that this conference was hailed as the opening of a new chapter in the struggle against capital. A very precise class character of people's democracy is given there—a characterisation which excludes the bourgeoisie from power. But all this does not find place in the document.

This is not the place to sit in judgment over the formulations of Comrade Mao in his *New Democracy*. At the same time since the

Andhra secretariat quotes Mao against the understanding of world situation and people's democracies as given by Zhdanov and CPSU(B), it is necessary to examine some of the formulations.

Mao's Formulation of 'Promoting Capitalism'—Wrong

It must be admitted that some of Mao's formulations are such that no communist party can accept them; they are in contradiction to the world understanding of the communist parties. Take the following horrifying formulation from Mao, quoted by the secretariat, and approvingly quoted, which throws a floodlight on what stand the secretariat wants to take :

“Some people cannot understand why the Communist Party of China, far from being unsympathetic to capitalism, actually promotes its development. What China does not want is foreign imperialism and native feudalism and not native capitalism which is too weak.”

No Marxist can ever agree with this reactionary formulation. The CPI in its resolution passed by the second congress has correctly stated that the people's democracy which it wants to establish will confiscate all strategic industries, banks, etc., nationalise them, and drive out the capitalists from key positions to eliminate capitalist order altogether in the shortest possible time.

Are we to suppose that while the revolutionary workers of France, Italy, England, the revolutionary masses of countries, like India, the great USSR and eastern democracies are engaged in fighting world capitalism, the Communist Party of China proposes to rebuild capitalism on the soil of China? Are we to understand that capitalism which has ceased to play any progressive role is reassuming it on the soil of China? Are we to understand that we have returned, so far at least China is concerned, to the theory that socialism cannot be established without capitalism having run its full course in every country—at least in China, and revise the Leninist understanding about the colonies and backward countries going gradually to socialism without necessarily going through the rule of capital and capitalism. And is it not elementary Marxism that capitalism in its declining period never advances production but hampers it, leads to crisis, intense exploitation—and hence you cannot promote it? Is it not elementary Marxism further that if you undertake to promote

capitalism you will be inevitably promoting the dictatorship of the capitalist class? It is elementary Marxism to know that the class which dominates economically will dominate politically and that a party which seeks to promote the rule of capital in economy will end in promoting the rule of capital on the state. One might also ask, has the Chinese proletariat and the people fought for a quarter century, undergone torture and sufferings, for promoting capitalism, the system of wage-slavery and unbridled exploitation? It is obvious that this promoting capitalism would mean promoting the rule of a fascist clique, like Chiang's clique for capitalism can only exist as fascism in China in present-day conditons.

It is obvious that this idea of promoting capitalism is reactionary and counter-revolutionary. It is at the same time clear that Mao, though he has made this loose formulation, at the same time combines it with other formulations.

For instance he repeatedly stresses that the new revolution, the Chinese revolution, is not of the old bourgeois type—and everyone knows that the old bourgeois type revolutions were precisely the revolutions which promoted capitalism.

The basis of the new democracy that he gives is such that in the hands of the revolutionary class it must become a weapon of squeezing out capitalism and not promoting it.

“In such a republic, all big banks, big industries and big commercial establishments must be state-owned. In order to ensure the freedom of people's livelihood from the influence of private profit, all the native-owned or foreign-owned enterprises, either monopolist-dominated or too large for a private effort—for instance banks, railroads, etc.—will be managed by and controlled by state alone. This is the essence and theory of control of capital.”

It is clear that these weapons in the hands of a people's democracy do not lead to promoting capitalism but must lead to a gradual squeezing out of capitalist realtions from one branch of production after another.

People's Democracy : Instrument of Squeezing out, Not Promoting Capitalism

• While we need not go into 1

Mao in fighting polemically against certain deviations himself steps into new deviations. But he is right when he stresses that the Chinese revolution cannot, on the morrow of its success start building socialism by executive orders. For instance in a country dominated by small production in agriculture you cannot decree socialism and largescale agriculture the next day—for the simple reason that the means of production for largescale agriculture are not there and the majority of the small producers must be won over and convinced. This is nothing new. This is the lesson of the October revolution.

Also in such a country you cannot prohibit by decree on the morrow of the revolution all private trade, all private production in agriculture and industry—for the simple reason that neither the means of 100 percent social production are there, nor the majority of the small producers in agriculture can be won over in a single day.

Those who would apply introduction of socialism the next day would come into conflict with the vast masses of peasantry and play into the hands of the enemies of working class.

It is obvious that in these conditions when private production has to be tolerated it will continuously produce the relations and differentiations of capitalist society—for instance in a village some peasants may become rich etc. If left unchecked this will only mean capitalism. But the transitional character of the stage precisely comes from the fact that the state of the revolutionary masses holds both political and key economic power in its hands and uses them to check, curb and gradually squeeze out capitalist relations—by expanding production of nation-owned concerns, etc. Thus the stage becomes one of continuous struggle for squeezing out of capitalism—not promoting it. It is not yet socialism because private production is allowed. It is not capitalism because capitalism is being fought to destroy it, because the key positions are already in the hands of the revolutionary masses.

All this is again the experience of the Russian revolution. Mao confuses the toleration of commodity production, smallscale production, private production under the conditions of people's rule and nationalisation of big industries and banks—with promoting of capitalism and completely eliminates the transitional anti-capitalist character of the economic order under people's democracy.

In India also immediately after people's democratic revolution smallscale private production especially in agriculture will continue for some time. It cannot be eliminated the next day. Also private production on other sectors might be tolerated. But the key economic positions will already be in the hands of the revolutionary masses and they will be used to fight and diminish the role of smallscale production and build nationalised production. In the rural area in the beginning smallscale production may lead to certain differentiations among the peasants—some accumulating wealth and becoming rich peasants. But through wage legislation, trade legislation, they will be repeatedly curbed, will not be allowed to spread their net of exploitation and finally they will be eliminated when means of socialised agriculture are on hand. This is class struggle in a new form.

The fact that smallscale economy will persist in the transitional period, that it might give rise to the emergence of rich peasants temporarily—does not in the least mean that today we must not fight the rich peasants. Today as well as tomorrow the rich peasants are our enemies. They stand for the present state which we seek to overthrow. They are to be politically overthrown and defeated. They are to be economically fought—through agricultural workers' strikes etc. and their power of exploitation has to be undermined. Quick steps have to be taken to eliminate them as a class by promoting largescale socialised production. Meanwhile the proleotariat has to remember that it cannot hope to eliminate the rich peasant just by a decree without eliminating the conditions which create him. It must therefore take persistent steps to fight him till such conditions are created and—he is finally eliminated.

Mao, though he is right in stressing the fact that you cannot build socialism without long preparations, yet makes erroneous formulations.

The Andhra secretariat, while it gives quotations from Mao's book which was written five years back, is shy of even referring to Zhdanov's report and his description of peoples' democracy, even though the latter is a document accepted by world communists while the former is not. To quote Zhdanov:

“The new democratic governments in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria,

Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Albania, backed by the mass of the people, were able within a minimum period to carry through progressive democratic reforms such as bourgeois democracy is no longer capable of effecting. Agrarian reform turned over the land to the peasants and led to the elimination of the landlord class. Nationalisation of largescale industry and the banks, and the confiscation of the property of traitors who had collaborated with the Germans radically undermined the position of monopoly capital in these countries and redeemed the masses from imperialist bondage. Together with this, the foundation was laid of government, national ownership, and a new type of state was created—the *people's republic* where the power belongs to the people, where largescale industry, transport and the banks are owned by the state, and where a bloc of labouring classes of the population, headed by the working class, constitutes the leading force. As a result, the peoples of these countries have not only torn themselves from the clutches of imperialism, but are paving the way for entry on to the path of socialist development.”

The political thesis of the second congress describes the people's democratic state as follows : “The programme of the democratic movement can be... working class over the other sections of the toiling people.”

If the Andhra secretariat had stuck to those formulations there would have been no need to speculate on the character of people's democracy and land itself into opportunism. The position taken by the Andhra secretariat, and substantiated by loose quotations from Mao, amounts to equating people's democratic revolution to an anti-feudal revolution, i.e. to a revolution of the ordinary bourgeois type. Under the plea of proving that this is not a socialist revolution the Andhra secretariat has come to the conclusion that it is an ordinary bourgeois revolution. All the references to India being a colony and semicolon, and the strategy suggested amount to this. In reality if only it would study the quotations from Zhdanov it would find answers to all the questions. The people's democratic revolution is not only anti-feudal but anti-capitalist also—it not only abolishes feudalism but drives out the capitalists from key positions in the economic life and political rule and puts the people in a position to wage a successful final struggle against capitalism. This is how the

bourgeois democratic revolution gets intertwined with the socialist revolution and one passes into another.

Chinese vs Russian Pattern of Revolution— Unmarxist Counterposing

And finally the secretariat comes to the following conclusion as a climax to a line in which people occupy no consideration :

“Keeping all this in view, in areas where we are a good proportion in the masses like certain parts of Andhra, Kerala, Bengal, the time has come to think in terms of guerilla warfare (Chinese way) against military onslaughts of Nehru government which is bent upon mercilessly liquidating us.”

Guerilla warfare against the Nehru government in cooperation with rich peasants—can you beat it? This is not a joke, for the rich peasant in some of these areas like Telangana is supposed to be vacillating ally through the entire period of people’s democratic revolution. Can anything be more illusory than this ? The secretariat knows what havoc association with rich peasants played in Andhra when the party had to face repression and yet this kind of stuff is solemnly written. And of course in the document there is no call for winning over the people, for people’s democratic front, for winning over the majority of the masses in those areas where you are strong or weak. Where you are strong—guerilla warfare in cooperation with the rich peasant—such is its call. Guerilla warfare cannot be carried on by those who have not got the support of the overwhelming majority of the people the territory—even this major fact is forgotten. This reference to guerilla warfare is only an attempt to appear heroic after having yielded the interests of the revolutionary masses to the rich peasants and other sections of the bourgeoisie.

Finally you get the following :

“Our revolution in many respects differs from the classical Russian revolution ; but to a great extent similar to that of Chinese revolution. The perspective is likely not that of general strikes and armed uprising leading to the liberation of the rural side; but the dogged resistance and prolonged civil war in the form of an agrarian

revolution culminating in the capture of political power by democratic front.”

The way in which Russian and Chinese revolutions are described and contrasted is totally wrong.

Was there no civil war in Russia, no agrarian revolution, no protracted struggle? Did not the bolsheviks fight for thirty long years? To ask these questions is to expose the bankruptcy of the contrast.

Did not the strikes of Shanghai and Canton play a great revolutionary role in the formation of the Chinese red army and the revolutionising of the peasantry?

Anyone who rejects the revolutionary weapon of general strike—the specific weapon of the proletariat or belittles it, never mind under what excuse, is an anti-Leninist and anti-Marxist. Through it he really pours contempt over the role of the working class and takes a position that the fighting centre is only the peasantry and not the proletariat. The CPI considers the weapon to be one of the most important weapons in the revolutionary armoury—and will prepare for it as the preliminary to rising against the government

Anyone can see even today what revolutionary role the strike of the railway workers will play in present conditions and when peasantry is moving and whosoever rejects the role of a general strike—is guilty of surrendering to the enemy a most revolutionary weapon of struggle. A general strike of all industries will be followed by armed uprising all over the country, if the proletariat had in the meantime won over the majority of the people for the overthrow of the government, had created confidence among the people to follow the lead of the working class. The general strike in Russia followed by uprising was not a spontaneous phenomenon but the result of thirty years of proletarian struggle and the prestige of the bolsheviks among the people.

Why a Protracted Civil War in China ?

Why had the Chinese to go through the protracted civil war? Just because the leadership of the Chinese CP at times failed to fight for in alliance and under the leadership of the proletariat, because it

followed tactical policies which led to a disaster. The sixth congress theses on colonial movement say the following:

“Living, concrete, historical dialectics, such as were demonstrated by now completed first period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China; will give to the communists, especially those working in the colonial countries, a valuable experience which it is necessary to study diligently in order to draw the correct conclusions, especially from the mistakes committed in the course of communist work in the colonies. The rise of the revolutionary wave in China was unusually prolonged (over two years), since it was connected with a protracted internal war. Inasmuch as the northern expedition was not conducted directly against the great imperialist powers, and inasmuch as the latter, owing to competition between them, were partially passive during the first period, while the bourgeois leadership of the national movement had already for some years held Canton in its hands—a definite, though—limited territory—as well as a centralised power backed up by the army, etc., it is accordingly understandable that in this exceptional case a great part of the bourgeoisie in the beginning looked upon the national-emancipatory war as its own particular affair. The Kuomintang, in which it practically played a leading role, in the course of a short time came to be at the head of the national-revolutionary movement, a circumstances which in the course of further events represented an extremely great danger for the revolution.

“On the other hand, among the peculiarities of the situation in China must be numbered the fact that the proletariat there was stronger in relation to its bourgeoisie than the proletariat in other countries. It is true that it was weakly organised, but during the upward growth of the revolutionary wave the growth of labour organisation proceeded at a very rapid rate. The Communist Party also rose in a short time from being a small group to a party with 60,000 members (and presently even more), and possessing a wide influence among the workers. Naturally in these conditions many bourgeois elements also entered the party. The party was lacking in revolutionary experience and, even more, in traditions of bolshevism. In the beginning the upper hand in its leadership was taken by wavering elements, which were still only to a very small degree

liberated from petty-bourgeois, opportunist tendencies, which inadequately understood the independent tasks and role of the Communist Party, and which came out against any decisive development of the agrarian revolution.

“The entry of the communists for a certain period into the leading party of the national revolution, the Kuomintang in itself corresponded to the requirements of the struggle and of the situation, and was also in the interests of the indispensable communist work among the fairly wide masses of toilers who followed this party. In addition, at the beginning the Communist Party of China received in the territory under the rule of the Kuomintang government the possibility of independent agitation among the masses of workers and peasants and among the soldiers of the national army and their organisations. At that time the party possessed greater possibilities than it actually made use of. At that time it did not sufficiently carefully explain to the masses its proletarian class-position in distinction from Sun Yat-senism and other petty-bourgeois tendencies. In the ranks of the Kuomintang the communists did not carry out any independent policy, leaving out of account that in any such inevitable bloc the communists must conduct themselves in an unconditionally critical fashion towards the bourgeois elements and always come out as an independent force. The communists neglected to expose the vacillations of the national bourgeoisie and of bourgeois-democratic nationalism, just at the time when this exposure ought to have constituted one of the most important tasks of the Communist Party. The inevitable disruption of the Kuomintang drew nearer as the national army advanced, but the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party undertook nothing, or almost nothing, in order to prepare the party in case of a breach, and in order to guarantee its independent position and to unite the revolutionary workers and peasants in an independent fighting bloc which would oppose itself to the leadership of the Kuomintang.

“Thus the bourgeois counter-revolutionary coup of Chiang Kai-shek found the revolutionary proletariat completely unprepared, and threw its ranks into confusion. Further, the leadership of the Communist Party even at that time badly understood the process of the development of the revolution from one stage to another and did

not carry through the correct changes in the line of the party made necessary by this coup. Inasmuch as the Left wing of the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Kuomintang during the course of a certain time still went together with the Communist Party, there took place a territorial separation: there arose the separate governments of Nanking and Wuhan. But the Communist Party did not occupy a leading position even in Wuhan. Very quickly in the Wuhan territory there commenced a second period, characterised, among other things, on the one hand, by the presence of elements of an incipient, still indefinite dual power (the seizure by peasant unions of a number of ruling functions in the villages, and the extension of the functions of the trade unions, determined by the endeavour of the masses to reach a 'plebeian' independent solution of the question of power), and, on the other hand, by the absence of sufficiently mature conditions for the organisation of soviets as organs of revolt against the Wuhan government, in so far as the latter still carried on a revolutionary struggle against the Nanking government, which represented the treachery of the bourgeoisie to the revolution.

“The Communist Party at that time directly hindered the independent actions of the revolutionary masses, it did not facilitate their task of gathering and organising forces, it did not assist in breaking down the influence of the leaders of the Left-Kuomintang and their position in the country and in the army. Instead of utilising its participation in the government for these purposes, it, on the contrary, disguised the whole activity of this government (individual petty-bourgeois leading members of the party went so far that they even participated in the disarming of the workers' pickets in Wuhan and in sanctioning the punitive expedition to Changsha!).

“At the bottom of this opportunist policy lay the hope of avoiding a rupture with the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Wuhan government. But, as a matter of fact, this rupture could only be put off for a short space of time. When the mass risings acquired a threatening character the leaders of the Wuhan Kuomintang also began to reach out towards unity with their allies on the other side of the barricades. The revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants still continued to exert all its forces in order to achieve victory. The Communist Party of China now also corrected its line, elected a new leadership,

and took its place at the head of the revolution. But the revolutionary wave was already falling. The heroic mass struggle under the slogan of soviets could only achieve a few temporary successes. Only in individual localities did the uprisings of the agrarian revolution begin sufficiently early, in the remainder the many millions of the peasant rearguard were delayed in their advance. Instead of the former gross errors of opportunist leadership there were now revealed, on the contrary, in various places extremely harmful 'putschist' mistakes. The preparations for risings also did not take place without great mistakes on the part of the communists. The heavy defeats once more threw back the revolution, which in the south had already entered into the second stage of development, to the starting point of this stage."

Struggle for Proletarian Hegemony—the Key

At the same time it is true that the battle is a hard one, people have to be won over, and petty-bourgeois revolutionaries who think that for revolutions people are not necessary, who forget that revolution is made by the majority of the people, have to be told that a swift and easy victory cannot be expected. But this does not mean that general strike and uprising disappear. It is quite conceivable that in these revolutionary battles, centres in the cities might be temporarily crushed while in agrarian areas, because of the vastness, centres of resistance might continue and the struggle may reach high pitch. But this does not mean general strike disappears, armed uprising disappears, only civil war in the countryside remains. On the other hand in such circumstances general strike will have an electrifying effect. There is another trend which considers that agrarian struggles, Telangana etc. are nothing but partial struggles, that these struggles are to be fought as partial struggles, and that until the working class in the cities is able to capture power, agrarian struggles cannot develop up to the point of liberation. This is an erroneous view. It fails to take account of the depth of the crisis of capitalism and the agrarian crisis growing as part of it. It fails to see that mass political strikes in the cities, at a time when agrarian struggles burst out in the rural areas, may strengthen the agricultural workers and poor peasants to raise their struggle to the highest pitch, up to the point of liberation of the area where such struggle develops.

Those who contrast the Chinese and Russian way have many wrong things in their mind. Firstly, their idea about Russian revolution is wrong. They think that the Russian revolution was achieved on 7 November—a one-day show—a sort of coup and forget the dogged fight of three decades, the persistent effort to win over the majority of the people during the revolution and before. They also forget the civil war.

Secondly, when they contrast and uphold what they call the Chinese way, they seek to reject the hegemony of the proletariat in the democratic revolution and feel that Chinese revolution shows that hegemony of the proletariat is not necessary. All the indirect references to general strike and armed uprising being out of date, guerilla warfare in agrarian areas, civil war and prolonged struggle really conceals the idea that the leadership of the proletariat is not necessary. This attempt is done in the name of anti-feudal revolution, agrarian revolution etc.—in short a theory of peasant leadership. Its anti-Marxist character stands exposed.

Proletarian hegemony is not formally repudiated, but it is put in such a way as to liquidate it. Some of those who advocate what they call the Chinese way, formally stand for the hegemony of the proletariat. But they suggest that the Chinese experience shows that it is exercised through the communist party—politically and ideologically, and organisationally—which in reality reduces itself to the assertion that a communist party, based itself on the ideological and political platform of the proletariat, can successfully lead the revolution without setting the working-class itself, the mass of workers in motion—the hegemony to be secured through the leadership of the communist party and not through the direct participation and lead of the working-class in struggle.

As has been pointed above this is a wrong conception. In connection with China also it does not hold good. Those who have witnessed the war going on in rural areas of China and are not aware who carried the flame of agrarian revolution in the Chinese interior are apt to forget the heroic and leading role of the Chinese proletariat. Firstly, without the heroic and revolutionary struggle of the Chinese proletariat in Shanghai, Canton and other places, without their mass

protests, the general strike, the great Canton uprising and commune, a steeled party of the Chinese working-class could not have been. The Communist Party was the direct product of the heroic lead of the Chinese working class in the liberation struggle. Secondly, who carried the flame of revolution to agrarian China when they were compelled to retreat from the cities—the heroic proletarian fighters of Canton commune, the army trained in the class battles of proletariat in Shanghai—the army arising directly out of the Chinese working-class struggle. Without these neither the great march nor the existence of the Communist Party of China was possible. It is thus clear that hegemony cannot mean hegemony of the party without the working-class being in action, but directly the hegemony of the working-class led by the party, the entire working-class in action.

The PB rejects the entire outlook represented by the Andhra document as anti-party, anti-Leninist and being in utter repudiation of the political thesis of the second congress and of the accepted Marxist outlook on world situation, people's democracy, stage of revolution, as given in Zhdanov's statement.

V. REFORMISM IN THE NEW GARB OF PETTY- BOURGEOIS REVOLUTIONISM—CRITIQUE OF OTHER ANDHRA DOCUMENTS ON TACTICS AND TASKS

It is but natural that with this outlook the other documents drafted by the Andhra secretariat should suffer from grave omissions and reveal serious deviations. At the same time it is clear that called upon to lead the party there at the most crucial time the Andhra secretariat did give a firm lead, perhaps after initial vacillation on one of the most important questions facing the party—physical resistance to brutal terror and repression. It is obvious that the provincial committee initially committed a gross reformist blunder when in the name of guerilla warfare it asked the party members to retreat from the villages when police attacked —thus leaving the people to their own fate. In its Review of the Present Situation and Tasks", the secretariat says:

“.....it (PC) gave wrong tactics of resisting police repression, i.e. retreat when police come in large number into the fields, return after the police is gone and make propaganda and teach a lesson to the goondas... it worked havoc in the present conditions here. In many cases the cadre and even the local leadership ran away, leaving the masses to their fate. If instead we had asked the cadres and some local leaders (keeping some local leaders safe in order to maintain organisational continuity) to remain with the masses and resist repression, our position would have been much better. This is proved by the experience we now have. Activities like raping and looting are the least when there is any sort of resistance, though there is severe beating.”

These wrong instructions were counteracted in the “Raids and Party's Tasks” :

“When police raids occur none of the party members should leave the village and go away. One or two leading comrades of the village must remain in the neighbourhood of the village. Other leading members and party members must remain with the people. It does not matter if they get arrested...if the police touch a woman we must fight back whatever the risk. Women must take up self defence measures.”

This was a very correct lead, though somewhat belated. But in giving it under the circumstances created by heavy repression and all-round panic the secretariat proved worthy of the trust that the provincial ranks had placed in it.

For the rest however the Andhra documents reveal the same reformist impress seen in the document of “Stage of Revolution”. The secretariat has allowed itself to be overwhelmed by repression, by the crude petty-bourgeois revolutionism and has come to practical conclusions which are reminiscent of the “Pol-Org Letter” of February 1947 than of the present fighting line.

In the Andhra document there is no recognition of the central slogan of the party—people's democratic front—except once casually. The tactics of mass struggles, the objective, the experience, the winning over of different classes are not at all related to this main slogan of people's democratic front—the instrument of winning

over the majority of the people. This is not made the central point, the focal point of political and economic struggles, it is not regarded as the indispensable instrument which alone can secure our major objective—people's democratic state. How can a leadership be right if it forgot to make the front the central point of its activity? It must fail in isolating the bourgeois leadership, those who are repressing, because it will not have the correct slogans and understanding of the reality. This must be sharply nailed down as the major fault of the Andhra secretariat and its failure to understand the party line. Had it understood this it would have known how to fight the disease of petty-bourgeois revolutionism.

Secondly, in all the Andhra documents the economic analysis has no relation to practical slogans and hangs in the air. For that matter even their political analysis has no such relation. That is why even when they seem to accept the existence of economic crisis. in their practical conclusions they fail to see the wide sweep of the mass movement and fail to draw confidence about the development of the mass struggles, and warn the party members that we are lagging behind the tempo of mass struggles—not going ahead of it. That is why in the name of fighting vanguardism they come to advocate only partial struggles and other small-change of instructions.

The secretariat correctly sees the cause of collapse before repression in the rich-peasant bases of the party but fails to draw political conclusions about deviations and mistakes—that they were the mistakes of a particular class etc.

Partial Collapse before Repression ?

What was the state of the party on the eve of the offensive according to the Andhra provincial committee?

“(a) Our party grew into a mass party, from over a 1000 in 1942 to about 20,000 (not including Telangana) during this reformist period only. Most of them had no experience of even the satyagraha struggle, not to speak of the class battles conducted under the banner of our party. The standard of party membership was lowered, the clause regarding minimum regular work for the party was virtually suspended and those came to defend meetings or took part actively

in assembly elections were recruited. A number of undesirable and anti-party elements have also entered and propagated in this stinking reformist atmosphere. Hence the party ranks in general were seized with panic at this large scale offensive. A few have resigned from the party and a good number have become inactive. There are not more than 500 resignations in a total membership of 10,000 even in Krishna district, where repression is most severe. In other districts there are not many resignations. We cannot yet give figures of those that have become inactive. My estimation is that not more than one-half of the present membership will get inactive, including those that resigned. If we reorganise the party and revive the party life, we can activate a good number of those who have resigned out of panic, are not divulging party secrets or acting as informants, even under pressure from Congress and police. Some are coming again to the party, ashamed of their cowardice and asking for guidance. Only a few are acting as informants. As regards the class nature of those going out of the party, those coming from rich and middle peasants, are in general vacillating or going out of the party. Of them, only those that are ideologically steeled are remaining. Generally the poor-peasant and the agricultural labour mass is politically backward and not only not taken part in the anti-imperialist movement led by Congress, but was also hostile to it and secondly, due to our reformist outlook, we did not develop the agricultural-labour movement as an independent militant movement but as an appendage of the kisan movement, especially in the districts where the peasant movement is strong, for example, Krishna. In towns, cadres coming from the organised working-class are firm; but those coming from middle class and artisan sections are vacillating, for example teachers and petty shopkeepers.

“But in this atmosphere of panic and demoralisation there are sparks of hope too, a section of the party cadres withstood all this storm and bravely defended the banner of the party throughout the province for example, in Chinnakallepalli, Valuvehu, Haripuram of Divi taluk, in Bezwada where two cell secretaries martyred for the cause of the party, Amritlur and Zoopudi of Guntur district, Rajahmundry and Chittivalasa etc.

“The collapse of some of our party strongholds like Katur,

Mangalapuram, Davulur etc. even without resistance, gave courage to the police as well as local reactionaries and goondas to do all sorts of dirty things. It is true that the government concentrated on these villages with hundreds of police and goondas, but the absence of any kind of resistance is a pointer to the quality of our movement.

“(b) The local leadership, i.e. village and ward leadership, generally did not stand the test. It cannot be called leadership in the real sense of the term, except in some places where it evolved out of class struggles, but only ‘call boys’ of the taluk organisers, whose only job is to call the PMs for a cell meeting, when the organiser asks him to do. Moreover during this reformist period, party touts, preachers, rich-peasant and middle-peasant sons and such like elements came on top, occupied key positions in local committees and real fighters were kept back. Hence, when the offensive came on their head, instead of doing their duty, they spread demoralisation in the ranks and began to question even the policy of the party itself. They acted as the saboteurs so to say.

“(c) The district committees, taluk committees, and most of the firka organisers stuck to their posts; but were stupefied at this largescale offensive, could not give a proper lead to the ranks as the organisation got out of their control with all the effects of the sins of past reformism crashing on their heads. Only a few cases among responsible party organisers like Ratakonda Narsimhareddi etc. got panicky and wanted the party policy to be reversed to the old rut of reformism.”

The Andhra committee very correctly stresses the faulty class-composition of the party, the manning of key posts by elements from alien classes as one of the main causes of the collapse. Our party in Andhra, which includes hundreds of comrades imbued with heroism and revolutionary zeal, was paralysed because it was not based on the really revolutionary classes—and therefore the hesitation and even treachery common to such elements from other classes affected it—because those elements were in key positions. It is at the same time true that so great has been the revolutionary role of the party that a majority of these elements remained firm. Yet the minority, occupying key positions, caused partial collapse. This was almost a disaster, a calamity—a warning that the logic of classes, of class

struggle, is pitiless that those who violate the basic laws of Marxism will come to grief. That one of our most important units was very nearly betrayed by the heritage of past reformism, shows how the danger surrounds all units.

But the Andhra committee does not apply this understanding consistently to the political mistakes committed. In the mistakes of the provincial committee, in the mistakes of PMs, it only sees vanguardism—in the documents in mainly fights ‘vanguardism’ and under this mistaken notion very nearly liquidates the revolutionary perspective. It is obvious that if mistakes have been committed they must have their origin in the faulty class-composition of the party and the reformist ideological outlook. Instead of tracing it to these causes the Andhra committee traces them to so called ‘vanguardism’. It is the habit of diehard reformists to explain every failure, every defeat of their reformist policy, by explaining it as due to ‘sectarian’ ‘Leftist’ or ‘vanguardist’ mistakes. Such explanations enable it to cover reformism and sink still further in reformism, and move to extreme right. Instead of realising that reformist outlook had left the masses defenceless, or opened the flank to the enemy—such outlook pins the responsibility of its failure on alleged extremism, or over estimation of revolutionary tempo—making it appear as if they were running ahead of revolutionary developments, when in reality they were lagging far behind. The old central committee, steeped in reformism, was a habitual offender in this respect—every time explaining the failure of its reformist policies by saying that it was due to ‘sectarianism’—that ‘vanguardism’ was provoking the government, etc. and the CC sank still further into reformism to avoid ‘vanguardism’ and came to grief.

Not “Vanguardism”—but Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionism

The Andhra committee by using the wrong term vanguardism to explain its mistakes is really surrendering to right-reformists who are advocating the same argument; for explanation of vanguardism leads to the conception that the masses are not moving with sufficient speed, that you are going beyond the tempo of the mass movement. This leads to toning down political slogans, gives a wrong understanding of the speed with which the masses are moving and leads to the emasculation of the mass struggle.

How does the Andhra PC estimate its mistakes?

“But the entire party in Andhra, from the PC to the cell, with a few exceptions, not heeding this warning, jumped straight into that of vanguardism. We did not read properly the pulse of the masses. We woke from ‘Nehru bhajan’ after a period of 6 long months and also imagined the masses to have woken up from their deep slumbers, to which we are also guilty of having aided the national bourgeoisie in their game of lulling the masses to sleep.

“The PC gave such slogans as ‘Nehru government’ is a fascist government’, ‘Nehru the Indian Chiang’, ‘Nehru the bodyguard of Tata and Birla’ etc. in its appeal of 13 April in *Prajasakti*. The ranks eagerly responded and shouted ‘Down with the Nehru fascist government.’

“The PC without studying properly the effect of the economic crisis and the pulse of the different classes and also sections of a particular class—workers, middle class employees, peasants (deltaic, Virginia and garden-crop areas as well as backward landlord and zamindari-ridden areas) and agricultural labour etc.—mechanically gave calls of strikes and mass actions for all classes and sections of the people, for example, circulars on present struggles in zamindari areas and paddy procurement, published in *Prajasakti*, and strike ballot for teachers given by the Provincial Teachers Federation. The ranks began to implement them everywhere assiduously.

“The PC gave a tech circular in which it asked comrades to keep lathi etc. for self-protection and teach a lesson to enemies of the people who attack them, thinking in this wave of mass struggles they can easily be isolated. The ranks began to shout openly, ‘We will teach a lesson to enemies’ and began to demand arms from the higher committees.

“Vanguardism expressed itself more crudely as we go down to the ranks. The ranks took revolutionary possibilities for actual insurrectionary conditions, strategy for tactics and Telangana way for actual Telangana conditions.

“Even though the living conditions of the mass of the people are worsening day by day and their discontent has been mounting up, if

their illusions about the Congress leadership are not smashed, it is impossible to move them into struggles against their oppressors. In that case, it is the job of the revolutionaries to try to move the masses into struggles, through consistent political propaganda. If one attempts in haste to move the masses who are steeped in illusions about the exploiting classes and their political leadership, without sufficient political propaganda, one is sure to break one's neck and get demoralised. Now, -let us come to concrete questions.

“In the case of the working class, the call for continuous strikes till the working-class leaders were released was given in places like Guntakkal (railway workers), Guntur and Rajahmundry (municipal workers) etc. and had to be withdrawn in face of the government onslaught and the working-class unpreparedness for such a continuous battle.

“In the case of agricultural labour, we are right in taking up their wage and other issues on a province-wide basis and preparing them for independent mass actions. By this we began the first major attempt to dig deep into our class in villages and base our movement on it.

“In the case of forceful procurement, we should have mainly concentrated on propaganda, resisted wherever the peasants are ready, instead of a simple general slogan ‘Resist’. But the peasants did not move everywhere for resistance of forcible procurement. At first, in Krishna district, the peasants resisted indiscriminate procurement in Krishnapuram, Ponamalur, Poranki, etc. But when the government changed its tactics and left out peasants below 2 or 3 acres and launched severe repression, the peasants gave way. A report from Bukhatnam of Anantpur district came, where forcible procurement was resisted.

“In the case of zamindari peasants, the circular should have asked comrades to concentrate on propaganda and move the peasants into struggles, wherever possible, on issues like refusal of taxes, taking hold of irrigation tanks and occupying the banjars, etc. instead of a general call to refuse paying taxes etc.”

Anyone who reads the above extracts which the Andhra committee gives about the evidence of vanguardism will see that they disclose a different type of disease. They disclose the most elementary

mistakes : ignoring the most obvious rules in conducting partial struggles—a general failure to understand the struggle of the masses and reliance on the revolutionary phrasemongering of the petty-bourgeois leaders. The classroots are quite easy to see. The sons of our peasants, the rural intellectuals, have imported into the party their own alien conception of revolution. They could not be educated by the party; therefore the real struggle of the masses is alien to them. They do not base themselves on concrete class relations in deciding their actions. This is not ‘vanguardism’ but what Lenin calls ‘petty-bourgeois revolutionism’, by overcoming which alone the proletariat can march forward.

The Andhra secretariat used the word ‘vanguardism’ which was very current inside the party in the period of reformism. On closer examination it is revealed that there is no such word or tendency mentioned either in the *History of the CPSU(B)*, the *Programme of the CI* or Stalin's *Leninism*, and Lenin's volumes, recently pursued. It is difficult to say whether Lenin used anywhere else this word to denote any particular tendency. It appears that the word is a special contribution of our reformist past, and was effectively used to liquidate all attempts to lead the masses, to liquidate the vanguard role of the party.

In the past the word has been used to connote all kinds of things temporary disorganisation of the movement due to repression has been characterised as due to vanguardist mistakes, militant resistance by individuals also has been characterised like that.

In reality the expression seems to have arisen from cases where the revolutionary vanguard gets cut away from the masses at decisive moments, a tendency known as putschism, Lenin writes:

“To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard or at least of a benevolent neutrality towards it... would not only be folly but a crime.”

This is a case when the vanguard is thrown into a decisive battle before the masses have taken a position—a decisive insurrectionary battle.

The *Programme of the CI* also gives warning about a premature insurrectionary outburst, but does not talk about 'vanguardism':

"When the revolutionary tide is rising, when the ruling classes are disorganised...the party of the proletariat is confronted with the task of leading the masses to a direct attack upon the bourgeois state..., this mass action includes general strike conjoint with armed insurrection against the state-power of the bourgeoisie... . In passing over to new and more radical slogans the parties must be guided by the fundamental role of the political tactics of Leninism, which call for ability to lead the masses to revolutionary positions in such a manner that the masses may by their own experience, convince themselves of the correctness of the party line. Failure to observe the rule must inevitably lead to isolation from the masses, to putschism, to the degeneration of communism into 'Leftist' dogmatism, and to petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' adventurism."

Here again we find putschism etc. is characterised in connection with a premature attempt and insurrectionary outburst. The word vanguardism seems to have arisen in this context. In any case it cannot be applied because it does not describe correctly the vacillations of the petty-bourgeoisie before struggle, or to phrases about revolution, importance of class realities.

What is petty-bourgeois revolutionism? This is what Lenin has to say about petty-bourgeoisie revolutionism in his "*Left-wing*" *Communism—An Infantile Disorder*:

"In the struggle against what enemies within the working-class movement did Bolshevism grow up and become stronger and steeled. Firstly and principally in the struggle against opportunism, which in 1914 definitely grew into social-chauvinism and definitely sided with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Naturally this was the principal enemy of Bolshevism in the working-class movement. This enemy remains the principal enemy internationally. It is this enemy that has claimed, and still claims, the attention of the bolsheviks most of all. This side of the Bolsheviki is now fairly wellknown abroad too.

"Something different, however, must be said of the other enemy of Bolshevism within the working-class movement. It is not yet

sufficiently known abroad that Bolshevism grew up, took shape, and became steeled in long years of struggle against *petty-bourgeois revolutionism*, which smacks of, or borrows something from anarchism, and which falls short in everything essential of the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle. For Marxists, it is well-established theoretically and the experience of all European revolutions and revolutionary movement has fully confirmed it—that the small owner, the small master (a social type that is represented in many European countries on a very wide mass scale), who under capitalism, always suffers oppression and, very often, an incredibly acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions of life, ending in ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organisation discipline and steadfastness. The petty-bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which like anarchism is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such 'revolutionism', its barrenness, its liability to become swiftly transformed into submission, apathy, fantasy, and even a 'frenzied' infatuation with one or another bourgeois 'fad'—all this is a matter of common knowledge. But a theoretical abstract recognition of these truths does not at all free revolutionary parties from old mistakes, which always crop at unexpected moments, in a somewhat new form, in hitherto unknown vestments or surroundings, in peculiar—more or less peculiar—circumstances.

"Anarchism was often a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monstrosities were mutually complementary...

"At its inception in 1903, Bolshevism adopted the tradition of ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois semi-anarchist (or dilettante anarchist) revolutionism, the tradition which has always existed in revolutionary social-democracy, and which struck particularly deep roots with us in 1900-3 when the foundations of mass party of the revolutionary proletariat were being laid in Russia. Bolshevism took over and continued the struggle against the party which more than any other party expressed the tendencies of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, namely the 'Socialist-Revolutionary' Party, and waged this struggle on three main points. First this party, rejecting Marxism, stubbornly refused (or rather was unable) to understand

the need for a strictly objective estimate of the class forces and their interrelation before undertaking any political action. Secondly, this party considered itself to be particularly 'revolutionary', or 'Left' on account of its recognition of individual terrorism only on the grounds of expediency..."

(Compare this last also with the advocacy of guerilla warfare without winning the masses etc.—individual and group actions divorced from mass struggle.)

Its Reformist Roots

This petty-bourgeois revolutionism is at the root of the mistakes in Andhra. And it is not only in Andhra, but in other provinces also that the disease has spread since the session of the second party congress. Certain petty-bourgeois intellectuals have interpreted the party line to mean a licence for Left phrases divorced from the actual conditions of the day-to-day struggle or the interplay of class forces. They have not cared to study either the political thesis or the international documents. They belong not only to Andhra but to other provinces. Some CC members who airily talk as if no change has taken place, who always plead for 'offensive tactics', who advocated armed resistance in other provinces and states but dare not do so in their own province because reality is too near to be ignored; some intellectuals in Bengal who criticise and attack the provincial committee for lack of 'action'; the petty-bourgeois elements who talk in terms of provocative sabotage in industrial strikes but avoid mass battles with the police; those in Azamgarh who funky before the mass upsurge postponed it in the name of organising Telangana and ended in alliance with professionals—the tendencies represented by all these are petty-bourgeois revolutionism which must be mercilessly fought if the party is to discharge its revolutionary responsibilities. For what they reject is class outlook, estimation of class realities—Marxism.

In Russia, petty-bourgeois revolutionism was concentrated outside the Bolshevik Party—in the socialist-revolutionaries and anarchists. In other capitalist countries it was mainly concentrated in the anarchists. In India after the end of petty-bourgeois terrorism in Bengal and other places—an end brought about by developing mass movement, many of these honest elements swung over to the

party. Remnants continued to eke out their independent existence but they themselves had to accept socialism, and appear as Marxists. The influx of these petty-bourgeois revolutionaries was later added to by the influx of large number of petty-bourgeois elements from the Congress, from students—precisely at a period when the party was fast getting its proletarian outlook blurred. All this meant that some of the petty-bourgeois elements could not be completely assimilated and proletarianised and therefore the tendency to petty-bourgeois reaction, revolutionism—neglect of classes and their role should be strong. In India, therefore, unlike in Russia, at present at any rate petty-bourgeois revolutionism has to be fought inside the party. It was routed in Bengal when it was outside. Inside the party it assumes the Marxian garb and has to be unmasked. Those who display this tendency need not be immediately denounced, for the mistakes arose from the fact that the period of reformism has strengthened their nonclass outlook. But they have to be denounced if they become persistent defenders of their mistakes and tendencies represented by them have to be routed.

To turn to the Andhra secretariat and estimate its mistakes—it will now be realised that the secretariat which very correctly understood the class origin of the collapse of a section of the party, would have got the correct characterisation of its mistakes.

Obviously slogans such as 'Nehru government is a fascist government', 'Nehru the Indian Chiang', 'Nehru the bodyguard of Tata and Birla' etc. were wrong as 'rallying' slogans, as slogans of campaigning, as slogans of mobilising the people for struggle and fight. Not because they were wrong in their content, not because of lack of tempo in the mass struggle, not because such slogans 'over-estimated' the tempo of mass struggle, but because the advocates of these slogans forgot the elementary task of isolating and exposing the bourgeoisie in the concrete while simultaneously fighting it, they forgot that before you could raise the slogan of 'Nehru a Chiang'—as even a propaganda slogan, or a rallying slogan—much more so as a slogan or action—some concrete exposure of the bourgeoisie has to be done. To forget to do this is to forget the class-character of the government—a government manned by the national bourgeoisie who still have influence with the people and who are not completely isolated from the people,

as imperialism was. That is, it is forgetting in a typical petty-bourgeois revolutionist fashion an estimate of class relations, rejection of class analysis, and refusal in the concrete to fight and take advantage of the crumbling influence of the bourgeoisie.

This is not 'vanguardism'; this is neglecting the basic task of organising the struggle in a concrete fight against the bourgeoisie, getting beaten by bourgeois influence and strength even when it is rapidly crumbling, just because you do not adopt a Marxist way of fighting it. This is petty-bourgeois revolutionism at its worst; it cannot utilise the revolutionary opportunities at all when the bourgeoisie is in panic, gets itself beaten and then satisfies its conscience by saying it is 'vanguardism'—which immediately enables it to throw the blame on the masses who were supposed to be not as revolutionary as the leaders, whose tempo was not what it should be. Such explanations as 'vanguardism' only screen the disruptive tendency of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, fails to unmask it, prevents the party from correcting it and enables the right-reformists to drag down the party in the bog of reformism. It must be remembered that it is precisely the right-opportunists who always take advantage of every repression against the party, against the mass struggle, every temporary retreat brought about by repression, of every disruption and dislocation caused by wrong and erroneous nonclass application of the revolutionary line, to shout about 'vanguardism', about 'sectarianism', etc. to go back to the old line. The petty-bourgeois revolutionists play into their hands and the right-reformists seek to unnerve the Party—when it is facing difficulties. The Andhra secretariat, by its erroneous characterisation of this tendency as 'vanguardism', is committing a right-reformist mistake.

The instances of other mistakes cited by the PC also bear the same impress. They show an inability to meet the varying attack of the bourgeois propaganda and agitation and slander; an inability to win the masses, convince them by countering the propaganda, changing attack of the bourgeoisie; an inability to master the science of leading the masses. This is not vanguardism; this is petty-bourgeois incapacity meeting a world which is far different from what it imagined, with its class relations, class struggles and the varying

slogans of the various classes. Once more it cannot comprehend the classes, their actual struggle and wants to win it by mouthing brave slogans.

The document admits that on many occasions our comrades were not able to meet even the slanderous propaganda about communist-razakar alliance—when we were shedding blood in Telangana—that they were not able to take the offensive and turn the tables against the class enemy. Read the following from “Lessons of Raids”:

“In spite of that, when Congress leaders who have done not the least bit of help in the struggle but on the contrary have carried on compromise negotiations with the Nizam and disrupted the people's struggle—when these people spread slanders that our party had joined hands with the Nizam, party members collapsed and waited open-mouthed for instructions from the provincial committee.”

This throws a floodlight on how the party members were carrying on propaganda and how the PC was leading them. Once more an inability to fight the bourgeoisie—even its slanderous propaganda in the concrete—an inability which is inevitable if only general slogans are mouthed, the changing slogans of the enemy not anticipated, the exposure is not concrete.

The same inability is seen on the instance quoted about the procurement struggle. The document “Lessons of Raids” very correctly explains what happened but fails to draw proper conclusions and dubs it as vanguardism.

“Similarly the government, which had plundered the grain from the villages without any discrimination for poor peasants, had to exempt kisans holding 5 acres or less when due to the work of our party, both the Congress and the communist masses in Krishnapuram, Ponamalur and Poranki villages rose together to fight it back. But when the slanderous propaganda that repression resulted from atrocities committed by our party was being spread, we did not patiently explain to the kisans how it was because of the party fighting back that the government climbed down to exempt kisans holding 5 acres or less. While the enemies continued spreading slanderous lies we did not do propaganda even in the neighbouring villages about these monstrous deeds.”

Here is one more typical instance of failure in mass leadership, failure to capitalise a big victory. To have forced the government to retreat and give relief to peasants holding below 5 acres in the midst of unheard-of atrocities was a triumph of which the party could have been justly proud. To have brought about the unity of the Congress and our peasants was another big achievement. Yet the leadership fails to consolidate it and use it as a lever to march ahead. Why? Because perhaps with its mind concentrated on general slogans—'Down with...' etc.—the leadership fails to understand the revolutionary significance of such a victory in the partial struggle, totally underestimates the tempo which secured it and throws it away. It does not consolidate it by uniting the Congress and communist peasants still further, by using it as a lever to demand more relief to other sections if that was necessary and possible or to keep the entire united strength together for the next fight. The Congress leaders getting panicky at the fact that their own mass is joining the communists, finding that the atrocities committed by the government have made the peasants hostile, take advantage of our failure to consolidate the victory to start the propaganda especially among the peasants that the atrocities were due to communists and we do not realise the significance of this new move of the enemy. A victory won by the masses through intense suffering is undermined through our failure and the very perpetrator of atrocities has the cheek to come and attack the leaders of mass struggle. To describe this failure to lead the masses as vanguardism is to cover it up.

Similarly the mistakes regarding the teachers' strike or the railway strike are the elementary mistakes of people who have not mastered the theory and tactics of trade-union or mass struggles—and who have not studied the relations of immediate partial struggle in the revolutionary period to the political struggle—and who think that if the masses act in the economic struggle and the leaders mouth revolutionary phrases then revolution will be successful. Such a position cannot be described as 'vanguardist', 'insurrectionary' etc. It is really failure to organise the initial revolts, in the name of general slogans. The erroneous characterisation of these mistakes lands the PC into the acceptance of a reformist perspective. How, we shall see soon.

Correct Warning Regarding Exposure of the Bourgeois Leaders

Before we turn to it, it must be admitted that the PC document "Present Situation" contains some good instances of how correctly to expose, and how correctly to argue with the masses, how to bring them to the point at which they can see for themselves the truth about the general slogans of the party. It is obvious that we want to popularise as quickly as possible the idea that the government must go, we want to mobilise the masses to liquidate it. Through partial struggles, victories, defeats, political struggles, etc. We are making and must make a conscious drive to make the masses come to this conclusion—that this government must go. The slogan will follow in the measure we have done some preparatory work in disillusioning the masses. And it must quickly become an all-India slogan. But to do this the masses must be brought to realise the necessity of it. The Andhra PC has some very correct things to say on this point in "Lessons of Raids".

"Instead of patiently explaining the issues to the masses, we harmed ourselves a great deal with demagogic phrases such as; 'Nehru is the Chiang Kai-shek of India', 'Nehru the bodyguard of Tatas and Birlas', 'Nehru government a fascist government', 'We will teach a lesson to our opponents' etc. These demagogic words gave a helping hand to the slanderous propaganda carried on by the Congress leaders to the effect that we are conspiring to overthrow the Nehru government and that we are planning to murder Congressmen. They gave an opportunity to the enemies to sow confusion among the masses. Taking day-to-day provincial national and international issues, we must patiently explain to the masses how this government is functioning in the interests of capitalists and zamindars, how it is serving the interests of imperialists, how it is submitting to the imperialists, how instead of keeping its election pledges to the masses it is launching the most severe repressive measures, and how Nehru too, with all his thunderous speeches about doing something for the masses, is following the same path. And explaining how this government cannot do anything in the interest of the people, we must show the need for a people's government. Beyond that there is no need at all to enter into the

argument of whether armed revolution is necessary or not to overthrow this government.”

The political thesis of the second congress has already given a warning about this. “We must remember that those in charge of the government..... a new movement based on a new understanding of national unity.”

The experience of Andhra confirms the warning given by the second congress. For where does come the necessity of patient explanation about a government whom you are out to overthrow? Why does not the slogan of overthrowing the government automatically become the slogan of rallying and uniting the masses? Because the task of fighting the bourgeois government is to be combined with the task of isolating the government—the latter task flows from the influence of the national leadership over the masses, which means that the masses have not yet come to the conclusion that the government must be overthrown. They are to be brought to that point through their own experience. Had the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government possessed no such influence, had they stood exposed and discredited before the masses, then there was no question of not coming out with an immediate slogan of ‘Down with the government’, for it would have correctly expressed the experience of the masses and become a slogan of action. It is because of this influence, the necessity of isolation, that the slogan of armed revolution, ‘Down with the government’, does not yet become a rallying or uniting slogan, though our aim is to bring the masses swiftly to that position. The entire aim of our exposure is in this direction and if we do not miss the intermediary steps we will bring the masses to that position in the shortest possible time. From experience comrades will see that the slogan will become a rallying slogan where we are leading struggles and where previous exposure is made, where exposure has been brought to this point. As the masses gather more experience, we will be able to raise the slogan, now here, now there—then all over India.

One of the difficulties today comes from the faulty mass-class basis of our party. The fact that its masses, sympathetic and direct supporters are largely petty-bourgeois in towns—apart from the working-class—and that in the countryside the party is not based

on agricultural labour and poor peasants but on the middle peasant with his illusion about the Congress makes it more difficult to raise the slogan. The more we get firmly entrenched in poor peasants and agricultural workers—the more directly the slogan can be given.

Reformist Perspective of Retreat

In spite of this correct warning and formulation made by it, the report of the provincial committee ends in toning down of struggles, blurring the perspective of developing mass struggles, in failing to give the party members the confidence that impelled by the crisis the masses are moving forward, and in general cautioning against struggles. The erroneous formulation about vanguardism leads to the mistake of underestimating the tempo of struggles breaking out—tempo which no repression is able to bring down.

The entire conception of tasks—apart from certain organisational tasks given for strengthening the party—smack of political demobilisation of the party; they seem to be given on the basis as if the whole of India and perhaps the world has entered a period of reaction as if nothing but some elementary partial struggles are possible.

It is true that conditions were very bad in Andhra and the committee was very right in taking note of the point, of the disorganisation created by repression, of the defeats and beatings which the masses got in some places. To have ignored these things would have been very wrong. It was also very right on the part of the committee to have laid down the rule 'no vacillating elements in key positions', calling for a purging of the panicky elements, raising the minimum qualification for party membership etc. For taking this quick action the committee must be congratulated. It is perhaps the only committee which has taken the question of purging the party seriously. Similarly the committee was right in bringing to the attention of the ranks the importance of daily struggles—on food, peasant demands, workers' demands, demands of agricultural labourers etc.

But all this was no reason why the committee should have lost the perspective of developing mass struggles, should have lost the confidence that these could be organised very soon; why it should have lost the political and economic perspective. How quickly the

masses respond to the call of the party is seen from what happened at Divi on 15th August—Divi which was the scene of unprecedented terror, of raping of women, saw the people mobilised when the red flag fluttered and beckoned them. This was the unvanquished peasant of Andhra ready to surge forth when properly led by the party.

The committee, however, practically advocates a policy of the perspective of retreat—only partial struggles, no political slogans—no assertion that politicalisation and disillusionment are bound to take place rapidly’ no confident call that the mass struggles are bound to develop because of the crisis and we should not be caught napping. Equally amazing is the absence of any political slogans—exposure of the national government on national and international issues etc. The mere slogan ‘Repression is being carried on not on communists alone, but on the entire people; Unite and resist or we shall be doomed’ cannot work miracles. It must be accompanied by concrete exposure of the government policies.

There is no concrete guidance how to raise the partial struggles to political struggles, how to develop political consciousness out of them, how to link them in propaganda with the general slogans of the party; there is no indication how to connect the struggle against procurement with struggle for land—in short the link between partial struggles and basic class demands, between partial struggles and political propaganda and struggle.

The committee has unconsciously returned to the old opportunist slogan ‘Conduct partial struggles as partial struggles’.

Thus the document becomes one of retreat. The Andhra committee should on the basis of this criticism draft a new document embodying all these points, keeping all that is correct in its analysis but throwing overboard what is wrong and draft a resolution restoring revolutionary perspective, and the link between the immediate partial struggles and political struggles, warning that big struggles are ahead and the party is lagging behind, laying down how to carry to political propaganda in these struggles and politicalise them, how quickly through these we will be able to expose the government and make the masses realise that this government must go.

Positive Achievements of Andhra Provincial Committee

This critical estimate of Andhra PC's documents of course does not contain some of the positive achievements of our party there and the leadership. Called upon to lead the party there at the most critical period, the leadership of our party, the secretariat and the provincial committee manned their post heroically and did not get unnerved at the brutal repression and atrocities. They kept the party together, they regathered and regrouped the forces for a fight, they called on party members to wage a war against cowardice and fight like communists—in keeping with the great traditions of our party—the traditions of Telangana, of the Kayyur comrades, of the Bombay working-class which defied tanks on the RIN revolt day. Our comrades had a very difficult task to perform. The party was brutally attacked, and all the forces were concentrated against it immediately after the party congress. In fact the attack had started earlier and most of the Andhra leaders had gone underground even before the party congress. Before they could make a turn, before the party membership could make a turn and test the new line in practice the attack had started. It is nothing to be wondered at if mistakes were committed. The Andhra committee however has rendered a great service to the party by putting all the issues on a fundamental plane thus enabling clarified understanding and helping the process of ideological unification.

Secondly, the Andhra committee has again rendered great service by saving party cadre and underground party organisation and keeping it functioning in spite of terror. This in itself is a big achievement and many a provincial committee would have saved itself from enormous losses in cadre—had it the experience of the Andhra committee. The leadership of Andhra secretariat and committee is old, trusted and steeled leadership, and its latest review though it contains many erroneous formulations constitutes an honest attempt to struggle to catch reality and come to grips with it.

Our party ranks in Andhra have brought fresh glory to the red flag—the banner of the party. Having withstood the sadistic terror, braved torture, seen their women and children humiliated and tortured—but they did not flinch in their loyalty to the great cause of communism. Their sacrifice and courage have saved the party and defeated the enemy's offensive which was launched to crack

the base of the party. The resistance offered by our members and our masses in many places will go down in the history of our fight as a glorious struggle against overwhelming odds. The memory of our six cell secretaries who died fighting, of all those who fell resisting—will be permanently cherished by our party. There were comrades—a number of them—who were politically wrong when they loosely talked of guerilla warfare detached from mass struggle. The PB has criticised such an outlook. At the same time it must be stated that though these comrades were politically wrong, none could beat the in their devotion to the party, in their courage for the cause of communism, when the attack came they stood like a rock and gave unexampled instances of heroism and were largely instrumental in saving the party. All glory to them!

How little the enemy has succeeded in crushing is seen from the example of Divi. The Andhra masses under our leadership have had the first baptism of revolutionary struggle. If they appeared to reel a bit, it can only be a temporary phenomenon, they are bound to rise in greater strength in the immediate future and the task of the party is to be ready to lead the coming mighty battles which no amount of repression can prevent. Let the critical estimate made by the PB arm and steel our leadership and ranks alike to shoulder the great revolutionary responsibilities that await them.

Part II

VI. RIGHT REFORMIST DEVIATION IN WEST BENGAL COMMITTEE

In Bengal the same questions have been raised in a somewhat different form—i.e. in the first place there is a tendency to water down the clear lead given by the second congress in the interests of reformism and secondly a petty-bourgeois revolutionist tendency which shirks the revolutionary tasks of building mass struggles and is wrongly dubbed and characterised as 'Left-adventurism' or 'vanguardism'.

No detailed political report is available as regards Bengal—document reviewing the experience of mass struggles of the last six months, the changed positions of parties, groups and organisations,

the movement of the classes—as the Andhra document has attempted to do. The report of CC member Mullick (Mohd. Ismail) reveals that not only the PC has made no review of recent past to have a correct understanding of the present, but it has steadfastly neglected the task of reviewing of the most militant and inspiring struggles of the present period, and has failed to study the lessons of recent mass struggles.

All that is available from Bengal are some documents which addressed themselves to some doubts and hesitations raised by party comrades, and resolutions on TU and kisan fronts, together with a report of the activity of the West Bengal PC. For want of a detailed review it is of course not possible to lay bare the source of mistakes wherever they exist. Moreover here the reformist hesitations do not take the form of challenging the fundamental basis of the party line, but unconsciously straying into it under stress of repression, break of the link with the mass and by substituting the subjective moods of the leadership for the objective struggles of the masses.

Because of this, because of a failure to discuss the differences fundamentally, there is ideological confusion. The report on activities of West Bengal party says:

"The main weaknesses of this period which still continue and persist are there—ideological confusion, absence of unity on political and organisational matters (this is marked at all levels), vast number of members remaining inactive, lack of understanding of the new tasks in the new period and clinging to old habits and methods of work. This we sought to liquidate by means of kisan and TU resolutions and resolution on democratic front. Still political unity could not be forged in the PC and we differed on important organisational matters, on how to function the PC".

What were these controversies?

"The main controversies that arose were: (1) Is it a period of general offensive of reaction? And therefore a period of retreat? (2) Is the time mature for armed action against the government?"

Though the position taken by the PC as given in its report on activity seems to be generally correct, the fact that these questions were raised and debated show how deep down the reformism has

permeated the minds of party leaders. The party ranks would not believe, they would lose their faith in such leaders, if they knew that within a couple of months after the party congress some leaders of the provincial secretariat seriously debated whether it was period of retreat. This was the same reactionary stand which Joshi advocated in his "Pol-Org Letter" when he flatly stated that reaction was on the offensive, and advocated a line of retreat all along. The West Bengal documents do not give the names of comrades who took such a stand. Otherwise it would have shown the continuity of reformist line, revealed that these comrades have only formally accepted the party congress resolution—but are ever ready to revise a revolutionary understanding of the situation at the first opportunity, at first difficulty in which the party finds itself.

Reformist Cry About 'Period of Retreat'

Unaccustomed to Marxist way of thinking, neither these comrades nor those who differed from them realised that by raising the question whether it was a period of retreat or not, when the working-class and the masses were just entering on a serious fight, when serious fight had not yet begun, they were not only guilty of base cowardice—not only demonstrated their utter bankruptcy in understanding what a revolutionary struggle is, but demanding a complete change in the understanding of the period, i.e. they were demanding a diametrically opposite economic and political analysis of the situation. A period of retreat would be signalled when the proletariat and its followers have really temporarily exhausted their fighting capacity, when either through terror or economic measures a temporary way has been found out by the capitalist class, when against its increasing offensive the working-class can no longer take the challenge in any militant form, especially politically. A period of retreat therefore forces certain specific forms of struggle as the dominant forms—parliamentary activity, legal activity that is permissible, only partial struggles without much hope of their politicalisation, in trade-union matters often a great reliance on factory grievances and not the general basic demands, partial struggles are confined to the grievances and demands of the factory or concern and no prospect of their developing into struggle for basic demands. Much less is there any possibility of the struggles leading to revolutionary possibilities in the near future, political battles, seizure of power, general strike, etc. This is

how Lenin defined in *"Left-wing" Communism* the years of reaction—the periode of retreat:

"The years of reaction (1907-10) : Tsardom is victorious. All the revolutionary and opposition parties have been defeated. Depression, demoralisation, split, discord, renegacy, pornography instead of politics. There is an increased drift towards philosophical idealism; as a cloak for counter-revolutionary sentiments... Defeated armies learn well... The revolutionary parties must complete their education. They have learnt to attack. Now they have to realise that their knowledge must be supplemented by the knowledge how to retreat properly... Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties, the Bolsheviks effected the most orderly retreat... The Bolsheviks achieved this solely because they ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrasemongers, who refused to understand that one had to retreat, and that one had to know how to retreat, and that one had absolutely to learn how to work legally in the most reactionary parliaments, in the most reactionary trade unions, cooperative societies, insurance societies, and similar organisations."

Such are the characteristics of the period of retreat and the tactics that follow from it. Those who seriously raised the question of a period of retreat were in effect suggesting that the people have been defeated by reaction; therefore retreat to a policy of feeble opposition etc. Whether they were conscious or not, this and nothing else would have been the logic of their estimation. It would have had the same result, in fact a worse result, than that following the erroneous characterisation of deviation in Andhra as vanguardist deviation. In Bengal this repudiation of party line and struggle for reformism took the form of surreptitious revisionism in the guise of a study of the situation. It is a pity that the two PB members (Bhowani Sen and Somnath Lahiri) failed to nail down this tendency, unmask it before the ranks by exposing its logical implications. The PB members who drafted the West Bengal document replying to this discussion no doubt took a correct line and gave a correct answer and the provincial committee accepted it. But this document was only based on positive assertions of the policy: it did not negate specifically the doubts raised, unmask them and expose their social roots. This way reformism cannot be fought. By avoiding innerparty controversy, avoiding criticism of the erroneous outlook, the party

can never be forearmed against deviations. It was necessary to take up these doubts, show their social roots, their logical conclusions and unmask them. Inside the party reformism will never come as open reformism but as an estimate of provincial situation, individual struggles etc. The period when reformists inside the party would fight openly for a different understanding of the world situation or national situation is over.

Not Sharply Unmasked

And just because these formulations are not nailed down as the repudiation of the party line, the documents passed by the committee partly show the doubts as concessions to reformism.

The document 'Some Observations,' definitely states that the attack against the party is a sign of weakness of the ruling class etc.—yet even after that document such concessions are made.

How real was the concession to reformism, how liquidationist the whole attitude was, could be seen from the fact that the document on trade unions practically liquidates the trade-union upsurge and gives no broad political guidance, nor a tactic of trade-union struggle based on the rising militancy of the masses, but is based on general cautioning against mistakes, etc. It is a typical document which shows no faith in mass struggle, in its development, and bases itself surreptitiously on the slogan of retreat. It does not do it openly; in a vague general way it talks of an upsurge, general strike also, but bases its immediate tactic on lack of any such development.

Before the documents and their contents are taken into consideration, certain confusion must be cleared. What had happened in Bengal that comrades should raise the question of 'retreat'? Nothing except the fact that the party was declared illegal. What had happened really was that the party leaders were unlinked with the mass organisations and mass struggles; that they could not physically meet the workers in the field and they could not bring themselves to give guidance from the underground apparatus. There was nothing else. And this was made into a theory of retreat. To think that because the party was attacked it was a period of retreat, was nothing but retreat before repression. It was capitulation.

No doubt there was some disorganisation of our work. But every

disorganisation, whether through arrest of leading comrades, attack on the party, illegalisation of the mass organisations, cannot be called a period of retreat, or end of upsurge. This is actually what the ruling class fondly hopes to achieve. This is just what it cannot because the causes of social unrest are deep and it cannot be easily crushed.

There are some comrades it seems who began to quote statistics about strikes. Such comrades must be deemed neither to know Marxism nor how to read statistics. Apart from the fact whether there were less strikes or not, any one familiar with the trade-union or political movement will realise that even in a revolutionary period the movement does not necessarily proceed in a regularly rising crescendo but in spurts so to say—all the accumulated discontent now breaking forth with utmost intensity, then again taking some time to burst forth with greater force. If the intervening period between two bursts is called 'reaction', 'no upsurge', you only get completely floundered by the violence and intensity of the upsurge and fail to prepare for and lead it. This is in fact what happened in Bengal.

No one appears to have given any socio-economic reasons why the movement should go down. Has the cost of living been stabilised? Have the peasants won concessions? Have the masses been defeated? Has the terror been so widespread that demoralisation is ahead?

None of these factors were obtaining. It might be that in a few months there were perhaps less strikes? What of that? Since the crisis was there, it meant not that upsurge had gone down, not that it would be simply renewed—but that it was preparing to burst forth with greater violence—it was continuing—and the party should be prepared for it.

Besides it is impermissible to make such basic formulations, as if Bengal was isolated from India and the rest of the world; if formulations about retreat etc. are made by provinces, villages, towns, separately—it would be a mockery of Marxism. One can talk of temporary disorganisation of the apparatus etc. in a province or territory but it is impermissible to talk of a period whose characteristics flow from the general consequences of the all-India crisis. This outlook rejects a centralised political understanding for the whole of India; it smacks of narrow parochial outlook of petty-

bourgeois intellectuals who would not look to other province, to the experiences of their own party in other provinces.

Failure to Lead Mass Struggles

That the real thing was that the party was not able to lead the mass struggles, link itself with the masses and keep the ranks active is proved from the fact that 50 per cent of the membership is still inactive, and further, from the following quotation from "Report of Activities" :

"The strike by the central government employees started on 2 April (i.e. one week after illegalisation). But neither the PC nor the Calcutta DC could help them in any way. For the first time the strikers saw the Congress government in all its nakedness. The strikers did not get any clear and bold lead from any quarter; our boys who were leading were all inexperienced and suffered from legalist and reformist illusions. The party remained inactive and dumbfounded. The strike collapsed after a week. There were mass arrests—500 arrested."

One can now understand the utter reformism of comrades who in face of this failure to lead the masses attempted to discuss whether there was upsurge or not.

To take another instance and of the grossest type—the instance given by Mullick in a special report to the PB:

"In the bidi workers' strike for increase of wages in Calcutta and Bihar about 60,000 were involved. They fought for about a month; they hoisted the red flag in the streets of Calcutta in April when repression was in full swing (and then some PC leaders were trying to prove that it was a period of retreat), they took out a big demonstration in the streets of Calcutta shouting slogans to legalise the party, inqilab zindabad, etc. Their leaders were arrested : they

the government to release their leaders. They fought like hell with

company's dalals. Ultimately they won the strike. In this strike the Calcutta party never gave any help. The DC secretary and the DC members have never even seen the leaders of the strike, in spite of their repeated demands."

Mullick's revealing report gives a number of instances which conclusively prove that the PC secretariat and the Calcutta DC both had shut themselves off from the working-class movement, and had not even shown the elementary duty of reviewing the big strikes and their experiences. No strike was reviewed, no lesson drawn, no new lessons to teach the masses, the TU cadres, how to fight and organise; no lessons to the party members to teach how to link the mass movement with the underground centre. A complete testimony that the PC secretariat failed to give leadership to the mass struggle.

It will be thus seen that the cry of retreat, objectively amounted to a convenient excuse to screen the failure to give a lead to mass struggles, failure to link the underground centre with the masses—an escapist form of leading mass struggles.

That there was definite hesitation to lead mass struggles not only in the PC but also in the DCs is confirmed from the following report of Sukhen dated 6 November 1948.

“(1) In Hooghly, the Bora-Kamalapur struggle and the stalemate conditions are known to us. They fought against the oppression of local zamindars and congressmen and are still sustaining their morale. There is still practically no organised lead—the struggle does not base on the specific basic demands of the kisans and could *not be spread* in surrounding areas. The party leadership is systematically failing to organise the base. The conflict in leadership is still there. From PC we made certain stopgap arrangements to help the struggling kisans by sending relief, deputations, reporter visiting squads, etc. etc. The district kisan sabha fraction has met a number of times with no conclusive result.....

“(2) In Burdwan, Agradwip kisans are conducting a struggle against the local oppressive zamindar against ejection etc. Some of the local cadres had legalistic illusions and had been obstructing kisans' demonstration, putting up no resistance to government forces in spite of the militants' preparedness. After the suspension of one leading comrade, kisans brought out demonstrations etc. and the tempo began to rise.....

“In Nandigram the kisans of No 6 & 7 forcibly tilled the land—in spite of ejection orders, except two villages (one being our base and the leading cadre of the village getting funky).

“The kisans of Dongajora fought against armed forces on the issue of blackmarketing of paddy, the kisans of Budhakhali are continuously facing the police camps. In all these places the kisans’ morale is not dwindling, it is on the upgrade in spite of the lack of bold leadership on the part of our top organisation.

“In the bases where the majority class-composition is bhagchasis (share croppers) and where we conducted tebhaga struggles or at least popularised the demand of tebhaga, the kisans this year want to fight on tebhaga but this time they think not tebhaga but the whole crop has to be brought to their own house as in either case they apprehend the greatest blow from the government and jotedars. Their doubts are whether we would be able to lead them successfully or not. But they say they have no other way but to fight—this is based on their experience of the constitution hoax and on the confidence of their own fighting capacity revealed through last tebhaga.

“The rich kisans, some middle kisans and rural petty-bourgeois comrades who are the local or district leaders, showed in many places vacillation even to popularise the basic slogans formulated by the provincial committee. This is being revealed as the local cadres go on meeting collectively and take review of the jobs done and not done during the past 4 months”

This has been the real problem all along—whether in relation to working-class or kisan struggles and the provincial secretariat has been shirking it, failing to see it and some comrades were attempting to pass on the responsibility for this state of affairs to the masses. The under-estimation of the mass tempo and the failure to keep pace with it, finding out excuses not to lead it, are characteristics of a reformist outlook and they are seen here.

It is because of this that the PC and DCs do not care to review some of the biggest struggles—do not draw lessons. There is a document on democratic front—as if they did not exist, as if they were not the basic reality. This is born out of two things: Firstly, because the strength of the mass upsurge—that it will change the political landscape—is not real to them. In fact there is a petty-bourgeois contempt for the initial struggle of the masses—its revolutionary meaning is not formally seen.

the underestimation of the upsurge, because of an outlook that it will develop one day—whereas it is already developing—the immediate struggles are being missed. The reformist concession to the view that upsurge is not there has caused loss of perspective and brought about failure to lead the mass struggles.

Critique of TU Resolution

In view of this the document on TU movement drafted by one of the PB members (Somnath Lahiri) constitutes a really remarkable document, opening the floodgates to opportunism and reformism. Anyone who would claim that the Bengal secretariat had not really fallen into the reformism again should read the document. It is quite clear from it, that all the documents produced by Robi (Bhowani Sen) and which in the main upheld the party line seemed to have been only formally accepted by the secretariat.

The trade-union resolution adopted by the secretariat as late as 15 August 1948 when even the first subjectiveness arising from illegalisation should have disappeared, quite calmly argues as if even the TU struggle of the working class is yet to start. In typical reformist fashion it is not only blind to what is happening in the rest of the country, but also to what is going on in Calcutta. Consider the following statement:

“Though the workers are getting rapidly disillusioned about the policy of the national reformists and though their urge for resisting the worsening conditions is growing everyday, we do not yet see a mass working-class upsurge because the majority of the working class had not yet realised the need for a joint offensive against the terror and the worsening conditions or has not yet become sure of their ability to fight it back.”

This is said after the most hesitating section of the employees—the government employees—had gone on strike and demonstrated in face of victimisation; in a period in which even the police—the last bulwark of the government—has started wavering. Every Marxist at least ought to know that for government employees—middle-class employees—to come on strike things must have been in a state of continuous ferment—working-class strikes must have loosened the fear and instilled so much courage, apart from economic desperation, that even the most hesitant section enters the battle arena.

If the comrade had said that as yet the elementary TU upsurge has not developed into an insurrectionary upsurge—a political upsurge—he would have been right. But he talks about daily struggles and says there is no mass working-class upsurge.

He expresses the same idea earlier when the document states:

“Working-class is gradually entering into a stage of conflict with the employers and government. Some previous struggles clearly demonstrate this.”

This is how the upsurge is surreptitiously underestimated. The heroic working-class which has seen unprecedented battles in recent months is yet only gradually entering conflict—trade-union conflict, if you please. If the comrade concerned says that what he means is that the majority of the working-class has not started a simultaneous fight for its demands, synchronising in time, then such a fight, it must be plainly understood, comes out either as the final culmination of the upsurge, on the eve of revolution, or on the eve of a partial breakdown of the government etc. To mistake the final culmination for the developing struggle is not serious Marxism. So that the gist of the formulation is that there is hardly any trade-union upsurge.

The comrade then talks about a general strike and then makes the following amazing formulation:

“This upsurge *might* come (he is not sure about it, does not see it exists today) but if we are caught napping, the upsurge will end in total demoralisation... On us depends whether the upsurge will take place at all or crushed or lulled by the government...”

Here a number of mistakes are committed. Firstly, it is stated that the upsurge might come—he thus denies its existence today; then it is made dependent on us—the party—this is also wrong—the organised leadership of this upsurge—leading it to success—political conclusions depend on the leadership of the party. But the causes of the upsurge arise decisively out of socio-economic conditions leading to spontaneous elementary struggles of the masses. The upsurge in this form is taking place even when we are not there to lead it. All this confusion arises from the fact that upsurge is not distinguished from its culmination, general strike etc.—and is equated

that the final culmination of the upsurge does not exist—and from that to deduce that upsurge in the sense of a rising spontaneous movement of the masses also does not exist. It is thus that the document preaches a reformist outlook and tactics.

Based on revisionist confusion the document is a hotchpotch of all instructions, good and bad, none of which however is explained or given a place in proportion to its political importance. You cannot produce a document for a revolutionary party by incorporating all dos and don'ts—irrespective of their importance in the situation. It will not save the cadre from committing mistakes. It only gives the leader the excuse to escape further criticism by saying he had put all suggestions; contradictory as well as complementary in his document.

Not that all the suggestions and instructions it gives are wrong. But most of them will lead the comrades astray just because the urgency of leading the mass struggles is not placed, the tempo is totally underestimated, the main deviation—lag behind the mass struggles—is not only not laid down but a contradictory analysis—no upsurge—is made. In this background instructions which are otherwise useful have every chance of leading to opportunist practice. For instance, how can a warning against unnecessarily protracting strikes help the comrades when the disease is of not properly leading strikes, lagging behind spontaneous indignation of the masses?

Revolutionary Perspective Denied

The basic defect of the document, firstly, is that it gives up the perspective of revolutionary developments and denies it. Secondly, it fails to understand the main shortcoming of the present period—the failure of party to keep pace with the masses—even according to the old standard. Thirdly, it underestimates the upsurge. Fourthly, it does not make the least attempt to review seriously a single working-class struggle, its experience under new conditions and give any instructions. Fifthly, there is no integrated outlook—whatever suggestion has come into the head of the writer has been put in the same order on paper. And sixthly, the tips given are of such a general character. Seventhly, no mention is made of the basic slogan of strike committee, rank-and-file leadership in strikes—how to have a broad-based strike committee to train working-class leadership, no warning against trade-union bossdom—all these are totally absent.

Coupled with this are thoroughgoing opportunist formulations like hit-and-run affair which is opportunist theory of waiting on events, not preparing for struggle, justifying the existing practice of Bengal party leadership :

“Under conditions of terror it has to be a hit-and-run affair. Whenever we find the pulse of the workers going up, an offensive coming which is actually resented by the masses or some such thing, immediately rouse them up and call them out as soon as you find that the workers will respond to the call.”

These instructions sum up the opportunist outlook which is always afraid that the workers might not go on strike even when an offensive is there, leave aside themselves taking an offensive and caution against ‘over-striking’ by leadership when in actual fact, the workers were executing marvels of courage and heroic struggles. The hit-and-run affair is a clever way of sabotaging mass struggles by waiting for them; way of being dragged at the end of mass struggles, not of leading them. It comes because the reformist outlook does not believe that the masses are really fighting.

In reality a different warning was required. The warning especially to the trade-union leaders here : do not mistake your own demoralisation before repression for the mood of the masses—in all provinces the workers have repeatedly shown an amazing capacity to withstand terror and fight back—a capacity which we the communists had not seen in the workers all these years. Formerly one tenth of this terror would have meant an end to strike, trade unions, for a pretty long period. Now the terror is fought back for months. This has been the experience of Amalner, Coimbatore, SIR, Vizagapatam, where the recent assembly elections fought in conditions of terror gave big vote to the party. This shows how deep opportunism has gone down since it makes comrades forget their recent experience.

With such basic tactics advocated, when the deviation is that of neglecting mass struggles—what use are instructions like : fight with militant means when necessary, etc? These are mere phrases which only cover the policy of waiting on events, no faith in the masses. It is the latter that dominates the action of the party members for it corresponds with the existing deviation in the party and steers it.

If the authors of the document had paid serious attention to the points culled by them, they themselves would have come to the conclusion that the party is lagging behind mass struggles, failing to organise them.

Here are the instances given in the document:

“(1) In the tramways after the company's offensive at Nonapukur we failed to realise the need for rousing the workers to a protest action the very next day. Even after the decision was taken most of the leadership thought it was wrong to have a strike and that its inevitable failure will finally demoralise the workers and ruin the union. The result proved the contrary.

“(2) In Lipton even when nearly one-third of the total number of workers were retrenched we failed to call upon the workers to resist.

“(3) In jute, we refused to utilise the INTUC federation's demagoguery about a one-day strike against dismissals on the plea that they were not serious about it and that they themselves were not propagating their slogan among the workers. We did not realise that it was necessary for us to convey their decision to the workers and with suitable modifications on their demand, agitate for a united-front token strike on a near date. That would have, on the one hand, exposed to the workers the hollowness of the INTUC's pretensions. This happened because our comrades, who were living in the make-believe of a huge jute strike taking place by itself in the near future, did not realise that only agitation and action on occasions like the INTUC resolution could bring about a huge strike in the future.

“(4) On the Socialist Party's call for a one-day strike in Howrah against engineering award we did not see it as a tremendous opportunity to seal the fighting unity of our and socialist-controlled workers. We saw only the socialist leaders and speculated they could not be serious about the strike call but, being just as much dead to working-class needs and feelings as the socialist leaders themselves, did not see the tremendous ferment in the class which had compelled the socialists to issue the call. We remained neutral to the strike call, privately even poo-pooed the idea. A strike call which, if joined by us, might have changed the face of Howrah by rousing the majority of Howrah's working-class into a mighty one-day battle and could have laid the foundation of the future general upsurge in Howrah,

was betrayed by us, the working-class was set one against another, with the inevitable result that we were even powerless to prevent the Burn employees, over whom we used to have good influence, to call in police to help them break the strike."

The document makes a very correct comment on these instances. It refers to a naive idea that verbal "exposure coupled with worsening conditions will very soon bring about a mass working-class upsurge spontaneously and all that we have to do is to wait for the storm to burst. This false 'perspective' has been a cover for panic and reformism, it has led to holding the worker back from action, retreating before the owners' and government's offensive, refusing to acknowledge the workers' growing desire to unite to resist". And yet the document ends by throwing out all perspective, and hits upon the tactics that it condemns and all this because the authors have no faith that mass struggle is really on, that strikes even against the offensive will really break out.

Here we see hidden reformism and therefore all the more dangerous. We see it even when there is hardly any terror compared with Andhra, Tamil Nadu or Kerala.

Revolutionary Phrasemongering

The other side of this same process is petty-bourgeois revolutionism—those who are brave in words and who advance these words as against the realities of class struggle, and more, it is the same class and the same deviation as in Andhra. And it took the same identical form. In the ranks it took the form of slogans like 'Nehru a goonda, Kiron Shankar is a goonda'—a crude manifestation of petty-bourgeois loquacity. On the higher level—ideologically the question was posed: why no call for armed revolution?—why no slogan for armed revolution? etc. As we see, it is the same question.

Robi in his document—"Provincial Circular 5—Some Observations"—has answered this question correctly, though he should have taken it more seriously and dealt at length. He correctly points out that the slogan forgets the task of isolating the bourgeoisie, its influence. This is very correct. The has been
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t be noted.

Here you find petty-bourgeois revolutionism in its nakedness. These revolutionary phrasemongers did not see that the actual struggles of the masses were being neglected because of reformist deviation. That was no concern of theirs. All that they were concerned with was advancing more and more radical slogans—the more radical the better. So armed revolution—on the basis of neglect of the developing struggles—arms, means to fight, etc. —such is their sense of revolution. Reject revolutionary struggle in the concrete to talk big—and when beaten back deny that the masses are fighting—such is their practice.

Much light would be thrown on this dangerous tendency inside the party if the provincial committee were to make a self-critical review of the recent period. When all the slogans, doubts, criticisms that were raised in recent time, the doubts etc. that keep the party disunited and even the provincial committee disunited—then it will be found that the class-roots of the doubts are petty-bourgeois revolutionism on the one hand and deeprooted reformism on the other.

However this revolutionism is not only asking questions. It is going in for anti-working-class practice in the name of the party. In the course of the strike of the corporation workers there was an alarming instance of anti-proletarian outlook and agent-provocateur practice. The revolt of Mullick against these practices is a correct proletarian revolt, and the comrades concerned must be sharply condemned for their wanton dealings with the strike. The proletarian party does not indulge in such war against the people. It is not building people's front, it is smashing it. The second congress gave the direction to so conduct the strike as to build the people's front. Apart from this, such war against society against the lakhs of workers, of other toilers—is an act of agent-provocateur. Only in times of war, such things are done; or civil war when there is no other way out. It seems the secretariat passed a resolution applauding this agent-provocateur tactics. If it has, it shows how deep anti-Marxist petty-bourgeois deviations have gone in the Bengal party. This is worse than the compact with professionals in UP or individual actions in Andhra.

The anarchosindicalist saboteur was a common phenomenon at one time in the international movement and had to be fought

ruthlessly. No quarter is to be given to him. In the earlier pages we have seen Lenin's estimate about this anarchist petty-bourgeois revolutionist tendency. To give the remaining part of that quotation from "*Left-wing*" Communism:

"Anarchism was often a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monstrosities were mutually complementary. And the fact that in Russia, although her population is more petty-bourgeois than that of European countries, anarchism relatively speaking exercised a negligible influence during both revolutions (1905 and 1917) and during the preparatory period of these revolutions, must undoubtedly be partly placed to the credit of the Bolshevism, which has always waged a most ruthless and uncompromising struggle against opportunism... At its inception in 1903, Bolshevism adopted the tradition of ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois semi-anarchist (or dilettante-anarchist) revolutionism..."

A Factional Grouping

The danger to the Bengal party arising from this tendency has already been pointed out. The historical roots have been laid bare. Recent facts show that tendency has reached a dangerous stage—it is forming itself into a faction, because of its anarchist outlook it is being exploited by agent-provocateur (Anant Singh), and that it has been largely responsible for hastening the illegalisation of the Bengal committee, that it has nothing in common with the party principles about organisation, mass struggles, etc.

K's (N.K. Krishnan's) report now makes it quite clear that this group tried to develop an alternative petty-bourgeois line of action—long before the party-congress. In 1947 one of them said to K that the present leaders of the party come mostly from TU or Congress movement; they are not revolutionaries. We extremists alone will be able to lead the party.

Politically these comrades were ultrareformists. At the time of the party congress they wanted to defend Joshi's line but found it impossible. They therefore adopted obstructionist tactics. They gathered round them a number of discontented elements to attack the leadership of the Bengal party and the CC.

Their talk referred to above dates back to 1947—is a significant fact. For it is now established that Anant Singh has been an informer since 1947—and it is quite possible that the initiative came from Anant Singh and fell on ripe ground.

It is very significant that Upen who had information about the arrests on 25th earlier than anybody did not reveal it to anyone. One shudders to think of the consequences if the present leadership had been jailed: Anant Singh would not have been exposed, and Upen who was a close associate of Anant Singh would have been virtually in possession of the party. One should not belittle the idea of a deliberate plot arranged by Anant Singh.

Matters have not stopped here. The group has been on the offensive and as is the tactic of all international agent-provocateurs it is concentrating on those who hold the party together, firstly Robi. Secondly, to get into power themselves, they run down the secretariat. Once more taking advantage of the petty-bourgeois conceptions of organisation etc. they have so manipulated the discontent among the PC members that the secretariat, which itself has petty-bourgeois prejudices, is afraid to take decisions and offend the barrage of propaganda of a group even when the safety of the party is in question. The attitude of the members of the secretariat on the question of Dada, their persistence to defend a man who is obviously a scoundrel and a coward, their efforts to join in this gang's game to foist the blame on Robi, and finally their complete capitulation to this gangster, propaganda—is the evidence that the party is in great danger of falling in the hands of anti-Marxist suspicious elements. All this because the political roots of this tendency have not been unmasked to the ranks, because their politics has been wrongly characterised—Left-adventurism—and not nailed down as anti-Marxist, anti-party, outlook.

This is where the current of petty bourgeois reformism has brought the party. The openly anti-working-class outlook of this group finds expression, in persistent rudeness, arrogance to working-class cadres and leaders. The PC secretariat also is guilty of anti-working-class bias—but we will deal with it later after getting their opinion on Mullick's report.

Essential Task

A drastic purge of the party in Bengal, reorganisation of the PC and secretariat, unmasking the social roots of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, reviewing the experience of recent working-class and kisan struggles and on that basis chalking out a plan of closely linking these struggles with the underground centre, working out concretely tactics of leading mass struggles in a rising period, detailed planning out of the tactics of tebhaga, tactics of the mass struggles on other fronts, ideological education through schools and Marxist literature, full utilisation of the capacities of all PC members, activities of all party members, a conscious effort to orientate the minds of the party members to the working class, immediate looking to, training and promoting of working-class cadres to responsible positions, persistent attempt to proletarianise the party ideologically and change the social composition of our leading committees—these are essential if Bengal is to break through the present stalemate.

Robi (Bhowani Sen) should draft a detailed political self-critical report for Bengal—get it discussed in the PC and then a PB resolution should be drafted on that basis. PB should make arrangements to help Robi to train Hindi working-class cadre.

VII. REVOLUTIONARY PHRASEMONGERING AND BETRAYAL OF MASS STRUGGLES — EXAMPLE OF AZAMGARH

The same retreat before militancy of the masses and then running to methods of individual action—petty-bourgeois revolutionism was in evidence in UP in Azamgarh where one of the biggest kisan upsurges has been practically sabotaged through vacillation before struggle and running away from it. The Azamgarh instance must be taken very seriously for no other instance brings to the forefront the hidden weakness of our party so much as this one. It is an instance
 a petty-bourgeois leadership really fled away in panic from the mass and then lapsed into individual anarchist acts. Everywhere as we see the party has to pay a heavy price for the petty-bourgeois composition of the party, especially its leadership.

It should be noted that the leader whom the PB has to criticise and charge with running away from the struggle is the most popular leader and the leader of the peasants of the district. If the PB 'has to criticise him it is only with a view to see that such mistakes are not committed by him or anybody in future, to see that the entire party learns from the mistakes; that Party members who come from the petty-bourgeoisie take this warning seriously and remember that unless they discipline themselves through deep study of Marxism, through struggle, unless they consciously fight all their traces of social origin—individualism, lack of faith in the masses, faith in the power of intellectual arrogance—unless they proletarianise themselves ideologically as well as through the revolutionary experience of the party. Unless they develop a pride in our working-class and develop a sense of modesty—their social origin will betray them and the struggle at the most critical time.

This leader came from a zamindar family—an ex-terrorist—and can be taken to be a representative of rural intellectuals. He is the most popular leader of the peasants, genuinely loved by them. He has led also struggles in the past. But perhaps never did he see such tempo as at this time. When face to face with it, he fled from action in the name of preparing a Telangana. Typical petty-bourgeois revolutionist phrasemongering when running away from the battle. This is what happened. The situation in the district was as follows as described in a PC resolution:

“The kisan struggle in Azamgarh, that is in ... in tehsils led by us, has risen to a distinctly higher level during the last three months compared to the struggles led by us in the same district either in 1946 or 1947.

“The struggles for land led by us during 1946 and 1947 were overwhelmingly struggles of kisans ejected in various ways for reoccupation and reinstatement. They were also struggles of shikmais for occupancy rights, and of all kisans for pastures, fallow, tanks, trees, etc., and against various forms of zamindari zabardasti. The struggles of agricultural labourers were in the form of strikes for higher wages and also against begar. We also conducted anti-profitsteering campaigns organising occasional seizures of grain and cloth. But as yet there were no struggles for the direct and immediate

abolition of zamindari through a general occupation of zamindari lands followed by refusal to pay rents. In the nature of things, either the earlier struggles had to lead to the latter type or to end in partial and shortlived victories followed by a fiercer counter-offensive by the zamindars and the government and a retreat by the kisan movement. In fact our wrong policy after December 1946 actually created the latter situation in 1947, though new struggles were also taken up during the year.

“Our campaigning since the provincial party conference has also raised new and more aggressive slogans, has pursued very aggressive tactics, and has been organised on a voluminous scale. The key slogan most widely popularised seems to have been “Telangana in Azamgarh in 1948”. And this has been explained as an all-round seizure and distribution of zamindars' lands, total non-payment of rent, hounding out the zamindars from the villages and occupation of their property, seizure of hoarded grain and cloth and the establishment of village power. Both the central and provincial governments and particularly Jawaharlal Nehru and Pant have been openly attacked as traitors. Holding of small and big meetings in breach of section 144 after throwing out open challenges to the police and zamindars has become common, including their being addressed by comrades with warrants of arrests against them. The same comrades also normally move about with kisan volunteers armed with lathis and ballams and the police have not been able to arrest them till now. The number of volunteers (mostly youth) is about one thousand. Their most popular slogan is ‘Teen ke badle tees denge’ and at least during the last two months both the police and zamindars’ lathials have been so much overawed that the former have not resorted to any arrests and the latter have not dared as a rule to commit the usual acts of violence and terror against kisans and our workers. The volume of this entire activity has also been considerable, including more than 15 meetings with an average attendance of 4 to 5 thousand peasants, three rallies attended by between 10 and 15 thousand, and of course continuous movement of jathas propogandising in the villages. 2500 copies of a leaflet have been distributed all over the district and had a very good effect. Over 15 agricultural labourers’ strikes have also been organised in this period. On the whole the majority of labourers and peasants in Ghosi and large numbers in Segri are at the moment not

merely in a militant and aggressive mood, but also waiting for the order to 'go in to action'. On the other hand a number of zamindars have been evacuating their women and generally, as can be seen, their morale as also of their goondas is bad. The police, however, though innocuous for some time, seem to be preparing for firmer action and have reported to the ministry that we are planning a general offensive as soon as the ploughing season begins."

Mounting Peasant Upsurge

This was the situation. The landlords were evacuating, the police dared not attack, the disillusionment was so much that we could openly attack Nehru and Pant. The agricultural worker—our class, together with the poor peasantry was marching at the head. No wonder then that it set the pace—in militancy; no wonder then that the peasant led by these could not have illusions about the Congress and we could attack Nehru straight. We were basing ourselves on our class.

The peasants were gathering round the party, awaiting its directions, with full faith, and when their enthusiasm and indignation had reached the boiling point, the party leader let them down. This is how one of the arrested PC members described the situation :

"A series of 20 meetings after the government offensive against the party had not only given confidence to the comrades who were trying to run away from action, but created a new life among the peasantry in the entire area. Everywhere there was a general whisper in the village side that the party is going to give a call for the offensive. Peasants began making their preparation and each one was anxious to see that when the call from the red flag comes he should not be found lagging. Poor kisans and khet mazdoors would assemble round our comrades and ask them in whispers, 'Babu, kab hukum milega' (when are you going to give the call?).

"The rally in X was the culmination of these series of meetings. Be it noted here that twice in this place and its surrounding villages announcements for Congress meetings were made. And in spite of threats from zamindars and their goondas, not only the meeting was very poor but it could not be held. Both the times none but a handful of zamindars turned up.

"After about 15 days the above meeting in the name of the CP was announced at the same spot. With whom do the people stand was the question on which the kisans were to give their verdict and they did give their verdict. The meeting was attended by not less than 8 to 10 thousand kisans (liberal estimate) all armed with lathis. This surging mass of militant kisans even surprised our comrades. Jai Bahadur Singh spoke for four hours. The place is a stronghold of zamindars and the kisans had come fully convinced that the party will give the order in this meeting. They had therefore come prepared to start the work of eliminating the village parasites from the area. The generation-old vengeance was clearly writ on their faces and their erect lathis indicated that they meant business. They waited and waited but the hukum did not come. They lingered on even after the meeting was over and some even asked angrily as to why the call is not coming. A small minority inside the party was in favour of giving the call but majority including Jai Bahadur said, 'This is an unruly mass and we don't know when it will stop.' Thus the 'unruly mass' obediently dispersed, angry and partly demoralised."

Here was petty-bourgeois anarchist-revolutionist funking the mass struggle and in a typical social-democratic manner calling the mass 'unruly mass'. The masses had called the bluff of our leadership—and the leaders betrayed their social origin.

These exterrorists or petty-bourgeois intellectuals who fled from the mass struggles were at the same time attempting to organise individual action on their own.

"According to him the leadership had no faith in the people and was thinking in terms of collecting arms and fighting isolated terrorist type of actions. These comrades (about 20) were thinking that they alone will fight, give heroic resistance and perish. The leadership now realises its mistakes and agrees that it was a very serious non-political terrorist deviation ... a hangover of their past. Thus on the platform the leadership was communist, but away from the people it was a group of terrorists."

Phrasemongers Ran Away from Mass Struggle

Here we find the petty-bourgeois revolutionist who talks big about enacting a Telangana running away from the mass struggle

and choosing the company of lumpen elements in preference to the revolutionary masses. Sabotage of mass struggle coupled with attempts which would only enable the government to launch action against the masses who will not know why they are attacked, who will be attacked for something which has nothing to do with their struggle and before which therefore they would have been helpless—such is the character of this deviation, this disease of the petty-bourgeoisie.

It is extremely shocking that after this repudiation of the masses the PC which passed a resolution on the developments and sent the CC organiser there, did not even condemn these comrades much less remove some of them from responsible positions. It cannot be that the PC was unaware of what happened at the last mass meeting, before the leader came to PHQ, that he had just retreated before the masses.

In fact the CC organiser and PC failing to note what had happened forgot the enormity of the crime and went in for long-drawn-out revolutionary plans, forgetting that vacillators were in charge all over the district. No attempt was made even to educate them. On the other hand by acting as if nothing has happened, by not telling them at least that no revolutionary struggle is possible with such cowardly vacillations, the PC pandered to their revolutionism, and contributed to the debacle of arrests of the CC organiser and the DC members. The CC organiser and PC also openly pandered to and encouraged the association of DC leadership with the lumpen elements—a leadership which was preferring lumpen elements to the masses. Had the CC organiser and PC understood the real meaning of the last mass meeting, they would have known that to allow these comrades to associate with these lumpens was to encourage them in the betrayal of mass struggle.

The PC should have at least laid down that it was impermissible for comrades to raise the mass tempo to a boiling point, key up all expectations, and then give no slogan. This is reformist sabotage. It should have definitely stated that at that meeting—either a call, or some concrete organisational slogan, or a slogan of action on a certain next date—or a course of action—something which would have kept the mass tempo and convinced the masses that struggle was on, was

imperative. A really revolutionary and resourceful leadership could have given a slogan of action that very day, especially if not giving such a slogan meant dissipation of mass tempo. Firstly, to make no preparations, and without preparations or minimum organisational measures bring the masses to the point of action and then in the name of preparation postpone action—is betrayal. In such cases the masses will not only lose their confidence in the party but their tempo might take distorted forms.

Instead of first nailing down these gross deviations—the resolution describes the situation in general, i.e. without reference to the vacillations of the party leaders, and goes in for a long-drawn-out plan of revolutionary fight, migration from villages, etc., but misses the essential thing—that the vacillations are preventing even the preparatory economic struggle, leave aside its passing over into a political struggle. The resolution rightly rejects the slogan to declare a new government in the course of the struggle and correctly states that we must concentrate on organs of struggles etc. There was nothing wrong in anticipating developments, expecting revolutionary developments to take place out of the struggle and preparing for them. Not to have thought about future developments would be sheer opportunism, forgetting that partial struggles easily pass off into higher forms and phase. But the preparations must be real and not imaginary, i.e. they must address themselves to the situation that is most likely to develop on the basis of the realities of today, and not to imaginary developments. And there was not the slightest excuse to forget what was happening to this struggle in the immediate present.

Provincial Committee's Wrong Analysis

In the course of the resolution the PC makes the most opportunist formulation and suggests that it is based on something from Lenin :

“For a basic political reason too the immediate ‘formation’ of a government is wrong. Why is it that we communists do not form governments by capturing power in the bourgeois way by suddenly ‘dethroning’ the government in power and seizing the reins of power? Because we believe in and honestly pursue the policy of securing proper popular verdict through democratic vote before assuming power. The more fact that we are the leaders of the mass movement,

leading towards power does not constitute such a verdict. Only the support of the majority of the people secured through democratic vote constitutes such a verdict. (Explain Lenin)."

There never was and there never could be any sanction for this atrocious formulation in Lenin. To mention Lenin in this connection is to make a dishonest use of Lenin's name and mislead the ranks. The comrade concerned and the PC must be warned that it is impermissible to make use of Lenin's name in this manner to suggest as if the para is a faithful summarisation of Lenin's views. Lenin must be quoted. Cannot be allowed to be distorted.

It is obvious that the CC organiser and the PC who failed to note the running away from struggle, who did not attempt even to educate the leadership regarding the enormity of the crime, and who in face of it calmly drafted a revolutionary plan were guilty of phrasemongering petty-bourgeois revolutionism.

There would have been reality about their plans if they had seen that the struggle was being let down even in its early stage—then they would have taken precautions to unleash it and lead to higher forms.

Not Left-Adventurism—but Opportunism

The secretary's note on the happenings after the arrest and in reviewing the developments from the beginning commits again a right-reformist error of characterising an ultrarightist anti-Marxist tendency as Left-adventurism—as if the comrades concerned advanced slogans and actions which outstripped the consciousness of the masses—when in reality they were terrified by the masses and could not keep pace with them. A tendency should not be characterised by the words used by those who exhibit it, but by their deeds, actions. The secretary thinks that the whole trouble both with PC and DC arose because they took an insurrectionist position when it was a question of partial struggle only. This is totally wrong. The fiasco came because even the preparatory struggle was not launched so that the revolutionary possibilities could not be seen developed. It is true that those who funked the preparatory struggle talked loudly about revolution, but that does not entitle one to describe their position as 'insurrectionary' just as writing poetry about the moon cannot be described as a premature attempt at expedition to the moon.

The secretary has fallen into the typical reformist error of explaining all fiascos which are due to right-reformism as being due to Left-adventurism, insurrectionism, so that one can sink deeper and deeper into reformism. This is how Joshi and the old CC always explained things and took the party into the morass of reformism. There was nothing wrong about foreseeing the revolutionary possibilities of the struggle—what was wrong was that the preparatory form—struggle for land, etc. which was to have unfolded the revolutionary possibilities, even this stage was sabotaged which made the PC look ridiculous. Naturally even when it is correct to expect revolutionary possibilities, one would look ridiculous if one could not organise even the preparatory stage. But then the fault is not that you thought of revolutionary possibilities. From the present experience the secretary practically draws the conclusion that it was only a case of partial struggle and it was wrong to have thought of revolutionary possibilities at all. Thus he practically comes to the conclusion of thinking of partial struggles only when partial struggles are conducted—this is the logical result of the way he poses the question—the connection between partial struggles and political struggles unlinked and reformism comes by the backdoor.

In justification of this the secretary further contrasts 'organised influence of the party' with spontaneous movement of the masses. By making this contrast he practically argues that politics, revolutionary developments, etc. come only when you move the people (organised influence), and not when you are moving with the people (spontaneous movement). Once more through this contrast the link between spontaneous struggles and revolutionary developments is broken. It is true leadership of the party is always necessary. But that leadership comes by intervening and leading spontaneous struggles—by organising them, not apart from them. In a revolutionary period the spontaneous activity of the masses increases tenfold and the party must lead it and see in it the growing revolutionary wave which must be given proper consciousness and organisation by the party. To contrast the two, to contrast the leadership of the party with the revolutionary initiative of the masses—is to belittle the masses and unlink the party from the mass struggles. This attitude towards spontaneous struggles is a bourgeois-reformist attitude, an attitude in spreading which Joshi took the

fullest part. It is only one step short of denouncing the movement of the masses as anarchy—calling them unruly. Joshi distorted a number of accepted Marxist terms—among them spontaneity—to belittle the role of the masses. Such belittling makes it appear as if the main source to the revolution is not the masses but the party—a bourgeois idea. It is also a typically Congress idea. The Congress would start struggle every ten years—use the accumulated discontent and make it appear as if the Congress was the source of the struggle. In the intervening period it would sabotage strikes, peasant struggles, by saying it is anarchy. This and nothing else will be the result of the secretary's line.

VIII. CORRECT PROLETARIAN STAND ON KASHMIR

It was because of this reformism that on several important questions the tactical line of the party was forgotten, the tasks flowing from the strategic objective and class-combination were forgotten and some party comrades, including some CC members began to voice their past prejudices—petty-bourgeois radicalism—as the correct line.

The issue of Kashmir was an important issue on which there was a lot of confusion and because of this petty-bourgeois phrasemongering and the number of issues involved, clear tactics could not be developed. The problem in Kashmir was no doubt somewhat complicated. It involved the tactics of British imperialism and understanding of its tactics by us in the light of our new line. It involved the vital question of Anglo-American bases on Soviet border. It also involved the question of attitude in a dispute between Pakistan and the Indian Union and brought up the general question of what attitude the party was to take towards them ordinarily in relation to each other. Then there was the question of the democratic movement which had heroic traditions of anti-feudal struggle, though it was led by a bourgeois leadership. This bourgeois leadership and the movement led by it have been attacked mercilessly by the Pakistan propagandists, and their tool the Azad Kashmir government which is in reality the tool of the British imperialists. The agents of imperialism had repeatedly attempted through the leaders of Pakistan

to appeal to communal feelings of the Kashmiris and win over Sheikh Abdullah on the basis of Islamic sentiments but they failed. Sheikh Abdullah himself would have liked to see the last of the maharaja long ago and remove him but he of course will not end the feudal landlord class—the jagirdari—and solve the agrarian question. The Indian union government, whose armies drove the raiders from Kashmir, was interested on retaining the feudal prince so that it could strike a big bargain against the democratic movement and was therefore bringing pressure on Sheikh Abdullah to postpone the issue.

This was the situation in which a correct proletarian stand was to be taken.

The hangover of the past controversies in the first place obstructed a clear understanding inside the PB. In the past, in the CC meeting which produced the Mountbatten resolution some comrades had taken an incorrect stand, saying that the Indian union—by which they meant the Indian union government—was more progressive than Pakistan and therefore we should say that imperialism would attempt to use Pakistan against the Indian union. This stand was correctly rejected and it was stated that through partition British imperialism would attempt to use both against each other.

With the hangover of these controversies in their minds, some comrades would not see the actual roles of the various participants in the Kashmir tangle and wanted to criticise every attack against the raiders and Pakistan, if a similar attack was not made on the Indian union government. Their position practically amounted to treat the Indian union army on the same plane as the raiders and the logical conclusion of their tactics was, resist the Indian army also.

Imperialist Conspiracy for Anti-Soviet Bases

A moment's thought should have told these comrades that their position was the same as that of British imperialism and that it was a position which betrayed the people of Kashmir into the hands of imperialists and their agents.

Firstly, we could not content ourselves with merely giving slogans when behind the raiders' offensive was the conspiracy to secure anti-Soviet bases in Gilgit and when Pakistan was being openly used

for it. These comrades, by refusing to make any distinctions, were actually covering the complicity of Pakistan in the anti-Soviet conspiracy. It was so because having decided that there was no difference between Pakistan and Indian union government, by refusal to study the temporary, actual role of each in an incident, a particular conflict. It was our task to unmask those who were conspiring for anti-Soviet purposes at the behest of British imperialism and advance such slogans as would help the people in preventing this conspiracy from being successful.

These comrades got stuck because they had already made up their minds that it was immaterial whether Pakistan won or Indian union won—both would be anti-Soviet. That both would be anti-Soviet was correct and true. But the special exposure of Pakistan, special concentration of fire on it was necessary to expose the anti-Soviet game of imperialism, of Pakistan leaders, *to the people*. In this particular instance Pakistan was playing the role of direct agent of imperialism, of anti-Soviet conspirator, an active role. It had to be nailed down.

Secondly, though it is very correct to say that no distinction can be made between the Indian union government and Pakistan—by describing one as progressive and other as reactionary, it is wholly incorrect to state that the party does not adopt differential approach to the question of fighting both; that it fights both in an identical way. On the other hand it is incumbent on the party to choose such methods of fighting, exposing both as successfully unmask to the people the particular role they are playing in a given incident and do it in a manner which advances the democratic movement against both.

Differentiated Exposure of Pakistan and Indian Governments

The question of Kashmir is a typical question. It was evident that Pakistan's attack was the result of imperialist conspiracy. The raiders were led by imperialist officers. They were trained by Pakistan officers. Here in actual life the imperialists were using Pakistan against the people of Kashmir, as their instrument, and also their instrument against the Indian union government which sought to steal a march over them, by getting Kashmir accede to the Indian union. Imperialist intervention was masquerading as Pakistan's

intervention, as raiders' war, as Pakistan's conflict with India. It would be pro-imperialist to treat Pakistan and Indian union on the same plane in this instance. Why was Pakistan being used? The following quotation makes it clear:

“The underlying cause of the war in Kashmir lay in this state's geographical location, at the juncture of several state borders—including, in particular, the Soviet border. Anglo-American imperialist strategists aimed to convert Kashmir into a link in the chain of military bases with which they are doing their best to surround the Soviet Union. They were particularly interested in the northern-districts—Gilgit, Chitral, and a number of other small feudal principalities.

“After the division of India into two dominions the question of Kashmir's future was the cause of considerable anxiety to British ruling circles. In India, reactionary trends had not yet come out so openly as they have today, and there was a growing tendency for secession from the British Empire and the establishment of an independent democratic republic. On the other hand, it was already clear that Pakistan would remain within the empire, and that this dominion would be entirely dependent upon British and American support. In view of all this, the Anglo-American strategists felt that, if they were to retain Kashmir as a strategic military base, they must get it included in Pakistan.

“Their plan was simple: armed intervention in Kashmir, to be launched from the territory of Pakistan, and to be carried to completion before the Government of India could take counter-measures. They expected no serious resistance in Kashmir itself, for the following reasons” (*New Times*, No. 40, 29 Sept 1948—‘The War in Kashmir’).

It would be seen that the imperialists did make a short-term difference between the two because of the powerful democratic movement in the Indian union.

Under the circumstances there was bound to be a differential approach, different slogans of fighting both, different ways and methods—all the more because of the fact that the democratic movement in Kashmir, the mainstay of progressive movement, had special illusions about the Indian government.

It was of course wrong to have talked as we did before the party congress, that the Indian army was a liberating army. It was also wrong for any communist in Kashmir to have pinned his faith in the Indian army. But once the Indian army entered with the sanction of the leader of the democratic movement, and also in the background of imperialist conspiracy and the necessity to beat back the raiders, we could not take the stand virtually amounting to: resist the raiders, resist the Indian army. Certain comrades in fact wanted to take this stand though they were not saying it openly. But they violently reacted to any appeal to drive the raiders out, and they wanted simultaneously an attack on the Indian army.

Our Tactical Slogans

Our tactic could only be :

(1) Fight and oppose and rout the raiders and Pakistan army, defeat the imperialist conspiracy.

(2) Expose and isolate the Indian union government, and the illusions created about it by Sheikh Abdullah, by demanding liquidation of feudalism and forcing the government to come out in the open and exposing its obstructions (Sardar Patel's statement).

(3) In view of the fact that we had no independent base, build that base by initiating a peasant movement to take over land, confiscate landed estates, etc. and thus become an independent force capable of mobilising the Kashmir people independently of Sheikh Abdullah, a force which will be the base when the inevitable conflict between the people of Kashmir and the Indian union government breaks out.

It is in the course of building this base, in pressing for the implementation of the democratic programme, that we criticise and expose the Sheikh's government as incompetent and then as compromiser. Our weakness in the movement makes people concentrate on verbal exposure which enables the compromisers to successfully isolate us and keep us away from shaping the destiny of the movement at the most crucial period. While comrades in Kashmir have been pursuing a rightist policy—main factor being to build an independent base, when one section talks about attack on the Sheikh only, certain comrades from outside, without caring to study the situation in Kashmir, our weakness, the independent

strength of the proletarian party, the interplay of conflicting forces, etc., want to lump the Sheikh along with others. They would not make a distinction between Azad Kashmir government and the Sheikh and want to concentrate fire on the Sheikh as the compromiser. Intemperate and wrong attack on the Sheikh who is still the leader of the democratic movement will play into the hands of reaction.

Today, the economic situation in Kashmir is extremely critical and a big movement can be set ablaze—a movement in the rear of the Indian union army, a movement before which the Sheikh would have to render account. All exposure of the Sheikh must be connected with the development, of the movement and must correspond to the conditions created through it. Such a movement, demanding at the same time arms for defence—serves both purposes—defence against Pakistan, against Indian union—security of the democratic movement.

The Sheikh should not be treated so lightly. It is significant that when he organised the liberation day, the representative of the Soviet Union attended it, while the representatives of Anglo-American bloc, except India, boycotted it. To concentrate fire on him, forgetting the other forces, without creating preconditions for successful fight against his compromising policy, is to play a reactionary role.

Reference to UNO & US Intervention

The conflict between the Indian union government and the British imperialists became so sharp that it could not be settled at merely governmental level. Armies were used through Pakistan. After that it became still more sharp and India referred the question to the UNO, i.e. sought to bring pressure on British imperialism through the intervention of other imperialist powers. This reacted like a boomerang on the Indian union government and gave opportunity for American intervention. Under these circumstances the role of the Indian union in referring to the UNO had to be exposed as seeking imperialist intervention rather than rouse the people through agrarian reforms etc., and the role of Pakistan, its continuous resistance to UNO, etc. to be exposed as working in conspiracy with the British etc. to fulfil the imperialist plan; and the people of Kashmir to be roused to the dangers of imperialist intervention. Once more a differentiated approach had to be made.

The imperialists have played their game cleverly. At one stroke with the aid of Pakistan they have secured control of Gilgit and we have failed to expose—Pakistan's role in this treacherous conspiracy—all because of the pressure to equate both Pakistan and Indian union on every issue.

For the rest they have helped the raiders, Pakistan, to prolong the conflict, tire out the Indian troops, so that a bargain is struck for division of Kashmir and they get away with the Soviet border region—and all this in the name of doing justice to Pakistan. Today the situation is such that the Indian union, especially perhaps after the commonwealth conference, is prepared to agree to division—the capitalists are already demanding it—which would enable it to turn to the task of dealing with the democratic movement. The treachery cannot be exposed unless even now we make a differentiated approach in exposure and dispel the illusion about India, about the Sheikh's policy etc., while fighting frontally the raiders and Pakistan.

Settlement and Plebiscite—New Imperialist Move

In these circumstances nothing is real, the proletarian party cannot influence the events at all, unless it builds an independent base through agrarian movement, agitates on the programme of anti-feudal and agrarian revolution and initiates the movement to implement it. This is the basis of fight against all enemies, of successful isolation of the compromisers.

If an agreed division does not take place, imperialists will sponsor a plebiscite as an instrument of this division. In the plebiscite of course the question of whether Kashmir can remain independent will not be put. But can we ourselves raise the slogan today—Independent Kashmir? Firstly, one does not know the strength of the feeling for independence—i.e. existence as an independent state. The territory of Kashmir state, as it consisted before the invasion, consists of a number of nationalities—Pathan, Punjabi, Kashmiri; Jammu. Kashmir has always been a heterogeneous mass—and the common tie of democratic movement does not go beyond the Kashmir valley. Under these circumstances, there will be no such thing as independent Kashmir, unless it refers to the Kashmir valley only—and simultaneously other nationalities are allowed to be independent. It is quite obvious that in the case of nationalities, like Gilgit and

others—*independence* would be just another name for imperialist domination. In fact it will lead to the plan of division which the Indian union and imperialists are planning in coming to terms with each other. Can the Kashmir valley at least remain independent ? It seems difficult since it will have to rout armed imperialist conspiracies all round including the conspiracy of the Indian union and Pakistan interests. For us to take a lead in any such slogan unless we first know the prospect of independence would be to adopt a policy which might help imperialism only. Our stand must be such as helps the people of Kashmir in alliance with the peoples of the two big states, to achieve people's democracy as quickly as possible. To forget the machinations of imperialism when raising the slogan of independence is to act as the henchmen of imperialism.

Our Stand on Plebiscite

In the plebiscite what stand should we take? Should we vote for Indian union ? Should we vote for Pakistan? Should we remain neutral? It must be realised that plebiscite if it comes will come in spite of us, will come because of the failure of the democratic movement to settle the question in a revolutionary way—through a people's democratic Kashmir—uniting various nationalities and capable of defending itself. While our aim continues to be a people's democratic Kashmir, while we continue to fight for it, we are called upon to give our vote in the plebiscite. The vote we express in plebiscite. is not an alternative to people's democracy; we are not choosing between people's democracy and the Indian union or Pakistan; nor are we asking the people to vote for the one or the other because one state or government represents freedom and the other does not. We will call on the people to vote one way or the other by reference to one criterion only—voting which way gives the people of Kashmir a better chance to carry forward their battle for people's democracy. In this connection, the strength of the working-class movement in each territory, of the people's struggles, of the democratic movement, of the ties of alliance between the democratic movements in Kashmir and the two states—become the criterion. Taking into account all these factors, we would be justified in calling on the people of Kashmir to vote for the Indian union. We cannot ask them to vote for Pakistan nor can we remain neutral.

It is certainly wrong if one were to ask the Kashmiris to vote for the Indian union under the plea that the Indian union state or government represents freedom, i.e. by reference to the leadership of the Indian union, by making a distinction between the League leadership of Pakistan and the Congress leadership of the Indian union. But it is forgetting our duty if, when the issue is posed in spite of us—we were not to tell the people of Kashmir that inside the Indian union they have a strong ally in the matured working-class movement—a strong ally in the advanced democratic movement—and therefore comparatively better conditions for carrying forward the struggle for people's democracy. It is refusal to take an independent stand under the guise of not making distinction between two bourgeois leaderships—forgetting the movement of the proletariat and the masses and judging things solely by reference to the conflicts of the bourgeoisie—a special way of trailing behind the bourgeoisie.

IX. FRENCH INDIA — AND PRO-IMPERIALIST DEVIATION

The wrong and anti-Marxist understanding that it is reformist to distinguish between the tactics of imperialism and the Indian union government, that the proletariat can adopt a stand of neutrality and indifference when the question of imperialist possessions like French India or Portuguese Goa joining the Indian union is raised on the plea that there is nothing to choose between imperialism and the union government—lands the advocates straight into the arms of imperialism as it did the French Indian comrades. Some comrades in the PB definitely opined that it was wrong, opportunist to vote for French India joining the Indian union when the question was raised through the plebiscite—since in their opinion there was nothing to choose between French imperialism and the collaborating Indian union government—which was already in the Anglo-American camp. The logical conclusion of such an outlook could only be the disgraceful and treacherous policy pursued by the French India communists when they propagated for French India remaining within the French imperialist union.

Such phrasemongers, appearing to be heroic, wishing to appear as uncompromising fighters against the national bourgeoisie only do service to imperialism—to another section of the world bourgeoisie. In deciding on the issue of plebiscite they only see the two bourgeois sections—imperialists and the national bourgeoisie, but forget the people—the anti-imperialist people of Pondicherry and other areas and the people of India, they forget the needs of the common struggle of both these, of the genuine anti-imperialist desire to get rid of foreign imperialism, and by forgetting it allow the bourgeoisie to exploit it and pose as champions of the national independence. Besides they wrongly identify voting in the plebiscite with a choice between people's democracy and the collaborationist government.

In the past, before the second party congress corrected the line, there was the horrible deviation on the question of French India—when our comrades called on the people of French India to go from under the heels of French imperialism into the arms of free India. To call Indian union free India, to call joining Indian union freedom, was of course wrong and amounted to cheating the masses. But that is no reason why comrades, as a reaction to this stand, should develop another deviation which does not recognise the oppressive character and national humiliation of being under a foreign rule—a humiliation which is generally felt. But such mistakes will always be committed by those who fasten their eyes on the upper classes and not on the masses and the needs of the struggle.

How did the question of French India joining Indian union arise? Not only as a result of the Indian union government wanting to extend its territory, but as a result of the same anti-imperialist indignation to stem which British imperialists had to agree to instal Nehru in power. The driving force was the popular indignation. Under these circumstances what could be our advice to the people? We of course could not go on telling them that Indian union meant freedom but were bound to expose the class rule in the union. We were at the same time bound to lead the struggle against French imperialism which the national government was sabotaging. The bourgeoisie was concentrating on plebiscite to get the territory without an upheaval; it was a special form of compromise. Our task was to push ahead the struggle which we were leading, drive out the French—but under the reformist line pursued before the second congress, we withdrew

struggle at the behest of national leaders and allowed the bourgeoisie to take the question at governmental level. Our tactics should have been to drive out French imperialism—and people could have been united for that purpose—which would have placed us in a favourable position to deal with the bourgeois government. It is however clear that any idea of maintaining Pondicherry and other possessions as a separate state would have been totally unreal, considering the scattered character of the possessions, the extremely tiny character and the fact that they could neither function as a political and economic unit.

Once the question of plebiscite was raised and hope of a peaceful solution created—it became at least temporarily difficult to forge a united struggle against French imperialism, for its overthrow. People thought to vote would do the trick. What was our advice under these circumstances, considering the fact that there were absolutely no proposals for the existence of French India as an independent state? What would have been our advice if on the eve of August 1946 a plebiscite had been taken in India asking the people to choose between Mountbatten and Nehru—on the question whether power should be given to Nehru or not? We would have said this is compromise, no freedom etc., but how would we have voted? Similarly here the question had to be decided on the concrete needs of the struggle. Did it help the Indian people's struggle for democracy to allow Indians to remain in the French union? Did it strengthen the alliance of the people? Did it correspond to the genuine anti-imperialist feelings of the Pondicherry and other people and the feelings of the anti-imperialist masses of India? Did it serve the united people to bring face to face with the bourgeoisie to fight the common anti-capitalist battle? It is these questions that decide, and they decide in favour of the French possessions joining the Indian union.

Those who advocate that it is immaterial whether the masses remain in the Indian union or French union, decide the question solely by reference to the exploiting classes and forget the masses and their real movement and under the guise of uncompromising fight against the bourgeoisie join the camp of imperialism.

It is this outlook, wrongly strengthened by advice from the French CP, that landed the Pondicherry comrades in the debacle.

The French imperialists very decisively exploited the situation to make our comrades propagate for them and at the same time keep us out of the elections. Their party, the Socialist Party, knowing the mood of the masses did not come out openly with the slogan of remaining in the French union, it took an ambiguous stand : while only the communists campaigned for remaining within the imperialist union. We were thus isolated, attacked, etc., discredited as supporters of imperialism while the real imperialist party posing as neutral carried the votes. In Mahe the situation came to a head and uprising with us remaining isolated and compelled to boycott the elections. In one or two other places also the CP was compelled to boycott the elections—so big was the anti-imperialist tempo. Thus those who forget imperialism are naturally forgotten by the masses.

X. THE FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

On this question also there is a tendency among certain comrades to repeat only general slogans about the Indian union government having joined the Anglo-American bloc and repeating that repression in India is launched at the dictates of American imperialism—without caring to marshal out facts to prove the statement and arguing as if the majority of the people, including the petty-bourgeois followers of the Congress, have already accepted the fact that the government is collaborationist, that it is not pursuing an independent policy. Any attempt to prove factually by reference to concrete events is run down as 'defensive'; what they in practice demand is mere denunciation. Any reference to the sacrifice of freedom and sovereignty is run down because it is argued as no freedom exists—how can it be sacrificed?

This is once more not only a disregard for facts, or a question of approach, but an abjuration of the struggle against the bourgeoisie in the concrete, failure to realise that to be able to fight the bourgeoisie successfully on this issue, as on any other issue, you have to combine fight with struggle to isolate the bourgeoisie, otherwise they run away with the masses and capitalise the national sentiments and illusions of the masses.

Today when the world bourgeoisie is making an insane drive for war, when unknown to the Indian people the treacherous Indian bourgeoisie is conspiring with the imperialists for an anti-Soviet war, such failure to isolate, to fight the bourgeoisie on the plea of adopting 'offensive' constitutes a danger and menace.

This deviation which is nothing but running away from the concrete struggle ignores how deep the illusion of 'independent' foreign policy can be in a country which believes it has just won its 'independence' and 'freedom' and where the leaders, of the national movement are for the first time at the head of the government. It also ignores the concrete form in which the bourgeoisie of this country is exploiting the past traditions and heritage to bolster up its satellite foreign policy. And thirdly, it totally ignores also the common forms, and changing forms which the bourgeoisie is using through its press, its government, its stand in the UNO to represent its foreign policy as an independent one.

Fight Against Anti-Soviet Propaganda

Firstly, how does the international bourgeoisie carry on its anti-Soviet war propaganda? It is difficult to carry on such propaganda openly with the rise in the influence on the Soviet Union, with the rise in democratic and socialist consciousness of the masses, with the rise in the feelings, of international solidarity. Bourgeois propaganda therefore precisely addresses itself to these facts, decking itself out as defenders of democracy and international cooperation and attacking the Soviet Union as totalitarian, charging it with narrow-nationalism and aggressive war designs. It is thus that it seeks to confuse the issue and mislead the people. Side by side with 'it they brandish the atom bomb' to intimidate opponents of war by threatening them that if they do not join the anti-Soviet front they would get the worst horrors; it also used the atom bomb to make the people, who have seen the horrors of a protracted war, feel that the war will be a swift one.

In *The International Situation*, Zhdanov exposed this tactical line of the bourgeoisie with great clarity:

"One of the lines taken by the ideological campaign that goes hand in hand with the plans for the enslavement of Europe is an

attack on the principle of national sovereignty, an appeal for the renouncement of the sovereign rights of nations, to which is opposed the idea of a 'world government'. The purpose of this campaign is to mask the unbridled expansion of American imperialism, which is ruthlessly violating the sovereign rights of nations, to represent the United States as a champion of universal laws, and those who resist American penetration as believers in an obsolete and 'selfish' nationalism. The idea of a 'world government' has been taken up by bourgeois intellectual cranks, and pacifists, and is being exploited not only as a means of pressure, with the purpose of ideologically disarming the nations that defend their independence against encroachments of American imperialism but also as a slogan especially directed against the Soviet Union, which indefatigably and consistently upholds the principle of real equality and protection of the just rights of all nations, big and small. Under present conditions imperialist countries like the USA, Great Britain and the states closely associated with them become dangerous enemies of national independence and self-determination of nations."

The expansionist bourgeoisie is exploiting the feeling for international cooperation. Through the UNO, through its sub-committees, it puts fake proposals for international cooperation, proposals which if accepted would bring the Soviet Union and the new democracies in the orbit of imperialist world; in the name of international cooperation on atomic research it seeks control of Soviet sources of raw materials; it seeks to secure such control because the capitalist bloc has a majority, in the UNO and its sub-committees—and thus mislead the people. Every time it shows that its proposal has the majority behind it and that only the Soviet Union and new democracies are opposing it, carefully concealing the fact that the majority consists of capitalist governments who are united in their opposition to the Soviet Union, the developing forces of socialism—the class character of the struggle. This of course has to be exposed concretely on each separate issue so that bourgeois propaganda is paralysed. The building of the Anglo-American bloc, of the war bloc, is based on this ideological propaganda which is an attempt to secure some mass support and which must be exposed. Those who only speak about Anglo-American bloc but forget how in the concrete it is being built, and fail to counteract it only serve the warmongers.

The anti-Soviet campaign also takes a new form—charging Soviet Union with war designs—to cash in on the peace sentiment of the masses.

“Lastly the aspiration to world supremacy and the anti-democratic policy of the United States involve an ideological struggle. The principal purpose of the ideological part of the American strategical plan is to deceive public opinion by slanderously accusing the Soviet Union and the new democracies of aggressive intentions, and thus representing the Anglo-Saxon bloc in a defensive role and absolving it of responsibility for preparing a new war. During the second world war the popularity of the Soviet Union in foreign countries was enormously enhanced. Its devoted and heroic struggle against imperialism earned it the affection and respect of the working people in all countries. The military and economic might of the socialist state, the invincible strength of the moral and political unity of the Soviet society were graphically demonstrated to the whole world. The reactionary circles in the United States and Great Britain are anxious to erase the deep impression made by the socialist system on the working people of the world. *The warmongers fully realise that long ideological preparation is necessary before they can get their soldiers to fight the Soviet Union*” (Zhdanov).

The warmongers’ propaganda charging the Soviet Union with war designs has to be unmasked as one of the most important part of the fight against the imperialist bloc. To ignore it, and confine ourselves to shouts about Anglo-American war bloc is to serve the warmongers.

Again as part of this ideological preparation the Soviet Union is attacked in yet another way—this time to appeal to the democratic and anti-fascist consciousness of the people and take advantage of bourgeois conception of democracy.

“In their ideological struggle against the USSR, the American imperialists, who have no great insight into political questions, demonstrate their ignorance by laying primary stress on the allegation that the Soviet Union is undemocratic and totalitarian, while the United States and Great Britain and the whole capitalist world are democratic. On this platform of ideological struggle—on this defence of bourgeois pseudo-democracy and condemnation of communism

as totalitarian—are united all the enemies of the working-class without exception from the capitalist magnates to the right-socialist leaders ... The pith and substance of this propaganda is the claim that the earmark of true democracy is the existence of plurality of parties and of an organised opposition minority.” (Zhdanov).

Exposure of bourgeois democracy, of the bourgeois attack against Soviet democracy—is also a vital part in the fight against the war bloc. It will be thus seen that the world bourgeoisie cleverly adapts its forms of propaganda and fight to the consciousness of the people, change them according to needs, but there are certain comrades who would only like to reply with a stock argument, ‘Oh, you are truly a war bloc’.

Along with this of course comes the exposure, unmasking of the concrete steps taken by the bourgeoisie in pursuance of their policy, the Marshall plan—the chief instrument of economic subjugation of building war bloc, western union etc.

In India also we find the bourgeoisie adapting itself cleverly to the consciousness of the people, utilising all the above means and at the same time exploiting certain national peculiarities of the situation. All these had to be systematically exposed.

In the beginning the bourgeoisie dares not come out openly with its plan of collaboration with Anglo-American bloc—both because of the anti-imperialist mood of the masses and because it itself was bargaining for good terms. It therefore took a characteristic pose—*independent foreign policy*—independent of both ‘blocs’. Through this the bourgeoisie was appealing to the freedom and independence sentiments of the people, to the genuine feeling that foreign policy should be really independent of foreign imperialists. It was further cleverly exploiting through this slogan the traditional suspicions of the Indian people about big powers, and cleverly bracketing Soviet Union. with imperialist powers.

Expose Nehru’s ‘Independent’ Foreign Policy

In this situation it could be exposed by first showing that ‘*independent foreign policy*’ at the best meant rejection of fight against imperialism and of cooperation with democratic and socialist nations—and this was the beginning of joining the bloc. The fact

that the two camps are not power blocs, but the camp of people and the camp of imperialism had to be stressed, proved and the policy exposed.

Secondly, in actual practice, by reference to voting in the UNO, little assembly, Korea, Greece, etc. how the so-called 'independent' policy was a cover for serving the imperialist bloc—had to be proved.

Thirdly, by concretely showing that the stand of the Soviet Union on the concrete issues was democratic and in the interest of the people of the world including India: that the stand of imperialist powers was opposed to it—thus proving the two camps—one democratic camp and the other imperialist.

Lastly, both the Union government and the imperialists had to be exposed by reference to such questions as the question of Indians in South Africa. Here the imperialist powers consistently opposed any proposal for racial equality; Soviet Union consistently supported India and racial equality. And yet on other issues the Indian delegates would go with imperialist racemongers and not the Soviet Union.

Thus concretely before the Indian people the two camps had to be proved—their stand and role explained; this alone gives reality to exposure of the policy of the Indian government. We had to negate concretely the propaganda that the two camps were mere power blocs—and this cannot be done by shouting about India government having already joined the Anglo-American bloc.

Through all these we had again and again to prove that the policy pursued by the government was fundamentally opposed to the interests of the Indian people and was a sacrifice and sell out of the freedom and sovereignty of the Indian people.

The second stage in the development of bourgeois policy reached very soon when the question of commonwealth appeared as a practical question on the agenda. Having in the meantime successfully sided with the Anglo-American bloc on almost all issues, the national bourgeoisie began to busy itself with the special Indian (or British dominion) way of joining the bloc—through the British

commonwealth. How was joining the British commonwealth recommended? Now it was recommended on the ground of international cooperation—taking advantage of the feeling that exists among the people, of an obvious fact (Nehru's speech on the eve of commonwealth conference). Behind it also was the unexpressed thought that this cooperation was to be against some other power or aggressor (Soviet Union) though people could be made to believe that it was directed against both America and Soviet Union etc.

Expose India's Alignment with the War Bloc

The class character of this international cooperation had to be exposed as part of the fight against India joining the war bloc; it had to be exposed again as sacrifice of sovereignty and freedom of the Indian people—as joining the war bloc of imperialists.

Now with the commonwealth conference comes perhaps the more or less open phase which had started since the Burmese uprising, Malayan revolt and now is seen in its nakedness after the great victories of the Chinese liberation army. India is to be part of the commonwealth—under one name or another—Nehru has already come out in the open saying that in Southeast Asian countries the communists have been directed from abroad; a step for open emergence of India as part of the world anti-communist, anti-Soviet front. We will therefore soon have in Indian press open talk about danger to India from the Soviet Union, general propaganda about the CPI as Soviet fifth column etc. and the building of the war bloc has once more to be exposed by exposing the fact of joining the commonwealth, the real meaning of anti-communist hunt—a preparation to suppress democratic and socialist struggles at home and abroad for defending the capitalist order, for enslaving the Indian people, sacrificing the sovereignty of India in matters of defence, economic and foreign policies to safeguard the interests of the capitalists. We have to expose the propaganda of imperialists and the government to sidetrack attention from their treacherous designs and tell the people how the socialist Soviet Union is the real defender of the sovereignty of all nations and the interests of all toilers. A mere attitude of 'we told you so' fails to concentrate on the danger—just when people are likely to see it most when it is coming out in the

open; a mere attitude as if nothing special has happened, as if everyone had already seen the danger, as if the government had already announced its joining the bloc openly only helps the bourgeoisie when it can be exposed most successfully.

Along with this at all stages of policy comes the imperative duty of exposing the anti-Soviet propaganda which charges the Soviet Union with obstructing peace, with war designs. The imperialist press agencies representing UNO, atomic commission, Berlin most persistently spread anti-Soviet lies. The Indian bourgeois press repeats them blacks out Soviet statements and makes destructive comments. All these days the comments were made to show that there were two war blocs. Now they will be made to show that it is the Soviet Union, the anti-imperialist camp that is the aggressor, that India's sovereignty is being threatened by the Soviet Union. It is this ideological propaganda that will be stepped up very soon, through the unofficial press. What we must remember is that it is a far cry from the formal joining by Indian union of the Anglo-American war bloc to the Indian people actively participating in it. By counteracting the specific manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie we can see that the masses are not misled, that the government's bloc is not supported but opposed by the people. The formal formation of the bloc, India government joining it, does not end the matter, the struggle has to be intensified to see that the ideological propaganda of the bourgeoisie does not mislead the masses, that they see its treacherous character.

Already in the Indian press all kinds of anti-Soviet slander is poured in, especially the language press: this itself is a part of the war-bloc propaganda. In this propaganda a persistent campaign is carried on that the Soviet system is not democratic and the usual, arguments based on bourgeois democracy are given. This propaganda cannot be treated lightly. It is part of the capitalist propaganda to befuddle the minds of the Indian people and make them participate in the bloc which the government is joining. To effectively counter this propaganda, through every available means including nonparty journals etc., is an integral part of the struggle against the policy of warmongers. This once more needs factual exposures, and not mere shouting about Anglo-American bloc.

American Economic Aid

Lastly, comes the Indian bourgeois appeal for American economic aid, an Asian version of the Marshall plan. Here again the different temporary phases through which this effort to get American aid goes, its direct effect on home policies, has to be exposed and clarified. Further, it has to be exposed also from the angle from which people will understand it most.

As on the question of foreign policy, so on the question of foreign aid the bourgeoisie moved cautiously. It attempted to get the foreign aid leaving the declaration about nationalisation of industries intact. But pressure was brought to give it up and also assure foreign capitalists about guarantee of profits—before aid could be talked about. Hence this obvious domination, surrender to foreign capitalists, had to be exposed. The bourgeoisie further relied on the desire of the people to develop their resources and for that purpose take whatever help they could get. Here we had to take the stand that all help from foreign sources was welcome provided it did not lead to political and economic domination and that the terms of Soviet agreement with other nations as well as the fact that the Soviet Union is a socialist country ensure that economic agreements and help will not violate national sovereignty. On this basis in fact we must develop a demand for opening economic relations with the countries of anti-imperialists camp and expose the government's refusal to do it.

The bourgeoisie behaves very cleverly and moves cautiously. At the UNECAFE it thundered against domination of foreign vested interests, created an atmosphere of opposition to imperialism and then surrendered to American pressure by quoting the industrial truce and other resolutions—assuring full guarantee of profits and no nationalisation etc. It accepted that Japan be rebuilt industrially and supported American imperialism. In fact it accepted an inferior industrial status. All this had to be exposed and in two ways: (1) selling of economic sovereignty, (2) secondly, the point on which Indian people are extremely sensitive—industrialisation. It had to be exposed as perpetuating the backward economic structure and thwarting India's aspiration for industrialisation.

The economic aid that is sought has therefore to be exposed

concretely as the sell out of economic sovereignty and independence, creation of new vested interests and perpetuation of the backward colonial status of India—and this too by concretely giving facts, not by shouting. In contrast the Soviet pacts have to be examined and shown how they develop the economic strength of the nation and keep national sovereignty inviolable.

The talkers and phrasemongers in the party jump at any reference to freedom of India, protecting the sovereignty of India, any attack that the government is sacrificing the sovereignty of India etc. and they consider such a reference to freedom, sovereignty, as sickening. For they argue that we are not free, we are not sovereign—how can then freedom and sovereignty be sacrificed or sold? Such childish arguments are advanced.

If anyone were to use the words freedom, independence, sovereignty, to create illusions that these exist, that the government represents them, to bolster the government, then it is opportunism. But when they are used as a weapon of exposing the freedom, of exposing the steps which attempt to tie down India to imperialist strings, of the various steps which take the Indian people more and more into subservience to imperialism—they serve the purpose of rousing the people to fight for and defend national sovereignty and freedom. All such exposures can only be made in terms of freedom and sovereignty. That also corresponds to the illusions and consciousness of the people who can be made to understand the conspiracy of the government best in terms of betrayal of freedom and sovereignty. The standpoint of the phrasemongers would lead to an attitude of 'we told you so'. Such an attitude is abjuration of the struggle against the war bloc and refusal to fight the bourgeoisie just when its plans are coming out in the open. As is usual with these people, it is enough for them that the bourgeoisie has planned joining the bloc. But what about the people? How to rouse them and make them oppose the bourgeois plan? How exactly does the bourgeoisie seek to cheat them? These questions do not concern them. They want to hide their bogus radicalism under the plea of taking offensive, which in reality means refusal to fight for the masses.

The bourgeoisie may sign any pacts, but the people have the strength to defeat illegal pacts, provided the communist parties

discharge their duty and therefore the communist parties must clear the way for the people to see the bourgeois conspiracies clearly and fight them. For this patient struggle is necessary—this of course does not enter their heads. Their stand does not go beyond oppositional critiques—but is never addressed to the task of winning the majority of the people.

Fight Against War

And yet this task is of paramount importance. “The warmongers fully realise that long ideological preparation is necessary before they can get their soldiers to fight the Soviet Union” (Zhdanov). But our phrasemongers do not want to carry on an ideological fight for exposing the warmongers, for counteracting the ideological propaganda of our class enemies, for winning the people.

Whatever the shouters might say. “The communist parties must therefore head the resistance to the plans of imperialist expansion and aggression along every line—government, economic and ideological. They must rally their ranks and unite their efforts on the basis of a common anti-imperialist and democratic platform and gather around them all the democratic and patriotic forces of the people.

“A special task devolves on the fraternal communist parties of France, Italy, Great Britain and other countries. If the communist parties firmly stick to their position, if they do not allow themselves to be intimidated and blackmailed, if they act as courageous sentinels of enduring peace and popular democracy, of the national sovereignty, liberty and independence of their countries, if, in their struggle against the attempt to economically and politically enthrall their countries, they are able to take the lead of all the forces prepared to uphold the national honour and independence, no plans for the enthrallment of Europe can possibly succeed” (Zhdanov).

Such are the tasks of communist parties of all countries.

Today their tasks have become all the more imperative. The world bourgeoisie, led by American imperialism is seriously preparing for a new war of aggression—a war against the Soviet Union, against the forces of socialism and democracy, against the toilers of ball

lands and sovereignty of all nations. The war danger has become a serious danger. The formal formation of governmental blocs is only the first step. The bourgeoisie is making desperate efforts to split the people, muster them and get at least sections to participate in its war campaign. As a prelude it directs the offensive against the communist party and the working-class in each country.

As part of this campaign it indulges in the vilest slander against the Soviet Union, to alienate the sympathy of the masses from the land of socialism. This propaganda must be ruthlessly fought and correctly answered. There will not be much difficulty in answering it before our masses. But it will have to be properly answered before the Congress followers, the petty-bourgeoisie and masses not in contact with the party, to confuse whose minds desperate attempts are being made. There is no doubt that among the people strong pro-Soviet feeling exists. But we also underestimate the strength of the anti-Soviet propaganda, the desperate efforts of the bourgeoisie to erase the feeling of sympathy for the Soviet Union. Exposure of warmongers' plans, of the bourgeois democracy, and propagation of the role of the Soviet Union as the defender of peace, democracy, freedom and socialism, freedom from capitalist slavery, of superiority of socialist democracy over bourgeois democracy—these are immediate tasks. In exposing the warmongers' plan, their plans to unleash a new war, we must fully take advantage of the feeling for peace, and explain what war will mean in terms of economic conditions, and massacre and destruction to the working masses. We must expose the government which is making a drive for this brutal war.

Today the war danger is serious; and the international situation is more critical than ever. At the same time the forces of the people, of peace, democracy and socialism, are strong enough to defeat the war plans. At such a critical juncture it is an unforgivable crime against the working-class, against the revolutionary movement, to allow the CP to be isolated even temporarily from the masses or to be misunderstood by the masses, for the luxury of shouting phrases and laziness to study the concrete situation. Such phrasemongers must be declared to be the enemies of the working-class and the party can have no truck with them.

XI. DEVIATIONS ON HYDERABAD ISSUE

Same deviations and wrong ideas exist on the important question of Hyderabad and the successive stages of the struggle there. Many comrades have taken a stand in contradiction with the party line and thesis and have criticised articles in the *People's Age*. This wrong outlook is shown not only by certain sections of the ranks, but sometimes CC members and even a member of the PB has been guilty of it.

Firstly, therefore we must start with the political thesis and the line it gave on the question of accession. Under the heading 'Programme of the Democratic Front', the following has been stated: "Abolition of princedom and feudal rule in the Indian..... question will be decided by the wishes of the people."

It is thus clear that accession was to be exposed in terms of full democracy in the state, as a compromise with feudalism. The party congress did not give a general slogan—no accession but independence of states, nor did it give a general call to resist accession. Why? Because it was obvious that before there could be democratic resistance to accession, the people will have illusions arising from the fact that the national-bourgeois leadership was ruling the country. Only when such illusions were shattered could the large mass start fighting on both fronts—feudal reaction on the one hand and the Indian union capitalists on the other. The exposure of accession was to be a weapon to mobilise the people against both; to warn them that accession meant compromise with the hated feudal rulers—so that even if formal accession could not be prevented, there would be enough disillusionment in the immediate future to carry on the fight in the acceded state against the joining front of the bourgeoisie and the feudal princes. Naturally when the forces were ripe to oppose and fight accession, as well as feudalism—such a slogan could be given from the beginning. But it was left to the concrete circumstances whether slogan of open fight against accession could be given; what was however imperative at all stages was that accession had to be exposed by counterposing it against full democracy in the state.

The party congress did not take the position that the feudal states should remain independent; to take such a position would have meant

joining the imperialist-feudal camp. Nor did the congress take the stand that accession was a democratic advance to be supported etc. The fact however that accession was a compromise was not to mean that in fighting this compromise we lend support to stabilising position of imperialism and feudalism. The party congress very correctly posed the problems of accession in relation to full democracy—and thus set a standard which was a weapon of fighting the imperialists, feudal princes and the bourgeoisie. It is necessary to remember this because the stand taken by certain comrades in fact amounted to taking a position of ‘no accession’—the slogan of Kasim Razvi, Nizam and imperialists. The position taken by the Hyderabad committee virtually amounted to independent Hyderabad’, no accession, etc. Such a stand howsoever heroic it may appear to its sponsors, by its hostility to the Indian union government was nevertheless a pro-feudal pro-imperialist stand.

Also on the question of the significance of Telangana the thesis of the second congress took a clear-cut stand : “This is borne out by the struggle in Hyderabad, where, paralysing the influence of the bourgeoisie.”

Slogan of ‘Telangana Way’

It is clear that the congress made a sober estimate of Telangana struggle of unprecedentedly high level—armed struggle etc. —which typified the period, shows to what height revolutionary action of the masses can rise—pass off into actions for seizure of power. But while telling the masses and the party ranks this truth, which reformism was hiding from view, the thesis does not childishly call for enacting Telangana everywhere, irrespective of strength, mass following, etc. just because the struggle has risen to this great height in a part of Hyderabad. In fact even for Hyderabad as a whole it does not give ‘Telangana’ as the immediate slogan of action, for before there could be Telangana there must be fighting people—and people start their fight on concrete day-to-day or elementary political demands before they reach the highest form of political struggle. It is true that in some of the speeches at the party congress comrades called for the Telangana way—and that was very correct too. For the course of the Indian struggle in the immediate present must march along the Telangana way. But that does not mean that today

all that you have to do is to shout 'Telangana' and can rouse the masses to enact Telangana. Neither any speakers nor the party congress gave any such call. If the situation had been ripe for it then the party would have given the call for armed insurrection all over the country—for Telangana all over the country means armed insurrection of the people against the government.

It is necessary to remember this point because the wrong criticism coming from these comrades lays great stress on extending the armed conflict, it loosely talks about guerilla warfare all over the country, general strike and fight in the rear of the Indian army itself.

There could however be no two opinions that if we could start a successful guerilla warfare all over the country, we should do it. Nor could there be a difference of opinion that if we could strike successfully in the rear, we should do it. The question is: could our slogan inspire the people to action and hold up the hand of the government?

Hyderabad Situation After Party Congress

What was the situation after the party congress which gave a call to organise the Hyderabad Day ?

(1) The great struggle of the people of Telangana was not yet in the consciousness of our masses also. It had to be brought in and popularised among the people—ours as well as the remaining mass.

(2) Immediately after the congress conditions of virtual illegality for the entire party, temporarily disorganising its work and certainly affecting its mobilising capacity for the time being—its agitation and propaganda being very much handicapped. Within two to three months of the congress a reign of terror in all the southern provinces, including Andhra which constituted the rear and main base of help to Telangana, closing down of all party papers, organs, presses—widespread arrests, closing down of the journals and party press in almost all provinces, all leading members either underground or arrested—all mass leaders in the same position.

The party of the working-class had to reorganise its ranks; it was temporarily thrown on the defensive.

(3) Among the people of Hyderabad—barring the people of Telangana—the party had hardly any independent standing: the mass was either under the reformist influence of the right or Left section of the State Congress, or neutral. The backward consciousness of this mass gave a strong basis to the reformist and compromising policies of the State Congress leadership. This mass had never seen struggle before. This was the first time that a section of them was actually participating in struggle while the remaining were interested spectators, with all sympathy for the struggle. Firstly, even this sympathy was not so widespread. The illusions about the Indian union leadership were very great. These illusions had their strong basis on the hope of the backward masses which, for lack of experience of struggle, always think of settling the issue of struggle peacefully, without a frontal fight, through negotiations. These illusions were all the more strengthened by the belief that the Indian union leaders with the army at their control can in no time liberate Hyderabad. The armed strength of the Indian union became a substitute for mass struggle of their own. The reformist leadership was thus able to canalise the discontent of the masses into safe channels reliance on Indian union and slowdown and sabotage the mass struggle. More and more it was propagated that with accession all problems would come to an end, nothing should be done without the consent of the leaders of the Indian union.

(4) The leaders of the Indian union, while they were bargaining with the Nizam and British imperialism, continued to keep up the pressure of popular unrest through the reformist leadership and also frighten the Nizam and imperialists with the communist danger. The bourgeois press was representing accession and the demand for accession as a big democratic demand for the unification of India. The anti-imperialist masses throughout India, and especially in the provinces bordering the Nizam's dominion were taken in by it. In fact the bourgeoisie was able to exploit the traditional antinizam hatred of the Marathas, Kannadigas and Andhras for their own purpose. They were thinking that if the suzerain who lorded over their nationals for centuries, and whom in the past they had defeated in battle after battle (this applied especially to the Marathas) could now be made to accept the suzerainty of their leaders—it would be a big triumph. This circumstance combined with the fact that the

ruler was a Muslim while the subjects were Hindus, that there was religious and political discrimination against the Hindus—was enough to blind the backward masses to the needs of complete democracy and abolition of the Nizam's feudal regime. It was believed by large sections that Indian union government representing the Hindu interests would liberate them from the yoke of Muslim rule. The bourgeoisie and its press were either silent about Telangana or slandering-it. Their aim was to alienate the sympathy of the masses in Hyderabad as well as outside.

(5) The leaders of the Indian union—while they were fooling the masses thus, while their press was campaigning against the Nizam, while some of the State Congress leaders were threatening deposition of the Nizam and while Sardar Patel was uttering threats of dire consequences—were safeguarding their rear by taking every step about Hyderabad after full discussion with Mountbatten.

This was the situation after the party congress and the tasks directly followed from this situation.

These were :

(1) To extend, deepen and broaden the peasants' revolutionary struggle in Telangana by spreading it to new districts, to ensure the safety and development of Telangana by popularising it among the masses.

(2) It was obvious that not a single step forward with the other masses in and outside Hyderabad was possible unless the talk of accession had been exposed in relation to end of feudalism and achievement of full democracy, the illusion about Indian union leaders liberating the land had been smashed by exposing their compromising policy, and the paralysation of the people who relied on the government to act done away with etc. The government's compromising policy and its plan to isolate and crush Telangana could be defeated only if the people were made to see through its accession demagogy etc. Only by freeing people from these illusions—especially people who were not under our political influence, could we hope to bring about solidarity actions, demonstrations and swing the people into anti-Nizam action.

Any general call to action without exposure etc. was out of the

question. Wherever we could organise local struggles we of course had to do. In short, to develop the struggle in Hyderabad, both inside and outside, we had to make a serious endeavour to build a democratic front to develop the struggle and fight the compromisers, and as a beginning we had to seriously undertake the task of isolating the national bourgeoisie by exposing and unmasking its policies. An underestimation of the task to isolate the bourgeoisie was bound to keep the masses under the bourgeois influence and hamper the development of the struggle.

(3) Our task further was to come forward in our propaganda as uncompromising fighters against the Nizam, uphold the Telangana peasants as the revolutionary uncompromising fighters, fighting with arms against the Nizam and in contrast to the demand for governmental intervention, make popular the demand—'Arms for Telangana, arms for the people of Hyderabad'.

This was the only course left open to us—considering that we had to do even the preliminary task of winning over the people in Hyderabad for a struggle—leave aside armed struggle against the Nizam. All talk of immediate widespread action was of course the usual dream of phrasemongers.

The uneven character of the party's influence, of the, consciousness of the masses, and the disorganisation created by repression could be seen in the call for Hyderabad Day given by the party. In a few places we observed the day. In Bombay nearly 10,000 workers came on strike—thanks mainly to the Telugu workers from Nizam's dominion.

The main point however is not repression only. The point is that one Telangana did not mean that everywhere the masses had reached the same consciousness and were only waiting to get a word from us. The hard task of separating the masses from the bourgeoisie faced us—and without it we could not march a single step forward.

Side by side with local struggles therefore we had to concentrate on unmasking the policies of the bourgeoisie and disillusioning the masses. This we did persistently, exposing from the beginning anti-revolutionary, anti-democratic, compromising character of accession and teaching the people the necessity of struggle.

This we did. Within a couple of months after the party congress, the question of accession came prominently before the people and we exposed it as compromise, demanded full democracy and arms for Telangana. With the barrage of propaganda the knees of some of our comrades began to shake and they demanded an answer in terms of 'yes' or 'no' to accession. The bourgeoisie wanted such an answer to expose us; our comrades susceptible to the daily bourgeois propaganda wanted to give a heroic answer 'no accession', which would have enabled the bourgeoisie to bracket us with the Nizam and befool the masses that we stood for the independence of the Nizam. The first reformist deviation appeared in the garb—failure to understand that the proper revolutionary reply to the Nizam, imperialism and the Indian union was: 'end of autocracy, full democracy, accession a compromise'.

Three Classes—Give Different Slogans

Three classes had given three different slogans—*independence of feudal Hyderabad* was the slogan of feudal interests—aided by imperialism. *Accession to the collaborationist Indian union*—the slogan of the bourgeoisie. *End of autocracy and full democracy*—the slogan of the proletariat. Some of our comrades who wanted us to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the question of accession, in reality pleaded for the acceptance of either the bourgeois or feudal slogan and rejection of the proletarian slogan.

In the struggle for the isolation of the bourgeoisie we had to persistently expose the opportunist character of its negotiations with the Nizam, the terms offered, the role of British imperialism—the final terms offered to the Nizam—which brought into concrete terms the compromise that the bourgeoisie sought to hatch.

Meanwhile the Nizam sought to create a diversion by staging communal massacres with the aid of razzakars. The plan of the Nizam was simple. Re-enact the scene of western Punjab and eastern Punjab, set in motion lakhs of refugees to create chaos and anarchy in the Indian union. It was a threat to the Indian union government—that if it dared intervene, the reply would be widespread massacres which would send lakhs of refugees inside the Indian union creating chaos and anarchy, and which as a retaliation would bring counter-riots in

the Indian union—masacre of Muslims etc.—paralysing the entire administration, and thus making it impossible to carry on military operations. This was not only the plan of feudal elements but also of imperialism—especially the tory imperialists who were in close touch with the Nizam through Monckton. The labour-imperialists and Mountbatten themselves would have been glad had the plan succeeded and forced the Indian union government to accede to the Nizam's demands.

That the plan was a serious one could be seen not only from the threats of Kasim Razvi and expectation of wholesale massacre in certain foreign newspapers immediately after intervention, but from the great relief and sense of elation which the leaders of the Indian union showed when they found there were no riots. Rajaji's thanks giving congratulation to the people etc. were not accidental. The Indian union leaders believed riots would take place all over India. They had the experience of August 1947 riots and they were in terror of the new. They conveniently forgot that the August riots could be provoked because of the ground prepared by them.

They tried to avert riots by seeing that the press did no communal propoganda on the issue, that the conflict with the Nizam was not given a communal turn through the press; anyone who read the press could easily see that no communal capital was created out of the razakar atrocities by the press, that the victims of razakars were not made as being Hindus etc.—this was the bourgeois reply to feudal plans. Nonetheless the bourgeoisie, perhaps warned 'by imperialism against the consequences of intervention did stand in terror of communal riots. It completely underestimated the tempo of the people and forgot the people could be diverted into such antipeople channels only by the national leadership and no one else.

This then was the imperialist-feudal plan to decide the issue of accession in their own favour, to enforce no accession but virtual independence of the Nizam where British capital could have a full run and which could be used as a bastion for independent imperialist

intervention against the people of India—a bastion independent of the bourgeoisie.

Our Slogans Against Imperialist-Feudal Plans & Bourgeois Compromise

This plan had to be unmasked and exposed, it had to be fought; that the Nizam and imperialists should hit on this plan had to be explained also by reference to the compromising policy of the Indian union government, the vacillations and retreats of the Indian union government before the plan had to be unmasked. The razakar gangs—the counter-revolutionary gangs organised by feudal reaction and imperialist reaction—had to be taken seriously; the people both in Hyderabad and outside to be warned that the attack could be defeated only by arming the people, by the forces of the people—and thus once more linking the struggle directly with Telangana. The peasants of Telangana to be put forward as the heroic fighters who alone have successfully met the attack of the razakars. Contrast the trek of refugees in other areas with the stand of the peasant in Telangana.

The concrete slogan of action was no doubt armed resistance, any resistance to the Nizam. But of course there was very little possibility of action being developed in a wide scale because of the backwardness of the movement in other parts, the sabotage by the State Congress and the illusions about the Indian union leadership. In certain places militants demanded arms to defend and we could not give them in any quantity. By April it was already too late to procure arms in any large quantity and send across. Nonetheless efforts were made. But the point is that the main weakness was not yet arms—though armed resistance in certain border areas even by bands of individuals would have put heart in the people and rallied people of certain localities—but all this on a very limited scale.

The Achilles' heel lay in our organisational weakness and inability to break through the reformist sabotage and lead independent mass actions against the state, the Nizam leading to attacks against seats of oppression, police thanas, etc., fighting with whatever arms available even in the process of disarming the police and razakars and arming themselves. Except in Telangana we could hardly progress anywhere in this direction, which made it all the more necessary to expose systematically all the reformist illusions.

This was rendered imperative because in the absence of mass action the razakar atrocities made the people in Hyderabad as well as outside look more to the Indian union and its army for aid. The consciousness that there was a people's way out was blurred and in exposing the Nizam's plans—the plan of people's fight had to be put across and the compromising plan of the bourgeoisie which encouraged the Nizam to come out with the razakars, had to be exposed.

The things to be noted are that even in face of the atrocities committed by the razakars the slogan of armed resistance to the razakars, arms for Telangana, people's resistance—were propaganda slogans and not yet slogans of action over any part of Hyderabad barring Telangana.

They could not yet be slogans of action because the illusions about the bourgeoisie were still strong.

And secondly, because apart from exposing these illusions through propaganda, we ourselves had not had any strength to launch independent action on local or political issues which would have enabled sections of masses to shed these illusions quickly. Thus the bourgeois sabotage could prevent a united front of popular forces against the Nizam.

This also meant that while exposing the Indian bourgeoisie we should expose the leaders of the State Congress and the Socialist Party who were aiding the repression against Telangana, preventing militant joint action. At the same time we had to appeal for a united front to their ranks.

Could we have given any other slogans—either as propaganda slogans or slogans of action? Could we have called for instance a general protest strike for arms to Telangana or the people of Hyderabad?—or a general call to the people of Hyderabad to raise against the Nizam?—or call to the people to carry on guerilla warfare, or to extend and follow Telangana?—or could we have asked the people of the Indian union to resist or overthrow a government which was betraying the people of Hyderabad? It may sound ridiculous to ask such questions, but yet it is precisely these questions that are being raised by certain CC members.

We could have certainly given all such calls without of course affecting or influencing anybody and bringing the masses even one

step nearer shedding their illusions. These slogans would have ended in air, without teaching anything to the masses; on the other hand they would have helped the bourgeoisie to erect a wall between the communists and the masses.

The real task was, as we have seen, to popularise Telangana as the independent peasant resistance under our leadership and expose the compromising policy of the bourgeoisie, as an instrument of releasing the masses from the hypocritical influence of the bourgeoisie before they could act and unmask also the imperialists and the Nizam.

Popularise Telangana—Expose Bourgeois Intervention

If some of our comrades were blind to the realities, to the moods and consciousness of the masses as they existed at any particular moment, the bourgeois leaders were carefully addressing themselves to the masses—study their mood and militancy. The leaders knew very well that at any decisive moment—like that of intervention—the mood and passion of the masses might overflow the channels of safety and in such a situation the revolutionary appeal of the Communist Party might fall on fruitful soil. Therefore on every occasion when a clash between them and the Nizam seemed imminent they turned the barrage of their ideological propaganda against the communists—the Communist Party in Hyderabad with slanderous rumours of communist- razakar alliance. The obvious aim of this propaganda was to alienate the sympathy of the people from the fighting revolutionary masses of Telangana, from the Communist Party—to isolate the vanguard, the working class.

The barrage of this propaganda, repeated in hundreds of bourgeois papers, was a powerful weapon of creating confusion among sympathetic elements and driving a wedge between the party and the masses in Hyderabad and outside. How it put the party on the defensive even causing a partial collapse of its propaganda is clear from the resolution of the Andhra PC which says that our ranks became tongue-tied before this propaganda, could not reply effectively to it till the provincial centre had given directions, could not even make use of the facts, which were daily pouring in—facts about the glorious fight our comrades are putting—about their deaths on the battlefield, when scores of them died fighting the Nizam's forces.

The fact that the compromisers who were betraying the struggle

could get away with this slanderous propaganda at a time when reports of our battles with the Nizam were daily pouring in, that they could dumbfound our ranks in certain places, that they could take the offensive when we were having repeated clashes with the Nizam's troops showed how deep were illusions about them, how big yet was their power of betrayal—both of which we could only ignore at our peril. The compromisers however never forgot the task of isolating us in the class battle, though our phrasemongers were willing to make a present of the entire mass to them.

Once more this propaganda had to be exposed, nailing it as the screen to cover the nefarious compromise that the bourgeoisie was hatching—and pointing out who was fighting uncompromisingly in Telangana, who was dying in battles of resistance to the Nizam and who was handing over revolutionaries from Hyderabad state to the Nizam's police.

The bourgeoisie and its press used every issue to justify intervention and military operation, to create a background for it. Taking advantage of our weakness, low organisational influence, its propaganda began to make out that there was only one alternative to razakar atrocities—and that was intervention of the Indian union government.

The two classes—feudal and bourgeois—were thus busy pushing their own alternative: 'no accession, no intervention'—'accession, intervention'. Both were united in pushing away the proletarian alternative of end of autocracy and establishment of full democracy. It is significant that the bourgeois government when it began military operations against Hyderabad, gave as one of its main reasons the anarchy and atrocities created by the razakars. Thereby it not only wanted to assure British imperialism that no radical social changes were contemplated, but also appeal to the backward mass which now was thinking only in terms of the razakar atrocities.

Taking advantage of the helplessness of the people created by its own sabotaging policies the bourgeoisie began to strengthen the feeling for intervention as the only way out. The fact that in the meantime we could not extend Telangana, nor organise anything in Andhra, nor extend the movement to a point when people could regard it as a serious challenge to the Nizam as an alternative way

out, sustained the illusion. We ourselves could have and would have taken the position of 'no intervention' if the masses had been in action under our leadership; for once in action they would have seen that bourgeois intervention is no way out, is not liberation but another slavery.

In the given situation however we could only take the stand of exposing the intervention, its aims and objects, warning the people that they would be cheated, that people including the heroic peasants of Telangana would be crushed and reminding them of the general demands of full democracy, agrarian programme, etc. Had we taken any other slogan to satisfy some of our phrasemongers—for instance 'down with intervention' etc. —not only the bourgeoisie but the very people whom we had to win over would have called our stand as identical with that of the Nizam and the bourgeoisie would have been given an opportunity to isolate us, Telangana, from whatever sympathy there was for us, for our heroic struggle of resistance. Such a stand would have helped the bourgeois reactionaries to crush the Telangana peasant with the backing of popular support. The phrasemongers are not as innocent as they look.

Tactics in the Face of Actual Intervention

On the eve of intervention and immediately after intervention certain comrades, including one CC member from Bengal, seem to have lost all political perspective, became completely unbalanced and alien to all sense of responsibility. Fantastic formulations and suggestions were made as if the event was an Edgar Wallace mystery requiring a hair-raising solution.

Y from jail demanded that both before the intervention and after we should have raised the slogan: Resist the army of the Indian union !

V demands the same and says there is no difference between Nehru and the Nizam—the march of the Indian army is an act of imperialist aggression.

Nageswara Rao says—when the Indian army marched there should have been general strike in the rear of the army, sabotage and guerilla warfare. Even now he says that the party should go in for guerilla warfare in its strong bases.

B wants to escape by throwing all the blame on the centre, its failure to supply arms, etc. and now he says nothing is possible, not even resistance in Telangana. He suggests laying down of arms in Telangana, burying them in safe places—and he is able to suggest this because he wants to thrust all responsibility on the centre.

We must take all these formulations seriously. To take V's formulation first, is it correct to state that there is no difference between the Nizam and Nehru? It would be correct only if the question was: did Nehru represent any different social order than the Nizam? It is correct to state in reply to this question only that both Nehru and the Nizam ultimately represent a compromise between the feudal and capitalist order, that in the final analysis both stand for the present order, though each would like to have a privileged position over the other.

But what social system the two represent in relation to the masses is not the issue of present discussion. V here is echoing past controversies which have been already settled. Before the party congress we did make a distinction between the order represented by Nehru and that represented by the Nizam, saying that the former was democratic, progressive and had to be supported in its fight against the latter. It was practically a shamefaced theory of capitalism being inevitable for a certain length of time and an equally shamefaced support to compromise. Here accession was regarded as a step forward, etc.

But in the party thesis we took a correct revolutionary position, distinguishing ourselves from the bourgeoisie and the feudal princes, the line of fighting both and advancing independent proletarian slogans and solutions, and fighting both did not mean just lumping them together but understanding the different positions taken by both in their conflict and fighting them in respect of the positions taken by them (no accession—accession etc.). The old distinction which was based on one being progressive—then support to one against the other—was given up. This did not mean here that we obliterate all distinctions between feudal and bourgeois elements—a distinction which has a fundamental and vital bearing in relation to the masses. For instance in the foregoing analysis itself we have

made a distinction between the 'no accession' stand of the Nizam and 'accession' stand of the Nehru government—to be able to concretely fight both, not to support one against the other, but on no account to obliterate the distinctions. If really there was no distinction between the two stands we could have come out saying that Kasim Razvi is an agent of Nehru who is raising the razakar menace only to sidetrack attention. This stand becomes and appears absurd because it fails to see that the exploiters also must often clash — opening the eyes of the masses. It really comes from a wrong stand which regards the exploiter as a homogeneous mass with no fissiparous tendencies, i.e. it exaggerates their strength.

But V's formulation is made with a purpose—to justify resistance to the Indian army marching into Hyderabad—as if there was anyone who took a stand that the army should not be resisted because it was a liberationist army, or because it was the army of Nehru, the democrat. To justify resistance to Nehru's army it is not at all necessary to equate Nehru with the Nizam and our slogan of a people's democratic government itself is a slogan of liquidating the Nehru government. But the question in relation to Hyderabad was: could we give that slogan, resist the Indian army?—if there was no difference between Nehru and the Nizam as V suggested then of course we could give that slogan—whether it became a slogan of immediate action or not, it would have been a slogan of rallying the people, if the masses of Hyderabad hated Nehru as much as the Nizam, if they themselves did not make any distinction between the two. One will now, realise how ridiculous and utterly irresponsible such statements are. To forget the difference between an autocratic and most-hated feudal prince, completely isolated from the people and who would have crumbled into dust had the masses not been held in leash by bourgeois saboteurs, and the national bourgeois leaders, who are still national leaders, who are still able to throw us on the defensive when we are fighting the Nizam most, about whom enormous illusions exist in the minds of the people, illusions directly flowing from the oppositional part of the bourgeoisie, is playing with politics. The heroic and high-sounding phrase —no difference between Nehru and the Nizam—however revolutionary it might sound to the ears of the petty-bourgeoisie, is in reality a special way of rendering service to the bourgeoisie. Here the task of isolating

the bourgeoisie is so completely forgotten, that even in a rapidly developing situation when the masses are shedding their illusions quickly, the proletariat will be repeatedly isolated and never be able to lead the masses.

No distinction between the Nizam and Nehru is not an accidental formulation for V. He made a similar formulation—no distinction between Indian collaboration and French imperialists and advocated neutrality in the French India plebiscite. As we have seen this 'no distinction' slogan is only a cover to fix attention on the exploiting classes and forget the masses.

V's second formulation—Indian union's intervention is war of imperialist aggression is also wrong. It can only be described as enforcement of compromise with feudalism with the aid of military force. The instalment of Nehru government in August 1947 of course could not be described as an act of imperialist aggression, but betrayal, compromise, etc. V's formulation is a horrible formulation because it forgets the actual class relations—the real character of the conflict and what is more, entirely forgets the position taken by the masses—the anti-imperialist masses inside and outside Hyderabad and leads to a strategy which does not take the masses into consideration. The formulation is made to justify a preconceived idea—resistance to Indian army. The syllogism is as follows:

All imperialist aggression should be resisted.

This is an imperialist aggression.

It must be resisted (whether the masses realise the need of resistance, whether they have any illusions, etc.—this of course is no concern of V).

Why 'Resist Indian Army' Was a Wrong Slogan

The slogan of resistance to Indian army has been raised by a number of comrades besides V. It must be characterised as wrong and harmful in the circumstances, in fact as a slogan which would have helped the Nehru government to smash us all the more quickly. One does not know whether these comrades consider the slogan 'resist the Indian army'—as a slogan of propaganda or action—we can take it as both.

What does the call 'resist Indian army' amount to? A slogan of popular uprising against the Nehru government. We may ask these comrades—if it is so easy to organise a popular uprising against the Nehru government in backward Hyderabad (notwithstanding Telangana, Hyderabad as a whole is backward; taking 'resist' as a slogan of action) or if it is so easy to use popular uprising against Nehru government as a rallying slogan (propaganda slogan), and if all that is required is a call from the party, why did we not do it in Bengal where as a party we are much stronger? Or in Andhra or anywhere else? In Bengal the horrible deeds of the police in Kamlapur, or the shootings in strikes, or arrests of party leaders—which were acts of direct repression at the hands of the Congress ministry—in Hyderabad the Nehru government till then at least had not repressed anybody, barring of course the fact that the Madras ministry had handed over some of our comrades to the Nizam's police—coupled with our relatively greater party strength and influence over mass organisations—could be a far greater urge for uprising than the future doings of the Nehru government. Why then have we not given the slogan of overthrow the Roy government—why did V and others criticise those who give the slogan 'Nehru a goonda'? It seems that the situation was very ripe for an uprising in Hyderabad just because the army had marched in. But it was very premature where the army was permanently stationed and the police were perpetrating daily atrocities. All this only means that slogans of revolutionary struggle are to be determined not by the stage of the intensity of class struggle, but by the moods of certain leaders.

The only place where the slogan of resistance to the Indian union army was correct was Telangana.

It would certainly be opportunist and a betrayal of the struggle not to fight on in Telangana. Here the slogan of resistance to the Indian army is a real slogan whose necessity is perceived by the masses. And this has been proved by actual experience.

There could be no two opinions about the fact that we want to bring the masses quickly to that position at which they can echo back our demand—'overthrow the Nehru government'—in the entire Indian union, including Hyderabad.

That is the central point of our activity. The question is: is the

situation ripe today that we can raise the slogan at least as a rallying, a unifying slogan all over India, like the slogan: 'overthrow the imperialist rule—in the earlier years of national movement? In the 1930s when we raised the slogan 'overthrow imperialist rule' whether amongst our masses or Congress masses, or even hostile masses—it struck a sympathetic chord, served to bring us nearer to the people, to unify the people—for it expressed their desire to be free; because the government was completely isolated from the people. Even those who differed from us, who preached non-violence or dominion status, had either to support it or keep silent about it. Today however vast sections including sections of our own working-class and kisan followers have yet to see the necessity of overthrowing the rule of Nehru and the slogan does not automatically create that sense of unity in common struggle as it did. Exposure, more smashing of illusions, is still necessary till the slogan becomes as all-India rallying slogan.

That does not mean that today we do not raise it locally, in struggles, etc. when the masses can understand it. On the other hand it is incumbent on us to raise the slogan in our struggle, during, repression etc., when we find that the masses will really welcome it as the expression of their indignation. It has to be raised under these conditions. It is thus alone that it will go into the consciousness of the masses all over India—as the direct experience of the struggle—and become an all-India slogan, firstly rallying slogan and then a slogan of action.

We may ask the Andhra comrades how is it that the Andhra people who knew, what terror Nehru government's Congress ministry was capable of, who had seen torture, beatings, rape etc.—how is it that these people could not rise in revolt against the Nehru government as the Telangana peasants did? How is it that in defence of themselves we could not start a revolutionary uprising, guerilla warfare, armed resistance to the Congress ministry? The Andhra PC correctly stated the following in its "Raids and Party's Tasks" when it replied to the demand for guerilla warfare in Andhra—guerilla warfare which is nothing but armed revolt, though not yet on a national scale :

"Conditions here are not favourable for forming guerilla squads as in Telangana and carrying on armed struggle. In Telangana the condition of the people is very wretched and three-fourths of the

people are coming forward and fighting. The Nizam's government is completely isolated from the people. But conditions here are different. The conditions of the people here is not so wretched and the government has not become completely isolated from the people like the Nizam government—a strong section of the people is standing behind the government. In these conditions an armed struggle will still further isolate our party from the people and lead to its disintegration.”

The argument about more wretched conditions in Telangana is of course wrong; the difference between the economic conditions in Telangana and Andhra is not such that one should be in revolutionary ferment and the other should not be. But what the document attempts to say, that the Nehru government has a popular base, that the majority of the people is not yet convinced about the necessity of armed overthrow of the government nor can they be rallied on the slogan of armed struggle to overthrow the government, that the slogan of armed overthrow instead of uniting the people isolates us, is correct. What is being discussed here really is not mere resistance in a skirmish, or mass conflicts, but a war against the government—armed struggle against the government to overthrow it and the reason given to reject it—the government is not isolated—is correct. Though life has forced the Andhra PC to take the realistic attitude, it does not prevent Nageswara Rao and other comrades of the PC from again taking an unrealistic diametrically opposite view and demand that guerilla warfare should be started all over in India.

Let it be clearly understood that the slogan of ‘resist the Indian army’ was a slogan to Hyderabad of armed insurrection against the Nehru government—and let those who advocate it answer that the situation was ripe for giving it in Hyderabad, or in any part of India; a slogan which we are not able to give even in the most advanced areas barring Telangana.

Secondly, how fantastic the slogan is, how puerile and dangerous, how it only helps reaction—can be seen from the fact that the slogan of armed resistance to Nehru army was to be given to those who had failed to organise armed resistance on an all-Hyderabad scale even to the Nizam—because they were precisely under Nehru's leadership. The people of Hyderabad who calmly put up with razakar terror with their faith in Nehru, who as the

Nizam attacks them more believe in and rely more and more on the help and intervention of the Indian union, whom the reformist leadership kept away from anti-Nizam struggle precisely by sowing illusion about Nehru and who were therefore waiting for intervention as if it would give a real blow to the Nizam were to be told to resist the same Nehru and his army whose arrival they have been awaiting all these days. Could political innocence, phrasemongering and playing with slogans go further? Resist Nehru when in his name people were not even resisting the Nizam fully.

The act (intervention, march of the army) which was to be the first step in the disillusionment of the masses was considered to be the final step in the disillusionment, convincing them about the necessity to overthrow the government. Such are the estimates of phrasemongers or petty-bourgeois revolutionists.

Such a slogan if it had been given would have completely isolated the Telangana peasant and the party from the masses in Hyderabad and outside and would have enabled the bourgeoisie to identify the party position with that of the Nizam, and would not have helped the masses at all to learn from their experience or appreciate the position of the party.

It must be understood as an axiom that in times of quick revolutionary developments especially intermediary slogans are of utmost importance deciding which way the flow of mass movement is directed. Slogans which fail to help the masses learn through their own experience, which do not take into account the immediate direction of the mass movement and do not attempt to guide it in proper channels, slogans which only help the bourgeoisie to cut off the CP from the masses—objectively play an anti-revolutionary role.

With petty-bourgeois revolutionists it always happens that just when the masses are about to open their eyes and begin to see the class enemy in a correct light, just when they are beginning to appreciate the work and activity of the CP, when to all appears the bourgeoisie has scored a success yet in reality the masses are beginning to see through it—just at this time the petty-bourgeois rushes in with his fantastic slogans and makes it difficult for the masses to comprehend the policy of the CP and gives one more opportunity to the bourgeois to retrieve the losing battle.

In reality, as we will see, intervention and its aftermath have created new problems, for the bourgeoisie and accentuated the crisis. It is at the same time opening the eyes of the masses and disillusioning them—a process which we must accelerate. This intervention has not closed the Hyderabad chapter: on the other hand conditions will become worse for the bourgeoisie and we must have enough patience to see that our enemy is getting into a difficult position and we are getting in a position to hit at him provided we do not recklessly throw away the masses from us.

If the majority of the people of Hyderabad had no illusions, and we were in possession of them, we of course would have advocated resistance. If we had much more strength than what we have today, we would have adopted another successful tactic to breakthrough the illusions about the bourgeoisie. We would have taken the opportunity of the entry of the Indian army to raise and implement the slogan 'smash the Nizam', and in several tracts driven out his officers and taken power on behalf of the people, so that by the time the Indian army reached Hyderabad it would have found power in the districts in the hands of the people. Then a real war of resistance, one which the people would have understood, would have begun. But we had not the organisational strength to raise 'smash the Nizam' slogan and destroy all bases of compromise.

The reactionary results flowing from the slogan 'resist the Indian army' could now be seen.

Masses Learn Through Experience

Equally reactionary in result will be the slogans of Nageswara Rao. Firstly, he suggests that general strike, sabotage, etc. should have been organised in the rear of the Indian army — as if to organise these the masses are not required, and as if the masses do it any time on any issue—whether on that issue there are illusions, propaganda, etc. is not to be taken into account. This is making the party and the subjective desires of the leadership the motive force of history and not the masses and their concrete struggles and experience. Which province, including Andhra, can say that it could have organised all the things that Nageswara Rao suggests? Not one.

Today he wants guerrilla warfare in all the provinces—our strong

bases—as if guerilla warfare can be called at the becking of the party. We have seen that Telangana itself had not gone deep down in the consciousness of the masses. On the question of intervention there were and still are deep illusions. And yet you are supposed to call a guerilla warfare, perhaps of your own people—throw the vanguard into the battle whether the issue is real or even known to the masses or not—whether they relise the treacherous role of Nehru's intervention or not. Guerilla warfare divorced from the masses in the name of Telangana—a slogan which shows that even the very elementary lesson of leading mass struggle is not learnt. To talk of guerilla struggle apart from the masses, to unlink this struggle from the task of building the people's front, to cry for guerilla warfare without exposure, or desperate struggle to isolate the bourgeoisie, is to act as a typical petty-bourgeois revolutionist who does not take into account concrete circumstances.

Our great concern for the heroic people of Telangana should not blind us to elementary teaching of revolutionary Marxism, to the realities of the class situation as they exist.

In this connection we cannot but remember what Stalin writes about the great merit of the Bolshevik Party which knew how to make the masses learn through their own experience, how to make the party slogans the slogans of the masses, how to lead them. The classic instance of the Bolshevik Party's support to the constituent assembly when soviets were in existence is cited by Stalin. To quote (“October Revolution and the Tactics of Russian Communists”):

“The fact is that for the victory of the revolution, if it is really a people's revolution which embraces the masses in their millions, correct party slogans alone are not enough. For the victory of the revolution one more necessary condition is required, namely, that the masses themselves become convinced through their own experience of the correctness of these slogans. Only then do the slogans of the party become the slogans of the masses themselves. Only then does the revolution really becomes a people's revolution. One of the peculiar features of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October was that they correctly determined the paths and turnings which would naturally lead the masses up to the party's slogans to the very threshold of the revolution, so to speak—thus

helping them to feel, to test, to realise by their own experience the correctness of these slogans. In other words, one of the peculiar features of the tactics of the Bolsheviks is that they do not confuse leadership of the party with leadership of the masses; that they clearly see the difference between the first sort of leadership and the second sort of leadership, that they, therefore, represent the science, not only of party leadership, but of leadership of the vast masses of the working people.

“A graphic example of the manifestation of this feature of Bolshevik tactics was provided by the experience of convening and dispersing the constituent assembly.

“It is well known that the bolsheviks advanced the slogan of a soviet republic as early as April 1917. It is well known that the constituent assembly was a bourgeois parliament, fundamentally opposed to the principles of a soviet republic. How could it happen that the Bolsheviks, who were aiming for a republic of soviets, at the same time demanded that the provisional government immediately convene the constituent assembly? How could it happen that the Bolsheviks not only took part in the elections, but themselves convened the constituent assembly? How could it happen that a month before the insurrection, in the transition from the old to the new, the bolsheviks considered a temporary combination of a republic of soviets with the constituent assembly possible?

“This ‘happened’ because :

“(1) The idea of a constituent assembly was one of the most popular ideas among the broad masses of the population.

“(2) The slogan of the immediate convocation of the constituent assembly helped to expose the counter-revolutionary nature of the provisional government;

“(3) In order to discredit the idea of a constituent assembly in the eyes of the masses, it was necessary to lead the masses to the walls of the constituent assembly with their demands for land, for peace, for the power of the soviets, thus bringing them face to face with the real and authentic constituent assembly;

“(4) Only this could help the masses to become convinced

through their own experience of the counter-revolutionary nature of the constituent assembly and of the necessity of dispersing it;

“(5) All this naturally presupposed the possibility of a temporary combination of the Soviet republic with the constituent assembly, as one of the means of eliminating the latter;

“(6) Such a combination, if brought about *on the condition* that all power were transferred to the soviets, could only signify the subordination of the constituent assembly to the soviets, its conversion into an appendage of the soviets, its painless extinction.

“It need hardly be proved that had the Bolsheviks not adopted such a policy the dispersion of the constituent assembly would not have taken place so smoothly, and the subsequent actions of the socialist-revolutionaries and Mensheviks under the slogan ‘All power to the Constituent assembly’ would not have failed so signally.”

It is typical of the petty-bourgeoisie to forget all class realities and oscillate between complete defeatism on the one hand and high-sounding phrases devoid of all realities—i.e. in both cases complete blindness to the class situation. If a strike is broken or there is a short spell of industrial calm—they imagine a period of retreat has begun; if people resist with arms and fight as they did in Telangana they imagine that it means that a call for armed insurrection can be given tomorrow as a slogan of action. When the call does not materialise they lose all faith in resistance and call for all abandonment of resistance as B does in connection with Telangana.

B's stand now is—bury your arms in Telangana, do not fight; centre has let us down because sufficient supply of arms is not given, etc.

It is no doubt true that Telangana is in danger and it has to bear the brunt. That it is more or less isolated. Yet we must fight to the last. Because by not resisting you are not only not going to save anything, but completely demoralise the people. Whether you resist or not, repression is going to be brutal. Prolonged and protracted resistance if possible, however might even retrieve the situation if we keep it prolonged for a time. For B fails to see that the situation in Hyderabad has become extremely critical for the bourgeoisie. Within a couple of months all the illusions must begin to burst and

after another, the economic situation, atrocious procurement plan, the restoration of the old regime—all this must lead to fresh unrest. The situation is unstable, the bourgeoisie cannot easily control it. If we keep resistance in Telangana, it really gets the chance of expanding and spreading. This is the real picture. Keep the resistance in Telangana, and similarly plan to bring the rest of the masses in line—through all kinds of actions including partial struggles, thus build a popular movement, a people's democratic front. This is the task and not laying down of arms.

One of the Andhra comrades has suggested that our slogan for Hyderabad should be rejoining of the different linguistic areas of the state to their provinces. Even when virtually it is said that the slogan is to be realised as part of people's democracy, in the present context it plays a reactionary role. Firstly in so far as the slogan is suggested as a slogan of immediate practical action it is nothing but a paraphrase of the bourgeois version of bringing the state administration to the level of provincial administration and has no revolutionary merit in it. It only satisfies the rich peasant and whets his appetite for procuring land. Secondly, it effectively sidetracks attention from a united fight against the Indian union administration, from the fight for democracy, from the fight against compromise it is hatching, through the constituent assembly, elections, etc. It gives a free charter to the union administration. Those who think that joining the territories to the provinces automatically eliminates feudalism are wrong. The feudal structure, the economic foundations, will remain and yet the territories may become part of the linguistic provinces—even if the Nizam is formally under such a scheme, the compromise structure remains. All that happens is that the bourgeoisie is put in exclusive possession of the state by the communists. For communists to fight for such a thing is anti-revolutionary.

XII. PRESENT SITUATION IN HYDERABAD AND OUR TASKS

With the intervention of the Indian army in Hyderabad and the military occupation of the state, the crisis in Hyderabad has become accentuated, opening the possibilities of a rapid mobilisation of the

people against the feudal regime and its bourgeois sponsors and protectors.

One of the main factors in the radicalisation of the situation is the beginning of the process of disillusionment with the bourgeois leaders of the Indian union and the leaders of this State Congress, who because of the illusions of the masses about them have up till now successfully sabotaged all struggle in the Nizam's dominion in the interest of a treacherous compromise.

These illusions made the Hyderabad masses look to the India government and its army for help, for deliverance from the Nizam's yoke and razakar atrocities. They took the initiative out of the hands of the masses and transferred it to the bourgeoisie.

All the expectations of the masses were thus keyed up on the eve of the intervention and they expected that after the triumph of Indian arms the old order would go, the economic problems would be solved and political democracy for the people established. The greater the illusions, the stronger was the expectation.

After Entry of Indian Army

But within two months of the triumph of Indian arms the masses are witnessing a quite different picture extremely shocking to their hitherto credulous minds. The Nizam remained, the feudal order is being wooed, the nawabs and jagirdars are installed in political power in collaboration with extremely reactionary capitalist elements, the tyrannical bureaucrats are restored to their former position, the hated police and magistracy has come back backed by the arms of the Indian union. Even the State Congress which wields considerable influence with the people and which has been a subservient tool of the Indian union government in its fake oppositional role and sabotage of the mass struggle, is kept out of ministry, and only extreme right elements who consistently betrayed all struggle and even accepted ministerial posts in the Nizam's cabinet when the Nizam was at war with the people—are considered safe to shoulder the responsibility of power.

While the old rulers are restored to their former status, their economic privileges also are being restored. In part of Telangana land seized by the peasants is being given back to the landlords, in

the rest of the state the jagirdars and landlords continue as before, the land problem remains unsolved and the tiller is left without land, prices of food-grains have started soaring, the government is on its way to introduce the hated procurement—that open robbery of the peasants—which was one of the main causes of the outburst two years back.

With the rapid deterioration of the economic situation all over India, the situation in Hyderabad had already become unbearable for the masses. If during the last two years there was no general and complete bustup, it was largely due to the sabotaging influence of the Indian union leaders and the illusion of the masses about it. After the intervention this last big prop of the old order is being seriously undermined through the experience of the masses themselves, and can be completely undermined if the proletariat knows how to lead the masses in a situation in which while the masses are losing confidence in the bourgeoisie, yet the task of consistently organising this disillusionment and tearing them away from the bourgeoisie has to be systematically carried out. Wrong slogans and estimates would just enable the bourgeoisie to take the masses back under its influence.

Break-up of Feudal Order

The present situation in Hyderabad is a continuation and further accentuation of the crisis in Hyderabad which in the first sweep of the mass movement under our leadership yielded the great and heroic story of Telangana. Telangana—the armed struggle of the peasantry led by the Communist Party for land, for power, against feudal autocracy—reaching the stage of embryonic state form and holding out for months defiantly against feudal bandits and armed power typified not only the desperate situation in Hyderabad but the new revolutionary period, with the peasant ever ready to throw himself in endless battle, if the proletarian party is able to reach him, despite his illusions, and lead him. Once his desperation, arising out of his unbearable economic conditions, could find proper outlet under proletarian leadership—there was no limit to the height which the struggle could reach. It could quickly pass from the elementary phase to the highest phase. Telangana was thus the sign of the new period—the symbol of the post-war revolutionary India. It showed to what

great heights the masses could easily rise once the proletariat was able to take the lead, do away with bourgeois influence, etc.

It is in this sense that the second party congress correctly glorified Telangana and responsible party leaders raised the cry of 'Telangana way, Telangana everywhere'. It however did not mean that the insurrectionary situation has become immediately ripe all over India, that it was at our beck and call—a mistake committed by many comrades.

Roots of Reformist Mistakes in Telangana

But Telangana was a victim of the reformist policies of the party also. In the first phase because of the old reformist line, the revolutionary significance of Telangana was not understood and consequently revolutionary line was not pursued inside Telangana itself. The August resolution which led the party to go in for this militant action and in one sweep enabled it to organise armed resistance of the peasants to the feudal order was watered down. With the Mountbatten resolution it became increasingly difficult for any revolutionary line or tactic to be adopted. The result was that not only inside Telangana class-collaborationist mistakes appeared but outside also there was hardly any revolutionary propaganda to popularise the glorious struggle of the Telangana peasants. The attitude in general was that of towards militant partial struggle and nothing more. In fact it can be said and proved that the party, whether in Andhra or elsewhere, hardly got any time to systematically understand and propagate the revolutionary content of Telangana struggle. By the time the second party congress correctly placed the significance of Telangana as indicating a new period of armed conflict and heralding the stage of people's democratic revolution, the attack on the party had already started and the propaganda and carrying Telangana into the consciousness of the masses had somewhat slowed down.

The mistakes committed in Telangana were in line with the old reformist line of the central committee and for which only the central committee could be held responsible and no one else. As R points out in his draft document 'On the Present Situation in Hyderabad State and Our Tasks'.

“Coming to our guerilla areas, for a long time our main programme was fighting the state forces and razakars. We did not realise the importance of implementing our agrarian programme through the mobilisation of the agrarian labour and the poor peasantry. Consequently the masses became sympathetic spectators, we their volunteers for their protection against the state forces and the razakars. No class organisation of agricultural labourers and sectional organisation for women. No party organisation, no cells and no enrolment of party members. Only organisations functioning were guerilla squads.....

“This was realised late and our PC made a serious effort to reorganise completely. Decisions are taken for the implementation of our agrarian programme seriously, i.e. land distribution and wage question of agricultural labourers, functioning of Andhra Mahasabha and organising of agricultural labour and women’s committees, local defence squads mainly consisting of youth etc.....

“We succeeded to some extent in implementing the above decisions, but before we could implement fully the armies of the Indian union entered the state and upset all our programme.”

And again,

“Our party is second to the Congress in mass influence taking the state as a whole and commands the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the masses in the two districts of Nalgonda and Warangal. But the drawback of our movement is, just before the entry of the Indian troops, it was confined to the two above mentioned districts, and some pockets in other districts of Telangana and Marathwada. Our party units got virtually liquidated and our masses became inactive in rural areas where we did not carry on armed struggle. In towns too our working-class base got disrupted and the Muslim workers fell a prey to razakar propaganda and some of them even joined razakars; trade unions and party units in virtual liquidation. This is mainly because of our wrong understanding that nothing but guerilla struggle by big squads is possible under those conditions and non-understanding of the importance of the rallying of the masses on mass issues for militant actions and organising sabotage activities by small groups of 2 or 3, etc. It is true that we are right in taking to guerilla warfare in our strong areas, but it, is

wrong to have left the other areas to their fate, without any mass activity or any form of resistance.”

Reformist Line of Old CC—Tailism to Congress Leaders

As regards failure to rouse the anti-imperialist masses in India over the question of Telangana, the document of the Andhra PC “Telangana Struggle and Its Lessons” states the following :

“In Andhradesh, our agitation and propaganda was confined to expose the Nizam’s atrocities, to enlist Andhra people’s sympathies, to severely criticise the Congress government’s anti-struggle attitude, etc. We could lead the momentum among the people to a higher stage through mass actions. We never returned back the blow delivered on us by Congress government. We always looked towards the struggle of Telangana as a struggle to build up another such revolutionary movement in Andhra. It is why Andhra masses remained as painful onlookers when repression swooped on them or praised them when they heroically fought back the repression. They did not realise the necessity of direct participation in the struggle.

“When our enemies—British imperialism, Nawabs of the Nizam and the Indian bourgeoisie—all united and helped one another in smashing the revolutionary struggle, we could not realise the necessity of uniting the peoples of Telangana and Andhradesh to fight back the enemy. If in Andhra, people are not able to face the severe repression let loose on them today, it is only due to our neglect—not to move the people in mass against Congress government on Telangana issue.”

And again,

“All our propaganda could only make the people as witnesses. They shed tears at the news of Telangana people’s difficulties..... But we could not create such consciousness in them when they will take it as their own struggle. We always thought in terms of help for the Telangana struggle but we never thought of linking up this struggle with the anti-imperialist struggle in Andhra and take both of them forward. We did not care to take out a demonstration when Congress leaders sought to betray the struggle by a standstill agreement..... Due to Telangana struggle, a great upsurge swept over the people of the border villages in the Indian union. Our

influence has grown in Andhra public. But we did not take our flag to new areas. We did not make use of such a problem as this which can be very well used as a powerful weapon to unite and mobilise all varieties of people.”

Conciliatory Attitude Towards Rich Peasant

As regards class-collaborationist mistakes of the worst type directly following from the old reformist line of the central committee and mechanical copying of the tactics adopted by the Chinese Communist Party, the following is enough to demonstrate how deep the mistakes had crept into the struggle :

“Our tailist attitude towards Congress led to our neglect of land problem. We invited those of the zamindari class into the struggle, who were taking shelter under Congress with a view to safeguard their properties and lands, on three conditions : (1) resign your posts, (2) all bribes to be returned, (3) all illegally-occupied lands should be returned. We said the 500 acres should be left for those who participate in the struggle and only the rest to be distributed. We even allowed some concessions to those who own 200 acres and less—that lands illegally occupied by these should be taken back only with their consent. With all these concessions, our anti-zamindari struggle was nothing but a farce. We took to land distribution programme only when the Nizam, Congress and deshmukhs under Congress garb intensified their offensive on us.”

There was also a marked deviation of faith in the rich peasant who in many places had secured the leadership of the struggle only to betray it :

“We mixed up rich peasants with people and posed their reactions as people’s reactions and thus tailed behind rich peasantry, instead of correctly estimating their role, exposing them, rescuing people from their hold and lead the people in the revolutionary struggle under party leadership.

“Where the rich peasant leaders hold the reins, the party organisers were given shelter. But, on the other side, they surrendered to the police along with the people. We too did not try to keep direct contact with the masses and satisfied ourselves saying : This much (shelter) they are doing. We cannot expect more than this from them.’

Organisers were deceived by this plot of the rich peasants and blindly argued that the people are not coming forward and so there prevail no circumstances in which we can go to the villages?'. .

Thus it will be seen that both as regards the internal strength of Telangana and also its linking with the struggle of the masses outside Telangana as well as in the Indian union, reformism of the old line came in the way of organising the full force of the struggle and exposing the illusions and class enemies of the peasants.

In spite of all these the continuance of Telangana and the fight forged by the peasantry and the fact that this fight was not crushed continually remains as a new beaconlight calling the people of Hyderabad and the masses of the Indian union towards the democratic revolution. The existence of Telangana in spite of its mistakes was an open announcement of the fact that the feudal order in Hyderabad had already reached a breaking point, that the armed masses, peasants, would successfully resist it and that what was preventing Hyderabad from being engulfed in a united single revolutionary wave was lack of similar developments in the state elsewhere because of the backwardness and illusions of the masses.

Imperialism, the Nizam and the Congress Government

The negotiations between the Indian union government and the Nizam were conducted in the background of this revolutionary struggle of the peasants, of which, both were afraid, and in the context of a rapidly-worsening economic situation. Both tried to frighten each other with the threat of communism and peasant revolution to secure strong bargaining points against each other.

The conflict between the national bourgeoisie and the feudal nizam was taking place in a situation which was dangerous to both. And therefore both sides were determined to see that whatever their differences might be the initiative should not pass into the hands of the revolutionary masses and the Communist Party, i.e., their conflict should not unleash the pentup mass forces which were ready to meet the challenge of both once they were roused. The nizam aided by Monckton and Churchill tried to secure virtual independence for himself so that he together with the British capitalists could have a free run over the vast territory of Hyderabad. The labour-imperialist Attlee and his agent Mountbatten of course would have been pleased

with the Nizam's victory. In fact they would have been glad if the Nizam had been able to secure the concession that he wanted from the Indian union. At the same time they took precautions to see that the Indian union leaders remain linked with them. They trusted them lest the situation might get out of hand, either by a clash with the Nizam and the Indian union, bringing the masses to the forefront or the Indian union referring the dispute in sheer desperation to the UNO in which case British imperialists were afraid that America would get a hand in the game. The Indian union leaders from their side finding the mess that they were in Kashmir took every precaution to see that every step they took was sanctioned by Mountbatten, a sanction which naturally dictated that no radical social steps should be taken in connection with the Nizam's role. There was the conflict not only between the Nizam and the Indian union but also the Indian union and British imperialism. But all the three sides were determined to see that the masses nowhere came in the picture. These negotiations once more confirmed the brilliant formulation of the party thesis which stated that in all conflicts between imperialism and the Indian union government the masses will never be appealed to and the problem will be settled at governmental level. Here of course the masses were completely bypassed and though it appeared that the problem was not settled through negotiations and bargaining at governmental level, in actual reality it has been settled like that. For the use of arms against the Nizam was only made to ensure the compromise already sanctioned by imperialism and nothing else.

Armed Clash—Instrument of Compromise

We do find that in actual life the formulation that the conflict between imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie will be settled at governmental level sometimes confirmed, sometimes slightly amended. For instance, in relation to Kashmir the conflict between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie is no doubt fought within the framework of compromise, but through an Indo-Pakistan clash. At the same time its another feature is that neither in India nor in Pakistan the masses are really appealed to.

In connection with Hyderabad we find again the use of arms against the feudal ally of imperialism but nonetheless within the framework of a compromise previously arrived at between

imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie and the masses were nowhere called in.

In pursuance of their tactics to keep the masses out of the picture, the Nizam and his advisers, though they talked about resistance to the Indian army, did not offer any resistance nor had they any plans of offering resistance. They and their imperialist masters knew that if any such resistance is offered and the struggle became somewhat protracted, the impatient masses in Hyderabad state would rise in action, smash the state power, removing all chances of compromise and in fact challenging even the Indian bourgeoisie. The battle therefore had to be fought on the basis of attempts to enact widespread communal riots in the Indian union so that the attention of the masses can be sidetracked and at the same time anarchy and chaos could be created in the rear of the Indian army. The bankrupt weapon of communal riots is the only weapon which imperialism and the feudal autocrat could hope to wield against the impatient masses in the Indian union as well as Hyderabad; to incite the masses to communal murders, the razakar goondas were allowed to pillage, rape, burn and perpetrate every kind of atrocity hoping that thereby the Hindu masses in the Indian union would take retaliatory action.

Strategy of Keeping Masses out of the Fight

The democratic instincts of the masses in the Indian union inflicted a defeat on the Nizam and his advisers. And no riots took place.

The Indian union leaders really believed that there would be riots and were quaking in their shoes when the army invaded Hyderabad. But they were much more afraid of the political initiative of the masses, of the masses rising in revolt against the Nizam on the entry of the Indian union army, of the masses in the Indian union and Hyderabad following the path of Telangana peasants and getting out of their hands. From the beginning through its agents, the State Congress leaders, they sabotaged the anti-Nizam struggle of the people of Hyderabad, making them look to the Indian union and its army for help. Side by side they tried their best to malign and slander the Communist Party and the struggle of Telangana peasants circulating libellous slanders about communist-razakar alliance to alienate the people from, all sympathy to Telangana struggle and to isolate the vanguard from the Hyderabad people. The methods and

tactics adopted by the rival parties and classes clearly demonstrated the potentialities of mass struggle and how both the classes stood in terror the mass upsurge.

The reason why there could be no widespread mass upsurge in the last year and following the entry of the Indian union army, the reason why the anti-Nizam struggle of the people of Hyderabad could be so successfully sabotaged lay in the fact that the people of Hyderabad had developed dangerous illusions about the national bourgeois leaders, illusions which are common to all politically backward areas. The second reason why the tactics of the Nizam and the Indian union government to keep the masses out of the picture temporarily succeeded was because the mass basis of the party of the working-class was extremely weak except in the two districts of Telangana, so that the proletariat could not undertake in the last year or so independent mass actions on a large scale in Hyderabad that would have not only strengthened the peasants of Telangana but would have helped in smashing the illusions held by the masses about the national leaders.

The basic weakness of the proletariat was the fact that it had hardly any organisational and political influence outside the two districts of Telangana. And therefore was not in a position to develop militant actions to seize the initiative in the conflict between the two sections of the oppressing classes. The fact the working class was hardly in a position to make even the beginnings of a sufficiently powerful democratic front, the fact that the working-class had hardly started winning over the majority of the people for any anti-Nizam action was of decisive importance in ensuring the success for the tactics of the bourgeoisie. The working-class will not be able to march a step ahead in defeating the compromising policy of the national leaders so long as it does not improve its mass influence and its position among the people. To substitute revolutionary slogans for a patient fight to build mass influence and develop the leadership of the masses will only enable the class enemy to inflict still further defeats on the working-class and its party.

Not a Stable Bourgeois Victory

It is further sheer defeatism to think that the national bourgeoisie has secured a stable victory in Hyderabad and that it would be able to stabilise the situation easily. No doubt the illusions about the

national bourgeoisie will not disappear all in a day but the fact that the masses were taught to expect a big social upheaval on the arrival of the Indian troops, that their expectations were keyed up, that now for the first time they will see the national bourgeoisie in action in real life and see the contrast between what they imagined the bourgeoisie to be and what it really is, is a fact which accelerates the process of releasing the Hyderabad masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie provided the working-class plays its role correctly. Secondly, with its compromising policy, with its framework of compromise, determined in consultation with imperialism, the Indian union government and its representatives will not be able to solve a single problem affecting the economic life of the people of Hyderabad. On the other hand they will be accentuating the economic crisis and misery of the people and using their armies to support the iniquitous feudal regime.

The problem of land, the problem of abolition of landlordism and jagirdari, the problem posed by the interest of an agrarian revolution, the problem of the state worker and his wage, the question of state bureaucracy, the question of political democracy which is demanded by all—on all these questions the Indian bourgeoisie will be taking a stand which will only accentuate the situation still further and drive the masses to open desperation.

In fact the Indian bourgeoisie will add new exploitation and new burdens to the old ones in its attempt to consolidate its position at the expense of the masses and improve it relatively in relation to the feudal hierarchy. While the Indian bourgeois leaders are wooing the Nawabs and the Nizam's Muslim jagirdars, they are at the same time organising a ruthless drive against the lower sections of the Muslims mostly composed of the petty-bourgeoisie, workers and peasants, so that the communal basis of the feudal class is liquidated and the feudal class is made completely dependent on the bourgeoisie for its existence. It at the same time serves to hunt down a very important section in the fight against capitalists and feudal lords once they are rescued from the communal influence.

This repression against the lower sections of the Muslims and repression against the mass of peasants to stabilise the landlords, repression against the common man through old bureaucrats in order

to maintain the old order, refusal to take any progressive step for the amelioration of the conditions of the masses together with the prospect of Hyderabad being thrown open without restriction to the exploitation of Indian capitalists so that the full effects of inflation, high prices are fully felt by the people—these factors decisively show that far from having stabilised the situation, the bourgeoisie by first raising hopes and then entering into nefarious compromise in the background of a desperate economic situation has thus forged conditions for a widespread mass struggle against its rule. The bourgeoisie is not really winning the battle. On the other hand for the first time it is coming face to face with its dupes, the masses of the people of Hyderabad.

Deepening Crisis—Mounting Discontent

It is in this common action and the possibility of spreading the struggle throughout the state and the possibility of the development of the spontaneous struggles of the masses themselves that the future of the democratic movement in Hyderabad and Telangana lies. No doubt the Indian union army wants to finish off Telangana before the masses elsewhere begin to move, it wants to isolate the vanguard and crush it out of existence before the masses elsewhere learn and appreciate the glorious struggle waged by the peasants of Telangana and consciously begin to follow that path. The bourgeoisie and its generals hate Telangana like poison and would not spare any means to crush it out of existence. Their safety lies in seeing that the tradition of Telangana is destroyed, that it is erased from the minds of the people, that it no longer stands there as a living symbol of the glorious resistance of the peasants of Hyderabad and they know that other sections are going to move in the near future.

In these circumstances they would welcome nothing more than stoppage of all resistance by the peasants of Telangana so that they could unleash mass terror against the peasants and cause complete collapse of morale. Under the present situation stoppage of resistance under one excuse or another is nothing short of the worst betrayal of the Telangana peasant unless of course the situation is such that the morale has gone down and the peasant is refusing to fight. Retreat will mean beheading the Telangana peasant, but will not save him from repression and terror, from being hauled up for murder, robbery

and dacoity. The danger to Telangana is no doubt there but that danger has to be met by stiff resistance and by making big attempts to spread the struggle against the present regime on as many fronts as possible. Any other method of trying to save Telangana will not yield results. Even the mobilisation of the party in the Indian union for the purpose of saving Telangana will today only have a symbolic value, not affect directly the main course of events there. The course of events there will change only if our party and the working-class are able to open as many fronts as possible, on day-to-day economic, political and other issues against the present regime and if in the meantime we definitely are able to protract the struggle in Telangana so that we give time to the masses elsewhere to link up the struggle here.

A report from Marathwada correctly sizes up the situation.

“The prices are rising steadily. Rationing is not yet reintroduced. Jowar sold at one and a half seers per-rupee for one month. Now it sells at $3\frac{1}{2}$ seers to a rupee in government-controlled shops. Wheat costs Rs 2 per seer. The office employees face a wage-cut and retrenchment. It is also taking place for other sections of the working-class. Their organisations are also springing up fast.

“In the countryside after the first wave of hunting down the razakars and seeking vengeance, after the first sense of relief, doubts have begun to creep into the minds of the people in the last few weeks. Criticism and discontent are beginning to be voiced. The peasantry was the worst sufferer under the regime of the razakars. It was the frontrank fighter against them. This peasantry is being disarmed while the old oppressors, the police and revenue officials are returning. This is very disquieting to the peasants. They feel uneasy that they should be disarmed while their old enemies still occupy the government administration.

“The immediate cause which roused the kisans in Hyderabad was the oppressive grain-procurement scheme. That scheme is being reintroduced. It is not known if it is going to be modified. However the kisan is upset at the very thought of its revival. The land revenue which the kisan refused to pay to the nizam last year is going to be collected as dues—the new administration has announced. In addition the State Congress has asked the kisan to pay the State Congress

find as much as he pays to the government as land revenue. The custom posts, which were burnt and razed to the ground in the hundreds all along the border, are being re-established. The kisan is furious and does not know how and why these things are happening. He is against old officers being brought back, against levy, against payment of arrears of land revenue, against revival of the custom nakas. He had secured these gains during his struggle and is very much averse that the new order should so soon deprive him of his gains. In the aftermath of occupation, he has snatched back the lands which Rohilla and Pathan and Arab sowcars and goondass had seized from him in the past years. Now he is impatient to know when the other lands which have passed to other sowcars and parasites will be permitted to be recovered. The State Congress workers give them the hope of the morrow—of the change through the constituent assembly. In some stray cases he has seized lands from other sowcars too. But these are merely portents of what is raging in the minds of the peasantry.

Armed Defence in Telangana

This is how the crisis deepens—impelling the masses to move forward and making it impossible for the Indian bourgeoisie to stabilise the situation by compromise with the Hyderabad capitalists and feudal landlords.

Only the party of the working-class can lead this developing unrest. Only by concentrating attention on which the masses themselves are moving, when they are coming into conflict with the new order, will we be able to set in motion forces which can challenge the very basis of the rule and save and extend Telangana, link them with Telangana. No struggle is too small, no demand is too petty today. The backward masses of Hyderabad, hitherto kept away in large tracts even from elementary economic struggles, will first move in that direction to realise the necessity of higher forms under our leadership. They will show all the variegated forms from economic protests to higher forms and party must develop them consistently.

And through these struggles the masses will gradually see, when led and directed by the party, the treacherous character of the bourgeois leaders and come to the point of demanding their overthrow.

Our task therefore is to put up a militant defence in Telangana, extend and broaden the mass struggles elsewhere, which bring the masses into conflict with the present regime, expose the role of the Indian union leaders and the State Congress and other parties, popularise Telangana and try to raise a protest movement against the repression there, to bring pressure of the masses to withdraw repression against Telangana, to save this core of armed resistance, and defeat the Indian leaders' game to smash it.

Now that the diversion created by razzakars on the one hand and by the illusions about the bourgeois leaders on the other—a diversion which split the working-class and tore away the Muslim workers who often formed 40 per cent of the working-class population—is over, now that both sections are coming out of their stupor, they will feel the effects of the economic crisis, rise in the cost of living, low wages—all the more and the working-class strikes will be breaking out with greater ferocity. The all-India railway strike is maturing fast and the same cause must bring not only the Nizam's railway workers on strike, but the entire working-class. The party must prepare for this, organise it. The prospect of an all-Hyderabad general strike—starting on an economic issue and developing as the culmination of a number of strikes—is there, and it must be seriously worked for.

Extend Mass Struggles Throughout the State

These struggles of the working-class will first unite the Hindu and Muslim workers, unifying the working-class movement. The disorganisation of the working-class is a special and dangerous weakness—it means the vanguard itself is disorganised. They must not be regarded as mere partial struggles but as the preparatory struggle through which the proletariat rapidly links itself with the revolutionary movement led by the party in Telangana and comes forward to discharge its role in the democratic revolutionary struggle. A dogged defence of day-to-day interests should be combined with the development leading to the realisation of the revolutionary perspective. The methods of conducting these struggles must directly flow from the needs of the struggle, the consciousness of the masses, and the necessary to develop this consciousness so that the working-

class understands its political tasks and is able to go to higher forms of struggle. It would be wrong to minimise any one of the factors. If the factor of the needs of local struggle is isolated from the general atmosphere of repression etc., and prevailing consciousness alone is taken into consideration, there is every danger of non-resistance to repression, pandering to backward consciousness and failure to politicalise the working-class as well as failure to develop militant resistance and collapse' of economic struggle. If on the other hand mere revolutionary perspective is kept before the eyes, how concretely the masses can be brought to see it is not shown, there is danger of the mistakes committed in Andhra being repeated— indefinite strike, the technical means of struggle and forgetting that masses have to be prepared for the struggle, and in fact unlinking the economic struggle from the political struggle.

In developing these struggles special attention should be paid to Muslim workers, and to reforge the unity of the Hindu and Muslim workers. The Hindu and Muslim workers are divided by the exploiting classes, and in their blindness follow the class enemies. The exposure of the communal politics, of bourgeois politics how it deceived the masses to advance the cause of the exploiters, how the exploiters once more join hands to oppress the exploited. must be sharply brought out—the razakars, communal leaders exposed, the feudal Muslim clique exposed, and the bourgeoisie unmasked, the compromise between the Muslim and Hindu exploiters, between the feudal regime and Indian union leaders, unmasked, to teach the masses that Muslim communalism was a weapon of vested interests and the masses were befooled; that the cry of Indian unity and democracy of accession, was a cry for compromise. Thus working-class unity should be restored.

Similarly in the course of struggles, whether we are directly leading them or not, the party must carry on political propaganda— full people's democracy in Hyderabad, nationalisation of industries, end of autocracy, people's democratic front, workers' and peasants' alliance, Telangana, against repression etc.—so that political unity and political perspectives unify the workers.

The fight for working-class unity—not only trade-union unity but also political unity—constitutes the basis of people's democratic

front and it has to be systematically carried on. There can be no firm people's democratic front unless working-class unity is there, for there can be no unity among the people unless the vanguard is united to lead the people.

Form Organs of Struggle

In developing the working-class struggles the form of a broad-based strike committee with conscious efforts to develop rank-and-file working-class leadership of strikes, of working-class struggles, is imperative and incumbent on party members. In recent years strike committees are often mere formal organs—an appendage of the big leaders. They neither really function nor lead, nor take decisions in full view of the masses, and thus do not evoke pride as being organs of their own men—with a pride in workingclass leadership. Sometimes they are nothing more than union executives, labelled strike committees, executives elected by a general council meeting—in which the majority of workers do not participate. They thus cease to be treated as something close to the strike and fail to mobilise the militants and active strata which come to life in strikes and become narrow bureaucratic organs either of the trade-union or party cadres, who on such occasions ought to make every endeavour to promote new people. In the strike committees properly organised and functioning as the real leading organs of struggle, with the full participation of their members, who are in direct touch with the masses, who are sensitive to the moods of the workers, as well as in the peasants' committees, we get, in embryo, the revolutionary form of organ of struggle and future organ of power. It has to be consistently developed so that the revolutionary struggle of the masses develops a revolutionary form of organisation, when the question of organs of power etc. is raised. In the day-to-day struggle these forms of organisation are the only democratic forms which will keep the leaders in touch with the masses and enable the leaders to actively fight every blow of the government with quick rapidity and counter-strike from the workers, and effectively meet all attempts at disorganisation through repression or disruption through any other means.

In the peasant areas we must take up every issue from procurement, rent, collection of arrears of revenue, oppression by officials, disarming of peasants, and lead the struggle forward to the

slogan of agrarian revolution, nationalisation of land, land to the tiller etc. and demands of agricultural workers. Wherever the unity of toiling peasants has been disturbed due to razzakars or other villainy of some of the harijan leaders—wherever there is division between Hindu and Muslim toilers. Hindu and harijan toilers—it must be done away with by political exposure of the upper classes—including the Indian union bourgeoisie.

Make Agricultural Workers and Poor

Peasants the Main Base

We must rely mainly on the agricultural workers and poor peasantry—and forge the struggle in a way which enables these two classes to overcome the vacillations of the middle peasant and keep him in alliance, and isolate the rich. While fighting for the unity of peasant toilers we should not commit the mistake of succumbing to the vacillations or selfish interests of the middle peasants and slack down the struggle under the mistaken idea of unity. On no account do we consider the rich peasant as an ally. The experience of Telangana also shows that the rich peasant betrays the struggle and is really in the enemy's camp. The existing economic and class relations in India put him in the enemy's camp. Whatever attitude of non-opposition he might have taken in the past in connection with our anti-landlord and anti-Nizam struggle, in the new set-up he will emerge more and more as the confirmed enemy of the peasant. Even when he appeared to have sided with us in Telangana he was betraying the peasant for his selfish interest and getting into a leading position to betray. Unless his role is exposed he will mislead the peasant. There should be no talk of 'neutralisation' of the rich peasant. The fact that sometimes he may take a vacillating or even sympathetic attitude to certain partial struggles, etc. has nothing to do with his general role in the democratic struggle. In any decisive conflict, even in a partial struggle, he will come forward as an enemy. Whatever be his attitude in any partial struggle against landlords, etc. we will first act according to the needs of the struggle and will not show any consideration to him, to 'neutralise' him. If that partial struggle also includes the struggle of agricultural workers—we will not tone down our demands against the rich peasant to keep him neutralised. We will fight him with the same intensity as we fight the landlord. If the particular partial struggle is only directed against

the landlord and not directed against the rich peasant, then we will pocket his sympathy but will not do anything which in any way boosts his sympathy and creates an impression among the masses that he is a general sympathiser of the peasant toiler. On the other hand we will see that the masses do not develop such illusions about him.

To forget the exploiting and class character of the rich peasant is to sacrifice the interests of the most revolutionary class in the rural area—the firm ally of the proletariat—the agricultural worker. The fundamental importance of the development of the struggle of agricultural worker for wage etc. must be understood. Without the agricultural worker coming to the forefront of the agrarian struggle through his own struggles, agrarian revolution cannot be successfully organised.

A conscious attempt must be made to link all the struggles with the Telangana peasants whose deeds must become a part of the consciousness of the peasant movement. These struggles again must become the lever of exposing the Indian union leaders, the State Congress, the present regime and taking the peasant to the realisation of the necessity of liquidating the present regime—preparing him for the decisive task of the democratic revolution.

The organisation of separate agricultural workers' organisations and of Kisan Sabhas even under condition of illegality—as well as organs of struggle like peasant committees—is imperative. The role of mass organisation was ignored in Telangana—a fatal blunder which divorces the masses from the vanguard and makes them silent spectators of the struggle. This is an axiomatic truth which is further proved by the experience of Telangana ("Lessons of Telangana"). The source of this deviation is threefold. (1) conditions of illegality, (2) repression and necessity to meet it, and (3) spontaneous outburst of mass struggles.

(1) Under conditions of illegality it becomes increasingly difficult for the party and mass organisations to maintain links with the masses and thus is tending to yield to these difficulties—which lead to the party being unlinked from the masses.

(2) The necessity of fighting raids, police attacks, goonda gangs, etc. concentrates the attention, for the very existence of the party, on

organisation of bands of volunteers, guerilla bands—who at best are advanced detachments and makes people ignore the basic task of mobilising the people through mass organisations (“Form of Deviation in Telangana”).

(3) In a period of rising mass struggle and under conditions of enforced illegality, for some time it appears as if conscious leaders can be a substitute for mass organisation. But as soon as repression starts, or political difficulties come, the masses are assailed from all sides—then the lack of mass organisations is felt; then it is realised what tied the people together was not so much the conscious leaders but the spontaneous mass discontent.

Any underestimation of the role of mass organisations or organs of struggle like strike committees, peasant committees, will prove fatal. Trade unions, agricultural workers’ unions, kisan sabhas, strike committees, peasant committees—all have to be developed and organised—despite conditions of illegality. Mass organisations constitute the basis of party’s independent influence and weight, the influence of the proletariat.

The party bases itself on the working-class and mainly relies on the agricultural workers and poor peasants—with the middle peasant a vacillating ally always to be steadied and also the lower petty-bourgeoisie in the same position. Whenever the party has to understand or decide on a slogan, or a course of action, it must first decide by reference to the firm revolutionary ardour of these classes and not of the vacillating sections. It may be that a slogan which rallies these revolutionary sections may not be liked or may even be opposed by the vacillating sections. But if it really sets in motion, educates the militant majority, then it will serve to break the vacillations of the vacillators and make the alliance firm. While the party does not want the working-class to be isolated from the vacillating sections of the petty-bourgeoisie who form part of the democratic front, it cannot at the same time make these vacillators the determining factor in deciding the party line and slogans.

The party must lead the struggle of the middle-class employees, students and other oppressed sections of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Among the mass of workers, it must carry on direct socialist propaganda—about the aims of the working-class movement and

train working-class cadres in Marxism. Among the mass of agricultural workers, poor peasants, socialist propaganda must be carried on. Among the peasant militants from other sections and among petty-bourgeois youths—the party must lead the ideological struggle for socialism, popularise socialism, expose the socialism of the Socialist Party brand. Today among petty-bourgeois youth there is great desire for studying socialist theory, international developments, the Soviet Union, and ideological propaganda to satisfy these needs must be carried on.

Slogans of People's Democracy

Similarly the party must lead the frontal political battle against the existing regime—with arms in Telangana, with weapons of propaganda and disillusionment in other areas—using every form, from illegal handbills to whatever legal opportunity that might exist. With the general slogan of end of autocracy, people's democracy, liquidation of landlordism, nationalisation of land, and land to the tiller—nationalisation of industries etc.—the party must expose the present plans and make our major slogans sink into the consciousness of the people. It must be remembered that over a large part of Hyderabad these slogans have not been heard at all—much less have they even become slogans of fight and action. They must be constantly brought before the masses, who must begin to regard them as their slogans, prepared to fight for them and judge all other parties by their attitude to these slogans.

At the same time it will be a big mistake if the party ignores the bourgeois preparation for the constituent assembly and its elections. The constituent assembly, with its announced adult franchise, will play a big role in the further deception of the masses and hold out new hopes and create new illusions. These hopes and illusions can be smashed only by concretely counteracting every step taken by the bourgeoisie. Firstly, the adult franchise which certainly is a big right, hitherto subscribed to by the bourgeoisie in relation to Hyderabad, but nowhere else except in Baroda, has been announced to expose the Nizam's opposition as autocratic and to pass off the bourgeoisie as democratic before international opinion. But now it is being realised that adult franchise might prove dangerous even to the bourgeoisie which is afraid of its own shadow—the Left wing of the State Congress. That is why there will be mock adult franchise

so that the democratic demands of the State Congress followers and other sections of the masses are satisfied, at the same time they are cheated. The disillusionment that is growing after intervention is being stemmed by this appeal to adult franchise, the admission of the right of the representatives to form their own constitution, etc. If this is not concretely exposed, if only a negative attitude of having nothing to do with it is taken, if the class character of the whole manoeuvre is not brought before the people, the bourgeois leaders may get away with it, especially with the help of the Lefts who may contest the elections as an oppositional party and canalise the discontent.

We must therefore frame our fundamental demands of the constitution—the rights and principles it should embody—and popularise it as the only constitution that will be acceptable to the people of Hyderabad, and force the other parties to express their opinion on it, expose them, especially the wordy Left. On the basis of this we should agitate that only those who stand for these demands can remain true to the masses and not those who have compromised with the Nizam or the Indian union leaders.

We should frontally attack the manoeuvres and say that the capitalists and the landlords—the Indian union government etc.—all want our votes, get elected through our votes, to oppress us, and parade to the world that the oppression of the peasant, etc. has the consent of the peasant, and show this by their alliance with the reactionary landlords.

Simultaneously we must expose every manoeuvre to violate adult franchise—false registration etc. to show that they are afraid of the people, want to organise a mock election. We will not allow it. Let there be a real election supervised by workers' and peasants' committees. We must expose all bureaucratic interference and demand the right for the CPI, lifting of the ban against it to propagate for its democratic principles and fight the elections. Suppression of the CPI—the party of the masses—is disavowing the free character of the elections.

Whether we will really contest the elections will depend, apart from the impossibility of getting such opportunity, on whether the elections become really a rallying point for the masses and a good weapon in our hand to expose the enemy classes and carry the battle

to the CA. We must propagate in such a way that any curtailment of the right of adult franchise, which is most likely will create fresh anger and disillusionment and expose the real game behind the elections.

It is of course obvious that for us this struggle over constituent assembly though vital and important, is not an alternative to the development of mass struggle, nor a substitute. That will be sheer opportunism.

People's Democratic Front

It is out of the experience, organisation and consciousness developed through these economic and political struggles, that the working-class gradually builds the people's democratic front—the front of all the oppressed and toilers, to take up the challenge of the existing regime. The building of the people's democratic front is the concrete task—a task which represents the task of winning over the majority of the people for revolution. The proletariat cannot discharge its tasks of the present period unless it convinces the toilers about the necessity of liquidating the present order, and builds a force which is the capable of doing it—the united force of the people led by the proletariat—the people's democratic front. The hegemony of the proletariat is secured by the fact that it is the proletariat which guides other sections to realise the necessity of the front, creates confidence about it, chalks out its programme and patiently directs one section after another to take its position inside it.

The front is built progressively in the course of the struggle, under the conscious direction of the proletariat. Its embryonic and transitional forms are often to be found in the temporary joint committees of several mass organisations for economic help to one section, for joint economic or political action, committees for certain political objectives ending in peasant committees for the programme of the people's democratic revolution. All these are not even like stages but generally the development often goes like this.

The proletariat and its party, therefore, play a decisive and leading role in organising the people through the people's democratic front. It is therefore necessary to overcome all the weaknesses of the party, its small strength, its lack of proper functioning in Telangana, absence of strong base among the industrial workers, absence of workers in

leading positions in the party. A wide drive for recruitment in the party especially among the working-class and quick training of working class cadres and promotion to leading positions is absolutely essential if the party is to discharge its tasks. Recruitment drive and training must also be carried on specially among agricultural workers and poor peasants.

The independent activity of the party, its activity to build a firm base for the proletariat, is the supreme need of the hour if the working-class is to defeat the conspiracy of the bourgeoisie and rescue the masses, to be able to develop independent actions to counteract the bourgeois manoeuvres. The basic weakness of the working-class hitherto has been that while under its leadership the peasants of Telangana developed revolutionary resistance, elsewhere it had hardly any strength to take the masses into independent action and enable the masses to break through the illusions about the bourgeoisie.

Expose the Treacherous Policies of State Congress Leaders

At the same time it is clear that the events following intervention have not automatically disillusioned the masses. Only the process has started and preconditions for rapid disillusionment have been created. But nothing is automatic. If the working-class and its party fail to judge each situation correctly, learn to counteract the changing manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie which goes on changing its slogan to suit the change of moods of the masses, there is every danger of the proletariat failing to mobilise the masses and handing them over to the bourgeoisie. At such a critical time failure to advance the slogan and course of action corresponding to the realities of the class situation becomes a great crime. The task therefore is no doubt a difficult one, one requiring careful and vigilant planning and Marxist objectivity.

It is equally true that intervention has not suddenly increased the strength of the party and it cannot fulfil with Case the enormous tasks facing it, from leading elementary struggles to the armed defence of Telangana. The smallness of the party, the lack of cadres, the difficulty of reaching the people—all these will continue. But at the

make conscious endeavour to develop leaders from the workers and peasants—the struggles will yield such a good harvest of leaders

that what appears to be impossible at present will not appear to be so. Bureaucratic methods of functioning, failure to promote young worker and peasant cadres to leadership will of course perpetuate the famine of cadres, making it impossible for the party to look in certain areas beyond a few elementary struggles. It will not be amiss to suggest that the Andhra PC should send quite a number of its own cadres to Telangana districts—to organise and extend the struggles, create and train new cadres.

The fact that illusions about Indian union leaders and the bourgeois leaders in general still persist has its bearing on the working-class approach to other political organisations, their leaders and their followers.

The most important organisation is the State Congress—the direct handmaid of the Indian union leaders, but also cold-shouldered because of the strong influence of the Left wing in its leadership. The State Congress has considerable influence with the people, especially the petty-bourgeoisie. It is organisation No. 1 in Hyderabad—though it has hardly any base among the real toilers. Today, in spite of its being a faithful underlink of the Indian union leaders, it is suspected, not allowed to form an interim cabinet, because it is supposed to be full of Left elements whom Sardar Patel detests and whom perhaps British imperialism and Nizam also hate.

The Left elements who are supposed to be strong in the State Congress are however of the usual Left variety—a bourgeois Left—whose talk is socialist, who vomit anti-communist slander and who are preparing to emerge as the constitutional opposition under the new regime, and are opposed to independent mass struggles.

However both the State Congress and the Left were forced to talk of a radical programme because of the resistance of the masses and to sidetrack their attention from the betrayal involved in the present compromise. The recent resolution of the State Congress talks of nationalisation of industry, abolition of zamindari, etc.—a sure sign that the discontent in its ranks has begun to well up.

It is therefore necessary that in organising daily struggles, political battles, in forging the movement to build a democratic front, in the agitation for Telangana and for ending autocracy, for a democratic constitution, we must make constant appeals to the followers of the

State Congress and the Left to forge a united front with us in fighting the compromise and autocracy. Simultaneously we must expose the vacillating, compromising and treacherous policies of (Swami Ramananda) Tirtha, in terms suited to the consciousness of his followers, we must also expose the Left leaders whose deeds and words show a bigger gap. Since the Left leaders occupy a stronger position because the general trend of mass mood is towards the Left, there might be greater illusions about them especially among the youth. In attacking the Left we should not appear to be more opposed to the Left than to the right. We might make a differentiated approach to the Left to expose the leaders all the more effectively. We should also expose Sardar Patel's support to the treacherous liberals who had deserted even the mock struggle—not to support Tirtha but to expose Patel all the more effectively.

Through constant appeals for joining action and concrete exposure of the leaders we must endeavour to swing the petty-bourgeois following of the Congress into action, against autocracy, against compromise, against economic oppression, political repression, for support to the economic struggles of the masses. Exposure of the bourgeois leaders is not an aim in itself. It is done with a view to release the masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie and the test of its success is how far we have been able to move the masses into united action despite the bourgeois leaders. The winning over of these sections of the masses is an important task in the building of the democratic front and persistent struggle must be carried on for forging a united front with them and bringing them inside the people's democratic front.

Sharp Exposure of Socialist Leadership

There is yet another party of which we must take serious note because of its all-India importance—the Socialist Party—affiliated to the All-Indian Socialist Party. Though the party is not strong, it is likely to have much importance in the coming days since the Left of the State Congress is likely to join it. In any case because of its all India importance the party may attract in the near future good elements and create disruption. The disruptive role of this party in Hyderabad struggle—standing of communists; Telangana, joining hands with the bourgeoisie must be unmasked. The role it is playing in India—supporting government; opposition against communists,

agreeing to anti-strike measures like industrial truce, and talking about strikes before the workers when forced by the discontent of the workers (railway); while encouraging repression against workers and trade unions by blaming the communists for it; the workers for it, rejection of all revolutionary forms of struggle, constitutional opposition etc. Their socialism should be unmasked before the young intellectuals as a variety of bourgeois deception—persistent propaganda for bourgeois democracy, faith in peaceful transfer of power, opposition to government but loyalty to the state slogan. Further a sharp exposure must be made of their estimate of the world situation, their pro-imperialist politics and they must be unmasked as the enemies of socialism and the toiling people for their anti-sovietism, their hatred of the land where socialism has triumphed. Their animosity to the Labour Party and French socialist-imperialist—tools of American imperialism and their own imperialism.

In this connection it must be considered to be the primary duty of all members of the party to counteract anti-Soviet propaganda, to denounce the war preparations of imperialist powers and unmask the policy of the Anglo-American bloc and the Indian union government. The party must further consistently propagate among all sections but especially among the workers, agricultural workers and poor peasants—the liberating role of the Soviet, the socialist character of the state and the real content of people's democracy obtaining there, so that the anti-Soviet warmongers are met with a strong mass base to defeat their propaganda.

The party must at the same time unmask the disruptive role of the Socialist Party in the trade-union movement in Hyderabad as well as the Indian union. It should expose before the workers that such tactics only help the capitalists—and that is what the socialists are doing. The exposure must be accompanied by strong appeal to working-class unity to fight bosses and secure economic advance. The workers under the influence of the socialists must be appealed to in the name of class unity and solidarity, in the name of common struggle.

The party must also sharply unmask the socialist slogan of linguistic areas rejoining the provinces and expose its real character before the people. That slogan is only a bourgeois slogan to secure dominant right of exploitation—and at the same time keep the feudal

exploitation intact. Andhra districts have seen as much repression as Telangana and the common man is as much oppressed here as there. This slogan, basing itself on the sentiment for unification especially in Andhra, is intended to sidetrack attention from the main struggle against autocracy. It is a mere paraphrase of Sardar Patel's slogan of bringing the state to the administrative level of provinces. The working-class stands for a unification of the torn linguistic regions by revolutionary means, by overthrowing autocracy and the bourgeoisie in both areas, and by establishing the power of the people. Today if the demand is at all to appear on our platform it must appear in the form of a revolutionary unification by establishing people's power and should not be put in a way so as to obscure the need for the unity of toilers of different nationalities in present-day Hyderabad. This point is important because it seems that in the past this wrong outlook, which underestimated the need of toilers of different nationalities in Hyderabad, was responsible for the virtually non-existent efforts to spread the message of Telangana to other parts.

In unmasking the Socialist Party leadership on all these issues care must be taken to distinguish between the leaders and honest followers and the latter must always be appealed to for joining action or front. Also the mistake of ignoring the Socialist Party because of its present weak numerical strength should not be committed. The party represents an ideology which in the near future is likely to deceive a number of petty-bourgeois elements getting disillusioned with the bourgeoisie, which deceives honest elements wanting to fight for socialism and therefore the policy of the party must be exposed.

These are the tasks facing our units in Hyderabad. It is important that the PB member from Andhra should call the Hyderabad units and explain the situation to them, ask them to implement the line. In consonance with these tasks he should also help the Hyderabad committee to concretely apply the line to different parts of Hyderabad, Marathwada etc.

Party units outside must do their best to popularise the cause of Hyderabad people and the glorious struggle of Telangana and mobilise popular opinion against the brutalities of the Indian army. An illegal pamphlet describing these brutalities must be got ready to be printed in all languages and to go to workers and peasants first.

ON PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

I

Questions have been raised by comrades about the stage of revolution in India. Are we in the stage of February revolution in Russia or are we on the eve of October? And what is people's democracy?

The stage of revolution at any given time in any given country is determined by the maturity of class relations in that country—understood in the context of the class relations in the world, in the context of the crumbling of the capitalist order, and the dominant class antagonism of our times, the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat. The dominant class antagonism in the world puts the socialist revolution on the order of the day. What intermediate stage is necessary to pass on to the socialist revolution—whether it is necessary at all—is determined by the sum total of class relations in the country.

Marxism-Leninism has always regarded the democratic revolution in colonial and less-developed countries as a link in the chain—as a more or less short stage leading to proletarian revolution. This was so because in the period of declining capitalism, capitalism could not play a progressive role and carry out consistently the task of the democratic revolution, the emancipation of the colonies from imperialist yoke, much less solve the major problem of the capitalist world. Only opportunists imagined that a long period of capitalist rule and development must necessarily ensue as the result of the emancipation of the colonies.

The proletariat, on the other hand, had taken up a position to carry on the anti-imperialist struggle to the final phase of democratic revolution, the transitional point to the dictatorship of the proletariat—the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants.

Document adopted by the December 1948 PB meeting of the CPI and printed as an authoritative statement of the editorial board in the January 1949 issue of "The Communist".

Imperialism was to be overthrown not to put the bourgeoisie in power, but to exclude it from power; the masses were to take power—democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants—and a corresponding economic programme was to be realised, a programme which would place the key economic resources in the hands of the workers and peasants, and one from which a transition could be made, according to circumstances, to the next stage.

II

Basing itself on the great experience of the Russian revolution and the Leninist teachings on Russian revolution of 1905-1917—the sixth congress of the Communist International in its colonial theses outlined the communist strategy and tactics in colonial countries as follows:

“As in all colonies and semicolonies, so also in China and India the development of productive forces and the socialisation of labour stands at a comparatively low level. This circumstance, together with the fact of foreign domination and also the presence of powerful relics of feudalism and precapitalist relations, determines the character of the immediate stage of the revolution in these countries. In the revolutionary movement of these countries, we have to deal with the *bourgeois-democratic revolution*, i. e. of the stage signifying preparing of the prerequisites for proletarian dictatorship and socialist revolution. Corresponding to this, the following kinds of tasks can be pointed out, which may be considered as general basic tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the colonies and semicolonies:

“(a) A shifting in the relationship of forces in favour of the proletariat: emancipation of the country from the yoke of imperialism, (nationalisation of foreign concessions, railways, banks, etc.) and the establishment of the national unity of the country where this has not yet been attained: overthrow of the power of the exploiting classes at the back of which imperialism stands: organisation of soviets of workers and peasants: establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry: consolidation of the hegemony of the proletariat.

“(b) The carrying through of the agrarian revolution: emancipation of the peasants from all precapitalist and colonial conditions of exploitation and bondage: nationalisation of the land:

radical measures for alleviating the position of the peasantry with the object of establishing the closest possible economic and political union between the town and village.

“(c) In correspondence with the further development of industry, transport, etc., and with the accompanying growth of the proletariat, the widespread development of trade-union organisations of the working class, strengthening of the communist party and its conquest of a firm leading position among the toiling masses: the achievement of the eight-hour day.

“(d) Establishment of equal rights for nationalities and of sex equality (equal rights for women) : separation of the church from the state and the abolition of caste distinctions: political education and raising of the general cultural level of the masses in town and country, etc.

“How far the bourgeois-democratic revolution will be able in practice to realise all its basic tasks, and how far it will be the case that part of these tasks will be carried into effect only by the socialist revolution, will depend on the course of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants and its successes or defeats in the struggles against the imperialists, feudal lords and the bourgeoisie. In particular, the emancipation of the colony from the imperialist yoke is facilitated by the development of the socialist revolution in the capitalist world, and can only be completely guaranteed by the victory of the proletariat in the leading capitalist countries. The transition of the revolution to a socialist phase demands the presence of certain minimum prerequisites as, for example, a certain definite level of development in the country of industry, of trade-union organisations of the proletariat and of a strong communist party. The most important is precisely the development of a strong communist party with a big mass influence, which would be in the highest degree slow and difficult process *were it not accelerated by the bourgeois-democratic revolution which already grows and develops as a result of the objective conditions in these countries.*”

The programme of the Communist International, under the section “Struggle for the World Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Colonial

Revolution”, laid down the following:

“The special conditions of the revolutionary struggle prevailing in colonial and semicolonial countries, the inevitably long period of struggle required for the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry and for the transformation of this dictatorship into the dictatorship of the proletariat, and finally, the decisive importance of the national aspects of the struggle impose upon the communist parties of these countries a number of special tasks, which are preparatory stages to the general tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Communist International considers the following to be the most important of these special tasks:

“(1) To overthrow the rule of foreign imperialism, of the feudal rulers and of the landlord bureaucracy.

“(2) To establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry on a soviet basis.

“(3) Complete national independence and national unification.

“(4) Annulment of state debts.

“(5) Nationalisation of largescale enterprises (industrial, transport, banking and others) owned by the imperialists.

“(6) The confiscation of landlord, church and monastery lands. The nationalisation of all the land.

“(7) Introduction of the 8-hour day.

“(8) The organisation of revolutionary workers' and peasants' armies.

“In the colonies and semicolonies where the proletariat is the leader of, and commands hegemony in, the struggle, the consistent bourgeois-democratic revolution will grow into proletarian revolution—in proportion as the struggle develops and becomes more intense (sabotage by the bourgeoisie, confiscation of the enterprises belonging to the sabotaging section of the bourgeoisie, which inevitably extends to the nationalisation of the whole of largescale industry). In the colonies where there is no proletariat, the overthrow of the domination of the imperialists implies the

establishment of the rule of people's (peasant) soviets, the confiscation and transfer to the state of foreign enterprises and lands."

It is thus clear that colonial or national-democratic revolutions were intermediary steps to proletarian revolution—which was already maturing on a world scale. How soon and how quickly the one passed into the other, depended on a number of factors, including the international situation and the preparedness and maturity of the proletariat in the country to lead the masses—the maturity and strength of the communist party to act as the vanguard.

III

The passing over of the democratic revolution into the socialist revolution is a Leninist conception. It was propounded by Lenin in his *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy*. Its truth was proved in the 1917 revolution when in nine months the proletariat had to pass from the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants to the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the socialist revolution. Stalin in the *History of the CPSU (B)* writes:

"While advocating the victory of the bourgeois revolution and the achievement of a democratic republic, Lenin had not the least intention of coming to a halt in the democratic stage and confining the scope of the revolutionary movement to the accomplishment of bourgeois-democratic tasks. On the contrary, Lenin maintained that following upon the accomplishment of the democratic tasks, the proletariat and the other exploited masses would have to begin a struggle, this time for the socialist revolution. Lenin knew this and regarded it as the duty of social-democrats to do everything to make the bourgeois-democratic revolution pass into the socialist revolution. Lenin held that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry was necessary not in order to end the revolution at the point of consummation of its victory over tsardom, but in order to prolong the state of revolution as much as possible, to destroy the last remnants of counterrevolution, to make the flame of revolution spread to Europe, and, having in the meantime given the proletariat the opportunity of educating itself politically and organising itself into a great army, to begin the direct transition to the socialist revolution.

“Dealing with the scope of the bourgeois revolution and with the character the Marxist party should lend it, Lenin writes:

“The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Such are the tasks of the proletariat, which the new Iskra-ists (i. e. mensheviks—Ed.) always present so narrowly in their arguments and resolutions about the scope of the revolution.’

“In order to leave nothing unclear, two months after the appearance of the *Two Tactics* Lenin wrote an article entitled ‘Attitude of Social-Democrats to the Peasant Movement’, in which he explained:

“From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and just in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way.’

“This was a new line in the question of the relation between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution, a new theory of a regrouping of forces around the proletariat, towards the end of the bourgeois revolution, for a direct transition to the socialist revolution—the theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing into the socialist revolution.

“This line confuted the tactical position of the west-European social-democratic parties who took it for granted that after the bourgeois revolution the peasant masses, including the poor peasant, would necessarily desert the revolution, as a result of which the bourgeois revolution would be followed by a prolonged interval, a long ‘lull’ lasting fifty or a hundred years if not longer, during which the proletariat would be ‘peacefully’ exploited and the bourgeoisie would ‘lawfully’ enrich itself until the time came round for a new revolution, as socialist revolution.

“This was a new theory which held that the socialist revolution would be accomplished not by the proletariat in isolation as against the whole bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat as the leading class which would have as allies the semiproletarian elements of the population, the ‘toiling and exploited millions’.

“According to this theory the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois revolution, the proletariat being in alliance with the peasantry, would grow into the hegemony of the proletariat in the socialist revolution, the proletariat now being in alliance with the other labouring and exploited masses, while the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry would prepare the ground for the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat.”

This passing over, this interlinking of the two revolutions, was a sign of the maturity of socialist revolutions—a sign that the world had entered the epoch of socialist revolutions—the countries with advanced capitalism having the socialist revolution immediately on the agenda. It was a sign of the sharpened class conflict of the capitalist world to which all other antagonisms were long subordinated.

IV

Today all these contradictions have sharpened to an immense degree. Firstly, as a result of the war because of the leading role it played in the antifascist war, the power of the great socialist state, the Soviet Union, has increased tremendously. Secondly, a number of countries of eastern Europe have broken away from the capitalist orbit. The power of the socialist world has increased; the strength of the imperialist world has decreased. Thirdly, the liberation of a great part of China from the yoke of the agents of American imperialism has dealt yet another blow to the capitalist order, sharpening the world conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Fourthly, the powerful rise of working class movements, the rise of the communist parties in a number of countries and the growing awakening of the people in these countries against the Marshall enslavement and the attempt at stabilisation of the capitalist order, makes this conflict intense and brings it to the point of civil war. The poverty and destitution created by decrepit capitalism, the enslavement being imposed by aggressive American imperialism,

the world economic crisis—all these sharply pose the question: capitalism versus socialism. The internal crisis of the imperialist system is still further aggravated and the system is brought near collapse by the rise of colonial struggles which develop into prolonged wars and in which the working class and its party are taking a leading or active role, preventing compromise and carrying forward the revolution. This sharpens the conflict inside the imperialist countries; it further creates the threat inside the colonies of the whole struggle passing into the hands of the proletariat and the threat that with independence the colonies might get altogether out of the capitalist orbit, because of the active role played by the proletariat. The two camps that are formed today, the camp of imperialism and the camp of anti-imperialist forces, more and more stand revealed as the camp of world capitalist order and the camp of world socialist front led by the Soviet Union. The war preparations of the first camp are directed against the Soviet Union and other democratic states and are part of its war against world socialism. The class conflict in the world, in each country, has sharpened so much that the capitalist in their desperation are dreaming of an international war against the forces of socialism, democracy and peace.

It is therefore impermissible to talk about building capitalism, giving a long period of development for capitalism, as certain communist leaders have done. It is a throw back to the discredited social-democratic conception which wanted to erect a Chinese wall between the democratic and socialist revolutions.

It is in the context of this world situation that the developing revolutions in each country, including ours, must be viewed. The new feature that will be found in backward and colonial countries is that the delayed democratic revolutions are breaking out in the midst of the most intense and sharpened conflict in each country between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the bourgeoisie and the toiling masses—proletarian and nonproletarian. This heightened conflict in each country, together with the intensified conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat on a world plane, interlaces the two revolutions far more closely, inextricably, and makes it impossible to win the first without passing over to win the second. It is this deep interlacing, the fact that in each

country the revolution is taking place in the midst of unprecedented conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the former and the nonproletarian masses as well, that underlines the character of the present revolution as people's democratic revolution—which emphasises its extreme nearness to the socialist revolution and , at the same time, sharply demarcates it from the bourgeoisie democratic revolution—and people's democracy from bourgeois democracy.

In India we find all these features in our struggle for people's democracy. The delayed democratic revolution is to be pushed forward in the midst of an unprecedented antagonism between the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the proletariat and toiling nonproletarians, on the other. On every issue we see the toiling people coming into conflict with the bourgeoisie. This is natural because the bourgeoisie, with capitalism on the point of collapse, is unable to reorganise economic life but only adds capitalist exploitation to the unbearable yoke of feudal exploitation of the peasant. Its land programme, for instance, brings it into conflict not only with the proletariat but with poor and middle peasants as well.

Nothing need be written about the sharpened conflict with the proletariat—the attack on the Communist Party and the strike struggles, the terror against workers, the legislations passed and its wage policy are clear witnesses to the sharpened conflict. By upholding private production, by refusing to nationalise industries and curb profiteering, by its policy of high prices and inflation, by its failure to tackle blackmarketing—the bourgeoisie comes into conflict with the proletarian as well as nonproletarian masses of town and village. By linking India's fate with the world capitalist order which is on the brink of collapse, by attempting to throw the burdens of the crisis on the people, the bourgeoisie and its government come into conflict with the people.

Whether it is building of industries and more scope for employment, or national planning or prices and monetary policy, there is not one question on which measures of the government can be supported as progressive ones; there is not one question on which

the proletariat can do anything except advance measures of the transitional period—measures which can be realised only by a people's democratic government. On every front, in every activity, everything that the bourgeoisie does is reactionary and has to be countered by proletarian measures. Every step forward for the realisation of democratic revolution necessarily takes an anticapitalist character and thus the two stages get interwoven.

The situation is totally unlike any we had witnessed. This is typified in the fact that the immediate aim of the revolution is to dethrone the bourgeoisie from power, to eliminate the political rule of the bourgeoisie. In the earlier period the democratic revolution marched against imperialism and sought to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie; now its aim is to deliver the frontal blow against the power of the bourgeoisie itself. Not paralysing the instability, but open defeat, vanquishing, in a political battle, of the bourgeoisie. Such is the immediate political objective of the people's democratic revolution.

This is a totally new feature of the situation. It is missed by those who take an opportunist line by saying that nothing has changed, argue as if it is imperialism that is to be overthrown as in the earlier days and screen the new class relations involved in the necessity to eliminate the rule of the bourgeoisie. This necessity as it can be easily seen, links the struggle for democratic revolution with the struggle for proletarian revolution which cannot be achieved without overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie.

What place does fight against imperialism occupy in the struggle? Here again it is to be carried on at a different level. The bourgeoisie has secured a national state, linked with world capitalism—and therefore a satellite state. The struggle for real independence means taking the country out of the orbit of world capitalist order, into the socialist front, the socialist system. Freedom and independence now mean freedom from the world capitalist order—not from this or that imperialism only. Thus, again, the task of fighting for real freedom is linked with the defeat of capital at home and abroad and breaking away from the capitalist system.

Further the revolution has of course to liquidate feudalism, but as we have seen even this task cannot be done without simultaneously

fighting the capitalist elements in the countryside and overthrowing the political rule of the bourgeoisie. Thus both the anti-feudal and anticapitalist character of the struggle gets emphasised.

It is this mixing, this combination, that gives us people's democratic revolution in our country.

VI

Is the present phase of the Indian revolution comparable with the February or the October revolution in Russia? It is neither. It is mixed. In India the interlacing has taken place not exactly in the way it took place in Russia. It is not February—because our aim is not to overthrow autocracy, but the rule of the bourgeoisie. Our aim is not to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie, but to overthrow it.

It is not October—because, though we are eliminating the political rule of the bourgeoisie, we are not able to raise the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat immediately—because the intermediary strata, parties, classes have not yet exhausted their full possibilities and therefore a bloc with them cannot be ruled out. We have already seen that large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie masses, middle peasants, etc., are coming into conflict with the bourgeoisie especially because of its failure to liquidate feudal relations in revolutionary way—i. e. failure to carry out the democratic revolution—and this force is a valuable force. To forget that it has not exhausted its possibilities is to outrun its consciousness, to disrupt the democratic front and hand it over to the bourgeoisie. In Russia the bolsheviks could raise the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat only after the democratic dictatorship had exhausted its possibilities, the majority of the people had been won over, etc.

Those who argue that we are on the eve of October forget that before October, side by side with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, there was the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants—a bloc which was rendered inevitable at that time by the petty-bourgeoisie composition of Russian population.

Only one warning is necessary. No one can say whether in the course of the struggle we will no march straight to the dictatorship.

of the proletariat. It becomes a question of the strength of the proletariat, its hegemony, its capacity to lead the toilers, how quickly in the process of the struggle the nonproletarian toiling sections shed their illusions, etc. No dogmatic assertion can be made. But for the present we can only work on the strength of the correlation of forces as it exists.

This means that the proletariat must attach great importance to the intermediary strata, to winning them over, to see that they are not split, to defeat every manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie to mislead them, to adopt supple tactics and manoeuvres to enable these masses to shed their illusions by their own experience. To hurl phrases at them, to act on the presumption that they will automatically come, to be little the concrete task of winning them over, and to concern oneself with repeating fundamental slogans only will put the initiative in the hands of the bourgeoisie or its agents—the socialists, etc.

The people's democratic revolution is thus the democratic revolution which is more than ever interlaced with the socialist revolution in each country and in the world. It begins by throwing the bourgeoisie out of power. So far as we can see, in our country the immediate state form will be a bloc of the proletariat with nonproletarian elements, a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. But this state, arising in the context of world socialist revolution and in the course of direct struggle against the rule of capital, will quickly pass into the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its programme—nationalisation of land and largescale industries, etc.—itself constitutes a transitional programme.

The state cannot mark time. The bloc must immediately move against the capitalist elements in the countryside and towns and begin a process of squeezing them out. It will be in a position to do it more quickly than in the past because the countries of the socialist system will be in a position to supply it with the technical means to overcome backwardness, reorganise industry and reconstruct economy on socialist lines.

To the extent that the proletariat leads the bloc decisively and makes the state act energetically against the political and economic

sabotage of capitalists, the state matures into a dictatorship of the proletariat, the bloc is replaced by a unified leadership of the proletariat, hegemony of the proletariat. The mistake of Tito and others lay in imagining that after people's democracy the class struggle dies down and does not get intensified. The proletariat will have to struggle against the vacillations of its allies to see that the state marches forward, the bourgeoisie is crushed and firm steps are taken towards socialism. This cannot be done unless in the process the proletariat brings all its allies firmly under its leadership—i.e. establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Zhdanow, in his report on the international situation at the Warsaw nine-parties' conference, describes the people's democratic government as a bloc headed by the working class—a bloc of peasants, people, etc., i.e. one in which the bourgeoisie has no place. He says that the bloc has introduced nationalisation, gone beyond bourgeois democracy, etc.—meaning towards socialism.

Kuusinen in his article "Are You For or Against the Soviet Union?" described it as the intermediary stage to socialism. This also is important. The intermediary stage is the stage in which the class struggle is the sharpest, because the issue has yet to be finally decided. The bourgeoisie is thrown out of political power, but not yet economically vanquished, etc.

VII

People's democracy is thus not qualitatively a new element. It is the delayed democratic revolution ripening into socialist revolution in the midst of sharpened world conflict. It is the consistent application of Leninism to the present situation. It is not a substitute which dispenses with the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the consistent application of the principle of proletarian hegemony to all the stages of the revolution—based on a sober estimate of the class relations and the situation at any given stage.

It is easy to see which classes will actively participate in it. Just because of the sharpened antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the bourgeoisie and other sections—it is only the proletariat that will lead it consistently. Its firm ally will be the proletarians of rural areas and, next to that, the poor peasant. The middle peasant vacillates, but has to be won over. The petty

bourgeoisie vacillates, but the section which is turning more and more towards socialism will be won over; the other section will vacillate more, and be split. It is the same with the intellectuals. It will be a desperate race, for the bourgeoisie will try to tear away section from the proletariat and the proletariat will have to wage a virtual war of ideology, action, etc. to win over the vacillating section.

The leading combination will be of course the proletariat in alliance with rural proletarians and poor peasantry—the same combination that brings about the proletarian revolution. Once more we see the interlacing and how quickly one stage ripens into the other depends on the strength of this combination.

APPENDICES

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

1917

From the heart of the deep white snow welled out the red fire of revolution. The first rapier thirst in the heart of world-imperialism was delivered by the masses of Czarist Russia. Never before in human history did a revolution kindle so much glow of hope in so many hearts. The dark, suppressed under-world of human beings, mutilated in body and soul, opened its jaws and for the first time millions of down-trodden throughout the world felt in their innermost being the assurance of deliverance from an all round misery and saw the vision of a world which was not measured and grasped by their intellect but was only vaguely felt instinctively. The masses were not prepared in most of the European countries for the revolution, social-democratic leaders had done their job for the bourgeoisie to perfection. Yet such was the great urge for freedom the November Revolution had released that the masses in Germany, Austria, Hungary, France could not but raise the standard of revolution, though only to be betrayed by the Social-democracy.

Such was the gigantic sweep and depth of the Symphony of the November Revolution.

India, isolated, segregated and kept in intellectual quarantine by British imperialism, learnt of the Russian Revolution through papers which represented the Bolsheviks as monsters and were all sympathy for the Czarist government. Practically no information about the Revolution reached India in the years 1917 and 1918.

Only in 1919 some news about the Soviet Government trickled to this country. Some literature of a very vague character reached India alongwith it some loose talk from persons who had returned to India after the termination of the war. The middle class intelligentsia which was the spearhead of the national movement in India,

was attracted by the emotional spell of the people's revolution in Russia and the Soviet form of Government wove round their mind. For a period of twenty years the middle class intelligentsia had adopted the cult of individual terrorism to fight foreign rule in India. Though it had failed to achieve its end it had served its purpose by emotionally preparing the country for a ruthless fight against imperialist domination in India and also by bringing into glaring contrast into its heroism the pertition-making-constitutionalism of the-then Congress politics.

The Gandhian epoch of the gigantic mass movement had not started yet. The first realisation of the potentiality of a mass movement dawned to the Indian intelligentsia through the information, meagre though it was, of the Russian revolution. The window looking out to the masses and kept closed so long, was mentally opened out for the first time by the breeze of the great November Revolution. A new vista opened out before the mental vision of the revolutionary section of the Indian intelligentsia. Mentally atleast a corner was turned.

In 1920, the Pan-Islamic Mahajereen movement started in India. It was more or less an off-shoot of the Khilafat movement which was launched in 1919 in order to put pressure on the British Government to restore Constantinople to the Khalifa of Islam as according to the Islamic tradition, the temporal sovereignty of the Khalifa was the indispensable condition for the exercise of Khalifa's spiritual powers. The Nationalist movement in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, made Khilafat one of its main planks, with the idea of utilising Muslim fanaticism for nationalits end.

Amanullah, the king of Afganisthan who was anti-British invited the Indian Musalmans to come and settle down in Afganisthan if they found that they were unable to perform their religious duties in British occupied India. At that time slowly the news of Soviet Russia's aid to Turkey spread in the country and that deepened the sympathy for the Soviet Government in India.

Amanullah's invitation to the Indian Musalmans was a political stunt meant to squeeze out some advantageous terms from the British Government. Ultimately he got what he wanted British

government recognised the status of Afghanistan as an independent Sovereign state.

In May 1920, first group of Mahajereens left India. This migration lasted till the end of 1930 and by that time nearly 36 thousand people had left India.

In the first few years nearly thirty per cent of the Mahajereens were students from the Punjab. United Provinces, North Western Frontier Province, Delhi and from some Indian states such as Bhopal, Patiala and Bikanir.....some tried revolutionaries from the Punjab and U.P. joined these bands with the idea of going to Soviet Russia.

In October 1920 a group of 36 men who had left India some months ago and among whom was Shaukat Osmani reached Tashkend. M.N.Roy who was already in Tashkend met the group and a course of military training was started for the Indian revolutionaries. M.N. Roy. brought over by Borodin to Moscow from Mexico had been by that time entrusted by the Communist International to organise contacts with Indian revolutionaries in India and abroad. He had in those days established himself in Tashkend to get into touch with the groups of revolutionaries that were coming to the Soviet Union through Afghanistan taking advantage of the Pan-Islamic movement. Incidentally it must be mentioned here that also a khilafat deputation consisting of a half dozen of persons and led by one Iqbal Shedan reached Tashkend in October 1920. It took thirty thousand rupees, returned to Afghanistan quarreled amongst themselves and did not returned to India at all.

When the group had already completed ten month's training in the Tashkend military school Shaukat Usmani, Abdul Majid and Abdul Kahir Sehrat these three were selected to political training and were sent to Moscow in January 1921. Incidentally a fact may be mentioned here. Some time after in March 1921, soon after the N.E.P. was introduced, the Soviet Government entered into a trade pact with Great Britain and one of the conditions put forward by the British Government as a preliminary to the ratification of the pact was the abolition of the Tashkend Military School.

The school was thus closed down and the Indian revolutionaries who were receiving training there were also shifted to Moscow where they were admitted to the Eastern University for Communist training (known as Kulb in Russian).

About this time in June, 1921, a deputation of Indian revolutionaries consisting of Bhupen Dutt, Lohani, Agnes Smedley Khankhoji, and Nalini Gupta, and led by Viren Chattopadhaya arrived in Moscow.

This group represented the Indian revolutionaries who had during the world-war of 1914 organised a revolutionary centre in Berlin. The deputation submitted a thesis on the Indian Political situation to Lenin. Lenin personally acknowledged it in a short note which he wrote to Viren Chattopadhaya, the leader of the deputation. An interview with Lenin was arranged in which a detailed discussion was to follow. But M.N.Roy who was then the handyman of the powerful clique (Borodin etc.) dominating the Comintern managed through the clique to frustrate all the efforts of this deputation. After a couple of months' constant but futile efforts, the deputation returned to Berlin without achieving anything. Roy had already established himself as the obsequious handyman of a powerful Russian Communist clique in the Comintern which wanted to determine the Political line, the tactics and the organisation of the Indian Revolution and to keep the Colonial Section of the Third International as the clique's special sphere of influence.

Nalini Gupta who came with the Chattopadhaya group, had in Moscow crossed the floor and joined M.N.Roy.

In India, in the meantime, a revolutionary situation has grown. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi a gigantic mass-movement had raised its head. Shaukat Usmani who was in Moscow, decided to return to India as soon as possible in order to do his bit in the movement. M.N.Roy tried hard to dissuade Usmani from returning to India as he wanted his messenger to reach India before Usmani. In September, 1921 Shaukat Usmani left Moscow for India and reached India in January 1922. In the meanwhile some fifteen boys who were undergoing communist training in the Eastern University, Moscow, returned to India by the end of 1921 and at the beginning of 1922. Nine of them were arrested in 1922 and tried at Peshwar

in 1923 and sentenced to one to two years imprisonment. The trial was known as the Tashkend Conspiracy case.

Nalini Gupta who was sent to India by M. N. Roy, reached India some time in the middle of 1922. He went to Calcutta and recruited Muzaffar Ahmed there. Then he went to Bombay and met Dange at the instruction of M. N. Roy. Dange had by then made himself heard in the city of Bombay by leading a strike of college students. Nalini Gupta met and arranged with Dange the publication of a weekly from Bombay, Sometime in the latter part of 1922 the weekly "Socialist" made its appearance in Bombay with Dange as its editor. Usmani who had returned to India in January 1922, soon after left for Persia and after a short stay there returned to India in January 1922. Soon after left for Persia and after a short stay there returned to India again in September 1922. He and Nalini Gupta had already met in Moscow in 1921.

Nalini Gupta had contacted Dange and Muzaffar and returned to Moscow to report to M.N.Roy. Soon after Shaukat Usmani received a letter from M. N. Roy to contact Muzaffar Ahmed. In May, 1923 Muzaffar Ahmed and Shaukat Usmani were taken under arrest. Muzaffar Ahmed was released after a few days but Shaukat Usmani was taken to Peshwar where the police made strenuous efforts to connect him up with the Tashkend Conspiracy case. For three months Usmani was kept with fetters as an undertrial prisoner, but as the police failed to implicate him with the conspiracy case, he was released but was immediately arrested under Regulation 3 of 1818 and detained as a state prisoner.

Nalini Gupta who had gone to Moscow to report to M. N. Roy, came to India again in the latter part of 1923. In December 1923, Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar were arrested in Calcutta. On the 4th of March, 1924 Dange was arrested in Bombay. Muzaffar Ahmed and Nalini Gupta were brought to Cawnpore from Calcutta, likewise Dange from Bombay and Usmani who was already a detenu was brought to Cawnpore from Peshwar Jail. In Cawnpore Jail Usmani, Dange and Muzaffar Ahmed met for the first time in March, 1924. Nalini Gupta was the only one who had known them all before. On the 17th March, 1924 the Cawnpore Communist Conspiracy case started. The other four accused in the case were M.N.Roy.

Singaravellu Chetty of Madras, Prof Ghulam Hossain of Lahore and Ramcharan Sharma of Pandichery.

M. N. Roy being in Moscow could not be laid hand upon Ramcharan Sharma absconded, Singaravellu Chetty was arrested but released on bail as he was old and ailing and Prof. Ghulam Hossain who was arrested for reasons best known to police, was not brought to trial. So only Usmani, Dange, Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmed, these four stood the trial on a charge of sedition. The charge against them was that they conspired with the Communist International and also amongst themselves to deprive the King Emperor of his Sovereignty of British India. The trial lasted for two months and in May, 1924 they were sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment each. But both Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmed were released after they have served out their sentence for little over a year on ground of health. Dange and Osmani served out their full sentence and were released in 1927.

At the end of 1925 Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmed who had settled down in Calcutta after their release, had gathered a group of left-wing nationalists around them and announced the formation of the Bengal Worker's and Peasants' Party sometime in 1926.

The party then consisted of a handful of men, the prominent amongst them being Naresh Sengupta, the well-known novelist who was the president of the party. Atul Gupta a well-known literature and an equally well-known advocate of Calcutta, Nazrul Islam, the famous poet, Kutubuddin Ahmed, Samsuddin Ahmed. Hemanta Sarkar, a brilliant youngman who had already made his mark as the follower of C. R. Das and Muzaffar Ahmed, Hemanta Sarkar was the Secretary of the party and poet Nazrul Islam became the Editor of the Party's weekly organ 'Langal' (the plough). Besides Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmed, who were communists in thinking, the rest were all petty-bourgeois left nationalists who had been dissatisfied with the leadership of National movement which pulled the reins of the mass movement in 1920 and 1921 as soon as the masses wanted to cross over the boundaries of bourgeois class interest. It was the dissatisfaction of the petty-bourgeoisie that reflected itself in the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal. One illustration would suffice to show the bourgeois moorings of the petty-bourgeois leaders of this party. One issue of 'Langal' came

out with an eulogy of Subhas Chandra Bose together with his horoscope!

Still the appeal of "Langal" to these youngmen who dreamt of freedom when the Non-cooperation movement convulsed the country from one end to the other, was immense. They were disillusioned and broken hearted Gandhism had lost its revolutionary charm and terrorism had no appeal for them. By the rejection of Gandhism and terrorism whatever might have been their gain in a negative sense, they had not gained as yet any other ideology to replace them. Youths at that period were in a state of intellectual and emotional vacuum.

Saumyendranath Tagore who was a staunch Gandhist since 1920 and suffered disillusionment like many other youngmen of that period, was drawn by the first copy of 'Langal' which fell in his hands. He joined the Bengal workers' and Peasants' Party at once and readily. In 1926 the first conference of the Bengal Workers' and Peasants' Party held its session at Krishnanagar, Nadia under the presidentship of Naresh Chandra Sengupta. In this conference the constitution and the line of action of the party was finally adopted.

A new executive was chosen. Naresh Sengupta was re-elected the President. Hemanta Sarkar and Saumyendranath Tagore were elected sectional secretaries of the peasants and workers fronts respectively. Muzaffar Ahmed was elected editor of the party's weekly paper which in the meantime had changed its name from 'Langal' to Ganavani (The voice of the masses). This was the period when the first contacts with the working class in Bengal were established. Soumyendrantath Tagore and Kutubuddin Ahmed went to Badartala, a jute area just outside Calcutta and a meeting of jute workers was held and contacts were established.

Likewise through Hemanta Sarkar the party had established contacts with large number of fishermen of Nadia district, Goalanda and Chandpore. Some ex-terrorist elements belonging to the intelligentsia joined the party during this period. Contacts with a few districts of Bengal were also established. In the meantime a couple of comrades from other parts of India came to Calcutta. The party had just started to feel the ground under its feet.

Ideologically the party comrades were least equipped. Beside Communist Manifesto, M.N. Roy's secret letters, his illegal paper 'Vanguard' and a couple of Roy's pamphlets were all that the ideological armoury of the party consisted of. The financial position of the party was precarious in the extreme. Two small rooms in a mess in Harrison Road were the office of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal. Comrades had to work under conditions of semi-starvation and Ganavani had to cease publication now and then due to financial stringency.

There were hardly half a dozen communist throughout India at this period. Dange and Usmani were in prison, Muzaffar Ahmed, Nalini Gupta, Saumyendranath Tagore, Kutubuddin Ahmed and Samsuddin Ahmed in Calcutta, Ajodhya Prasad in U.P., Iyengar in Madras, these comprised practically the entire communist personnel that was scattered in different parts of India. As yet there was no communist party.

This was the situation in the country when George Allison, a British comrade arrived in India. He came under a false name with a false passport. Campbell (Allison's assumed name in India) met the various trade union leaders in the country and after he had been in the country for quite a long time, he contacted the communists of Calcutta.

Soon after his false passport was discovered during a raid on the Jute Worker's Union office at Bhatpara. Allison was arrested, sentenced to two years imprisonment and was shipped off to England at the termination of his sentence. That was 1926. By the end of 1926 Saklatwala, the famous communist member of the British Parliament arrived in India. By his wonderful oratory and flaming denunciation of Gandhism, he created a great impression on the youths of the country.

The second annual conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party met in Calcutta in December 1926. Atul Gupta presided and Saumyendranath Tagore was the chairman of reception committee of the conference. Saklatwala came and addressed the conference of the second day. In this conference Saumyendranath Tagore was elected the General Secretary of Workers and Peasants' Party of Bengal.

Organisational and propaganda work went apace. A peasants' conference was held in Kusthia presided over by Atul Gupta. Though Nalini Gupta valuable contacts with terrorist parties were created and efforts were made to win them over to the programme of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties. Contacts with the jute workers of Bhatpara and the workers of the Titagarh Paper Mills were established. The base of the party had undoubtedly broadened out but the ideological preparation of the party members was practically nil.

Our contact with the Communist International as more a myth than a reality. It was truly speaking a contact with M.N. Roy and his emissaries. Neither the programme of the Communist International nor its various theses on organisation, propaganda and political subjects were at all known to the comrades of the party. The party comrades were kept on the ideological diet sampled out by M.N. Roy in the form of secret letters, 'Vanguard' and pamphlets.

This was felt to be too insufficient an ideological nourishment for communists. It was decided to send some one to Moscow to establish direct contact with the Communist International. In April, 1927, Saumyendranath Tagore left for Moscow with a mandate of the Workers' and Peasants, Party of Bengal, there being no Communist Party of Indian as yet. In June, 1927 Saumyendranath Tagore reached Moscow and presented his mandate to Comintern.

In pursuance of the established rule of the Comintern, Saumyendranath Tagore submitted two reports—one organisational report and the other political report. Bukharin presided over the committee meeting of the Comintern in which the political report was submitted. In the course of the report Tagore pointed out among other things how since the world war of 1914, due to war exigencies British imperialism had been forced to modify its industrial policy vis-a-vis India. Its old policy of keeping India as a source of raw material for British industries and as a dumping ground for British goods had undergone certain modifications due to the presence of economic necessities of war, and the new colonial policy of Finance capital. Bukharin in his concluding remarks said that it appeared to him that a process of decolonization has started in India. We shall have occasion to revert back to the theory in connection with the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International.

Soon after Piatnitsky, the then General Secretary of the Central Committee of Comintern sent for Tagore and had a long talk regarding the work of the communists in India. It was evident from the talk that quite a different picture of the communist activities in India had been presented to the Comintern by M.N. Roy. Piatnitsky had an idea that there were hundreds of communists in India in those days. When Tagore told him about the actual number of communists in India in those days, which did not exceed more than a dozen, Piatnitsky was quite taken aback. He said that it seemed unbelievable as Roy had reported the existence of hundreds of communists in India. Tagore told him in reply that Roy might have hidden those communists in the Himalayas, they were neither heard nor seen in India. It was also evident from the talk with Piatnitsky that the Comintern had given enormous sums to M.N. Roy for financing the communist movement in India. Tagore informed Piatnitsky that hardly any money had been received in India and the growth of the Communist movement was tremendously handicapped due to the lack of money and literature. From Piatnitsky's words it was clear that enormous sums had been placed at the disposal of M.N. Roy for catering to all those needs of the communist movement in India.

When Tagore arrived in Moscow and submitted his reports to the Communist International and had the above mentioned talk with Piatnitsky, M.N. Roy was then away in China. A month or more, after Tagore's arrival in Moscow M. N. Roy returned to Moscow from China.

It was clear from the talks that Tagore had with Roy that Roy had already sensed the danger of exposure and was very keen of Tagore's early return to India. Soon after his return from China, Roy submitted a report on the political situation in India in which he picked up the stray remark of Bukharin about the so-called decolonisation process in India and supported it. We shall have occasion to speak about it in connection with the Sixth World Congress of Communist International.

In November, 1927 during the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution a conference of the oppressed people of the East was

held in Moscow under the chairmanship of Madame Sunyat Sen, M.N. Roy and Tagore spoke in that conference on behalf of India.

In India Dange and Usmani came out of prison in May and August, 1927, respectively. Meantime Workers' and Peasants' Parties had been organised in Bombay and in the Punjab and an All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party was in the making.

In November, 1927, the annual session of the Trade Union Congress met in Cawnpore. This was the first session of the T.U.C. which was attended by industrial workers. The Cawnpore Majdoor Sabha was formed in 1922 by Ganesh Shnaker Vidyarthi, a radical nationalist who was also sympathetic to the communist cause. The communist and socialist workers of the Majdoor Sabha worked hard to make the workers T.U.C. minded. This was also the first annual session of the T.U.C. to hoist the red flag. Bengal and Bombay comrades came in large numbers to attend the conference, also Shaukat Usmani and Sohan Singh Josh from the Punjab. It was felt at this period that the time had come when the various communist groups scattered throughout India should be co-ordinated by the creation of a centralised Communist party of India. In December 1927, during the Madras session of the Indian National Congress a dozen communists from various parts of India met in Madras, amongst whom Dange, Nimbkar and Joglekar came from Bombay, Muzaffar Ahmed and Abdul Halim from Bengal, Sohan Singh Josh from the Punjab, Singeravellu Chetty, Iyengar and Ghate from Madras and Usmani from U.P.

Under the chairmanship of Dange, the conference met where the constitution of the Communist Party of India was adopted, a decision was taken to affiliate it to the Third international, and a Central Committee of Party was elected. The first Central committee of the Communist Party of India consisted of the following members : Muzaffar Ahmed, Shaukat Usmani, Dange, Ghate, Saumyendranath Tagore, and three others. Ghate was elected the General Secretary of the party. A future programme was also drawn up. Dange and Nimbkar were entrusted to organise the Girmi Kamgar Union in Bombay. Usmani settled down in Delhi to carry on propaganda work through news papers, and Ghate took up the work of party organisation.

In the Madras session of Congress the little group of communists made their influence felt. The Communist members of the A.I.C.C. decided to table a resolution of the full independence of India in the open session of the Congress and distributed their leaflets in thousands. Jawaharlal Nehru who just then arrived from Europe to attend the Congress session at Madras also sponsored an Independence resolution. The Communists withdrew their resolution in his favour and exerted all their influence in support of Nehru's resolution.

In the middle of 1927 one Philip Spratt, a good but ineffective man, was sent out to India by the Communist Party of Great Britain for organising the communist party in India. Some months after about October 1927 one Ben Bradley was sent out by the C.P.G.B for organising the trade union movement. Bradley had been to India previously. He was in Government Service in Peshwar and served imprisonment for cheating.

These two Englishmen, who were absolutely raw and knew nothing of Indian conditions or the cross-currents of Indian politics, were made the pontifical authorities of the communist movement in India. What followed was inevitable. They were the easy prey of the clique—Ghate, Muzaffar Ahmed and Joglekar—that had with amazing rapidity crystallised within that tiny party of dozen men. The clique and the satraps both needed each other and were like two sticks made to stand on mutual support. Patronising, fawning and financial corruption had branded the growth of the Communist Party of India from its very beginning.

Usmani who at that time had settled down in Delhi, went to Bombay in April, 1928 and had a brush with Bradley on the question of immediate task of the party. Usmani stressed on the necessity of concentrating more efforts on organisation of the Party than on the trade unions. Bradley who was specially deputed to India for trade union work could not allow any one to minimise the importance of his job, which to him appeared as minimising his own importance. All that Usmani meant and stressed was not the unimportance of the trade union activity which every Communist knows to

be indispensable basic work of the working class movement but the relatively greater importance of party organisation.

In the early months of 1928 news reached India about the coming World Congress of the Communist International.

Usmani decided to go to Moscow and to place before the Comintern the entire case of the Indian Communists.

He informed his party comrades about his plan to leave for Moscow. Dange, the diplomat supported him in private but expressed his helplessness to support him openly. The triumverate clique—Ghate, Muzaffar Ahmed and Joglekar—supported by the two satraps—Spratt and Bradley tried their best to persuade Usmani to give up his proposed trip to Moscow. When they found that their persuasion had no effect on Usmani they refused to give him a mandate from the party.

In June, 1928 Usmani left India with two other comrades for Moscow. He reached Moscow just in time for the sixth World Congress of the Communist International which met in the third week of June, 1928.

A letter had in the meantime reached the Comintern from the Indian party informing the Communist International that Usmani did not represent the party at all and that he represented none but himself.

The following were chosen as Indian delegates to the Sixth World Congress—Shaukat Usmani, Clemens Dutt, Lohani, Shafique and Saumyendranath Tagore.

Habib was chosen as the delegate to Communist Youth Congress which was meeting at the same time.

M. N. Roy was in Berlin at that time. He conveniently kept himself away from the World Congress knowing fully well the fires that would be directed against him. Bukharin presented a draft programme of the Communist International to the Congress. Discussions on that draft programme continued for weeks and was finally adopted with certain modifications.

In the meantime preparatory committee meetings were being

held on all major problems. On the Indian question a series of meetings took place. It was attended by a number of Russian comrades from the Comintern and by the entire Indian delegation.

Bukharin's unfortunate stray remark about decolonisation was the subject matter of strong attacks both in the committee meetings and in the open session. Undoubtedly the so-called decolonisation theory was wrong. It gave quite a wrong estimation of the role of British imperialism in India and also of the co-relation of class-forces vis-a-vis Indian revolution. But as has been pointed out earlier Bukharin had mentioned "the process of decolonisation" only as a stray remark in his concluding remarks on the political report presented to the Comintern by Saumyendranath Tagore. Bukharin never for a moment advanced it as a theory, not did he add a word more than what he had said—"It seems a process of decolonisation is going on."

The real 'culprits' were M.N. Roy and G. Lohani. Bukharin was at that time the president of the Communist International. Both Roy and Lohani represented unprincipled opportunism and careerism. Lohani left Chattopadhaya a group and joined M.N. Roy when Roy through the support of the Russian clique vanquished Chattopadhaya group. Roy, as we shall see later is the last work in unscrupulousness so far as it concerned his own interest. Both these men picked up the stray remark of Bukharin about decolonisation and wrote article after article, veritably building up a theory out of a stray remark.

Roy was asked to come Moscow from Berlin, which he refused on the ground of health. Thus Roy managed to escape the fire of the opposition which was directed against Lohani in the open session of the Congress. There was also a joint meeting of the British and Indian delegations. In the committee meetings Usmani and Tagore represented two divergent views and estimation on the political situation in India. We shall have the occasion to go into details about it when discussing Kusinen's thesis on the colonial problem.

On another issue there was difference of opinion between Usmani and Tagore. Workers' and presents' parties in India came in for lot of criticisms during the Congress. There is no doubt that a two-

class party is a theoretical nonsense and a breeding ground of petty bourgeois opportunism. On the Leninist conception of one-class party there was no difference between Usmani and Tagore. The difference expressed itself in the fact that while Usmani only attacked the Workers' and Peasants' party, Tagore though agreeing that they should be abolished, maintained that the Workers' and Peasants' parties played a very necessary role in drawing the disgruntled petty bourgeois revolutionaries to mass front.

Trotsky from his exile sent a thesis in criticism of Bukharin's draft programme. This document marked as strictly confidential was circulated amongst the delegates. Trotsky's thesis was a trenchant criticism of Socialism in one country, of the liason of the communists in China was Chinese bourgeoisie and of the various other international problems discussed in Bukharin's thesis. Delegate after delegate spoke on the draft programme of Bukharin and from amongst the Indian delegates Lohani, Usmani and Tagore took part in the discussion.

The colonial thesis was presented by Kusinen to the Congress. This was the period when Stalin's class-collaborationist tactics in China had fatally stabbed the Chinese revolution. Yet Stalin stuck to his policy with that ignorant obstinacy so characteristic of him. And so far as Kusinen and such others were concerned, they had no other alternative but to ditto their master as their neck and pocket both depended on Stalin's mercy.

It seemed that the tragic experience of China was not sufficient to stop Stalin and Stalin's men from their class-collaborationist policy with the bourgeoisie. It is true that in China Stalin's policy had swung from extreme right to a pseudo-leftist adventurist stunt. Newman, the Stalinist indulged in a most gruesome adventure in Shanghai which cost thousands of communist lives. This was done by the way of covering Stalin's rightist follies during the Comintern Congress. Kusinen dealt on the revolutionary role of the colonial bourgeoisie in the national liberation movement. Tagore opposed Kusinen and pointed out that the colonial bourgeoisie had absolutely no revolutionary role to play in the national liberation movement of India or as a matter of that of any colony. On the contrary the

colonial bourgeoisie is bound to play an increasingly counter-revolutionary role in relation to the national freedom movement.*

Finally Kusinen's thesis was modified on the basis of the various suggestions and criticisms made during a week's discussion. The role of the colonial bourgeoisie was definitely declared to be a counter-revolutionary one.

There were two other important reports made in the Congress— one was the organisational report of the Communist International placed before the Congress by Piatnitsky, the Secretary of Comintern, dealing with the development and shortcomings of the communist movement throughout the world and the other was a report on the Bolshevik Party's method of work in the Czarist army before the revolution. The latter report was submitted by Yaroslavsky, the Secretary of the Central Control Commission of the Bolshevik Party.

After nearly a month's session the Congress concluded in the third week of July, 1928.

Soon after the cessation of the Congress M.N. Roy was expelled from the Communist International. In the resolution of the Communist International expelling M.N. Roy the following reasons for expulsion were mentioned : (1) Forgery, (2) Uncomradely behavior, (3) Indiscipline.

The first charge requires elucidation. Roy forged a document

* Here is a portion of the speech delivered in the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern by comrade Narayan, the adopted name of Comrade S.N. Tagore :—"After our experience in India, in 1922 when the bourgeoisie betrayed the great mass movement, which shook India from one end to the other, it is high time now to formulate it more clearly to show that the bourgeoisie can never fight imperialism genuinely. The demonstrations which the Indian bourgeoisie has organised all over the country against the Simon Commission has given rise to illusion in the minds of some of the comrades here that the bourgeoisie is still going to play a revolutionary role in India. But if we look for a programme, the concrete steps the bourgeoisie in India are taking for the fulfilment of a revolutionary programme, in order to carry on a genuinely revolutionary struggle against foreign imperialism, we find that there is absolutely no revolutionary programme at all put forward by the Indian bourgeoisie.

in his own hand writing which he wanted to pass off as Abani Mukherji's writing. Handwriting-expert of the Comintern proved it to be Roy's writing. This heinous crime Roy committed in order to put Mukherji in difficulties. The other two charges require no elucidation, they are clear enough.

From the above-mentioned resolution of the Comintern it is clear that Roy's expulsion from the Communist International was not due to any political difference with Stalinism. Roy, the careerist, always served the man in power. He was always the most servile agent of Stalin and is still a Stalinist with the hope that the wheel of fortune may turn in his favour and he may again be re-instated in his former position by Stalin.

Roy joined the Brandler opposition in Germany, only after his expulsion from the Communist International. And he did that only to give a political colouring to his expulsion. After covering his expulsion with a political coating he reverted to Stalinism soon after.

There was at this time some sharp difference between Kusinen and Tagore on the question of the management of Indian affairs. India being a colony of British imperialism it was natural that the Communist Parties of India and Great Britain would evolve special contacts for revolutionary activities. But what actually happened was that the British Communist Party wanted to monopolise and

It is only a fight which will lead to a compromise on better divisions of the spoils which will be gathered by exploiting the Indian masses. Surely there are contradictions between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the native bourgeoisie as there always will be contradictions between the plunderers for the monopoly of the same spoils. Of course, the Indian Communist Party and the proletarian movement there should take advantage of these differences and utilise them for the purpose of the furtherance of the revolution, but we must not forget that this quarrel among the national and imperialist bourgeoisie is in the nature of a family quarrel between two brothers over property and that the forces of the rising proletariat in India will be met by a common front of the native and imperialist bourgeoisie, if not today then tomorrow. The Indian bourgeoisie is fighting on the same old constitutional issue, and that is our its own benefit. It is clearly seen in all its programmes and tactics, through every phases of its struggle. Even partial alliance with the bourgeoisie means the abandonment of the slogan of agrarian revolution which means the virtual abandonment of revolutionary struggle in the colonial countries especially in such a

boss over the Communist Party of India in the same way as British imperialism bossed and monopolised India. In the eyes of the clique in Comintern, which arranged the Indian affairs in this way, this was internationalism and to criticise this was nationalistic deviation. Such was the bureaucratic conception of internationalism of the clique dominating the Comintern.

The Indian comrades present in Moscow hardly knew what arrangement the Piatnitsky-Kusinen clique were making with their yes-men of the Communist Party of Great Britain about the work in India.

Both Clemens Dutt and Lohani expressed to Tagore their dissatisfaction with the way Indian affairs were conducted and managed by the Comintern. But they were not ready to bell the cat. That they conveniently left to Tagore. It resulted in Tagore's brush with Kusinen. Tagore decided to return to India. End of December, 1928 Tagore left Soviet Russia for Berlin on his way to India.

Shaukat Usmani returned to India in December, 1928 and immediately proceeded to Calcutta to meet other comrades. The All India Workers' and Peasants' Party's conference had just then concluded its session in Calcutta.

All those important communists who had gathered in Calcutta, because of the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party's conference, held a party meeting and exhaustively discussed the tasks that were

predominately agriculture country as India is. I think that this formulation is not a happy formulation and neither a right one. I emphasise that the bourgeoisie in India has completely gone over to the side of the reaction, if not as yet to the side of open counter-revolution." (from--International Press Correspondence . Page 1203).

Another portion of Comrade Narayan's (the adopted name of Comrade S.N. Tagore) speech is being given here : the "colonial aspect of the world revolution as formulated in the programme confronts us with certain difficulties.

Take for example, that section in the first chapter of the draft programme where we find the statement : "That the colonial movements of the proletariat should march under the leadership of the revolutionary proletarian movement in the imperialist home countries." This means that the proletarian movement in India should march under the leadership of the British Communist Party, or, that the Javanese Communist movement should march under the leadership of the Dutch Communist Party. Nobody will deny that in the organic structure of British imperialism India and England are closely connected with each other

facing the communists at that particular time. Work was concretised and allotted to each and every comrade. Muzaffar, Halim and Spratt were given the charge of Bengal work, such as the jute workers' organisation etc. Dange, Nimbkar and Mirajkar (who was not a party member yet but whose application was under consideration) were entrusted with the work of organising Bombay textile workers, Bradley and Joglekar were given the charge of G.I.P. Railway workers, Soban Singh Josh was given the charge of the journal "Kirti" (Revolution).

Usmani was to organise the N.W.R. and Ghate, the secretary of Communist Party, was to devote himself to party organisation.

By the end of January, 1929 Usmani went to Bombay by the order of the party to edit the communist party's Urdu weekly 'Pyeme Majdoor' (The workers' Message). Dange started weekly 'Kranti' in Maharatti. Only three issues of the Urdu weekly had come out when on the 20th of March, 1929 arrests took place all over India. All the prominent communist, some well-known Trade-Unionists and a sprinkling of left-wing nationalists were arrested. Altogether thirty-one persons were arrested. Large number of persons outside India who could not be arrested were declared by the Government as accused in the case. Amongst them were M.N. Roy, S.N. Tagore. G. Lohani, and Mahammad Ali.

The Meerut conspiracy case started on the 12th of June, 1929. Tagore who was in Germany at that time was informed not to return to India just then but to wait till the trial end as Tagore's letters to Muzaffar Ahmad and Kishori Ghosh and also Muzaffar Ahmad's

and for the same reason the Communist Parties of India and Britain are also organically linked up with each other for carrying out the Proletarian Revolution in these two countries, but this on no account means the subordination of the colonial party to the leadership of the party of the imperialist home country. I am quite sure that the author of this Draft Programme does not mean this at all. But the formulation forces one of to this conclusion and we must correct this. Of course the movements in the colonial countries should not be deprived of the experiences of world proletarian movement and of the guidance of the Communist International. The only leadership acceptable is the leadership of the Communist International. I think the formulation should be made quite clear and this Section should be differently formulated. (from International Press Correspondence, page 1203).

letters to Tagore were the exhibits on behalf of the prosecution in the Meerut conspiracy case. The case dragged on for more than three years and ended only in August, 1932. Judgement was still pending. Nothing made so much propaganda in India for communism as did the Meerut conspiracy case. The entire attention of political India was focussed on the Meerut conspiracy case and hundreds of radical youths were drawn to the Communist Party because of it. There was also good bit of propaganda in the International Press.

One can say with justice that the Meerut conspiracy case placed communism on a sure footing in India.

In the prison the witch's cauldron was boiling. The clique of Ghate, Joglekar, Muzaffar, Spratt and Bradley was carrying on its nefarious activities. Dange was charged with sectarian activities in the middle of 1929. It was alleged that Dange was trying to monopolise the Maharatti weekly "Kranti" and that he was carrying on fractional activities in the Girmi Kamgar Union against the interest of the Communist Party. Controversy and bitterness developed to such an extent that Dange resigned from the Communist Party, though later on he explained it away by saying that he had seceded from the communist group in the Meerut jail but did not resign from the Communist Party. While in jail Dange had a visit from Victor Sassoon, the Bombay mill-owner.

Funds were being raised in India and in England for conducting the case. As soon as funds began to pour in, disagreement started. The clique wanted to keep the funds entirely in the control of the communists whereas Usmani and a few others maintained that the funds, raised for the defence should be controlled by all the thirty-one accused of the case irrespective of whether they were communists, nationalists or trade unionists. Sharp differences manifested on this issue between the sectarian clique and Usmani and others.

The cleavage deepened when on their way to the Almora Jail, the clique let down Usmani when he had a fight with the police. When Usmani went on hunger strike as a protest against police behaviour, the clique not only did not support him; on the contrary, did everything to run him down. In September, 1932 Usmani tendered his resignation from the Party. But the clique did not stop at this. From prison they sent our letters to Bombay to their yes-

men to start a campaign of vilification against Usmani in the press. All sorts of baseless and dirty propoganda they started against Usmani in the press. They even went so far as to bring out in Bombay press that Usmani had applied for King's pardon!

In January, 1933 judgement was delivered in the Meerut conspiracy and the curtain was drawn on a case which dragged on for four long years.

In January, 1934 Saumyendranath Tagore returned to India. In Europe he had lived through the Nazi counter-revolution in Germany in 1933. The European working class was facing one of the greatest crises in its existence.

Proletarian revolution was at its lowest ebb in Europe. Thousand of German communists, socialists and radicals had left Germany and settle down in Paris. Paris in 1933 was the centre of the revolutionaries from all the countries of the world. The German debacle had opened out the flood gate of fascism in Europe. Deep and anxious discussions were going on amongst the revolutionaries in Paris. The causes of the defeat of the revolutionary forces in Germany in the hands of Hitler's counter-revolution, the perspective of the proletarian movement in Europe, the immediate strategy and tactics to be adopted by the proletarian front for stemming the fascist tide, so on and so forth, all these problems engaged the deepest attention of the emigre revolutionaries in Paris.

Tagore who had gone to Paris immediately after his release from Nazi prison, was in constant touch with the revolutionaries of all shades of opinion. In that huge anti-Nazi demonstration which took place in Paris in May, 1933, Tagore was one of the speakers. He had in the meantime met Romain Rolland and got from him a message to the Indian youths to build up an anti-fascist front. Tagore also met Henri Barbusse the President of the International League against Fascism and War and made with him all arrangements for opening a national branch of the league in India.

Soon after his return to India Tagore published his book "Hitlerism or the Aryan rule in Germany". This book was published by one Abdul Halim on behalf of the Bengal provincial branch of the Communist Party of India.

Abdul Halim whose services to the workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal were always strictly limited to the manual plane and to the creature comfort of Muzaffar Ahmed, was Muzaffar Ahmed's pet creature. After the arrest of Muzaffar, Muzaffar managed to put Halim on the head of the Bengal organisation of the party.

After the publication of his book Tagore received a note from Abdul Halim to the effect that they did not agree to the viewpoint of Tagore regarding the causes of the victory of fascism in Germany.

Tagore had written in this book that the reason for the tragic defeat of the German working class in the hands of Hitler and his gang was due to the treachery of German Social-democracy and the fatal political mistakes committed by the Communist Party of Germany.

This statement was objected to by the chorus-boy of Stalin. Halim wrote to say that they had received the resolution passed by the Communist International on the German situation. In that resolution the German socialists had been made entirely responsible for the Nazi victory in Germany, and the Communist Party of Germany's political line and tactics in this period were declared to be correct. This suicidal, unrealistic and thoroughly ignorant resolution of the Stalinist clique in Comintern was a sure indication of the utter degeneration of the Communist International. Once a mighty organisation of world-revolution in the period of Lenin, fearlessly criticising its own mistake, it had been slowly transformed by Stalin into a clique apparatus, fearful of historical objectivity and mindful of its own existence only.

Great dissatisfaction prevailed in the ranks of the communist of Europe and American regarding this resolution. Specially amongst the German communist including such Stalinists as Neumann and Ramelle, there was great disappointment and disagreement with the resolution. Everyone felt that it was a resolution completely unworthy of the critical and revolutionary tradition of Lenin's Third International. Men who has been for years Stalin's stool pigeons such as Hans, Neumann, Ramelle etc. they even could not swallow this extremely stupid resolution. Dissension and revolt were rampant even in the orthodox rank of the Stalinists. Later on Neumann and Ramelle paid with their lives for this disagreement with Stalin.

There is no doubt that the German Social-democracy had betrayed the revolution and was moreover to a very great extent responsible for the victory of fascism in Germany. But that is not the whole truth. The general anti-revolutionary and at all critical period counter-revolutionary tendencies of the German Social-democratic leaders were known to everyone since the imperialist world-war of 1914. Lenin had waged decade-long war against the opportunist and compromise-craving leadership of European social-democracy in general and the German Social-democracy in particular. So the betrayal of the revolution by such lackeys of the bourgeoisie may be tragic but nothing unexpected and surprising.

But what about the Communist Party of Germany which was formed with the object of wresting the working class from the clutches of the German Social-democracy and of organising the proletariat for the revolution? In 1933 when the German Communist Party had sent nearly one hundred deputies to the Reichstag, when it had built up an enormous party machinery had its own powerful press and had even gained some seats at the expense of Social-democracy, how was it that it collapsed like a house of card at the crucial moment of Nazi onslaught?

This question was worrying the revolutionary communist all over the world and they were determined to go at the root of the problem and to find the answer. In 1923 the German working-class had placed itself under the leadership to the Communist Party of Germany and was ready for revolution. At Strelitz in 1920 the Social-democratic party of Germany had polled 25 thousand votes and the Independents 2 thousand. In July, 1923 at Strelitz, the Social-democratic party polled 12 thousand votes and the Communist Party 11 thousand.

Voting in Berlin Metal Workers' Union resulted in 54 thousand votes in favour of the communists and 22 thousand votes for the Social-democrats.

On 29th July, 1923 a conference of left-wing deputies demanded a cessation of coalition with the bourgeoisie and co-operation with the Communist Party.

Brandier, at that time the leader of the Communist Party of Germany, declared in a meeting of the Executive Committee of the

Communist International—"There were signs of rising revolutionary movement. We had temporarily the majority of the workers behind us, and in the situation believed that under favourable circumstances we could proceed immediately to attack."

Lenin was in death bed at that time but Stalin who was already controlling the party apparatus in the last days of Lenin, wrote in a letter to Zinoviev and Bukharin—"In my opinion the Germans must be curbed and not spurred on." The reasons that Stalin gave for backing his opinion was amazingly naive. He wrote—"When we seized power, we had in Russia such reserves as (a) Peace, (b) the land to the peasants, (c) the support of the great majority of the working class, (d) the sympathy of the peasantry. The German communists at this moment have nothing of the sort."

It was absolutely historically false to say that "The German communists at this moment have nothing of the sort." The German communists in 1923 had the backing of the majority of the German working class. Moreover Germany was not predominantly a peasant country like Russia. The numerically powerful and politically conscious German proletariat in the course of its revolutionary march would have swept the peasantry along with it against the Junkerdom. The urban petty bourgeoisie would have also fallen in line with the revolution for its inherent grudge against high finance. But then it was no reasons that stood against the revolution, it was Stalin's lack of faith in the proletariat and world-revolution that militated against it. And that is clear from the following words of Stalin—"Of course they have the Soviet nation as their neighbour, which we did not have but what can we offer them at the present moment?" Already Stalin was on the way of letting down the world revolution for socialism (?) in one country.

But the most amazing passage is yet to come. Writes Stalin in the same letter—"Of course fascists are not asleep but it is to our interest that they attack first : that will rally the whole working class around the communists (Germany is not Bulgaria). Besides according to all informations the fascists are weak in Germany."

Thus the German communists were asked by Stalin to wait till fascists attack. According to him it is to the interest of the communists that the fascists attack first! This was in 1923 and exactly ten years

after we had occasion to see if it was to the interest of the Communists to let the fascists attack first! Moreover Stalin had the information that "the fascists are weak in Germany." So from Stalin's superb reasoning it followed that the communists should not attack first but should allow the fascists attack first; but as the fascists were weak we should wait till they were strong to attack, for surely the fascists were not such fools that they would attack when they were weak!

Such is the extraordinary logic of Stalin! But whatever may be the quality of that logic, the net result was the betrayal of the revolution in Germany.

In the meanwhile Brandler was forced by Stalin even to enter a coalition government with the Social-democrats.

It is difficult to visualise a more opportune moment for revolution in Germany than that of 1923. Later on Brandler was to pay for Stalin's betrayal of the German revolution. Stalin put all the blame on Brandler for the failure of 1923.

After sacrificing Brandler as the offering to the tribal god, Stalin in 1924 swung the German Communist Party from its ultra-rightist course to the ultra-leftist course. Since 1924 to 1933, this ultra-leftist course was followed in Germany and this was the reason why the Communist Party of Germany failed so miserably in 1933. The Red Trade Union Organisation (known as R.G.O. in German), the united front from below tactic, the slogan "Social Fascists" coined by the German Stalinists to dub the Social-democrats and the under-estimation of the importance of the middle strata in the revolution, all these serious blunders were at the root of the defeat of the German working class by German fascism.

But then the Stalinists of Europe and America may get perturbed, they may be overwhelmed by the enormity of the German tragedy and may for once be shelled by colossal revolutionary tragedy out of their clique-bound existence but not the Indian Stalinists. These Indian Stalinists had their social root in the most degenerated section of the Indian petty bourgeoisie. These Stalinists, in fact, represented the lumpen intelligentsia section of intelligentsia.

Ignorant and greedy, dishonest and unscrupulous, fawning to

their own comrades, these despicable Indian Stalinists as true samples of lumpen intelligentsia, were only concerned with their pocket-nerves which by the way were being sufficiently tickled by Stalin.

To the Indian chorus-boys of Stalin, the Comintern resolution on the German debacle was the holy word which required not analysis. It was to be accepted with the same religious irrationalism which marks the acceptance of religious dogmas by religious people all over the world.

Tagore in this reply to the Stalinists pointed out the necessity of a through study of the causes of the German tragedy, and of forming considered opinion on the basis of such studies, irrespective of resolutions. But the pocket-nerves of the lumpen intelligentsia stood against their taking such a rational and revolutionary attitude towards political happenings. The fight with the clique started.

In 1931 a Red Trade Union Congress had been established by the Communists in opposition to the existing All India Trade Union Congress. This ultra-leftist move was suicidal. On the one hand the newly grown trade union movement of India was weakened by this split, on the other hand the communists had segregated themselves from the mass of the organised workers.

Tagore condemned this ultra-leftism and advised the dissolution of the Red Trade Union Congress and the functioning through the All India Trade Union Congress. Tagore pointed out to the Stalinists how the Red Trade Union opposition in Germany had failed to mobilise even five percent of the organised workers and how it proved fatal to the cause of the situation.

But historical experience never teaches the Indian chorus-boys of Stalin anything and the revolutionary thinking is foreign to their nature. So Tagore's pleading went unheeded in 1934. In 1935 when Stalin had swung from ultra-leftism to ultra-rightism all along the line, his Indian gang received the order to liquidated the Red Trade Union Congress. This time no argument was necessary. The order of the pay-master was a sufficient argument. In the Calcutta Session of the T.U.C. presided over by Hariharnath Sastri, the Stalinists grovelled on the dust before the reformists and conceded more grounds in their indecent haste to carry out the order of their pay-

master than it was necessary. Tagore also participated in that particular meeting in which the final dissolution of the Red T.U.C. was accomplished.

But in 1934 the Stalinists stuck to their blunder with the obstinacy of hirelings whose thought process consists only in carrying out the order of the pay-master. In 1934 the Stalinists had also assumed an ultra-leftist attitude towards the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. Having come from the lumpen section for the intelligentsia. These men suffered from a sense of inferiority complex vis-a-vis the intelligentsia. This prevented them from making an objective estimation of the role of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia in the revolutionary movement in India. They alienated the most radical section of the intelligentsia and picked up the lumpen. That suited the clique alright but was detrimental to the development of communist movement in India.

Tagore stood against this tactic of alienating the intelligentsia. The need of the professional revolutionaries for the development of the communist movement in India was too great and urgent to be trifled with. And in the conditions of India in 1934, only the intelligentsia could supply the professional revolutionaries.

Disagreement on and these fundamental question continued till the middle of June 1934. The clique of Somnath-Halim controlling the Bengal apparatus of the Stalinist party started a campaign of distortion of Tagore's viewpoint. The clique was frightened lest the control of the apparatus slipped away from its hands.

When after a series of discussions with the various Stalinists of Bengal and of other parts of India it became quite evident that corruption and degeneration had eaten up the core of the so-called Communist Party, it was decided to start another parallel party. In 1934, the Communist League of India was started with Sudhir Dasgupta, Probhat Sen, Ranjit Majumdar, Arun Banerji and Saumyendranath Tagore as its members. The name Communist League was chosen because of its historical association with the Communist League of Karl Marx. Marx and Engles had published their epoch-making "Communist Manifesto" on behalf of this League.

Ganavani (the voice of the masses) made its appearance first

as a weekly, then as the monthly organ of the party. Marxian literature poured out of the Ganavani Publishing House. In 1938 "Red Front", the illegal organ of the party made its first appearance with the draft platform of the Communist League.

The programme dealt mainly with the following subjects :

- (1) The Role of the Indian bourgeoisie,
 - (2) The Indian National Congress,
 - (3) The character of the Indian revolution,
 - (4) The political misdeeds of the Stalinists
- and (5) The tasks before the Communist League.

International Neo-Menshevism was rampant at this period with the introduction of the People's Front tactic. The swan-song of revolution—the class-collaborationist tune of Menshevism—became the main tune of the chorus-boys all over the world. In India this class-collaborationist Neo-menshevism expressed itself in the Indian Stalinists' sudden outburst of love for the bourgeoisie and for the bourgeois Congress. They had since long characterised the Indian relation as a bourgeois revolution but now this ignorant blunder was made doubly worse by ascribing revolutionary role (later on of course they changed this revolutionary role into an oppositional role of the bourgeoisie) to the bourgeoisie. The wholesale condemnation of the Congress gave place to unprincipled sycophancy of the Congress. The Congress became by a stroke of the pay master's pen the only anti-imperialist organisation, the realisation of the Indian people's anti-imperialist struggle and the organ for the completion of the national revolution!

Here are some relevant quotations from the Draft Platform of the Communist League of India in Red Front No. 1 Vol 1 :

"Colonies and dependencies of which India constitutes a classic example are the deeper reserves of imperialism. It is out of the vast reservoir of colonial super-profit that the imperialists bribe a section of the proletariat at home, infect them with a national chauvinism and thus secure the social-economic basis of reformism in the labour movement. Now if the imperialist system of exploitation is

to be destroyed the world front of anti-imperialist revolutionary forces must extend from the very centre and heart of the imperialist home countries to the colonial lands. The final defeat of Imperialism is then conditioned by the emancipation of the colonies from the octopus of Imperialism. This is why in the anti-imperialist struggle the movement for the liberation of the colonies is an important and decisive factor—a factor of revolution”.

“The national question the problem of national emancipation, of independent national development is not a static question. It must not be viewed as an extra-historical phenomenon, an abstract metaphysical concept isolated and detached from the central task of the epoch, the overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of socialism. It is only an item, a significant detail in the general process of historical social changes. It has no absolute or independent magnitude but is determined by the whole course of social development.”

“But in this epoch of the decline of imperialism and of proletarian socialist revolution, the content of the national liberationist struggle of the colonies and dependencies has changed. The banner of bourgeois nationalism is discredited. The concept of bourgeois emancipatory national movement is sterile. The fight for national freedom shall be won under the banner of proletarian internationalism, under the banner of the socialist conception of self-determination. The national question has grown into the general question of liberating the nations, colonies and semi-colonies from the yoke of imperialism”

“Historically, the I.N.C. was the political organisation of the Indian national bourgeoisie, who created, fashioned, moulded and wielded it for wringing some concessions from British Imperialism. Objectively, it thus initiated the first phase of anti-imperialist struggle. Gradually its social base widened. But this widening does not change the class-role and class-face of the congress. After reaching a definite stage of struggle the social class leadership of the congress,

caught in the mesh of inherent social contradictions, tries to blunt the revolutionary edge of the anti-imperialist struggle. Nevertheless its social class-basis is wide enough to enfold vast masses of the middle classes, peasantry and the workers. It is in this sense that congress is a multi-class organisation. That is why in the anti-imperialist united front of the people, the national congress is a factor of account but not the organisational realisation of the anti-imperialist people's front."

"The working class must necessarily constitute the driving force of the Indian national revolution. And the proletariat and the peasantry cannot grow into a vital political force if they confine their struggle to economic sphere only. In fact the rigid division between political and economic struggle is arbitrary and fantastic. Economic struggle shades off into political struggle and political struggle develops into a struggle for power of a particular social class against some other social class or classes. The working class and the peasantry through their economic organisations cannot indeed participate as a class in the political struggle for national independence. It is through the political party of the proletariat that the working class and the peasantry fashioned into a distinct political force in the process of active political struggle will participate in and guide the national revolution. But the working class and the peasantry must at first become independent political force before they can be the central dynamics of the anti-imperialist struggle. The very idea of an alliance necessarily involves and postulates independent existence of the class organisations forming the alliance."

"The working class is not simply an aggregate of individual workers. The working class is a developing social force and can fulfill its role in the anti-imperialist struggle only acting as a class. Hence individual enrolment of workers in the national congress does not enable the working class to infuse its militancy into the national struggle. Simple numerical addition of some thousand workers to the national congress shall not enable the working class to act as powerful social lever in raising the anti-imperialist struggle to a higher and more consciously revolutionary plane."

* * *

“We are not opposed to fractional work in reformist trade unions but we must not forget to organise independently vast mass of unorganised workers. Neither are we opposed to co-operation with the congress on specific issues but we are not prepared to perpetuate congress influence in the working class to transform it into bourgeois reserve and paralyse its independent class-action.”

“The threatening growth of really revolutionary upsurge of the exploited and toiling masses of India not only against British imperialism but also against its native servitors, seriously set the congress leaders a-thinking. The rapidly growing mass revolutionary temper must be kept within proper limits under the stupefying bourgeois influence. Gandhism, as the theory of class-collaboration, as a powerful brake upon revolutionisation of the masses proved inadequate to the changing conditions. The political terminology of Congress leadership must be smacking of more revolutionism and radicalism. A new type of men must be requisitioned to steer the congress helm. The rank and file of the bourgeois political party was greatly dis-illusioned by the criminal treachery and betrayal of the anti-imperialist struggle. They tended to break away from the congress. Thus when the bourgeois congress was threatened with the loss of its social base, congress-“socialism” stepped in and stabilised the social base of the bourgeois congress. The task of keeping the process of radicalisation confined and restricted within and under the congress was set forth in the Congress-Socialist of 29th September, 1934, “Hitherto elements dissatisfied with the policy officially pursued by the congress tended to break away from it.....with the formation of the congress-socialist party we hope the stage of infantile disorder is over”.

“That Congress-“Socialism” is a left manouvre of the bourgeoisie and not a radicalising agency and that it can not be the rallying ground of the anti-imperialist elements are determined by its (a) attitude to the congress (b) its work in the congress on definite issues and (c) characterisation of the nature of colonial revolution”.

* * *

“The immediate task of the communists is :

- (1) To speed up the independent communist organisation of the working class, peasantry and the middle-class.
- (2) To organise and develop independent class organisation of the working class and the peasantry on the basis of class struggle, on the basis of unflinching opposition to landlordism, capitalism, imperialism and to maintain their ideological and political independence.
- (3) To develop the anti-imperialist movement along the active struggle for the immediate class demands of the toiling masses, along the lines of class struggle, for raising the tempo, width and intensity of the movement.
- (4) To organise a genuine left bloc—within the congress to deepen and sharpen the conflict between the counter-revolutionary leadership and the anti-imperialist rank and file and to rally the rank and file around the genuine anti-imperialist platform, developing outside the congress.
- (5) To detect every subtle bourgeois manouver (e.g. Jawaharlal’s “socialism”, Roy’s theory of multi-class leadership etc.) and apply communist criticism against it.
- (6) To explain to the working class the implication of tailism and class-collaboration that are inherent in the particular way in which the C.S.P. and the “C.P.I.” have launched their drive for individual enrolment and to organise the pressure of the mass movement to effect recognition of the principle of collective affiliation by the national congress.
- (7) To set up local united front action committees between the congress and the organisations of the workers, peasants and students on the basis of the struggle for appropriate and concrete anti-imperialist issues.”

In 1938 met the first convention of the party. The main thesis before the convention was on the united front tactic. The tragic history of the united front tactic practised in France and Spain was too serious a happening to be passed over without assuming a

definite stand on such a tactic. The party had since 1934 condemned the class-collaborationist united front tactic followed in China in 1925-1927. This tactic had spelled disaster to the Chinese revolution and was thoroughly un-Marxian and un-Leninist. It was Menshevism in ideology and practice.

In his, "Address to the Communist League" Marx wrote in 1850,—“In the case when a struggle against a common enemy exists, a special kind of alliance is un-necessary. As soon as it becomes necessary to fight such an enemy directly, the interest of both parties fall together for the moment.....During the struggle and after the struggle, the workers at every opportunity must put up their own demands in contra-distinction to the demands put forward by the bourgeois democrats.”

And Lenin says— “Here we have before us the new Iskra philosophy in its complete, pure and consistent form, the revolution is a bourgeois revolution, therefore we must bow to bourgeois vulgarity and make way for it.....By that we would place the proletariat entirely under the tutelage of the bourgeoisie (while retaining for ourselves complete freedom to criticise....) and compel the proletariat to be weak and mild in order not to frighten the bourgeois away. We emasculate the immediate needs of the proletariat, namely its political needs which the Economists and their epigones have never thoroughly understood, out of fear lest the bourgeoisie be frightened away. We would completely abandon the field of the revolutionary struggle for the achievement of democracy to the extent required by the proletariat in favour of the field of bargaining with the bourgeoisie and obtaining their voluntary consent (“not to desert”) at the price of our principles and of the revolution itself”.

Little did Lenin know that in 1925 and again in 1934, the consent of the bourgeoisie “not to desert” should be obtained “at the price of our principles and of the revolution itself.” Little did he imagine that the emasculation of “the immediate needs of the proletariat namely its political needs...out of fear lest the bourgeoisie be frightened away,” would be practised in 1925-27 and 1934, by the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Stalin.

The convention repudiated this un-Leninist variety of United

Front practised in China, France and Spain with such disastrous results, and declared it to be a betrayal of the revolution.

The second imperialist war started in September, 1939. The party of the revolutionary proletariat immediately came out with its pamphlet, "The imperialist war and India." It exposed mercilessly the real implication of the so-called democratic front stunt of the British Communists (Stalinist brand) of the Indian Stalinists, of the Indian bourgeois nationalists such as Gandhiji and of the petty bourgeois Congress-socialist (national socialist) Party.

It was the period of national-chauvinistic defencist policy of the Stalinists of England and France. The secret and open alliances of Stalin with Hitler and Stalin's supply of war materials to Hitler had not become known as yet. So Harry Politt, the British Stalinist came out with a thoroughly chauvinistic pamphlet in defence of British imperialism. He had soon to recant it when his master entered into open and secret pacts with Hitler and tied himself with a golden chain of friendship with him. The Stalinists of Great Britain and India (as a matter of that Stalinists all the world over) immediately shunted their bogey from the "democratic (!) rails of British imperialism to the anti-imperialist (?) rails of German fascism. This was the second period. In this period—a'la the international chorus-boys of Stalin-Hitler became democratic, revolutionary and what more the defender of the world against British imperialism. Stalin's shameful secret pact with Hitler according to which he sent his invading army to Poland when Poland was writhing in agony under Nazi boots and grabbed territories according to his secret arrangement with Hitler and Stalin's supply of necessary war materials (oil, timber and manganese) to Hitler—all these unpardonable crimes were supported with vehemence by the chorus-boys of Stalin all over the world. Then came the third period. Hitler attacked Stalin erstwhile his comrade in-loot. Overnight the tune changed. Churchill became the only champion of democracy, the imperialist war became the people's war and Churchill the leader of the people's war against fascism.

These are the three phases of the 'dialectical' (a word used by Stalinists to cover up all their stupidities and criminalities) development of the international hirelings of Stalin in the period of the second imperialist world-war. The Indian bourgeoisie through

its party, the Indian National Congress declared its fullest sympathy for the 'democratic' front of British imperialism. Gandhiji in grateful sympathy with British imperialism burst into tears before the imperialist butcher Linlithgow. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Gandhian national-socialist clowned the cap of Micawber and played the role of gentleman in politics. He ascribed to himself the title of statesman and declared with holy wrath that an enemy in peril could not be attacked. That would be a violation of the gentlemanly code of the Micawban statesman. Behind all these clownish games of Gandhiji and Nehru was hidden the naked class-interest of the Indian bourgeoisie.

The Indian bourgeoisie could not afford to start a genuine mass movement against British imperialism. It knew fully well that in this epoch an anti-imperialist mass-movement would mean its own negation as a class. Its dread of the Indian masses—its class-enemy is infinitely deeper than its dissatisfaction against British imperialists, its partner-in-robbery. That explains the attitude of the bourgeois Congress and its accredited leaders like Gandhiji and Nehru. That explains why the congress resigned the ministry in such a tame drawing room fashion, instead of forcing Linlithgow to drive them out of office. That could have been the starting point of a great mass movement—the forcible suppression of 'popular' ministry—but that is exactly what the Indian bourgeoisie did not want at that time, world-situation was yet not in its favour. Stalin was reaping the benefit of his pro-Hitler 'neutrality' and grabbing territories in a way which was rather disquieting to the Indian bourgeoisie. It was extremely nervous in the early phase of the war. Red menace seemed to be growing too unpleasantly fast for its taste.

That is why Jawaharlal Nehru waxed so eloquent on his being a gentleman (not a fighter) for India's freedom and Gandhiji opens out his lochryinal glands in sympathy of imperialist democracy.

The individual Satyagraha was in perfect tune with the attitude explained above. It was just a stunt to put a stop to the murmurs of the dissatisfied elements within the Congress.

The Communist League took its firm stand on the profound teaching of Marx and Lenin and exposed all the political chicaneries

of the Stalinists, the bourgeois Congress and its satellite organisation—the Congress-socialist Party.

Here are some relevant quotations from *Red Front*, March, 1940—as adopted in the Second Party Conference :

“So, the (second) imperialist war broke out not in defence of people’s democracy and freedom, not really in the protection of the independence of Poland as the hypocritical bourgeoisie would proclaim but as the direct outcome of the rivalries for imperialist brigandage on the masses. And the masses are dragged into this horrible carnage by a propaganda of rabid chauvinism and made to fight a battle to which they are not parties but their exploiters and oppressors are.

“In explaining the task of the proletariat in socialist revolution Lenin exploded the idea of imperialist war breaking out on an immediate issue of fight for peace of democracy and called upon the proletariat to overthrow the power of capital for the achievement of democratic peace. “The war is a product of half a century of development of world imperialism and of its million thread and connections,” he said, “one cannot escape from the imperialist war, one cannot achieve democratic non-oppressive peace without first overthrowing the power of capital and without the overthrow of the power of state to another class, the proletariat.” (Lenin, *The Task of the Proletariat in our Revolution*).”

“In view of the present situation created by Second Imperialist War, the Communist Party of India takes its stand :

- (1) For the Independence of Poland, the present victim of fascist aggression.
- (2) Against fascism, the arch-enemy of the people and its satellites, the bourgeoisie of all countries.
- (3) Against all patriotic, compromising and “democratic” sophism of the bourgeoisie and pacifists.
- (4) For full self-determination of the colonial peoples.
- (5) For the support of the international proletariat for the

successful overthrow of its own national bourgeoisie in all countries.

- (6) For the conversion of imperialist war internally into a civil war and externally into a revolutionary war for the real defence of Soviet Union and the carrying forward of the world revolution."

Soviet Russia was all along under Stalin a partisan in the war. It was Stalin's open pact with Hitler that brought about Hitler's attack on Poland and it was Stalin's secret pact with Hitler that led to the partition of Poland by Hitler and Stalin. Stalin took Bessarabia and the Baltic States as a price of his neutrality in favour of Hitler, whom he supplied war materials till June, 1941. Thus it is wrong to say that Soviet Russia was not in the war. Stalinism was in the war from the very beginning in favour of German fascism, its neutrality was with certain reservations like the neutrality of fascist Italy. In this period both Stalinism and Italian fascism played the role of the supplier of raw materials of war to Hitler.

At the first conference of the Communist League of India the two main theses that came before the party were the thesis on the People's Front and the thesis on the Third International and Soviet foreign policy. The conference declared the so called People's Front of the Stalinist variety as in essence a front against the people and condemned the Soviet foreign policy of the Stalin-regime and the subservience of the Third International to the needs of Stalin's foreign policy.

Stalin had attacked Finland in October, 1939. This unprincipled aggression of Stalin on Finland was supported by the Stalin's hirelings all over the world. The Communist League sharply condemned this un-communistic action of Stalin. It declared that—"The Soviet invasion of Finland was an act of pure and simple aggression. It has no connection whatsoever with the revolutionary proletarian movement in Finland. Of course, the myth of the Finnish people's government was incubated three weeks after the Soviet army had invaded Finland, in order to give aggression the honourable appearance of revolutionary help to a people in revolt. The fact remains that there was no popular uprising in Finland to justify

the intervention of the Red Army. The subsequent action of the Soviet Government signing peace treaty with the Finnish Government denounced by them as fascist, dealt the last blow in demolishing the myth of the Finnish people's good.'

(On the Self-determination of Nations.)

Further—"Let us be quite clear on this. If by military intervention it would have been possible to overthrow capitalism and imperialism we would have welcomed it unhesitatingly. If it had meant the quickening of the world-revolution and the seizure of power by the working class, we would have welcomed it as by this alone could the Soviet Union justify its existence as the citadel of revolutionary internationalism. The working masses and the oppressed people of the world demand bold revolutionary interventions by the Soviet Union on the world arena but not the type of military aggression as on Finland. We strongly object to such military aggression because we are convinced that military interventions when not in the nature of a help to revolutionary uprising started by the people of a country, causes the greatest setback to the revolutionary movement. It actually helps the bourgeoisie to befool the people and to temporarily utilise the masses for its own capitalist-cum-nationalist interests.

In Finland the Finnish workers and peasants had fought for the independence of their country against the Red Army. The Red Army did not appear to the Finnish masses as their saviours but as the enemies of their country's freedom. The Soviet Government did not come to them as champion of social justice and national integrity but as the destroyer of their national integrity. It did not represent to them the cause of the revolution but the expansion of the Soviet territory. This is a historical tragedy of the first magnitude. It has injured the cause of communism and has lowered its moral prestige as nothing else has done.

Mannerheim and the Finnish bourgeoisie had been helped by this aggression and the proletarian revolution had been submerged by the nationalist flood let loose by Stalin's action. The great teaching of Lenin about the self-determination of nations as the necessary step towards socialism, has been completely ignored by Stalin who it seems has failed to realise the profound revolutionary implication of this principle.

We have to bring back the faith of the oppressed people of the world, in the Soviet Government by condemning Stalin's aggression on Finland, and by asserting our whole-hearted support to the principle of self-determination which in the words of Lenin is "in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism" and is moreover "absolutely necessary for the sake of the final aim".

(On the Self-determination of Nations.)

Further—"The aggression against Finland was carried out on the basis of two pleas put forward by Stalin : Firstly that fascist Finland was being made the base of attack on Soviet Russia by all imperialist powers that it was being made into some sort of an imperialist jumping ground for attacking the Soviet Government. Secondly that some Finnish territories were necessary for the effective military protection of the Soviet. The first plea put forward had no immediate bearing on the issue of aggression against Finland. At the moment of aggression there was no sign of any imperialist or fascist concentration in Finland for launching an attack on Soviet Russia. That such a future probability existed, may be granted for argument's sake; but then such a probability existed also from the sides of Poland and Rumania. On the assumption of a future probability aggression cannot be undertaken. That smacks too much of an imperialist and fascist method of putting forward a plea for aggression. The second plea that some Finnish territories were necessary for safe-guarding the integrity of Soviet territory also does not fare too well. In these days of modern mechanical warfare twenty miles of territory, here and there, does not and cannot play any significant role in the protection of the integrity of any country. History has put an ironical commentary on this plea of Stalin by forcing him to abandon these Finnish territories in a few weeks time when the Nazi-Soviet war started.

The government of Finland was also not a fascist government in the sense that Hitler's or Mussolini's or Franco's governments are. It was a bourgeois democratic Government dominated by the social-democratic elements. But there is no doubt that like bourgeois governments in this period of acute crisis of imperialism, the Finnish Govt. was also fascist in content. It was fascist in the same way as Baldwin's or Chamberlain's national governments were and

Churchill's and Roosevelt's governments are. If on the score of its being fascist that Finland had to be attacked, then Stalin surely should have been on a much more sure ground if he had attacked either Nazi Germany or Fascist Poland or Fascist Italy or Fascist Spain. Our main point is that by this method of aggression neither Sovietsation can be achieved nor the cause of world-revolution can be furthered. It cannot be achieved because the citadel of world-capitalism cannot be battered by just nibbling at its outer periphery. If by aggression we could conquer fascist Germany or the so-called democratic countries of France and England then of course we should carry out such aggressions by all means. Such a conquest will smash the very heart of world-imperialism. Sovietisation and world revolution will surely then make colossal strides forward. But we all know that speculations of such attacks on the principal imperialist powers cannot form even the subject-matters of intelligent discussion. The Soviet army cannot be expected to launch in near or distant future such attacks against imperialist powers. This sort of aggression against small powers can not do any appreciable damage to world-imperialism, but it does definitely harm the cause of world-revolution. It harms because the bourgeoisie of the major imperialist countries and also or all capitalist lands would use such aggressions as a handle to play on the nationalist sentiments of the people and to win them over to their side (however temporary that may be and historical temporariness may mean many years) from the revolutionary mass front.

That was exactly what happened when in the days of Lenin the Red Army marched into Poland without being invited to come by any popular uprising. The polish bourgeoisie made good use of the nationalist sentiments of the masses and got them to fight the Red Army. Lenin, the great revolutionary frankly admitted his mistakes

The same mistake was repeated by Stalin by his aggression on Finland. Finnish workers and peasants sided with the Finnish bourgeoisie to fight against the Red Army. Stalin's aggression served as the bridge by which the gulf between the Finnish masses and the Finnish bourgeoisie was bridged for the time being. The revolutionary cause of Finland suffered thereby. Since Stalin has launched on the policy of united front with the 'democratic' imperialist bourgeoisie to-day and the united front with the fascist

bourgeoisie to-morrow he has shelved the task of world revolution completely. He thinks that what is only possible of achievement by consistently organising the revolutionary movements in each imperialist and capitalist country (the task which he has given up already many years) he will be able to achieve it by small diplomatic pilferings. But as we have seen that the task of world-revolution can never be achieved through such tactics, it can only be then wasted and injured. Only on that ground we have objected to Stalin's aggression against Finland. (Red Front, March 1942).

We have seen how in this period the Stalinists gloated over every victory of Hitler and eulogised him as the defender of democracy. But suddenly the table was turned. Hitler attacked Soviet Russia in June 1941 and over-night dialectics (the dialectics of pocket) came to the aid of the hirelings. For us, the revolutionary communists, Hitler was since 1933, if not earlier, the filthy criminal, the murderer of the German communists, socialists, liberals and pacifists—in one word Hitler was the hangman of all those elements that signified progress and enlightenment in Germany. For us Hitler never "dialectically" changed into a saint from satan and again satan from saint. The cause of world-revolution determined our thinking not the greedy open jaws of the pocket.

Likewise, Churchill, the arch-imperialist, the criminal slave-driver of colonial people did not for the revolutionary communists transform himself into an angel just because it was to the interest of Stalin now to cuddle close to Churchill, being so unceremoniously released from the bond of "golden chain of friendship" (Molotov) with Hitler.

But for the Stalinists, the third phase of their metamorphosis has already begun. Hitler, the champion of people's democracy (according to Stalinists) became the blood-thirsty savage (which he really was all the time, even at that period when the Stalinists called him an angel) once more. The war lost its imperialist character as soon as Soviet Russia entered the war openly (as covertly it was all along in the war like 'neutral' Italy) and became the people's war.

Red Front, the organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party of India wrote in March 1942 — "The Stalinist Notorious (N)

Funkers (F) group once propagated united front with democratic (!) imperialist bourgeoisie because they were ordered to do so by Stalin. Then when Stalin made his pact with Hitler and Molotov grew lyrical over "the golden chain of friendship" (Molotov) that bound Soviet Russia with fascist Germany, the Stalinist N.F. group overnight discovered that the democratic (?) imperialist bourgeoisie were not half so democratic as they thought : Hitler was much better. Then the Nazi attack on Soviet Russia brought the sudden revelation to these N.F. traitors the British imperialism is waging a people's war against Hitler. These traitors can be made to side with either British imperialism or Nazism according to the order they receive from Stalin."

The Third Conference of the Communist League of India met in 1941. In this conference the name of the party was changed from the Communist League of India to the Communist Party of India. The party considered the situation created by Hitler's attack on Soviet Russia and had prolonged discussions on the point whether Soviet Russia's entry into the war had not changed the character of the war. After prolonged discussions the party came to the conclusion that the character of the war had not changed because of the entry of Soviet Russia in war.

"The imperialist character of the world-war has not undergone any change even when Soviet Russia has been entangled in it. And why? Because firstly, as a whole the character of world-war remains imperialist. One cannot and must not judge the character of a world phenomenon like the world-war in a piecemeal fashion. One cannot say that part of the world-war is imperialist in character and part of it is people's war in character. The absurdity of such a viewpoint is more than obvious. One must judge such a world-phenomenon by its world-aspects and judging its total aspects we see that the prime movers are imperialist and the objects for which it is fought is entirely imperialist.

"Secondly, even if we accept the contention for argument's sake that Soviet Russia's entanglement in the second world-war has changed its imperialist character and has transformed it into the people's war, we will have to ascertain before that whether the U.S.S.R. is still a genuinely people's government. That question has to be decided before the transformation of the imperialist character of the war into a people's war by the coming of Soviet Russia into war arena can be judged.

"We are of the opinion that though the government of U.S.S.R. remains still Soviet in form, in content it is not longer a genuinely people's government. Under Stalin the Soviet Government has slowly transformed itself into a government of bureaucratic caucus which rules with a ruthless terror against the people of Soviet Russia itself. The proletarian democracy which was surging in mighty flow right from the masses, enundating the lowest as well as the topmost rung of the Soviet structure during the period of Lenin, has been checked, impeded, smothered and crushed by Stalin and the bureaucracy of which he is the leader.

"Tried servants of the people, seasoned revolutionaries, have all been murdered by Stalin and his gang on the plea of the most shamefully false charges manufactured against them. The democratic right (proletarian democratic rights) of the people of Soviet Russia, the inner party democracy of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin were swamped by the slimy bureaucratic tide of Stalinism. Every opinion that differs from Stalin is dubbed as counter-revolution and the person who dare utter political views not liked or shared by Stalin and his bureaucratic caucus, is branded as a spy of either this or that imperialist power and is shot. Political Jesuitism of Stalin has surpassed in savagery the inquisitory method of Spanish Jesuits. Stalinism has not only not freed bourgeois democracy from its class-limitations and make it proceed to the next higher stage of proletarian democracy, Stalinism has even limited the rights even enjoyed by the people under bourgeois democracy and has reverted back to the unabashed rule of bureaucratic autocracy. Thus we are driven to the conclusion that the present Soviet Government has lost its character as a people's government which once it had in the period of Lenin.

"Also the foreign policy pursued by Stalin during the last nine years reflects the non-people's government character of the present Soviet regime. If the revolutionary working class of Soviet Russia which has successfully carried out the greatest revolution of the world and had thereby ushered in the era of world-revolution, had the Soviet Government really in their hands, they could never have then formulated the policy of class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the policy known as the united front and people's front which was really the front against the people.

"They could never have carried on aggression against Finland knowing that such aggression can never be a method of Sovietising the world and that such a method cuts at the very root of the Leninist principle of self-determination of nations which forms an integral part of revolutionary socialism. Moreover it should never be forgotten that such aggression only helps the world-bourgeoisie to alienate the masses from the Soviet by playing on the nationalist sentiments of the masses. It harms the cause of revolution and communism.

"If the Soviet Government is really the people's government, it would not have allowed Stalin to enter into secret pact (not the non-aggression pact) with Hitler for dividing Poland with him. All these facts prove that the revolutionary working class of Soviet Russia is not at the helm of the Soviet Government. It is a bureaucracy led by Stalin which rules the Soviet Government today. Therefore even from the standpoint of the Soviet, it is not a people's war."

(Red Front, the organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, March 1942).

Regarding people's war it says further—"People's war presupposes that the people of a particular country or a group of countries which are involved in war, have snatched the political power from the hands of the bourgeoisie and have become the masters of that particular country or group of countries. People's war presupposes the existence of people's government. Only when the people's government fights for the Protection of the people's government or for the revolutionary extension of the people's government in any other land in response to the invitation of a revolutionary people's uprising, can such a war be called a people's war. The mere fact that people have been drawn into the war and that they have been made to fight their masters' battle does by no means allow us to designate that war as people's war. For in that case every imperialist war can be called a people's war. Because it is the people of every imperialist country that who are forced to fight by ideological terror and physical terror—in one word by the organised terror of the bourgeois state to fight against the people—their own class-brothers—of another country."

(Red Front, March, 1942).

As we do not consider the war to be a people's war even from the standpoint of the Soviet what then is our attitude to Soviet Russia now engaged in a life and death struggle with German fascism?

"Our attitude towards Soviet Russia would be clear from the slogan—All aid to the Soviet—that we gave out. But this slogan must be understood in a revolutionary way. Our aid to the Soviet does not mean the petty bourgeois Jawaharlalite method of sending ten rupees or a bottle of iodine or two Red Cross nurses to the Soviet. This petty bourgeois non-revolutionary romantic method has been adopted by all petty bourgeois "friends" of the Soviet including the Notorious (N) Funkers (F) group. We know very well that placed as we are we cannot send substantial and direct help to Soviet Russia to-day. Every help must go through British imperialism which is most likely to usurp and utilise most of the help intended for the Soviet for its own purpose. Moreover under the present circumstances we are not in a position even to render effective help to the Soviet in the manner discussed above. Our aid to the Soviet to-day can mean :

(1) Mobilisation of the masses of our country for the Soviet idea.

(2) Organisation of the people of our country into anti-fascist mass organisations.

(3) Utilisation of the quandary in which British imperialism finds itself at present for striking at it when the opportune moment comes.

And thus (4) establishment of a free and Soviet India.

Only in striving to accomplish these tasks and by accomplishing these tasks, can Soviet Russia be effectively helped."

(Red Front, March 1942).

Red Front, the central organ of the Revolutionary Communist further declared—"M.N.Roy and his gang, and the Stalinist legal-communists both declared the war as the people's war. M.N.Roy, from the very beginning of this imperialist war and the legal-

communists since Soviet Russia has been engulfed in war. But at present both the groups consider the imperialist war as the people's war and both the groups have declared their unstinted support of the war. Now this support necessarily includes support to British imperialism which is a party to this war. Both M.N. Roy and the legal-communists have clearly and unhesitatingly declared their readiness to help British imperialism with all their strength. Both the groups have volunteered themselves as recruiting agents and war fund collectors of British imperialism. This means that these preachers of people's war stunt will go about amongst the Indian masses and ask them to assist British imperialism in its fight against Hitler. The result will be that firstly there will be great confusion in the minds of the people. They will wonder as to why those who had so long opposed British imperialism and had talked of revolutionary struggle against it, should now talk of helping it. Has there then taken place any change of the better in the villain called British imperialism? The masses will be greatly confused as a result of such propaganda.

"Secondly, if by this perfidione propaganda the legal-communists and the Royists would succeed in making the Indian masses side with British imperialism, then it would mean that a change of attitude has been brought about in the mentality of the massed towards British imperialism. It would signify a change from the attitude of opposition to it, to that of co-operation with British imperialism. It is clear that no revolutionary struggle against British imperialism can be carried on if the masses of India develop a mentality of co-operation with British imperialism.

"The vendors of people's war ideology are trying to bring about that psychological change in the attitude of the Indian masses towards British imperialism. That will mean nothing else but weakening, disintegrating and disrupting the revolutionary mass front for India's independence. That amounts to a treachery to India's revolution." (Red Front, March, 1942.)

And that unheard of treachery started with the legal-communists' conversion to people's war ideology. One by one the Stalinists

trooped out of prison by abject surrender to the terms imposed upon them by British imperialist fascist regime in India. The terms were—support of the imperialist war and sabotage of the national revolutionary movement as far as it was in their power to do so. On these terms these Stalinists bought their personal freedom and the legalisation of their party. They became openly the agents of Linlithgow-Maxwell. At government's expense their men were sent to attend the Delhi student convention straight from prisons. The legal-communists were subsidised by the All-India Radio to preach support of the imperialist war. They went round in police-lorries in the city of Bombay asking people not to oppose the imperialist war. They started their weekly journal "People's War" in half a dozen languages with the money they received from Linlithgow-Maxwell for propagating support of the imperialist war. They acted in scores of cases as informers of the C.I.D. and got their political opponents arrested.

The black record of misdeeds of the Indian Stalinist legal-'communists' leaves the records of Stalinists or fascists of other lands far behind in sheer perfidy and criminality. The reason is not far to seek. It is as we have already seen the lumpen intelligentsia social root of these legal-communist that is responsible for their loathsome political behaviour.

In the meantime another sly attempt was made by the legal-communists and their supporters to use the Kornilov incident of the Russian revolution as a plea for the justification of the legal-communists' support to British imperialism. The canard was started by Swami Sahajanand, a 'Kisan' leader who had developed a sudden love for the people's war theory. In a letter to Indulal Yagnik another 'Kisan' leader Swami Sahajanand "made an effort to justify his present conversion to people's war theory on the plea that Lenin and the Bolshevik Party has supported Kerensky and joined hands with him when Kornilov raised the standard of revolt against the Kerenky government.

"This amazing travesty of historical data and this most astounding example of the mechanical and unhistorical use of false analogies, has gained currency amongst the Stalinist National Frontists, who

hang on Swami Sahajnanand's Kornilov fiction with the desperate tenacity of a drowning man clutching at a straw." That is what the revolutionary Communists wrote in their brochure—Sahajanand, Kornilov and People's war.

They wrote—"The Bolsheviks not only entered the Committee of Defence, inspite of their being a negligible minority in that Committee, they moreover announced that in the struggle against Kornilov they are ready to form a "military technical union" even with the directory. Lenin wrote—"It would be the profoundest mistake to imagine that the revolutionary proletariat is capable, so to speak, out of 'vengeance' upon the Social-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks for the support that they have given to anti-Bolshevik raids, to shooting at the fronts and disarming of workers of refusing to support them against counter-revolution. Support the provisional government in a "technical military sense" but not politically, that is what Lenin advised the Bolshevik Party to do. Time and again Lenin warned the Bolshevik Party not to lend political support to Kerensky and the provisional government. In one of his letters to the Central Committee Lenin wrote—"We ought not even now to support the government of Kerensky. That would be unprincipled. You ask : But mustn't we fight Kornilov? Of course, yes. But that is not the same thing. There is a limit here. Some of the Bolsheviks are crossing it, slipping into 'compromisism, getting carried away by the flood of events'.

"On August 29th, 1917 Piatakov, a Bolshevik leader, declared at a session of the Kiev city Duma—"In this dangerous moment we must forget all the old accounts...and unite with all revolutionary parties which stand for a decisive struggle against counter-revolution. I summon you to unity etc. etc."

"This was the false political tone against which Lenin wrote these memorable words—"To forget the old accounts would have meant to open new credits for the candidates in Bankruptcy." Further Lenin wrote—"We will fight. We are fighting against Kornilov, but we are not supporting Kerensky, but exposing his weakness. This is a different thing...We must struggle ruthlessly against phrases about supporting the provisional government etc..

precisely as mere phrases."

"Thus in fighting Kornilov, the Russian proletariat was not supporting Kerensky, it was only pursuing its own special aims.

"From the above quoted utterances of Lenin we can draw the following conclusions :

"Firstly, only a "technical military union" with the provisional government; this was all that Lenin could recommend to the Russian proletariat and to the Bolshevik Party.

"Secondly, Lenin warned the Bolsheviks not to support the government of Kerensky in any case. That would be unprincipled (Lenin). Here Lenin wanted to point out that only technical support can be given to Kerensky, but no political support.

"Thirdly, Lenin pointed out that fight against Kornilov by no means implied support to Kerensky. "That is not the same thing. There is a limit here. Some of the Bolsheviks are crossing it slipping into compromisism or getting carried away by the flood of events" (Lenin). Here Lenin hinted at the attitude of Piatakov and such other Bolsheviks.

"Hasn't Swami Sahajanand taken up exactly the same attitude as that of Piatakov and hasn't he in a panic got himself "carried away by the flood of events"? Don't the slogans 'people's war' and 'democratic front' which Swami Sahajanand finds himself so deeply attached to these days, lend political support to British imperialism? Is it not "slipping into compromisism" (Lenin) with British imperialism? Doesn't the acceptance of these slogans amount to ideological concession to British imperialism which must lead to political concessions?

"We are the sworn enemies of fascism and against it we must carry on a prolonged and ruthless struggle till fascism is exterminated. But it is one thing to fight against fascism and quite another thing to mis-represent the character of the present war and to propagate such false slogans as 'people's war' and 'democratic front'. This is thoroughly unprincipled. The Bolsheviks opposed Kornilov, and it is because of them that Kornilov was smashed,

without supporting the government of Kerensky. They brought pressure on Kerensky and forced the provisional government to accede to the demands of the workers of Petrograd to arm themselves. They could do so, firstly, because there was a revolution which had overthrown autocracy, and secondly, because there were the Soviets, the mighty organs of the revolutionary masses of Russia. Even then the Bolshevik Party did not support the provisional government and Lenin pulled up those Bolsheviks who like Piatakov got panicky and craved for unity with the government of the Russian bourgeoisie.

"Lenin castigated those who like Piatakov took up a defencist position. Lenin wrote—"We will become defencist only after the transfer of power to the proletariat. Neither the capture of Riga nor the capture of Petersburg will make us defencists. Upto that moment we are for proletarian revolution. We are against the war. We are not defencists." And Trotsky wrote—"The fall of Riga is a cruel blow. The fall for Petersburg will be a misfortune. But the fall of the international policy of the Russian proletariat will be ruinous."

"And moreover is there even the slightest justification for using the Kornilov incident as a plausible analogy to the present situation in India?

"The historical back-ground of the Kornilov incident had the following characteristics :

Firstly, the masses had already destroyed autocracy.

Secondly, though the masses had to surrender the state power into the hands of the bourgeoisie in February due to the weakness of their political parties, yet the masses had kept sufficient power in their hands through their soviets.

Thirdly, though the bourgeoisie usurped the state power, it was powerless to exert it fully on the masses. The phenomenon of dual power had made its appearance in February.

Fourthly, by lending only 'technical military help' to the provisional government, on no account political help, the workers of Petrograd got the chance of arming themselves.

"Does the political situation in India fulfil even a single one of these conditions? Are analogies meant to be used as a claptrap for the masses, for the ill-informed and for the justification of one's panicky state of mind and one's consequent surrender to reaction?"

"And moreover are analogies justified when there is a similarity only in most superficial non-essentials between the events compared and when there exists profound differences between the subjects of analogy in their fundamental aspects?"

"We hope this will be enough for Swami Sahajanand and we trust that this will cure him (or is it a vain hope?) of the malady of false analogy, panic, compromisism and defencism. As for the so-called National Frontists (Stalinists) no reasoning can do them any good. Saboteurs of revolution have their own logic, propounded and codified in the school of treachery and opportunism.

"Let us mobilise the masses of India against fascism and rouse them to oppose fascist aggression. But that task can only be fulfilled when we explain to the masses the imperialist character of the present war and rouse the masses to action both against imperialism and fascism.

"We must follow a distinct course with a definite aim in view just as the Bolsheviks did in their fight against Kornilov.

"And that, Swami Sahajanand, cannot be accomplished by covering imperialism with one's own unprincipled opportunism and by making it appear thereby democratic and respectable."

(Sahajanand, Kornilov and People's war).

Standing firm on the foundation of revolutionary defeatism of international Marxism, the revolutionary communists exposed the imperialistic-chauvinistic implication of the people's war slogan.

Even the fall of Riga and Petersburg was not considered at all sufficient a reason by Lenin to become chauvinistic-defencist. Only after the revolution can the communist become defencists. But here the legal-communist Stalinists of India became defencists of British imperialist colonial empire, because for the moment that suited the political purpose of their pay-master, Stalin.

Red Front wrote—"Since the war started, the Stalinists and the Royists advanced one step more in pursuance of their united front tactic. From the united front with the Indian bourgeoisie they passed on the united front with the British imperialism. The myth of People's war was created in order to cover up the shameful surrender to imperialism. When Stalin bound himself with the golden chain of friendship with Hitler, these Stalinist chorus-boys discovered democratic virtues in Hitlerism, to-day when Stalin and Churchill are so by an equally golden chain of friendship, the Stalinist legal-communists in India have no other alternative but to serve British imperialism. They have reduced the great principle of revolutionary internationalism to the principle of wage slavery of Stalin's clique. The change of policy of the Stalinist National Frontist will depend entirely as in the pact on the order of Stalin and on nothing else." (Red Front. October, 1942).

In Red Front. March, 1943 we read—"Attempts of the once "National Frontists" and now Imperialist Frontists and other so-called independent 'kisan' and labour leaders like Swami Sahajanand, Indulal Yagnik etc. proved ridiculous in its effect upon the general picture of the movement and their sudden somersaults, as a natural culmination of their opportunities, have brought political suicide for them, confusion for their followers and indignation and disgrace for their avowed political ideals and helped the Indian bourgeoisie to ridicule any idea of class-organisation, independent of the Congress. Thus we see these Maxwell-boys (these Stalinist legal-communists, the Royists who could never dream of any other organisation but the Congress) and the confused independent leaders have now neither the Congress nor the masses nor even their 'mass organisations' to stand upon. They have left the native bourgeoisie, left the masses and the intermediate classes. They now stand nowhere on Indian soil. They are now hanging on foreign interests."

In 1942 the Indian bourgeoisie under the leadership of Gandhiji started the 'quit India' movement. We have seen that when the second imperialist war started in 1939. "the bourgeois Congress adopted a policy of futile neutrality. Neither help nor obstruct, this most absurd policy was adopted." '(Revolution and Quit India' number of the Red Front, October, 1942).

We have also seen as to why the Indian bourgeoisie adopted this policy of purposeful hypocrisy in 1939. Red Front writes—"In 1932 British imperialism had not as yet received any hard knock from Nazi Germany and its power was not weakened by the continuous reverses that since then have weakened British imperialism considerably. Then there was another factor which was causing great uneasiness to the Indian bourgeoisie...The Indian bourgeoisie realised with alarm that the result of the war was going in favour of its most dreaded enemy, the Soviet Government. Whereas to the European and American bourgeoisie Stalin had long ago unmasked himself, to the Indian bourgeoisie, he still appeared as the incarnation of world-revolution. The apparent success of Stalin's unprincipled diplomacy frightened them. They sensed in the victory of Stalin's diplomatic the growing power of the Soviet Government and of their own approaching doom. Thus the international political situation in 1939 militated against the possibility of the Indian bourgeoisie launching a mass movement against British imperialism. What appeared to them to be Stalin's diplomatic victories had unnerved the Indian bourgeoisie. It started seeing the unwritten word of its class-destruction on the wall of international political development. That is why we witnessed the political phenomenon of the resignation of ministry stunt and the melodrama of 'Individual Satyagraha' enacted by the Indian National Congress under the guidance and patronage of its class-owner, the Indian bourgeoisie. In 1939 the world political situation did not allow the Indian bourgeoisie to go further than this." '(Revolution and Quit India' number of the Red Front, October, 1942).

This was the reason of the hypocritical 'moral protest' gesture of the Indian bourgeoisie in 1939. By 1942, the international political background had undergone a colossal change. Fascism has not only scored victory after victory against the so-called democratic powers, fascism has moreover given infinitely worse and deadly blows to the Soviet power. Whether the naked fascism of Hitlerian type or the veiled fascism of Churchillian type will ultimately win, one thing is certain, world-imperialism as a whole will emerge out of this war immeasurably stronger than the world-revolutionary front. Soviet Russia for years to come will be

dependent on the Anglo-American imperialist powers. Soviet Russia under Stalin had long ago ceased to be the ideological centre of world revolution, now it ceases to be one also from the point of view of financial and technical assistance to the international revolutionary movement.

"The present day dependence of Soviet Russia on Anglo-American imperialism has forced the Soviet Government to lend its support to the notorious Atlantic Charter and to enter into pact with British imperialism in which the Soviet Government promises not to interfere in any way the 'status quo' of British imperialist domination for another twenty years. "Stalinism has finished the role of Soviet Russia as the yeast of world revolution. In 1942, the forces of World-revolution have reached its extreme low water mark. For the time being counter-revolution has come out supremely triumphant. The Indian bourgeoisie is not primarily concerned as to which combination of the two warring imperialist power come out victorious in this world-war, because whichever side wins, it will not materially alter its class-position. The victory of neither side can or will destroy the economic privileges of the bourgeoisie which the victory of Soviet Russia would certainly have meant. Therefore the defeat of Soviet Russia and its tragic weakening is a most welcome thing to the world-bourgeoisie... To-day the Indian bourgeoisie is confident that a mass uprising in India receive no help of any importance from Soviet Russia. Any mass movement which the Indian bourgeoisie would organise in order to put pressure on British imperialism will not be able to break through the bourgeois limitations of the movement and assume a revolutionary form because those two factors which are necessary for such a break through are missing; firstly, the revolutionary leadership of the masses in India, and secondly, the help given to a revolution by an international revolutionary centre. The utter characterlessness of the leftist movement in India as a whole and its miserable weakness on the one hand and the mortal weakening of the Soviet power by the Nazi on the other, both these phenomena have negated the possibilities of a successful revolutionary movement in India for some time to come." ('Revolution and Quit India' issue of Red Front October, 1942).

That is the reason why the hypocritical mist of "moral gesture" of 1939-1941 evaporated in 1942 by the rays of class-interests. The hint of the possibility of a scorched earth policy being followed in India in case of a Japanese attack on India, the collapse of the British imperialist regime in Burma, the growing food scarcity in the country, the terrible battering of Soviet Russia by the Nazis,— all these factors contributed their shares in the decision of the Indian bourgeoisie to launch a pressure movement against British imperialism in Autumn, 1942.

The 'Quit India' slogan reflects all these political reflection and epitomises the political conclusions reached by the Indian bourgeoisie. It is an admirable slogan for inflaming the masses and for mobilising them against British imperialist dominations. But the bourgeois wants only a pressure movement not a revolutionary movement. It declares that the movement, would be short and swift. In other words, the Indian bourgeoisie is fighting shy of the prospect of leaving the masses too long in a state of mobilisation. Such a state of mobilisation spread over a long period may lead on to the revolutionary transformation of the masses. Such a risk the Indian bourgeoisie is naturally not prepared to take. Therefore the movement is contemplated as a short and swift one...But it must not be allowed to get linked up through a centralised leadership. Its spontaneous, atomised and non-centralised character must be maintained. This is the political implication of the programme of action of the Quit India movement that the Congress has placed before the country. The state power can not be seized by spontaneous non-centralised episodes of violence. The seizure of power can never be made by a movement of spontaneous and decentralised nature ; it can only be attained through a movement led consciously by a political party with a centralised leadership. In other words the seizure of power can only be the outcome of revolutionary process; and a revolution is by no means a huge pile of unrelated an unconnected episodes of violence. Revolution is a planned action undertaken but a political party for the seizure of power. That the authors of the Quit India movement do not want a revolutionary movement but just outbursts of localised mob-violence, is quite evident from the plan of action they have put forward. They

themselves are determined to see that the present episodic character of the mass violence is maintained. The intentions of the leadership is also apparent from the way that the entire Congress leadership has meekly allowed itself to be transported to the jail. To expect a political movement to succeed a without the guidance of leadership is something like expecting the army to fight without a general staff. Thus we are driven to the conclusion that seizure of power has not been contemplated at all. Transference of power by the pressure of world-development and of internal anarchy is the high water mark that the political movement led by the Indian bourgeoisie can reach to-day." ('Revolution and Quit India' number of Red Front, October, 1942).

Bourgeois Congress raised the cry of 'Quit India' but gave no programme of action and the leadership betrayed the masses and consciously kept the movement within the bounds of disconnected episodes of violence. Yet what the masses of India did without any leadership, without any plan of action, being supplied to them, will be a proud heritage of the generations of fighters for freedom and social equality all over the world. Unarmed, left in the lurch by the Congress leadership without any help from any outside source, the masses of India challenged the British imperialist fascist regime in India in hundreds of heroic encounters. Thousands and thousands gave their lives, hundreds of villages were pillaged and burnt by imperialist soldiers, mass rape of women was carried out according to imperialist plan, nearly hundred thousand were arrested, still they fought on, attack after attack, one more heroic than the other, hoping against hope that revolutionary help and direction shall reach them. But nothing came, no direction, no help. After two months of heroic struggle they retreated before the inhuman savagery of British imperialist forces in India.

It can be asked that whatever role the bourgeois Congress may have played, where were the leftist, what were they doing at this crucial phase of mass upsurge?

Why did not the leftist parties which had been swearing by revolutions for so many years, take the leadership of this gigantic spontaneous mass upsurge in India and direct it on the path of

revolution? The question is more than pertinent and requires a thorough answer.

There have been so far four parties in the field which constituted the left movement in India :

- (1) The Congress-socialist Party,
- (2) The Communist Party of India (The Stalinist legal-communist party),
- (3) The Royist party and
- (4) The Revolutionary Communist Party of India.

(During the August Movement, 1942, the name of the party was changed from Communist Party of India to Revolutionary Communist Party of India—see Red Front, March, 1943).

Of these four parties, the Stalinist legal-communist party and the Royist party have become imperialism-defencists and open saboteurs of national revolution.

The other two parties, the Congress-socialist Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party of India though both had joined the mass upheaval released by the Quit India movement, their approach to the Quit India movement has been totally different from one another.

The Congress-Socialist Party as behoves a wing of the bourgeois Congress was all praise for the leadership of this movement and had not a word of criticism for it. Its criticism was limited to a 'philosophical' (!) discuss on non-violence. Even in the period of a mass upsurge all the criticism that it had to offer against the betrayal of the revolution by the bourgeois Congress has been only about Gandhian non-violence! Such is the revolutionary (!) role of this petty bourgeois party! Its leaders never learnt the simple truth that for a socialist party (of course they may protest against it and say, when has it ever been one?) it is absolutely necessary to criticise the hauling nature of its bourgeois ally even at the time when they are both attacking the common enemy. It must caution the masses against the bourgeoisie, the compromising character of the bourgeoisie and place its own demands and plan of actions

before the people. This is the political tactic that every party calling itself leftist, must follow.

Remember what Marx wrote in 1850 in his address to the Communist League—"In the case where a struggle against a common enemy exists, a special kind of alliance is unnecessary, ..etc." (as quoted before) and also remember Lenin's important advice. "Strike together but march separately". The Congress-socialist never thinks himself separate from the Congress—a congress-man first, then a socialist. This policy and faith, however good for being a blind follower, can never be the mettle for any independent leadership. Thus for example, when Gandhiji came out, openly dissociated himself from the August movement and condemned all violent activities and condemned those congress men and women who took part in it and asked them to stop all sorts of violent talk and movement, there was nobody, not even the C.S.P.—to won the responsibility of the movement—not to speak of having the courage to continue it. It has no voice to-day, its lamentable weakness in political conception has created wild confusion as revealed in the book of Masani "Socialism Reconsidered" which is nothing but "socialism withdrawn". Dantwalla's "Gandhism Reconsidered" which is nothing but "Gandhism and not socialism" and in Atchut Patwardhan's letter to workers on labour front to abandon Marxian teachings of class struggle and to accept the Gandhian tactics of Mazdoor Mahajan as revealed in Ahmedabad—i.e. class-collaborationism, and in Dr. Lohia's mystical meaninglessness in 'Inquilab'. Obviously the influence that C.S.P. wields to-day is not due to its theory (which it has none other than the bourgeois leadership at every critical stage) but to its capacity to follow the whims of its masters.

There can be no real truce with the class-enemy at any stage. Even when along with the bourgeoisie the masses will strike at the common enemy, they must at every opportunity oppose the bourgeoisie with their own demands. In no case should the leaders of the working class parties allow the workers and the masses to lose sight of their own special ends.

In one of the circulars issued by Jaiprakash Narain, the congress-

socialist leader after his escape from Jail, he says—"Nothing like it ever happened or was expected to happen in this our long suffering and suppressed country. It truly was the "Open rebellion envisaged by our incomparable leader Mahatma Gandhi."

The utter bankruptcy of the leadership, its conscious betrayal of the mass revolution, its deliberate plan of not planning the mass uprising, its intentional sabotage of the mass movement, the inevitable class-limitations of this bourgeois leadership etc. etc. there is not a simple word about these things in the circular.

All that we learn from the lips of the congress-socialist worshipper of the 'incomparable leader Mahatma Gandhi' (which really means—the incomparable leader of the Indian bourgeoisie) is that there have been two reasons for the suppression of the movement. firstly that "there was no efficient organisation" and secondly that "after the first phase of the rising was over there was no further programme placed before the people."

So this is the worth of Jaiprakash Narain's 'incomparable leader' who neither created efficient organisation for the uprising, nor placed any programme before the people. Yet he talked of "open rebellion" ad nauseum and when asked to give a concrete programme, he is reported to have said that all that is there to do is to carry the message 'open rebellion' to the villages. The masses will do the rest! In other words keep the movement a spontaneous and unorganised in character as one can.

Such is the incomparable leadership!

He has not the heart to analyse the actions of his "incomparable leader" and find out if the lack of efficient organisation and the lack of programme of action are not the deliberate designs of the incomparable bourgeois leadership that is frightened to death in the name of a mass revolution.

Jaiprakash Narain wants the masses to be prepared for the second phase of the 'revolution' under the same 'incomparable leader' and his still more incomparable 'socialist' worshipper.

But there is nothing strange or unfamiliar for us in this attitude of Jaiprakash Narain and the Congress-socialist party. Congress-

socialism has since the day of its inception has been in the service of the Indian bourgeoisie and Gandhism. "It sided with Gandhism every time when the decisive moment came. Its betrayal of the left wing has been so brazen-faced that it hardly needs comment. Jaiprakash Narain, the pontiff of congress-socialism is perfectly justified when he writes that the congress-socialist have often disagreed with Mahatma Gandhi but never opposed him." The revolutionary communists are quite correct when characterising the Congress-socialist Party they write—"It was the bourgeoisie seed that fructified within the womb of the Indian petty bourgeoisie and resulted in the political illegitimate,—Congress-socialism."

How can such a party which fulfils the role of his Majesty's Opposition within the congress which exerts its utmost to dupe the masses into the sty of the bourgeois congress, and which owes its political existence and prestige (!) to Gandhi and Nehru, ever give a correct revolutionary leadership to the Indian masses? It was never created with that end in view. It was created to stem the tide of leftism in this country and to strengthen the bourgeois congress. Congress-socialism, the Indian variation of socialism reflect all the degeneration of international socialism with amazing clarity. It created its mass organisations, only for handing them over to the bourgeois congress. It sabotaged the Kisan Sabha (peasant committee) at the bidding of the congress.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of India had stood shoulder to shoulder with the masses in their grim battle against the British imperialist-fascist regime. Hundreds of the revolutionary Communists have been imprisoned all over India, Five have been killed by the imperialists' bullets. Helped by the Stalinist legal-communist informers, the government had let loose its savage repression against the revolutionary communist party. Every where they have been the special target of imperialist wrath. Yet unfalteringly the revolutionary communists stood by the masses. As early as November 1941, in the second conference of the party, a detailed plan of action for the coming struggle was drawn up and sent to various organisations of the party.

When the 'Quit India' movement started and the masses surged

forward in mighty revolutionary waves, the party was not caught unawares. Its ideological weapons were never allowed to get the bourgeois rust. It never identified the mass movement with the Congress, nor did it prove its political bankruptcy like the Congress-socialist Party by forfeiting its revolutionary right of criticism of the bourgeois Congress.

The Revolutionary Communist Party was not slow to point out the treachery of the bourgeois leadership of the 'Quit India' movement. As early as October, 1942, only a month and a half after the commencement of the movement, the party brought out a thorough analysis of the movement in the party organ, Red Front. The party warned the country not to mistake this movement for a revolution. The fate of the movement was sealed by its bourgeois leadership. The Congress leadership had sabotaged the movement even before it started. Not for a moment did the party surrender to the Congress-romanticism of the petty bourgeois congress-socialists, nor did its feet were swept off from the grounds of revolutionary ideology and tactics by the sweep of the movement. Petty bourgeois politics bowled over by a movement is a common phenomenon all the world over. The party fought relentlessly against this danger of sudden ebullition of petty bourgeois romanticism regarding the bourgeois Congress amongst the revolutionaries in the ranks of the party and outside it.

The Party stood by the masses, stood by the mass upheaval, never did it stand by the bourgeois Congress,

The gigantic mass heaval of August and September, 1942 should never be confounded with the Congress. Besides giving impetus to the movement by the slogan 'Quit India' and its propaganda, the Congress was nowhere in the field when the actual mass uprising swept over the land. Almost all the big and small leaders had already hastened to jail to seek safety there. And today Gandhiji openly denies any congress responsibility for the movement! Once the students of India had ignited the fire of revolt, the masses started the fight without any help from the Congress. The revolutionary communists went along with the masses through the ordeal of fire, not faltering for once, not leaving the masses

in the lurch for once, knowing fully well that due to the betrayal of the bourgeois Congress leadership of the movement, the movement was doomed. The revolutionary communists marched with the masses in the hour of their struggle with imperialism. They did not follow or support the Congress even once. It is one thing to join the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, even when one knows that the uprising is sure to be defeated, and it is another thing to solidarise with the treacherous leadership of the movement, to sing its praise as the congress-socialist Jaiprakash Narain and his followers do. The Revolutionary Communist Party to-day is not shy of what it has done to help the movement and it shall never disown the masses in their movement, however defective it had been in practice.

"The conclusions that we draw from the "Quit India" movement are :

Firstly, the utter bankruptcy of the Congress, the Party of the Indian bourgeoisie; and its total inability (as the class-party of the bourgeoisie) to lead the national movement.

Secondly, the complete overthrowal of non-violence as the technique of struggle.

Thirdly, the complete exposure of 'National Frontist' legal-communist, the germ-carriers of Stalinism in India.

Fourthly, the phenomenal tempo of the revolutionisation of the masses of India.

Fifthly, the ripening of the ideological premises for the growth of real leftism in India, as a result of the political development, both national and international. The national revolutionary movement in India has definitely jumped over the hurdle of Gandhism and has scornfully rejected the petty bourgeois congress-socialism which is at the service of the Indian bourgeoisie."

(*Revolution and Quit India...Red Front, October, 1942*)

In March, 1943, the party changed its name from the Communist Party of India to the Revolutionary Communist Party of India. In this connection the Red Front wrote :—"The Revolutionary

Communist Party is the party of toiling masses struggling to become the most conscious and the most consistent exponent of revolutionary communism on the line of Marx, Engels and Lenin in opposition to the most severe onslaught, of imperialism on the one hand and profanation spread by the P.C. Joshi group disparaging the ideal of communism itself in the eyes of the public, on the other hand. It has from its very inception in the year 1934, tried its best to organise the masses in their own class-organisation independent of the Congress and independent of any bourgeois influences. Time has shown the correctness of its analysis and in near future it will show more the exactitude of its formulation of the Indian struggle in the arena of world socialist revolution. In the course of its history it had to change its name twice—once from the Communist League to the Communist Party of India and thence to the Revolutionary Communist Party of India. We know as most students of politics know that communism if nothing is not a revolutionary theory, but communism in the hands of the so-called official communists have become so profaned and shamelessly distorted that we have been forced to add an epithet "revolutionary" before communism in order to differentiate our stand from those betrayers" (Red Front, March, 1943).

In the national field the immediate tasks of the party are (1) "to undertake the task of teaching the masses, the science and art of revolution" (Red Front, March, 1943).

The Confusion created by the betrayers, the spirit of defeatism spread by the impatient bourgeoisie and the terror created by the 'Goonda-Raj' of British imperialism shall lead the masses to reaction unless we, the revolutionaries rightly educate the masses in right earnest." (Red Front, March, 1943).

(2) To build up the organisational apparatus. Unless the masses have their own organs of power and fight, independent of the Congress, how can the masses fight when the Congress halts? These independent organisations of the masses and their own leadership are absolute preliminaries of continuing the struggle into the revolution. (Red Front, March 1943).

(3) "To explain the sinister implication of the Congress offer

to the British imperialism that if they agree to the Congress demands, they will join the war against the Axis. We must stand unequivocally against this resolution. We, the Indian masses shall not buy our freedom with the cost of continuing the imperialist war. We shall not fight Japanese imperialism for the British nor shall we fight British imperialism for the Japanese." (Red Front, March, 1943.)

In the international sector the following changes are inevitable :

"Firstly, the dismemberment of the British Empire,

"Secondly, the virtual extinction of Soviet Russia as an international revolutionary force. Ideologically it has since the beginning of the Stalin regime ceased to function as a revolutionary centre, now after the war, for years to come, it will not be in a position to lend material and technical help to the revolutionary movements of other lands.

"Thirdly, the formation of an international revolutionary centre after the war. The national revolutionary movements in the the colonial countries—national in form, proletarian in content will have to form an international revolutionary centre in co-operation with the European revolutionary movements. This task cannot be relegated in the background for an indefinite period after the war. It must be immediately and effectively tackled."

This was what the Red Front wrote in October, 1942, long before the dissolution of the Third International by Stalin.

The Revolutionary Communist Party had all along been critical of the ideological and tactical line of the Third International under Stalin. The complete subservience of the Third International to the political necessities of the Soviet state, the maintenance of the Third International solely for the furtherance of the Soviet foreign policy, the complete domination of the Comintern by the Russian Stalinist clique, the systematic destruction of democracy within ranks of the Communist International, the class-collaborationist United Front policy of the Comintern—a factor which contributed enormously to the blunting of the edge of the international proletarian revolutionary movement and prepared the ground for the advent

of fascism, the seal of consent that the Comintern gave to Stalin's chauvinistic-theory of 'socialism in one country', the support that the Comintern gave the Stalin's aggression on Finland in complete disregard to Lenin's revolutionary teaching on self-determination of nations, all these tragic deviations from Marxism-Lennism, the Revolutionary Communists had unequivocally condemned.

Yet they had not given the slogan of a new International before 1942. And why? Because each and every alteration and deviation from communist principle can surely be condemned and must be condemned but they are not sufficient for launching forth the slogan for a new International. A major crisis is necessary for taking such a step. It is only when the very ideological foundation on which an organisation or a party is based has been liquidated, does such a moment come. To precipitate it is adventureism, to postpone it after such a moment is come is opportunism. The Revolutionary Communist Party shuns both. Just as Lenin could not advance the slogan of Third International till the first world-war, though he had been a constant critic of the opporrunic and class-collaborationist tactic of the Second International since a decade earlier, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India could not advance the slogan of a new International, till Stalin gave the last stab to the communist International by siding with German fascism at the beginning of the war, by supplying Hitler with raw materials of war and by entering into secret pact with Hitler for dividing up Poland between German fascism and Stalinism. The heinous crime of Stalin sounded the death-knell of the Third International. This lesser perfidies of supporting the Atlantic Charter, entering into twenty years's pact with British Imperialism by which Stalin promised to maintain British imperialist 'status quo', were the last straw on the back of the camel.

The Revolutionary Communist Party realised that Lenin's Communist International has been finally murdered by Stalin, no hope of its resuscitation remained.

That is the reason why in 1942, the party advanced the slogan of a new International.

Stalin by his announcement of the formal death sentence on the

Communist International in 1943, only killed once more the corpse to a great international organisation, the soul of which he had killed long ago.

The revolutionary communists had long ago visualised this end of the Communist International as the logical development of Stalinism.

When the revolutionary soul of the Third International was sucked out finally by the vampire of Stalinism, the Revolutionary Communists discarded the corpse of the Third International in 1942 and raised the battle cry,—A new International for India's revolution and for the world-revolution.

Note : This document was prepared and circulated by Somen Tagore Group of Revolutionary Communist Party of India.

INDEPENDENCE FOR INDIA?

R. Palme Dutt

(The following excerpts are drawn from a chapter in the new edition of India Today, which is being published in India—Ed. L.M.)

"Our strike has been an historic event in the life of our nation. For the first time the blood of men in the services and men in the streets flowed together in a common cause. We, in the services, will never forget this. We know also that you, our brothers and sisters, will not forget. Long live our great people. Jai Hind!"

*Last message of the Naval Central Strike Committee,
Bombay, February 23, 1946.*

"India in the opinion of many, was on the verge of a revolution before the British Cabinet Mission arrived. The Cabinet Mission has, at least, postponed, if not eliminated, the danger.

(P.J. Griffiths, leader of the European Group in the Indian Central Legislative Assembly, speech to the East India Association in London, June, 24, 1946.)

In June, 1946, the Labour Prime Minister, C. R. Attlee, speaking at the Labour Party Conference, declared—

We ask for others the freedom we ask for ourselves. We proclaim this freedom but we do more than proclaim it. We seek to put it into effect : witness India.

Similarly, the Chairman of the Labour party, Prof. Laski, declared in an interview in the Indian press (Published in the Indian press on May 23, 1946) :—

It is the biggest abdication of power in modern history in a non-violent way made by any imperialist power to any people and I hope Indian nationalist leaders will appreciate this offer made on a gold platter.

This view of the new British constitutional proposals in 1946 has received wide publicity in the world press, and especially in

the Anglo-American press, which has been lost in admiration of British self-abnegation.

On the other hand, this view has by no means been accepted by Indian opinion. On June 1, 1946, the official All India Congress Committee *News Letter* published its verdict.

What we fear has come to pass. The Cabinet Mission in trying to accommodate communal and feudal interests, have ignored the larger interests of the nation. The British Ministers meant well and did their best, but their best has unfortunately turned out to be not much better than what even Messrs. Churchill and Amery were willing to concede in March, 1942 ... The independence that has been promised is so hedged-in with restrictions that it is a misnomer to call it by that name.

What is the reason for this complete divergence of viewpoint between British imperialist self-praise and Indian dissatisfaction? Do the British constitutional proposals of 1946 represent the final abdication of British imperialism and recognition of Indian independence? Or do they represent the last of the long series of attempts of British imperialism to evolve a constitutional compromise, so as to adapt itself to changing conditions and the rising Indian national demand, while retaining the essence of its power and domination? Do the new proposals represent Indian freedom? Or do they represent only a facade and show of giving India freedom nullified in practice by the impenetrable jungle of qualifications, restrictions and limitations?

India in the Changing world

Why was the Cabinet Mission sent to India in 1946? Four main reasons may be noted for the new trend in British Policy.

First, the end of the war brought a new popular upsurge all over the world. Fascism, the main spearhead of reaction in the present era, the leader of the offensive against democracy and the most brutal exponent of the open and unconcealed theory of racial domination, had been defeated by the united struggle of the democratic peoples. Now, German, Italian, and Japanese imperialism had been wiped from the ranks of the powers. Anglo-American imperialism remained, but had to share world leadership with the Socialist Soviet Union in an uneasy partnership of the three world powers. The Soviet Union, despite the grim losses of the war whose

main burden had fallen on the Red Army and the Soviet people, emerged from the war enormously strengthened in its world position and influence. The liberated European nations pressed forward along the path of advanced democratic power against the old feudal and militarist and big business forces which had betrayed the national cause and served Hitler. Japan's grip on China was broken and the march of the Chinese national and democratic movement was resumed, despite pressure of American reaction placing obstacles in the path. All the colonial peoples were in movement, proclaimed their freedom for which their liberation movement had fought. In this new world situation there should be no question of maintaining unchanged the old autocratic and bureaucratic regime in India, the greatest colonial territory of all and with the most powerfully developed national movement.

Second, the British empire was basically weakened, despite its share in the common victory. The relative decline of British capitalism both in its economy at home and in its position in world economy, and in its hold on its colonial empire, had been a marked feature of the era between the two wars. This relative decline from the old dominant world position was carried still further forward by the effects of the second world war. Older statesmen of British imperialism, like a Smuts or a Churchill, observed with alarm the growing and preponderant relative strength of what they termed the two 'colossus' powers of the new world, the United States and the U.S.S.R., and the prospect of Britain sinking to second or third rank. On every side the British Empire was assailed by the challenging pressure of the peoples held directly or indirectly within its orbit, from Egypt and Palestine to Burma and Malaya and Indonesia.

The masses of the British people awakening to the new conditions, were turning away from Toryism to find a new path for British progress and prosperity. But the old rulers of the Empire were seeking by all means to maintain and restore the old disintegrating basis of domination. They sought to re-establish colonial suppression in the reconquered territories, as in Burma and Malaya and Indonesia. They sought to counter the changed world balance by a new imperialist alliance, first by the attempted device of a Western European bloc and when this failed, in the face of opposition of the European peoples, by the alignment of Anglo-American bloc against the Soviet Union. In all these new strategic calculations,

India was of primary importance, It became essential for the weakening British imperialism, alike for its economic requirements and for strategic plans, to find a basis of settlement in India, which while serving to appease and if possible to win over the upper sections of the national movement should hold India within the British economic and strategic orbit.

Third, the change in the world position of Britain was reflected also in the internal position in Britain. Toryism went down in overwhelming electoral defeat in the summer of 1945, despite every attempt of the old Tory electoral machine to capitalise the moment of victory and the prestige of Churchill. For the first time a Labour majority was returned to power. Although the moderate right wing leaders of the Labour Party who composed the new Government were, in practice, closely allied to Tory British imperialist policy as subsequent experience has soon showed, the mass rejection of Toryism in the elections was a sign that the British people were beginning to seek new positions to replace the old imperialist basis. The Labour Party Conference, following the Trade Union Congress, had already adopted a resolution, sponsored from the movement and in the face of initial resistance from the Executive Committee for Indian independence. Thus the labour movement was officially committed to Indian independence and it became imperative for the new Labour Government to make some fresh departure in policy in relation to India.

The fourth reason of decisive importance was the rising popular upsurge within India and universal national demand for immediate independence. Imperialism could no longer continue to govern India in the old manner.

There follows an account of the naval rising of February, as part of the national upsurge of 1945-6. Then, after a detailed account, with full documentation, of the stages of the Cabinet Mission up to its departure on June, 29, the chapter concludes as follows :

The new Constitutional Plan of 1946 has been widely presented to world opinion as a plan for Indian freedom. Yet an examination of its provisions can only lead to the conclusion that it was in reality

little more than a repetition of the Cripps offer of 1942 and very far from the establishment of Indian freedom or the right of democratically elected representatives of the Indian people to choose their own future.

The plan undoubtedly represented a skilful attempt to adapt British Policy to the new situation in India. The main proposals were designed to break the deadlock which during the preceding years had held up any constitutional development in India even though the character of its machinery was such as to hold out the prospect of many new deadlocks in the sequel. It presented the basis for possible support and co-operation by the Congress and the Moslem League. It held out a hypothetical offer of future independence. It proposed the formation of an Interim Government based on the main parties. These proposals carried a very slight step further forward the lines of the Cripps offer of 1942, the August offer of 1940 and the 1935 Federal Constitution. But the limitations of the plan were glaring.

First, the hypothetical offer of future choice between Dominion status and independence was very far from the demands of all Indian political organisations without exception. The issue of independence was, in fact, left to be decided by an unrepresentative body whose composition and procedure were determined by the British award and weighted in a reactionary direction.

Second, the indispensable basis for any democratic choice of a constitution, that is, the election of a democratic Constituent Assembly based on universal suffrage was refused, nominally on the grounds of haste. The composition of the Constituent Assembly was undemocratic in that it perpetuated communal division; it was indirectly elected from Assemblies, based on an electorate representing 11 per cent. of the population, and in addition was weighted by 93 nominees of the Princes representing one quarter of the whole.

Third, no provision was made for democracy in the territory of the Princes constituting one third of India. Arrangements with the Princes were left entirely to voluntary negotiations, including with regard to the matter of their representation in the Constituent

Assembly. The States were not only left untouched, but by the ending of paramountcy, if no agreement was reached in the interval with their consent, they would be legally and diplomatically independent sovereign states.

Fourth, the plan partitioned India into four zones; one Hindu majority zone; two Moslem majority zones and the fourth zone of the Princes States. No provision was made for the consultation of the wishes of the inhabitants over this partition, which was arbitrarily laid down as an award. This partition had nothing in common with any principle of self-determination. The resulting three-tier structure would be extremely cumbrous and possibly even unworkable in practice.

Fifth, on the basis of this partition, the Centre was left with very weak and limited powers. In particular it lacked powers for economic planning or social regulation on an all India scale, such as would be essential for progressive democratic advance, effective large-scale economic reconstruction and the raising of social standards.

Sixth, during the interim period no transfer of power was proposed; the old constitution would continue and the interim Government would only be a reconstituted Viceroy's Council with the veto and over riding powers still available in case of need.

Seventh, military occupation would continue during the indefinite interim period, so that the collaboration of the new constitution would take place under the shadow of military occupation.

Eighth, the Constituent Assembly would not be sovereign. The new constitution drawn up by it would not be valid until approved by the British, and British approval would be dependent on the fulfillment of two conditions, satisfaction of the British rulers as to adequate provisions for the protection of minorities and acceptance of an Indo-British Treaty, both of which would have to be fulfilled before any cession of sovereignty would take place.

The scheme undoubtedly represented an attempt to find a basis of alliance with the upper-class leadership in India. As to the constitutional negotiations active steps were being taken to draw

closer the bonds of British and Indian big capital. (Birla Nuffield, Tata I.C.I. Agreement, etc.)

The significance of this attempted alliance is not only in relation to the internal situation in India, but also in relation to the international situation. The aim to promote a settlement in India on the basis of an alliance with the upper-class leaders and with strong reactionary weightage to the Princes, represented an attempt not only to stabilise the situation in India, hold down the rising mass forces and protect British interests, but also to maintain India as a strategic base to make India an ally of British imperialism in its general world policy. This aspect was especially serious in view of the marked reactionary, anti-democratic and anti-Soviet trend of British world policy alongside the Indian negotiations. Anti-Soviet propaganda was very intensively spread in India during the negotiations. Military and strategic preparations were in practice strengthened at the same time as the talk was spread about independence.

The Commander-in-Chief, in answer to a motion in the Central Legislative Assembly demanding that the Indianisation of the Indian Army should be completed in ten years, answered that, no time limit could be set and that Indianisation might take twenty or more years. Immediately following the Cabinet Mission's statement of policy, Field-Marshal Montgomery flew to India for special strategic consultations. It is obvious that these aspects of policy accompanying the Cabinet Mission's Plan, although receiving less public attention at the time, could have very serious consequences for the future of India.

The general conclusion is inescapable. The Constitutional Plan of 1946 continued the old method of elaborate balancing and counterpoise of the different elements in Indian political life, especially building a political structure on communal antagonism and balancing the Congress as against the Moslem League with the Princes as the reactionary pivotal force, in such a way as to nullify in practice the supposed offer of Indian freedom and retain effective final control in their hands. British control was to continue during the critical and indefinite interim period and so be able to govern the whole character of the ensuing Constitution. British

imperialism had not yet abdicated and transferred power to the Indian people. It had rather exploited all its ingenuity and age-old political experience to establish an elaborate, cumbersome, precarious machinery through which, even behind the formal facade of "Indian independence," it would be able to continue to manoeuvre and seek to maintain its essential economic and strategic domination. As the protracted negotiations which followed the announcement of the Cabinet Mission's plan dragged on during the summer of 1946. Indian opinion increasingly came to recognise that the final winning of Indian independence would still have to be achieved in the future.

IMPERIALISM AND THE INDIAN ARMY*

Neil Stewart

European domination over India has been in the past maintained more by the use of Indian troops than British. In the wars of conquest of the 18th century, the frontier wars against the Sikhs and the Afghans, in the Mutiny, in the conquest of Burma and in the innumerable little struggles in and near India, it has been the Indian Army, rather than the European troops of the Honourable Company, or the Regiments of the Line, which has been the predominating factor. This was frankly expressed by Sir John Malcolm, Governor of Bombay in 1832.

“Our Eastern Empire has been acquired and must be maintained, by the sword. It has no foundation, and is not capable of having any, that can divest it of that character; and if the local army of India, but above all the native branch, is not preserved in a condition which, while it maintains its efficiency, preserves its attachment, no commercial, fiscal or judicial systems we may improve or introduce, can be of permanent benefit.” (Quoted in the Eden Report, 1884.)

The task of the Military and civil leader, therefore, was to maintain the loyalty of the army. The mutiny was a terrible lesson; it was taken to heart and minutely analysed by the Peel Commission of 1859, and twenty years later by the Eden Commission. The mass of evidence taken by these commissions showed how the Mutiny had been made easy by the fact that caste and religious differences in the old Bengal Army had been smoothed away. A pro-British Moslem commentator on the Mutiny recorded as follows what had taken place :—

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* *This study of the past foundations of British Policy in India towards the Army is apposite today when the press announces that the new Mountbatten Plan is expected to partition India into separate states on the basis of Hindu and Moslem areas.*

“Government certainly did put the two antagonistic races in the same regiments, but consistent intercourse had done its work, and the two races in regiments had become one. It is but natural and to be expected that a feeling of fellowship and brotherhood must spring up between men of a regiment, constantly brought together as they are. They consider themselves as one body, and thus it was that the differences which exist between Hindus and Mohammedans had, in these regiments, been almost entirely smoothed away.

“If a Portion of a regiment engaged in anything, all the rest joined. If separate regiments of Hindus and separate regiments of Mohammedans had been raised, this feeling of brotherhood would not have arisen.”

(“The causes of the Indian Revolt.” Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Calcutta, 1873).

There were many who saw that British rule depended upon maintaining the existing divisions among the Indians. One of the most brilliant and able British soldiers in India, General Sir Charles Napier, wrote only a few years before the Mutiny :

“The moment these brave and able natives learn how to combine they will rush on us simultaneously and the game will be up.” (“Life of General Sir Charles Napier.” W. N. Bruce, London 1885).

The opinions of a number of personalities famous in British Indian history were offered to the Peel Commission with a view to demonstrating that communal divisions were the basis of British safety in India. Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, wrote in a Minute (14th May, 1859) Presented to the Commission :

“But suppose the whole native troops to be formed into one grand army, the component parts of each regiment being as heterogeneous as possible, and suppose some cause of discontent to arise which affects all castes alike, the danger would undoubtedly be far greater than that which over took us last year.

“I have long ago considered this subject, and I am convinced that the exact converse of this policy of assimilation is our only safe military policy in India. ‘Divide-et-impera’ was the old Roman motto and it should be ours.”

With a neat simile Lord Elphinstone compared the policy for ruling India with the watertight compartments of a boat :

“The safety of the great iron steamers which are adding so much to our military power and which are probably destined to add still more to our commercial superiority, is greatly increased by building them in compartments. I would ensure the safety of our Indian Empire by constituting our native army on the same principle; for this purpose I would avail myself of those divisions of race and language which we find ready to hand.”

The military leaders were in complete accord with this point of view. A memorandum by an old Sepoy officer, Major General Sir H. T. Tucker, also envisaged the encouragement of caste and religious differences as the most hopeful solution :

“The strong necessity which exists for so dividing and separating into distinct bodies the ‘different nationalities and castes,’ the rulers in our Eastern Dominions may deem it safe to entertain in our armies, so as to render them as little dangerous as possible to the state ...

“The introduction of other elements would be advisable..... anything, in short, to divide and so neutralise the strength of the ‘castes and nationalities’ which compose our armies in the East ...”

A Minute by the Chief of Staff in India, Sir W. R. Mansfield, advocated not merely communal division, but communal antagonism as the main contribution to better control :

“I am strongly of the opinion that Mussalmans should not be in the same company or troop with Hindus or Sikhs, and that the two latter should not be mingled together. I would maintain even in the same regiment all differences of faith with the greatest care. There might be rivalry or even hatred between two companies or troops.

“The discipline of a native regiment, instead of being impaired would gain by it, as regards the greater question of the obedience of the whole to the commanding officer. The motto of the regimental commander in chief must be for the future ‘Divide-et-impera’.”

“Divide and rule” was the policy freely and openly accepted by the leading military and civil personalities in India. The Earl of Ellenborough, Governor General of India from 1841 to 1844, also advocated this policy in a Minute to the Peel Commission :

The fewer elements of combination there are in the native army

the better; and therefore the more nationalities and castes and religions, the more secure we shall be."

The evidence before the Peel Commission echoed the report of the Punjab Committee of 1858, which was composed by three men famous in the history of British India, Sir John Lawrence, Sir Neville Chamberlain and Sir Herbert Edwardes. It said :

"As we cannot do without a large native army in India, our main object is to make that army safe ; and next to the grand counterpoise of a sufficient European force comes the counterpoise of Natives against Natives.

"It is found that different races mixed together do not long preserve their distinctiveness; their corners and angles and feelings and prejudices get rubbed off, until at last they assimilate and the object of their association to a considerable extent is lost.

"To preserve that distinctiveness which is so valuable and which, while it lasts, makes the Muhammedan of one country despise, fear or dislike the Muhammedan of another, crops should in future be provincial, and adhere to the geographical limits within which differences and rivalries are strongly marked.

"By the system thus indicated two great evils are avoided; firstly that community of feeling throughout the native army, and that mischievous political activity and intrigue which results from association with other races and travel in Indian provinces."

A more clear and frank case for the encouragement of communal strife could hardly be made out.

The result of the Peel Commission was that the balance between Indian and British troops, and between the various races in India, was in future carefully kept. There were 60,000 British to 140,000 Indian troops. All scientific arms and personnel of arsenals and depots were British. A number of Gurkhas were recruited whose antagonism towards the Indian was known. Brigades were formed with two British, One Indian and one Gurkha battalion, thus ensuring that the number of fighting troops (including the artillery, the predominant arm of the 19th century battlefield) were British or Gurkha.

The recruiting of Gurkhas had been advocated before the Mutiny by General Sir Charles Napier, when Commander-in-chief. He wrote :

“The Gurkha will be faithful, and for low pay we can enlist a large body of troops whom our best officers consider equal in courage to European troops. Even as a matter of economy this will be good; but the great advantage of enlisting these hill-men will be that with 30,000 or 40,000 Gurkhas added to the 30,000 Europeans, the possession of India will not ‘depend on opinion,’ but on an army able with ease to overthrow any combination among Hindus or Mohammedans or both.” (“Life of General Sir Charles Napier.” W. N. Bruce, London, 1885).

The next examination of Indian Army organisation was by the Eden Committee, which met in 1879, and whose report was published in 1884. It approved the continuance of the caste and religious divisions of the Army :

“Our desire is to maintain the great national divisions of the army. ... The armies of India should be divided into four complete and distinct bodies, to be called army corps, so distributed that they shall be deprived, as far as possible, of community of national sentiment and interest, and so organised, recruited and constituted as to act in time of excitement and disturbance as checks each upon the other.” (p. 30)

This policy had already been borne out by the mutiny, when the armies of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, helped by the irregulars from the Punjab, which had all previously kept separate from each other, fought against the mutineers. The Commission came to the conclusion that in the Bengal Army the policy of ‘divide and rule’ was not being correctly put into practice :

“At the present time the Sikh and the Poorbia, the Mussalman from the Punjab and of Oudh, serve side by side in all parts of the vast and ill-defined tract called the Bengal Presidency. ...

“The natural consequences are that the distinctive characteristics of the soldiers, both in creed and nationality, tend to amalgamate, and thus a common feeling is stimulated which might dangerously unite them to a common end.” (p. 32)

The advice of the Commission was to divide the Bengal Army into two halves, each separate and distinct, so as to prevent any possible recurrence of the Mutiny :

“In working out the details of the proposed division of the army, our main object has been to define the territorial formation of the Army of India with due regard to the great principle of ‘divide et impera’.” (p.33)

The Moslems had been considered the most savagely anti-British element in the Mutiny, while the Hindus were considered the least seditious. Therefore, while there were a few all-Hindu units, there were no all-Moslem units, and the majority of infantry battalions and cavalry regiments were made up of the different religions. An infantry battalion might have one Punjabi Moslem, one Sikh and two Hindu companies. The Hindus would usually be of different castes or races, such as Jats, Dogras, Brahmins, Kumaons or Rajputs. A number of Pathans and other Moslems from the North West Frontier Province and the Tribal Areas were also recruited as an offset to the Moslems from the Punjab. The India Army, though extremely efficient as a fighting force, if not in its higher administration, was a body of separate little communities, each having little contact with the other, and the whole welded together by British Officers.

Urdu was the common language in which orders were given. As Urdu, or some similar language, is spoken by the majority of Indians, the language problem did not present any difficulty.

The organisation of the Indian Army upon communal lines was not just a phase of 19th century politics. It was carried on up to the present day, except when emergency or necessity enforced a change. It is noticeable that where caste or religious barriers are not recognised, as in the Royal Indian Navy, the situation that led to the Indian Mutiny arose once more and Moslem and Hindu united.

Communal distinction in the Army is, in fact, a reflection of the consistent policy which has been applied to the whole of India and which has successfully held it under European rule for close on two hundred years. The encouragement of communal distinction in the army has been paralleled by the encouragement of communal distinction among civilians; this is “the great system of ‘divide-et-impera’” whose result has been the present political deadlock and the terrible massacres of Bengal, Bihar, and the Punjab.

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