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Deal with Americans Produces Its Poisoned Fruits

MAR 27 1959
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NEW AGE

COMMUNIST PARTY WEEKLY

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, January 25

VOL. VII, NO. 5

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1959

25 nP.

The Association of Scientific Workers of India in its meeting held alongside the Science Congress has done good national service through its resolution on the Hindustan Anti-Biotics, a public sector drug plant in Pimpri, Bombay, by demanding from the Government of India an enquiry into the circumstances and reasons which led to the signing of the agreement with the U.S. firm of MERCKS against "the declared national policy." It also stated that "there was no justification for ignoring the Soviet offer of assistance." It also protested against the removal of Dr. Ganapati who had built and led the Pimpri plant so far.

for his lavish advertising campaigns, must pay for the past, present and future research in their foreign countries, must pay for the expansion of the plant and for many other items. A Government that can sanction a deal like the above must be called to account in firm and clear tones.

45 tons of streptomycin a year and many more crores of dollars, if we produce more and we must produce more, for our needs are greater. No royalties were involved in the Soviet offer but now we have to pay through our nose for U.S. "aid" and that too in scarce

Government gave that solemn undertaking. Now, under the agreement with the MERCKS, secrecy obligations have been imposed on the Hindustan Anti-Biotics.

In paragraph 11(a) of the agreement the plant will be required to "take all reasonable steps to ensure that such

PANDIT NEHRU did no credit to his high office when he admonished the scientists responsible for the above resolution that their Association "would lose the great respect its workers enjoyed in the country if it indulged in unfair and unjustified criticism of Government policies."

If it was only a matter of Pandit Nehru losing his temper, as he very often does, we would have ignored the matter. The issue involved this time, however, is very grave indeed. It concerns the future of our drug industry and the health of the nation.

Negotiations With U.S.S.R.

Delicate negotiations with foreign countries were involved to set up a composite drug industry in our country and meet all the requirements of our needy people. The matter was being handled by experts and eminent scientists. Disturbing facts had come to our notice that foreign concerns through Indian reactionaries were pulling wires to prevent the start of a national drug industry. Now, that Pandit Nehru has openly spurned the scientists and his Government has sanctioned this deal against its own declared policy, it is time for organs of public opinion to speak up.

The Government of India had assured the public, time and again, that since we do not produce any drugs, except from penultimate products or finished drugs bottled in India, the Government would develop the whole industry in the public sector. Any number of extracts from Pandit Nehru's own speeches can be quoted.

One felt confident that this assurance would be adhered to since the Soviet experts had been invited to draw up a big and composite project and the Soviet Government had agreed to give all the know-how entirely free of charge, train Indian workers on the technology of drug manufacture and to make India completely self-supporting in drugs.

The Government of India had been conducting discussions with the Soviet Government for the setting up of a drug industry since the beginning of 1956, when it invited Soviet experts to come to our country.

The Soviet experts submitted a detailed scheme to make India completely self-sufficient. Later on, again at the request of the Government of

SELL-OUT OF OUR DRUG INDUSTRY

India, the Soviet Government even offered a loan of about Rs. ten crores, the needed foreign exchange for importing equipment to implement the scheme suggested by the Soviet experts. The Government of India invited a second team of Soviet experts who came to India early August last year to finalise the project.

Startling Terms

While the above negotiations were going on, the Government of India permitted a foreign firm to gain a stranglehold on our drug industry. The HINDU of November 4 announced the Government approval of a project for the manufacture of drugs and pharmaceuticals by the American firm of MERCKS, Sharpe and Dhome International, through an Indian company, in association with the Tatas. Of the investment capital of Rs. 4.2 crores, 60 per cent would be subscribed by the American firm and 40 per cent by the Tatas. This is surely enough to startle anybody.

FIRST, the manufacture of important drugs instead of being attempted in the public sector has been passed on to the private sector. SECONDLY, a foreign firm had been brought into the country and with major control over the private firm to be set up. THIRDLY, the Tatas have agreed to be junior partners for the sake of their own profits. FOURTHLY, the Indian people and above all, our sick and needy, will have to pay a very heavy price indeed.

In the pharmaceutical industry of Europe and America it is customary to charge exactly ten times the actual cost of a drug. Thus the Indian patient must support a foreign manufacturer, must pay

But this is not the end of the story.

The same firm of MERCKS entered into agreement with the Government of India for the manufacture of streptomycin, and extension of the Hindustan Anti-Biotics plant at Pimpri. It is very much worth while examining the terms of this agreement.

In paragraph 8(a) we are committed to pay 2 1/2 per cent on sales in India and five per cent on sales in countries other than India, all this income-tax free and to be paid in dollars! This will involve paying annually about Rs. two crores in dollars if we produce only

foreign exchange.

These charges, however, are not formally called royalties under the agreement but charges for research and continuous technical assistance. Leaving wordy verbiage aside, any company lawyer after reading this agreement, would tell us that these are royalties.

Pimpri was built as an "open plant", which will observe no technical and scientific secrecy so that not only our nation but others as well may use and gain from the results of our research. The World Health Organisation had financed the Pimpri plant on condition that India will observe no secrecy. The Indian

information... will not be communicated... screening the employees to whom information will be disclosed or who may have access thereto and binding all such employees by proper security arrangements in a form satisfactory to MERCKS."

Indian scientists have rightly enough been very disturbed by this clause. Science and technology flourish best in an atmosphere of free exchange and contact of minds. This agreement will bind us to MERCKS hand and foot for ten years, make our scientists suffer McCarthy type screen-

* SEE PAGE 4

CPSU Congress Opens



Radio-picture of N. S. Khrushchev delivering his report to the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which opened in Moscow on January 27.

SCRAP-BOOK

KARANJIA TO THE DEFENCE

EDITOR Karanja of BLITZ has joined the fray—on the side of Mr. M. O. Mathai, till recently Special Assistant to Prime Minister Nehru. In a signed despatch to his paper of January 24, he has proclaimed to the world, "Nehru believes his assistant is innocent."

It is Mr. Karanja's habit to find himself amidst storm and revolution—so he says in the opening sentence of his despatch. After accepting this claim of his one begins to wonder what that has got to do with Mr. Mathai.

What I learnt from the despatch—and that was plenty—was that—

- Mr. Mathai is Mr. Karanja's friend.
- Mr. Karanja had a talk with the Prime Minister.
- Mr. Karanja personally has absolutely no doubt about Mr. Mathai's integrity.

The inference seems to be that since Mr. Karanja has faith in Mr. Mathai all of us should be satisfied. If we have any hesitation, even the slightest, Mr. Karanja has more evidence to offer us to prove that Mr. Mathai is no blue-eyed boy of Big Business as is sought to be made out, he is Enemy No. 1 of the Private Sector, in fact he is one of the architects of the Public Sector in India.

Listen to Mr. Karanja: "Mr. Mathai's contribution to the evolution of the Public Sector in India has also been considerable. In fact, the discovery for the State-owned enterprises of one of the most brilliant and enterprising young executive, Mr. M. K. Mathula, goes to the credit of Mr. Mathai... and that is one reason why the Private Sector and its most aggressive industrial house associated with the Forum of Free Enterprise have not forgiven Mr. Mathai." (original emphasis).

HISTORY ON ITS HEAD

Don't ask whether this doesn't go to confirm the charge that is being made that Mr. Mathai was in the habit of distributing favours of high-offices. Don't even ask questions about what goes on in our Public Sector—the corruption, waste, etc. This is the evidence Mr. Karanja has solemnly produced to tell us that the Private Sector has a grudge against Mr. Mathai. After this, of course, it is rather embarrassing for Mr. Karanja to mention anything about the Birla House that came almost as a gift to the trust in memory of Mr. Mathai's mother.

But more astounding is the way Mr. Karanja

brushes aside the charge of Mr. Mathai's friendship with certain American circles.

Hold your breath for what is coming:

"The other charge of American influence is pure and simple nonsense. I can attest to this fact with the authority of personal knowledge. To give only one illustration which would suffice to demolish this charge. I can reveal that the Bhilai Steel Plant which laid the foundation of Indo-Soviet collaboration came about as a result of a personal talk between Mr. Mathai and the then Soviet Ambassador, Mr. Meshnikov."

Wouldn't you think that the Soviet Union had no policy of aiding the industrialisation of underdeveloped countries, that the Government of India and Prime Minister Nehru himself had no plan to build a steel industry in India. Then one day Mr. Mathai met Mr. Meshnikov—and the offer for Bhilai came. Even the readers of BLITZ couldn't be credulous enough to accept meekly this placing of history on its head even if it is done by Editor Karanja.

THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE

But all this is not our quarrel with Mr. Karanja. Like Mr. Mathai, Mr. Karanja also has no solid material to put up a convincing defence. So the Prime Minister is dragged in, Mr. Karanja has even gone to the extent of charging us with using against Mr. Mathai "a dagger gotten second-hand from a patently capitalist source." The reference is to the publication of a report on Mr. Mathai by the Bombay weekly Current which in his words is "a pro-American anti-Nehru weekly which exists only to blackguard Mr. Nehru, his family and associates."

We only wish Mr. Karanja had read both the stories—as printed by Current and as printed by the Communist Press.

The Communist Press knew exactly what it was doing: a person who was being favoured by Big Business, who was too friendly with certain American circles was in the crucial post of being Special Assistant to the Prime Minister. His continuance there was dangerous to the interests of the nation and so the Communist Press exposed the whole story.

There was no hint of an attack on the Prime Minister. In fact, the whole thing was being brought to his notice so that he could clean up his surroundings.

Just because there is an attack from the Right on the public sector or on American Lobby attack on

the Prime Minister is no reason why we should close our eyes to wrong policies and practices of the Prime Minister and his Government. In fact, we would think that fighting these policies is a vital part of the fight against Right reaction and the American Lobby. Mr. Karanja would have us otherwise. But then his own paper would be guilty of this crime. Hasn't BLITZ ever exposed any scandal in the Public Sector? Does it mean the paper is against the Public Sector? That would be rather a cheap way of attacking a journal.

Mr. Karanja when he refers to the Current and tries to lump us with it is not being very honest. It does not help him to defend the indefensible.

WHO SHEDS TEARS?

I would like Mr. Karanja to read a few foreign Press comments on the Mathai episode.

The Manchester Guardian, for instance, in a despatch says: "Mr. Nehru's personal Assistant, Mr. Mathai, resigned during the week and amidst circumstances which leave Mr. Nehru more isolated in his ivory tower, and the private sector more vulnerable than ever." And later, "whatever the inside story of the affair, one thing is certain, that it will push India more towards Socialism."

I do not think the prospects are as cheerful as all that, but what is evident is that the Private Sector is not happy about Mr. Mathai's resignation. Unlike what Mr. Karanja wants us to believe, it is not the Public Sector which is shedding tears, but the Private Sector and the foreign vested interests.

A FEW QUESTIONS

Now if Mr. Karanja really wants to defend Mr. Mathai he should get some information from his friend and place it before the people to prove his incorruptibility. It is too much to ask us to just accept his word.

Mr. Karanja can, for instance, ask Mr. Mathai to tell us what his assets were when he started working for the Prime Minister some time in 1946.

Whether he had earned any such assets when he was in the employ of Sri C. P. Mathen or when he was working for the U.S. outfit in India (was it the U.S. Air Force)?

Whether when he joined Government service he declared his assets as required by rules? And whether subsequently he sent in returns when he bought and sold properties like the Kulu Valley Orchard?

What are the present

DISTURBING

Editorial

THE Rashtrapati's Republic Day message should be an inspiring call to action. Under a Congress Govern-

ment which has failed to keep its promises to the people, this is not possible. The Rashtrapati's have been routine speeches, the usual words which mean nothing. In keeping with his high office, he should certainly not be controversial, particularly on the National Day and lean on the wrong side.

The Rashtrapati this year reiterated the Government's determination to "go on from Plan to Plan" till every Indian is assured of "a reasonable standard of living and enjoys a measure of social security." No explanation of why it has not happened, so many years after independence. No guarantees how it will be ensured, in the years ahead.

"The shame and humiliation" that we have to look to foreign countries for food was admitted. The kisans were called upon to double the present production and make the country "free from the ever present ghost of hunger." The first obvious step is to ensure land to the tiller. The disturbing fact is that even on this National Day, despite the acuteness of the food crisis, no specific pledge was given that ceilings will be imposed this year and surplus land given to the landless to boost food production.

Equally disturbing is the call to the common people to show "a greater spirit of sacrifice" in the interests of development. The nation's economic development can and should lead to gradual, growing raising of the standard of life of the common people. Talk of development, however, leaves the working people cold because they see that the gains of development and of their own labour go primarily to the capitalists and the other vested interests.

The call of development will certainly inspire the people if they find that the vested interests are not allowed to have their own way and serve their own selfish interests; if they see that they are ensured better conditions of life and labour.

The call for sacrifice must be addressed to our big capitalists who can and must make sacrifices, whose selfish activities have made a mess of our economy, and who if left to themselves would make matters worse, in partnership with the foreign monopolists.

The call for sacrifice addressed to our common people can only increase their bitterness and intensify their indignation. In actual practice, it can only mean the green signal for a capitalist offensive against the workers and the people which will only provoke widespread popular resistance. The Rashtrapati's message is disturbing and fails to inspire any new confidence.

(January 28)

Scandalous

COMRADES B. T. Ranadive, Member of the Secretariat of the National Council of our Party, and J. M. Kaul, Secretary of the Calcutta District Committee of the Party, have been refused their passports by the Government of India despite repeated representations at the highest level. This is no routine administrative affair but a political event which should cause deep concern to all Indian democrats.

When the Indian Government refuses passports to the top leaders of the leading Opposition party, it is not observing the common decencies of democratic life and is denying leading Indian citizens the legal right to travel abroad. It is bureaucratic authoritarianism, a shame under the aegis of Indian democracy.

This denial of democratic rights is a scandal that must not repeat itself. Our Party will fight it with the support of all decent democrats. The issue is simple: the right of well-known Indian patriots to get their passport on demand.

(January 28)

assets of Mr. Mathai and the investments—in Tata Ordinary, Tata New Ordinary, Elphinstone Mills, Andhra Valley Power, India Cement? And in National Savings Certificates and Development Loans? Is there a bank account in London and another jointly with somebody in Zurich?

And a few questions about the Chechamma Memorial Trust.

Will the Trust Deed be published? And also the Bank statements of the Trust?

What are the instructions given to banks regarding operation of accounts? Who is authorised to sign cheques?

Who are the donors of the Trust and what amount has each donated?

There are plenty more questions that can be asked, and maybe if answers are not forthcoming, we may have to provide them ourselves. And these answers will certainly not go to strengthen Mr. Karanja's defence of Mr. Mathai.

—DIARIST

FEBRUARY 1, 1959

AITUC: DETERMINING VOICE IN INDIA'S TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

★ From RAJ BAHADUR GOUR

About a hundred members from all over India were present when the AITUC General Council began its sessions in Bangalore in the morning of January 15 to review the developments since the Ernakulam Session of the AITUC in December 1957, and find solutions for the vital and urgent problems facing our working class and our economy.

COMRADE S. A. Dange, M.P., General Secretary of the AITUC, in his five-hour report to the Council reviewed the economic developments in the world and in our country since Ernakulam, the struggles of the working class in defence of the vital interests both of themselves and the economy and the tasks and perspectives.

Comrade Dange posed the question: "What is happening to the economy—all over the world and within our own country?" and proceeded to reply:

In September 1957 when the extended meeting of the AITUC Working Committee was held in Delhi we saw the signs of a creeping recession in the advanced capitalist countries. When we met at Ernakulam in December 1957, we were already feeling it and by the time the AITUC Working Committee met in Darjeeling in May 1958, it was already 'on our heads'.

What is the nature of this 'recession' in the capitalist world and how is it different from the earlier recessions in 1947-48 and 1953?

Quoting from the findings of the U. N. Committees themselves, Comrade Dange exploded the myth that this "people's capitalism" was immune from troubles and showed how the present crisis was more persistent, more extensive and deeper than the earlier ones.

The first crisis of 1947-48 did not affect all the capitalist countries. It was explained away as arising out of temporary reasons of postwar reconstruction and so on.

The second crisis of 1953 also did not embrace all the capitalist countries, it was felt only in countries not affected by the earlier 1947 crisis. This too was explained away as arising out of the end of the Korean war.

The Present Crisis

But the present crisis is accepted even by U. N. authorities to be a "real downward trend in business." It has embraced all the advanced capitalist countries.

In the USA, iron and steel production fell by 55 per cent at a certain stage during the present recession. There are five million unemployed in the USA today.

"The richest capitalist country," remarked Dange, "was not only facing a serious 'downward trend in business', but was unable to provide even essential social security to its workers—something which ought to be expected from its highly developed industry."

In the United Kingdom, production in December 1958 was four per cent less than in December 1957. The unemployment which during the last decade hovered around

ward are astonishing. Production is continually growing and living standards are continually rising.

Their Way Out

Comrade Dange then went on to show as to how the imperialists want to solve their difficulties.

FIRST, they are hysterically attempting to resolve the crisis by an intensification of the cold war and actually initiating short wars as in Korea, or in Egypt or an adventure in Lebanon.

SECONDLY, they are ferociously attacking the national liberation movements as in Algeria and are frantically trying to create obstacles in the development of the underdeveloped countries and their efforts to liquidate their economic subservience to and dependence on imperialist countries.

THIRDLY, they are resort-

GENERAL SECRETARY REPORTS

★ CAPITALIST RECESSION AND EFFECTS ON OUR ECONOMY

★ UNITED ACTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS

and pits are idle. In spite of all this, twelve million tons of coal had accumulated at the pits in November 1958. In fact of this "miracle country" is importing coal from the USA under old contracts and is facing competition from U. S. petroleum products as fuel against its own coal.

The economists of the Birla camp in our country themselves agree that in West Germany the productivity of the worker is exemplary. And this high productivity has produced only increased 'private savings' while internal consumption is not rising and they remain at a "mean standard" in relation to food and drink.

So the West German worker has to eat less and drink less in order to increase the 'private savings' of capital. And this 'private accumulation' has to be exported to other countries like ours, not on our terms but on their terms, not to develop our economy as we want to, but to enrich and prop up the private sector.

"So," Dange said, "after twelve years after the war, when 'people's capitalism' is being planned, we are faced with a serious recession, mounting unemployment and the classical phenomenon of 'poverty amidst plenty' in the advanced capitalist countries."

Contrast this with the developments in the Socialist countries. Here real miracles are taking place. Crisis is unknown, unemployment is unknown. Science and technique have advanced so much as to add a new planet to the solar system. The Seven-Year Plan of the USSR and China's leap for-

ing to furious attacks on the living standards of the working people within their own countries.

Fierce Resistance

But they are meeting with fierce resistance on all fronts. What then has emerged from out of this resistance during 1958? What are the contents of the new situation?

Asia, Africa and Latin America have been the traditional reserves of Western imperialists. It is these reserves that are collapsing.

Africa is in ferment. New independent States are emerging in that Continent. Fierce resistance to the entrenched racists is developing as in Algeria.

Emergence of new African States, the role of Egypt, Syria and Iraq and the people's war in Algeria throwing up a Provisional Government are the new, significant and vital contents of the present situation obtaining in Africa and West Asia.

The imperialist attacks are also conditioned by this new element in the situation. No more could their old methods of granting concessions and keeping them subservient bear any dividends. Therefore a new method is resorted to. Throw up military dictatorships that are amenable to American imperialist influences and pressure, suppress the forces of independence and swallow the economies of these countries.

Developments in Pakistan

are a part of this strategy of the imperialists.

Comrade Dange warned against any equating of the situations in Pakistan and Iraq. In Iraq the military supported by the people overthrew a quisling regime and brought about radical social reforms internally. Agrarian reforms that are being debated in India for the last twelve years have been enforced in Iraq within six months of the new regime.

How are they attacking the working class in the USA and the U.K.? And how are the working class and the trade-union movement resisting them?

In the USA, the steel workers and the automobile workers refused to accept any wage-cut. There was fierce struggle and the workers won. And in the USA it is these steel and automobile workers who determine the wage line in the country.

In the U. K., the imperialists are attacking the trade unions

underdeveloped country trying to develop her economy.

Peculiar Phenomenon

The general production indices are going down because of the fall in cotton, jute and tea which form the major component of production index. This is typical of an underdeveloped country, where as the fall in advanced capitalist countries is due to that in iron and steel and products of heavy industry.

Our country is underdeveloped and is also trying to develop her economy by laying the foundations of heavy industry.

We, therefore, see a peculiar phenomenon that while the production in cotton, jute and tea has fallen that in cement, engineering, coal and sugar has grown.

TISCO and IISCO have expanded. Bhilai is going into production. Iron and steel would register an absolute increase in production. Coal raising, cement, sugar and paper have all registered an increase in output.

In spite of all this, the year 1958 leaves us with an impression of closures, food shortage and high prices, and difficulties of foreign exchange. Why?

We are faced with a complex phenomenon in our economy. Our food difficulties are arising out of a 'crisis in agriculture' due to outmoded land relations and lack of agrarian reforms, accentuated by failure of crops and capitalist price manipulations in the grain market.

The foreign monopolists are trying hard to utilise fully these difficulties and these internal contradictions of our economy and make fresh inroads and create obstacles in our development.

Our difficulties are, therefore, difficulties arising out of the grip of the capitalist market and the foreign monopolies. Nevertheless this grip is neither complete nor absolute. "That is why the basic direction of laying the foundation for heavy industry persists and refuses to be destroyed by imperialist pressure," observed Comrade Dange. The basic construction on the basis of developing capitalism continued but its tempo was checked by imperialist forces with the help of internal weaknesses of our economy.

State of Our Economy

Then Comrade Dange proceeded to discuss the developments in our national economy and the effects on it of the recession in advanced capitalist countries.

In March 1958 itself, the Government accepted that the boom in the economy had come to an end. The production in the first seven months of 1958 was less than that in the corresponding months of 1957. Unemployment had grown. One million was the figure on the register at the end of August 1958.

"But," Comrade Dange said, "the position was neither so simple nor so alarming." The recession, according to Dange, is relative and not absolute. It is a reflection only of the bad effects of world capitalist market and the activities of the foreign monopolies. The peculiarities of our 'recession' arise out of an un-

When imperialists were trying to make use of our difficulties and strengthen their positions, the Socialist camp was rendering immense help in our absolute growth and to our efforts to build up an independent economy. "When imperialist aid at the most helps us in overcoming temporary difficulties while in the bargain trying to entrench its vested interests in our economy, Socialist aid is proving of decisive importance in our absolute growth," said Comrade Dange.

The Bhilai plant progresses according to schedule. Czechoslovak aid to build our own foundry to use our steel for our machine-making.

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PAGE THREE

AFTER NAGPUR THE DUKE

ONE can imagine the British ruling class planning the Duke of Edinburgh's visit to India in a big way and hoping to make political capital out of it. It is sickening to watch the Indian Press and ruling circles echoing the British sentiments and playing the British game.

The Daily Telegraph (January 21) in its editorial wrote: "Prince Philip's visit which begins today symbolises a relationship that goes deeper than politics... Our concern for the country's (India's) welfare—shared by the whole Western world—is no less than when we held direct responsibility."

The Dally Mail in a similar editorial attached "very great significance" to the Duke's "expedition."

A Reuter report said: "If the Duke's tour is a success, the Queen will pay a ceremonial visit to India in winter 1961, according to usually reliable sources here."

The Duke came to India as a delegate to our Science Congress. He is no scientist and as he stated himself: "My only degrees are honorary ones." At best he is a patron of the scientists and their organisations. It is, however, none of our concern whom the invited British scientific organisation sent as their delegate.

It is, however, our concern when the Delhi University conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Sciences at a Special Convocation and hailed him as "a great and gracious Englishman." He may

be gracious, but what makes him great? Even a loyal Englishman would not hail their Queen's husband in such words.

The citation said: "Today Britain and India stand together with their relationship shrouded in mystic haze with no sure answer as to which of them is mother and which the daughter, which the teacher and which the student."

The Manchester Guardian Correspondent from New Delhi gleefully reported back: "The visit has received a mixture of affection for the British way of life and attachment to the Commonwealth."

The British reactionaries preach the myth about the mystique of the Commonwealth, but when the heads of our Universities repeat the same stuff, they are being servile. Words like the above solemnly stated in an august function, ought to sting Indian public opinion into activity and voice the demand that the nation's dignity and prestige be not thus violated.

Long days of British colonial rule has inevitably left its corrupting mark on India and there is obvious need to launch a crusade against ideological servility.

Again, while the British Queen's consort was being thus publicly pampered, etc., India's Prime Minister had no time to meet the Oman delegation, who had come under the leadership of the Deputy Imam, to seek our country's moral and practical support in their liberal struggle against the British colonialists and their bombers.

We only hope that the Arab

SELL-OUT . . .

* FROM FRONT PAGE

ing to the satisfaction of MERCKS or face the sack. It will deny us the right to free exchange of scientific information with other countries of the world and foreign scientific institutions.

The Hindustan Anti-Biotics built by the devoted labour of Indian scientists, technicians and workers now goes under the control of MERCKS, on their own terms, and will be run "the American way." The period involved is not three years as is being falsely stated but ten years and this period is likely to be extended by another ten years.

The country must know the guilty men responsible for the above anti-national deals. The foremost among them is Manubhai Shah, the Minister for Industries, who has doggedly opposed Soviet aid on the ground that the U.S. would offer us better terms and the above are the terms!

The official concerned is Dr. Nag Raj Rao, Joint Secretary of the Ministry and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hindustan Anti-Biotics.

We may have more to say about these gentleman if prompt action is not taken by the Government of India betimes.

The first man to be victimised after the agreement with the MERCKS is Dr. Ganapati who, through patient research work in the Haffkine Institute had developed new methods for the production of sulphadrag. He was sent by the

Government of India twice abroad to explore the possibilities for manufacturing drugs and penicillin in a State plant in India. He submitted his report which was approved by the Cabinet. He went to the WHO and finalised their aid. Pimpri was built out of his research work and devoted efforts. He designed, equipped, staffed and led it all these years. The MERCKS could not naturally stomach such a competent and upright man. They had him transferred back to Haffkine Institute.

The person who is now functioning as the boss of Pimpri is S. T. Raja, who is a B.A., LL.B. and no technical man. His past is none-too-bright and NEW AGE knows a bit more about him.

His main qualification is that he is on dining and gossiping terms with M. M. Shah. He is playing hell with the scientists and workers at Pimpri. One instance will explain his ways.

A nurse had to be engaged. The post was advertised for Rs. 100. Ten or twelve turned up. The salary offered was reduced to Rs. 60. Only the girl, whom this Raja wanted to appoint, offered to work on this low salary. After about 20 days her salary was raised to Rs. 100!

The workers and technicians of Pimpri have submitted a memorandum to the Ministry and the Prime Minister for retaining Dr. Ganapati and against his victimisation.

India's scientists from above and the Pimpri workers from below have taken up a just national cause. Indian public opinion must give them all the support.

NOTES OF THE WEEK

delegation will know enough of India to take the news back home to their freedom fighters that the heart of the Indian people is with them and not with the British.

THE SCIENCE CONGRESS

THE Indian Science Congress is a big annual affair. The country has every reason to be proud of the work and achievements of our scientists and research institutions. The international recognition of India's scientists has been growing from year to year. This year distinguished foreign scientists came as fraternal delegates from twenty countries and the biggest ovation was given to the Soviet space scientists. Indian science is not only respected abroad but our scientists also respect world science and, above all, willingly pay their tribute to the scientific advance of the USSR.

Indian scientists spoke of science and peace and science and society. The President of this 46th Session, Dr. A. L. Mudaliar in his address made a powerful plea for banning the utilisation of atomic energy for war purposes. He called for a declaration by scientists and for firm measures by the Government.

Another director examined by the Commission owned up that he was appointed as a director after marrying the daughter of Dalmia's sister. He owned up that he had no particular qualifications and that his job was to sign where he was told to and enter into as many benami transactions as were necessary for the Dalmias to fatten themselves. The revelations being made before the Bose Commission about the Dalmia concerns are typical of what happens inside most of our Big Business concerns in the private sector. They need wide exposure and there should be a strong demand for stringent methods against the private enterprises and for firm measures by the Government.

employment of the Dalmia-Jain Group and believed that the Dalmia-Jain Group people were doing correct things, and I relied on their decisions."

Pressed further by Justice Bose, he owned up that he "did not apply his mind to the problems of the Company and that he surrendered his judgement to the Dalmia-Jain Group people." He named the group as consisting of R. K. Dalmia, S. P. Jain and J. G. Dalmia.

The above shows what type of regime and what type of reforms Indian Big Business would welcome in our own country if they held full sway and come to realise their heart's desire. Straws like the above also disclose the path towards which the Indian reaction, champion of collaboration with the foreign imperialists, seeks to drive Indian developments.

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BAGHDAD PACT

THE Baghdad Pact Council met at Karachi and discussed "subversion not only from Communist countries but also from other quarters". Pakistan complained of an alleged subversive movement "encouraged and financed by the Government of India". It also reported "certain facts and figures" about the Indian Communist Party's "subversive activities in East Pakistan". It also complained that the All-India Radio was being used to "spread disaffection and disunity among the Pakistani people". Pakistan demanded guarantees not only against aggression from Communist countries, but also from other quarters, notably "India and Afghanistan".

PHONEY LAND REFORMS

THE Pak President on January 24 announced "land reforms which the Hindustan Times headlined as "Sweeping" but which are really phoney. Gen. Ayub Khan has himself stated that his land reforms are meant to make the transition smooth and peaceful, "to do so in the interests of the landlords".

The calling has been placed at 500 acres of irrigated land or 1,000 acres of dry land. The landlords can additionally retain up to 150 acres under orchards. They can alienate by gift a limited area to their heirs.

The Hindustan Times has editorially supported and welcomed these reforms as the best way of ending old feudal order. The truth is exactly the contrary. They are the best way to save the feudal landlords in the present-day world.

The editorial, however, discloses the way the mind of Indian reactionaries works and what they would do if they have their own way with India's land reforms.

In line with the above, there is another disturbing estimate of developments in Pakistan. The Progressive Group of Bombay is a circle of business executives, and the social and intellectual elite of the Bombay bourgeois world. The Bombay Chamber of Commerce is the organisation of British and collaborationist Indian concerns. And Dandekar is the first Indian President of this Chamber. He spoke before the Group on 22nd January on "Impressions of recent visit to Pakistan."

"On the whole, his impression was that perhaps nothing better was possible when the coup of October 7 took place in view of the atmosphere prevailing at that time.

"The Pakistan Cabinet was composed of men of good character, ability and great promise. No other Cabinet has

inspired so much confidence since Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan's. "In Pakistan today, the only very disagreeable thing was the sense of fear".

The developments in Pakistan are accepted cynically and the imperialist role hidden, Pakistan's pro-imperialist Government given a good certificate and the fear generated among the people under the military dictatorship just found "disagreeable".

This is another evidence of the acceptance and laudation of Pak developments by a leading spokesman of Indian reaction.

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN GUJARAT

For the last few months, the Mahagujarat Satyagraha struggle has been going on uninterrupted. In the Satyagraha, started on August 17, 1958, for reconstructing Martyrs' Memorials at Ahmadabad which were wantonly removed by the Government, over 1,800 persons have

been courted imprisonment. The Congress and the Major Mahajan (INTUC) and the Ahmadabad millowners. Thus, the municipal by-election became an important event. All these reactionary forces looked upon this election as an opportunity to damn the Mahagujarat Janata Parishad.

All the 13 Corporators, who had resigned, joined the Janata Parishad, and the Parishad directly contested the elections. The Nagrik Paksh also set up an equal number of candidates and it became a straight fight.

The election campaign developed into a regular struggle. Big meetings and processions were organised and the mill workers gradually came out, breaking the hold of the Mahajan and the millowners.

The non-Gujarati workers and Gujarati workers from Saurashtra who had remained unaffected by the Mahagujarat movement, were also drawn into the campaign and they became more and more the supporters of Mahagujarat.

The election took place on December 14. The Janata Parishad secured 12 seats, each with a big majority and the Nagrik Paksh could get only one seat with a narrow margin of 122 votes. Though this was only a by-election, it clearly showed the trend of development: far from becoming weak, the Mahagujarat movement, was becoming continually stronger, and the Satyagraha struggle had won the hearts of a large majority of the people, including the Ahmadabad millworkers.

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Bye-Election Results

This became very clear during the recent by-elections to the Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation. Thirteen Corporators had resigned in September as a protest against the Bombay Government's policy of not permitting the erection of Martyrs' Memorials, even though the Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation had adopted a unanimous resolution for setting them up.

The majority of Corporators belong to the Nagrik Paksh, which was formed during the 1957 Corporation election. Subsequently, the Nagrik Paksh turned away from the Mahagujarat Janata Parishad, with whose support its Corporators had got elected to the Corporation. This Nagrik Paksh, dominated by the leading millowners of Ahmadabad, has broken all the promises made at the time of election.

The Congress, which had not contested the Municipal Corporation election in 1957, began to support the Nagrik Paksh. In fact, in the by-elections which took place in the middle of December, a regular alliance was formed between the Nagrik Paksh, the

Janata Parishad had won the seat in this constituency.

The Congress has been notorious for its malpractices in elections, particularly purchasing of votes. This time, the Congress stooped still lower and resorted to much worse methods. Under its pressure, the Janata Parishad candidate, who was once a Congressman, suddenly and treacherously retired from the contest just 12 days before the day of polling. The Janata Parishad had thus no candidate left in the field. And the next day, another independent candidate, too, retired, perhaps, as a result of the same pressure from the Congress. Contempt for the Congress and condemnation of its rotten anti-democratic ways became widespread throughout Gujarat. The people realised that the Congress which was never tired of preaching clean methods, would go to any length to defeat the will of the people. This only intensified the popular determination to doggedly fight it.

Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, who talks so much and so often about democracy, again

spoke—not in the least as a protagonist of true democracy. On October 24, 1958, at the AICC meeting in Hyderabad to placate his Congress lieutenants in Maharashtra, he held out a tempting picture, describing the bilingual Bombay State as one in which the Marathi-speaking people dominated over the Gujarati-speaking people. He shamelessly said that the Marathi people had got everything they wanted, were in a dominating position in the new set-up of bilingual Bombay State.

At the same time, Sri Nehru thundered condemnation of the popular struggle which has been going on in Gujarat and Maharashtra against the bilingual set-up. He called this struggle fascist, he showered praise on the Congress Government, which is railing Bombay State.

The whole of Gujarat and Maharashtra resented this speech of Sri Nehru and statements were issued by the Janata Parishad and Maharashtra Samiti leaders challenging his words. In Gujarat, November 1 was observed as Anti-Bilingual Day.

On November 2, Sri Nehru was to address in Baroda the Youth Congress, a pocket organisation of Congress. The Gujarat Congress had decided to hold a big public meeting for Sri Nehru. The Janata Parishad decided to organise a parallel meeting at Baroda on the same day at the same time. On a similar occasion on October 2, 1956, when Sri Nehru had visited Ahmadabad soon after the brutal firing of August 1956, the Janata Parishad meeting was thrice as big as the Congress meeting of Sri Nehru.

Again on November 2 at

Baroda, the same great scenes were witnessed—over a lakh-and-a-half people came to the Janata Parishad meeting, while less than 50,000 persons attended the Congress meeting.

The huge Janata Parishad meeting was addressed by Sri Indulal Jain, Sri S. M. Joshi, Sri Dinkar Mehta, Sri Dabhabhai V. Patel and others, and speaker after speaker demanded the immediate break-up of the bilingual State, which in reality was neither dominated by Maharashtra nor by Gujarat, but only by the big capitalist interests of Bombay and Ahmadabad.

This mammoth rally was a clear expression of the firm determination of the people of Gujarat to carry on the struggle against the bilingual set-up in cooperation with the people of Maharashtra. If Sri Nehru really believed in democracy, this meeting should have opened his eyes and he should have realised what the people of Gujarat wanted.

Another important event during the last few months in Gujarat has been the Fad Yatra of Acharya Vinoba

Bhave. In the earlier stages of this Fad Yatra which began on September 23, Vinoba Bhave had been very critical of the Congress.

August 1956 all over Gujarat. The Bombay Government had refused to institute any such enquiry. After the firing of August 1956, which killed five more young people of Gujarat, the demand for enquiry became irresistible. But the enquiry which the Bombay Government has been compelled to institute is a truncated one. It is to go into only the three firings in August 1958 and that, too, only at Ahmadabad.

The Government in the terms of reference has also asked the Commission to enquire into the disturbances which took place on these days in Ahmadabad and to find out whether any political parties were responsible for the same. This is just an attempt to cover its own crimes and throw the blame on others.

The Janata Parishad and the Communist Party have submitted their statements to the enquiry commission in which they have tried to prove that the police firings were absolutely brutal, unprovoked and unjustified and were avoidable.

The people of Gujarat are passing through great trials and struggle. They are boldly facing all the repressive measures of the Congress Government and are conducting their great Satyagraha movement for the achievement of Mahagujarat for over 6½ months now, bringing a big change.

him and Sri Nehru and between him and Sri Jaya Prakash Narain as also between him and Sri S. M. Joshi as well as the leaders of the Mahagujarat Janata Parishad.

But, he did not utter a single word in favour of Mahagujarat. All that he did was to put forward his proposal that the Samiti and the Parishad might leave the issue for arbitration by the Lok Sabha and that the members of Parliament from Bombay State might not exercise their vote when the Government reopened the question of Bombay State, provided the Congress Party issued no whip and gave its members the right of free vote on the question. Vinoba Bhave himself offered no guarantee nor expressed willingness to become an intermediary between the Congress and the Opposition. He only offered his advice to both of them. The people who listened to him were left with the feeling that his silence had quite a lot to do with the meeting Sri Nehru had with him.

The enquiry into the police firings in Ahmadabad of August 1958 is to be conducted by Justice Kotwal from January 12.

The people of Gujarat have been demanding a judicial enquiry into the police firings of

August 1956 all over Gujarat. The Bombay Government had refused to institute any such enquiry. After the firing of August 1956, which killed five more young people of Gujarat, the demand for enquiry became irresistible. But the enquiry which the Bombay Government has been compelled to institute is a truncated one. It is to go into only the three firings in August 1958 and that, too, only at Ahmadabad.

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Movement Against Bilingual State Sweeps Forward

● FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

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Nehru-Bhave Meeting

It seems the Congress High Command was somewhat disturbed by his utterances and were apprehensive that the Acharya might condemn them more outspokenly at Ahmadabad. They, therefore, planned to send Sri Dhebar, the Congress President to Vinobaji, a few days before he entered Ahmadabad. Later on, instead of Sri Dhebar, Sri Nehru himself met Vinobaji on December 17 in a village in Ahmadabad District. What transpired at this meeting has not yet been published, but since then, Vinoba Bhave has ceased to criticise the Congress. His speeches on subsequent days were very disappointing to the people, particularly at Ahmadabad where he had not a word of criticism against the brutal police firings of August 1956 and 1958. Neither had he a word of consolation for the people. There were great expectations that he might speak in favour of Mahagujarat, particularly because he had appeared to be taking a keen interest in the problem. Discussions had taken place between

—P. C. JOSHI

FEBRUARY 1, 1959

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PUNJAB: BIG STRUGGLES ARE AHEAD

At a time when we are faced with a serious food situation and when our peasants have to be enthused to grow more food, the Punjab Government, not heeding the voice of lakhs of our peasants, has promulgated an Ordinance for collection of betterment and acreage rates.

THAT an Ordinance on such a controversial matter was issued just four days after the adjournment of the Vidhan Sabha and two days after the Vidhan Parishad was adjourned, is another instance of the farce which the Congress rulers make of our parliamentary democracy. The notification of the Irrigation Department published on the same day clearly shows that the decision had been taken many days before and the Government had wanted to deliberately bypass the Legislature.

Undemocratic Procedure

One would like to ask the Government why if two Sessions of the Vidhan Sabha could be called within a period of ten days to discuss a much less important matter like the Gurudwara Amendment Act, the occasion was not used to discuss the provisions of the Ordinance through normal legislative procedure. Also why the two Houses of the Legislature were not called to session to discuss such a serious matter affecting lakhs of peasants, and agricultural production itself? The promulgation of the Ordinance in such a manner does not bring any credit to the Government or the democracy by which it swears.

When last year, the Punjab Government published the Draft Schedule of Betterment Charges for collecting Rs. 61 crores from the erstwhile Punjab as betterment levy, there was terrible resentment among the peasantry in the entire State. Numerous rallies, conferences and demonstrations were held. The peasants in their thousands also filed objections to the assessment of betterment levy under the Act. The Irrigation Department has not been able to deal with those objections and give satisfactory replies to them.

The Government in its anxiety to impose the colossal burden of this taxation on the peasants seeks through this Ordinance to bypass those objections and the whole procedure that had been earlier decided upon. It wants to realign the charges through the backdoor. The purpose of the Ordinance is this and nothing else.

This Ordinance does not make any change as far as the parent Act is concerned. It adds certain clauses as an interim measure in order to start collection of betterment levy and enable the Government to bypass the procedure laid down in the Act.

The Ordinance seeks to realise with effect from the kharif harvest of 1958-59 advance payment of betterment charges at rates not exceeding Rs. 25.00 per acre in areas which the Government may notify.

The P. W. D. Irrigation Branch, through its notifica-

tion dated January 5, 1959 (the same day on which the Ordinance was issued) has prescribed Rs. ten per matured acre as advance payment for perennial irrigation, Rs. five for non-perennial, Rs. 7.50 for restricted perennial and Rs. 2.50 in the areas where water allowance has been increased. Even in the case of chahi lands in such areas the rate of advance payment of betterment charges will be half of the above rates.

In short, the Ordinance means that the collection of betterment levy will begin in February 1959 throughout the State including the erstwhile Pepsu. This collection will be considered advance payment which will later on be adjusted to betterment levy when fully enforced. Government may go on increasing the advance payment up to Rs. 25 per acre and impose this tax in an indirect way.

The proposed amount of betterment charges in respect of the areas watered by the Bhakra Project alone would be Rs. 81 crores in case it is paid in one instalment by the peasants. As this huge amount cannot be realised in a lump sum, it has been spread over

Peasants Get Ready To Fight Unjust Betterment Levy

by HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET

20 instalments in ten years with a simple interest of 4 per cent. Thus the total amount of betterment charges to be realised in ten years on account of the Bhakra Project alone will be over Rs. 100 crores.

An Unjust Tax

The betterment charge is to be levied in addition to the taxes under the existing laws, over and above the land revenue and local rate which has been substantially increased since independence. The peasants will have to pay irrigation tax which has gone up by 50 per cent after 1950. In addition to this they will have to pay Water Advantage Rate the amount of which would be more than Rs. 90 lakhs a year. In short, in respect of the land area receiving irrigation from the Bhakra Canal Project the net increase in the income of the Punjab Government by way of Water Advantage Rate and Irrigation Tax (abiana) alone would be nearly Rs. 260 lakhs annually.

In addition to this there would be an increase in local

rate and surcharge on land revenue, the exact amount of which is not known. In any case the total increase in the income of the Punjab Government will not be less than Rs. 320 lakhs annually. The levying of ten crores of rupees of betterment annually over and above this tax can in no way be justified.

Govt's Case Untenable

The imposition of this colossal burden of betterment levy is sought to be justified on the ground that charges ordinarily leviable are not sufficient to cover the cost of the scheme.

This argument is both unjust and unreasonable because:

FIRST, there had not been a single beneficial project in the country whose total cost was met within a period of ten or 15 years. This can be said about the canal system developed in the Punjab before independence or the development of railways throughout the country.

SECONDLY, this being the first project of its kind, it cannot be treated as only the concern of the peasants of the Punjab. The whole country has gained experience which will benefit us a lot in the future, in the construction of other projects for effecting economy, etc. So a part of the burden must be borne by the Centre.

THIRDLY, the project would

counted in the irrigation part and another Rs. 15 crores is put in the electricity part. The net money required to make the balance of the cost of the irrigation part would amount to nearly Rs. 50 crores. At the rate of three per cent the interest on this would come to Rs. 150 lakhs annually.

Thus after meeting the total cost of maintenance and administration of these canals, which amounts to Rs. 84 lakhs annually, there will be a net saving of Rs. 270 lakhs annually from the enhanced income from these lands. This income would be sufficient to meet the interest charges and some part of the capital cost. Thus there is no ground for imposing the betterment levy.

Food Production Will Be Hit

After twelve years of independence our country is faced with a serious food situation today. Our food production has not substantially increased. One of the factors responsible for such a state of affairs is lack of capital investment in agriculture. The burdens already imposed have reached their limit leading to increasing indebtedness in the rural side. The peasant is today short of capital.

The Foodgrains Enquiry Committee appointed by the Central Government had recommended last year the reduction of irrigation rates in order to increase produc-

tion there, leaving the people at the mercy of hoarders—both urban and rural. Instead of making purchases of wheat after the last Rabi crop and building an adequate stock, the Punjab Government pursued a week-knead policy.

In July-August, when the neighbouring State of Uttar Pradesh was facing a serious food crisis, the hoarders in Punjab started minting money by smuggling wheat across the borders. Wheat which was being sold here at Rs. 16 per maund was sold at the rate of Rs. 26 to Rs. 30 per maund in the Western districts of Uttar Pradesh. When the situation here took a critical turn and Statewide demonstrations began taking place, the Punjab Government woke up a bit and started acquiring such wheat stocks as were purchased by the licencees on behalf of the outside traders of the States not forming the Northern Wheat Zone.

CHANDIGARH, January 11

NEW STAGE IN STRUGGLE FOR PEOPLE'S FOOD

From V. D. CHOPRA

"Hai Atta" is the central slogan of hundreds of demonstrations which are taking place in all parts of the Punjab. Despite the tall claim of Food Minister Pt. Mohan Lal that the Government was "determined to bring down prices," this border State is facing gloomy prospects. Till very late, the Punjab Government continued to parrot-like repeat that "the food position remained satisfactory throughout the State."

It was on January 3 that the State Food Minister was forced to admit that the food situation was really grave—when wheat prices had shot up to Rs. 23 per maund and in some parts of the State the common people were eating vegetables instead of wheat atta.

Since the last Rabi crop, the prices of foodgrains in the Punjab have been registering an upward trend—except for a brief period of two to three weeks when the small landowners brought their produce to the market for sale. This is vividly proved by the facts given by the Punjab Government which by no stretch of imagination reflect the reality. The index number of wholesale prices of agricultural commodities rose to 110.4 in middle July 1958, whereas the index number of wheat of Northern India was 88 in August 1958. In August it rose to 116, in September 119.7, in October 124.4, in November to 126.2 and on January 23 it stood at 137.6.

There are yet another three months for the new crop of wheat to come into the market. It is obvious that unless some drastic steps are taken, the Punjab is heading towards a food crisis which may be worse than the war days even. Wheat which was sold at Rs. 13 per maund just after the last crop is now being sold from Rs. 20 to Rs. 22 per maund. It is, therefore, not incorrect to say that wheat trading has become gold mining for those who have stocks.

Alternative Resources

Every Punjabi patriot is anxious to see the economic, cultural and political advancement of the State. We are no doubt proud of the Bhakra Project and we are anxious to build more industries by utilising our raw material power and technical know-how. But the resources for this development should be found from elsewhere, not by throwing burdens upon the common people whether living in towns or rural areas. They are already groaning under such burdens.

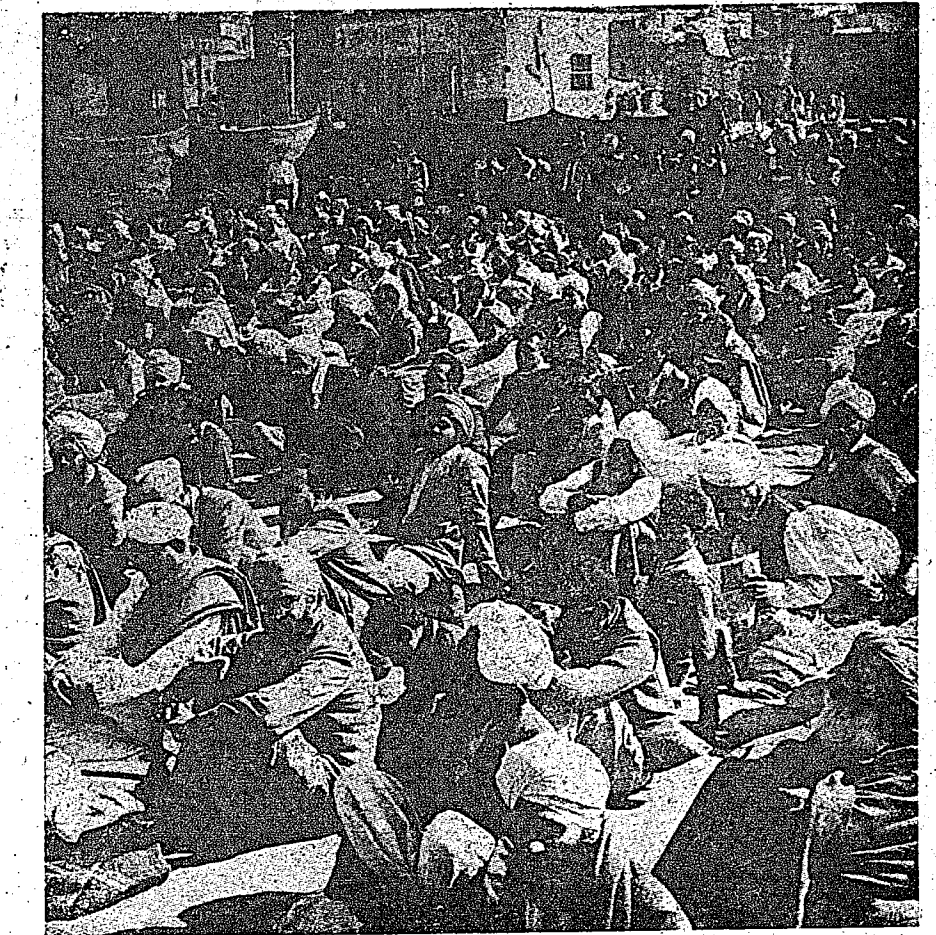
There is no dearth of resources if only the Government makes radical changes in its policies. There is suffi-

cient room for economy in administrative expenditure. Some projects in Chandigarh can be given up or postponed to a suitable time. Agricultural wealth tax on the wealth of the big landlords can bring a good amount to our treasury. There is the hoarded wealth of the princes of erstwhile States which can be taken over as long-term loans to be utilised for the development of the economy. Abolition of the jagirs can be another source and many such avenues are there to be tapped.

Ever since the Punjab Government published its schedule of betterment charges about a year ago, the peasants affected by it have been very much agitated. They have voiced their opposition to the imposition of betterment charges through hundreds of public meetings and demonstrations. They are bound to re-

sist the imposition of advance payment of betterment levy. Because their cause is just and their case strong, they will get the support of all sections of the population.

It is high time the Government heeded this just demand of the peasantry and withdrew the Ordinance. Otherwise the peasants will launch their struggle against the monstrous Ordinance and the people will stand by them.



A view of the rally at the Provincial Food Convention in Ludhiana

ment there, leaving the people at the mercy of hoarders—both urban and rural. Instead of making purchases of wheat after the last Rabi crop and building an adequate stock, the Punjab Government pursued a week-knead policy.

In July-August, when the neighbouring State of Uttar Pradesh was facing a serious food crisis, the hoarders in Punjab started minting money by smuggling wheat across the borders. Wheat which was being sold here at Rs. 16 per maund was sold at the rate of Rs. 26 to Rs. 30 per maund in the Western districts of Uttar Pradesh. When the situation here took a critical turn and Statewide demonstrations began taking place, the Punjab Government woke up a bit and started acquiring such wheat stocks as were purchased by the licencees on behalf of the outside traders of the States not forming the Northern Wheat Zone.

Smuggling Continues

The total quantity acquired up to September 15, 1958 came to 5.54 lakh maunds. This did check the upward trend of food prices but it was just a temporary phase. But in this drive, the Government did not touch the hoards of landlords who have huge stocks of wheat even now. The reports from the districts bordering on Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh show that these hoards are finding their way into these States through a well-knit system of smuggling.

Why The Rise In Prices

The question arises: how is it that despite this increase in production, the prices are showing an upward trend and have registered a sudden rise during the last few weeks. The answer to this question is that it is primarily the pro-landlord and pro-hoarder policies of the Punjab Government that have made a mess of the whole problem.

To meet this rise in prices, the Punjab Government adopted a haphazard policy—although it was mislabeled a 'food policy'. While it made a stitch here, it created a new

of the Punjab, but till today it has not been contradicted. This was an open call to the richer sections in the rural economy to hoard their produce.

When the common people in Punjab are crying hoarse for fair price shops to supply foodgrains, how the Punjab Government hesitates to touch the hoards of landlords becomes clear from another instance. In reply to a question in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha, Food Minister Mohan Lal disclosed that the declared stocks of wheat with the traders on December 1, 1958, stood at 465,788 maunds and further added that the figures of stocks with landlords are being collected. It has taken the Punjab Government over six months to collect figures of stocks of wheat with landlords, and yet the process is not complete. It seems by the time the next crop comes to the market, this process may be completed! No other proof is needed for the influence which the landlords wield over the Punjab Government.

In fact, rumours are current in Chandigarh that some Congressmen themselves are engaged in this trade of smuggling and have minted thousands of rupees during the last five months. It is this policy which has essentially created an artificial scarcity and high prices in a State which is surplus in foodgrains.

Against State Trading

With the announcement of the scheme for State trading in foodgrains both urban and rural stock-holders became more active and in an organised manner, they started pushing up the prices of foodgrains. This was done with a view to pressurise the Government to withdraw this scheme or to modify it in such a manner that they have a key position in the entire set-up of the scheme. Foodgrain dealers openly said that they were waging a struggle for their 'survival'.

Reports have appeared in the Press that in some mandis, the agents of big dealers in foodgrains started buying wheat at a higher price than the market price and thus pushed up the prices of foodgrains. In important mandis of foodgrains like Moga, the big foodgrain dealers are proposing to organise cooperatives for trading in foodgrains and some of the local landlords have agreed to become members of these cooperatives as 'producers'.

This is how both urban and rural hoarders have joined hands to sabotage the scheme of State trading. It is significant to note that between September 1958 and January 1959, the index number of wholesale prices of agricultural commodities increased from 119.7 to 137.6.

Government's Attitude

It is, therefore, not an accident that the Punjab Government all these months has refused to treat the food problem as a national problem. It was not long ago that Prime Minister Nehru said that food should be treated not as a party problem but as a national problem and took personal interest in the formation of an all-party food advisory committee at the Centre. But here in Punjab this committee was formed only two weeks ago.

The composition of the committee itself shows how indifferent the Punjab Government is towards getting the cooperation of other parties in solving this problem. The committee is packed with members from the ruling party. Political parties like the Republican Party and the Akali Party find no place in this committee. Similarly mass organisations like the AITUC, HMS, AIKS and the Dehati Mazdoor Sabha have been completely ignored. It is, therefore, but natural that this committee has not been able to lay its fingers on the real causes of the present food crisis in the Punjab.

Though this committee has made some welcome suggestions such as opening of more cheap grain depots, creating public opinion against smuggling and formation of all-party food committees at district level, etc., yet it has not seen its way to suggest ways and means to give relief to the rural poor. Nor has it suggested concrete and stringent measures to check smuggling.

In fact, the committee fell a prey to Government propaganda and gave a call against food demonstrations and 'appealed' to the people to give up 'agitational approach'. The Communist representative, Ch. Pratap Singh Daulata, was the only member of the committee who dissociated himself from the appeal and later on under popular pressure Jan Sangh and PSP leaders have also resiled from their original stand.

Popular pressure has forced the Punjab Government to take some belated measures to "ease" the food situation. Nearly 500 fair price depots have been opened in some major cities and towns in the State, though the original proposal was to open a few dozen depots in 11 cities. This step has temporarily eased the situation in some places but there has been no appreciable fall in the price of wheat—which is being sold at Rs. 20 per maund and in some cities even at a higher price.

Very Acute Problem

The attitude of the Punjab Government continues to be one of complacency. It is not yet alive to the gravity of the situation in rural areas. According to a spokesman of the Punjab Government, the present rise in prices of foodgrains affects only 80 per cent of the urban population (28 lakhs) and six lakhs of rural population. Thus the Government feels that if it has 70,000

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ON TO BECOME VANGUARD OF THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

Bihar Conference Lays Down Party's Task In State

The emergence of the Communist Party as the vanguard and the leading force in the democratic movement in Bihar can be the only guarantee for the defence and further growth of democracy, to build up democratic unity, and to checkmate and defeat the forces of reaction in the State. To bring this about is the main and urgent political task facing every Communist in Bihar. This was the call given by the Fifth Bihar State Conference of the Communist Party held at Giridih from December 24 to 29, 1958.

THE Conference noted important advances registered by the Communist Party and the democratic movement in the State. These consisted of almost a doubling of Party membership, increasing by over five times the Party's vote in the General Elections, the phenomenal growth of the AITUC unions and their membership from 36,000 to more than 80,000. But these advances were too small and insufficient in a situation when reaction, too, had been consolidating itself both inside and outside the Congress and when serious danger to democracy had arisen in the country in the context of ominous developments in neighbouring countries.

The Conference, therefore, as underlined by the Party's General Secretary, Comrade Ajoy Ghosh in a speech, was faced with an urgency which none could afford to ignore.

Giridih, in the district of Hazaribagh, where the Conference was held, is an important coal-mining and mica trading centre with one of the oldest Party units and AITUC unions in Bihar. This was the first Conference of the State Party to be held in Chhotanagpur—perhaps an unintentioned tribute to the growing industrial importance accompanied with a broad labour upsurge in the area.

More than four hundred comrades came to the Conference from all parts of the State. Two hundred and fifty-seven among them were delegates representing more than ten thousand fully paid Party members and the rest were visitors. Not only the delegation was bigger than earlier conferences and represented a bigger membership, but it was also composed of a broader cross-section of people—from industrial and agricultural labourers and peasants to representatives of urban intelligentsia including teachers, doctors, lawyers and poets.

Atmosphere Of Unity

The Fifth Conference of the Party in Bihar was, on the whole, very different from the fourth Conference held three years earlier at Bochahi in Bhagalpur District. The difference was most sharply marked in the unity which prevailed at the atmosphere at the Giridih Conference.

The three years from Bochahi to Giridih through the Palghat Congress and the Amritsar Special Congress, the Arwal Special Conference of the Party in Bihar, and no less important than these, life's own experience, the general elections, the bitter and glorious struggle of the Jamshepur workers and the broad food campaign spread over the whole Province had closed

these policies, the growing popular disillusionment against the Congress, decline in its prestige and influence, the rising tide of the movements and struggles of the people, the growing use of the repressive machinery of the State to crush the democratic movement, the growth of the Communist Party, the attempt of the reactionaries to take advantage of the popular discontent, the greater domination of the reactionaries over the Congress itself, and the intensification of the factional and group struggles inside the Congress—these are some of the salient features of the political developments of the last three years in Bihar.

But it was necessary to sound a note of warning.

In the first place, the disensions inside the Congress were not based on differences of policy. But as was seen on the occasion of the Patna firing on students in August 1956, or during the food campaign in 1958, the more the

Report, the tendency to underestimate the strength and manoeuvres of the reactionary forces had led to the neglect of the task of building a broad movement for the defence of democracy, and what was an integral part of it, the defence of the popular Government in Kerala.

The Conference noted the big upsurge in the labour movement in the State which had reached new heights in the glorious struggle of the Jamshepur workers who have kept the flag flying to this day and in face of the worst repression. But the Conference at the same time noted the failure of the Party to build up an integrated, Statewide political campaign in support of the Jamshepur workers.

The Conference, similarly noted the broad sweep and the varied forms of activity and struggle adopted in the food movement in the State—from the organisation of relief kitchens to hunger marches, demonstrations, hunger strikes by individual leaders and one day mass hunger strikes. The popular response was tremendous. In the districts of Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Darbhanga and Gaya the movement assumed districtwide proportions and won many concessions.

Leadership's Failure

There was sharp criticism of the State leadership's failure to integrate all these activities and the tremendous response of the people into a provincial struggle or Satyagraha to force a change in the Government's food policy. Factors underlying this failure were many: underestimation of the seriousness of the food crisis; overestimation of the relief measures undertaken by the Government; a feeling that unless the movement is launched by a united front of parties, the Communist Party may find itself isolated with the entire repressive machinery of the Government arrayed against itself.

Here the mistake was to make the united front a precondition of struggles whereas united fronts are formed and get consolidated only through and during the struggles of the masses. Comrade Ajoy Ghosh referred to this point in his speech when he made the important formulation that even the danger of temporary isolation is not the sole criterion for judging the correctness or otherwise of a struggle. There may be occasions where the masses have not yet gained the consciousness and in order that they may gain the necessary experience and consciousness, the vanguard may have to decide to launch the struggle by itself.

But there was yet another, a sectarian attitude to the question of unity, an attitude which denied the necessity of building up unity in action with the PSP.

Despite the rabid anti-Communism prevailing in the PSP there were individuals who supported united work with the Communists and, at least on one occasion, even State PSP President Basawan Singh

known for his anti-Communist views, had publicly supported the cause of the Jamshepur workers.

Under these conditions it was the responsibility of the Communist Party to make every effort to build unity in action on common issues with the PSP—both with the leadership as well as the ranks—in the interests of putting up united and effective opposition to Congress policies. It was the duty of the Party at the same time to carry on sharp struggle against all attempts by the PSP leaders to spread reformist and revisionist confusion in the masses.

Mistaken Notions

Discussion on the Report laid bare many weaknesses and mistaken notions which had beset the activities of the Party in this period.

There was the wrong and reformist understanding of the peaceful path to Socialism which equated it with parliamentarism. It refused to develop the self-acting initiative of the masses and to build up their struggles and movements. Its crassest example which found expression at the Conference was the denial of the necessity to build up the mass organisations of the various sections of people like the Kisan Sabha. The Party, it was said, had to fight the elections and so the Party should directly organise the kisans under its own banner. The Conference rejected this understanding.

In relation to Government plans and projects, both reformist and sectarian mistakes have been present. On the one hand failure to see their bourgeois class character led to a refusal to raise the demand for changing the policies of the Government, and concentrating the movement only to the 'honest' implementation of these policies. On the other hand, sectarianism expressed itself in insufficient attention being given to welfare work, the panchayats and cooperative societies.

Reformist understanding of peasant unity led to the neglect of the agricultural workers' movement and the task of building up the movement for basic agrarian reforms. Many delegates referred to the Provincial Committee's neglect of the work on youth, students, teachers and cultural fronts to which in recent times the Congress was devoting much attention.

By separate resolutions the Conference welcomed State trading in foodgrains but demanded that in Bihar procurement price of rice and paddy be increased by Rs. two in each case making them Rs. 18 and Rs. 11 respectively and the target of procurement be raised to five lakhs instead of one lakh ton.

It demanded the nationalisation of Telco and the break-up of the Tata monopoly in Jamshepur town.

The Conference decided to launch immediate campaigns on a number of pressing demands of the people. The Organisational Report which was presented by Comrade Yogindra Sharma dealt with these questions. It noted that—"In the last three years the Party (in Bihar) had made all-round progress. Its political influence had grown. Its mass base had both broadened and deepened. It has developed organisationally. Not only has

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India And The German Question

by ROMESH CHANDRA

In a village, not far from Prague, there is a garden of roses. The name of the village is Lidice, the roses have come from all over the world to grow on Lidice's soil and fill Lidice's air with their fragrance. They call it a garden of "Friendship", of "Peace"—these are little words, which mean so much—just as Lidice is a little place and also means so much.

LIDICE was a village which was murdered, razed to the soil, its men slaughtered and burned in a mass grave and its women herded out to slavery in concentration camps, from which only few came back. The murderers of Lidice were the German Nazis, the Hitler hordes—whose bestiality knew no bounds. And Lidice became a symbol during the war, a symbol of Nazi inhumanity and equally a symbol of the determination of the peoples enslaved by German militarism to win their freedom again.

Lidice shall live again—became a slogan which united the forces of resistance. And today a new Lidice has risen and the roses are the pledges of men and women in many lands to see that Lidice shall not be murdered again, that German fascism and militarism shall not be allowed to rise again, that war shall be no more.

Lidice was far away from India and we never felt on our bodies and deep within our souls the lash of the Nazi terror, as others felt it. But we, who know the agony of Ashi and Chimur, the horror of Jallianwala Bagh and the crawling order of Amritsar, can understand well the agony and horror of the Lidice regime.

They call it the German question, the German problem. We know what it means: the question, the problem of how to prevent Lidice being murdered again. It is a question, a problem for everyone in the world. For German militarism has been a factor of decisive significance in the launching of two world wars; and despite all the international pledges taken at the end of the Second World War, German militarism is again raising its head, poised to strike like a cobra.

The Grotewohl Visit

The recent visit to India of Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl of the German Democratic Republic has helped to focus attention in our country on the urgency of the German question, and more, on the vital part which India can and must play in bringing about a peaceful solution.

The imperialist Press was rattled beyond measure at the attention paid to the East German Prime Minister not only in India but also in the United Arab Republic and Iraq. The London Times (January 13) moaned that "any shortcomings in the official welcome" in India were "more than made up" by the "large reception committee"—headed by the Mayor—"by whom the visiting party were profusely garlanded." And though later the same paper sought wishfully to give the impression that the visit was

a "failure," no one could blind himself to the fact that India had given recognition of a very definite character (even if not on the diplomatic level) to the German Democratic Republic, by the long conversations which had taken place between Grotewohl and Nehru, by the presence of Nehru and several Ministers at the Reception given by the German Trade Representative in honour of Grotewohl, and by the largely attended Citizens' Reception supported by leaders of all parties in Delhi.

The success was apparent also in the "protests" made by the West German Ambassador and in the cancellation of a scheduled visit to India of a West German Minister, who angrily went back from Pakistan, reportedly because the mass welcome given to Grotewohl in India had made the Minister concerned decide to show his Government's disapproval and not proceed to our country. The pressure from

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

West Germany has till now prevented even independent and non-aligned countries like India from recognising through diplomatic relations the reality of the German Democratic Republic. But the blackmail cannot succeed for all time.

The UAR and the German Democratic Republic have decided to exchange Consulates-General. The West German Government leaders promptly yelped like wounded jackals and postponed indefinitely the departure to Cairo of a delegation which was to negotiate a fifty-million-dollar investment in the Aswan Dam Project. The West German monopolists have made it clear to other countries too that their "bounty" will not be forthcoming for any country which dares to recognise in any way the reality of the East German State.

In 1959, the question of Germany and its future can no longer be ignored by a country in as crucial an international position as India.

We cannot any longer look on the question purely from the point of view of the amount of "aid" we are receiving from West Germany and the consequent "necessity" not to do anything which annoys the givers of this "aid." There is a new "necessity" today, looming larger every moment: the necessity to halt the eruption of the volcano of German militarism, for

the lava of war from it could engulf all mankind.

This Is The Peril

It is no longer possible to stand on the sidelines and watch, to be content with our rake-off in the shape of a Rourke or two, and turn a blind eye to the peril of a rearmend Germany. Make no mistake about it: Hitler's men are back very much in the saddle in West Germany. Eight out of seventeen of the top Ministers of the Federal Republic were leading Nazi officials; 85 per cent of today's diplomats were members of the Nazi Party; 181,202 of today's officials belong to the old fascist State machine; 17 monopoly groups control 80 per cent of the entire West German share capital.

And it is this Germany which is being rearmend; its army made stronger militarily than ever it was in Hitler's times, equipped with nuclear weapons, covered with missile rocket bases, ready as the advance post of aggression, the spearhead of NATO.

From here come cries of revenge, cries of pushing back the frontiers, of reviving the military "glory" and the empire of German fascism.

It is time that India threw her entire weight into the battle against the growth of this German militarism which en-

dangers the whole world with a nuclear war.

What concrete steps can be taken by India in this regard? Mr. Grotewohl's statement on his departure from India referred to his conversation with Sri Nehru and said:

"Both of us agreed as to the necessity of settling international disputes step by step and by peaceful negotiation. Any attempt to impose one's will on another will not lead to a solution and may add to the tensions which exist today. Every effort which aims at bringing, on the basis of such principles, the conclusion of a peace treaty nearer, should be welcomed. The German problem should be settled in the same manner by peaceful negotiation."

It is clear from the phraseology that this paragraph has the approval of Prime Minister Nehru and represents Indian policy on the German question. It is necessary to translate these obviously commendable principles into action.

It is in this same context, in terms of Indian principles for peace that the latest Soviet proposals for a peace treaty with Germany must be examined. Does the draft treaty correspond with the principles of the Panch Shila, of Bandung—to which India is committed? Does it meet the need for working "step by step" towards a peaceful, de-

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Dictatorship In Laos

THE American standard pattern for Asia has since last week moved on to Vientiane, the capital of Laos. A military dictatorship is clearly in the offing and the stage is set to move the Seato tentacle into the kingdom, bordering Thailand, Cambodia, Viet Nam and China. A new danger spot thus is on the point of eruption, a fresh attempt about to be made on the Asian—and very decisively Indian—policy of neutrality and peace.

Let us begin with the background. At the Geneva Conference of 1954, Laos was declared an independent State under the supervision of the International Commission (India, Poland, Canada) set up by it. From March 1956 it was run by a Government headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma.

With the support of the people and with the aid of the International Commission, Souvanna Phouma was able to resist strong American pressure, to pursue a peaceful and independent policy as well as to negotiate the full integration of the two northern provinces and of the officials and soldiers of the Pathet Lao in December 1957. This followed the establishment of a coalition Government in November of that year.

This agreement held out the prospect of yet another Asian country entering the path of peaceful democratic and independent development—"a prospect which the Americans, who foot the bills, did not relish." (Economist, London, January 24, 1959) Economic pressure followed.

The Laos budget is almost entirely dependent on American aid, which pours in annually to the extent of \$48 million. It has been calculated that Laos in the first six months of 1957 imported goods to the value of 631,984,000 kip (the Laos currency) while it exported only 19,615,000 kip—leaving an enormous balance of payments problem.

Faced with American economic blackmail, Prince Souvanna Phouma went on an explanation tour of the United States in January 1958. But of what avail were his explanations when in May 1958 in the bye-elections to the National Assembly as per the Geneva Agreement, the Neo Lao Haksat and its patriotic allies won 13 out of the 21 seats? The Neo Lao Haksat was led by Prince Souphannouvong, who had also headed the Pathet Lao. Together with eight others, made up of representatives from the Democratic Party, the Neutrality and Peace Party as well as patriotic individuals, they constituted a total of 21 in an assembly of 50.

Americans Move Decisively

The Americans now moved in more decisively. They knocked together a new party of the old mandarins and the reactionary capitalists called the Lao Luom Lao (Rally of the Laos People) and on August 18, 1958, forced the resignation of the Souvanna Phouma Coalition Ministry—the Premier was himself packed off to Paris.

A new and menacing reactionary Government was formed headed by Phoui Sananikone,

excluding the Neo Lao Haksat and in which the Commander-in-Chief Oun Bhattakul (described by the London Observer of January 14, 1959, as "a tough professional soldier without too much respect for constitutional niceties") came to have an increasing influence.

Not content with this, the reactionaries have decided to move a step further. Border incidents with the Viet Nam Democratic Republic began to mount, repression was launched against the Neo Lao Haksat and other patriotic elements, bad relations began to develop with the Cambodian Government which stoutly maintains its neutral and independent policy. The offer for negotiations of the Viet Nam Democratic Republic was brusquely rejected. Increasingly the rabid Thai Press began the clamour that Seato should extend its "protection" to Laos (the phrase belongs to Sarasin, Thai Secretary of State, currently engaged in dubious negotiations with the Nato officials). Whipping up the scare of "invasion", Phoui on the one hand declared that Laos "must clearly state that it is on the side of the free world" and, on the other, proclaimed that "democracy was too fragile to meet the menace". (Economist, London, January 24, 1959.)

Inevitably the climax came. Last week Phoui steamrollered the Assembly to dissolve itself, took special powers for 12 months and promised a new constitution under which fresh elections will be held. He promised to rule through the "two essential motors of an independent State: the army and the civil service."

To make the parallel absolutely clear Time of January 26, 1959 wrote: "Like many another Asian leader in recent months, Phoui was demanding the right to rule alone for a full year to arrest the nation's political drift and shore up its economy." Shades of Ayub Khan!

Act Now!

The situation is serious and India, as the Chairman of the International Commission unhappily indefinitely adjourned since last July, must act quickly to activate it.

FIRST, a situation has clearly developed in Laos reproducing the conditions which the Commission was set up to tackle.

SECONDLY, it is surely time that our positive and dynamic neutralism came into the arena to repel the American-backed offensive to abrogate democratic institutions and disrupt democratic processes in Asia.

THIRDLY, it has to be realised that peace in Asia, as anywhere else, cannot be preserved by passivity masquerading as non-interference. Initiatives have to be made and a counter-strategy developed against the relentless imperialist offensive. It is an ill-wind that blows through many countries of Asia. With military dictatorships where possible and dollar-gilded "softening up" where necessary, the Americans are closing the net. All Asia must be alerted and India assist decisively the awakening and the resistance. Laos must be restored to her own people and to Asia.

—MOHIT SEN

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AITUC GENERAL COUNCIL

* FROM PAGE 3

ing industry, the USSR assistance for a mining machinery plant, thermal power plant at Nyveli, optical glass plant, and above all the oil exploration with the help of Rumania and the USSR are all great steps to build our independent economy and discard dependence on imperialist countries.

The contrast between capitalist and Socialist aid could be seen also in our imports of strategic consumer material. For example, out of 484,000 tons of steel imported in 1958, we got 119,000 tons from the USSR, 113,000 tons from Japan, and only 43,000 tons from the USA, 50,000 tons from the U.K., 37,000 tons from West Germany and 30,000 tons from France.

Our oil exploration in the State sector with Socialist assistance was the biggest blow to foreign oil kings. Our oil imports valued at Rs. 53.63 crores in 1949-50 have shot up to Rs. 108.00 crores in 1957-58.

During 1958 we found that on the one hand the foreign imperialists and on the other reactionaries within our own country, tried to make use of these difficulties, create panic and attempt a shift to the Right. A slight shift to the Right was also noted. Nevertheless the struggle continues and there is not a decisive shift to the Right.

What were the main planks of attack?

The foreign monopolies said money should be made available to the private sector, demanded guarantees against nationalisation and curb on wages and social security measures for the working class.

Big Business circles opened an attack on the public sector, and the plan to lay the foundations for heavy industry. They first squandered the foreign exchange and later shouted about the shortage and demanded free flow of foreign capital into the country. They demanded drastic pruning of the Plan and severe cuts in what they called "non-developmental expenditure" but what really is social expenditure on health and education.

The closures of textile units was resorted to to create panic, impose wage-cuts and secure concessions. The closures of smaller units was the result of mismanagement coupled with real financial difficulties. The closure of bigger units was a real fraud. Cloth consumption had gone up by 24 per cent in handloom cloth and by ten per cent in mill cloth.

What was the role of the working class and the AITUC in this struggle in 1958?

● We defended the public sector against the attacks of the private sector kings and the activities of the saboteurs entrenched in the administration.

● We denounced financial corruption and the Ministry's role in export-import trade.

● We supported State trading in foodgrains and nationalisation of wholesale trade in foodgrains that would not only give cheap food to the consumers but would also

render the peasants immune to the disastrous rigours of wholesalers' price manipulations.

● The AITUC demanded ceiling on land as the first step to radical land reforms and supported cooperative agriculture.

● It demanded the rationalisation of certain irrational taxes.

● It resisted attempts to freeze wages, intensify exploitation and doggedly and determinedly defended trade-union rights and the living standards of the workers.

The major struggles of the working class during 1958 (which cost six million man-

days in the first nine months of 1958) could be classified into broadly four categories:

FIRST, the actions against closures or threatened closures in textiles and in engineering as in Bombay, in Coimbatore, in Kanpur, in Vidarbha, in Bhopal, Indore, etc.

SECONDLY, actions against rationalisation as in textiles and in defence of the gains as registered in the recommendations of the 15th Indian Labour Conference in 1957.

THIRDLY, actions against the attempts to deny bonus or lower its quantum.

FOURTHLY, actions in defence of trade-union rights, significant among them being

the Jamshedpur struggle and the Central Government employees' struggle against Service Conduct Rules.

In these struggles the trade-union movement has registered glorious records of united action to its credit.

Outstanding achievements of united action are the Port and Dock strike led by a united trade federation; the March 27 Demands Day demonstrations unitedly organised by all except the INTUC; the Bombay strike of July 25 against the lock-out of Premier Automobiles; the united strike of West Bengal plantation workers in which the unions of all affiliations participated; the united strike of Calcutta tramway workers in which all of the unions took part; the victorious action of Life Insurance Corporation em-

ployees for bonus; the struggle of the Kaleshwari Mills workers in Coimbatore; the strike in the Hindustan Aircraft; the action of the Hindu Press workers and the demonstrations in favour of extending Employees' Social Insurance benefits to families of the workers and opening hospitals of ESI in West Bengal and Punjab.

These struggles of the working class have further enhanced the prestige of the AITUC, increased its strength and consolidated its organisation. Today the AITUC is the gravitating centre of the thinking of the working class on all major issues. Today the AITUC's voice is the determining voice in the trade-union movement of the country. Today the AITUC exerts a decisive influence on major issues facing the working class.

PUNJAB FOOD SITUATION

* FROM CENTRE PAGES

memorandum on the food situation in the Punjab.

It further decided to continue its struggle for food till the following demands are conceded:

● An immediate ordinance should be issued declaring the hoarding and smuggling criminal offences and hoards should be seized.

● The Punjab Government should stock two lakh tons of foodgrains for the next three months.

● Fair price depots should be opened in all the cities and towns and at least one such depot should be opened in each panchayat area for the rural population.

● All-parties food committees should be set up at every level and in seizing hoards, checking smuggling

and running depots, the committees should be given full cooperation by the Government.

● Government should give interest-free food grain loans to the rural poor.

With the formation of this Provincial Committee, the struggle for food has entered a new phase. But the leadership of the Jan Sangh has decided to remain aloof from this joint struggle. It is a well-known fact that the Jan Sangh leadership in this State has been running a campaign against State trading. Similarly the Jan Sangh representative in the State Food Advisory Committee was the first among those who gave the slogan of "miss a meal" and "give up mass agitation on food." Despite this, the ranks of the Jan Sangh are being drawn into the joint movement.

Bihar Party Conference

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the Party—failure to organise the Party Members in Branches, to educate them and to activate them.

It was obvious that in the coming period much attention will have to be devoted to the organisation and functioning of Branches. The Report pointed to the necessity of expanding the organs of Party leadership at all levels and building up collective leadership by strictly adhering to all norms of Leninist Party organisation—collective decisions, individual responsibility and collective check-up, criticism and self-criticism, reporting to and from below and above, and strict discipline.

The Report pointed out the lamentable fact that 6,000 out of more than 10,000 Party Members at the time of the Arwal Conference had to be struck off the Party register because they had not paid the annual membership fee according to the new Party Constitution. It was not a financial question because unemployed agricultural labour comrades had found the money to pay Party Membership dues whereas the defaulters included members from stratas which were not so badly off. It was the result of the organisational failure of

the Party—failure to organise the Party Members in Branches, to educate them and to activate them.

It was obvious that in the coming period much attention will have to be devoted to the organisation and functioning of Branches. The Report pointed to the necessity of expanding the organs of Party leadership at all levels and building up collective leadership by strictly adhering to all norms of Leninist Party organisation—collective decisions, individual responsibility and collective check-up, criticism and self-criticism, reporting to and from below and above, and strict discipline.

The Organisational Report laid down the task of recruiting 25,000 fully-paid Party Members and 500 wholtimeers till the next Party Conference and collection of Rs. 50,000 Party Fund during January and February 1959.

By fulfilling these tasks the Party will take the first steps towards becoming a broad mass Party at the head of the democratic movement in the State.

The Conference elected a State Council of sixty-nine

—which in its stead elected an Executive Committee of seven-teen and a Secretariat of seven consisting of Comrades Yogindra Sharma, Sunil Mukherji, Karyanand Sharma, Indradip Singh, Jagannath Sarkar, Krishna Chandra Choudhry and Ali Ashraf. The State Council elected Comrade Yogindra Sharma as Secretary and Comrade Sunil Mukherji as Acting Secretary in view of the long leave granted to Comrade Yogindra Sharma on medical grounds.

The Conference proved to be a big event in the small town of Giridih. The entire money for the Conference was raised from the workers who also acted as the volunteers.

An important and additional attraction of the Conference was the cultural performance by the Calcutta and Patna troupes of the IPTA and the Moshaira and the Kavi Sammelan which used to be held after the sessions on various days.

On December 29, the concluding day of the Conference a fifteen thousand rally was addressed by Comrades Ajoy Ghosh, Jyoti Basu and Dr. Z. A. Ahmad. Comrade Sunil Mukherji reported on the decisions of the Conference.

OMAN : PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM

While the British-directed forces of the Sultan of Muscat have occupied a greater part of Oman, patriotic fighting forces numbering some 20,000 headed by the Imam himself are carrying on the resistance from the Jabal-e-Akhdar (Green Mountains). They have the sympathy and support of the entire people and the people help their fighting forces in many ways. This is what the Deputy Imam of Oman, Salah al-Harthy, who is leading a three-man delegation told a New Age correspondent in Delhi last week.

ALL, thin, fair, bespectacled Salah al-Harthy was dressed in the national Arab costume and spoke only Arabic. One of his companions, Saif Said, a young man who has received his education in Bahrain and Baghdad translated him into English.

The British imperialists have thrown a huge black-out blanket over their aggressive war and their heinous atrocities in Oman, said Salah al-Harthy. Constant air-bombing and razing to the ground of populated villages is the main form of British aggression now, after they have occupied most of the land. Still the people in the occupied territory are rallying more and more to the national cause.

Having taken away thousands of freedom fighters as prisoners, the British treat them in the most callous and inhuman way and many beloved leaders of the Omani people e.g., the Qazi of Nizwa have died in prison as a result of the horrible conditions there. The British do not allow even the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to visit or bring succour to these war prisoners. No representative even of the British Press is allowed to visit the country to report conditions to the outside world.

Both in Aden and the Persian Gulf area, British military preparations are being continually stepped up. Already there are one to one-and-a-half lakh of British troops in Aden, being supplied and reinforced from the nearby bases in Kenya. In the Gulf area there are several air bases, besides one reputed to be a rocket-launching base. Abu Dhabi in the Gulf area is a big naval base where U.S. warships too are regular visitors. From all these bases and with all this force they hem in the rising Arab people of the Gulf Sheikdoms and especially the people of Oman and Muscat.

Oman has become the storm centre of resistance due to a peculiar combination of circumstances. Huge reserves of oil were discovered in the Fahud region of Oman in 1954-55. This led the British to resort to their ruse of claiming that the Imam of Oman, an independent popular elected and progressive ruler, was subject to the Sultan of Muscat who happens to be a pucca stooge of the British.

Relying on this fiction, the British launched their aggression and the first thing they did on occupying Fahud was to send their men and machines to start extraction of oil. In fact, the aggression itself was organised on the initiative of the British Iraq Petroleum Company. In the early stages, the Omani resistance forces were able to blow up the entire oil equipment sent by the British.

The Omanis, while continuing

their fight, are keen on making the facts known to the outside world. They have set up Information Offices in Cairo and Damascus and the present delegation has set out on a tour of Asian countries like India, Burma, Indonesia, etc., to acquaint the Governments and peoples of these countries with facts about the struggles in Oman.

One significant member of the present delegation is Mr. Faisal bin Ali. He is a cousin of the Sultan of Muscat. Faisal bin Ali, till 1956, was himself serving in the so-called Foreign Ministry of Muscat (this "Ministry" has all along been headed by an Englishman). In 1956, Faisal crossed over to the side of his Omani brethren and has since been helping them, particularly in keeping the outside world informed of Oman's struggle.

In Delhi the delegation called on the officers of the External Affairs Ministry. Mr. Saif Said, the Deputy Imam's spokesman, told me that they had received a very sympathetic hearing from officials.

The delegation also addressed a meeting of citizens organised by the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. The meeting adopted a resolution fully supporting the demand of the Omani people that British aggression should be stopped forthwith, that foreign troops should be withdrawn from Oman and its independence restored and recognised.

Smt. Rameshwari Nehru presiding over the meeting declared amidst applause that the question of Oman's independence was vital for the entire Afro-Asian world. She assured the delegation of the Indian people's sympathy and support.

The German Question

* FROM PAGE 9

democratic, reunified Germany—as laid down in international agreements—particularly the Potsdam Agreement?

The first fact to note is that it is fantastic that 14 years after the end of the war there is still no peace treaty with Germany, that foreign troops are still on German soil and that Germany still is not a sovereign State. The Soviet draft treaty is an effort at ending this anomaly and giving Germany once more its rightful place in the comity of nations, through the end of the state of war (Article I) and the consequent withdrawal of all foreign troops from its soil (Article 3c), the recognition of its full sovereignty (Article 3) and its admission to the U.N. (Article 7).

At the same time in conformity with the international agreements to prevent the rise of German militarism and fascism, the Soviet draft treaty:

1) Bans Germany from producing, acquiring or experimenting with nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction, rockets and guided missiles, submarines (Article 2b);

2) Permits Germany to have only such armed forces as are necessary for its defence (Article 2g) and weapons only in such quantities

as are necessary for these forces (Article 2b).

3) Lays down rules by which Germany must grant basic human rights and freedoms, freedom of organisation to political parties and at the same time prevent the rise of organisations of a fascist nature or having the aim of hostility against any of the allied Powers. (Chapters IV and V of Part I).

Of special significance is the proposal that both the Democratic and the Federal Republic will withdraw from the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO—thus taking a vital step towards disengagement and for peace.

Taken as a whole, the Draft Treaty embodies precisely such principles as cannot be approved by India. On the question of German unity, the draft treaty rightly takes into account the reality of the existence of two Germanys and at the same time commits the other nations to assist in bringing about unity through such forms as may be agreed upon by the two German Governments through negotiations. The possibility of a confederation is also envisaged and provided for.

All this is in sharp contrast to the Western Powers' barren proposals of "free elections" which amount to equa-

ting unity with the complete destruction of the Democratic Republic and to making this "unity" a precondition for any negotiations for a peace treaty.

India's intervention—emphatically in support of negotiations at the highest level on the German question, can be of paramount significance. To keep silent in the face of mounting tension, of the resurrection of German fascism and militarism, is tantamount to condoning the war-drive at its most critical point.

Germany is not just a European problem. It has become a world problem, on the peaceful solution of which all peoples are interested.

Lidice may have been far from India once. Nuclear power has brought us very much closer. And nuclear war could destroy both the roses of Lidice and the roses of New Delhi. But the world is a different world from that in which Hitler could destroy Lidice. For today the peoples—who grow roses and artificial plants—are strong and the monsters—who grow death and war and imperialism—are weak.

Our roses shall live... let us fight to protect them.

(January 28)

NEW AGE

MINISTER & EMPLOYEES' LEADERS ON THE SAME PLATFORM

Defencemen's Answer To Private Sector

CIVILIAN employees of the Defence establishment in Delhi demonstrated their powerful support for the Government decision to manufacture vehicles and other equipment in the public sector at a mass meeting of theirs held on January 23.

They repeatedly applauded Defence Minister V. K. Krishna Menon's declarations like: "The Defence industry should not be held to ransom for private profit", "We don't want to kill any industry nor do we want to be killed ourselves."

The huge meeting held under the auspices of the Delhi Defence Workers' Council was attended by representatives of the All-India Defence Employees' Federation from many other centres. Chaudhury Brahm Prakash, M. P., presided.

It was an interesting sight to see the Minister for Defence, his Deputy Sri Raghuramaiah, as well as officials of the Defence Ministry gathered on the same platform as the leaders of the Defence Employees' Federation and speaking very much the same language. The meeting resounded repeatedly with slogans of "Krishna Menon Zindabad", "S. M. Banerjee Zindabad".

Sri S. M. Banerjee, Independent M.P. from Kanpur, a former Defence employee and Vice-President of the All-India Federation, in his opening speech declared that defence workers were interested not merely in their own grievances and demands but also in the attainment by the country of self-sufficiency in its defence establishments. They fully supported this slogan, he said. The employees felt that it was their dream that was being realised through this.

The workers had their griev-

ances like the six-days' break in service and the question of contributory health scheme, etc. But these, Sri Banerjee said, could be settled by mutual consultations.

Sri V. K. Krishna Menon emphasised the fact that preservation of the country's independence necessarily meant that the country should be independent in its defence requirements. During British rule India's defence was supposed to be part of imperial defence and every little thing for defence had to come from Britain. "If you have to govern yourselves, you can't do it; if the tools of defence are in someone else's hands," said Sri Menon.

He condemned the superstition prevalent in some circles that there was something which could not be done under the tropical sky.

Referring to the private sector's campaign against Defence Department's manufacture of trucks and tractors, Sri Krishna Menon said: "It was an act of faith. Three years from its being undertaken every bit of it will be produced in this country... We do not want to make something just for the sake of making it, but for the sake of building our national industry." The Defence Department manufacturing establishments had perforce to maintain surplus capacity and this surplus capacity in peace time must be employed to meet the civilian requirements of the country as well as to provide employment and training to the people.

Referring to industrial relations in Defence establishments he said the workers here were equal participants in a national job and problems had to be solved round the table. "We have to learn still more how to work together," he said.

The great tradition in Russian literature from the days of the great Pushkin to our own times has been one of devoted search for truth, for realism in expression and mastery of the writer's craft. That this great heritage is upheld and adored by the present generation is a fact which becomes instantly clear on reading

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Sahitya Akademi Award: Good Sense Prevails Over Anti-Communism

RAHUL SANKRITYAYANA

AMONG the ten proud recipients of the Sahitya Akademi awards for the best books written during the past three years is the eminent scholar and litterateur Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayana, the first Communist to be openly honoured by the Akademi.

His great work *Madhya Asia Ka Itihas* (History of Central Asia), covering within its compass the huge span of time from the pre-historic period to the thirties of the present century, has been selected as the best Hindi book of the last three years.

It is only natural that whereas the award to Rahulji has been applauded enthusiastically by large numbers of people, not only in the Hindi-speaking region but also in other States, certain individuals and small groups

parading themselves as the sole arbiters of the fate of Hindi literature have felt dejected and annoyed.

So far as Rahul Sankrityayana is concerned he is perhaps the one great scholar in India who has been provided the least patronage by the Government, given the most shabby treatment by the bureaucrats who occupy the chairs of authority. But without ever bothering for any rewards for his labours Rahulji has given the greatest variety and maximum number of books to the Hindi readers.

Thanks to the wise choice of the Sahitya Akademi, today a healthy atmosphere prevails and a correct pace has been set for the future. However, it was not easily done.

Madhya Asia Ka Itihas, published by Bihar Rashtra Bhasha Parishad, runs into more than one thousand pages and is divi-



Rahulji

ded into two parts. The first part (529 pages) covers the period up to 1229 and the second up to 1929. Apart from the introductory remarks by Balu Shivapujan Sahai, Director, Bihar Bhasha Prachar Samiti,

and the Preface by the author, the book contains a frontispiece of V. I. Lenin, a large number of maps, photographs of coins, and appendix of names and reference books.

As Rahulji says: "Undoubtedly the amount of material concerning the history of Central Asia available in Russia and the Russian language is not available anywhere else... An authoritative history of Central Asia can be written only by Russian scholars..." (Vol I, page 8)

Elaborating his plans for the future and referring to the difficulties Rahulji says: "Central Asia also includes Chinese Central Asia... I have a mind to write a detailed history of China including Tibet... However, old age and economic difficulties are not the only difficulties, the bureaucracy of this free country is also ever ready to create obstructions.

"I had to go to Tibet in disguise during the British regime... When I met the Indian officer-in-charge in 1950 in connection with my visit to Tibet... He was least interested in knowing anything about Tibet and we parted after a formal talk of one or two minutes." (Vol. II, Preface)

The least said about this state of affairs the better.

However, Rahulji, did go to Tibet and did complete this long and strenuous work of enormous historical value, particularly in the background of the growth of Asian solidarity. But when the question of selecting the best book came another farce was repeated, not totally unconnected with the doings of the bureaucracy, this time only on a higher administrative and 'academic' level.

It is learnt that out of twenty-three persons who were asked to give their verdict on books only thirteen responded. Out of these thirteen two voted only for *Urmila* by Pt. Balkrishna Sharma Naveen and refused to vote for any other books. Among the remaining eleven, the largest number of votes, came for *Madhya Asia Ka Itihas*. Ramadhari Singh Dinkar's *Sanskriti Ke Char Adhyaya*, certain novels, some books of literary criticism, etc., were also in the field of competition.

Even after *Madhya Asia Ka Itihas* had received the largest number of votes certain people, the "intellectual" elder-brothers of the bureaucrats, servile and impertinent, shallow and pedantic, bloated with their pride of fighting Communism questioned the "antedecents" of the author of the great book, *Madhya Asia Ka Itihas*, and tried to prove the "worthlessness" of the book.

However, there was a rift in their own camp and even a person like S. H. Vatsyayana, who cannot be mistaken for a Communist sympathiser even by a blindman, had to vote for Rahulji's book. As a last resort a very cheap argument was advanced—that *Sanskriti Ke Char Adhyaya* contains an introduction by Pandit Nehru and as such was the most deserving book. However, it is said, the argument was discounted by the President of the Academy himself.

That is how good sense triumphed over the cold war unleashed against this book.

Rahulji is not only a great literary figure but has time and again plunged into the mass movement and been rewarded for this by several jail sentences. Both his love for culture and his unity with the masses has made him an honoured member of the Communist Party.

I will conclude with the words of Sri Shiva Pujan Sahai, the veteran Hindi writer:

"Looking back to the services of Rahul Sankrityayana in the field of literature one finds that the variety and amount of work he has done, has not been done by any one single writer. It would not be enough to consider him an extraordinary writer; he is in fact a renowned literary institution..."

—MUNSHI

LOUD TALK OF PUBLIC SECTOR, ALL AID TO THE PRIVATE

★ From JNAN BIKASH MOITRA

CALCUTTA, January 26

Our Congress leaders never tire of proclaiming that they are building a "Socialist" society, that they stand for expanding the public sector and restricting private enterprises within "legitimate" bounds.

THE recent Nagpur session of the Congress went so far as to declare that public enterprises and State trading should be so conducted as to yield additional resources for public purposes and that profits in the private sector should be controlled.

Here are a few instances of how the Congress Government in West Bengal is implementing these declarations:

● Fertilizer Plant handed over to the Birlas:

Four Fertilizer Plants are proposed to be set up in the public sector during the Second Plan period to meet the estimated demand of 370,000 tons of chemical fertilizers, the annual ca-

capacity at the end of the First Plan being only 85,000 tons.

One of these plants will be established at Durgapur in West Bengal. But it is not going to be a State-owned enterprise as originally planned.

It is now learnt on highest authority that Dr. B. C. Roy, West Bengal's Chief Minister, recently entered into an agreement with the Birlas, permitting them to set up the proposed plant under complete private ownership and management.

Not only that. For many years to come, they have been guaranteed huge profits at the expense of the State exchequer.

The terms of this anti-national deal are reliably reported to be as follows:

The Government will have no share in the company which will build and run the plant;

The Government will buy up the entire quantity of fertilizers for 30 years after the plant goes into production. The price that the Government has agreed to pay is a little over Rs. 300 per ton although the cost of production at a very liberal estimate will not exceed Rs. 100 per ton;

Coal gas from the State-owned coke-oven plant at Durgapur will be supplied to the company at cheap rates;

Necessary facilities will be extended to the company for securing loans and equipment from the USA.

If certain apparently isolated events in the past few months are now pieced together, it becomes evident that confabulations for sabotaging the establishment of the fertilizer plant in the public sector has been going on for a pretty long time.

Dr. Roy went to the USA

last October to explore, it was said, the possibilities of getting U.S. assistance for the State Government's projects under the Second Plan. When Dr. Roy arrived in Bombay on his way to the USA, one of the Birla brothers was already there. He also left for the same destination by the same plane. Perhaps, it was again a sheer coincidence that both of them negotiated for a loan and for equipments for the fertilizer plant.

On their return to the country the deal was finalised under a veil of secrecy.

Thus a gift of several lakhs every year is proposed to be made out of the slender resources of this State. But neither West Bengal's agriculture nor its peasantry will be benefited in any way.

● Big Concession to J.K. Industries, Ltd.:

The J.K. Industries Ltd., owned by the Singhanias, has an aluminium factory at Asansol, about 125 miles from Calcutta.

Some time ago the management sought Dr. Roy's help to tide over an acute shortage of electrical power supply in the plant.

Ever generous as he is to Big Business, Dr. Roy immediately instructed the State Electricity Board to supply a portion of the power that it receives from the DVC—but at one-third the price the State Government has to pay to the DVC.

The annual loss to the State Government over this transaction will be to the tune of Rs. 20 lakhs.

Dr. Roy's justification for this deal is that the management would have shifted the factory to some other State if this concession had not been given!

● Rs. two crores worth of junk bought:

The West Bengal Government has decided to purchase the Oriental Gas Co., Calcutta, at a cost of rupees two crores. The company supplies coal

gas to the Calcutta Corporation for street-lighting in some areas and also to hospitals, laboratories and a limited number of residential buildings.

The plant is reported to be outmoded and completely worn-out. Experts are of the opinion that several lakhs of rupees will be required to renovate it.

The Communist Party has repeatedly demanded nationalisation of the British-owned Tramways Company and the Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation whose equipments are in good shape and assets quite considerable. The nationalisation of these concerns will substantially increase the revenues of the State.

But the Government has always rejected the demand on the ground that it does not want to waste funds in buying up junk!

How is it then that the Government has decided to purchase the Oriental Gas Company? Perhaps because the majority of shares in the company are owned by a multi-millionaire family and a nephew of Dr. Roy is one of the directors of the company.

● Rs. eight lakhs sent down the drain:

Another sum of Rs. eight lakhs has been literally thrown away.

The Government has bought the A. K. Sarkar Industries of Belghoria, a few miles from Calcutta. The factory used to produce lanterns, etc., but its machineries were so dilapidated that there were frequent breakdowns, and it became unremunerative to continue production. The factory was therefore closed down.

Negotiations then went on behind the scenes and the Government purchased the factory against the advice of its own experts. They had pointed out that at least Rs. five lakhs would have to be spent to modernise the equipment.

But certain people had to be "rehabilitated", and eight lakhs of rupees were paid for the junk!



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Printed by D. P. Sinha at the NEW AGE PRINTING PRESS, 5, Jhandewallan Estate, M. M. Road New Delhi, and published by him from 7/4, Asaf Ali Road, Delhi.

Phone: 25794

Telegraphic Address: MARKBADI

SUBSCRIPTION RATE

INLAND: Yearly Rs. 12-0-0; Half-yearly Rs. 6-0-0 and Quarterly Rs. 3-0-0. FOREIGN: Yearly Rs. 16-0-0; Half-yearly Rs. 8-0-0. All cheques and drafts to be made payable to T. MADHAVAN and not to NEW AGE.